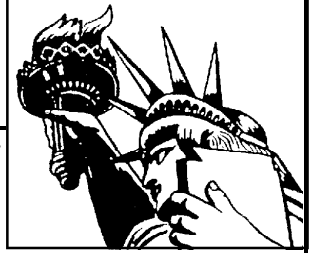


LIBERTARIAN LIFELINE



There's No Government Like No Government

The governor and the legislature finally gave California's government an operating budget—40 days after the constitutionally mandated deadline. During those 40 days, all of the politicians received their full salaries and benefits, and never suffered a moment of distress worrying about how they were going to pay their bills.

When the federal government became locked in an ideological budget battle in 1996 and its spending authority expired, President Clinton and Congress chose to Do the Right Thing. They shut the mother down, *twice*. They furloughed more than 85,000 “non-essential” government workers and, whether they intended to or not, proved for the better part of two weeks that the American people could get along quite nicely *without government!* The sky did not fall, the mountains did not tremble, and millions of children did not starve.

In fact, hardly anyone outside the beltway of Washington noticed any difference. The vast majority of us went about our business as though nothing out of the ordinary had happened. Wall Street celebrated a record-breaking financial market the same week the news media was mourning the closure of the passport office. The only people actually inconvenienced by the government shutdown were tourists trying to visit the National Parks, and travellers trying to obtain passports. Of course, the politicians decided they simply couldn't get along without going to work or paying the 85,000 “expendable” bureaucrats and decided to draft a budget compromise anyway, but for a brief period of time, we enjoyed a fabulous period of growth and prosperity without having any government get in the way.

In contrast, there probably hasn't been a single working American who has not experienced some repercussions from the Teamsters' strike against UPS in August. The dramatic reduction of operations from only *one* major corporation that provides a specific and vital service to a large market has had a greater impact

on our lives than the shutdown of the *entire federal government* last fall. One should also note how well the free market has responded to maintain competing delivery and shipping services during the UPS strike, without need for any government intervention whatsoever.

California could just as easily have shut down its own government on July 1, 1997. Had this happened, the politicians would probably have been pressured by the media into performing the jobs they were elected to do and a budget agreement would have been hammered out in record time, because after a week or two without government, it would have become abundantly clear how little we need it. California citizens would have realized very quickly that “essential government services” are not necessarily essential at all.

Imagine commuting to work without any CalTrans roadblocks impeding traffic. The state's highways and streets would be in no more disrepair than they were in June, but the drive to work would have been much smoother. Emergency services are generally provided at the local level, so these would have continued as before. State level reimbursements to counties and various contractors would have been delayed, of course, but this is nothing unusual either, since obtaining contract payments from the General Fund takes an average of six months or more to turn around in the best of circumstances. People who do business with the State of California never expect to be paid in any timely fashion.

Since the budget battle has become something of an annual ritual in Sacramento, perhaps Californians should pressure their legislators to follow the example of the federal government, and insist that the next time they fail to pass a budget by June 30, the state government should simply shut down. But unlike the federal government, no state government worker should be paid for not working, no politician should receive a penny for failing to perform the job to which they were elected, and no government office should open its doors until the spending authority is in place.

Perhaps this would light a fire under politicians to do their jobs, or better yet, demonstrate to the voters how little government is needed. As with the federal government, the day-to-day affairs that occupy most of us would continue as if nothing were amiss and the citizens of the state might realize that they can govern themselves at least as well—and probably better than—the politicians. ■

From the Chair

Greetings!

That is how the letter from the draft board used to arrive to say that you had been drafted. At least we don't have *that* to worry about these days. We only have President Bill Clinton sending us or our sons and daughters overseas to Haiti and Somalia. ("We certainly solved a lot of things there," he said caustically.) Have you noticed how the ten month project that we had in Bosnia is still going on? There is no end in sight.

What does all this have to do with the Contra Costa/Alameda Libertarian Lifeline? Not much. It just shows that if we don't keep after our Senators and Congresspeople, they will go far afield from what they should be doing.

Since I am running for Danville Town Council, I sat in on the Council meeting this week. I am sure that all of you have some idea what a Council should be doing: providing for roads, street lights, tending a park or two, hiring cops to arrest speeders and burglars, and funding the library. There is not much else that a Town

Council *should* do since the School Board worries about giving raises to the teachers even if the kids don't have books.

What did the Danville Town Council do until 1:00 a.m.? It discussed an apartment building that some poor slob wanted to put on his own property. People complained about every facet of the project. The Town Council contemplated all of the objections with serious (if bored) faces. The poor soul who wanted to build the apartments had started out wanting to build 48 units and he had already been whittled down to 38 in a previous Council session. No one got up to say that the project was **NONE OF THE COUNCIL'S BUSINESS**.

The project was not a menace or a nuisance. It was just a guy wanting to make a buck putting up small, inexpensive apartments on his own property. If there's anything this town needs, it is more *inexpensive* apartments. There is no place in Danville affordable enough for a high school graduate to live.

By setting up zoning, the Town Council had managed to take away the right of a person to use his own property in any way that will not injure other people. The Town was not offering to buy ten units from the builder in recompense for him not building them. They just wanted to stick it to him. Isn't there something in the Constitution about "nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation?" None of the people complaining about the apartment building ever suggested that the Town might just pay the owner for reducing the value of his investment. They just wanted the Town Council to kill the project with no recompense.

There are always a lot of arguments about "what if they wanted to build a pig farm next to you?" First of all, it just doesn't happen. No one will waste valuable residential land on a pig farm. Sure, they may want to build more apartments on it than you or I may like, but *it is not our land*. It belongs to someone else. What right do we have to complain about it to the Town Council? A person who does not like the proposed use of the land should buy it and do anything they want with it. Otherwise, keep silent. It is not their land.

We have gone a long way in this world to where a bunch of elected officials have the power to bankrupt a person just by changing the zoning on his property. For a while the state of Washington had a requirement that said that if a government body restricted the use of a person's property, the body had to pay the difference in

LIBERTARIAN LIFELINE

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value. There was panic in every city hall and planning commission. They were in trouble, big time. They might even have to pay for past actions. The state quickly rammed through a ballot initiative to kill that idea. The planning commissions are back in full cry and only the property owners take it in the ear.

It comes down to a very basic question: Are you willing to allow other people the freedom to do things that you might not like in return for the same freedom for yourself? The Libertarian answer must be "YES!" Not "Yes, but..."

I can assure you that if you *don't* fight for these rights for others, they will assuredly be taken away from you. When was the last time you got up in your city council meeting and spoke for personal freedom at that very intimate level? The idea that you can take away some freedom from others and still have your own freedoms is laughable. Freedoms lost never come back. The last time we GAINED any freedoms was 220 years ago and many people had to die for them. We have been losing freedom steadily ever since.

We hope that there will never be the need for another revolution to overturn a repressive government. To prevent the eventual total loss of all our freedoms for ourselves and our children we must keep resisting the inclination of every elected or appointed body and every bureaucracy to nibble away at our liberty. We must fight them in private and in public, in the corridors of city hall and in the nation's capitol.

We must also fight for freedom within ourselves when we want to go down to city hall or to Congress to ask them to take away some of the freedoms of others. Elected officials and their bureaucrats are delighted to increase their own power at the expense of others' freedom. We must not give them the excuse to do it. A loss of freedom on one front can have unintended consequences on many other fronts.

Any loss of others' freedom will be a loss of our own. Do you really want your children and grandchildren to live in a world as bereft of freedom as our rulers would like it to be? Then we must all continually fight for freedom on every front and at every level. Strike a blow for freedom today and every day.

In FREEDOM!

-- Doug Ohmen

Lifeline Editor Seeks Assistance

Do you enjoy reading and writing about politics, libertarian or otherwise? Do you fire off articulate, well-reasoned letters to the editors of the major daily newspapers or small weekly community newspapers? Are you annoyed when so few of them ever get published? Do you wish you had a mechanism to voice your opinions and express yourself to more people than your small circle of friends and immediate family? Do you have a computer, but use it only for playing games or surfing the internet? Do you wish you could put it to good use and produce something to which you can point with pride?

If you fall into any of the above categories, perhaps you'd be interested in getting involved in publishing the *Libertarian Lifeline*. The *Lifeline* is the voice of the East Bay Region Libertarian Party, but it can also be a soapbox for your favorite cause, or your bully pulpit for your pet peeves. As an editor or assistant editor, the *Lifeline* is whatever you make it.

Even if you're not quite ready to take over the production of a monthly newsletter, perhaps you'd be interested in lending your time, your words, and your skills to helping publish the *Lifeline*. This would require only a few hours out of the month, and you'd be surprised at how much you can learn. Want to get your feet wet in the desktop publishing business with PageMaker? Here's our chance to learn the ins and outs of a major graphics software package without having to take classes or invest a large sum of money. All we really need is your time and your talent.

Please contact our chairman, Doug Ohmen at (510) 820-0812, or *Lifeline* Editor Terry Floyd at (510) 351-0973 if you are interested in helping the Party.

If you'd like to get involved in the party, but don't know where you're needed, speak up and we'll find plenty of good activities to keep you busy.

A Book Worth Reading

The Sovereign Individual: How to Survive and Thrive During the Collapse of the Welfare State, by James Dale Davidson, William Rees-Mogg. Simon & Schuster, February 1997, 416 pages.

Reviewed by Ed Miracle

The title alone should grab your attention. While the word "libertarian" appears nowhere in its pages, and its authors have been branded "conservative," *The Sovereign Individual* predicts a future that is abundantly, thrillingly, irresistibly libertarian. Its sober prediction of free markets, free minds and the devolution of the nation-state—all within the next few years—should be music to libertarian ears. Its challenge for libertarians will be to examine and judge its central thesis: that the principal determinant of social structures throughout history has been the economics of the use of violence, not ideology or belief systems.

Davidson and Rees-Mogg develop this theme and use it to ground their predictions in the "megapolitical" effects of new technologies, principally the advent of private, unbreakable encryption and ubiquitous Internet communications. When encrypted cyberspace and other innovations shift the locus of economic power away from massive corporations and nation-states, entrepreneurs and "sovereign individuals" will live autonomously under private treaties. Talented people, regardless of locality, ethnicity, gender or religion will ascend to independent wealth and self-dominion. One reviewer calls this cyber-nirvana "Bermuda in the sky with diamonds." Sovereign individuals will contract with local, competitive agencies for "sovereignty services," i.e. government. "Nationality" will scarcely exist.

Deprived of tax-plunder, nation-states will necessarily collapse. So will mass democracy. Market sovereignty means those willing to pay for "sovereignty services" will contract individually, on terms most agreeable to themselves. Those who choose not to pay (or cannot pay) will have no enforceable political means to extort wealth or services from anyone. Thugs will have to revert once again to actual gun-in-the-face tactics. The end of centralized economic authority also renders those old pretenses of mass ratification, the ineffectual vote and the corrupt legislature, vestigial anachronisms. If you don't have a government, what's left to vote for? Personality-of-the-week? Will a libertarian economy arise before public acceptance of a libertarian ideology? This book strongly implies that it must.

Whether their analysis is faulty or dead-on, the authors

present a treasure of fresh and provocative observations — often subversively, unintentionally, libertarian — within sweeping historical perspectives. Never mind their social-Darwinist scare stories and their confusion of political anarchy with social chaos. Never mind the shameless pitch for their investment newsletter. This is a serious book to challenge your intellect and your imagination, not a flimsy bromide for your investment portfolio.

"Political tags -- such as royalist, communist, democrat, populist, fascist, liberal, conservative, and so forth -- are never basic criteria. The human race divides politically into those who want people to be controlled, and those who have no such desire. The former are idealists acting from highest motives for the greatest good of the greatest number. The latter are surly curmudgeons, suspicious and lacking in altruism -- But they are more comfortable neighbors than the other sort."

---Robert A. Heinlein

LIBERTY, THE CONSTITUTION, AND “THE LAW”

By FRANK M. REICHERT

Moderator, *Liberty Northwest Conference*

It was George Bush, when attempting to justify US participation in the Persian Gulf War, who directly reminded Americans that the goal for strengthening the United Nations was to make the world safe by imposing the “rule of law” upon the entire planet. The term “New World Order” was used repeatedly by Bush signaling the transformation of national independence into a worldwide era of “inter-dependence”, or the end of national sovereignty as we have historically known it.

I do not believe that Mr. Bush made a flippancy slip of the tongue. Nor do I believe that the term “New World Order” was used as some obscure abstract idea of political ideology once crafted by our nation’s founding fathers, although Bush clearly alluded to such abject “patriotism” and sought to rally Americans behind the banner for world government using allusions to America’s past.

Bush’s goal, as he described it himself, was to strengthen the power, prestige and authority of the United Nations according to the vision of its “founders”! Such an allegory points our minds to a far different era, that is, of our nation’s independence from England, and the “vision” of America’s founding fathers. There is a quantum leap in the difference in political ideology of the nation’s founding fathers and the “fathers” that created the United Nations.

The United Nations’ US delegation that helped create this body was a motley band of clap trap socialists, communists and one-world theorists led by convicted communist spy Alger Hiss. This is not the libertarian-minded delegation that met in Philadelphia and pounded out the criteria for limited government that is enshrined in our nation’s Constitution and Bill of Rights.

In Nazi Germany the “rule of law” ended up in the holocaust and genocide for those minorities which found themselves in disfavor by the lawful authority. Much can be said about the former Soviet Union,

Communist China and other tyrannical regimes that have plagued the globe during the majority of this century.

It is fitting therefore that libertarians, constitutionalists, and others who share the vision of liberty, place into proper perspective our position relating to law and specifically the Constitution itself. We are not libertarians because we believe that the Constitution provides a libertarian-oriented ideology. Nor for that matter are we libertarians because any piece of paper, any law, or any edict anywhere supposedly recognizes and offers protection against aggression.

Liberty is a “condition”. Law is force, or the threat of force. The US Constitution is very unique in that the “force” or “threat of force” is directed more against the government itself, than the people. It is this condition that many reflect on as not only unique, but that force, in this case, makes the condition of liberty possible in most cases in America.

Total law is the *total absence of liberty*. Of course, in the real world, total law, or total liberty is never reality, but we do have historical examples of extremes in each case where both have been used and we can study and measure the results. When George Bush, Bill Clinton, Newt Gingrich and others talk about a world ruled by law, libertarians and others who cherish liberty should shutter!

George Bush never informed any of us who is going to create this body of law, nor did he tell us what specifically the law was going to be. He did say that no nation on earth should be able to violate that law, and that the UN vis-a-vis, world government, would use appropriate force to enforce that law.

The UN Charter is not the US Constitution. There are no liberties in the UN Charter that exist apart from restrictions by “appropriate” law as formulated by UN bureaucrats and other social change engineers whose vision of utopia is the hellish nightmare of abject tyranny upon mankind for the so-called “better good” of the “world community.” World “concentration camp” is more fitting here.

Libertarians must continue to oppose U.S. meddling and entanglements in foreign treaties, organizations, and economic unions. We must continue to oppose foreign aid and military assistance in all its present forms.

And, we must support legislation and action to end U.S. participation in the United Nations and the removal of the UN from US soil. □

Redevelopment: Eminent Domain for Private Gain

by Lou Filipovich

"Nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation." Thus the Bill of Rights specifies the only purpose for eminent domain: "public use." Since then, government has used its power of eminent domain to acquire land for public use. Roads, parks, military bases and police stations were essential public facilities that took property over individual property rights. Private real estate transactions, on the other hand, were always voluntary agreements between individuals.

Redevelopment has changed all that.

Under redevelopment, "public use" now includes privately owned shopping centers, auto malls and movie theaters. "Public use" is now anything a favored developer wants to do with another individual's land. Eminent domain is used to effect what once were purely private transactions.

Its use nearly always favors large developers at the expense of most small property owners. In a typical redevelopment project, a developer is given an "exclusive negotiating agreement," or the sole right to develop property still owned by others.

Once such an agreement is made, small property owners are pressured to sell to the redevelopment agency, which acquires the land on behalf of the developer. If refused, the agency holds a public hearing to determine all "public need and necessity" to impose eminent domain! By law, this must be an impartial hearing. In reality, the agency has already committed itself to acquire the property for the developer, so there is little doubt of the outcome.

Whole areas of cities have been acquired,

demolished and handed over to developers to recreate in their own image. Historic buildings, local businesses and unique neighborhoods are replaced by generic developments devoid of the special flavor that once gave communities their identity.

Typical is the experience of Anaheim. Having demolished its historic central business district in the mid-1970s, the redevelopment agency recently hired consultants to help restore the identity of a downtown that no longer exists. An internal city memo even goes so far as to admit that the complete eradication of the traditional business district "has left nothing" for the community to relate to as their downtown!

Small business owners are compensated and relocated, but often in distant areas far from their established customer base. Cut off from the community that nurtured them, they often cannot survive.

Small property owners have little chance to participate in redevelopment projects. Consultants and redevelopment planners prefer to work with one huge parcel under a single ownership. Entrepreneurs, renters and homeowners just get in their way!

Indeed, one of the definitions of blight is that of "irregularly shaped lots with multiple-ownerships," to be solved by "consolidating parcels" for an outside developer to control. The variety of land owners and uses that gives cities their individuality becomes an excuse for expropriation!

Footnote: Legislative attempts to protect small property owners have been derailed by pro-development forces in Sacramento. Eminent domain, usually is defended as a tool of "last resort," yet eminent domain lies at the heart of the government coercion that makes redevelopment possible—and destructive—truly creating "public debt" amounting to billions and billions of dollars that is solely dependent on the city's homeowners and renters property tax producing system! □

This is the eighth installment of a ten part series on the impact of Redevelopment Agencies in California. Part Nine will follow in the October issue of the *Libertarian Lifeline*.

Three-way race in New Jersey?

Dr. Murray Sabrin, talk show host, professor of finance at Ramapo College in Mahwah, N.J. and author of the book "Tax Free 2000," says he may be able to do something no other Libertarian can do in 1997: Appear in a nationally televised debate. Sabrin hopes to find himself in the nationally televised New Jersey gubernatorial debates with opponents Christie Todd Whitman and Jim McGreevy.

"If we raise \$210,000 by August 31 we are in the debates. No commissions, no review boards — it's a matter of law," reports Libertarian nominee Sabrin. "With over \$50,000 raised in funds and pledges, we're about 25 percent of the way there. ..."

The series of three debates is scheduled to be televised on New York, Philadelphia, and New Jersey stations, and are expected to receive national media attention. "Governor Christie Whitman has her eye on the White House," Sabrin reports. "Her hopes will be dashed if she doesn't win by a big margin. She won her first election over the most hated incumbent governor in

New Jersey history with less than a 30,000 vote margin out of 2.5 million votes. "Current polls show support for Whitman at significantly under 50 percent, and McGreevy within a statistical margin of error. We need only control a small percentage of the vote to exceed the balance of power in this election."

Whitman describes herself as a "Dole Republican" and has angered many conservatives in the state with her stands on gun control, private property, and a \$3 billion dollar bond issue to pay back money she withheld from the state pension plan to pay current expenses, Sabrin reports. Dr. Sabrin, who earned his Ph.D. from Rutgers, is president and founder of the Alliance for a Tax Free America, a nonprofit, nonpartisan, educational organization dedicated to preparing the public for the major economic and social changes that will occur in the next several decades.

For more information, call the Sabrin campaign hot line at 1-800-785-FREE. Contributions may be sent to Sabrin for Governor, P.O. Box 445, Leonia, N.J. 07605 ... maximum contribution by New Jersey law is \$2,100 per individual or company, and state law requires name, address, occupation and employer name and address. The campaign also accepts Mastercard and Visa. □

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(For those joining the LP as a voting member)

*I hereby certify that I do not believe in nor advocate the **initiation** of force as a means of achieving social or political goals.*

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS **SEPTEMBER**

Tuesday, September 16, 1997 East Bay Libertarian Party General Meeting. This month, we'll be meeting at the Pinole Creek Cafe, located at 2454 San Pablo Dam Road in Pinole. If you need directions, you may call the cafe at (510) 724-1040. If you have any additional questions, please call the LP Party Line at (510) 531-0760.

Tuesday, September 23, 1997, 7:00 p.m. Oakland/Berkeley Libertarians in the 16th Congressional District will meet to discuss regional issues at the offices of Resources for Independent Thinking, 5236 Claremont Avenue, Oakland, CA. For more information, contact Jeffrey Sommer at (510) 537-3212 or Greg Lyon at (510) 284-8367.

Sunday Afternoons, 5:30 p.m.: The Libertarian News Hour on Free Radio Berkeley, 104.1 FM, hosted by Jeff "Zippy the Yippie" Sommer, the voice of freedom on the airwaves originating from one of the last bastions of socialism in America, Berkeley, California. To speak with Jeff on the air, call him at (510) 594-8082. If you have internet access, check out the Free Radio Berkeley Web Site at <http://www.freeradio.org>

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