Opinion

Guest editorial

Taxed to death?

by Anthony Harrigan

The success of Proposition 13 in California, the property tax limitation initiatives, has raised immense hope that tax limitation proposals will succeed elsewhere in the nation. The major, longterm target of the tax limitation movement, of course, is the federal government.

Tax limitation is right, just and necessary. If ever there were an idea whose time has come, it is tax limitation. The American people are being taxed to death.

The foes of tax limitation — the advocates of massive spending — cry that tax limitation won't work or that it will work terrible hardship. They say that tax limitation laws will put teachers out of work, close libraries, and result in drastic curtailment of police and fire services. None of these things need happen.

The taxpayers are willing to pay taxes for essential services. What they are angry about is the unchecked growth of local, state and federal bureaucracies and the exploitation of the government grant mechanism for make-work projects and programs.

To work successfully, tax limitation has to be applied across the board — from the local level to Washington. Anyone who has experience with government agencies or who has worked in a government office knows that government spending can and must be cut.

Where is the waste of which taxpayers complain? The waste is in "rent-a-care", in overstaffing in government offices at every level, in the manipulation of government grants to provide per diem, travel funds and fees for consultants.

The waste is in food stamps for people who drive new model cars, in public medical care programs for persons who can afford to buy liquor, in programs for the federal government to subsidize sewer construction for local communities or police cars for city hall. The waste is in state arts funding that create plush headquarters for state arts commissions and state cars for employees of countless state and local agencies.

The waste also is in the swollen Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare that has a bigger budget than the Dept. of Defense, and in the countless surveys done for and by government, in public relations aides for almost every local, state and federal office.

The waste is in an extensive number of "educational" seminars for bureaucrats, usually in faraway, interesting

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Agree or not

Lack of information dumps personal service contracts

by S. C. Van Curen

FRANKFORT—Lack of information supplied to participants probably is the chief cause for recommendations to cancel a personal service contract.

The Personal Service Contract Review Subcommittee recommended cancellation of the contract the Public Employees Benefit Service Corp. has with the Deferred Compensation Board.

Robert Doris, administrator for the subcommittee said the cancellation recommendation is being mailed to David Edwards, director of the Deferred Compensation Board.

Doris said the subcommittee has received many complaints about PEBSCO has furnished inaccurate statements in the past and there is too much lag between the time state employee money is deposited before it goes to earning for him.

PEBSCO has an office in Frankfort but is controlled by the parent firm of Davenport and Dillard in Oklahoma City, Okla. The contract has a ceiling of $50,000 per year, but Edwards says his board pays the firm only $1,800 per month or $21,600 per year. PEBSCO also gets $3.00 for each new participant, a one-time charge for getting his name set up in the program.

Employees of the state, the university system and public schools are eligible to participate in the program of depositing part of their salaries in the deferred compensation plan. Edwards says about a half million dollars comes in each month.

The employee can choose one of several plans for investment of his money with several insurance companies. The companies make a six per cent charge on each paycheck for handling the investment. Since this deduction is made, Edwards says it takes about 18 months to gain back to the original amount invested.

However, the advantage to the participant is that he is not paying state or federal income tax on the money he invests, hence the name of deferred compensation. The participant has the advantage of using the money he otherwise would have paid out in taxes. He isn't taxed for the money until he withdraws it and its earnings. He has two ways to withdraw it. Wait until he retires, or can prove a hardship.

After retirement he will be having less earned income, and his taxes theoretically will be lower because he will be in a lower tax bracket. He also reduces his tax bracket by the amount he is paying in while he is working.

Edwards said PEBSCO first started issuing a quarterly statement to participants. However, only the year end statements showed the earnings since the insurance companies credit the earnings as of Dec. 31 each year. Also, while there are two state paydays per month, the insurance companies invest the money only once a month. This provides a time lag.

There is no limit on what a participant may invest each month. The more he invests, the more federal and state taxes he defers and earns interest on the dollars that would have gone to government in taxes.

Edwards said PEBSCO had changed to a larger computer system and had many errors in the first statements issued with the new computer. He also said PEBSCO now furnishes only an annual statement since the quarterly statements would show no gain.

About 5,000 employees are now participating in the program.

Doris said as he views it, lack of public relations and keeping the participants informed is probably the cause of much of the discontent. Edwards agreed in principle with this.

The next step is for Edwards and his board to agree to the cancellation or disagree. If Edwards wants to retain PEBSCO, his board can do so. The subcommittee does not have the authority to cancel a contract. The subcommittee then can refer the matter to the Appropriations and Revenue committee for action by the 1980 legislature.

Letters from our readers

To The Carlisle Mercury:

Being new to the community we did not know all the things as one does who is a native of this beautiful town. After we had our things pretty well settled we decided it was time to transfer our out of state drivers licenses. We had lived in some strange, backward places and had never had any difficulty in this official transaction. In response to our inquiry, we were directed to go to the courthouse to get driver licenses. This we did, but it was not the right day since the licenses are only given on Thursdays.

We were not able to go the next Thursday, but the following week I went by myself and arrived at 1:45. I was told by the officer that I was too late, and that he had to give road tests. Thus, I learned that the written test is only available from 1:00-1:30 on Thursdays. I asked about any other city that I might go to take the test. Of course, you know the answer to that.

The following Thursday I went to Indianapolis to help move a relative. So, on this Thursday my wife and I reread the drivers' manual. We asked each other questions and made sure that we were at the courthouse on time. We entered the courthouse with that air of suspense that always comes with taking this test. Our minds were concentrating upon road signs, highway intersections, hand signals, and stopping distances. We were shocked when the ladies at the desk informed us that we could not take the test today. The reason was that auditors or someone was using the room normally reserved for taking driver exams.

We asked the State Police officer if we could take the exam out in the hallway. "No," he said, "there's no electrical outlet for the eye vision test." I asked about other rooms that we could go to, but that was no help either.

We left the courthouse a bit frustrated. But, now that I have had time to think over the situation I've figured it out that in that great Big Building in the center of town there must be only one electrical outlet and whoever gets there first gets to use it.

Robert Edwards

Memory Lane

Giffin Company honored; Martians 'invade' America

Thursday, October 30, 1958

At the annual Giffin party Friday night sponsored by the city and merchants of Carlisle for employees of Giffin Manufacturing Company, Mayor Bill Power presented Lonnie Giffin, president of the firm, with a plaque honoring him and his family for their community service during the past 10 years the company has operated here.

Miss Penny Brookshire, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Brookshire, and Terry Kenney, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Kenney, were elected king and queen last Thursday night at the Halloween carnival held at Nicholas County Grade School at Headquarters.

Charles Vice, son of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Vice, was recently elected chapter brother by the Carlisle F.H.A. chapter.

Miss Patricia Dianne Clark, a graduate of Carlisle High School, and daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Clark, has been initiated as a charter member of Gamma Xi Chapter of Kappa Delta at Kentucky Wesleyan College in Owensboro.

Mrs. Walter Atkinson fell at her home on East Union Road, Monday and fractured her hip. She was transferred to St. Joseph's Hospital in Lexington where she underwent surgery.

BORN — To Mr. and Mrs. Claude Thomas Barlow of Campbellsville, a daughter, Cathylynn, last week. — To Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Morris, a daughter, Shirley Faye, Oct. 23 — To Mr. and Mrs. Paul Tincher, a daughter, Oct. 24.

DIED — Mrs. Orra MacDonald, 80, at her home in Ludlow. — J. Rice Crooks, 65, Thursday in Mt. Sterling. — Mrs. Maude Shaw, 78, of Paris last Wednesday at the home of a daughter, Mrs. Millard Lawrence in Beverly, Mich. — Rev. William Arther Pile. Burial at Kentucky Christian College in Grayson. — Henry Wilson, 75, Saturday at a rest home in Liberty. — Miss Eugenia Layson, 95, Sunday at the Carlisle Nursing Home.

Thursday, November 1, 1928

Re-organization of a Boy Scouts of America troop in Carlisle, under the active sponsorship of the American Legion Post and a number of Carlisle businessmen, was accomplished last Thursday night at a meeting of committees in the Nicholas County courtroom.

A defective flue was blamed by the local fire department for a fire which damaged the home of Mrs. Frances Baker on West Main Street near Sycamore Street on Monday afternoon.

Mass hysteria takes nation by storm as Martians "invade" U. S. and defeat armies in radio program. Written by H. G. Wells and fictionized by Orson Wells, the broadcast caused such consternation among Americans who listened in that certain section of the nation that residents were seen hiding in cellars, fleeing their homes for "safer" places, or trying desperately to contact relatives in the "attacked" areas.

Roy Blount of Moorefield, well-known foxhound and horse breeder of this section has disposed of a dun two-year-old horse to the Ringling Brothers Circus, for use of one of the managers as a riding horse.

BORN — To Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Minton of the Cassidy Creek section, a son on Oct. 28.

MARRIED — Eugene N. Feeback of Carlisle and Mrs. Burnam Morrison of Glasgow were issued a marriage license last week in Nicholas County court. — Mayme Kennedy Gates and Erwin James Brunker of Carlisle, Oct. 27. — Miss Geneva Bell Ellis of Louisville and Edmun Shindelbower of Lexington on Oct. 29.

DIED — Max Metzger of Paris. — Mrs. E. M. Mattox, 55, of near Millersburg, Friday. — Harvey B. Wagoner of the Maysville Road section, Monday. — Robert Lee Bailey, 72, at his home on Oct. 20.

Kentucky Reflections

Judge upholds church schools but more appeals expected

by George Street Boone

Early this month Judge Henry Meigs of the Franklin Circuit Court entered a sweeping order in the School Accrediting Case ruling out many state-imposed requirements for private schools.

How far should the state be permitted to go in requiring compulsory attendance and in imposing standards on such private schools? In 1972 the Supreme Court upheld the right of Amish children to leave school after the 8th grade, since their parents believed that formal education past that level was in conflict with centuries of their religious practices. One leader explains his church does not distrust education, but distrusts the exposure of their young people to the increased social sophistication of the high schools. The members of his church believe, for example, in using latest scientific information and technologies in farming, but feel no obligation to permit their young people generally to pursue their education in high school or college.

The concern of some for limiting control of the State Board of Education over private schools may be based on their passionate devotion to religious freedom. One can speculate, however, as to how many of these concerned citizens also support the compulsory posting of the Ten Commandments in the public schools, another Church-State issue before the courts.

Judge Meigs found what he described as incontrovertable proof that there were real and substantial differences between the educational concepts, notions of textbooks, curriculum content and teacher qualification in the public and the private schools. He ruled that these differences had a foundation in firmly held religious beliefs. He found "[T]he enforced separation (of religious and secular education) currently prevailing in public schools is casting increasing doubt upon the value of education," and "The state is unable to demonstrate that its regulatory scheme applied to the public school has any reasonable relationship to the supposed objectives of advancing educational quality."

The plaintiffs sought successfully to have the Kentucky State Board of Education enjoined from imposing many of its standards on their schools, but they admitted the state's overriding interest in maintaining reasonable health, fire and safety standards for all schools. They offered submission to these, along with uniform, standardized testing as the means of earning "approval" for their schools, rather than submitting to the "accreditation" requirement prescribed for state schools.

The standardized testing has been mandated in the public schools by the 1978 Legislature, despite the objections of many experienced teachers who feel that these tests will inevitably reduce the quality of education. They point out that teaching efforts and time will have to be increasingly be directed toward the failing groups instead of giving

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Mercury Vapors

by Warren R. Fisher

Christmas, Less Than Nine Weeks Away

Not knowing a whole lot about music, but knowing how to solder connections, left me last year with a contraption called a programmable electronic chime. The fact that the gadget among other things receives CB, that is, when the CB is close to the house is just another of its attributes. It also reminds one to set their electric clock if the current has been off.

It was nearly Christmas last year when I finished installing the chimes in place of the doorbell, so what could be more appropriate than trying Greensleeves which was followed by Little Town of Bethlehem simply because more people knew the tune.

The first of the year found me with Aud Lang Syne, Easter brought out the tune Easter which stayed with us through the summer. Since summer was waning, the Last Rose of Summer was tried, followed by Swannee River and Westminister none of which sounded so good and reminds one that it is not a musical instrument and does not have proper pitch.

But the best tune or the most realistic tune so far is Beethoven and it wouldn't be programmed if the Mercury's editor, Jeff Kerr hadn't held the book and called out what lead went to what note within the 13-note octave. Since the designers were thoughtful enough to provide the instrument with a lead and connection to play the tune without going to the door and punching the doorbell button. I made immediate use of same asking Jeff if that was the correct tune — and he replies, "Don't ask me. I'm tone deaf!" The better halves came to our rescue. I'd plugged wires nine and ten into C' (sharp) instead of C. Beethoven will stay I think until Christmas time which is less than nine weeks away.

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We welcome all letters and enjoy our readers comments but we cannot publish them at someone else's expense whether it be ours, yours or others.

Kentuckians have ghost stories

by Helen Price Stacy

Whatever the weather this time of year it fits into the spells cast by dark shadows and stories told around a wood fire in the family room.

A slow rain, drizzling down windowpanes creates a perfect mood for a ghost tale as does an autumn evening, dry and sear, when the lightest breeze makes parchment leaves and sapless twigs rattle like bones being tossed about in a box and scattered corn blades rasp and whine like so many unknown voices roaming the country side, free and unfettered.

Nature is adept at creating the perfect atmosphere for Halloween's shades, spectres, phantoms, spirits, apparitions, ghouls, goblins, haunts and ghosts.

"Hallowe'en," explains Gus Doyle of Lewis County, means Holy Eve and was named because it is the eve of the festival of 'All Saints.' Years ago when Hallowe'en began most people believed in ghosts, spirits, witches, fairies, goblins, elves, brownies, leprechauns, knockers and boogies."

Some people still believe, and those who scoff make it a rule to stay away from dark places, especially country graveyards and vacant houses with tattered curtains hanging from paneless windows.

In northeastern Kentucky around the South Portsmouth area of Greenup County a man believes. The way he explained it to his grandson was that a couple died in a wreck at Henaan's Bend near School House Hollow. This was in early days of the automobile. Later if a traveler found himself near the bend around midnight he experienced a strong force holding him. The grandfather, returning to his Greenup County home one night, later than usual with his wagonload of supplies, discovered his wagon had stopped. His horses strained and heaved, but the wagon stayed, the wheels spinning and groaning. The animals finally pulled the wagon from the grip of the supernatural power, but the grandfather made certain he was never near Hensan's curve after dark.

In Wolfe County where a family was murdered during the Civil War years, a closet in an abandoned, rotting hulk of house is said to have a supernatural force. The family, including children, was stuffed into the closet after the murders. As soon as a family moved into the old house in a lonely section of the county they moved out. They would tell about passing the closet and feeling a power sucking them inside. Children would panic when the force began pulling them into the dark recess. Finally, no family would move to the house. It was still standing 10 or 12 years ago but perhaps gave in to last winter's deep snow.

In western Kentucky a mother can be seen late at night bending over the cradle of her infant. They died under mysterious circumstances and the father left for a New England city. The family who moved into the house started hearing low cries of a baby late at night. They moved. Another family reported a vision of a woman in a filmy night dress bending low over the cradle and crooning softly. Many years earlier Alfred Lord Tennyson must have known about a similar mystery, for he wrote about noises of falling weights that did not fall, bolted doors that opened themselves and "Her, bending by the cradle of her babe".

Frankfort, city of historic houses and historic citizens, has its mystery stories. One of the best known is the Gray Lady who roams Liberty hall. How long has it been since the Gray Lady has been seen?

Liberty Hall, built in 1796, claims at least three ghosts. Strangely, none is of the daughter of the builder John Brown. The child died at age eight. An aunt of Mrs. Brown made a long journey to Frankfort to try to comfort her niece and husband and herself died of a heart attack three days later. The Gray Lady, attractive and wearing a gown of gray silk, fits the description of the aunt.

Still later at Liberty Hall another ghost was seen in the garden. An observer said she did not fit the description of the Gray Lady but was said to be a singer who was attending a ball at the Brown home and was last seen walking in the garden.

A third ghost fits the description of a soldier who has been seen looking into the windows of the house, searching for his sweetheart.

What to do about a ghost should one be encountered during these days that lead to the Eve of all Saints? One eastern Kentucky lady advises kindness. "They will not hurt you. They are here to help."

Report cards due next week

The first nine weeks of school will end Wednesday, Oct. 25, for the Nicholas County Elementary and High Schools.

Report cards for both schools will be given out Thursday, Nov. 2.

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