

"People" lacking in today's state politics

It seems like every time I open the newspaper there's some new political problem running amok in Harrisburg. First there was the 35-day budget impasse. Then the trivial fact that a state legislator may have cast the deciding vote in favor of the budget in Harrisburg while waiting for a plane in Pittsburgh. NOW, on top of everything else, Mayor Stephen Reed seems to have stashed away \$7 million dollars in city money to be spent at his discretion.

Where did "elected by the people, for the people" disappear to? Can anyone tell me? I'd personally like to ask Democratic Rep. Richard Hayden if he has any idea WHY he can afford to take his family on a vacation to Hawaii. Ok, maybe his wife's Ivana Trump's divorce attorney, but more than likely it had a little something to do with taxpayers' money.

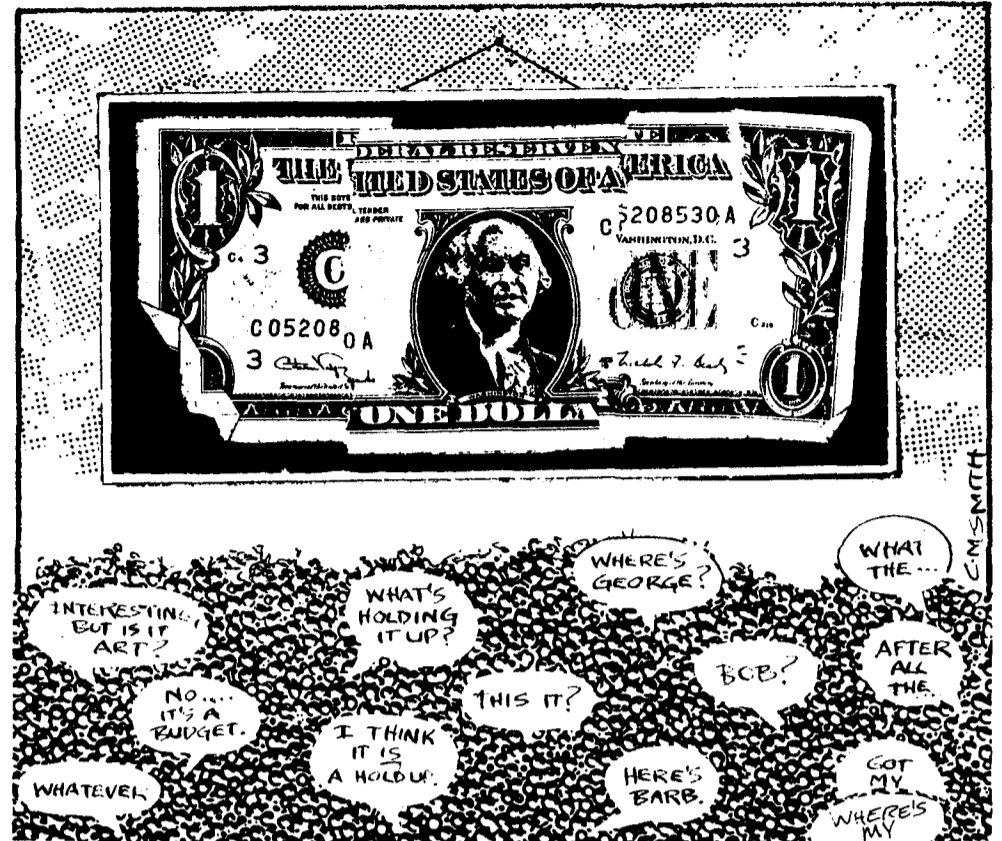
Forget the fact that there were state employees who couldn't afford to pay their rent or buy their families food. Forget the fact that a woman with a station wagon full of children parked in the driveway of the governor's mansion to protest her husband not receiving pay for his work. Forget the daily rallies at the capital by angry state workers against Casey. But don't forget that Hayden, who electronically rigged his machine to vote "yes" to any legislation on August 4, was elected by the people AND for the people. Why then should he be excused from his duties? Because of illness? Sure. Death in the family? Sure. But a non-refundable airline ticket to Hawaii? Give me just a small break.

Here's another high point in Harrisburg politics. Mayor Stephen Reed "obtained" \$7 million of the city's money from last year's sale of Harrisburg city's water system to the Harrisburg Authority, and stashed it in an account without City Council's knowledge. While Reed says that he's already spent nearly \$5 million of it on city projects, council members are up in arms because the spending took place without their knowledge or approval.

What's a few million here and there? Especially if it's \$150,000 to purchase an Astroturf field and dasher boards to surround it for the Harrisburg Heat soccer team. Catch a clue Mayor Reed. Hershey had a team and they failed miserably. Do you really think people are going to be drawn to the Harrisburg team because they play in the Farm Show Arena? If the games are played at night I think fans will see that as more of a deterrent than a plus. I know after having a tire slashed and numerous key scratches added to my car while parked on Derry Street last year, I now think twice before venturing into the capital city after sundown.

But there is a bright spot in all of this...while it took Pennsylvania legislators 35 days to agree upon a budget, that's not a record. As of this writing, the state of Connecticut has gone more than 54 days without a spending plan. Maybe they could settle it if half their legislators planned trips to Hawaii....

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A newspaper for the student body

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