

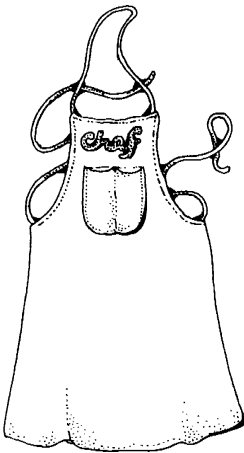


# The Capital Lie

April 1, 2003

## Bakers Plan “White Apron Day” to Push Tart Reform

Dozens of disgruntled bakers are threatening a walk-out if Governor Wise fails to address the looming crisis over tart reform. “This confectionery crisis has been cooking for far too long,” commented Even Jerkins, head of the International Global Bakers’ Consortium. “We knead to rise to the challenge and enact stricter cap legislation for bakers.” Citing studies that the old-style bakers’ caps are too loose causing them to fall over the eyes leading to mistakes involving recipes, Jerkins demanded, “We can’t be held responsible for mistakes we make when under duress from too-loose caps. We need tighter caps on recipe liability.” Demanded Jerkins. “Tart Reform is the only answer,” he added.



Meanwhile, Citizens for Recipe Reform held a press conference to show the harm done to them from the ingredients in their tarts. “It’s not our fault we’ve been damaged by defective tarts,” bemoaned Zary Guckett of the Tart Victims Coalition, “We need to get rid of bad bakers – that is the answer!”

Call Governor Wise and ask him to pass legislation mandating tarts contain only the best ingredients and to oppose any bills limiting a baker’s dozen to twelve tarts.

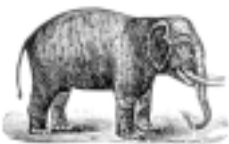
# Coalition Opposes Clean Elections

Fearing that the WV Clean Elections Act, a bill that establishes a system of public financing for legislative and gubernatorial candidates, might actually become law, a new counter coalition, Big Business Against Democracy (BBAD) has formed. At a recent press conference, Con Nehlen, coalition spokesman said, "There's no need to publicly finance elections. Special interests are already paying for elections so you won't have too."

The group began working with legislators behind the scenes during the legislative session with its initiative to raise the individual contribution limit from \$1,000 per election to \$4,000. The coalition worked with Senator Untrue Chafin to make this happen. Chafin said relying on special interests such as coal, timber, oil and gas to finance elections makes more sense than establishing a fund financed by legislators' constituents through qualifying contributions and tax check-offs. "With Clean Elections we'd only be getting \$3 here, \$5 there," Chafin said. "We've got to look at where the wealth is and get our contributions from there."

An allied group, Big Business Lobbyists Against Democracy (BBLAD), supported efforts to allow lobbyists to spend \$200 on legislators before having to report their expenditures to the Ethics Commission and a proposal to extend Senators' and Delegates' terms. On the term extension, the coalition's spokesman said that it is needed to help "protect our investment." "We put over \$6 million dollars into legislative campaigns just last year, and so we don't think it's asking too much to keep our friends in office a couple of more years," said BBLAD spokesman Nelson Robberbarron.

Both BBAD and BBLAD announced, "In order to further advance our legislative agenda, we'll really have to buckle down and pool our resources so we can spend more in next year's elections." They also vowed to continue their opposition to passage of the WV Clean Elections Act. "We believe this bill discriminates against special interests. It's too bad that some people can't accept the fact that we're special and that we deserve special treatment under the law. We don't discriminate with our contributions, we buy Democrats and we buy Republicans."



# Make It Shine, We'll Keep the Dime

WV-CAG worked on several initiatives this year, including a WV bottle bill. "A pleasantly surprising amount of support" is how bottle bill lobbyist Melinda Malt described the reaction she got from legislators. "We weren't sure what to expect but we are happy with our post-session results," she said. "Plus it didn't hurt that we formed a coalition with unusual allies, like NASCAR freaks."

As with all legislation, many amendments and other tweaks were contained in the bill's final language. Most notable was the decision to allow the state to keep much of the unclaimed 10-cent deposits, an amount expected to total tens of millions of dollars.

"We've been listening to these tree huggers for years. It's about time they thought up something that would bring the state some real revenue, instead of fighting every red-blooded initiative we come up with," proclaimed Senate and House leaders at the bill signing ceremony.

All unclaimed deposits, plus those made on any beverage that does not have a NASCAR celebrity as its commercial endorser, will remain property of West Virginia. "Let's face it. NASCAR is our future. Why not help insure its success?" said car nut officials.

In a similar litter control effort, WV-CAG helped get passed a cigarette butt deposit as well. Now, to get back part of the 55-cent cigarette tax increase, smokers can return their used butts to retailers and get a penny a piece. WV-CAG sees this legislation as a tremendous victory. "Smokers are bound to be more courteous about where they leave their butts," stated Malt.

## Sum of All Fears

In a historic move, Governor Wise combined over 260 bills into one legislative package that passed in the session's final hours. The overweight, informed consent, no stricter than federal, corporate welfare, \$250,000 cap, pollute wherever and whenever you want, industry gets whatever it wants, no public input, increase in campaign contribution limits, increase in term limits and pay, tax breaks for the wealthy, redistricting, no helmet, drill where you want, Homeland Security, ban Clean Elections, budget digest, workers complications bill easily passed both the Senate and the House. Senator Mic Louse considered a filibuster on the session's last night that would have all but derailed the governor's all-encompassing bill but instead said, "Ah, screw it. Let's head down to the Marriott and party."

# WV-CAG To Move and Change Name

In reaction to WV's rapidly changing political climate, WV-CAG staff and its board have decided the organization can be more effective if located elsewhere. Staff compiled a list of relocation ideas for its board to consider and a front runner has emerged.

"We have yet to talk to the board about this but the staff seems to favor New Zealand," stated Nerd Seemstra, WV-CAG Executive Director. "Most of us feel that if we are going to move, let's make it a drastic one, where local politicians don't have any prejudices against us and we can make a fresh start."

"I have a lot of animals and, if I'm going to relocate somewhere, I think New Zealand would be a nice place where they can be happy," said WV native and Research Director Julie Arrowthrower.

Staff cites accumulating dissatisfaction with lobbying results. "There's less people in New Zealand so there's bound to be fewer issues to tackle. We'll be able to focus on simpler programs like fighting overweight sheep trucks. Maybe we haven't been as successful as we'd like but they're not expecting us in New Zealand. Never underestimate the element of surprise," continued Nerd.

To finance its move, WV-CAG is selling raffle tickets. The winner gets the organization's Dixie Street office complex. Second place winner receives two Dixie Street complexes. When asked whom the group plans to target for ticket sales, Mr. Seemstra responded, "Oh, that's easy. Lots of folks would pay to see us pack up and leave town. We think this will be one of the biggest money makers we've ever conjured up."

## WV-CAG Now KAG

Anticipating its move to New Zealand, CAG has changed its name to Kiwis Against Government (KAG). "It's a great name," said CAG founder Davis Shrub. "Now finally we'll know the exact fruit of our labor. Let's face it, it's a far more honest name. Cut a kiwi open and what do you find? Green mush embedded with irritating seeds."

*West Virginia Citizen Action Group (WV-CAG) publishes Capital Eye/Lie during the Legislative Session and throughout the year. You can visit our website at [www.wvcag.org](http://www.wvcag.org), call us at 304-346-5891 or e-mail us at [linda@wvcag.org](mailto:linda@wvcag.org) to give us your comments and suggestions and to become a member. Since 1974, WV-CAG has been a nonprofit membership organization dedicated to increasing citizen participation in economic and political decision-making. By educating people about key public interest issues and involving them in the decisions that affect their lives, WV-CAG works for progressive changes in federal, state and local policies - ranging from environmental protection and consumer rights to good government and health care reform. Thank you for your support!*

# Bond Goes Supreme

On March 11<sup>th</sup> the WV Supreme Court heard our appeal challenging the state's plan to give away \$200 million in bond money. "Gee, we didn't really think they'd really take us seriously," commented Nerd Seemstra, CAG Executive Destructor, "Now we have a new name at the Capitol – Citizens Against Giveaways!"

Nerd is sure we'll win this important case with the expert counsel of Leary Hairless and his masterful courtroom style and custom diagrams. "We've got 90% of the law but only 10% of the politics on this one, boys," Leary lamented. "But we'll give 'em grief until they do the right thing!"

This high-stakes case has resulted in reactions across the spectrum, from a Kanawha County Commission lawsuit (for less than 2 business days) and a House of Delegates bill especially to gag CAG, to letters of support from citizens statewide and thumbs up from both Charleston newspapers.

Eventually this controversy over the "Mother of all Budget Digests" will end and the state will return to business as usual. But the damage is done and rumors have it that Charleston is planning to condemn the CAG's Dixie St. block in order to build a T-ball park.

"This suit has been like grabbing a tiger by the tail," said Zary Guckett, CAG Deportation Director. "It's one of the reasons we're considering the move to New Zealand."

# Hawkish Strategy Surprises All

In an interesting politically unproven move, Governor Wise is seeking support for his reelection bid early on by..... alienating almost everyone who supported him in 2000. "In a time of political uncertainty, close reelection bids, and a deeply divided country the governor has decided to try something completely new: tick off all of his traditional supporters," confirmed a staff aide that asked for confidentiality. "He will collect as much money as possible from the state's richest special interests, passively support legislation by letting deadlines come and go, set up a couple more taskforces with already determined yet drawn-out agendas, and still claim to be unmotivated by campaign contributions."

A confidential source close to the governor confirmed that, closer to the election, Wise will unveil his HAWK and STALL campaign. "These tactics have gotten us through this administration's first term and we think it will continue to work for us politically. Heck, our only real goal is to get the guy reelected. So what if he's got some disgruntled supporters out there. If they can cough up some more cash, maybe the governor can find some time to listen to what they have to say," the source continued.

*If you set aside Three Mile Island and Chernobyl, the safety record of nuclear is really very good.*

*-Treasury secretary Paul O'Neill, explaining the Bush administration's advocacy of nuclear power*

You guys have a twisted sense of humor but I want to support you anyhow. Here's my donation/membership renewal. (Remember, it's easy to donate on-line at [www.wvcag.org](http://www.wvcag.org). Or clip and snail mail to 1500 Dixie St., Charleston, WV 25311):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Here's my donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Send me action alerts at my e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

# Which One Will You Go To?

## **July 1 - Governor Wise's Monster Coal Truck Rally**

Governor Wise announced an exciting new phase in his commitment to bringing thrilling motorsports to West Virginia. "Last year, we put WV on the NASCAR map. But it's just too costly to put the state's name on a losing car. Truck and tractor pulls only come to town a couple of times a year, NASCAR is only on television once or twice a week, and I owe it to West Virginians to put that kind of excitement in their lives every hour, every day. That's why I signed Senate Bill 583, which, starting July 1, is going to make every trip down a select few WV highways a non-stop adrenaline rush!"

"Starting in July, when you go out on WV 10, 3, 94, or US 52 or 119, any road in Boone, Logan, or Mingo County, and a lot of other roads, too, you're going to see some of the country's premier monster trucks, blasting down hills, around hairpin turns, revving up in the straight spots. These trucks aren't like the lame ones you see at the truck pulls—these trucks are hauling coal and lots of it! Another advantage of SB 583, compared to going to the truck pull or watching NASCAR on TV, is that you'll be able to see these trucks up close. These are narrow roads, so if they're not blasting right up your tailpipe, just the way that Saint Dale used to do, they'll be whipping over into your lane so you'll get up close with the biggest, most powerful trucks on the highway!"

After the announcement, Ernie Blackheart, driver of "Coalzilla" said, "I've heard a lot of talk from school bus drivers about how they think they own the road. Well, you can talk the talk, but if you're going to be the man, you've got to drive like the man. You think you're hot because you're driving something big, yellow and full of yard apes? This is West Virginia, so all I can say to you, is no fear, dude, no fear."

SB 583 will initially bring the benefits of Wise's nonstop monster truck rally to a handful of "Coal Hauling Roads" in 15 counties in southern West Virginia, but administration officials point out that motorsports are popular statewide and that coal is abundant in northern West Virginia. In addition to taking the thrills and spills statewide, other enhancements under consideration include opening the system for log and gravel trucks, adding jump ramps to highways for crossing streams after existing bridges collapse, and instituting a scoring system that would award points for smashing selected targets during the annual season.

**June 13 - WV-CAG's annual fundraiser at Coonskin Park.** We'll have exciting speakers, great food and some of the strangest auction items ever compiled. Ticket prices will include all the fun plus a great dinner and munchies. We are still putting together the details so stay tuned or call us at 346-5891. (By the way, in case you didn't notice, this is the only part of this April Fool's newsletter where we've allowed ourselves to be serious).

**HAPPY APRIL FOOL'S DAY!!**