SURPRISING NEWS ...

Post features LP members

The Washington Post is usually a Libertarian-free zone, but not this past month: Two major articles about Libertarian Party members have appeared in the notoriously liberal newspaper.

On February 8, the Post featured a front-page story about the growing jury nullification movement, focusing specifically on the Fully Informed Jury Association and its Libertarian founder, Larry Dodge.

The article noted that the FIJA movement is being partly driven by “libertarians who abhor the overbearing hand of government,” and is catching on “in courthouses across the country.”

And on January 30, the Post’s business section displayed a prominent photograph of LP member Michael Tanner — with a story describing his work at the Cato Institute to privatize Social Security.

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And on January 30, the Post’s business section displayed a prominent photograph of LP member Michael Tanner — with a story describing his work at the Cato Institute to privatize Social Security.

Although labeling some of the Cato Institute’s ideas as “just this side of zany,” the Post acknowledged that the influential, non-partisan think tank’s relentless campaign for replacing the government’s faltering Social Security system with private accounts was finally paying off.

The LP said the Post’s coverage is surprising — and heartening.

“If even the Washington Post realizes that Libertarians have a major impact on public policy, that’s a breakthrough,” said LP Communications Director Bill Winter.

TOLEDO LIBERTARIANS MULL RECALL OF MAYOR

Libertarians in Toledo, Ohio are weighing whether to launch a recall drive against the city’s mayor, who is trying to sharply curtail local citizens’ Second Amendment rights.

Libertarians Galen Fries, Dr. LeRoy Lloyd, and Duane Arquette are floating a trial recall petition, and trying to decide if there is widespread public interest in a recall effort.

The petition charges that Mayor Carleton Finkbeiner is “pursuing legislation of gun control that is bluntly unconstitutional” — including proposals to require handgun registration and to allow prosecution if children gain access to guns without trigger locks. Libertarians charged that the proposals would result in litigation that could cost the city millions of dollars, and would “make criminals out of ordinary, law-abiding citizens.”

LP STARTS DEFENDYOURPRIVACY.COM WEBSITE

Hoping to drive an e-mail spike into the heart of the FDIC’s “Know Your Customer” law, the Libertarian Party has launched an Internet campaign to stir up public outrage about the “bank spying” proposal.

On February 17, the LP sent an e-mail letter to the 10,000 people on its e-mail announcement list, asking them to send an attached anti-Know Your Customer message to friends and family.

It directed people to a new website, www.DefendYourPrivacy.com, where they can sign an electronic petition, send a comment to the FDIC, and get more information about Know Your Customer.

“We’re trying to generate a chain reaction,” said LP National Director Steve Dasbach. “If it works, we could generate tens of thousands of comments against this regulation — perhaps enough to stop it in its tracks.”

Under the Know Your Customer rule, banks would be required to learn where you get your money and report all “suspicious” transactions to the federal government. The FDIC’s public comment period ends on March 8.

NJ LIBERTARIANS GET $12,500 SETTLEMENT

In April 1996, Libertarians John Paff and Timothy Konek handed out “Million Dollar Bills” during a Tax Day protest. In February 1999, they were handed a check for $12,500 from the East Brunswick township government for falsely arresting them during that protest.

The money was a settlement for a federal civil rights lawsuit filed by Paff and Konek, charging that police had illegally arrested them while exercising their Constitutional rights of free speech at a legitimate political protest. A federal judge agreed, and ordered the township to pay the New Jersey Libertarians $12,500 in damages, plus $25,000 in lawyers fees.

“I’m glad the judge ruled in our favor, but I’m sorry that the taxpayers have to pay,” said Paff, chairman of the Somerset & Middlesex Counties LP.
Outrage in law

Steven Kubby, the Libertarian Party candidate for governor last year and an acknowledged medical marijuana patient, and his wife Michele were arrested Tuesday and charged with possession of marijuana for sales and cultivation, and conspiracy.

About 300 plants were confiscated with street value estimated at $420,000, according to Lt. Mike Allen of the North Tahoe Task Force.

The arrest, which followed a six-month investigation, raises yet again the question of whether Proposition 215 will ever be implemented properly in California. It would be helpful to hear more from Attorney General Bill Lockyer, who campaigned as a supporter of the rights of medical marijuana patients and who could do a great deal to ensure compassionate and uniform enforcement of the law.

The law — Section 11362.5 of the Health and Safety Code — exempts patients with an authorization from a licensed physician and “primary caregivers” from the laws against possession, cultivation and use of marijuana. Selling, transporting and distributing marijuana are still illegal under state law, although appeals court decisions suggest the necessity of some leeway to accommodate patients and caregivers. So far no court has determined exactly how much leeway will be allowed and the state has not issued guidelines.

Mr. Kubby and his wife are patients who say they have authorization from licensed physicians and who acknowledge they grow marijuana plants in their basement for their use but deny they distribute to anyone. They were roused from their home in North Lake Tahoe Tuesday evening by a dozen members of the North Tahoe Narcotics Task Force and taken to the Placer County Jail in Auburn. Their bail, Mr. Kubby, told us, he didn’t know what Michele’s medical condition is, but that she does have a physician’s recommendation.)

Arthur Wood said the local sheriff’s department refuses to provide Mr. Kubby any marijuana while he is in jail. Such a decision is outrageous. But it highlights the need to develop guidelines for the implementation of Proposition 215, a responsibility the previous attorney general shirked.

The real outrage is that Mr. Kubby was arrested at all, if all that he says is true. As Robert Raich, an attorney who is a member of the city of Oakland’s medical marijuana working group, told us, “I can’t think of anybody to whom Prop. 215 more directly applies than Steve Kubby. He has a physician’s authorization and he was growing only for his and his wife’s personal use. It’s troubling that he has no access to his medicine while in jail, but it’s even more troubling that he is in jail at all. Prop. 215 was written to keep patients out of jail.”

Bill Lockyer’s press representative, Hilary McLean, told us that the attorney general’s policy is usually not to intervene in local decisions on prosecution and she knew of no plans to intervene in Mr. Kubby’s case.

It should be the attorney general’s job to make sure that law enforcement officials abide by the statewide law. California voters passed Prop. 215 more than two years ago.

The proposition itself hasn’t been challenged in court and has not been overturned — although various law enforcement agencies have nibbled at its edges in the way they have treated patients.

It’s time for law enforcement and the courts to respect that law.

Libertarian to run for Adams Co. commissioner

By ROBERT REILLY

A Hamiltonian Township

Libertarian has announced his candidacy for Adams County Commissioner.

Charles H. Knepper Jr. said he has major differences of opinion with the current commissioners (Democrats Thomas Weaver and Harry Stokes and Republican Thomas Collins), calling them “yes men (that) don’t say no to anybody.”

Knepper says he will push for the county to sell its nursing home and put its residents into private care facilities, which he said could save taxpayers about $2 million.

He also opposes the county’s plan to exercise its power of eminent domain over a 182-acre farm off Granite Station Road for a proposed county composting facility.

If such a facility was needed, private industry would have already gotten involved, Knepper said, adding that in both cases, the county is putting itself in competition with private industry.

This runs contrary to Knepper’s Libertarian beliefs, he said, because the average citizen should have the liberty to do largely as he or she wishes, without government interference, as long as one’s or her actions do not infringe on someone else’s rights.

“The Libertarian Party is the party of principle. We don’t change our platform every four years like the Republicans and the Democrats,” Knepper said.

Born in Franklin County, Knepper spent 19 years in the U.S. Air Force, where he served as a telecommunications supervisor and public affairs officer before his retirement in 1995.

A South Mountain area resident since 1994, Knepper has never held elected office. He is a member of the National Rifle Association, the American Legion and serves as vice chairman of the Adams County Libertarian Party.

Knepper expects other Libertarians to challenge him for the party’s nomination in the May primary. The general election will take place Nov. 2.

Sumner County residents form Libertarian chapter

By ALBERT DITTES

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — A South Mountain area resident is concerned about the lack of political parties in Sumner County.

“They have no representation,” said Jim Culp, a retired public school teacher and student of libertarian philosophy.

Culp said the Libertarian Party is the only new party in the state that is trying to get into the political process.

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It’s their party

Liberarians plan to become the first political party recognized under Maryland’s new ballot access laws today when they submit 13,000 signatures to the state’s election board in Annapolis.

To gain official party status in Maryland, which conveys the right to put candidates on the ballot, a minority or “third” party must submit 10,000 signatures on a petition supporting its recognition.

That requirement was also in the old law, but the new law has made it easier for parties to retain state recognition. Under the new law, once the state recognizes the party it keeps that status through the next statewide election year. After that, the party must claim 1 percent of the state’s registered voters or 1 percent of the vote in the gubernatorial election. The old law, considered one of the most daunting ballot access measures in the nation, required 3 percent.

In 1996, the last year the Libertarian Party was recognized in Maryland, it claimed 6,000 registered voters and was likely to need more than 26,000 voters to keep its status after 2002. Chairman Steven E. Boone said the party plans an aggressive registration campaign to do so.

Liberarians advocate smaller government and less government interference in people’s lives.

Smokers’ rights

Liberarians upset at proposed county-building ban

By ALAN JULIAN
Courier staff writer
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Dan Steward says he joined the Libertarian Party because he thinks government is intruding on personal freedoms. An example of that, Steward says, is the proposed smoking ban in county-owned buildings.

Steward and other members of the fledgling Libertarian Party pledge to circulate fliers and speak out against the ban.

“We’re not saying we want to run through the building smoking anywhere we want,” said Steward. “We just want an area set aside for us.”

City government banned smoking in its share of the Civic Center earlier this year. Now, county government is crafting a similar ordinance. Included in the county’s ban would be the Civic Center complex and the Auditorium and Convention Centre when the renovated facility reopens.

Except for smoking groups that argued against the city ordinance, the public to breathe the smoke,” she said.

If you put them (designated smoking areas) in the break rooms, then you really force the public to breathe the smoke,” she said.

The thing happens in rest rooms.

Earlier this year, a similar smoking ban was passed by City Council. It prohibits smoking in county government offices at the Civic Center. Libertarians were among the pro-smoking groups that argued against the city ordinance.

Brian Majors, who also belongs to the local Libertarian Party, said smokers shouldn’t be forced to go outdoors to light up.

“I recognize that cigarette smoke stinks. It may even be nauseating to some,” said Majors, who is himself a smoker. “But we basically feel it’s not right to ostracize smokers. We think there should be designated areas to smoke.”

Banks spying on their customers

A new government directive will force banks to spy on their customers and report any “unusual transactions” to federal investigators.

Under the so-called Know Your Customer rule, bank tellers can quiz you about where you got your money and how you plan to spend it. And if your answers sound suspicious, they can report you to federal law enforcement agencies.

This new regulation will turn your local bank into a branch of the federal government’s civilian surveillance apparatus. It’s the ultimate invasion of your financial privacy.

The Know Your Customer law has been proposed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and is scheduled to go into effect on April 1.

It will require banks and other financial institutions to develop customer profiles, monitor bank transactions, and report to the government any large cash deposits or withdrawals.

Since “unusual activity” could include depositing a Christmas bonus or inheritance, or withdrawing money to buy a house or car, ordinary Americans could find themselves trying to prove to agents from the FBI, the Internal Revenue Service, or the Drug Enforcement Agency that they are not drug dealers or money launderers.

This law would turn every bank teller into a government informer and everyone with a bank account into a criminal suspect.

The Libertarian Party opposes the Know Your Customer regulation for numerous reasons.

• Your banking habits are none of the government’s business.

In a free society, the government has no business even asking where innocent Americans get their money or how they spend it.

• Much less coercing businesses into secretly monitoring your bank account.

It’s an illegal, warrantless search that violates the Fourth Amendment.

Monitoring every bank account to check for laundered money is no different from pulling over every driver just in case some are intoxicated, or searching every home to check for stolen goods. It is unconstitutional — plain and simple.

It could subject your money to asset forfeiture.

If you can’t immediately prove you’re not a criminal, the government could seize your money under asset forfeiture laws. Instead of being the safest place to store your money, banks could become the most dangerous place — since Uncle Sam’s bank robbers can seize it at will.

We need to flood the FDIC with letters, faxes, and e-mails demanding an end to Big Brother Banking.

In a free society, the government has no business even asking where innocent Americans get their money or how they spend it.

To comment on the Know Your Customer regulation, write: Robert E. Feldman, Executive Secretary, Attn: Comments/OES, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, 550 17th Street NW, Washington, DC 20429. Or fax: (202) 898-3838. Or e-mail: comments@FDIC.gov.

Steve Dasbach is national director of the Libertarian Party.
**Liberty Pledge News • February 1999**

**Libertarian has good ideas**

**I** HAVE just read a new book by Virginia Postrel, the brilliant editor of Reason Magazine, a publication of the Libertarian Reason Society. She does an excellent job of cutting through some of the most troublesome aspects of liberal/conservative conflict.

Every writer has favorite words with which they fall in love. I have a long list that I'm always editing out of my own writings. One of Postrel's favorites is "stasis." According to Webster's, that means the "condition of standing still." In her book, "The Future and Its Enemies" (Free Press), she looks at social and economic problems from the standpoint of the "stasists"—those who insist upon confining enterprise to the established rules and who resist thinking "out of the box."

One thing Postrel does is to help resolve the difficulty I've had in defining the terms "liberal" and "conservative." I have claimed that liberals are often really "conservative" because they insist upon using the same old solutions to solve social and economic problems. Consider how many liberal programs are nothing but a tedious repetition of ideas and methods devised by FDR 60 years ago during The Great Depression. These methods are stasis by any definition. And there is certainly an appreciable segment of conservatives who stick to solutions that are "tried and true." Thus, this scholarly book presents a new way of classifying the body politic. What is the opposite of the stasist? Unfortunately, the best word to describe them is "preconceived" but that has been usurped by the ultimate stasists, the liberals with a failed socialist methodology. Postrel uses the more definitive word "dynamists." Using this book as a guide, we can divide people as either "stasists" or "dynamists." We avoid the use of labels that have lost their meaning.

Not surprisingly for a libertarian, Postrel suggests that most of the stasists are in the government apparatus, stuck with a corrupt methodology. She places her trust in the hands of the people. Thus, established structure is seen as the enemy. In another sense, however, Postrel reinforces an observation I agree with heartily.

The most successful and the most satisfying accomplishments in one's life are not in attaining goals but rather in inventing or devising the method of attaining the desirable goal. The "process" is the most important creative effort and results are just by-product. I've observed that for an entrepreneur, the end result of a process is not the special prize one anticipates. Once a process has been established that gives less than the best results, the temptation is to repeat it over and over, hoping for better results. This is the kind of stasis Postrel frowns upon.

Ideologues, when faced with failures in practice, insist that the only remedy is to pursue their ideas with increased fervor. The dynamists, on the other hand, keep trying to invent new processes in order to get better results. In the business world, the corporate functionally is the stasist and the entrepreneur is the dynamist. It is the difference between General Motors and Microsoft.

Stasists project the false image of the "risk-free society." Dynamists represent adventure, the attack on the wilderness of free thought, the fording of rivers and the advance in the face of danger. This book celebrates them and should be read by all who cherish the intrinsic worth of human beings.

Joseph J. Jacobs is founder and chairman of Jacobs Engineering Group Inc. in Pasadena.

**The compassionate conservative**

**JOSEPH JACOBS**

**Stadium Opposition: Quirky, Quixotic**

By MIKE SWIFT
Courant Staff Writer

To James Madison, a member of Connecticut's Libertarian Party, the only legitimate use of tax dollars is the military and police—government functions that protect private property.

"Education" Madison says it's better provided by the private sector and charitable groups.

To Tom Sevigny, a member of the Connecticut Green Party, key political issues include establishing a universal, government-backed health care system and cleaning up air-polluting power plants.

But Madison and Sevigny found themselves working for the same cause this week—organizing a campaign to derail a $347 million taxpayer-backed stadium and training facility for the New England Patriots.

In what may be the ultimate example of David vs. Goliath, local activists hope to use talk radio, the Internet, letters to the editor and public protests such as one expected today at the state Capitol to make things so uncomfortable for Patriots owner Robert Kraft that "We might be able to have Kraft and his people pick up their marbles and go home," in the words of Madison, the Libertarian Party's communications director.

Even with the patronage of consumer advocate Ralph Nader, it appears a somewhat quixotic quest. Legislation funding the stadium was approved by the General Assembly in December, a final development agreement could be signed by the Patriots and the state as soon as Monday. Polls suggest that a majority of Connecticut residents oppose the stadium.

But don't tell that to the 30 people who braved a snowy night Wednesday to attend the second organizational meeting of Stop the Stadium Inc.

"I think the groundswell is there; it's just being repressed," said Mike DeRossa of Waterford, who attended the meeting at a church in Hartford.

The stadium will cost $350 million, plus inflation. Stop The Stadium has collected $350, mostly through individual contributions of $10 or $25, Sevigny said.

Nevertheless, this unlikely coalition of progressives, senior citizen anti-tax advocates, libertarian get-government-off-my-back conservatives and people who just don't like the stadium believes it has a chance to stop the juggernaut.

Members of the coalition include the Green Party, the Reform Party, the Libertarian Party, the National Organization for Women and the Connecticut Public Interest Research Group.

"The two things I hear from people I talk to is, one, the cost. The second thing is how this was rammed through the legislature. They are very, very angry about that," said Sevigny, who is a co-chairman of the Green Party.

Members say the union of the far-right with the far-left on the stadium issue can be explained by the taxpayer-funding of the stadium. Stadium backers say the investment will be repaid by new taxes and economic activity the stadium generates.

But opponents say it's a welfare for millionaires.

"It's a public funding for private profit, that's what it is," said Donna Donovan of Glastonbury.

The coalition this week considered petitions, persuading investors to shun tax-exempt stadium bonds, even enlisting Hartford...