

The Libertarian Party of California

# LPC Monthly

OFFICIAL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## Summer Fun Issue *Libertarians Work Hard Play Harder*

Elected Official  
*Al Swain*

*2003 LPC Convention  
Ontario, California*

**Peter  
McWilliams  
Memorial  
Rally**



## From the Chair

You're all getting pretty familiar with the accomplishments of David Molony, our Executive Director. If it weren't for him, we wouldn't have the in-house LPC Monthly newspaper. And it seems as though it gets better every month, doesn't it?

What you may not know is how effective he has been in increasing the number of volunteers at the state headquarters in Panorama City. It seems as though most every time I go to the office – it's about ½ hour



Aaron Starr

from my house – there's a tornado of activity, with volunteers doing data entry, making phone calls, researching on the Internet, doing writing, etc. David calls his volunteer recruitment efforts *Project Cyclone*. I can see why.

Seeing all these busy volunteers reminds me how much we are a MEMBERSHIP organization. It is the dedication of our member volunteers who make most of our progress possible. (You didn't think we could change the world on just \$25 per year, did you?) Yes, money is vital to our cause – the US Postal Service won't accept barter in exchange for stamps and our other vendors appreciate being paid – but that's just the beginning. We are also very much in need of YOU: YOUR talents, YOUR time. We need YOU to talk to your friends and others about our party, our candidates, and our cause. And we need you to volunteer to help your local chapter.

And since I come from a business school of thought that says, "What gets measured is what gets done," I've asked David – ok, maybe I twisted his arm a bit – to put a measurement in every *LPC Monthly*, starting this issue, showing the cumulative hours volunteered this year by members and to write about their accomplishments. We'll start off just measuring who helps out at the LPC headquarters. Later this year we'll create a place on our website where members can enter a log of the volunteer hours they donate to their local chapter. And we'll have special recognition for these volunteers at our next state convention in February.

Now ... back to *Operation Breakthrough*, our successful candidate recruitment project I keep harping on. Can you blame me? We've elected 21 Libertarians to office in California using this technique.

We're having a real challenge raising the money we need from major donors for our 2002 effort. David and I keep talking to people and they are not feeling quite as rich as when the stock market was at dizzying heights and the economy was roaring.

So we're going to try a different approach.

If you haven't gotten it already, you're about to get a unique fundraising letter. It's unique because it doesn't ask you for any money.

Instead, we're asking for a pledge of, say, \$10 or more for each Libertarian we elect in 2002. If we elect no one you pay nothing. If we elect a record-breaking 20, you'll pay \$200. You pay only for success, after we elect people to office.

Based on past results, we know that for approximately every \$1,500 we spend, we elect one more Libertarian to office. If we are able to get pledgers to come up with a combined \$1,500, or more, per electoral victory, in \$10 and \$20 increments, we'll be able to go after some of our larger donors and ask them to make an investment instead of a gift. If we're successful, like we have been in the last two elections, we will be able to pay these political venture capitalists back, plus a little bit more. It's a bit of a risk, but it does have a reward.

If you want to invest \$1,000 or more, elect Libertarians to office and possibly get your money back with a profit, please call me at home (805-583-3308) or call Executive Director David Molony at the office (818-782-8400) as soon as you finish reading this column.

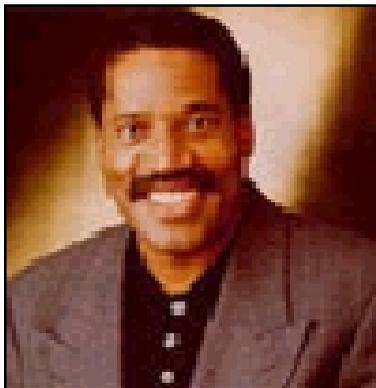
Aaron Starr, CPA  
Chairman  
Libertarian Party of California  
starrcpa@pacbell.net  
805-583-3308

## WHO SAYS GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS HAVE TO WORK?

By Larry Elder

Sex education abstinence programs do not work. Or so the government now tells us.

For the last five years, the government spent \$500 million on educational programs pushing sexual abstinence. With the



Larry Elder

program set to expire, Congress recently debated whether to extend it for another five years. Many Democrats oppose "abstinence only," arguing it unrealistic, while conservative Republicans want the program to continue.

But, do the programs "work"? A government-commissioned report concluded, "Most studies of abstinence education programs have methodological flaws that prevent them from

generating reliable estimates of program impacts."

In 1999, high school students and graduating seniors reported a slight decline in sexual activity. But given the number of variables involved, the report could not attribute the drop-off to the abstinence-only programs.

Other studies concluded the opposite — that of sexual education programs, the abstinence-only approach shows the most promise. In October 1994, *Atlantic Monthly* discussed the failure of so-called "comprehensive sex education" to reduce teen sex and teen pregnancy. But encouraging teens to swear off sex appeared to work better. The article talked about an Atlanta, Ga., program called Postponing Sexual Involvement. "Its goal," said the magazine, "is to help boys and girls resist pressures to engage in sex. . . . The classes are led by popular older teenagers who teach middle-schoolers how to reject sexual advances and refuse sexual intercourse. . . . Boys practice resisting pressure from other boys. . . . Thus teaching sexually active

middle school students to engage in protected intercourse is likely to be more difficult and less successful than teaching abstinent students to continue refraining from sex."

But since when did government programs need to "work"? The list of programs that fail, whose unintended consequences exacerbate problems, simply boggles the mind.

Take the recently expanded Title I. Secretary of Education Rod Paige once said, "After spending \$125 billion . . . over 25 years, we have virtually nothing to show for it. Fewer than a third of fourth-graders can read at grade level."

What about bilingual education? After California voters stormed to the polls and rejected bilingual education, the education establishment seemed stunned when Spanish-speaking kids, post-bilingual education, dramatically improved their English language skills. Ken Noonan, founder of the California Association of Bilingual Educators, admitted that he was wrong, "I thought (eliminating

(continued page 7)

## 2003 LPC Convention Mark Your Calendar - February 15 - 17

By David Molony

Our 2003 LPC Convention location has been set. Let me tell you about it.

### The Convention

The 2002 LPC Convention was great. 2003 will be better. What's planned? Guest speakers, mondo food, LPC officer elections, candidate and activist training, and fun.

The convention is a 2 ½ day event, taking place starting

Saturday, February 15,

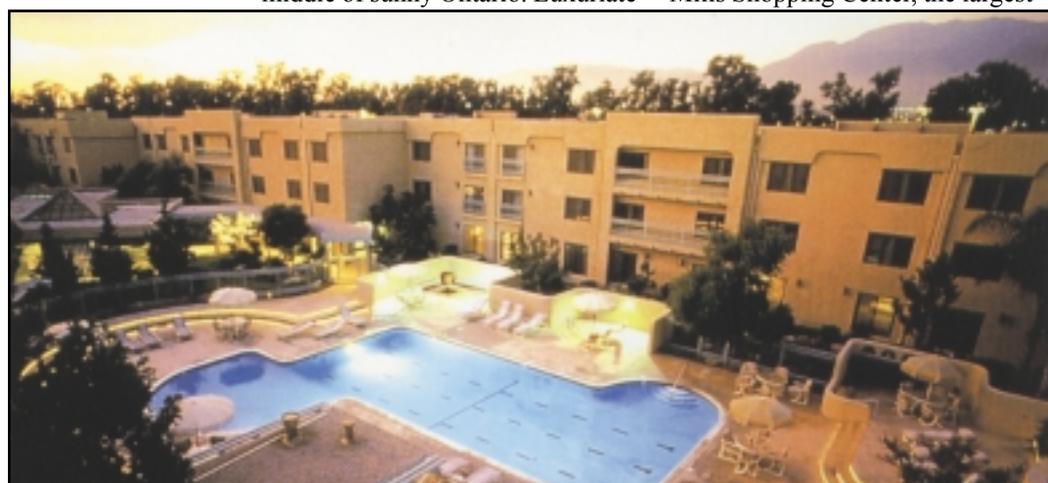
16, and 17 (1/2 day). Fly in Friday night so you are ready to go on Saturday. We encourage everyone to register today for only \$200.

### Location Location Location

We have a premier venue at the Ontario Marriott. A mix of sophistication and hospitality awaits us. The hotel has sun-bathed courtyards, gently running brooks, and lush green gardens in the middle of sunny Ontario. Luxuriate

equipment. Massage therapists wait to knead out the knots.

Skiing and golf are available nearby, as well as the California Speedway, a world-class race track providing high-speed thrills and excitement. The Ontario Mills Shopping Center, the largest



Ontario Marriott - Do You Breaststroke, Backstroke, or Crawl?

next to the pool.

The Executive Athletic club includes indoor racquetball, outdoor-lighted tennis, steam rooms, and professional exercise

in California, features hundreds of shopping, dining, and entertainment possibilities.

The hotel features extensive facilities of 21,000

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# Coming Out of the Cannabis Closet

By Ann Harrison

Jodi James is a 34-year-old single mother of two, a Democratic candidate for the Florida House of Representatives and a marijuana smoker. James, who made a point of disclosing her marijuana use at the Florida state Democratic conven-



Ann Harrison

tion, is one of a growing number of people who believe it's time for pot smokers to step forward and challenge their negative stereotype.

"If many prominent people come out of the closet, it will change the idea that we have

to hide, that we have to be ashamed," James says. "Coming out on this issue will change what will be okay for other politicians to do."

Some politicians have already been forced out of the closet, or have come out on their own. Michael Bloomberg, the mayor of New York City, was revealed to be a marijuana smoker by the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), which ran a series of advertisements featuring Bloomberg's reply to a reporter who asked him last summer if he had smoked marijuana, "You bet I did," said Bloomberg, "and I enjoyed it."

Other people who have voluntarily chosen to reveal their cannabis use include Don Topping, a professor emeritus at the University of Hawaii and Norm Kent, an attorney from Ft. Lauderdale and a recovering cancer patient. Kent uses marijuana for medical relief, as does James, who became permanently disabled after a fall in 1987. But Kent hopes to move the cannabis debate beyond the

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## Executive Director Report

### All You Want To Know

By David Molony

Summertime, summertime, sum, sum, summertime. It's time to have fun. Time to be the grasshopper, at least for a month. Let's dance and rave. It is



David Molony

summertime and we are lucky enough to live in California.

Email me pictures of you water skiers in Lake Tahoe, you hikers in Shasta County and Marin,

and you surfers in Malibu, and of course, you beach volleyball players. I would love to publish any pictures you send.

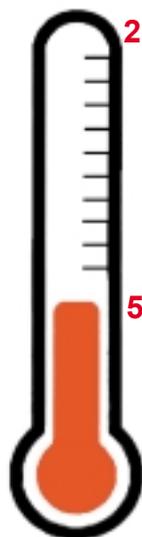
I hope all of you enjoy the summer as much as I will.

#### Thermometers

It is amazing. All kinds of people are coming into the LPC headquarters and volunteering. Like most things, one or two people came in at first. Then more. And then more. Volunteers have contributed 537 hours of crucial volunteer work. I am continually amazed at the talent and dedication of California Libertarians. I will be publishing a thermometer every month to show our progress. Ow, my arm hurts for some reason.

If you would like to help

#### Volunteer Hours



(and we have ALL kinds of tasks that need completing), let me know. It is not necessary to come in to the office. Many tasks can be done from your home. Call me today at 877-884-1776 if you are ready to help.

#### Communications

I am in the process of putting together a LPC communications team. Eventually, I would like to cover every type of media, but right now I am starting on Op-Eds, position papers... the written word. Please contact me if you would like to be part of the writing team. Please send a sample of your work, if possible. We

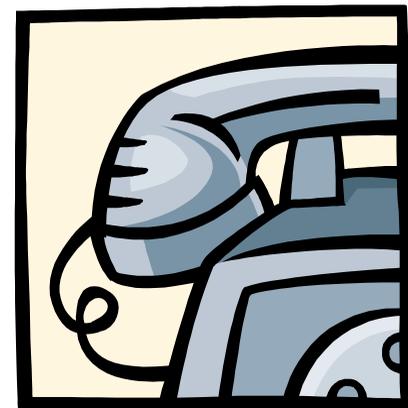
hope to have many writers so that

(continued page 6)

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Only email submissions will be accepted.

LPC Monthly is the official newsletter of the Libertarian Party of California. Opinions contained herein do not necessarily represent official party positions unless indicated. All submissions are subject to editing.

Deadline: 1st day of every month.

## Peter McWilliams Memorial Rally Saturday, June 15th, 2002

On Saturday, June 15th, 2002, the Libertarian Party of California is organizing the *Peter McWilliams Memorial Rally*. This is a statewide event, with memorial rallies in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego. Please join this event in memory of Peter McWilliams and the countless victims of the Drug



Peter McWilliams

Political War.

Peter McWilliams was the #1 bestselling author and medical marijuana activist who died two years ago in California. He was found dead in the bathroom of his Los Angeles home on June 14, 2000. According to sources, he had choked on his vomit.

McWilliams, 50, suffered from AIDS and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma since 1996, and used medical marijuana to suppress the nausea that was a common side-effect to the potent medications needed to keep him alive.

Peter McWilliams was arrested by the federal government,

and eventually released on bail if he agreed not to use marijuana. He suffered the predictable results.

McWilliams was a multi-million-copy-selling author of *How to Survive the Loss of a Love*, *The Personal Computer Book*, and *DO IT! Let's Get Off Our Buts* (with co-author John-Roger), a #1 New York Times bestseller. He also wrote what is widely considered to be the definitive book against "consensual" crimes, *Ain't Nobody's Business If You Do*. Peter McWilliams appeared on The Oprah Winfrey Show, Larry King (both radio and television), Donahue, and Sally Jessy Raphael.

"Marijuana is the finest anti-nausea medication known to science, and our leaders have lied about this consistently. [Arresting people for] medical marijuana is the most hideous example of government interference in the private lives of individuals. It's an outrage within an outrage within an outrage," said McWilliams.

Please contact the LPC office at 818-782-8400 for more information. Alternatively, for San Diego, please contact Gardner Osborne, 858-459-7382 or email at [Gardner@san.rr.com](mailto:Gardner@san.rr.com). In the San Francisco Bay Area, please contact Christopher R. Maden, 415-845-8202 or email at [chair@lpsf.org](mailto:chair@lpsf.org). **LPC**

## Elected Official - Al Swain

### Whitmore Unified School District Governing Board

I am often asked by someone, "What can I do to help?" in the context of helping the party, or advancing their concept of Liberty. I usually say, "Get elected."



Al Swain

It's really very difficult to effect a change in government, if you're not in government. Typically you don't need to look very far for an opportunity to get involved in government, no farther than your local school board, water district, assessment district, grand jury, or citizens advisory committee for any number of local agencies. Some are elected, some appointed. You have to run as a candidate for the former but you can volunteer for the latter.

In fact, volunteering is a good way to get started in either case. If you start by showing up at public meetings, making constructive suggestions and volunteering assistance, you will be noticed. Of

course you can also get noticed if you complain and lecture, but it will take much longer to make progress. And by building a presence over time as a "concerned citizen" you increase your chances of being elected or appointed to the job.

The downside is that once you're on the board or committee you will actually have to do some work. These agencies each exist with a charter to fulfill, to govern some public function or program, and typically require some real effort on the part of their members. A member must be willing to learn how the agency operates and understand its limitations as well as to do the pick and shovel work of attending meetings, listening and taking part in discussions and accepting the responsibility that goes with the job.

Some seem to assume that once one is in a public position one can simply make pronouncements and cause some more libertarian condition to occur. In non-partisan offices that is seldom the case. It usually takes months of slow progress to demonstrate your ability and earn the trust of others before you gain the acceptance of a proposal or idea that you offer, hopefully a libertarian one.

But the top line requirement is to first "get in the game". Once you do, chances are that

someone will ask why you voted the way you did on some issue or how you determine the way to approach a problem. That is what you must be ready for. That is when you get the chance to explain a principle or a motive founded in libertarianism to a receptive ear. And as you accomplish your job over time, more than a few will ask.

For the longer term we also have to "stay in the game". One tactic we use here in Shasta County is to consider that each office held is a toe-hold in government. So once gaining a toe-hold our job is to train someone else to take that position when we can no longer serve in it. We have elected three libertarians to office in Shasta county thus far, with two serving currently. Those may not sound like significant numbers, but for a county of 180,000 that would equate to having 355 elected Libertarians in all of California, or 30 in San Diego.

Meanwhile we are gaining experience. The experience gained in public service is not obtainable in books, nor school, nor on-line and I believe that no Libertarian will get elected to partisan office without it. It will take some time but eventually we will achieve our strategic goal of becoming the second largest party in our county, one toe at a time.

— Al Swain **LPC**

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— Freeman

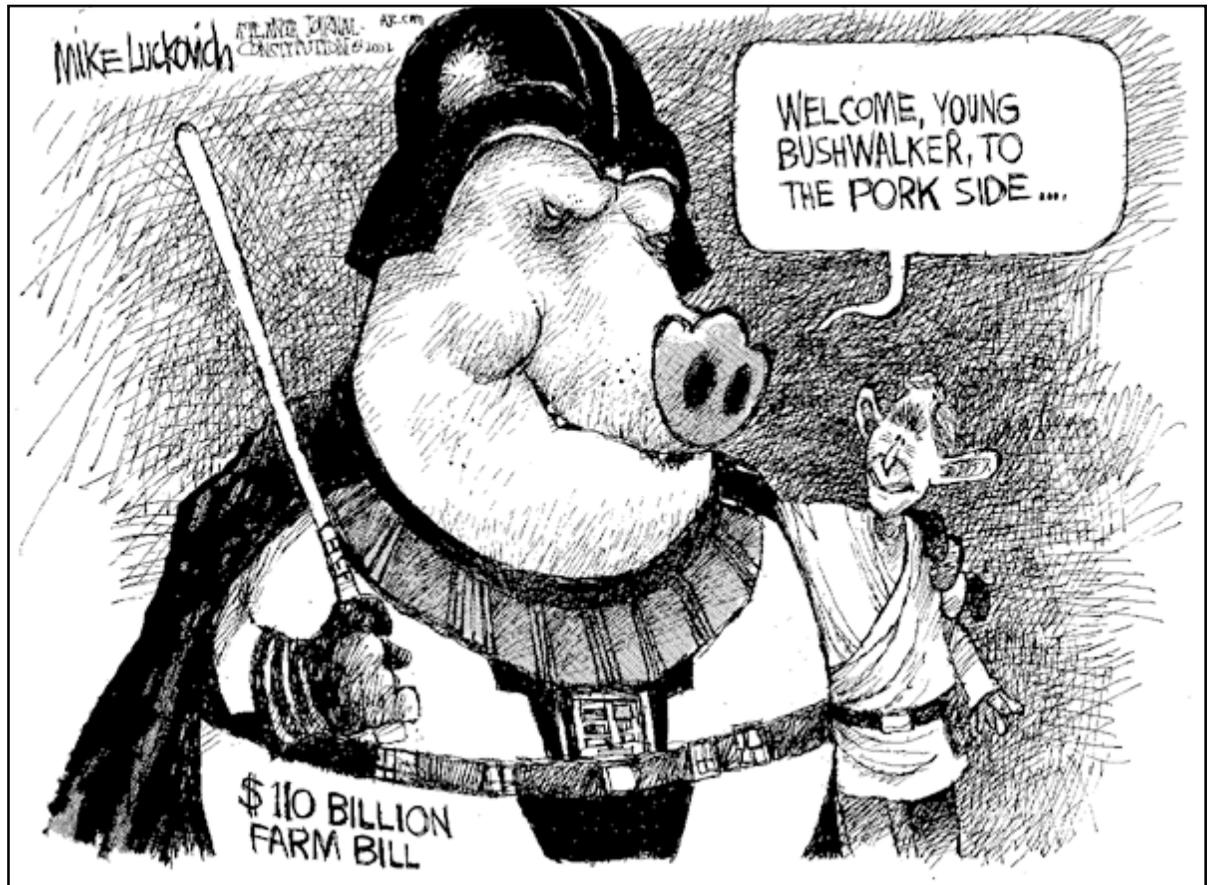
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With these amenities, we expect the convention to sell out, so make your reservation today.

**Stuff to Do at the Convention / LPC Election Year**

Every two years, the Libertarian Party of California elects new officers. Please show up to cast your vote. We will also vote for new party Executive Committee members, and on the party platform and bylaws. If bylaws and platform committees are not your bag, we will also have educational training for activists and candidates. Training was very popular

this year, and we will repeat it next year.

Of course, we plan on having banquet speakers and keynote speakers. They will be announced as we schedule them.

**Cost**

The cost today is \$200 for a convention package (hotel is extra). This price will go up by \$10 every month. December price is \$260. If you pay in January, it will cost \$275, and door price is \$300. But I don't know why I'm telling you the door price, because I know you will take advantage of the \$200 available right now!

If you wish, we will also

have a payment plan, so let us know if you prefer making smaller monthly payments. Please call Gail Lightfoot to arrange payments. If you order today, you will only have to pay as little as \$25 per month. Call now.

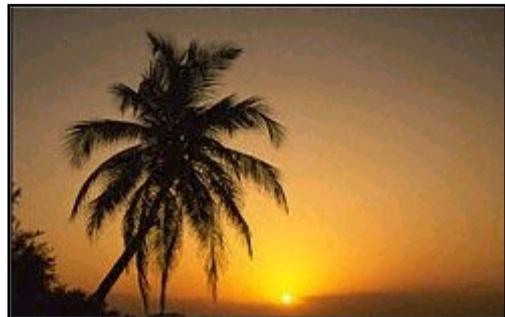
**Action**

OK. Enough talk. Time for you to get busy with that order form at the bottom of this article. I look forward to seeing you at the convention!

**LPC**



Fantastic Feasts



**2003 LPC Convention**  
**February 15-17, 2003**  
*(fly in Friday to get started first thing Saturday morning)*

**Ontario Marriott**  
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 Ontario, CA 91761  
 909-975-5000

**June Convention Price:** \$ 200  
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**Local Office**

**Your Opportunity to Serve**

By Mike Everling

Have you considered standing for local, non-partisan, office? Have you wondered how being an office holder contributes to our Libertarian cause? Does it really make a difference to the Party and can it possibly be any fun?

According to Aaron Starr, our state party chairman, there are over 2200 local seats available each year or so which libertarian activists may seek and in most cases attain with just a little effort.

They are municipal offices such as city councilmember, board member and commissioner; school board member, community college board member, member of one of the special districts around the state, and in the City of Los Angeles, member of one of over 100 neighborhood councils.

Some of these posts are appointive; it is not unusual for those who have been active on the local political scene to be offered a position. Most, however, are elective. Of these, the races for the seats often are uncontested, or fewer persons sign up than there are seats available, making whoever signs up for the office elected automatically.

When there is opposition, it is usually token in nature and even when it seems substantial, it can still be overcome with a little bit of campaigning, or sometimes sheer luck, or even simply being the right person at the right time to make a difference.

Just ask Kate O'Brien of Ventura County, who won a seat on the Rancho Simi Recreation and Parks District board in a very exciting, very close election. Kate spent exactly zero on her campaign in contrast to another candidate who spent thousands of dollars. The election was contested, but after a partial recount failed to change the results, Kate's "landslide" margin of three votes was upheld. Imagine what you might do with a very modest budget, some political savvy and a little shoe leather along the campaign trail!

Over fifty Party members are currently known to be holders of local office. You can see the complete list at our state party website at <http://www.ca.lp.org/lpc-office-holders.html>

They include Tom Tryon, Calaveras County Supervisor;

Norm Vroman, Mendocino County District Attorney, John Mehaffey, Saratoga City Councilmember, and Bonnie Flickinger, Moreno Valley City Councilmember.

Tryon, Flickinger and Vroman have been re-elected to their respective posts. Officials who have been re-elected are poised to go on to higher office, perhaps being successful in partisan contests. Having a track record of electoral success and - perhaps more important - achievement in office, is seen as indispensable in this endeavor.

There is a drawback to running for these non-partisan offices and that is that there's a very good likelihood of your being elected and having to serve in office! Of course, you should look at this not as a drawback but as a multiple opportunity: to serve your community, to serve your party, and to serve yourself in terms of gaining experience, expertise, credibility and wisdom.

You'll have the opportunity to apply your judgment and discretion to community issues and build a track record as being an honorable and respected member of your community who has shown by example that he or she is ready for higher office.

Can it be fun? Well, that part is up to you and what you might consider fun. Perhaps it is getting paid a small per diem on the days you have committee meetings. Perhaps it is the long hours you might be called upon to contribute to the work of your board or commission. It could be the sense of added responsibility you'll know as you go about your duties of office. It might even be that special opportunity you discover to propose solutions that reflect your values as a libertarian and which further, even if only in a small way, our cause to restore government based on principles of justice and liberty to our land.

If you are ready to "walk the walk," then get in touch with your Region Chair or LPC chairman Aaron Starr (who is also by the way, the Simi Valley Cultural Art Center Foundation Treasurer), and join our proud corps of office-seekers and office holders. They are the advance guard of our Libertarian army marching toward freedom.

**LPC**

## Executive Director Report (continued from page 3)

we can spread the workload around many people. Call or email me at 818-782-8400 or [director@ca.lp.org](mailto:director@ca.lp.org).

### Members

The key to any organization is people. Do Americans want to become Libertarians? The answer is a resounding Yes. Last month I was at an outreach booth. In two days, I signed up 17 new members.

You can do the same. People are starving for a political party that represents them, as individuals. Do you want to bring in five to fifteen new members every weekend?

If I could train a few people to do outreach booths, I'm sure we could have three or four outreach tables around California every weekend signing up 8 to 15 new members each. However, it takes a little training. If you are interested in signing up new members (and registering Libertarians) please contact me at 818-782-8400.

### Logicity and the 2003 LPC State Convention

Libertarians are logical. Rational. Therefore, please sign up today to attend our 2003 LPC

Convention. The signup form is at the end of the Convention article. You will save a lot of time and money if you sign up today. The only good reason NOT to sign up to attend is because maybe you don't know if you will be able to attend. No problem. There will be a money back guarantee through the end of the year. Send the form in today, please.

### Calling All Libertarians

Please read the articles by Al Swain and Mike Everling in this issue. They are both winners of the Karl Bray Award, the Libertarian Party of California's highest award for LPC activists.

Like everyone I speak to, Al and Mike say small local non-partisan offices are the way we will reach higher offices. These offices include fire districts, community services districts, transportation boards. I sincerely hope you will run in a local election this fall. If you don't have the time or inclination, please support those who will. This is what a political party is about. Please contribute today. On the back page is a contribution form for you to help us.

Hey. Catch a wave.

LPC

# Summer is here — Everybody Polka!

By Barry Benintende

Okay, summer is upon us and many Libertarians have the same problem: We all work too hard and forget to take time to relax. One of the best things any of



Barry Benintende

us can do is remember why we're putting in 80-90 hour weeks (other than to appease the godless IRS): For our families. About all I have to say on that subject is "Guilty as charged."

Like many Libertarians, I work constantly to provide a lifestyle for my wife, kids and myself. We're not rich, far from it, but we home school and have to pay for our own curriculum. Still not rich, but we prefer a house with a yard over an apartment without one. Yet again, not rich, but we prefer having a car over public transportation. All of that means one thing: I've got plenty to pay for. But

all work and no play makes Barry a dull Libertarian. And I loathe being dull.

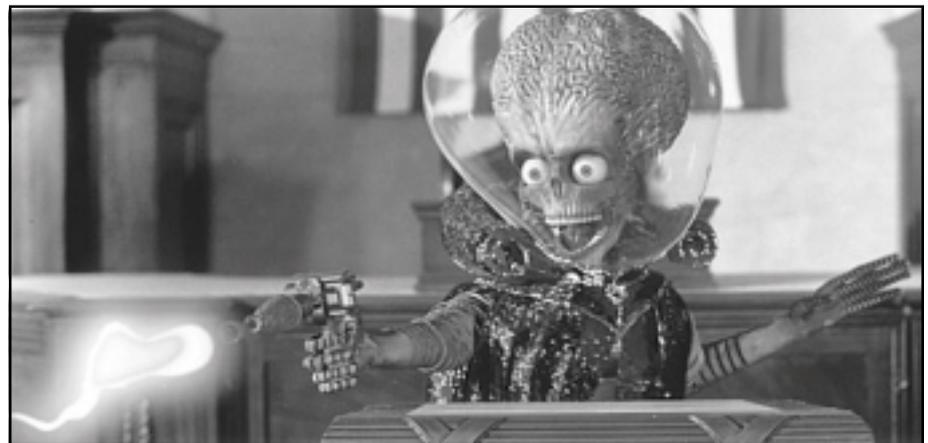
With so much fun to be had, and me being the sofa spud that I am, it is time for the annual film festivals my friends and I are known for. The bar-b-que is getting fired up, the Harp Lager and Orange Crush are on ice and this summer's theme is (with a nod to the blockbuster success of *Lord Of The Rings — The Fellowship Of The Ring*) ... Sci-Fi and Fantasy.

First up is the under-appreciated gem, *Krull*. A near classic of both genres, *Krull* features a monster and its army of Slayers who attack the planet Krull, leaving scorched earth and broken-spirited Krullians in their wake. To stop the invaders, two hostile nations decide to join their forces by the marriage of Princess Lyssa and Prince Colwyn. During the ceremony the Slayers attack the palace, kill both kings, wound

Colwyn and kidnap Lyssa. The next morning has the wise Ynyr looking for, and finding, Colwyn.

With Ynyr's help, Colwyn gains possession of a magic weapon, the five-bladed sword, and together they go on their quest for the monster's black fortress to free Lyssa. Along the way they pick up a motley crew of thieves, rogues and other un-loved factions of society to help them in their quest.

Next is the classic *Godzilla, King of the Monsters!*. From 1956, this first installment of the franchise of loved, loathed and everything in-between is a must-see by anyone who loves Sci Fi. "Godzilla," the word, is actually the Anglicized version of "Gojira," the original name for the rubber monster suit wearing guy that breathes fire, crushes housing, melts model tanks and otherwise



*The Second Amendment Rules! Where Can I get One of Those?*

makes life in Tokyo hell. Oh yeah, *Godzilla* is also the 400 foot tall T-Rex immortalized in a song by *Blue Oyster Cult* and revered by geeks like myself around the world. Directed by Inoshiro Honda, the original and best of the *Godzilla* directors, who in his later years worked on *Akira* Kurosawa's last five films. By-the-way, Raymond Burr is tacked on as Steve Martin, but I'm still not sure why.

From 1998, Manga Entertainment brought the world the Anime brilliance of *Ghost In The Shell*. The movie is over the top in its post-apocalyptic Tokyo (poor Tokyo, it's always getting clobbered in Sci Fi movies), violence, special effects and style. Also, there is Major Kusanagi and the typical Manga philosophy break. This is the point in most all Manga animation where the action stops so someone can get moral, usually delivering a "can't we all

just get along?" speech at great length.

Tokyo needs a break from getting its butt kicked, so it's Washington's turn — *Independence Day* (1996). On July 2nd, worldwide communications systems are sent into chaos by strange atmospheric interference. The military finds that a number of enormous objects are on a collision course with Earth. They turn out to be gigantic spacecraft, piloted by an alien species out to eliminate us and steal our planet. Attempts to communicate with the aliens end in disaster and the scene of the White House getting fried alone are worth the rental price. Plus Will Smith is just so full of bravado and charm.

Following that is 1996's *Mars Attacks!* Tim Burton is a genius and this movie is proof. And to quote Jack Nicholson, as President James Dale, "I want the

people to know that they still have 2 out of 3 branches of the government working for them, and that ain't bad."

Last is *Left Behind*, the film based on the first book in the hugely successful series of books by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins.

As *Armageddon* dawns, Jesus Christ comes and takes all of his believers to Heaven and leaves the non-believers behind to face the wrath of Satan. The story follows a group of people who try to discover where the millions of people went, and why they were left behind. Featuring Kirk Cameron, who, shocking as it may seem, does not stink as an actor anymore.

If this doesn't sound like fun for you, grab a book and read instead. Have a fun summer.

(Benintende is Executive Editor of the *La Jolla Light* and a member of the *San Diego Film Critics Society*)

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question of medical use. He notes that the vast majority of the estimated 12 million American cannabis users are not lighting up to ease an ailment.

According to Kent, healthy cannabis smokers need to become a political constituency, much like gays and lesbians who built a political movement by shedding the "shame" of being homosexual. "It is about your right to be free and make decisions without the government telling you what you can do with your body," said Kent who publishes Express, the largest gay and lesbian newspaper in the state of Florida. "The rights you fight for can keep someone from going to jail."

#### **Cannabis Consumers Campaign**

A group of outspoken cannabis users, including James and Topping, are uniting to support the newly launched Cannabis Consumers Campaign — a California-based movement that lobbies for the civil rights of marijuana smokers. "Are you tired of being treated like a second-class citizen, denied the same rights in society that our alcohol and tobacco-consuming peers enjoy?" reads a letter sent by the Campaign to prospective activists.

Campaign director Mikki Norris points out that cannabis smokers could have their children, jobs, public housing, drivers licenses, student loans and even their freedom taken away from them at any moment. "This is not just about the right to get high, it's about equal rights," said Norris in a recent address to the annual NORML conference in San Francisco. "I pay taxes, I earn a

living, I recycle, I am a good neighbor, and at the end of the day and at the end of work, I like to smoke a joint."

Norris says the Campaign will culminate in an advertisement featuring 100 prominent cannabis smoking celebrities who will "come out" together.

"We need to present ourselves with dignity and stand up to the persecution and harassment that we live with," said Norris. "I would love to see a time when we are judged not by the contents of our urine, but by our characters."

Bill Maher, host of the television show Politically Incorrect, told attendees at the NORML conference that it's time Harrison Ford and Ted Turner stood up and acknowledged their cannabis use. Spokespersons for Ford and Turner did not return calls seeking comment on Maher's statement.

According to San Francisco criminal defense attorney Anthony Feldstein, a public statement of cannabis use is constitutionally protected speech. But Feldstein says there is no guarantee that law enforcement investigators will not use such an admission in support of a search warrant. Much depends on where the person making the admission lives and on the attitudes of the local judges.

Feldstein adds that there also is a big difference between saying that you have smoked cannabis and admitting that there is a bag of cannabis presently in your house.

#### **Speaking Out and Coming Out**

Washington D.C. DEA spokesman Will Glaspy says

federal authorities that prosecute drug traffickers will not target outspoken cannabis smokers. But Glaspy argues that the Campaign undermines the government's warnings about marijuana. "If we try to convince kids that smoking marijuana is safe, it is the wrong message and not the message that should be put out," said Glaspy.

Nick Spadafino, owner of Pacific Park Recovery Center, in Tustin, Calif., says he is concerned that those who proudly smoke marijuana increase their chances of addiction to other substances.

Spadafino does not believe that all cannabis use leads to addiction or self-destructive behavior. Many cannabis smokers now coming forward say that marijuana has not been damaging, but instead has enhanced their quality of life. "I get stoned and I listen to Mahler — classical music with weed is fabulous," said 80-year-old Arthur B. Waugh who attended the recent Cannabis Freedom Day Rally in San Francisco.

The Cannabis Freedom Day Rally also drew San Francisco immigration attorney Steve Baughman who strolled through the crowd handing out a leaflet entitled "Vital Stats On One Pot Smoker." Among the items listed were "Number of persons in my employ who will lose their jobs if I go to jail: 15."

"I think it's important for mainstream, day-job people like myself to show up at events like this to get the word out that this is not just potheads wanting a bigger party," said Baughman, who wore a neatly pressed business suit. "This is a fundamental civil liberties issue."

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bilingual education) would hurt kids. The exact reverse occurred, totally unexpected by me."

What about the \$110 billion of taxpayers' money spent over decades on renewable fuels or alternative energy sources? Congress, ignoring the laws of supply and demand, spent this gargantuan sum to attain energy independence. But, so far, the government — or rather, the taxpayer — has struck out. "We make the wrong bet," said UC Berkeley physicist Daniel M. Kammen. "We use R&D money to try to pick winners by pouring tons of money into big projects, rather than funding lots of different research and letting the marketplace pick the winners."

What about things like mandated safety helmets for bicycle riders? Do they "work"? In fact, since 19 states now require helmets for bicycle riders, rates of head injuries increased, even as bicycle riding declined. "People tend to engage in risky behavior when they are protected," says Robert Hartwig, chief economist for the Insurance Information Institute. "It's a ubiquitous human trait."

What about the Americans With Disabilities Act? Recently, President Bush praised the act, signed into law by his father. In the nine years following the passage of the 1990 law, unemployment among working-age people with disabilities increased 12 percent. Thomas DeLeire, professor of public policy at the University of Chicago, says, "It's likely that the ADA led to people with disabilities being perceived as more expensive for employers, both because of the potential

litigation and the costs of accommodations." After controlling for education, age, type of disability and other factors, DeLeire found an 8 percent drop in employment of disabled men, ages 18 to 65, from 1990 to 1995.

What about the law that increased unemployment benefits for workers affected by Sept. 11? Again, does expanding benefits accomplish their objective; do they "work"? People tend to procrastinate in looking for work until their unemployment benefits run out. Larry Katz, the chief economist at the Labor Department during the Clinton administration, found that workers are almost three times more successful in finding jobs when benefits are just about to run out.

So here's the drill. Congress passes laws, never mind the impact. Congress sometimes studies the impact of laws, frequently ignoring its findings. And, written in government-speak, reports often serve to confuse, confound and, every now and then, entertain.

For example, one government study injected deadly gas into a cage of laboratory rats, killing all. The report's conclusion? The experiment induced a "100 percent mortality response." Gotta love it.

*Larry Elder is an attorney, syndicated columnist, Los Angeles radio talk-show host and the judge on TV's "Moral Court." To find out more about Larry Elder, visit the Creators Syndicate web page at [www.creators.com](http://www.creators.com).*

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