

**It's a dog's death**

It is a sad fact that almost all stray or unwanted pets are killed on our behalf. Yes killed, sometimes slaughtered on mass to rid us of the responsibility of looking after them. We are all to blame, we substitute words like "euthanase" or "put to sleep," "shelter" and "pound" to help us feel better, but it is our fault the Cleveland Animal Shelter has to kill unfortunate pets.

I was at the Bradley County Landfill a few years back, arriving there just after a load of dogs, puppies, cats and kittens had been unceremoniously dumped amongst the trash. Even though my job prepares me for disturbing events I was shocked and emotionally upset at the sight. I am an animal lover, but I am usually not sentimental when it comes time for the need to kill them. We do eat them, so someone has to kill them for us, but the animals at the landfill were different, they were meant to be companions, it seemed such a waste.

My first reaction was to blame the staff at the shelter for being uncaring, dumping them with the trash was a travesty for those wonderful creatures, but on reflection I realized that it was my fault, or at least partly my fault. I had abdicated responsibility for this unpleasant task to others when I should have got involved, tried to make a difference in those defenseless animals lives. At least I could have tried. What could I do to save pets no one wanted, I asked myself?

The ugly fact is that most of these wonderful creatures were doomed to die from the moment of their birth. There are too many of them for the homes available and spay-neuter programs are obviously ineffective at keeping numbers down. People are turned off adopting from a community shelter because of the cost. A dog or cat can be found elsewhere free of charge without much effort so why are shelters pricing these creatures to death?

Unfortunately, our community must face the fact

that it will be necessary to kill otherwise healthy pets but surely we can do it in a respectful way and improve life for them while they are alive.

It is possible to do this inexpensively with determination and the help of sheriff Tim Gobble. One community in Arizona has non-violent female prisoners care for unwanted pets until they are either adopted or killed. Both pets and inmates seem to benefit from this arrangement and it frees up animal control personnel to do a more humane job.

Landfill managers are not unfeeling people. I am sure the shelter board could persuade them to set aside a place dedicated for the respectful burial of these unfortunate animals. It would not take much effort and could set Cleveland apart. Perhaps male inmates could dig and care for the animal cemetery.

It is just a thought.

What do you think?

**It's a waste of money**

Cleveland and Bradley county has spent a fortune over the years on hiring freelance construction managers for its multi-million dollar construction projects. The fees amount to 3 or 4 percent of the total project cost and judging by the high cost per square foot we are paying, does not seem to be cost effective. If the cost of a new school is \$10 million, the manager gets \$300,000 to \$400,000. Just by not hiring a manager would save the taxpayer the same amount guaranteed but there is no guarantee of savings if one is hired. The construction managers themselves work the public works circuit, going from town to town always in a different place but not always with a different general contractor. Are these relationships healthy for the communities hiring them?

The winning bid for a contract comes with a price and guarantees of quality and performance set by the governing body financing the project, with appropriate performance bonds required as part

of the deal, so there are already built-in safeguards protecting the community. If a construction manager is really necessary, one could be hired permanently at less cost to oversee all local projects and that person's loyalty to the community for which he works could be trusted.

That's what I think.

What do you think?

**The tax to prevent a tax?**

It is not unusual for a governing body to propose a tax using the threat of a property tax increase to persuade voters to adopt it. A tax is a tax is a tax is a tax, no matter how it is packaged, and someone will be out of pocket because of it. The idea that somehow you will be exempt from paying is a fallacy and a neat way of presenting something known to be unpopular.

The Cleveland City Council want more of your money and are trying to use this popular gimmick to relieve you of it. They are proposing a half cent sales tax increase, saying it will avoid a property tax increase to pay for "much needed" building and road maintenance projects. And besides, they say, if they don't raise the sales tax the state could jump in and raise it, keeping the money for themselves. So, according to our esteemed city council, the proposed tax is a good tax, one that should be welcomed with open arms by your positive vote at the special election needed for its adoption.

We are on the brink of a catastrophic recession with the prospect of severe unemployment because of business failures and the economic downturn, so what do the Cleveland City Council propose.... a tax increase that will make Cleveland less competitive and further deepen the effects of the financial crisis for local people?

What should they be doing? They should get with the program like the rest of

us and accept that the spending spree is over, at least for the time being.

They should conserve what they have and hunker down for the possibly tough times ahead. It might also be prudent for the city council to concentrate on how they will continue paying city employees with falling revenues from a less wealthy community that is already reeling from industry downsizing and growing unemployment. Placing city growth on the back burner until more prosperous times may be a necessity they don't want to face but forcing a sales tax increase at this time will be a difficult pill to swallow for most voters. No matter how attractively it is packaged.

That's what I think.

What do you think?

**They'll do it her way.**

Amy Moore used to work for the county mayor, now she works for the county commission. So why the comment? While working for Mayor D. Gary Davis she was asked to write the job description for a new position being created for research assistant to the Bradley County Commission.

Let me say up front that I personally like Ms. Moore. She has always seemed dedicated to her work for the county and is a very likeable person but I dislike the way government acts when filling jobs like this one specially designed for her. To allow the person who wrote the job description to apply is a conflict under the best of circumstances, but to create a position for a specific person and then to make it appear legitimate by seeking applications and going through a selection process is a disgrace to everyone involved, including taxpayers and especially those who had their time wasted applying for a position that had already been filled.

It is uncomfortable to write negatively about

someone you like and believe is doing a good job, but sometimes it is necessary to inform our readers of occurrences that happen under the radar with people we trust to be up front and open while conducting public business.

It is difficult to be precise on actual events but it appears that Ms. Moore worked for Mayor Davis but he needed a full time assistant which did not suit Ms. Moore. So as not to leave Ms. Moore without employment, a job was created for her in a part time capacity by the county commission for whom she had done research while in Davis' office.

Another problem the commission created for themselves having a seasoned county employee doing research for them, is they will never be completely sure if the research they receive and on which they base their decisions is complete and unbiased. An example would be if research was being done to discover if county employee salaries were in line with other communities, selective research could be offered that they were not, when in fact they were. This has happened in the past and will likely happen again. Individual commissioners doing their own research to reach an independent conclusion will insure responsible decision making for all constituents when the entire commission taking advice from a public employee is not how the system is designed to work. Commissioners do not work for government, they work directly for the people they serve. Relying on one person with a conflict of interest is not healthy for representative government.

Even if Ms. Moore does an outstanding job for the commission, and I have no reason to believe she won't, a cloud will always remain over the conflict that has been created.

That's what I think.

What do you think?

**Defeating the object**

Sometimes government is an ass just as surely as the law is said to be. And when you combine the two... enough said.

Saving the planet seems to be the catchword of the twenty first century. The United States spends untold millions educating the public to recycle and keep America beautiful. It is good that we take responsibility for the condition of our planet but sometimes it is difficult to do so on a personal level because there is no common sense leadership. Government encourage citizens to be environmentally considerate, then do their damndest to prevent them from doing it.

A personal example of this that I think needs to be mentioned involves the disposal of old tires. In a little used corner of a piece of land I own in Bradley county, many years ago someone had dumped a load of old tires, many of which were large commercial or agricultural tires. I had always intended to take them to the landfill for recycling but had never gotten around to it. Finally last month I had someone pull them out with a tractor and take them to the landfill. These tires were heavy and difficult to move manually so it took two men to do the job. I thought it was a good thing that was being done for the environment but the satisfying feeling soon subsided when I was presented with a bill for landfill charges of \$131.40. So, with the cost to haul them I was out almost \$200 for trying to keep Bradley county beautiful, and that my friends I find ridiculous bearing in mind a fee is automatically charged on new tires for disposal in advance, and presumably the tires are given to the recycling company for free. Now I understand why the tires were illegally dumped in the first place.

Is it reasonable to expect even the most environmentally supportive citizen to pay such exorbitant fees to clean up someone else's trash?

What do you think?