



Government Declares War on Lemonade Stands

I kid you not. In community after community, these budding entrepreneurs are being told to pack it up and scoot before they're charged with various violations. In some instances, in fact, fines have been levied.

I'm beholden to the Freedom Center of Missouri, a relatively new public policy group in the Show Me state, for documenting the following list of outrages. Please note that all of these occurred this year. Such crackdowns are becoming more and more common.



Aug. 6: Massachusetts State police shut down the stand of a 12-year-old refugee from Fukushima, Japan, who was selling green tea he brought with him when he and his family evacuated after the tsunami.

Aug. 1: Police officers in Coralville, Iowa, ordered at least three sets of children to quit selling lemonade during the "Register's Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa" unless they first got a vendor's permit and a health inspection. This is the first known example of a coordinated set of shutdowns at a single time.

July 19: In McAllen, Texas, authorities shut down a girl's lemonade stand for failing to obtain a food permit and threatened a grandmother who protested with a \$50 fine.

July 17: Police in Appleton, Wis., inform children that despite legally selling lemonade and cookies in their front yard during an annual city festival for the past several years, a new city ordinance bans these sales. The reason? To protect licensed vendors from competition. How's that for a great example of how America works?

July 15: Cops in Midway, Ga., shut down a lemonade stand some children were running in their own front yard, saying the kids had to obtain a peddler's license and a food license and pay \$50 per day for a temporary business permit.

June 16: A county inspector in Maryland closed a [kids' lemonade stand](#) and fined parents \$500 for violating county law, though county officials waived the fine and allowed the stand to reopen at a another location described as safer and more private than the intersection where the stand was originally located.

June 10: The Philadelphia Department of Health shuts down a lemonade stand operated by a cancer charity because it lacked a necessary permit and — get this — didn't install a hand-washing station.

March 7: Officials in Hazelwood, Mo., said a cookie stand in a family's driveway violated local ordinances and ordered an end to the Girl Scouts cookie sale.

Feb. 26: Georgia police demanded the closure of a Girl Scout cookie stand until the girls obtained a peddler's permit.

Feb. 26: Savannah, Ga., officials determined that city ordinances require an end to a 40-year tradition



Written by [Wallis W. Wood](#) on October 16, 2011

of Girl Scouts selling cookies outside the historic home of the organization's founder.

Is this a world gone crazy or what?

I wish I could tell you that the evil triumvirate of Nancy Pelosi, Harry Reid and Barack Obama were responsible for this nuttiness. But they aren't. In virtually every case, the culprits were local officials obeying local ordinances. So much for my long-held conviction that the closer you can bring government to the citizenry, the more fair and efficient it will be. Clearly, in the communities described above, some petty bureaucrats have an awful lot of time on their hands.

Have you heard of a similar outrage in your community? If you have, please notify the good folks at the Freedom Center of Missouri at www.mofreedom.org. They have a national map on their website where they like to track such things.

I thought of a way we can turn this absurd negative into a bit of a positive. And that is by asking you to share an inspiring story from your own youth when you demonstrated the same entrepreneurial spark as the youngsters above. What happened as a result?

I'll start. My first money-making effort, besides a long list of chores that earned me a weekly allowance, was setting up a roadside lemonade stand along the highway that ran past our house.

What I didn't consider, and what neither parent pointed out to me, was that the two-lane highway was in rural Ohio and that cars zipped by at 50 miles an hour. Want to guess how many slammed on the brakes and backed up a few hundred yards so they could buy our lemonade?

None. Our only customer in three days was a nice neighbor who knew we were there and came to a stop in front of our house. My younger brother, who was my partner in the enterprise, got pretty discouraged after the first hour or two. Because I was older and bigger, however, I made him keep at it for two more days.

Truth be told, I didn't mind our lack of success. First of all, I had all the lemonade to drink I wanted. Second, I always had a book handy and could wile away the quiet hours with one of the Black Beauty stories or Tom Swift and his electric whatever. It didn't take much to keep me happy in those days.

But during the third day, I finally threw in the towel. I had had enough of my brother's complaining. Besides, he came up with an alternative idea that made sense to me.

"Why don't we walk along the highway and pick up all the empty bottles we find," he suggested. "We can take them to the store in town and collect the deposit on them. Then we can spend it on Coke, candy and comic books."

Like any brother, Jeff knew all my weaknesses. I wasn't that crazy about Coke or candy; in fact, I preferred a root beer float. But the chance to purchase a brand-new comic book, and not wait until my monthly haircut to read whatever remnant of a comic book I could find in our neighborhood barbershop, was irresistible.

So we went inside and each took a pillowcase from our bed. Then we started searching the roadside and gutter for castoffs.

You'll probably be surprised to learn how successful our efforts were. As I recall, we received 2 cents for every small glass bottle we found and a nickel for the larger ones. After a couple of hours of effort, I think we'd each earned a dollar or two. That may not sound like much today, but back in the early 1950s, it was a king's ransom — or at least enough for several comic books and candy.



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The whole experience was a great lesson for us. Our parents made sure we realized there was no such thing in this world as something for nothing. If you wanted something, you had to earn it. As the Lord said in Genesis 3:19, "By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made" (NLT).

I wish I saw more examples of today's youngsters working as hard for their spending money as we did a generation or two ago. Kids today take their \$100 sneakers and jeans for granted as well as their \$200 electronic gizmos.

Would they actually be better off if they had to trudge down the highway, picking up empty soda and beer bottles to earn a few extra dollars? You tell me.

Until next time, keep some powder dry.

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