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PATRIOT Act renewal vote fails in Senate

U.S. Senate Democrats and a few Republicans blocked a vote on Dec. 16 to extend the USA PATRIOT Act, which was set to expire on Dec. 31.

President George W. Bush, who has strongly encouraged extending the act, denied requests to give legislators more time to consider revisions to the law.

Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) needed 60 votes to bring the bill up for a final vote, which would have overridden a filibuster and ended debate on the revised act. But he fell eight votes shy of this goal: The vote was 52-47.

If Republicans had managed to override the filibuster and end debate, they would easily have been able to renew the act with a simple majority vote.

On Dec. 17, Bush gave a live television talk in which he said the Senate's decision was "irresponsible" and will "endanger the lives" of American citizens.

"The Congress has a responsibility not to take away this vital tool that law enforcement and intelligence officials have used to protect the American people," Bush said before the vote.

"The senators who are filibustering the PATRIOT Act must stop their delaying tactics so that we are not without this critical law for even a single moment."

All but two Democrats — and only four Republicans — opposed the legislation, but not because they want the law to expire. They said they wanted to improve the bill before renewing it.

Congress could still decide to renew the law.

And even if legislators allow 16 provisions in the PATRIOT Act to expire on Dec. 31, any foreign intelligence investigation that began before the expiration date will be allowed to continue, with all of the law's powers still in effect.

This means that any ongoing investigations will be allowed to continue.

LP's Leadership School takes shape

With classes expected to commence in late January, Libertarian Party national headquarters staff members are finalizing plans for the Libertarian Leadership School (LLS).

The Libertarian National Com-

mittee decided at its August 2005 meeting that the LP should have a program through which candidates and members could receive training. The LNC then directed headquarters staff to create such a program.

"We said very clearly that we need to train our people, so they are

prepared to run for office," said LNC Chair Michael Dixon.

LP Chief of Staff Shane Cory presented his plans for the LLS at the LNC's November meeting in Baltimore, and board members expressed their approval.

Since that time Cory has further clarified the courses that will be offered in the online school — and has selected teachers for the classes.

Each class is expected to last at least six weeks. Cory noted that the classes will not be of the "if you show up, you'll get credit" variety.

Students will be expected to invest a significant amount of time in each class, he said: "These classes on fundraising, campaign management and other necessary matters must be meaningful. We want to help Libertarians become more politically effective."

The campaign management class, for example, will be directed by Stephen Gordon, vice chair of the Alabama LP.

Gordon has worked with a number of Libertarian Party campaigns over the years — including serving as communications director for the Badnarik for President campaign in 2004. He is also involved in local campaigns, such as a recent legislative effort to legalize medical marijuana in Alabama.

In addition to turning in regular projects, students will be required to read two books during the six-week course: *Winning Elections: Political Campaign Management, Strategy and Tactics* by Ronald A. Faucheux, and *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*, by Joe Trippi.

As detailed on LP.org/lls, other

courses offered will include:

- Candidate training.
- Member recruitment, with instructor Bruce Cohen, chair of member communications for the California LP.

- Blogging 101, with instructor Stephen VanDyke, of the libertarian Web site hammeroftruth.com.

- Candidate recruitment.

- Media communications, instructed by Joe Starrs, vice president of northern Virginia's Veritas Media Group, a media consulting agency.

- Personal health and appearance, led by Joe Giganti, president of Veritas Media Group.

- Campaign fundraising.

- FEC compliance, to help state affiliates begin filing with the Federal Election Commission, led by Paula Edwards, the national LP's FEC consultant.

- Database usage, with instructor Marc Montoni of the Virginia LP. Montoni is a database technical consultant.

- Ballot access, led by LNC member Bill Redpath, who is the LP's strongest advocate of maintaining ballot access.

- Campus organizing, led by LNC member Jim Lark, who has helped form LP organizations on many college campuses and who serves as an advisor to the University of Virginia's Libertarian groups.

Classes start soon, so go to LP.org and sign up for those that best suit your activity with the LP.

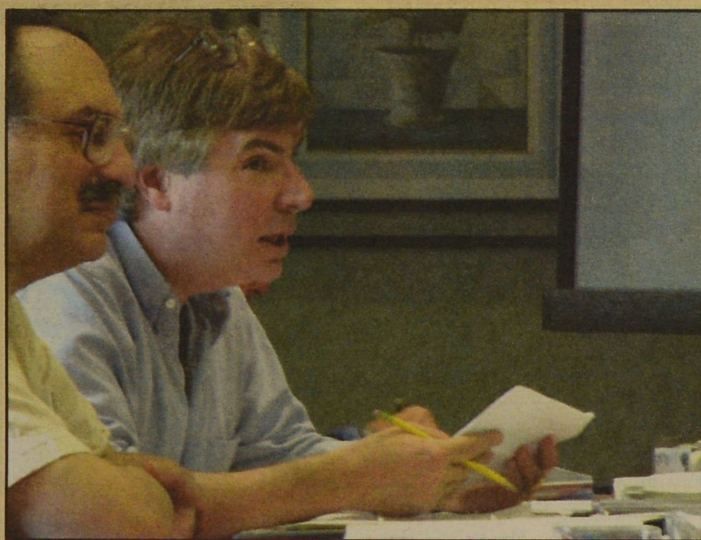
"We don't expect to fill every class, but we will certainly be able to train a great number of people in the coming year," Cory said.



■ Libertarian National Committee members James W. Lark III (at left) and Bill Redpath (below) will be two of the teachers in the online Libertarian Leadership School. With classes scheduled to begin in late January, the school will give Libertarians opportunities to learn how to run campaigns, manage office responsibilities and spread the LP's message via the Internet and other media.

—Photos by

LP News Editor J. Daniel Cloud



Can we get legislators to 'Read the Bills'?

By J. Daniel Cloud
LP NEWS EDITOR

The May 2005 issue of *LP News* featured an article by Jim Babka, president of Downsize DC, in which he talked about his organization's proposed "Read the Bills Act of 2005."

This legislation, if approved, would require members of Congress to read each bill before voting, ensuring that new laws aren't often passed, Babka stated.

"Most members of the House of Representatives and the Senate barely read any portion of bills they pass, much less every word of every bill," he continued. "That's why we

have created the Read the Bills Act, to fix this problem."

According to the act, all members of the House and Senate would have to sign a sworn affidavit, under penalty of perjury, saying they have read the complete bill on which they are voting.

This would apply also to every part of any current law to be amended, and to any old law coming up for renewal because of sunset provisions.

Several months have passed, and Downsize DC has been seeking a member of Congress to introduce the legislation.

That search is apparently over.

Babka reports he has found a

legislator who will sponsor the Read the Bills Act in 2006, so those who sit on Capitol Hill could soon be faced with legislation that they'll have trouble voting down.

It's a two-pronged attack: If legislators vote to approve the bill, they will be required to read legislation thoroughly. Under this restriction a host of onerous — and massively expensive — bills would never have been approved. On the other hand, if members of the House and Senate choose instead to vote against the act, they will be admitting that they don't read legislation before voting on it and that they have no intention of doing so.

While it should be obvious to any

reasonably intelligent person that legislators currently do not read the bills they approve, many Americans simply don't think about whether their representatives are actually representing them.

As Congressman Brian Baird (D-Wash.) wrote in the *Washington Post* in early 2005, members of the 108th Congress approved "the Medicare prescription drug bill, the energy bill, the intelligence bill and the defense authorization bill," and chances are they didn't read any of them.

"These important pieces of legislation total more than 2,900 pages of text and authorize more than \$1

See **DOWNSIZE DC** Page 2

NEWS BRIEFS

U.S. Rep. Tom DeLay faces corruption trial

On Dec. 5, Texas judge Pat Priest upheld money-laundering charges against U.S. Rep. Tom DeLay (R-Texas), paving the way for a criminal trial by jury that could begin this month.

Priest threw out charges that DeLay and two of his business associates conspired to violate election law by making an illegal campaign contribution.

The charges stem from DeLay's fundraising efforts on behalf of Republican candidates running for the Texas House of Representatives. The money laundering charges have greater possible penalties, but are also harder to prove.

Since the charges were filed in October, DeLay has sought to portray the charges against him as politically motivated.

Because of his indictment, DeLay — who had been House majority leader since 2003 — was forced to step out of that position. He was replaced by Rep. Roy Blunt of Missouri.

DeLay has denied wrongdoing and said he hopes soon to return to his position in the House.

However, House Republicans could decide to hold a special leadership election if 50 or more members of the 229-member Republican caucus decide DeLay should be removed permanently from the post.

A likely trial featuring Rep. DeLay could very well create more political problems for the Republican Party. A highly publicized criminal trial will only add to the mantle of corruption that is settling on the GOP's collective shoulders. [See **Republican legislators**, Page 10]

Time magazine features libertarian businessmen

A story posted to *Time* magazine's Web site on Dec. 12 put two libertarian businessmen head-to-head in a discussion of whether corporations have a responsibility to "do good."

T.J. Rodgers (founder and CEO of Cypress Semiconductor) and Whole Foods Market CEO John Mackey have both described themselves as libertarian, but they have distinctly different views of corporate social responsibility (CSR).

The *Time* reporter was apparently inspired by a story in the October 2005 issue of *Reason* magazine, in which Rodgers, Mackey and Nobel laureate Milton Friedman debated CSR.

Interestingly, *Time* referred to Mackey as a "an avowed libertarian," but didn't apply the same terminology to Rodgers despite his repeated self-description as a libertarian.

(That aside, however, it was good to see a libertarian portrayed as the ultimate proponent of CSR, as libertarians are typically depicted as big-business-friendly and selfish.)

Mackey, according to the *Time* report, "believes that people are far more inspired by their work when they feel it connects them to ideals that reach far beyond the bottom line." His belief that donations to environment- and people-friendly charities is good for business has certainly been demonstrated by the success of his own company.

But Rodgers doesn't entirely disagree. He simply thinks that "the virtues touted by CSR ... come just as easily if markets are left to run freely," the *Time* reporter said.

As evidence, Rodgers pointed to Cypress's investment in environment-friendly solar power, saying that investors are interested in the effort not because of environmental concerns but because they believe it is a potentially profitable enterprise.

In other words, practicing good environmental standards is simply good for business.

In the end, this position is very similar to that held by Rodgers' alleged "intellectual adversaries," the *Time* reporter concludes.

Liberty magazine founder R.W. Bradford dies

William (R.W.) Bradford, founder of *Liberty* magazine, died on Dec. 8 at his home in Port Townsend, Wash., of kidney cancer. He was 58.

Liberty, which has about 7,000 subscribers across the country, was founded in 1987. Bradford was occasionally critical of the Libertarian Party and of some Libertarians, but by most accounts he was fair and willing to consider other people's opinions.

For example, many *Liberty* readers were irate when Bradford decided to publish articles written by supporters of the war in Iraq — a war Bradford himself opposed, according to a story published in the *Seattle Times* shortly after his death.

"While he held strong positions, Mr. Bradford opened his magazine to views across the political spectrum," the story says, quoting Ross Overbeek, a longtime friend of Bradford's. "That's what made *Liberty* one of the most influential publications of the libertarian movement. He ... actively solicited diverse opinions."

Shortly before his death, Bradford reportedly sent a note to friends proposing a headline for his own obituary, saying, "Bradford is dead; *Liberty* lives on!"

Downsize DC — Read the Bills

Continued from Page 1

trillion of spending," Baird continued. "Yet, collectively, they were available to members for less than 48 hours total for reading" before being voted upon.

The battle isn't over yet, not by a long shot.

While a congressman has been found to sponsor the Read the Bills Act in 2006, "details have not been finalized and I cannot share the name," Babka said, noting that he hopes to reveal the legislation's sponsor soon.

In September, Babka and others with Downsize DC met with one senator, one House representative, one chief of staff and several legislative aides in hopes of finding a sponsor for the bill. Babka is planning to take another group of activists to meet with Capitol Hill staffers and congressmen in February, helping the proposal along.

Reinforcing the bill's appeal will be the fact that Downsize DC has succeeded in having more than 23,000 messages sent to congressmen regarding this one issue, and the number is growing.

Downsize DC is actually two separate endeavors: The Downsize DC Foundation and DownsizeDC.org.

The foundation started out as the American Liberty Foundation in December 2000, while DownsizeDC.org began as RealCampaignReform.org. Babka became president of the effort in September 2001. The original organizations were replaced in 2004 with Downsize DC, but not before RealCampaignReform.org took a campaign finance suit to the Supreme Court.

In addition to DownsizeDC.org, Babka oversees DownsizeDC.com, a Web site for the foundation.

This separate site is dedicated to "educating liberty-minded people about how to bring about social and political change," Babka said.

"We're trying to offer something in small snippets every day. We really do want people to see that downsizing D.C. leads to human progress."

This positive commentary is beneficial because "the libertarian movement has a lot of Chicken Little mentality, saying 'The sky is falling,' and there's some truth to that," he said. "But we often forget

the good news, that while Big Government hurts, liberty works."

How does Downsize DC get its message to Congress? When someone fills out a petition on the site, the computer system automatically

fills out forms at the appropriate legislator's Web site — whether it's one or two senators or a representative or all three.

The Read the Bills Act isn't the organization's sole project.

"We're constantly dealing with whatever's in the news, the lighting rod issues," Babka said. "We've sent more than 203,000 messages to Congress, from more than 10,000 people."

Most of Downsize DC's activities have a "decided civil liberties bent," he added.

"For example, issues we've tackled include the PATRIOT Act (29,000-plus messages); the Real ID Act; protecting the Internet from campaign finance regulation; and many others."

"When Congress is in session, they're doing a lot of damage," Babka said. "When they're in session, we send out about three or four messages a week. We need to keep activity growing. The objective is to keep pressure on Congress"

Like others in the freedom movement, Downsize DC's goal is "to build a big parade," Babka said. "We want people everywhere, everyday, to be exposed to the idea that government should be smaller."

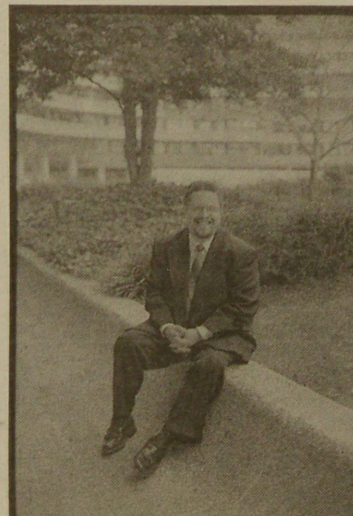
Which sounds like the freedom movement as a whole: As we get bigger, more and more people should be gaining awareness of the benefits of small government.

What distinguishes Downsize DC from other libertarian-minded groups?

"The key thing that distinguishes Downsize DC from other libertarian groups is that we are guided by a direction, not a destination," he said.

"If small government is represented by San Francisco and our current, Big Government state of affairs has us symbolically in Boston, we want to get on the Freedom Train and head in the direction of San Francisco."

"Not everyone is going to want to ride the train all the way to San Francisco. But by associating with us, reading the things we're saying everyday and seeing the intellectual consistency behind the freedom movement, many people will want to ride the train further, perhaps even to San Francisco," he said.



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The Mission Statement of the Libertarian Party: "To move public policy in a libertarian direction by building a political party that elects Libertarians to public office."

Libertarianism In One Lesson: Ninth edition recently published

A new ninth edition of David Bergland's *Libertarianism In One Lesson* — the book that has been called "the best brief introduction to libertarianism available today" — has been released.

Available from the Advocates for Self-Government, the book has been extensively updated and revised since the last edition was published five years ago.

Bergland wrote the first edition of *Libertarianism In One Lesson* in 1984, during his Libertarian Party presidential campaign. He was also the party's vice presidential candidate in 1976.

"This new ninth edition represents another milestone for the book," Bergland said. "It's been updated to include issues that people are talking about today — including terrorism, the war in Iraq, Social Security reform and medical marijuana. More than 20 years after the first edition, I am confident that the book is more relevant and useful than ever."

Bergland holds a bachelor's degree in English from UCLA and a law degree from the University of Southern California. For 23 years, he was an adjunct professor of law at Western State University College of Law in California.

In the book, Bergland answers common questions about the philosophy of freedom: What is libertarianism? What are its historic roots? Where do libertarians fit on the political map?

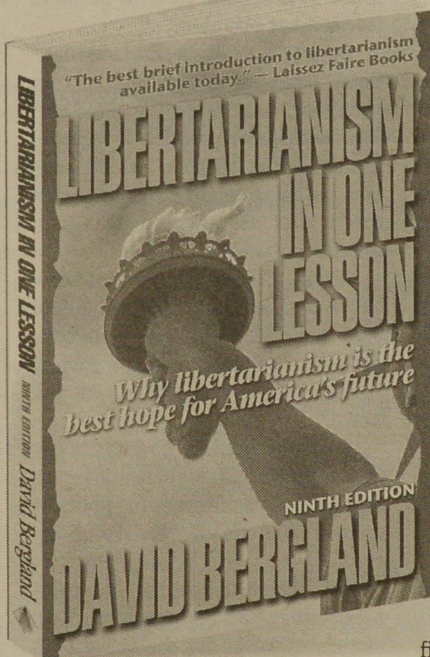
tions, such as the Utopian Fallacy and the "PANG" Premise (People Are No Good), that encourage people to turn to politicians to solve problems.

Libertarianism In One Lesson features chapters on major public policy issues, including national defense and terrorism, taxation and government spending, education, the War on Drugs, Social Security, poverty, the environment, guns and crime, and health care. The book also features an updated "Suggested Reading" chapter.

"Bergland pulls no punches," Advocates President Sharon Harris said. "The book advocates a bold, unflinching brand of libertarianism. Bergland even proposes three innovative ways to fund national defense without taxes!"

"But he is also a realist; the book suggests practical proposals to help America take those first steps towards a more libertarian future."

Libertarianism In One Lesson has been called "a concise, eloquent introduction to libertarian thought and how it can be applied to real-world problems" by Liberty Tree, and "the best brief introduction to libertarianism available today" by Laissez Faire Books.



Can libertarianism really work in the "real world?"

Bergland offers libertarianism's guiding principle — "you own yourself" — and explains the enormous impact that simple statement has on the relationship between individuals and government.

He also addresses the misconcep-

POLITICS 2006

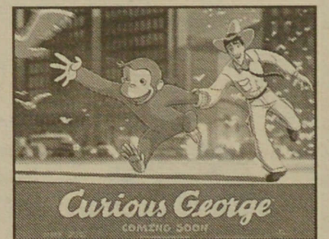
Nail clippers, PC and the War on Terror

Compiled by J. Daniel Cloud

LP NEWS EDITOR

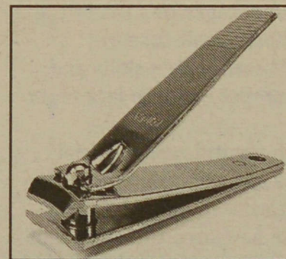
■ File this under "misuse of the word 'libertarian.'" The Dec. 1 edition of Salt Lake City's *City Weekly* says that the Sutherland Institute was formed 10 years ago "as an archconservative think tank, pushing Libertarian ideas." However, the institute has recently veered from its hard-Right "libertarian" message, the paper reports. For the record: "Libertarian" and "conservative" are not synonyms, people. (And lest anyone be confused, neither are "libertarian" and "liberal.")

■ It's official: "Political correctness" is out of hand. Witness the decision made by the minds behind the upcoming "Curious George" movie to change the job description of "The Man in the Yellow Hat." In the children's books, the man who rescues the little monkey from a plethora of precarious positions captured George in Africa to take him to a zoo. In the movie version, he will instead work as an archaeologist who is in Africa searching for artifacts. Why? The film's director told *USA Today* that capturing a monkey for a zoo would seem harsh in today's society.



■ The varying views of the future of Europe's climate can get confusing. On Nov. 29, the European Environmental Agency claimed that Europe is facing the worst climate change in five millennia as a result of global warming, which will soon cause Europe's glaciers to melt and deserts to spread into Europe from the south. And on Nov. 30, *NewScientist.com* reported that scientists are predicting a "mini Ice Age" across Western Europe. Both the impending "ice age" and the potential over-heating of Europe are blamed on human-produced greenhouse gasses.

■ Homeland Security Department officials announced Nov. 30 that restrictions on "weapons" such as small scissors and nail clippers will soon be relaxed for airline travelers. The Transportation Security Administration restricted carrying such articles onto planes soon after the 9-11 terrorist attacks. I wonder if they'll get rid of the restriction on cigarette lighters. Oddly, you are currently allowed to carry matches on planes, but not lighters. On a recent flight, security threatened to seize my trusty Zippo, which I've carried for years. I stepped out of the security line and mailed the lighter to my home a few miles away, as the TSA employee suggested. I pointed out that the U.S. Postal Service forbids mailing explosive or flammable liquids, which the Zippo holds, but she seemed unconcerned.



■ In a recent article in the *Bucks County (Penn.) Courier Times*, Republican state Sen. Tommy Tomlinson was quoted as saying that his probable Democrat opponent in the 2006 election isn't qualified for the seat because he "has been out of town too long." So where has Democrat Paul Lang been, leading Tomlinson to say he isn't fit for legislative service? Apparently he was serving in the U.S. military. The reporter noted that Lang is a 28-year veteran of the Coast Guard.

■ In late November, several key opposition parties in Venezuela announced they would boycott the Dec. 4 national assembly elections — saying they didn't trust the nation's electoral system. Specifically, they raised concerns about the secrecy of electronic voting machines. Leaders of other parties pointed out that boycotting elections won't help get rid of the current regime, but voting machine opponents said there can't be a secret election when machines record the ballots along with voter information. If America's "opposition parties" boycotted U.S. elections, would anyone notice? Actually, that's what happens every election cycle, when a majority of Americans don't bother voting.

■ According to a study by the Congressional Research Service, the Bush administration's metrics for progress in the so-called War on Terror cannot show whether the United States is winning the war. "Four years have gone by since Sept. 11, [and] government agencies have still not agreed on criteria too measure progress against terrorism, even though billions of dollars have been spent," said Raphael Perl, who wrote the report. That shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone who has been paying even cursory attention to the war's "progress."



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THE PROFILE

Talk radio's Art Bell

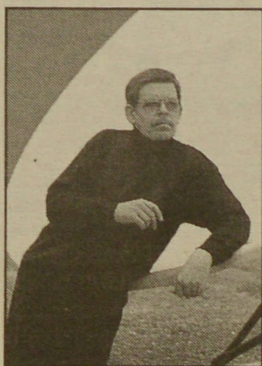
By Bill Winter

THE ADVOCATES FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT

Over the past two decades, only a small handful of people can claim to have "redefined" talk radio — among them Rush Limbaugh, Dr. Laura Schlessinger and Howard Stern.

Add to that list Art Bell, who turned the "graveyard shift" of radio into the hottest time slot in the business with his Coast to Coast AM show, and attracted millions of listeners to his offbeat blend of the paranormal, paranoia, and politics.

And he did it all from a distinctly libertarian perspective.



Bell (born in 1945) got his first taste of the power of radio while operating a pirate rock 'n' roll radio station as a U.S. Air Force medic during the Vietnam War era. After leaving the military, he worked as a disc jockey in Okinawa, Japan, where he landed in the *Guinness Book of World Records* by broadcasting continuously for 116 hours and 15 minutes.

After returning to the USA, he briefly attended college before getting back in the radio industry as a chief engineer. Over the next decade, he worked both on the air and behind the scenes in the radio and cable television industries.

In 1989, Bell got his big break when KDWN, a 50,000-watt station in Las Vegas, offered him a late-night time slot. After dabbling briefly in political talk, Bell switched over to the paranormal, focusing on the occult, UFOs, conspiracy theories, vampire monkeys, ghosts, and pseudo-science. Bell did not claim to believe everything he broadcast — he said he offered only "entertainment" and a nonjudgmental forum for speculation — but fans flocked to the far-out format. The show became a huge hit, and was soon syndicated around the nation.

By the mid-1990s, Coast-to-Coast AM was broadcast on almost 500 stations and reached 9 million to 15 million listeners weekly. Those numbers made Bell the fourth most popular radio host in America (behind only Limbaugh, Stern and Schlessinger). Bell also hosted the Sunday night "Dreamland" show.

The industry took notice. In 1997, Bell won the Best Male Radio Talk Show Host award from the National Association of Radio Talk Show Hosts. In 2002, he placed #12 on *Talkers* magazine's list of the 25 greatest radio and television talk show hosts of all time.

Bell's "open-minded approach, excellent broadcasting skills and keen interest in the subject matter helped propel him into late night superstardom," reported *Talkers*.

On May 5, 1998, Bell made his libertarian identification official when he joined the Libertarian Party on the air, with two-time Libertarian Party presidential candidate Harry Browne sharing the microphone. Bell said he joined the party because he feared the decline of liberty in America.

"We're clearly heading toward a more totalitarian state," he said. "I completely distrust the government — and everybody should. They've told lie after lie, so the average American has become cynical. Today, the first assumption is that what the government is telling you is a lie."

Bell said he "likes almost everything" in the LP's platform: "The Libertarian Party is the closest ideologically to what I now believe. I really believe in freedom. I am proud and happy to have found a [political] home."

In October 1998, Bell's career took an unexpected turn when he vanished from the airwaves for two weeks because of threats against his family. In April 2000, Bell again left his show and did not return until February 2001. Bell later said he had to deal with a sexual abuse case involving his son and a substitute teacher. (The teacher was convicted of sexual assault.)

Bell retired in 2002 because of back pain. He returned to host a weekend show in 2003, and semi-retired again in June 2005. He now hosts two Sundays a month on the Premiere Radio Networks, and make occasional guest appearances on Coast-to-Coast AM.

Bell is the author of *The Quickening: Today's Trends, Tomorrow's World* (with Jennifer L. Osborne, 1997), *The Art of Talk* (1998), *The Coming Global Superstorm* (with Whitley Strieber, 1999), and several other books.

■ Each month, LP News features a column about celebrities who call themselves libertarian. This article reprinted with permission from the *Advocates for Self-Government*. To read profiles of dozens of libertarian celebrities, visit: www.TheAdvocates.org/celebrities.html.

Utah town elects libertarian mayor

On Nov. 21, *Utah Policy Daily* published an interview with Randy T. Simmons, a professor and political science department head at Utah State University who had recently been elected mayor of Providence, Utah, a town of about 5,300.

In the interview, Simmons said he is involved in politics because he has "a passion for liberty," and followed that up immediately by saying he is a "libertarian in the same sense that Ronald Reagan and Barry Goldwater were."

"My guiding principle is that we should unleash capitalism and let people run their private lives without interference from government," he added.

His ambition is "to promote liberty and efficiency-enhancing public policies, restricting people's ability to take their neighbors' property through zoning and encouraging user fees for services provided by government."

While not a member of the Libertarian Party, Simmons is very much a libertarian, an issue he clarified for a Web site from Utah State University, USUAggies.com, which also interviewed him after his election as Providence mayor.

"I often view the Republicans and Democrats as the Evil Party and the Stupid Party," he said in that interview. "My problem is that I seldom know which is which."

However, he added, he generally tends to align himself more with Republicans than Democrats "because Republicans tend to be more free-market oriented."

Doubt his libertarian credentials? Later in the USUAggies.com interview, he riffed on Social Security, saying the program is "a well-funded Ponzi scheme" which, like any pyramid scheme, "will fail as the base of the pyramid shrinks in relation to the top."

"From an ethical point of view I find it objectionable. Why should your generation be taxed to support the retirement for the richest generation in the history of the world?"

Simmons holds a bachelor's degree from USU, as well as a master's degree and doctorate in political science from the University of Oregon.

In addition to heading up his department at USU and teaching, Simmons also works for the Property & Environment Research Center, for which he writes columns critical of the Endangered Species Act, among other topics.

As his proudest public moment, he lists "publishing a full-page article on the op-ed pages of the *Washington Post* on the follies of the ivory trade ban [which] does not help elephants and makes poor Africans even poorer."

He lists Robert Heinlein's *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* and Orson

Scott Card's *Ender's Game* as among his favorite books, along with the Robert Fox translations of several books of the Bible — "and of course, *Beyond Politics: Market, Welfare, and the Failure of Bureaucracy*, by William C. Mitchell and Randy Simmons."

Among his mentors he listed Moses, Job, Adam Smith, F.A. Hayek — and the authors of the Federalist Papers.

Is he an LP member? No.

Is he a libertarian? Apparently, there's not much doubt of that.

Online Resources for LP Members

■ Find contact info for your state Libertarian Party or your State Chair

Visit: www.LP.org

Click on: Organization

Click on: State Parties

Click on: [Your state]

■ Find contact info for the National Committee

Visit: www.LP.org

Click on: Organization

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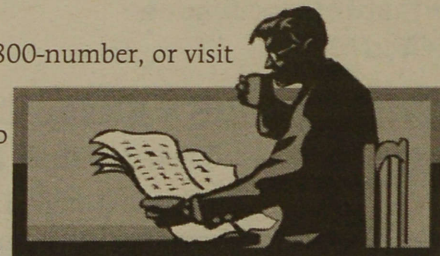
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Get people to "Push the Button" and become libertarians. (p.81)
Treasure Map for finding people who urgently want freedom. (p.83)
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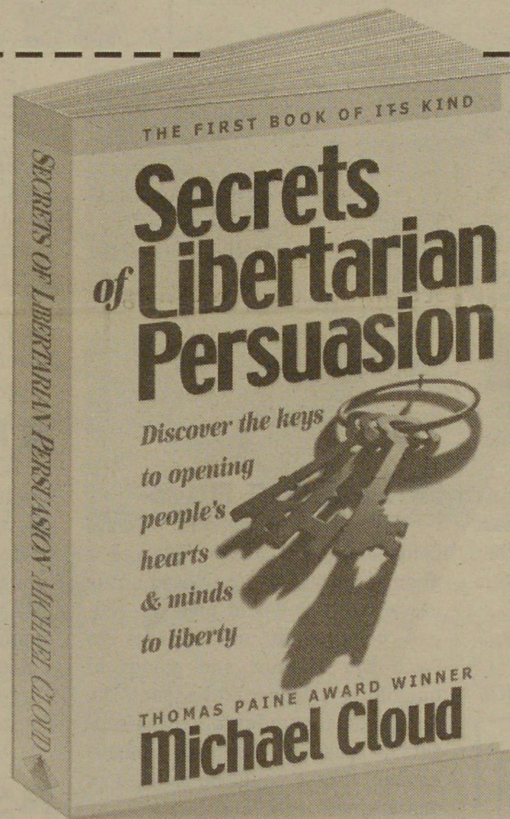
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LENEWS 1-06

TALKING POINTS

FEMA head Michael Brown, welfare, and poppy eradication

■ Fourth Amendment?

Miami police announced Monday they will stage random shows of force at hotels, banks and other public places to keep terrorists guessing and remind people to be vigilant.

Deputy Police Chief Frank Fernandez said officers might, for example, surround a bank building, check the IDs of everyone going in and out and hand out leaflets about terror threats.

"This is an in-your-face type of strategy. It's letting the terrorists know we are out there," Fernandez said.

The operations will keep terrorists off guard, Fernandez said. He said al-Qaida and other terrorist groups plot attacks by putting places under surveillance and watching for flaws and patterns in security.

"People are definitely going to notice it," Fernandez said. "We want that shock. We want that awe. But at the same time, we don't want people to feel their rights are being threatened. We need them to be our eyes and ears."

—CURT ANDERSON

The Associated Press
November 30, 2005

■ Private disaster

Former head of FEMA Michael Brown has opened up his own private disaster agency. That's like Robert Blake opening up a marriage

counseling facility.

—DAVID LETTERMAN
CBS's Late Show

November 28, 2005

■ Say what?

"Considering the dire circumstances that we have in New Orleans — virtually a city that has been destroyed — things are going relatively well," [FEMA's Michael] Brown said.

—CNN.com

September 1, 2005

■ Medical welfare

"For years, New York Medicaid, the state's health care program for the poor, has been an open-air bazaar for drug companies and their wares. Prescriptions that are severely restricted in many states are often dispensed freely here, and at higher prices, costing taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars," the New York Times reports.

"As a result, the state program spends more on drugs for each Medicaid recipient than any other state but West Virginia, according to federal statistics. While other states have tried to fight soaring drug costs, New York lacks even the most basic controls that dozens of other states and private health insurers have used."

In "Medicaid's Untallied Costs," Michael Cannon, Cato's director of health policy studies, writes: "Med-

icaid is welfare. Like other forms of welfare, it discourages work and charitable effort among the taxpayers who fund it. More troubling, though, is that it discourages self-sufficiency and encourages dependency among beneficiaries.

"In addition, Medicaid increases the cost of private medical care and health insurance. A program that offers services effectively free of charge to tens of millions of beneficiaries cannot help but fuel demand and medical inflation.

"Providing medical assistance to the poor without fostering dependency is a delicate balancing act. And the costs incurred by getting it wrong don't get a line-item in the federal budget. Reforming Medicaid along the lines of the 1996 welfare law would allow the states to strike a better balance for all involved."

—GREG GARNER, EDITOR

Cato Daily Dispatch
November 23, 2005

■ Tracking rules

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a phone-book-thick proposed rule yesterday that would give the federal government new powers to track the comings and goings of individual travelers and expand the circumstances under which passengers exposed to a serious communicable disease could be isolated or quarantined.

The proposed changes are the latest in a series of preparatory moves aimed at solidifying federal health officials' legal authority to take actions aimed at slowing the spread of emerging contagious diseases, such as pandemic flu.

The new provisions — the costs of which would fall mostly on the travel industry — call for greater scrutiny of passengers for signs of illness and greater efforts by airlines and others to obtain personal contact information from travelers. They also broaden the list of symptoms that would make people subject to quarantine.

Although the rules strengthen federal authority to isolate passengers suspected of being infected, they also spell out in unprecedented detail key legal rights, including appeals processes, for citizens. The agency will accept public comment for 60 days before issuing a final regulation.

Officials said they are confident that the vast majority of Americans will support the changes so the government could better protect them from a major outbreak — whether naturally occurring or from a bioterrorism attack.

[A]lthough travelers would be asked to provide more personal information — including phone numbers and e-mail addresses — the goal is simply to be able to contact people if it becomes apparent they sat near an infected person while traveling.

No one could be forcibly isolated for longer than the amount of time it takes for the suspected disease to be no longer communicable — less than a month for most diseases.

The CDC estimated that the costs of implementing the new rule na-

sidies for the 11 crops and products noted by Oxfam total \$9.3 billion for the United States out of the country's \$19.5 billion in subsidy payments, and \$4.2 billion for the European Union out of \$44.8 billion, on an annual basis.

Oxfam, a nongovernmental advocacy group involved in world poverty issues, has lobbied strenuously for rich countries to reduce agricultural subsidies so that developing countries in Africa and elsewhere can better compete and grow their economies.

The talks in Hong Kong are part of a round of trade discussions that began in 2001 in Doha, Qatar. They were termed a "development round," meant to lift the world's poor nations out of poverty by giving their farmers better access to developed world markets.

American trade officials said on Tuesday that they could not comment on the accuracy of the Oxfam estimates, but that the United States is trying to eliminate the kinds of farm subsidies that could run afoul of the W.T.O. rules.

—ALEXIS BARRIONUEVO

The New York Times
November 30, 2005

■ Pay as you go

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is suggesting the federal government tax hybrids and other fuel-efficient cars.

The chamber says the federal Highway Trust Fund is running out of money to maintain the nation's highways, and that Congress needs to consider new sources of revenue.

Chamber leaders also are suggesting billing drivers for miles driven.

Why tax hybrids and other alternative fuel vehicles? Proponents say drivers should have to pay their fair share to fill potholes and fix bridges, regardless of how much or what kind of fuel they use.

—The Associated Press

November 25, 2005

■ Poppies

Total U.S. spending on poppy eradication and other anti-drug efforts in Afghanistan last year: \$780,000,000.

Amount it would have cost to purchase the country's entire 2004 poppy crop: \$600,000,000.

—HARPER'S INDEX

Harper's Magazine
October 2005

■ Subsidies

A failure by the United States and the European Union to make significant progress toward reducing agricultural subsidies in trade talks in Hong Kong could bring legal challenges on both sides of the Atlantic, trade and agricultural experts say.

In a report to be released Wednesday, Oxfam International highlights three American commodity crops vulnerable to lawsuits and eight agricultural products in the European Union that could be sources of cases.

Several independent experts agree with Oxfam's assertion that complaints could be brought against the United States' corn, rice and sorghum programs, while the 25-country European Union could be challenged on subsidies for tomatoes, tobacco, butter, wine and spirits, citrus juices and processed fruits like canned peaches and pears.

According to the report, the sub-

■ Sowell on politics

Random thoughts on the passing scene:

■ Nightmare for the 2008 Presidential election: Hillary Clinton versus John McCain. I wouldn't know whether to vote Libertarian or move to Australia.

■ We are so much more rational about sports than we are about politics. No one considers it "unfair" that Tiger Woods does so much better than the average golfer, or resents him for it, or accuses him of "gouging" when he collects big bucks.

■ Since neither the creationists nor the evolutionists were there when the world began, why are our schools teaching either set of beliefs, when there are so many hard facts that the schools are failing to teach?

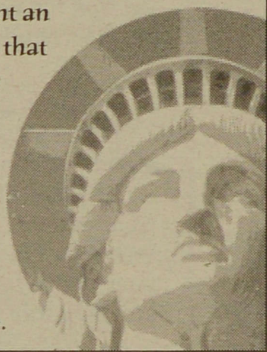
—THOMAS SOWELL

Syndicated columnist
November 30, 2005

"Tyranny is always better organized than freedom."

—CHARLES PEGUY, FRENCH PHILOSOPHER (1873-1914)

That's not all: It's got more people working for it, too. And it's better funded. That's where you come in. If you want America to someday live up to its noble libertarian ideals, the Libertarian Party needs to be able to mount an effective challenge to the political parties that are more interested in pushing us towards tyranny than towards liberty. How can you help? By naming the LP in your will or insurance policy. For a private discussion of this option, call National LP Treasurer Mark Nelson at (563) 340-6151. Or e-mail him at: treasurer@LP.org, and include "Planned Giving" in the subject line.



■ Medicare

Last week, as Medicare cheerleaders valiantly attempted to persuade, bribe or threaten seniors to sign-up for one of dozens of different prescription drug plans, there were numerous reports of people being so totally befuddled they might just take a pass.

The number of people eligible for Medicare will nearly double by 2030. Medicare is projected to rise from 12 percent of the federal budget to 25 percent by 2025, which is literally unsustainable because young taxpayers will not sustain it.

We got into this mess as a result of 40 years of political hubris. Despite ample evidence to the contrary, legislators and bureaucrats continue to believe they should dictate what sort of insurance coverage seniors should be allowed to buy.

When it comes to the new Medicare drug plans, Congress assumes folks in their 80s must be sufficiently proficient with computers to log on to medicare.gov and pick between dozens of different Medicare drug plans. Yet that same Congress imagines those same seniors must be protected from any opportunity to choose insurance that makes economic sense.

—ALAN REYNOLDS
Townhall.com

November 17, 2005

■ Exit strategy

President Bush had an embarrassing moment after holding a press conference in China, did you see this on the news? He tried to leave the room, but the doors were locked. Once again, no exit strategy.

—JAY LENO
NBC's The Tonight Show
November 22, 2005

■ D.C. baseball

The [Washington, D.C.] government significantly underestimated the price of a state-of-the-art stadium for the Washington Nationals and as a result has been forced to shift \$55 million set aside for infrastructure improvements to cover escalating costs.

City officials had included money to repave roads and expand a Metro station near the stadium in the \$535 million budget approved by the D.C. Council last year. Those funds now will go instead toward labor and building materials and to cover the cost of land for the stadium, which also is more expensive than anticipated.

The D.C. Sports and Entertainment Commission, which is overseeing the construction, determined that the cost of the distinctive ballpark designed by its architects has risen from \$244 million to \$337 million.

The commission will ask the federal government and private developers to pay for the public works projects that have been removed from the budget.

D.C. Council member David A. Catania, who voted against the publicly funded ballpark, said the

budget changes violate the law that authorized the stadium financing.

—DAVID NAKAMURA AND THOMAS HEATH
The Washington Post
November 21, 2005

■ Bad intelligence

Democrats charge President Bush with misleading the Congress and the electorate over prewar intelligence. Last week, Sen. John Kerry said Mr. Bush's handling of the war was "one of the great acts of misleading and deception in American history."

Vice President Dick Cheney re-

joined that such attacks are among the "most dishonest and reprehensible charges that have ever been aired" in Washington.

If anything good comes out of this heated debate, it is perhaps the consensus that on the momentous decision of war or peace, presidential deception is repugnant.

The Democrats who are condemning President Bush hope that we will forget about their passive role on the U.S. military mission in Bosnia. Much to their chagrin, however, this month marks the tenth anniversary of the Balkans undertaking — so it is worth recalling how that mission

got underway. President Clinton announced the deployment of troops in a nationally televised address. Mr. Clinton said this mission would be "precisely defined with clear realistic goals" that could be achieved in a "definite period of time."

What kind of time frame did the president have in mind? He assured viewers that this mission "should and will take about one year." The White House and the State Department then went to work to sell the mission to a skeptical Congress.

Throughout the 1996 election year, the Clinton administration led voters to believe that it would

adhere to the one-year deadline. ... A few weeks after securing his reelection, however, President Clinton suddenly announced a change.

We now know that our intervention would last nine years, not one. ... The salient point is that Mr. Clinton and his national security team did not think the American people would accept a long-term intervention in the Balkans, so they packaged the mission as a one-year affair, after which our troops would quickly come home.

—TIMOTHY LYNCH
FoxNews.com
November 25, 2005

PEIRCE 2006 Ohio LIBERTARIAN FOR GOVERNOR MAKE OHIO FREE AGAIN

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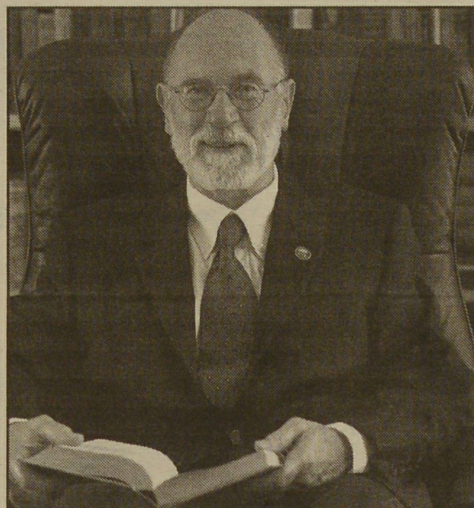
Ohio ranks near the wrong end of all of the recent rankings of the states: highest tax burden, least economic freedom, worst environment for small business survival. It is also the 48th fastest growing state in population.

The major parties just don't get the message. Ohio has been misgoverned by Republicans for decades and the Democrats are promising even more of the same. As Bill Peirce has traveled around the state he has found voters everywhere fed up with professional politicians and eager to hear the message of limited government and individual freedom and responsibility.

While the Republican and Democrat parties are torn by bitter primary battles, the Peirce campaign has obtained the endorsement of the Libertarian Party of Ohio, has selected Mark Noble for the Lieutenant Governor slot on the ticket, and has launched the drive to obtain the 5,000 valid signatures needed to secure a place on the ballot.

FREE TO PROSPER - FREE TO LIVE

Bill Peirce will devote full time to carrying the message of freedom to the people of Ohio. Government has failed so badly in the State that voters are ready to listen to a Libertarian message. The only thing we lack is the money to get the message to the people. This is a campaign that can make a difference. Please help us.



About Dr. Bill Peirce

After earning an A.B. degree from Harvard in 1960 and a Ph.D. in Economics from Princeton in 1966, Peirce taught in the Economics Department of Case Western Reserve University for more than 35 years. During 6 of those years he served as chairman of the Economics Department. He was named Professor Emeritus of Economics in 2002. He was a visiting scholar at the University of Maastricht, The Netherlands, in 1988-89, and at the University of Mannheim, Germany, in 1996.

Bill Peirce has published books on Bureaucratic Failure, Energy Economics, and Technological Change. He has also written articles, chapters, and short pieces on labor economics, the extractive industries, privatization, the European Union, and local public finance. Teaching specialties include Public Finance, Public Choice, and Energy Economics.

Peirce is a Trustee of the American Institute for Economic Research and serves as Academic Advisor to the Heartland Institute and the Buckeye Institute. He is a member of the American Economic Association, the Public Choice Society, and the International Association of Energy Economists.

Bill Peirce has been married for 39 years and has 3 children.

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Don't delay! Space is limited and classes are filling quickly!

'Secret law' case heard by federal appeals court

By J. Daniel Cloud
LP NEWS EDITOR

There is apparently a law that allows the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to require all airline passengers to present identification before being allowed on planes.

The problem is, no one is willing to say what the law is, much less present it for scrutiny.

Libertarian John Gilmore decided two years ago that he isn't willing to take Justice Department officials at their word when they said there is such a rule, and he filed a lawsuit arguing that if there is such a law, it is unconstitutional.

The lawsuit names U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft, FBI Director Robert Mueller, Tom Ridge of the Office of Homeland Security, and several other federal department heads — as well as Southwest and United airlines — as defendants.

Gilmore argues that the ID regulation is unconstitutional for

several reasons: It is unpublished; it requires government agents to search citizens who are not suspected of crimes; it burdens the rights to travel, associate and petition the government; and it discriminates against those who choose anonymity.

Moreover, Gilmore argued that because the regulations are secret, they violate the federal Freedom of Information Act.

The government defendants wanted to keep this case sealed, but a federal appeals court ruled on Sept. 10, 2005, that the government must argue the case in public.

The case is underway.

In early December, a three-judge panel of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals heard beginning oral arguments in Gilmore's case, which stems from a July 4, 2002, incident.

While trying to fly out of Oakland International Airport in California, Gilmore declined to show a government-issued photo ID to Southwest Airline employees who demanded to

see such identification.

He was then given conflicting information as to whether the identification requirement was a government mandate or an airline regulation.

So he went to the San Francisco airport, where he encountered the same restriction: He couldn't fly without showing identification.

A life member of the Libertarian Party, Gilmore explained at the time that he was flying to Washington, D.C., to petition the federal government for a redress of grievances — specifically regarding the ID requirement, according to *LP News* accounts in 2002 and 2003.

Airline employees eventually informed Gilmore that the airport was following security directives from TSA and that the directives weren't available in writing.

Gilmore and his attorney contend that by blocking him from flying, the TSA had effectively taken away his constitutional right to "petition for redress of grievances."

Federal officials disagreed in the December hearing, as they have since the suit first went to court.

U.S. District Judge Susan Illston dismissed Gilmore's case in March 2004, saying that Gilmore didn't have to fly to D.C., that there were numerous other ways he could have gotten there.

Thus, his right to petition the government hadn't been taken away — he simply couldn't fly to the nation's Capitol without identification, Illston said.

The same argument came up several times in the most recent hearing, with federal witnesses saying there is no constitutional right to fly on an airline.

The three judges reportedly were skeptical regarding the idea of a secret law, as it was presented to them by Justice Department officials.

The Justice Department has said it could identify the secret law under seal, making it available to the judges in the case — but any public description of the contents of the

law would not be permitted, and defense attorneys wouldn't be allowed to see the law.

The department argues that national security concerns make it necessary that directives dealing with transportation be kept secret, and officials refuse even to confirm or deny the existence of the law.

But in America, said James Harrison, an attorney representing Gilmore, "we do not have secret laws."

If the panel of appeals court judges agree with Gilmore that the law shouldn't be secret, or that he shouldn't be expected to follow a law no one can point to definitively, they could send the case back to district court for a complete trial.

"I believe I have a right to travel in my own country without presenting what amounts to an internal passport," Gilmore told *USA Today*, noting that he believes the case will be successful.

"I have a right to be anonymous, (to not) be tracked by my government for no good reason."

Changes to LP Bylaws proposed

[Editor's note: This is the fourth in a series of articles detailing the activities of the national LP's 2006 Bylaws Committee. The committee is considering alterations to the LP bylaws — proposed changes that will be voted on at the 2006 national LP convention in Portland, Ore. Previous proposals were printed in the September-November 2005 issues of *LP News*.]

To recap, the 2006 Bylaws Committee has decided to use sentiment polling to rank and filter all proposals for change that come before the committee. Each member indicates his sentiments for each proposal.

The possible sentiments are strongly opposed, somewhat opposed, neutral, somewhat in favor or strongly in favor. By assigning a numerical value from 1 to 5 for these sentiments, we are able to gauge the degree to which the proposal is supported.

We actively welcome proposals from the membership at large. We also welcome the feedback of our members.

While there are 10 people on this committee, it is possible that we will not see every advantage or pitfall the various proposals may present.

■ Proposal 11: Base decisions on delegate apportionment rather than membership

In several places in the bylaws, decisions are based on "the same membership numbers used for delegate apportionment." This proposal would substantially simplify

that language to refer directly to delegate numbers.

■ Proposal 12: Allow LNC expulsion of party members on affiliate request

Several affiliates have expulsion provisions, but even if a person is expelled by one of those affiliates from membership in the affiliate, he is still a member of the national LP.

This proposal would dictate that the national LP (including the LNC and staff) would honor the affiliate's decision and remove such a member from the national party rolls, as well.

■ Proposal 13: Change in delegate list submission deadline

The bylaws (Article 13, paragraph 5) specify that the affiliate delegate lists must be submitted no later than one month before the corresponding national LP convention. This proposal would change the deadline to one week before the convention.

At the last convention we encountered a significant problem. At least one state sent amendments to their delegate lists via e-mail to national headquarters only a day or so before the convention start, but all staff members were working at the Convention, so the changes were neither received nor processed.

This resulted in a problem with credentialing. The affiliate correctly identified that the Bylaws permitted what they did, but the Bylaws allow a nearly impossible situation. The language should specify a cutoff, and the procedure for handling amendments after that date.

■ Proposal 14: Repeal National Campaign Platform

The proposer has provided the

following argument in support (he also endorsed eliminating the LP Program): In 2004, Michael Badnarik did not submit a separate campaign platform, instead choosing to use the LP platform.

With neither a separate LP Program or campaign platform in place, there no longer exists any official document detailing immediate "transitional" proposals. The platform reformat attempts to take this into account, by dividing platform language into issue, principle, solution and transition sections.

Those who want transitional language now have an avenue, by amending the LP Platform. There is no reason why the Platform can't speak to both direction and destination. Just about every imaginable libertarian policy document already exists somewhere, and if none are totally on a particular candidate's message, he is always free to create his own.

■ Proposal 15: Bylaws back on agenda at every convention

It can be argued that with the time savings afforded by some of the other proposals already covered, there should be time available to consider bylaws proposals at every national convention, instead of only at non-presidential nomination conventions, as is currently required.

(In coming months, we'll keep you updated on other proposals. The Web site is now available for you to review those proposals that have already been presented in *LP News* and to comment on those proposals. Go to: lp.org/bylaws/index.php.)

■ About the author: LNC member Dan Karlan is secretary of the 2006 Bylaws Committee.

By Dan
Karlan



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We intend to fix this.

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The American people are ready now for more liberty and less government. They are just not ready for no government.

We are freedom lovers committed to turning the Libertarian Party into a far more useful tool for advancing liberty. We want to reform the platform so that Libertarian candidates can proudly quote our platform and still win elections.

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Allen Hacker, Campaign Manager and Treasurer*

Louisiana Libertarian on the campaign trail — for 2007

By J. Daniel Cloud
LP NEWS EDITOR

A Louisiana man who helped many evacuees from New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, which hit the Louisiana coast on Aug. 29, 2005, is running for the Libertarian Party's nomination for governor.

T. Lee Horne is a resident of Franklin, La., the community to which many Libertarians sent money and relief materials after the townsfolk made it clear they would not seek or accept government assistance for hurricane refugees.

In fact, when volunteers with the Red Cross got lost on their way to New Orleans, they were sheltered by Franklin volunteers. The Red Cross workers said the town was doing a fantastic job, and that the Red Cross wouldn't be needed there.

It was Horne who initially called Louisiana LP Chair Vinson Mouser and told him about Franklin's relief efforts, and Mouser passed the word along to national LP headquarters.

Horne said he saw results from the LP's call for assistance via LP.org and a mass e-mail, and reports that the effort made a big difference for those helping people evacuate from the New Orleans area.

"A lot of materials and a good bit of money came in that we didn't

know where it came from, so it's hard to say what came because of the LP's involvement and what didn't," Horne said. "But I do know that several hundred dollars at least came directly from the party's help."

"And it was needed. People were coming in to Franklin from New Orleans, having broken radiator hoses or fan belts, or tires that didn't hold up on the trip, and we were able to help them. So in addition to the shelter and material goods, we were able to get a number of cars back on the road."

As it happens, Horne's campaign activity helped a number of people get out of the deluged Gulf area.

Horne has been driving around the countryside in Louisiana for almost two years now — he started campaigning for the 2007 gubernatorial election in 2003, he reports — and has memorized many of the backroads.

People in Franklin know of this, and when they started getting calls from friends and family who couldn't leave New Orleans because the major roads were blocked, they started calling Horne for directions.

It's not every candidate whose campaign peregrination actually contributes to saving lives.

At 55 years of age, Horne has time to drive around the state because of the nature of his business:

He manages trust funds for families and is on the board of directors for a few small corporations, and his business is done primarily via computer.

When he's not working in Franklin or New Orleans — where he keeps an apartment — he has been spending a great deal of time driving his old camper van around the state, handing out magnetic business cards announcing his candidacy. And he said people are starting to recognize him and tell him about where they've seen his card posted — including on newspaper boxes and in public restrooms.

How did a small-town man with no political experience get interested in running for governor?

The same way many others do: by realizing that something had to be done.

"I was talking with some friends over drinks and supper one night,

looking at the state of affairs in the state, and I was disgusted," Horne recounts. "I remember being in college and talking about taking care of the stupid social problems here at home before we even thought about



fixing other countries' problems, and I started thinking about what a mess we've made of it."

"I kept looking for somebody to do something, and finally decided it was time to do something myself."

"Before, I was busy running my business. But after the last election — and due to the War on Drugs and the PATRIOT Act — I started thinking, 'what the hell are they doing?' This is my generation. We were going to fix our country's problems, and we've made it so much worse."

"Well, somebody needs to do something to stop it."

In Louisiana, Horne thinks he's

the man for the job.

And he's putting his own money into the campaign. So far he has spent close to \$25,000 on the race, and the election's almost two years away. He has produced a television commercial and was getting prepared to start fundraising when Hurricane Katrina hit.

"It seemed tacky to be fundraising while the state was dealing with a huge disaster like that, so I held off on asking people for money," Horne said.

Until he starts getting his commercials on the air, and presumably after, Horne will keep touring the state and meeting people, so that people will know who he is when they hear his name.

"I can take care of my business anywhere there's an Internet signal, whether it's New Orleans or Shreveport or Cut Off," he said. "So I've been going to fairs and festivals all over the state — the Seafood Festival, the Duck Festival. At the Festival of Lights in Nacogdoches, they really welcomed me. They let me walk down the parade route with the parade, handing out my magnetic business cards and introducing myself. That was a good day."

It's safe to say T. Lee Horne doesn't intend to be merely a paper candidate when the polls open in late 2007.

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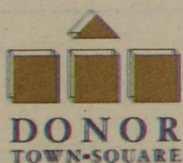
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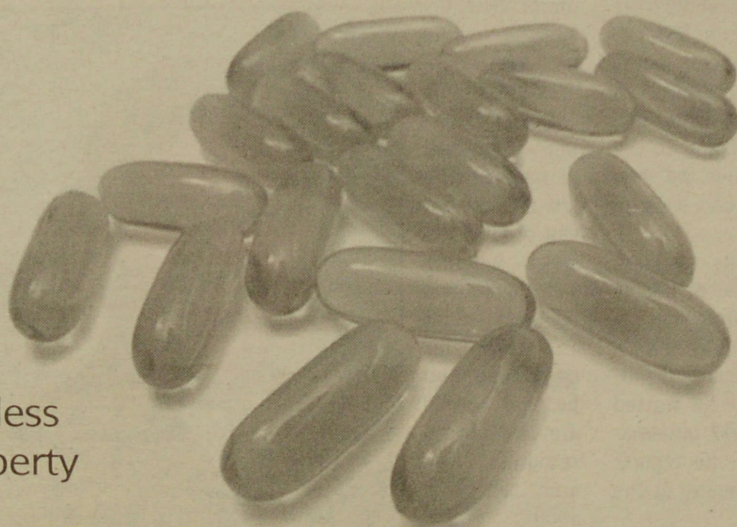


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AFFILIATE NEWS

Tax money, turtles and the 214-year-old Bill of Rights

■ FLORIDA

Land purchase decried by Senate candidate

Florida legislators recently decided to pay \$350 million for 73,000 acres — a move Libertarian Karl Dickey decried as an irresponsible and wasteful use of so-called public funds.

"Where is this money coming from? The Florida taxpayer, of course," said Dickey, the LP's District 30 candidate for the Florida Senate.

"This is an obscene amount of taxpayer money being spent on more land the state will once again defile," he said, noting that the state government currently plans to spend billions in taxpayer money to restore land it has slowly destroyed over the last several decades.

Florida residents would be far better served if "the restoration and new land acquisition was placed in the hands of such organizations as The Nature Conservancy and the Audubon Society of Florida," Dickey said.

"These two private organizations would be better suited to manage the land."

Rather than spending large sums of tax money on land, Florida's legislators should look for alternatives to spending public funds on such projects, he said.

Unfortunately the state government — like politicians in most other states — seems more interested in raising fees and costs for its citizens than in reining in its overspending.

"That's why I'm running for office," Dickey said. "The Florida voter wasn't consulted on this massive expenditure. This spending spree of our state government must stop."

■ KENTUCKY

New regulation will tally registered Libs

The state of Kentucky has always let voters register as Libertarian or as any other political party. There is a line on every voter registration card where people could write in their political affiliation.

But in the past, anyone who registered as anything other than Democrat or Republican were listed on the state's record books simply as "Other."

Effective Nov. 15, 2005, however, the state started properly coding people who write "Libertarian," "Green," "Constitution," "Reform," "Socialist Workers" or "Independent" on their voter registration form's "party membership" line.

Unfortunately, the newly approved system applies only to voter registration forms filled out on or after Nov. 15.

This means that anyone who is already registered as a member of one of the listed "minor parties" must re-register if they want to be coded correctly.

What difference does it make?

"We have never been able to know how many registered Libertarians there are in Kentucky, but now we can," said Richard Winger of *Balot Access News*.

If people who are already registered as Libertarian don't re-register, however, the state's count of Libertarian voters won't be accurate.

"If we don't get the word out to our Kentucky members, the state will be issuing an official tally on Jan. 1, 2006, with an absurdly low number of registered Libertarians," Winger said.

So if you live in Kentucky and registered to vote prior to Nov. 15, 2005, go register again as a Libertarian, with the knowledge that the state will now go to the trouble of registering you as something other than "Other."

If you haven't registered to vote at all, do so.

And do it soon, even if it might be a while before the next election cycle.

■ OHIO

Turtle leads to jail time for pet store owner

Ohio state law mandates that owners of native reptiles must tag them with transponder chips inserted under the animal's skin.

Terry Wilkins, who owns a pet store, has the dubious honor of being the first Ohio resident sent to

jail for violating the rule, which is part of a 2000 state wildlife-preservation law, Ohio LP Executive Director Robert Butler said in a press release.

Wilkins' crime? He didn't insert the required bar-code tag in his daughter's pet box turtle.

"In Columbus, the reported number of violent crimes such as rapes and murders is nearly double the national average," Butler said. "Thefts and burglaries are well over that."

"But instead of focusing on truly despicable and injurious crimes, state law enforcement officials have decided to pursue and jail an unfortunate pet store owner."

Wilkins said he doesn't want to tag his animals because the process can lead to injuries and infertility — a particular problem for a pet store owner, who must breed his own animals in order to legally sell them.

According to a report in the *Columbus Dispatch*, Wilkins said he doesn't want to follow the state law because he considers it torture, and because the procedure could lead to the death of the animal.

Wilkins was sentenced to 90 days in jail, all but three days of which was suspended, and he will be put on probation. He was also required to reimburse the state for the expense it will incur by jailing him for three days.

"The Libertarian Party has an alternative to Ohio's repressive policies against small businesses," Butler noted, pointing out that the LP continually fights for the rights of small business owners by trying to reduce burdensome regulations.

■ TEXAS

LP helps candidates file to run for office

The filing period for candidates for state and district offices in 2006 ends on Jan. 2 in Texas, and the Texas LP announced on its Web site in mid-December that more than 70 candidates had already filed to run on the Libertarian ticket.

The site also included links to the Texas secretary of state's Web site, which lists all offices up for election in 2006.

But the LP didn't just tell Texas Libertarians what elections would be held in the coming year. Party officials also provided the means to help Libertarians file for office and get ready for their campaigns — thereby ensuring that there will be more Libertarian candidates on ballots across the state later this year.

In four early December events,



■ California Libertarians John Inks (at left), Morey Straus (behind the chart) and Lois Garcia administer the Advocates for Self Government's World's Smallest Political Quiz to a throng of young people at the Junior State of America (JSA) convention held Nov. 19 in Santa Clara, Calif. The event attracted about 1,200 area high school students, who "are very eager to talk with us," said Lawrence Samuels, Northern Vice Chair of the California LP. "Many tell us that their father or some other relative or friend is a libertarian," Samuels added. JSA is an organization for high school students interested in politics, government and the law. —Photo by Lawrence Samuels

Libertarian officials invited candidates to bring their nomination forms to be reviewed and notarized free of charge, simplifying the filing process.

Volunteers were also on hand to provide free digital photos of each candidate, both for use on the state LP Web site and for the candidates' use during their campaigns.

State LP Chair Pat Dixon also promised to attend the events, to give pointers on running for office.

As one of the LP's newest elected officeholders — he was elected in 2005 as a city councilman in Lago Vista, a city of about 5,000 located near Austin — Dixon was uniquely prepared to give campaign advice.

State LP officials even had paperwork available for people who hadn't had a chance to pick it up, and promised to help Libertarians complete it at any of the four events.

Even after the nomination forms were filled out, reviewed and notarized, the newly filed candidates for office weren't done: They were also given an update on the Texas LP; they were given instructions for the precinct and county conventions to be held in March; and plans were made for the November 2006 election cycle.

Texas LP Executive Director Wes Benedict said he hopes this assistance for candidates will help flood Texas ballots with Libertarian choices this year.

■ VIRGINIA

Bill of Rights Day celebrated by JAL

Central Virginia's Jefferson Area Libertarians (JAL) celebrated Bill of Rights day on Dec. 15 by gathering

on Charlottesville's Downtown Mall — in spite of the freezing temperatures and continuously falling sleet — to read the document on the 214th anniversary of its ratification.

Participating in the event were Libertarian National Committee representative James W. Lark III, JAL Chairman Arin Sime, Lindsey Burke, Roger Evans, John Munchmeyer, Nick Sorrentino and Gary Westmoreland.

The celebration earned the JAL Libertarians a story and photo on the front page of the *Daily Progress*, a local newspaper, which noted that Sime handed out copies of the Bill of Rights to passersby, many of whom stopped to listen as the text was read.

"This has been a terrible year for the Bill of Rights," Munchmeyer told *Daily Progress* reporter Jessica Kitchin.

"We do this every year but this year is especially important" because of the Supreme Court's ruling on the *Kelo v. New London* eminent domain case, the ongoing attempts to renew the PATRIOT Act, and other civil liberties violations.

This was the group's seventh annual celebration of Bill of Rights day.

The special significance of the Bill of Rights is that it recognizes that "rights do not come from human beings or the work of human beings," Munchmeyer reportedly said.

"The Bill of Rights is not a list of your rights at all; it is a list of things government cannot do to your rights. We are extremely fortunate to live in this country — a country where the power of the state is subservient to the rights of the individual."

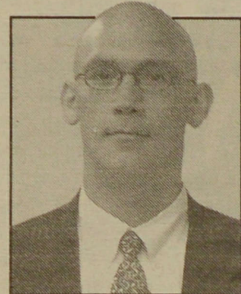
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THE EDITOR

Dealing with the USPS

I recently purchased a vintage camera on eBay, a 1948 Contax IIa I've been dreaming about for several years. It's a beautiful piece, with jewel-like workmanship and one of the nicest lenses I've ever seen. Needless to say, I was anxious to receive it in the mail.

Unfortunately, the only way the seller would send the camera was via the United States Postal Service.



By J. Daniel Cloud

LP NEWS EDITOR

Because I work from home I was able to sit in my office — which has a door to the front porch — every day during the hours when the mailman customarily comes. I knew the camera was coming with insurance and would require a signature, so I wanted to be ready when the man came with my new toy ... or tool, since I plan to write off the expense on my taxes in the spring.

So I was watching when the postal delivery guy came by one day. He didn't knock but I saw him out my window. He wasn't carrying a package, so I figured my camera had once again not come. I went outside a few minutes later and there in the mailbox on the porch was a slip saying, "We tried to deliver your package, but you weren't home."

Mystified, I called the handy number printed on the reverse of the slip and told the woman who answered that I was, in fact, at home, and had actually seen the mailman's package-less hands as he walked to the front door. She promised to have him deliver it again between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. that day.

Ah, it was finally going to come!

I sat at the front door from 4:00 until 4:30, then decided to sit on the front porch and wait for the delivery man. I was getting a bit obsessive about this camera.

But 5 p.m. came and left, and at 5:45 I decided business was done for the day and gave up on the camera's eventual delivery.

The next morning I called the post office and a friendly voice answered with the name of the office, adding, "Where service is our business," or words to that effect. It was the same lady to whom I had spoken the previous day. I told her my package hadn't been delivered as promised, and she said she had personally attempted to deliver it.

"I could hear music or the TV through the door, but nobody answered when I knocked," she said.

"What time was it?" I asked.

"4:45 or 5:00," she responded, at which point I expressed my opinion that she was indulging in a falsehood, pointing out that I had been sitting on the front porch from 4:30 to almost 6:00.

She didn't sound sheepish as she told me that it was at the office and I could pick it up whenever I chose.

I got the address and walked (in the rain) the eight blocks to the office. I had been told they close at 5:30 p.m., and I got there at 5:10 to find the doors locked. The sign said they close at 5:00 p.m., not 5:30 as I'd been instructed.

My head was dry as I walked home in the rain. The water just steamed off as it struck my super-heated noggin.

The next day it wasn't raining, but I was still steamed as I walked to the P.O., thinking my way through various scenarios of retribution.

Once there, I just dropped the delivery slip on the counter, collected my new camera and walked out, although I did unwrap the camera in the office to make sure it wasn't broken. There was a hole knocked in the side of the package, despite the "Fragile" markings on the box. Service is their business, indeed.

This wasn't the first time I've purchased items online, and it certainly wasn't the first time such a delivery has gone poorly. But looking back, I realize most botched deliveries were performed by the USPS, not by UPS or FedEx. Does that mean these private delivery companies don't occasionally screw up? No, I'm sure they do.

But if you have something that "absolutely, positively has to be there overnight," you probably go to FedEx, not to the USPS.

The U.S. mail isn't known for its reliability, speed or efficient customer service. And does that surprise anyone? It is, after all, a government-provided, taxpayer-funded service.

How's this for a postal slogan: Where service is our business — and keeping us in service is your business. Or maybe this one: If frustration is what you ordered, we really deliver.

What do you say we get rid of the USPS and let private enterprise compete for our delivery business? We have nothing to lose but government postal workers. And would that really be such a loss?

[See the *Libertarian Solution* on page 15 for more reasons to privatize the United States Postal Service.]

THE FORUM

Ohio governor candidate Peirce responds to gun control survey

[Editor's notes: A group called *Ohioans for Concealed Carry* (www.OhioCCW.org) recently sent a survey about gun control to all announced candidates for Ohio's 2006 gubernatorial race.

One who responded was Dr. Bill Peirce, the Libertarian Party's candidate. Peirce is Professor Emeritus of Economics at Case Western Reserve University, where he has been teaching since 1966.

In introductory comments to Peirce's survey responses, the Web site notes that "as is common with Libertarian candidates, Mr. Peirce demonstrates unwavering support of the Second Amendment."

Peirce answered the questions clearly, concisely and thoughtfully — exhibiting Libertarian principles while staying on topic.

But I'll let you judge for yourself.]

Q: Article 1, section 4 of the Ohio Constitution reads, "The people have the right to bear arms for their defense and security; but standing armies, in time of peace, are dangerous to liberty, and shall not be kept up; and the military shall be in strict subordination to the civil power." How do you think that applies to the ability of Ohio citizens to own firearms in this day and age?

A: The clear statement of the individual's right to bear arms in the Ohio Constitution is more important than ever today in helping us resist the many efforts to take away that right.

Q: In January of 2004, the Ohio legislature passed Amended Substitute H.B. 12, providing for a concealed handgun license for Ohio citizens. If you had been governor at the time, would you have signed that legislation into law? Please provide a brief explanation.

A: Yes. Although that bill was unnecessarily restrictive, it was a good first step.

Q: "Statewide pre-emption" is a concept that is currently being considered in the Ohio legislature. Do you feel that firearms laws are best managed at the state level, or that individual communities have the right under "home rule" to determine for themselves what laws and restrictions are best suited to their citizens?

A: Local governments have no rights. They have powers granted by the state. Only individuals have rights. The state should never allow local governments to interfere with the rights of citizens.

Q: Do you feel that the "plain sight" requirement for carrying a

firearm in a motor vehicle under the provision of a concealed handgun license is an unnecessary restriction, or that it contributes to the safety of law enforcement officers?

A: Something must be done to simplify the procedures so that CCW license holders do not become violators of the law on a minor technicality.

Q: The City of Columbus recently passed an "Assault Weapons Ban" in the wake of the expiration of the Federal ban. Do you feel that such legislation helps to reduce violent crime?

A: "Assault weapon" is a cosmetic category, not a functional one. Most important, registration is often the prelude to confiscation, and taking weapons from law-abiding people does not reduce violent crime.

Q: Florida recently passed, and Michigan is currently considering, legislation removing the duty to retreat from a self-defense situation and allowing any citizen to stand his/her ground if attacked in a place he/she has a legal right to be. Would you support or oppose similar legislation if it was introduced in Ohio.

A: I support legislation that confirms that individuals have the right to defend themselves and their homes.

Q: Do you feel that the government should disarm citizens in times of emergency as was done in New Orleans?

A: It is a terrible mistake to disarm honest citizens, especially in an emergency when law enforcement breaks down or is stretched thin.

Q: We believe education is true prevention. States such as Florida have adopted legislation mandating statewide education of youngsters using the NRA's "Eddie Eagle" program. This program teaches children who come across a gun to "STOP! Don't Touch! Leave the Area! Tell an Adult!" and never uses images of guns in its material. Ohio has approved minimal funding for this program in the past, but never implemented it as a mandatory safety precaution. Would you support or oppose legislation to mandate this training in classrooms statewide at an age when we teach children to "Stop, Drop, Roll!"?

A: I would endorse and encourage the use of the NRA's Eddie Eagle program in the schools, but I do not support further mandates on the schools, even for such good causes.

Q: Current law allows for any bona fide journalist to obtain the

list of concealed handgun licensees in Ohio. Do you feel that this is an invasion of privacy or an important oversight function?

A: Publication of lists of Concealed Handgun License holders is an invasion of privacy.

Q: Do you feel that "gun free zones," locations where firearms are prohibited even with a concealed handgun license, are important for safety and should be expanded or are unnecessary restrictions and should be reduced? Please provide examples for expansion or reduction.

A: I believe that private property owners can set the rules for their own property. However, the deterrent value of concealed weapons is diminished by the patchwork of restrictions and "gun free zones" that make concealed carry impractical for many people in their daily lives. Accordingly, I believe that government should minimize such mandates.

Q: Ohio law does not allow anyone other than on-duty law enforcement officers to carry a firearm into any establishment in which alcohol is being dispensed under a class D license. Would you, as governor, support or oppose legislation allowing concealed handgun licensees to carry a firearm in those premises, provided the licensee was not under the influence of an alcoholic substance, and was not consuming alcoholic beverages?

A: The individual who is not under the influence and not consuming should not be restricted.

Q: Ohio is a melting pot of cultures. Many Ohio residents are classified as "resident aliens" who live in this country legally, but have chosen for one reason or another not to seek citizenship. These "non-US Citizens" are permitted to purchase and own firearms, and regularly pass the National Instant Check System (NICS) when purchasing a firearm. Would you support or oppose legislation prohibiting non-US Citizens from obtaining concealed handgun licenses in the State of Ohio?

A: Non-citizens who are legally in Ohio and otherwise qualified should be allowed the protection of a concealed weapon.

Q: Do you have any statements you would like to add to clarify your position?

A: The U.S. and Ohio Constitutions specify that the natural rights of people include the right to bear arms. The objective of the law should be to facilitate, not to restrict, the exercise of that right by law-abiding citizens.

End the mail monopoly — abolish the U.S. Postal Service

By J. Daniel Cloud
LP NEWS EDITOR

The United States Postal Service recently announced it will start the new year with a two-cent increase in first-class postage — taking the cost of a stamp from 37 cents to 39 cents effective Jan. 8. This is an increase of 5.4 percent. Most of the Postal Service's other rates will increase by approximately the same percentage.

Postal officers point out this is the service's first postage increase since 2002.

The United Postal Service (UPS) and FedEx have also announced that they are raising their prices by about 5 percent at the beginning of January, citing increased fuel costs as their primary reason for doing so.

The difference is that these two package shipping corporations are forbidden by law to even consider competing with the USPS for a large portion of the mail business.

The USPS has a monopoly on the business of delivering letter mail — a monopoly granted and enforced by the government.

There are exceptions: Private carriers may deliver "extremely urgent letters," but they are forbidden by law to charge less than the USPS. In fact, they must charge at least \$3 per letter or twice the USPS postage, whichever is higher for the advertised service.

Even so, competition from FedEx, UPS and other private carriers — and, not insignificantly, electronic mail — cost the USPS an estimated \$4.5 billion in revenue between 2000 and 2004.

So while the federal Postal Service is able to use the economies of scale involved in delivering millions of small pieces of mail to offset the cost of delivering larger packages — thereby competing directly with FedEx and UPS for that business — the private companies are forbidden to compete with the federal agency by delivering letter mail.

As a result of its monopoly, the USPS has grown to be one of the largest employers in the country. It reportedly ranks third in the nation, following only the U.S. Department of Defense and Wal-Mart.

"The postal workforce is bigger than any two branches of the military combined," according to Tom Readmond of Americans for Tax Reform. "You could replace the Marines and the Army with postal workers, and you'd still have some mailmen left over."

■ Question 1: Why is the USPS given a monopoly?

As any school child should know, monopolies are, to put it lightly, discouraged by the government.

A monopoly in the private sector is against the law, and the circumstances should not change simply because the monopoly is government owned or government controlled.

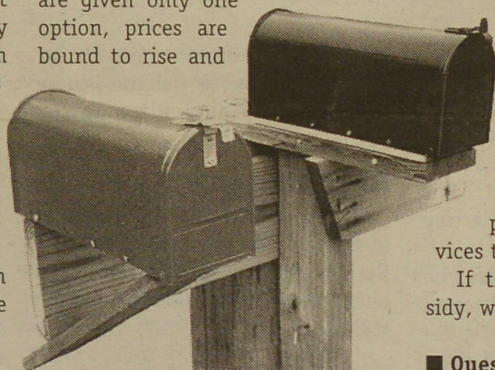
Apologists for the Postal Service argue that delivering the mail is a constitutional matter, that the U.S. Constitution gives Congress the power to deliver mail. But that's overstating the issue.

Yes, there is a clause in the Constitution giving Congress the right "to establish post offices and post roads," but there is no accompanying clause giving Congress the right to limit competition.

Far from protecting the USPS and the American public, monopolization of letter delivery is one of the largest factors contributing to the USPS's recurrent financial difficulties.

"Of course, the facts that there are 800,000 mostly-unionized postal workers, and that the USPS is a protected monopoly, combine to create an economic dynamic that almost ensures periodic cost and quality crises," opined Dr. Edward L. Hudgins of the Cato Institute in a 1996 address before a congressional subcommittee. "There are very few hardships for the Postal Service if quality suffers, since customers cannot turn to competitors for services."

When customers in any industry are given only one option, prices are bound to rise and



service levels are bound to decrease. Competition leads to "survival of the fittest," while the lack of competition leads only to entropy in the form of higher prices for lower service.

■ Question 2: Why does the federal government need to subsidize the Postal Service?

The Constitution, as noted, gave Congress the ability to establish post offices and build post roads. Suffice it to say that the roads are built, and there are other companies in place to make sure the mail gets where it's supposed to go.

But the federal government and Post Office officials deny that the government owns the USPS or contributes to it with taxpayer money.

The Postal Service claims to have operated without taxpayer support since July 1971, following the passage of the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970.

"By 1981, our operations were no longer funded by taxpayer dollars and we began self-supporting the organization through the sale of stamps and stamp-related products," Azeez S. Jaffer of the USPS public affairs office said in August 2002 in response to a column in the *International Herald Tribune*.

Libertarian SOLUTIONS

But even Jaffer had to admit, "it is true that we are a wholly owned subsidiary of the United States federal government," failing to see the disconnect in the middle of his paragraph.

Big Government proponents love to point out that the USPS is not subsidized by the government.

However, not only is the Postal Service granted a monopoly, it "is also exempt from state and federal taxes and is free from most government regulations," Edwin Feulner wrote for *Capitalism Magazine* in September 2003, saying the "combination is a recipe for disaster."

In addition, the USPS is compensated (to the tune of approximately \$36 million in fiscal 2004) from taxpayer funds, for services the federal government mandates that it provide free of charge or at a discount. These services include free mail for the blind, military mail and nonprofit mail.

No matter what Postal Service officials say, the tax exemption is a subsidy: Other businesses are forced to pay taxes while the USPS doesn't. If the other businesses were doing the mail delivery, they would pay taxes. Further, tax money pays for many specific services the USPS provides.

If that's not considered a subsidy, what would be?

■ Question 3: Why can't the USPS function like any other company?

The USPS has made much of its professionalization in recent years — going so far as to change its Web site, symbolically, from a "dot-gov" to a "dot-com."

But despite the Postal Service's claims about changing its business plan since the President's Commission on the USPS issued a negative report in 2003, there's nothing businesslike about it.

Other businesses aren't exempt from state and federal taxes.

Other businesses aren't exempt from government regulations.

Other businesses don't get to set the minimum price their competitors can charge.

And other businesses aren't granted a monopoly on a wide segment of the market.

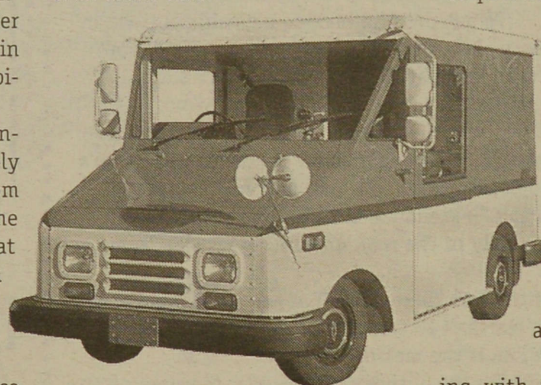
As *Capitalism Magazine's* Feulner wrote, "there are some things that can be done only by the government. Delivering mail is not one of those things."

One thing that is done very well by the government, unfortunately, is a negative for any business: Government agencies are notoriously good at overshooting budgets. While the USPS may not be as bad as some other government agencies, it still has its share of financial trouble.

"Even with a locked-in monopoly, the USPS can't make ends meet," Lexington Institute senior fellow Sam Ryan wrote in a March 2005 column for *National Review Online*. "Its accounting is so murky and convoluted it makes our Enrons and WorldComs look like models of financial transparency."

At that time the USPS had requested permission to increase stamp prices — a move that has since been locked in.

But raising the price of stamps isn't going to fix the USPS's budget problem, Ryan said, claiming that "raising the price of letter delivery just drives customers away at an even faster rate."



Gordon Sawyer agreed in his "Common Sense Chronicles" column on Dec. 5, saying that "the Post Office will increase the postage rate; companies and individuals will switch to enough more e-mail that snail-mail volume will decrease [further]; and the Post Office will be back in two or three years asking for another two cents. And they'll probably repeat this pattern until they are out of business."

■ Question 4: Should the USPS be privatized?

Maybe letting the Postal Service proceed toward its eventual demise doesn't seem like a particularly bad course of inaction.

But as other cash-strapped businesses (even non-governmental ones) have done, the office would eventually cry to the federal government for help. And knowing our politicians, they would happily comply.

No, other ideas must be considered.

Many people — from the occasional politician to think tanks — call for the privatization of the Postal Service.

Privatization would certainly be preferable to the system we currently have, and "privatization of the postal service is hardly a new idea," Scott Esposito of the Independent Institute wrote in February 2002, pointing out that "New Zealand, the Netherlands, Germany and Sweden have had quasi-privatized post offices for years."

Still, privatization isn't the best option. Think about it: If Congress can grant a monopoly to the USPS while it's a government agency, what's to stop politicians from allowing the monopoly to continue after the service is privatized?

■ Question 5: Why can't we just abolish the Postal Service?

A better solution would be to simply abolish the government postal service.

Moshe Adler, an economist at the Fiscal Policy Institute, noted in a February 2002 column that "if the proposal on the table were to abolish the Postal Service altogether and leave mail delivery to the market, I might have been for it. But it isn't."

Unfortunately, rather than going on to plead for such abolition Adler concludes instead that we should just "leave the post office to do what it does so well, and let private corporations enrich themselves in another pasture."

He apparently doesn't understand that what the USPS "does so well" is taking advantage of the government-enforced monopoly, of the tax-free business, and of the all-too-human conditioning that stems from a 200-year monopoly.

The best option for dealing with the United States Postal Service isn't to privatize it, which would lead to politically selected oversight committees and all the other encumbrances of formerly government services.

And we certainly shouldn't simply accept the current tax-funded monopoly.

So let's do away with the Postal Service altogether. Private corporations will expand their services to take the place of the government-sponsored service almost immediately.

But enterprising corporations will take advantage of the situation — and the public — by charging more for mailing letters, some say.

That hasn't proven to be the case with mailing packages, so why would it necessarily be so for letters?

If the USPS has large tax benefits and a guaranteed monopoly (which it does), and if private alternatives to the Postal Service's package delivery have become not only competitive but also profitable despite those advantages (which they have), why is it difficult to believe that private enterprise could also take over the delivery of first-class mail?

And why is it hard for people to imagine that the service could be improved, and prices could be cut?

Granted, the USPS is a historic institution, created by Benjamin Franklin to comply with the Constitution in this nation's very infancy.

But free-market solutions to expensive government problems also have a tremendous history in these United States.

American ingenuity and dedication to service is an even greater U.S. institution than the United States Postal Service.

It's time for the federal government to get out of the mail-delivering business — and let real businessmen handle it properly.

THE REVIEW

'Jarhead' – A Marine's tale

Reviewed by J. Daniel Cloud
LP NEWS EDITOR

I didn't want to see "Jarhead," the recent movie (based on Anthony Swofford's 2003 book) about a young U.S. Marine sniper's time in the first Gulf War. War movies aren't my thing, partially because I agree with Swofford that most war movies — even if they are intended as anti-war — end up as pro-war propaganda by inadvertent glorification.

But reviews were so mixed when the movie came out, with hawks saying the film is anti-war and doves screaming the opposite, that I felt I had to see it, if only to decide for myself.

And the answer is: This isn't a movie about war at all. Rather, it is a movie about one man's experience in the military.

To get the film-making elements out of the way, Jake Gyllenhaal portrays Swofford more than adequately, while Jamie Foxx plays his staff sergeant — a role that even Foxx couldn't over-act. The cinematography is spectacular.

There is nothing of substance to complain about concerning this film's technical aspects, although nitpickers will, um, pick nits as usual.

With a film like "Jarhead," excellence in technique should mean that there is nothing glaringly in the way, preventing viewers from seeing the message.

But through much of the film there doesn't appear to be a message.

In this case, perhaps, Marshall McLuhan was correct in his famous statement that "the medium is the message."

By filming a book in which the author says anti-war films are often used for pro-war purposes, are the filmmakers destined to make a pro-war picture? There is certainly evidence of this. Just before heading off to the Middle East, the Marines watch "Apocalypse Now." We see them chanting to the rousing strains of "Ride of the Valkyries," getting psyched up for the eventual kill.

In "Jarhead," Francis Ford Coppola's masterpiece about the madness of war ironically becomes the centerpiece of a Marine pep rally.

There are scenes galore where Marines exult in the fact that they're going to war, that they're going to confront the enemy — any enemy.

But for every such scene there is mitigation:

■ "Our current mission is to protect the oilfields of our good friends in the Kingdom of Saud," an officer tells the Marines.

■ "Who do you think gave Saddam his weapons? We did," one Marine says.

■ "What about the freedom of speech? What about the Constitution?" the Marines ask when told what they can't say to reporters. "You signed a contract," they are told. "You don't have rights."

Like reviewers of this movie, the Marines often can't decide whether they want to be there or not. Swofford isn't immune to the "glories" of war. He sometimes cheers along with the others, looking forward to his chance to head into action, but he's indecisive.

When asked by a reporter why he joined the Marines, he answers, "I'm 20 years old and I was dumb enough to sign a contract." Which, you can imagine, wasn't the rote response he was supposed to give.

Earlier, when asked essentially the same question by an officer, Swofford responds, "Sir, I got lost on the way to college, sir."

For the most part, symbolism and incidental remarks like these reveal this film's criticism of American foreign policy.

One instance arises when the oil fields are torched. The horror of being drenched in falling crude is blisteringly well-depicted. The oil blinds the Marines — in one case almost literally — pointing to the fact that the government had been quite differently blinded by oil.

Soon after, the war is over. The Marines say, "We never have to come back to this s**t-hole, ever again." They burn their desert camouflage fatigues and shoot all the guns in camp into the air. Never again will we need these BDUs. We're getting out of the desert.

Back stateside, the Marines are greeted by a parade during which a veteran of Vietnam comes on the bus, pain still visible on his face.

"Every war is different," Swofford says. "Every war is the same."

We see images of the Marines going on about their lives: working in sales, burying friends, living with families, while some of them continue their Marine service.

And over it all, Tom Waits is singing "A Soldier's Things," about a rummage sale where a former soldier's rifle, boots, medals and other goods are sold off. "Everything's a dollar in this box," he sings.

It's a poignant last look at the apparent futility of war — particularly of wars without reason and soldiers without purpose.

"All the jarheads killing and dying, they will always be me," Swofford says in voice-over narration. "We're still in the desert."

And we are.



THE MAILBOX

■ 'The State' religion

I sometimes say, half-jokingly, that socialists, communists, and fascists worship The State, and I am occasionally rebuked for that. But confirmation has come all the way from Chile.

Michelle Bachelet, a socialist who finished first in today's first round of presidential balloting there, recently described her religious views as follow: "I believe in The State."

This report comes not from some kooky right-wing publication, but from a report in the *Washington Post*, a pretty left-of-center newspaper, carried in yesterday's *Houston Chronicle*.

—JEFF DAIELL
Houston, Texas

■ Permission to reprint

Mr. Cloud,
Your article, "There shouldn't be a law," in the November issue of *LP News*, puts my sentiments into better words than I ever could. With your permission I'd like to ask at least one of the local civic groups here in Norco, CA to reprint it in their newsletter.

Permission granted?
—KRIS BROOKS
Norco, California

[Editor's note: Permission was granted, as it usually is. Most of the material in *LP News* can be reprinted by *LP* affiliate newsletters or by other organizations.

However, some articles are written by people other than the editor and I'm not in a position to tell people they can re-use those stories. *LP News* sometimes has specifically requested the right to reprint a story

or opinion piece that originally appeared elsewhere, so it is considerate to get permission before reprinting.]

■ Immigration

If "living standards" are defined in terms of dollars adjusted for inflation, then it is true that open immigration will increase living standards.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE insurance, you get a fine. It's like you're not buying liability insurance, you're buying government insurance!

—ON THE [LP.ORG](http://LP.org) BLOG

But what people want is not dollars, but what they can buy with those dollars.

And one of the things that Americans want to buy with their dollars is a country that is not overrun by Third World immigrants.

Thus, if they are prevented from purchasing closed borders with their dollars, their living standards go down, not up.

—RICHARD D.FUERLE
Grand Island, New York

■ Convention site

[Editor's note: The 2006 National *LP* convention is to be held in Port-

land, Ore., on the weekend preceding July 4. One reason given for this choice was that Portland is a prime tourist destination. Not everyone believes tourism possibilities should be part of the decision regarding where the convention is held.]

I have some ideas about prospective 2008 convention sites.

Tourism should not be a factor. Instead, timing and location are of the essence.

The convention should be held between the end of May and the middle of June. And after seeing the close results of the 2000 and 2004 elections, we should consider Columbus, Ohio, or Tallahassee, Fla., for the 2008 convention.

—DAVID F. CROWE, JR.
Saint Marys, Georgia

■ Insurance laws

I really hate those insurance and proof of insurance laws they have in many states.

If you're pulled over and haven't done anything, they can ask for proof of insurance. If you don't have proof that you are insured, that's a \$100 fine.

And if you don't actually have liability insurance, it's an additional \$200 fine. Of course that number varies.

It's ridiculous. It's like you're not buying liability insurance, you're buying government insurance!

Sure the country would be better if everyone had liability insurance, but not everyone can afford it.

And if someone is liable but doesn't have insurance, that is what civil law is for.

—PAUL P.
(Posted to LP.org blog on Dec. 12)
See **THE MAILBOX** Page 18

THE BEST OF THE BLOG

LP blog readers sound off on taxes, Congress and football

Editor's note: The blog at LP.org was introduced in April 2005 and rapidly became one of the site's more popular destinations.

In the June 2005 issue of *LP News*, I ran a "Best of the Blog" page — kind of an electronic Mail Box where people commented on various issues in the news and stories posted to LP.org.

Due to popular demand, I've decided to run this page as an occasional supplement in *LP News*, allowing readers who don't visit the Web site to keep up with some of the online discussions.

But if you want to comment actively, you'll have to visit LP.org to do so.

—J. Daniel Cloud, *LP News* editor

■ Maryland Implements "Flush Tax"

—December 13, 2005

—By Matthew Dailey

This month the state of Maryland will begin collecting a "flush tax" from property owners, regardless of whether they use the public sewer system or have a septic tank.

The monies from the \$30 "flush tax" will go towards the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Restoration Fund. It is estimated that the revenue generated from the "flush tax" will be between \$60 million to \$70 million, according to FoxNews.com.

The fund was part of environmental legislation that was strongly pushed by Governor Robert Ehrlich.

Revenues from the fund will be used to upgrade the state's 66 major sewage treatment plants.

Charles County Treasurer Jerome Peuler stated that some property owners who are not connected to the public sewer system have refused to pay the new tax.

Peuler said, "People are coming in here saying, 'I have a two-hole outhouse. I'm not going to pay you.' We have a saying around here: 'You

pee, you poo, you pay.' The three P's, you know?"

Reader Comments:

Oh, my Lord. How can we make them stop?

Posted by: Anonymous user

This is such a stupid tax. A tax should only affect people who benefit from a product (i.e. a sales tax). This tax affects everyone, whether they use the product or not, and is therefore immoral.

I'm sure that the government of Maryland could come up with enough money (by removing wasteful spending) to do the project without raising this tax.

Posted by: JasonMath

It makes perfect sense to me. The politicians finally figured it out.

They're throwing all our money down the toilet, so that's the perfect place to look for more revenue.

Posted by: Paul P.

When Robert Ehrlich ran for governor of Maryland, he campaigned as a "fiscal conservative" and a "social moderate."

If Governor Ehrlich was serious about getting funds for restoring the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays, he could have gotten the funds two ways:

1. Cutting government by eliminating useless and wasteful programs, bureaucracies, and privatizing certain entities.

2. Starting fundraising activities, asking the people of Maryland to donate money for the restoration.

He could have gone that route. But instead he introduced a new tax that will hurt the residents and taxpayers of Maryland once again. It is despicable.

That is what you get when you elect an unprincipled "moderate." He or she will go with what is politically expedient and whichever direction the wind blows. We all suffer in the end.

Posted by: Alex Pugliese

■ Congress Now Wants to Intrude On College Football

— December 09, 2005

— By Matthew Dailey

Instead of reforming the tax code or creating a budget to reduce the \$8.1 trillion deficit, Congress held a hearing on Wednesday about another important national issue, the Bowl Championship Series.

After meddling in the affairs of America's four professional sports, Congress has turned its attention to college football. The House Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protections felt that the Bowl Championship Series was a "deeply flawed" system and questioned the BCS coordinator, Kevin Weiberg, on why there isn't a playoff system in place.

The subcommittee admitted that it was not going to remedy the "problem" with legislation but members wanted to educate themselves and the public.

The *Baltimore Sun* reported that the subcommittee hearing turned into a spirited booster meeting.

Rep. Fred Upton, a Michigan alum, asked Weiberg, "How did Iowa get a better bowl than Michigan when we beat them there?"

Rep. Barbara Cubin (R-Wyoming) felt the University of Wyoming was being excluded from the BCS series because it is from the Mountain West conference.

Rep. Adam Schiff stated during the hearing, "I want to express my opposition to changing the post-season football schedule or altering the successful Bowl Championship Series." Notably, Schiff's home district includes Pasadena, the location of the Rose Bowl.

Schiff explained, "If the BCS was replaced with a playoff system, this would not only undermine the almost 120 years of tradition established by the Tournament of Roses, but it would also seriously undermine the economic vitality of the City of Pasadena and its surrounding areas."

Reader Comments:

If we could just KEEP them distracted with stupid non-issues like this, then maybe — just MAYBE — they won't be busy writing more bad legislation and working on social engineering projects.

We should all write in and act like we really care to encourage this.

I would, but I really have no clue what any of it is about since I'm not a sports person (LOL).

Posted by: Jason

I heard about this and it's one of the funniest and saddest things I've heard in a long while.

I'm conflicted on this, of course. I'm against such meaningless waste in principal, but on the other hand, I'm a big Auburn fan and alumnus, and we should have gone to that championship instead of Oklahoma last year! Therefore, the BCS is broken!

Time to break out Congress! ;)

Posted by: Paul P.

Ah, here it is: Art. I, Sec. 8, (19) "To provide for a fair and just play-off system for Div. 1 college football teams, to regulate the taking of performance-enhancing substances by baseballers, and do any other

thing Congress can get away with while still re-electing all members who wish re-election."

Ron Paul should be introducing a bill to cut off expenses for the Subcommittee responsible for these hearings.

Posted by: Creech

This is just another of Congress's blatant, egregious invasions into the business of private organizations.

The BCS was negotiated and implemented by coaches, university boards, and the student-athletes themselves, and agreed upon through compromise as the best method of choosing a champion.

This is both a ridiculous misuse of both power and resources and a sign of the times.

People now view the federal government as a philanthropic problem-solver willing to regulate and alter the behavior of any group of whose conduct they disapprove.

Posted by: Seth W.

Note to our elected representatives: GET BACK TO WORK!

Posted by: Bryant Christensen

Isn't it nice to see my tax-dollars at work? Lining the pockets of these lovely politicians so that they can discuss sports and related topics. I'm so glad the Founders made sure to include the Sports Clause when writing Article I, Section 8.

I mean, where would the world be without raising important discussions like this on my dime?

Posted by: Alexander S. Peak

Who wants Congress to get back to work? Why can't they just go home? We have too many laws already.

If it were up to me, there would be a 20-team playoff, with all eleven Division 1A conference winners getting automatic bids, and the top twelve teams getting first round byes.

But it's not up to me.

And it's not up to Congress, either.

Posted by: Lex

■ Open Thread for the Weekend

— December 9, 2005

— By Shane Cory

Some of you have been clamoring for an open topic day to discuss a variety of issues. Matt Dailey has been doing an outstanding job in bringing up articles of interest for the blog, but I think I'll leave it up to you today to discuss what's on your mind.

Reader Comments:

My hot button issue is helmet laws. Most non-riders don't care (or know much about it beyond what safety bureaucrats spoon-feed to the media).

Aside from the fundamental libertarian perspective of abolishing victimless crimes, this is also a good outreach issue.

Most bikers don't like helmet laws, given that about half don't wear them when given the choice. Many of those who wear helmets anyway still chafe at helmet laws. I'd say easily half of the motorcycle community would be receptive to Libertarian ideas. It's a ready-made constituency.

I've gone one step further. I have a donor card that says my organs can only go to states without helmet laws.

Posted by: ZenMan

Heard about this case in Atlanta where a man was arrested for selling a MARTA token?

The guy gets an extra token because he puts in too much money. Another guy can't get a token because the machine won't take his money. So he gives that guy his extra token, and the guy gives him \$1.75.

Almost immediately, a MARTA officer grabs and cuffs him, and holds him for about an hour and a half and arrests him. The guy misses work, too.

They say selling tokens is illegal because they don't know where you got the tokens.

Well, I guess we should outlaw the sale of all private property because we can never know where someone got it.

If there is any sense in Atlanta's government, the charges will be dropped.

Posted by: Paul P.

How about adding a directory of Libertarian candidates on LP.org? It seems like the party's national Web site should have a complete listing, at least for candidates at the higher levels.

It should be organized by state, and sortable by office, election year, candidate name, etc. List the candidate's Web site, and give contact information for volunteers, donors, and the media.

Posted by: Lex

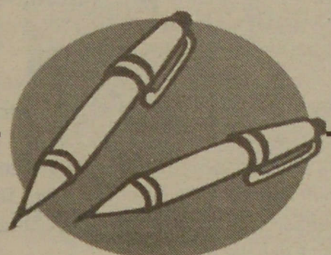
Lex,

We are in the process of designing a "campaign tracker" that will give a particular candidate a score, based on a number of criteria.

The higher the score the better — and candidates will be sorted by location. You will be able to access candidate ratings and locations through this Web site.

Make sure you keep an eye open for it.

Posted by: Chris Thorman



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THE MAILBOX

■ CEO George Bush

Imagine the CEO of a company with ever decreasing stock value who is having serious credibility problems with his shareholders, but keeps congratulating himself and defending the company's money-losing strategy when he addresses the employees.

How long do you believe such an executive would be able to hold

on to his job before being axed by the board of directors? My guess is — not long at all.

President Bush epitomizes that very scenario. But the board of directors, in this case the elected members of the United States Congress, continue to keep him at the helm and support his irrational and disastrous actions.

Every time he senses a rise in

his job disapproval rating from the share-holders — in this case the American people — he gathers an audience of company employees, such as our hard-working military personnel, to defend his actions.

He preaches to the choir, never having the courage to face the reality and the rest of the American people.

In the company example above, the shareholders faced with such an evasive CEO and incompetent board of directors would certainly demand immediate action or otherwise vote all members off the board and re-

place them with those who will take action.

Let's only hope that the American people do the same before this company we call the United States of America files for bankruptcy.

—DANIEL M. POURKESALI
Leesburg, Virginia

■ Christian Exodus

[RE: Christian Exodus, which was mentioned in the Politics 2005 column, November 2005 LP News. The group claims they hope to change the government in South Carolina to

uphold both Constitutional and biblical law.]

Christian Exodus won't interpret the Constitution strictly because they would have a problem with the First Amendment.

Christians are often staunchly opposed to free speech, trying to censor pornography, profanity and other religions.

If Christian Exodus succeeds, South Carolina could become an oppressive theocracy. Books, magazines, newspapers, television, radio and Internet access would be strictly censored.

And because some Christian leaders are opposed to medical technology, accusing doctors of interfering with God's will, medical care in South Carolina could become scarce and primitive if the Christian Exodus movement succeeds.

—RICHARD DUBAY
Meriden, Connecticut

■ Incrementalism

The principal reason this libertarian supports a consumption tax that replaces all other taxes is so that average citizens face the full tax burden every time they go shopping.

Most of our fellow citizens don't have a clue how much tax they really pay. That's why they aren't in the streets demanding smaller government.

Lesser benefits of such a consumption tax include reduced bureaucracy and greater privacy. The only negatives of the consumption tax are already features of the current system.

Libertarians who insist on "all or nothing" ensure that we'll continue to get nothing. It's time to start backing incremental steps toward freedom.

—JOHN R. PACK
Parker, Colorado

■ Social Security

The very liberal Newsday does not often print my letters, but they ran this one:

Baby boomers should know that Congress taxes Social Security. They need to complain now to their representatives and senators, so that practice is stopped before they retire.

That terrible tax costs this not-wealthy senior about \$1,500 each year.

That's a lot of money. When I tell some people that Congress taxes Social Security they go into shock. They can't believe it.

I hear, "Why would they do that? What is wrong with them?"

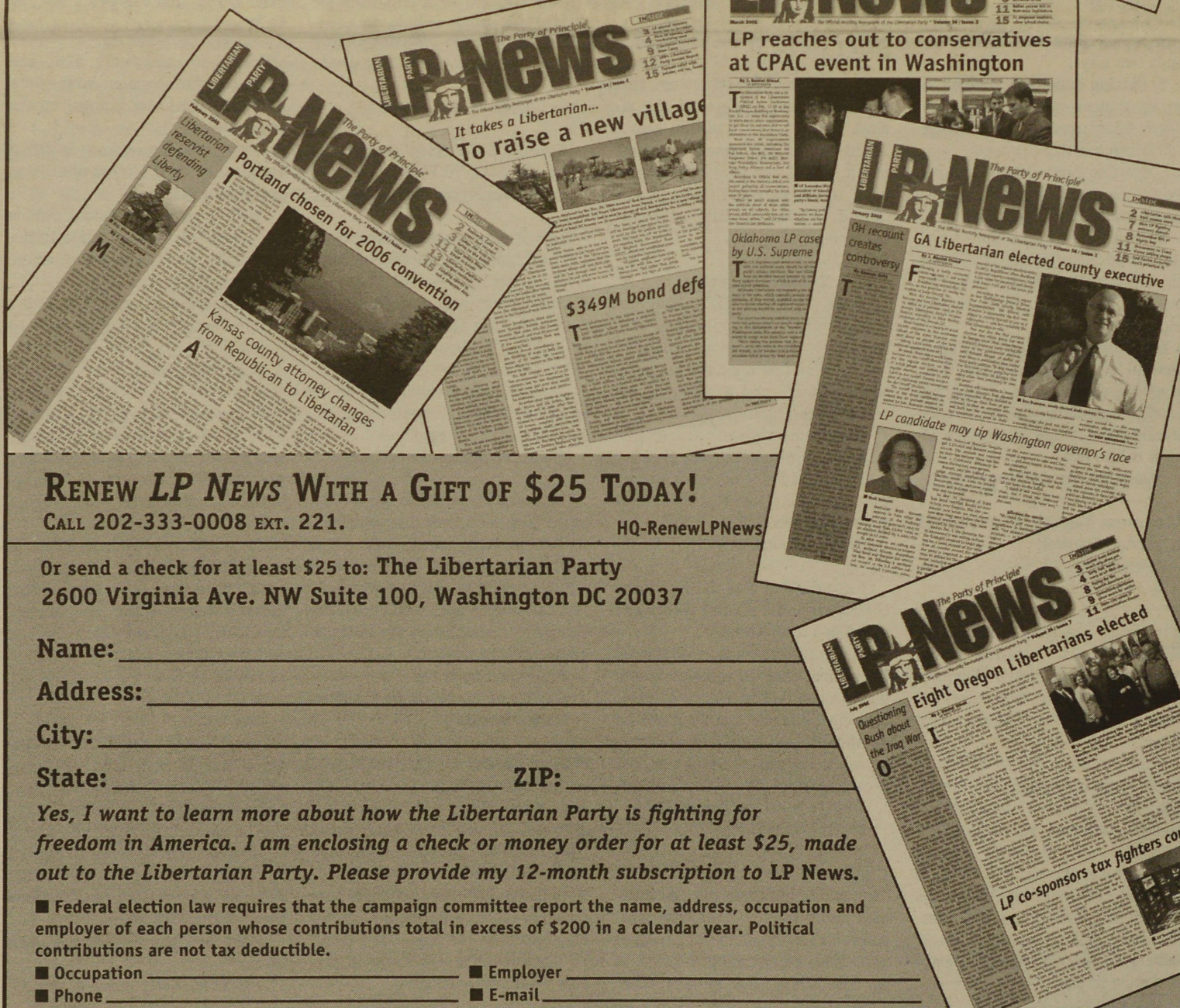
The tax on Social Security is terrible, and I think most people are not aware of it. Spread the word.

—RICHARD J. SAVADEL
Massapequa, New York

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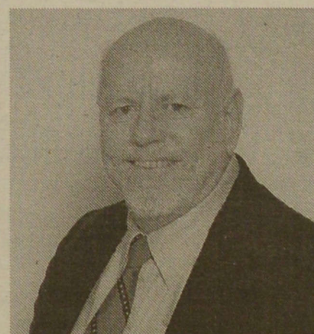
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Don't miss out! Visit LP.org often to keep up with current LP-related events.

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UPCOMING

■ January 21, 2006

Manhattan LP Convention, at the Ukranian East Village Restaurant. Speakers to include author James Bovard, author Fred Cookinham, and NYC Councilmember Letitia James. For more information, call (212) 252-3449 or e-mail info@manhattanlp.org.

■ January 28-29, 2006

Libertarian State Leadership Conference, at the Phoenix Airport Hilton in Phoenix, Ariz. Conference to focus on governing as Libertarians. Featuring a panel discussion about eminent domain. Speakers to include Adrian Moore of the Reason Foundation, Arizona House Rep. Russell Pierce, and Libertarian judge John Buttrick. Other details to be announced.

■ February 24-27, 2006

Liberty at Sea '06, Three-day cruise hosted by the California LP, aboard Royal Caribbean's Monarch of the Seas. For details, call (727) 525-9696 or go to www.CA.LP.org/libertyatsea06.

■ March 24-26, 2006

Florida LP Convention, at the Boca Raton Embassy Suites Hotel. Speakers to include Jim Babka of DownsizeDC; Philip Blumel, elected Libertarian and Florida LP activist; author Bob Burg; and David Wood, president of the Second Amendment Coalition of Florida. For details, call (800) 478-0555, or go to <http://lpf2006.org>.

■ April 8-9, 2006

Washington LP Convention, "Building Tomorrow Together," at the Kitsap Conference Center in Bremerton. Presentations focusing on five subjects: education, the environment, healthcare, property rights and transportation. Speakers to be announced. For details when available, call (425) 641-8247, e-mail officemanager@lpwa.org, or visit www.lpwa.org.

■ April 28-30, 2006

Indiana LP Convention, to be held at the Clarion Waterfront Resort in Indianapolis. Convention on Saturday will include workshops on proper land use, opposing eminent domain, and Indiana's Small Business Initiative. For details, call (317) 920-1994, e-mail lpinhq@lpin.org, or visit www.lpin.org.

April 28-30, 2006

South Carolina LP Convention, to be held at the Avista Resort in North Myrtle Beach. Convention on Saturday, April 29, followed by South Carolina's State Leadership Conference on Sunday, April 30. For details, call (843) 267-0045, e-mail chairman@scilbertarians.org, or visit www.scilbertarians.org.

■ June 30-July 3, 2006

2006 National Libertarian Party Convention, to be held at the Portland Hilton and Executive Tower in Portland, Ore. Details to come. Visit www.LP.org often to keep up with plans for the 2006 convention.

Libertarian National Committee, Inc.

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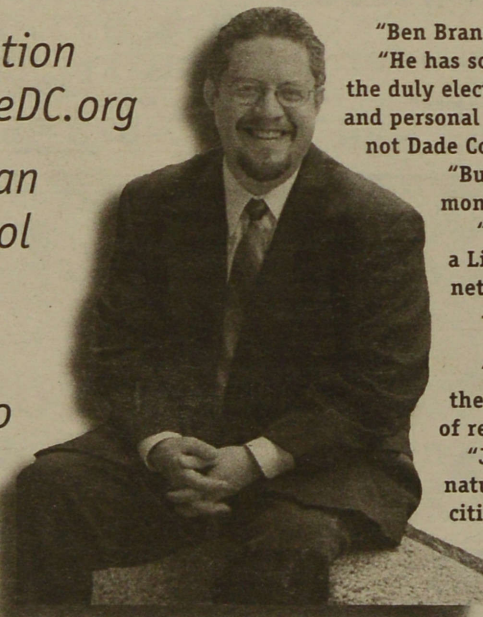
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FIRST WORD

"Ben Brandon is the rarest of Libertarian Party officeholders.

"He has something few capital 'L' Libertarians ever get — real day-to-day government power. Brandon is the duly elected county executive of Dade County. Unfortunately for the LP — the party of individual liberty and personal responsibility, free markets and a foreign policy of nonintervention, peace and free trade — it's not Dade County, Fla.

"But he can fight off any new regulations and try to change people's thinking 'about where the money comes from and what the role of government is supposed to be.'

"Whether Brandon is county exec until 2008 or 2012, he'll measure his performance the only way a Libertarian politician ever can or should. He'll know he's been a success, he says, if there's more net liberty in his community when he leaves office than when he started."

—BILL STEIGERWALD, *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, December 11, 2005

"Civil rights are not based upon genetics, they're based upon the constitution. So far as I know, there's no particular DNA sequence that fates each of us to follow a particular religion. Yet freedom of religion is one of our most cherished constitutional rights.

"Just why tens of thousands of New Hampshire's citizens are gay shouldn't matter. Whether it's nature or nurture or some combination of the two, they are. To suggest homosexuality precludes a citizen from a particular civil right — the right to marry — undermines our Constitution.

"Most Granite Staters, whether ... gay or straight, have a touch of the libertarian about them. We don't waste our time obsessing about other people's sex lives. Why should our politicians?"

—HILLARY NELSON, *Concord Monitor*, December 12, 2005