

LIBERTARIAN LIFELINE



Candidates Seek LP Nomination



The week of July 2-7 will see the Libertarian Party choose its Presidential ticket for the 1996 General Election. While the other parties stage their usual horserace, their conventions being hardly worth the time to watch (since we already know who their candidates will be and we already know more or less what they will say), the LP convention promises to deliver a *real* contest between the principled men and women who are active in LP organizations throughout the nation and who volunteer their time and resources to represent our party on the national stage of presidential politics.

One of the advantages to selecting a Libertarian presidential candidate as opposed to a Democrat or Republican, is the assurance that whoever that candidate turns out to be, all of them basically agree on the general principles of libertarian thought and policy. Each one shares the same vision of a free society, but they differ on the strategy necessary to achieve that goal and on the issues they feel should be emphasized. So the delegates in Washington will be choosing not just the team who will carry our message to the public as representatives of the best our party has to offer, but also the means by which that message is transmitted. In other words, the choice is not merely for the candidate, but for the strategy that candidate proposes to build the party and further the cause of freedom.

None of the candidates make any claim that they can be elected, and no one expects them to. Last year in Texas, **Harry Browne** even said, "I'm not interested in running for President. I'm not even interested in *being* President. I'm interested in living in a free society. And I don't want it to happen just before I die."

Browne is the author of several well-known books and publishes an investment advisor newsletter, *Harry Browne's Special Reports*. His latest book, *Why Government Doesn't Work* includes a basic platform for his presidential candidacy and is written more for the general public than card-carrying LP members. Harry feels libertarians spend far too much time preaching to the converted than educating non-libertarians about our philosophy. As an outreach tool, Harry's book has been well-received, and he is easily the best-financed candidate in the running, but other candidates have been critical of his book and the kind of libertarianism it promotes.

Rick Tompkins is running a lower-key campaign, but has developed a strong and intensely loyal support base without raising or spending nearly as much money as the Browne campaign team. Tompkins, a radio talk-show host, former chair of the Arizona LP and a long-time FIJA activist, appeals to the strongly ideological libertarians who believe our principles are the best selling-point for our party, and downplaying these principles, however good such a tactic might be from a public-relations standpoint, would be tantamount to selling them out. Acknowledging that changing unjust laws by electing libertarian candidates to office has not been particularly effective (as the deck in congress and state legislatures is clearly stacked overwhelmingly against us), Tompkins argues that our best option for changing such laws is through the courts and educating jurors about their right to judge laws as well as defendants. He feels our resources are better spent and our chances of success are greater when we attempt to sell the concept of freedom to twelve people at a time, rather than to thousands or millions in an election year.

Irwin Schiff is a well-known author and tax-fighter who says, "We are a small party, principally because we take an intellectual, moral and ethical approach to government." In reality, he claims, government is neither moral nor ethical, and appealing to the intellect of the American voter denies reality. Most politicians get elected by appealing to the voters' greed. Schiff emphasizes the old dictum that no one ever went broke underes-

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timating the intelligence of the public. He feels he can swell the ranks of the party with new libertarians by appealing to voters' wallets and educating them about the insidious nature of the Internal Revenue Service (which he christened *The Federal Mafia* in his book of the same name). Schiff maintains that the income tax is now and always has been a *voluntary tax*, and that by the IRS's own reckoning, only 82% of the public bother to pay this tax today. If a Libertarian presidential candidate could convince enough voters that they didn't have to pay this tax to reduce that level of compliance to 75% or less, the government would have no choice but to curtail its power, and eliminate wasteful programs as we have been advocating for twenty-five years.

Dr. Calvin Ruskaup of the Hawaii LP is seeking not only the party's presidential nomination, but also the office of National Chair. As fiscally conservative as he is strongly libertarian, Ruskaup has been very critical of the current NLP administration's financial dealings and recent relocation to the Watergate office complex. He advocates decentralizing the power of the NLP by moving administrative functions to the

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midwest where operating costs are much lower and transferring the savings to the local affiliates at the grassroots to strengthen the party at its core and use these funds more effectively.

Douglas Ohmen of Danville announced his intention to seek the LP presidential nomination in late 1994, soon after Browne's announcement. At that time, a one-candidate campaign didn't seem interesting or appealing, so Doug felt that throwing his hat into the ring would add some spice to an otherwise dull contest. Although his campaign has not been as well-financed as others, and he has chosen in the past year to focus his energy on local activism as the East Bay Region's Contra Costa County Vice-Chair, Ohmen has nevertheless impressed many libertarians who might have otherwise dismissed him. An economist and teacher, Ohmen is well-spoken and quick-witted, able to debate the finer points of Laissez Faire economic theory as easily as he dissects the political strategy of conservative Republicans. Doug feels that actions speak more than words, and that increasing the level and effectiveness of local activism is the key to growing the party.

Jo Jorgensen, former Vice-Chair of the South Carolina LP, has been campaigning strongly for the vice-presidential slot on the ticket, and has put together an impressive and experienced campaign staff, but the possibility exists that her candidacy may be challenged at the convention.

Other major events that will be taking place at the convention will be the platform debates and the election of new officers for the National LP. Current National Chair Steve Dasbach is seeking a second term, but is being challenged by Dr. Calvin Ruskaup of Hawaii and Gene Cisewski, Chair of the Washington, DC Libertarian Party.

C-SPAN will be providing comprehensive live coverage of the convention, and will make videotapes of the proceedings available for sale through their toll free inquiry number, 1-800-277-2698. Copies of individual tapes usually cost \$24.95, but be sure to confirm the price when you call.

On the next page, you will find a brief guide to the Presidential candidates and how to contact them. Unfortunately, your editor was unable to obtain a photograph of Dr. Ruskaup in time to include it with this guide. Next month, we will feature a detailed report on the convention from our East Bay delegates.

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Editor: Terry Floyd

Printed by: East Bay Region LP

Chair: Jeffrey Sommer (510) 537-3212

Alameda Co. Vice-Chair: Wayne Nygren

Contra Costa Co. Vice-Chair: Jean Marie Walker

Treasurer: Douglas Ohmen

East Bay Party Line: (510) 531-0760

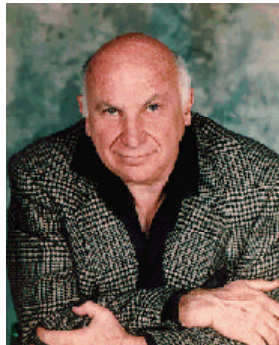
The Common Sense BBS: (510) 713-7336; 1200-28800, 8-N-1

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Douglas J. Ohmen
P.O. Box 1543
Danville, CA 94526
(510) 820-0812

Email: DOhmen@Valuenet.com



Irwin Schiff for President 96
P.O. Box 221440
Cleveland, OH 44122
(216) 248-9995
FAX: (216) 248-9994
Email: kantow@aol.com
<http://www.webpub.com/schiff/>



8129 N. 35th Avenue, #2-262
Phoenix, AZ 85051
(602) 930-1268
FAX: (602) 930-1739
Email: tompkins@nguworld.com
<http://www.nguworld.com/rick96/>



4094 Majestic Lane, Ste 240
Fairfax, VA 22033
(703) 222-9189
FAX: (703) 222-0929
Email: campaign@HarryBrowne96.org
<http://www.HarryBrowne96.org/>

Sorry, no photo of Dr. Calvin Ruskaup was available at press time.

Calvin Ruskaup for President
P.O. Box 10800
Hilo, HI 96721-5800

From the Chair

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

by Jeffrey R. Sommer
Chair, East Bay Region

I have been asked why I start out my articles with this phrase. What does it have to do with Libertarians? It seems like a mighty peculiar thing to do.

Well, this phrase is as close to a one-sentence summary of individual freedom as I know of. Look at it carefully: it says that you--the "thou" makes the individuality of the subject clear--have the absolute right to do your own True Will.

Now, this doesn't mean your every whim or harebrained scheme or suchlike; far from it. If one steps on other peoples' toes, the consequences are still inevitable. But the real purpose you have in your life, the reason you are here now, is supremely important. Your freedom to accomplish that purpose must be defended at all costs.

This is how we differ from the Socialists philosophically. They make a false idol of the collective group, forgetting that the group is composed of individuals, each with a different life to lead. They do everything they can to rob individuals of their freedom and privacy, citing a "higher good." We believe there is no higher good than the freedom of the individual, and though we must band together for the sake of political efficiency, we never lose sight of that one precious goal.

Unfortunately, the people who make and enforce our laws do not have much respect for the rights of the individual. It is our plan to replace those officials with duly elected ones who will respect those rights. One important tool in conveying our message to others is a slogan, a concise, easily understood statement that will encourage us and know our opponents flat.

That is what the phrase is for!

Love is the law, love under will. □

NATIONAL BANKRUPTCY

A citizen's perspective By: A. Swain

Deficit spending is at the root of our economic problems and cannot be permanently solved by either decreased spending or higher taxes but only by changing our thinking.

There is a growing discontent throughout the land. It is becoming increasingly difficult for Americans to tolerate the actions of our government in matters of the economy.

The thousand-odd presidents, senators, and representatives who for the last generation have guided our country into its present condition have not acted to correct our long term problem. The situation is one in which the wealth of our nation is being squandered by the same short-sightedness which has endangered our industrial competitive edge. The enemy is deficit spending. Consider the following arguments:

1. WHEN ONE SPENDS MORE THAN ONE EARNS, ONE LOSES VALUE. A person, family, club, town, state, or nation which persists in spending (not investing) more than it earns (or appropriates) must incur a debt of value. When a person consistently writes checks for more than she has to her account, she winds up in debt if she has a line of credit, or in jail if she does not. This is reasonable because it is a crime to fraudulently use paper bills, bonds, or checks, and we the public should be protected from those who would steal our property through fraud. When our government overspends we lose value.

2. CONTINUOUS OVERSPENDING IS CRIMINAL. Since continuous overspending is an indebteding process, the habitual overspender is either slowly selling himself and his family into poverty by squandering their resources, which is clearly a crime against his family and at least a personal vice; or, if the debt cannot be repaid, is a process of stealing from another, a crime in fact.

Overspending by a nation can lead to inflation, if the country attempts to retire the debt by printing more money. In this case the nation pays its debts by robbing some value from everyone holding its notes. The theft of inflation is insidious and reprehensible because it always takes more from our elders, who can least afford, least recover from, and we hope, least deserve the insult.

3. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS ENGAGING IN WRONGFUL ACTS. Article I

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Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States gives Congress the power to tax, spend and borrow to "...provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States,...". All budgets are approved by Congress and the President, and they are accountable for the results. Congress is also charged directly by the Constitution with promoting "the General Welfare", which they have clearly failed to do in allowing the National debt to rise to Godzillan proportions. What is most shameful about overspending is that it is not unlawful. It is nonetheless WRONG. The reality can be found in its effects: the leeching of the elder generation and the conscription of the younger as debtors for life.

There is a curious parallel to be found between the behavior of spending "addicts" and those of other drugs among the people. Denial, projected blame, an escalating spiral of indulgence, and above all the pitiful dependence on the power to dish out pork. The result is an effort to spend more each year. Our legislature doesn't need to know how to manipulate money like investment bankers, but they must know how to spend it wisely like housewives, our General Welfare depends on it.

4. WE MUST PAY NOW, OR PAY LATER, IN HIGHER TAXES, OR ELSE. We cannot fail to pay these commitments as Congress well knows. Are oppressively higher taxes the only honorable solution to a loathsome problem?

No, taxes alone are not even a solution. If everyone was taxed at a rate of 100% the country would still be bankrupt by a deficit. Any real solution must be enacted above the neck of each member of Congress.

I recommend real-time percentage budgeting. By this I mean a budgetary process based on the 4th grade concept of percentages, in which we would no longer talk about how many billions of dollars we would spend, but what percentage of the actual monies collected would be spent on each budgetary item. The implicit understanding being that it is impossible to spend more than 100 percent of anything, and that no money would be spent until it was collected.

If Congress determined that they had not spent enough on program "X", they could decide whether to increase taxes, or to increase program X's percentage and reduce program Y's to compensate for the change.

It's a simple concept that everyone can understand and everyone I have talked to, would vote for. It is responsible in that it acknowledges that nothing is free, and that there are consequences for each choice we make. Taxes are based on percentages; why not spending? Why should income be variable and outgo fixed? That is a recipe for disaster. Its time to take away governments blank check and give them a "piece of the action" instead.

How would we implement this plan? The concept was probably not workable in this century until as recently as the 1980s because of the complex computation and communications required. To forecast, evaluate, and monitor revenues from diverse sources in near real-time, and to track disbursements as programs are funded is a difficult task. But the problem of managing such a budgetary system with acceptable float is an order of magnitude simpler than those involved in the SDI program. And don't forget that America just happens to compute and communicate better than any nation on Earth.

In adopting the plan Congress could evaluate existing programs on the basis of the proportion of this year's budget occupied by each, and assign a percentage figure equivalent to actual expenditures as a starting point. Funding for new programs would then be enacted as a fixed percentage of the overall budget. Our government could still incur debt in times of national emergency as the Constitution intended and as is reasonable; we all do it from time to time. But no longer would the act be isolated from the consequence.

Consider also the effect of such a system on the spirit of cooperation necessary to reach any agreement where diverse views are concerned. This philosophy applied at the state and local levels would also avoid the effects of budget shortfalls on the economy by improving the accountability at all levels. We all must live within their means, and so must the Fed. This is a problem that our existing computer technology can help solve if we take the initiative. We can start by thinking PERCENTAGES.

I believe the alternative to solving this problem is a continued period of economic euphoria financed by burgeoning debt, followed by a period witnessing the bankruptcy of sacro-

sanct programs, crushing taxation, generational revolt, economic chaos, and finally the "restructuring" of this government. I only hope that that moment is not seized by a little man and some brownshirts. □



Talking About Our Generation

Major Differences between Gen X'ers and Baby Boomers

by Auren Hoffman

For those of us who grew up on MTV, video games, and microwave dinners, "Generation X" is far from a complimentary term. The phrase "Baby Boomer" has a nice ring to it, but "Generation X" suggests that my generation, those people born in the United States between 1963 and 1983, are lost or undefined. According to many pundits and modern philosophers, although we might be the generation that can surf the Internet or program a VCR, we lack the depth or direction to add value to society. Their "theory" suggests we are lazy, apathetic, and care little about the world — and even more notable, we are lost.

Needless to say, I have hope and pride in the generation that watches the "Simpsons" but lives the life of "Friends." I heard another "theory" that Gen X'ers are no different from boomers 20-30 years ago. Some people say that all 22 year olds are "lost."

Generation X is different from the boomers of yesteryear — but not because we are slackers, screw-ups, or schemers. The boomers tended to be, in the 1960's and early 70's, ideologues that crusaded for their causes and made love, not war. Then the boomers sold out their ideology for BMW's, stock portfolios, and cable TV. The liberal boomers soon became Reagan Democrats or fiscal Republicans.

But Generation X is different. Though many of us have our government causes, our campaigns, or strong ideology, the Gen X'er is (and will always be) more libertarian than the Baby Boomer. We tend to distrust government control of anything — we don't want the government meddling in our bedroom, our computer, or our income. Though socially liberal, like the young people throughout history, young X'ers are far more fiscally conservative than past generations.

Though many Boomers may have lost faith in the federal government, X'ers never had faith. We know that we are paying social security to support our parents, Medicaid to support our grandparents, and taxes to support wasteful projects like ethanol energy and corporate tax loopholes. We never expect to benefit from large government programs.

Many people think of the political spectrum as

one-dimensional, either liberal or conservative. In a one-dimensional analysis, X'ers and Boomers have roughly the same distribution of liberals and conserva-

tives. However, a real political spectrum is two dimensional (see graphic). On the graphic, each person's political ideology is represented by a set of (x, y) coordinates. The x-axis represents the traditional



determination of liberal or conservative while the y-axis represents a person's tendencies toward libertarian or authoritarian policies. Here is where an X'er differs from a Boomer. While Boomers tend to have an even distribution over the y-axis, X'ers are skewed more toward the Libertarian end. Current university students are more likely to agree with Milton Friedman than with Franklin Roosevelt.

Since Generation X is not yet a voting powerhouse, neither major political party has worked address our concerns. Both Republicans and Democrats, with the exception of the Jack Kemp wing of the GOP, tend to support more authoritarian government policies. Issues like immigration control and the minimum wage have little appeal to knowledgeable Gen X'ers even though they are the cornerstone of any Boomer campaign. But as Generation X makes up a larger part of the electorate, Republican and Democrat lawmakers will have to move "to the top" and address concerns like social security, affirmative action, and remake other authoritarian government programs.

The generation of high-top Velcro sneakers, button-fly jeans, and Y-necklaces is also the generation of smaller government, accountable legislators, and rapid response. Though the left and the right of the political spectrum is clearly defined, both parties must begin to push to the top to survive. □

This article originally appeared in the *Internet Herald*. Auren Hoffman is executive editor and a regular columnist for the *Internet Herald*, an on-line newspaper for, about and by Generation X writers. To read the *Internet Herald*, point your Web browser to <http://server.berkeley.edu/herald/>

GUILTY UNTIL PROVEN INNOCENT

by Denise P. Kalm

Is there anyone in the U.S. who isn't convinced that Ted Kaczynski is the Unabomber? That Tim McVeigh and Terry Nichols were responsible for the Oklahoma City bombing? These three have been tried by the court of the media and found guilty. Daily reports in the newspaper and radio and TV broadcasts bring out new evidence against them, each item another straight nail in the accused's coffin. The press has taken on the role of the prosecution, laying out motive and opportunity, presenting evidence both concrete and circumstantial to the jury of the nation.

But if this is a trial, isn't something missing? Like the defense's case? For every show purporting to depict the chain of events that led inevitably to McVeigh deciding to build a bomb, there should be an opportunity for the defense to bring witnesses to testify to the impossibility of the act. Parental divorce, a bad marriage and the wrong friend aren't enough to explain the destruction in Oklahoma. If they were, there would hardly be a building left standing in the U.S.

If the defense got a crack at the Unabomber case, they would immediately turn to the improbability of the continuing evidence "discoveries" in the Montana shack. Just how long does it take to shake down a 10 x 12 foot building? How could a third typewriter go missing for a week? Fear of unreasoning and baseless violence explains the rush

to judgment on the part of the public.

We want to believe that the evil-doers were caught and that we are again safe. We desperately yearn for a quick resolution, so we can again open packages unconcerned and do our business in government buildings without wearing a flak jacket. The media have less excuse. When the mainstream press takes on the color of the tabloids, the public should be cautious. If the story sounds too good, too juicy to be true, perhaps it is. After the "trial by journalism," where do the courts expect to get an impartial jury? Don't we all "know" the evidence already?

As much as we want these cases solved, we must all play devil's advocate to ensure these men a fair trial. Force the government to make its case, without the intervention of the press. After all, the press has to sell its story; hesitation, doubt and inference do not play well with readers and listeners. The public enjoys a scandalous story and dines hungrily on these, but it's time to push ourselves back from the table. Dig through the mountain of words and ask the hard questions. Our freedom rests on our ability to consider each defendant innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. If we so lightly cede their right to a fair trial, who will be there to speak for us?



*Denise Kalm is a freelance writer and a regular contributor to the **Libertarian Lifeline**.*

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(For those joining the LP)

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS **JULY**

For a variety of reasons (e.g., National Convention, the closing of Ricky's for summer vacation, and traditionally low attendance in July), there will be no General Meeting of the LP this month. Be sure to join us again in August.

July 2-7, 1996: Libertarian Party Presidential Nominating Convention. Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill, Washington, DC. Delegates should make arrangements by calling (215) 545-6994. For those of us who cannot attend, be sure to follow the convention on the C-SPAN Cable Network (Check with your local cable provider for channel and schedule).

July 5-9, 1996: Habitat for Humanity annual Build-a-Thon. Once again, East Bay Habitat for Humanity urges Libertarians who are not delegates to the convention to instead spend their holiday framing five houses in five days at the 105th Avenue Construction site in East Oakland. The LP has pledged \$250 to the cause and needs as many volunteers as can be rounded up on a holiday weekend. For more information, contact Catherine Gentile at (510) 251-6304 and make sure she knows you are volunteering on behalf of the Libertarian Party.

July 6, 1996: Annual Sacramento Second Amendment Rally: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. If by some chance you're not spending your holiday weekend in Washington DC at the LP Convention or building homes for Habitat for Humanity, take this opportunity to demonstrate your support for the right to keep and bear arms guaranteed by the Constitution. For more information, contact John Mills at (510) 704-1776. To reserve booth space, call Christina Yu at (510) 794-0541.

July 13, 1996: Savage for Congress Campaign Wine and Food Fest. Enjoy the beautiful scenery, delicious wine and food at the Westover Winery, 34329 Palomares Road in Castro Valley and support our candidate for the 13th Congressional District. Cost for this event is \$45 per person. Please RSVP no later than July 9 to the Savage for Congress Campaign, (408) 262-7161.

Sunday Evenings, 8:30 p.m to 9:00 p.m. On-Line Chat with Greg Lyon, Libertarian Candidate for Congress. America On-Line subscribers are welcome to join a weekly chat room with Libertarian Party Congressional candidate Greg Lyon every Sunday evening at 8:30. Just log on and go to LYON4CONGRESS

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20993 Foothill Blvd., #318
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