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## **Moving Ten Commandments poster seen by thousands over years**

*Ryan Cooper*

By Ryan Cooper

I remember the first time I saw the Ten Commandments **poster**. The large 6-by-8 feet canvas greeted me as I entered the South Campbell Avenue Wal-Mart. Like a woven tapestry, the multilayered images created a seamless connection between historical events, such as the raising of the flags at Iwo Jima and at the World Trade Center. Hidden in the lower right corner, the unknown author dedicated the **poster** to his favorite person, Jesus Christ.

Having finished a two-year church mission during the 9-11 attack, that **poster** moved me like none other. I purposely shopped at that Wal-Mart just to see the large **poster** hanging near the south entrance.

Six months later, the **poster** disappeared. When asked why it was removed, the manager explained that it was taken down due to a single complaint. Most of the feedback he had received from customers was favorable.

When asked where I could meet the **poster's** creator, he gave me the contact of several Branson artisans whom he believed had been commissioned to create the patriotic **poster**. After numerous phone calls, I gave up the search, wondering if I'd ever see my favorite **poster** again.

As fate would have it, I found the **poster** and the creator at a local Republican campaign event. George's Steakhouse cashier Jeremiah Youmans was giving away smaller copies of his creation to fellow George W. Bush supporters.

I was surprised that he didn't ask for any money. He even agreed to give me extra copies to hand out to Missouri State students.

In fact, Youmans donated nearly 60,000 **posters** to New York City and Washington D.C. residents, including President Bush. From Rep. Roy Blunt to Gov. Matt Blunt, state and federal lawmakers received copies of the **poster**. You can't walk through the state capitol and not see Youmans' **poster** on display.

I wasn't surprised when Circuit Clerk **Steve Helms** placed the **poster** in his office waiting area. Like many others, he had received the **poster** from a friend of a friend who knew Youmans.

The purpose wasn't to offend anyone. **Helms** simply liked the **poster** and didn't see a problem displaying it in the same fashion as Jefferson City lawmakers.

His decision became front page news and fodder for editorial scorn, giving readers the impression that **Helms** ran a ministry in the collections office. Having visited his offices, he doesn't serve communion, play religious music or accept credit cards.

I find it hard to believe that liberals, including some who work for this newspaper, haven't noticed the **poster** until weeks ago. It's been around for almost six years, yet it's being discovered as if it were a new phenomenon.

I'm not surprised that liberals are upset with the **poster**. It does contain at its very center the Ten Commandments, which aren't very modern or progressive.

It's a shame that they can't support a local artist because his work mentions God and pesky rules of living. If only he had smeared the Commandments with elephant dung or dipped them in urine, his work would have been acceptable and worthy of a taxpayer subsidy.

I suggest that those who don't like these 10 rules come up with new ones to follow. For starters, change the first commandment to "Thou shalt worship the one and only true God, Oprah."

In addition to father and mother, government social workers can be added to the list of people children should honor and obey. Given the confusing Clintonese definition of adultery, just cross out number seven.

At the bottom of the **poster**, dedicate it to the new prince of peace, Barack Obama. Ryan Cooper lives in Springfield. "From the Right" appears every Tuesday. Coming Wednesday: "From the Left."