

## **Attack on dispensary system short-sighted**

To whom it may concern --or should I say to whom it does concern, the taxpayers:

I find it disappointingly amazing that a few people in the community would like to put 30 people out of work in this economy, with no regard for their well-being or their family's well-being, to gain a small profit for themselves.

I see these individuals traipsing into County Council meetings with nothing on their minds other than "what can I get for me today?" Not one has demonstrated the mathematical ability to offer even a remotely acceptable plan to replace the contribution to the county budget provided by the dispensaries.

It is also interesting that none among the most vocal of the bunch -- or any of them for that matter -- have offered to provide a job for even a single dispensary employee.

Fast forward a few years into the future.

Although the community has been graced with the presence of dozens of liquor stores adorned with glorious banners and signs, we still have a budget shortfall. So what happens now?

The fallback solution of shortsighted politicians -- let's raise taxes. The remainder of the shortfall is bestowed on lucky taxpayers -- even nondrinkers.

Now I see we are in need of more than \$1 million to begin to balance the county budget, yet several of our senior council members see a need to do away with \$400,000 of free money. The dispensary basically belongs to the citizens of Wicomico County and costs them not a single penny. Dispensary employees are not county employees; therefore, it costs nothing for the dispensary to exist -- or not to taxpayers, anyway.

However, profits generated by the operation are given directly to the county budget and in turn, keep your tax liability from increasing.

That I find to be something we can all agree on -- we don't need any more taxes.

And in case anyone has been keeping up with the banter from the few on the council saying they were simply interested in the efficiency of the dispensary system -- or possible improprieties -- I see that the 58 percent increase in profits to taxpayers over the last five years must have slipped their worried minds.

How can they pursue imaginary allegations in the face of such a great increase in profits?

The annual aroma of poultry-derived fertilizer has been squelched by the stench of back-door politics.

*Justin Collis is general manager of the Wicomico County liquor dispensary system for the Wicomico County Liquor Control Board.*

*This op-ed appeared in the June 19, 2008 edition of the "Daily Times".*