

# On the subject of...

## No Mo Status Quo!

By Viki Eggers Mason



THE TRUTH IN BLACK AND WHITE

# The Aberdeen Advocate

In the weeks to come, I hope you will be hearing less from me on these pages and more from the candidates for municipal office. I have issued a challenge to those civic-minded individuals who shall be courting your vote to use *The Advocate* as a means to reach you with their message.

At this publication, we like to think the voters of Aberdeen are thoughtful, serious people who understand their responsibility to their neighbors and to the generations to come. Therefore, we urge you to ask hard questions at every opportunity, then listen carefully to the answers the candidates give.

I would certainly suggest that you also ask some questions of the incumbents. Here are a few:

- How many city employees have still failed to pay their past-due electric bills? (Something like 22 with a total past due amounting to nearly \$13,000.)
- How many of those employees have had their power cut off for non-payment? (None.)
- Why is the woman who kited something like \$67,000 in checks at the Electric Department still on our payroll? (We understand one Electric Department employee was encouraged to quit after he was accused of stealing.)
- Why was the Municipal Court Judge not termi-

nated when she was found to be using city equipment and resources to produce her campaign literature?

I guarantee that your current flock of alderbuzzards will only give you excuses. They can point to no successes — only failures. We deserve better, reader friends.

It's time to move forward. It is your job to gather all the information you can, then evaluate each candidate carefully. To that end, throughout the next few weeks we will dedicate as much space as possible a forum in which the candidates can speak directly to you, the voters.

### Issues and Answers

**This week's question: What is the biggest problem Aberdeen faces today and what steps will you take in the first 30 days of your term to address the issue?**

#### Ed Rayfield, Candidate for Alderman, Ward 2:

One of the biggest problems in Aberdeen is the board itself. I would work very hard with the Mayor and the rest of the board of Aldermen to get the Aldermen back to doing what we are supposed to do (planning and development) and, most of all, working for the good people of Aberdeen. We must all be working together (pulling the wagon the same way), so we can address all the other problems that exist in our city.

- Police Department: When our police officers make an arrest or write a ticket,

they must show up in court and we must provide a judge who is going to be fair and balanced regardless whether you are black or white. We have to make our merchants and citizens feel safe — if individuals commit a crime against us, they must be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

- Stopping the waste: Looking at each department's budget to ensure they have enough money to run their department and making sure they stick to their budget and holding each department

head accountable for his/her department.

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#### John Allen, Candidate for Alderman, Ward 5:

Reactive leadership. Aldermen should make decisions and choices based on experience and information available, keeping in mind that running the city is managing a sizeable business. We represent geographic areas and are designated to make business decisions for the best interest of those we represent. Information is power, but gathering too much information and

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# Issues and Answers

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delegating decisions to committees can lead to paralysis and no leadership.

I plan to look closely at the finances to see where the monies are being disbursed.

From the outside, it appears that some rebalancing of allocations is in order. The budget certainly needs closer scrutiny.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Jim Ballard, Candidate for Mayor:**

The one issue that seems to surface behind the need for more jobs is race relations. Whether this is a real or perceived issue, it needs to be addressed immediately.

A forum will be created to begin identifying the issues and to develop the problem-solving process. A plan of action for specific issues identified will be developed so appropriate changes can

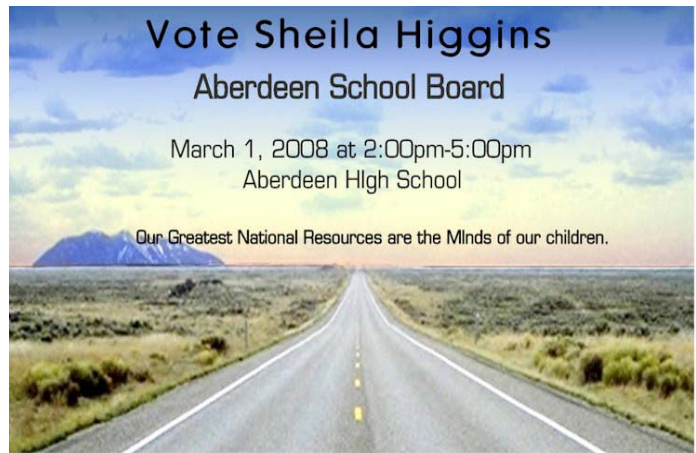
be addressed.

Aberdeen needs to move forward as a community (common-unity) in order to achieve economic prosperity and growth. Our city has a lot of good people who deserve better. This issue should not hold us back!

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Next week's question:

***According to our City accountant, our corporate payroll is out of control. If you are elected how will you go about bringing the payroll budget into line? Will you support a cut in Aldermen's wages?***



**Becka's Burger Shack**



North Hwy. 45

369-4275

Monday through Friday

10:00 a.m.— 8:00 p.m.

## Candidates standing for municipal elections:

Ward 1:

- Alonzo Sykes—Incumbent
- Robert Devauld
- Donald Dahlem

Ward 2:

- Cloyd Garth, Sr.—Incumbent
- Wilchie Clay
- Ed Rayfield
- Curly Payne

Ward 3:

- David Ewing
- Roger Cooperwood
- Dwight Stevens
- Jarrod Jones

Ward 4:

- Brunson Odom—Incumbent
- Randy Nichols
- Willie L. "Bug" Jackson, Jr.

Ward 5:

- Dr. Henry Calvert
- Tony Rogers
- Stephen Bowen
- John Allen

Mayoral Race:

- Cecil Belle—Incumbent
- Jim Ballard
- Steve Lance

Chief of Police

- Walter Sykes—Incumbent
- Henry Randle
- Quinell Shumpert
- Kennedy Meaders

School Board

- Sheila Higgins (Voting will take place at Aberdeen High School on March 1st between the hours of 2 and 5 p.m.)

# Chicken Bees

By Contributing Editor R. T. Mason

Bees are chickens.

I mean no offense to the poultry lovers out there, nor the fowl constituency of Aberdeen, but, being a student of nature, I once devoted several hours to watching a group of bees, as they most industriously tried to get their tiny paws on some food which had been left on a concrete storage area. Now, one might think that I've had entirely too much free time on my hands, but, as I've said before, wisdom is where you find it and out in the country, it bombards you from every direction if you pay attention.

The food had been dropped beside a bundle of brick, and the brick cast a shadow on the concrete. The food was within that shadow, and the bees refused to walk into that shadow. As the Earth turned, the shadow moved somewhat, but it never reached a point where the food was not in the shadow. I watched as several bees walked for hours around the edge of that shadow, but none would venture inside. I couldn't help but wonder what they would have done if a cloud had drifted by, throwing the entire area into a shadow, but that will require further research. As I said, bees are chickens.

Mayhap these bees had never read the twenty-third Psalm that says, "Yea, though I walk through the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." Bees aren't noted for their reading skills, anyway,

but you would think that there would surely have been one brave soul in the bunch. Not so. Bees are chickens. That's probably also the reason why bees don't smoke, but that's another story.

Bees don't seem to have this shadow aversion problem while flying. It seems to be a walking thing, like some folks can't walk and chew gum at the same time. My guess is that walking allows more time for contemplation than does flying, so when the bee has time to think about entering the shadow, he becomes a chicken. On the other hand, perhaps, when flying, a bee can soar free of Earth's bonds and with that freedom, everything is possible. I believe it was Socrates who insisted that his students contemplate philosophy while lying in hammocks in order that their minds would not be entangled with earthly snares. (Note to self: A small amount of that hemlock stuff seems to go a long way.) Anyway, walking bees are chickens.

(Yes, Dear, there is a point here.)

And, yes, reader, you too can be either a walking bee or a flying bee. You can spend your life walking around the shadow of government, always being bound by that imaginary line which separates us from tyrannical politicians. You can pace back and forth along that line, while grumbling and lamenting, about the fact that your children are being deprived of a future, that your property is now virtually worthless, that there are few jobs available in your city, that there are no plans for the future



in Aberdeen, that the city judge inflicts church attendance as punishment for infractions of the law, that aldermen are serving as representatives in one ward while actually living in another ward, that policemen are limited in what laws they can enforce and when they can enforce them, that our leaders are taking away our freedoms faster than our soldiers can protect those freedoms, that your money is being spent with little regard to budgetary restraint, or that you can't legally check the oil in your daughter's vehicle when she visits you from another county. Then, being the walking bee that you are, you can walk right into that voting booth and vote for the same people who have perpetuated your oppressions. You can do that. It's your right to do that. You have every right to vote to continue to be enslaved by small tyrants controlling their small empire with favors bestowed upon their subjects in order to perpetuate their own egotistical existence.

On the other hand, you could be a flying bee and breathe the air of freedom as you soar into that shadow of city government. You could break free from the shackles of your imprisonment and the slavery of tyrannical government, and you could vote for leaders who will dedicate themselves to building a strong future for Aberdeen. You could fly above the land of your former bondage, swooping down to enjoy the feast of bounty which has been stored within the shadowy confines of City Hall. You could do that.

You could do that, but only if you aren't a chicken bee. Like I said, "Wisdom is where you find it."

## Issues and Answers

In our continuing effort to assist the voters of Aberdeen in their quest for a new and more effective city government, we offer to all candidates (who are not incumbents) space in this publication to address questions and offer solutions to Aberdeen's problems. Candidates, if you wish to play along, please provide a typewritten answer of 150 words or fewer to the following questions:

**According to the city accountant, our corporate payroll is excessive. If you are elected, how will you go about bringing the payroll budget into line? Will you support a cut in Aldermen's wages?**

**Deliver your answers to 112 East Washington Street, Aberdeen,**

**or email them to - [advocate@vikimason.com](mailto:advocate@vikimason.com) -**

**Deadline 12 Noon, Wednesday, February 6, 2008**



# The Aberdeen Advocate

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The Aberdeen Advocate is committed to the goal of improving the quality of life in Aberdeen and Monroe County by identifying and exposing waste and mismanagement in Government. To these ends we humbly offer our observations and opinions.

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“All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends upon the education of youth.”

...Aristotle

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