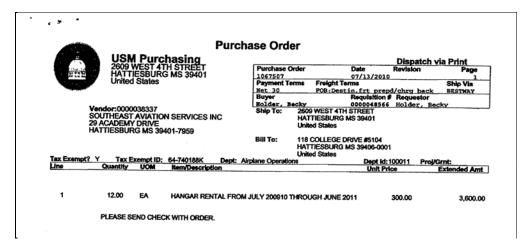
King Air & Queen Martha

An Essay by Victoria Tyler

Shortly after the beginning of what has become known as The Great Recession, USM Queen (president) Martha Saunders signed a \$2 million lease for a Beechcraft King Air airplane. Since then, USM's budget has been cut \$10 million, and now the institution is looking at another cut, which could total \$15 million. In dealing with these cuts, Saunders has delivered almost 50 terminal contracts to various tenured/tenure-track faculty. As part of this saga, the entire economics program at USM was eliminated, resulting in the forced retirements of five senior economics faculty, and the departures of four other, more junior, economists. More recently, programs and faculty in philosophy, religion, languages, and information sciences have been hit.

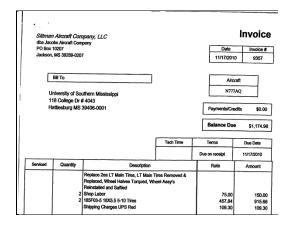
Meanwhile, Saunders continues to live the life of a Queen, even at a cost of almost \$20,000 per month in lease payments for her King (Air). This essay examines the life of the King (Air), as told through various official documents that USMNEWS.net recently obtained from the Mississippi IHL. To begin with, we take a look at the castle (airplane hangar) that Saunders maintains (through Southeast Aviation Services, Inc.) for the King over the course of each year, as shown in the document below.



As the screen above indicates, the Saunders administration pays \$300 per month, or **\$3,600** per year, leasing the castle (hangar) for the King (Air). Next, the King's taste in wine (fuel) is expensive, as the document inserted below suggests.

Closing Date 07/21/2010 Invoice Detail	•	Shell	Avia
Customer Number: Listing by Card Number		Unv of Sthm MS IP O Box 5104 Hatlesburg, MS 394	
CARD NUMBER:			
INVOICE INVOICE MERCHANT NAME NUMBER DATE	LOCATION	IATA PHON	IE NUMBE
106005_06/15/2010_Southeast Aviation Tall 7777AQ	Hattiesburg, MS	HBG (60	1) 544-866
QUANTITY UNIT OF MEASURE DESCRIPTION 50.000 AG Jot A Fuel with Additive		AMOUNT 3.940000	TOTAL 197.00
Invoice Total			197.00
106006 06/21/2010 Southeast Aviation Tail 777AQ	Hattlesburg, MS	HBG (60) 544-866
QUANTITY UNIT OF MEASURE DESCRIPTION		AMOUNT	TOTAL
218.000 AG Jet A Fuel with Additive		3.940000	858.92
Invoice Total			858.92
106009 06/17/2010 Southeast Aviation Tail 777AQ	Hattlesburg, MS	HBG (601) 544-866
QUANTITY UNIT OF MEASURE DESCRIPTION		AMOUNT	TOTAL
160.000 AG Jet A Fuel with Additive		3.940000	630.40
Invoice Total			630.40
Total for Card	A 144 (1997) 1997 1997 1997 1997 1997 1997		1.606.32

The screen above indicates that the King (Air) piled up a wine (fuel) bill of about **\$1,686** over just three charges in mid June-2010. Finally, the King (Air) requires a large staff of servants (mechanics), who keep him up and running each day. Of course, a staff like the King's doesn't come cheaply, as the documents below indicate.



The insert above shows that the King (Air) purchased new shoes (tires), perhaps from Italy (?), on 17-Nov-2010. These cost about \$916, and the cobblers (mechanics) charged the King (Air) another \$250 to fit them, raising the total bill to about **\$1,175**. The screen below shows that the King's servants (mechanics) provided special care on 1-Dec-2010, just in time for the Queen's (Saunders') trip to Louisville for a SACS meeting. This special day (1-Dec-2010) cost the kingdom (Mississippi) a total of about **\$4,522**.

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Tax Exemp	Vendor:0000 DEAN AIRCF 2909 HIGHW MERIDIAN M MERIDIAN M 4? Y Tax E Quantity	AFT SER AY 11 SO IS 39307	UTH	Ship To: 2609 WES & MCTHESIB United Stat Bill To: 118 COLLE	ROCINT DOPON TATH STREET WREMS BAR (C les EGE DRIVE #5104 URG MS 39406-00 les	ES 01 1:100011 Pro	VGmt: Extended Amt
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1	35.75	HRS	Labor for repairs to airp	ane		75.00	2,681.25

The information provided in this essay shows how high above their subjects that the King (Air) and Queen (Saunders) reside. The real question now is: Why are their subjects so loyal?