

## No need for emperors

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By Art Parker, Editor

By the time you read this the Lee County Grand Jury may have indicted others.

It was no surprise to me that Representative Barry Moore of Enterprise was arrested. It was a surprise to see that he was not arrested on ethics charges. The Acting Attorney General, Van Davis, arrested him for lying to the Grand Jury and providing false statements related to investigations.

What the AG did not do was go after Moore for ethics violations. In 2012 Moore sold his home to a company planning to bring jobs to the city where Moore lives, a company looking for a financial incentive from the State of Alabama. The company purchased Moore's home for \$650,000. However, the house was only worth \$424,000 based upon an evaluation. The \$200,000 plus difference creates some interesting questions.

The obvious prime target of the Grand Jury, if you read just about any news report anywhere, is the Speaker of the House Mike Hubbard of Auburn, a resident of Lee County. There are plenty of warm connections between Moore and the Speaker.

It's no telling where the Grand Jury will take us when it concludes its work. But I can tell you that

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most of my fellow members of the media that I talk with view this as Alabama's version of Watergate. What I think is similar and may eventually be uncovered, in my opinion, is that a major motivation for corrupt actions involves money with the intent of using it to destroy the other guy, or the other party, not to mention to fatten one's wallet.

A few weeks ago, while the troublemakers in the State House were still in session, I read a news report where Prattville Senator Bryan Taylor, when referencing what appears to be his personal and political position, said that gambling was a "cancer" on our state. It is no surprise that I disagree with Taylor, not because of his position, but because of his diagnosis.

The "cancer" we have on and in our state is not gambling, or alcohol, or any other nasty habit one may conjure up. The real cancer is those we elect. Their thirst for power and money is past an epidemic level. They want to build or be part of an empire, one that has a grip on the welfare, the pocketbooks, the minds of the people and our culture.

Their illness is so severe that they can never get enough. They can never get enough power. They can never do enough to rid themselves of contrary opinions or those that speak against them. They can never get enough money or wealth. Their illness is so severe that their real motivation is to have what the people have without sharing it with the people.

But all of this one day unravels because not everyone can be emperor. Thomas Jefferson told us our most important assets are free minds and free speech. James Madison told us we would always have factions. The bottom line is...as long as you have the former you shall have the latter, and that is a good thing. That keeps us from having emperors.

That's the real purpose of the Lee County Grand Jury. It is too see who has broken the rules and whose desires to be an emperor, or be an ally with an emperor, caused corruption.

We will always have the problems we have now as long as we elect politicians instead of statesmen, regardless of their political party. It's not that we always elect the wrong people. We elect many good people and they get the "cancer" that turns them into different people. One way to avoid some of this is with term limits, which I find favorable to my positions. Of course we must demand and make it clear that we will not tolerate anyone we elect that does not rigorously pursue terms limits.

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Let's pay attention to who we vote for. Let's send statesmen, not politicians, to the State House. Let's make sure they come home, after a reasonable time of service, and that their hands are just as empty upon returning as they were when they departed.