

# LIBERTARIAN LIFELINE



## Internal Revenue Service Unmasked

Recent Senate hearings on the abuses conducted by the Internal Revenue Service have confirmed and reinforced our long-held suspicions that this agency is riddled with corruption. IRS employees, testifying anonymously behind a screen and with their voices distorted, admitted that promotions and bonuses were based on the level of collections and seizures agents could take credit for, providing an irresistible incentive for overstepping their authority. The more taxpayers whose lives were ruined, the more money these agents made, and the better they looked in the eyes of their supervisors.

Moreover, it was revealed that the IRS targets lower and middle-income Americans for harassment, with the knowledge that these citizens are less likely to be able to retain legal assistance to fight the IRS. Wealthier citizens with the means to afford good lawyers are rarely, if ever, singled out for harassment.

While the Senators and the media appeared to be shocked by these revelations, those of us who've followed the evil trail of abuse could only respond with, "We told you so."

At the conclusion of the astonishing week's hearings, IRS Commissioner Michael Dolan, stood before the Senators, his eyes downcast and his face red with embarrassment, and meekly apologized to the victims of his agency's abuses. But merely saying "We're sorry," just isn't enough.

We all know that power corrupts, and we also know that any government agency given unlimited power will inevitably be corrupted by that power. With all we know about the government and its frequent abuses of power, how can anyone seriously consider giving that government the keys to our private affairs?

In the Information Age, the need for individual privacy is greater than ever before. With only a social security number (our de facto National Identity Card), a date of birth and a mother's maiden name, anyone—and I mean *anyone*—can access your credit records, your driving record, your employment history, and

much more. These numbers are freely available to anyone with the incentive to seek them out.

Your social security number is on hundreds of crucial documents and is regularly used as an index field for searching databases. Your date of birth and mother's maiden name are likewise easily available from county records and bank accounts.

Earlier this year, the Social Security Administration had to shut down its poorly-designed World Wide Web site after only 48 hours because computer users found out they could very easily find extremely sensitive private information about individual citizens with little more than a few clicks of a mouse.

While you can't monitor what other agencies do with this information, you *can* control how it's stored on your own computer. You can even safeguard your email communications with any one of dozens of free or inexpensive encryption programs that ensure your email can be read only by the person to whom you sent the message. But the government can't stand all that unregulated freedom that people are enjoying in cyberspace. They are helpless and confused by a technology they cannot understand or control. Not content to govern just about every other aspect of our lives, they are desperately trying to find a way to govern the internet.

FBI Director Louis Freeh has recently argued that his agency is hamstrung in attempting to thwart "druglords, spies, terrorists and violent gangs" because they can't crack most encryption programs. The FBI will use every resource at its disposal to force citizens to use only "government approved" encryption software, which is designed with a back-door to be used in the event criminal activity is suspected. This Orwellian legislation, HR695, is ironically nicknamed the Security and Freedom through Encryption ("S.A.F.E") Act and as originally introduced, was quite innocuous; however, recent amendments have turned it into a nightmarish Big Brother scenario. If they succeed, *no one's* privacy will be safe.

Given the authority to tap our phones and read all of our electronic correspondence, the FBI assures us that they would *only* do so with good reason, under stringent controls and with a court order from a judge. And of course, just like the Internal Revenue Service, they would never *dream* of abusing this awesome power to intimidate or harass ordinary law-abiding citizens. □

# From the Chair

by Doug Ohmen

Things are quiet this month. We had a delightful meeting in Pinole. Our speaker, Jarret Wollstein, has been a libertarian since before there were Libertarians. He was with Young Americans for Freedom on a campus in 1963 and has been with the Society for Individual Liberty since then. It has since become the International Society for Individual Liberty, but it still exists. They do important work in conjunction with the Libertarian Party. If you are not a member, you should join. Best of all, ISIL has now relocated to Benicia, so is now physically within our region.

It always makes me wonder why liberty is such a hard sell. We believe in it in the abstract, and so does everyone else, but when our politicians pass a new law that takes away another piece of our freedom, there are few people who complain. At least so few people complain that the salons in Washington do not feel the pressure enough to kill the act. The list is endless: communications decency, terrorists, gun

control, term limits, drug control, asset forfeiture, IRS abuses, medicines, schools, private property, zoning, etc. We have laws that are much worse than those that our forefathers went to war over in 1776 and yet we do nothing. We even apologize when we say that we don't like some of them.

The answer lies somewhat in the fact that our legislatures, Congress, state, and city give each of us some small benefits when they take away our freedoms. We are afraid that we will lose something such as our Social Security, our "free" schools, our farm subsidy, our protection from "undesirables" moving in next door, our protection from drugs, our old age medical care, etc. The list of actual and apparent give-aways from the government is endless. All you have to give up is half your salary and a lot of your personal freedom. After all, if you had freedom to do what you want, someone else might do something that you don't want them to do!

And that is the second reason people give up their freedom: We don't want others to have the freedom to do something that we don't approve of. Maybe we don't approve of their sex, drugs, religion, music, art, "pornography," smoking, you name it. We don't want them doing it, usually in the name of "morality." So we end up giving up far more of our own freedoms than we would take away from others.

What is the answer? We must ask the question "Does what they are doing truly affect us?" Usually the answer is "no." We just do not approve of their actions, even though they only affect our sensibilities. We must be willing to accept that many people are going to do things that we do not approve of. So be it.

This does not mean that we must involuntarily take care of the bad effects of their actions. We should not have to pay for their medical expenses from unsafe sex practices or smoking. We should not have to feed and house people who are unemployable because they are drug or alcohol addicts. We should not be required to support people in their old age who have not saved during their productive lifetimes. (Which is not at all to say that we should not do many of these things *voluntarily*.)

With freedom comes responsibility. People should have the freedom to be destructive with their lives, but then they must be responsible for the effects

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of those actions.

The great mother state says that all of these people are victims and therefore not responsible for their actions. Certainly there are things that happen to people that are acts of God, over which no one has any control. In these cases, there are many wonderful charities to help. There would be a lot *more* if everyone's salaries were doubled instead of that money going for taxes.

But most of the things that happen to people come from their own actions. This was understood before the monolithic state took over. People were expected to live good lives and to save for their old age. If they were self-destructive, people told them so and they received little sympathy when the results of their actions came around. People who were in genuine need despite their best actions were helped by family, churches and other charitable organizations.

This demand that "someone do something" has lead to the government stepping in to provide the demanded services. It also means that the government must make extensive rules and take a great deal of money from those who are not the recipients. We lose money and freedom and receive a very small mess of pottage. As Libertarians, we must continue to resist these assaults on our wallets and our freedom.

Speaking of our wallets. It now costs about \$200 each month to send out the *Libertarian Lifeline*, but we receive only about \$140 a month from the national party. This is a situation that obviously cannot continue very long. I believe that the newsletter is important since it is the way we communicate with all of the Libertarians in the Region. We don't have many people coming to our meetings. We have two choices.

One is that we could cut down our mailings to every other month. The other is to ask for an additional \$20 a year from each of the members of the Party. I prefer the latter because I think that the newsletter is important, but I would like to know what you think. Please send us your comments and a check if you feel that you could afford it.

Thanks. In freedom! -- Doug Ohmen

## Neither Rain, Nor Snow, Nor Gloom of Night...

As Doug Ohmen notes in his column, under the new Unified Membership Plan, the East Bay Region LP is losing money every month in which we publish the *Libertarian Lifeline*. Most of these costs are from printing and postage, which we can do very little to contain, but there is one financial burden that can be easily reduced with your help.

On the outside of the *Lifeline*, beneath the return address, is the notation "Address Correction Requested." This informs the post office that if a member has moved, we would like to have that copy returned to us with the new address indicated. This costs us not only the initial bulk rate postage (about \$0.13 per copy), but also the full 32 cent first class postage for the return of the copy. Moreover, the post office is not always prompt about returning the address corrections, so we often end up mailing to a bad address two months in a row. In an average month, we have anywhere from 15 to 30 newsletters returned to us with bad addresses. Needless to say, this adds up very quickly. We *could* simply ask the post office to forward the newsletter to a member's new address, but then we'd never know the member had moved, would have no way of knowing the new address, and would *still* be charged the first class rate for forwarding.

You can help us by promptly informing us of any change of address. A 20 cent postcard from you could save the LP anywhere from 45 cents to \$1.00 in postage costs for misdirected newsletters to invalid addresses. If you send us a quick email notification when you move, it won't even cost you a dime.

Libertarians are renowned for our fiscal conservatism. Please do your part by helping us conserve our scarce resources.

# Wrong rights?

by Katherine McKay

The other day I was at my dentist's office and noticed the water fountain was no longer where it had been. I asked him what had happened to it. "It was taken out," he replied, "because it didn't conform to ADA standards for wheelchair access." Since it would have cost a great deal to refit the water fountain and there was no room for an extra-large unit in the narrow hall on the second floor, the building management decided to take it out entirely. So now, solely because it did not fit the standards for people in wheelchairs, no one has water. I have never seen a person in a wheelchair on that floor.

Several years ago, I went to one of the most interesting exhibits I have ever seen at the deYoung Museum, the collection of Near Eastern carpets of Christopher Alexander. The explanatory notes for each piece were lengthy, being excerpts from his forthcoming book on the subject, and were much more interesting than the general run of curators' notes. For some reason, the Museum administration had decided to place these notes, lengthy as they were, at a level accessible only to people in wheelchairs. This meant that almost all of the visitors - I saw no one in a wheelchair - had to stoop over for prolonged periods of time if they wanted to read all the notes. After I left the exhibit, I filled out a questionnaire as requested by administration staff to see how people liked the new format. To the first question, "Are you disabled?" I wrote, "Not before I entered this exhibit," but I doubt it did much good. The administration was too proud of its new politically correct stance.

Philip Howard, in his excellent book *The Death of Common Sense*, tells how the lobby for the disabled almost blocked a test of badly needed public toilets in New York City in 1991, using New York's laws prohibiting denying the disabled any access to public accommodation. Since the coin-operated, self-cleaning toilets (imported from Paris) had to be small in order not to block New York's crowded sidewalks, they were not wheelchair-accessible. The suggestion that larger, wheelchair-accessible units, with a full-time attendant, be set up at a few places in addition to more numerous smaller units was rejected by the lobby,

which insisted that the disabled had a legal right to be "mainstreamed," that is, to use the same toilets as everyone else - the larger, more expensive units, or no toilets for anyone. The lobby was unreasonably rigid and was still unhappy with the final compromise test, in which dual units, one for the general public and one with a full-time attendant for wheelchair users, were set up in three different places. The regular units were used over 3000 times per month; the wheelchair-accessible ones were virtually unused. Howard's statement that the lobby for the disabled refers to the rest of us as the "temporarily abled" makes clear their motivation of resentment and retaliation on the able-bodied.

If common sense rather than ideology had prevailed, the management of my dentist's building could have installed a special water fountain for wheelchair users in the downstairs lobby, where there was room for an extra-large unit. The Museum administration could have reproduced all of Alexander's exhibit notes and handed them out to visitors in wheelchairs so they could read them as they went along. The wheelchair users in New York could have been content with the separate, special public toilets.

But these non-negotiable directives have nothing to do with sense. Rather, they are the dictates of special interest groups who have learned to intimidate the rest of us by playing on a combination of guilt and victimhood. How did we allow them to gain such power? In an effort to forestall discrimination, well-meaning legislatures have given these groups open-ended "rights." But, as Howard points out, these are not the rights set forth in our Constitution, which provide individual *rights against* encroachment by government. Rather, these *rights to* the provision of some service or preference at the expense of the rest of us are powers of coercion imposed upon the majority by a small group. The founding fathers were concerned to curb the power of such groups, called "factions" by James Madison, groups "adverse to the rights of the other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community."

Perhaps we should form a special interest lobby of the non-disadvantaged to stand up for the rights of the rest of us. I do not deny that the handicapped among us deserve some special consideration in their access to public accommodations. But the above are examples of

egalitarianism run wild. Do we really assent to bringing everyone in this country down to the level of the lowest physical common denominator? Do we want to allocate scarce public resources to filling the deficiencies of a few in protected social categories while the majority have no say in how their money is spent, yet receive fewer services from it because they are not in such categories?

It remains to be seen how many abuses the majority of taxpayers will put up with before there is a general backlash. In recent years there has been increasing debate on this subject, and consciousness is growing that the method of protecting disadvantaged citizens by issuing them open-ended rights has unwittingly furnished them open-ended powers over the rest. No nation can remain prosperous which spends its resources propping up the weak at the expense of the strong.

□

Source: Philip K. Howard, *The Death of Common Sense*, Random House, 1994, pp. 113-116 and pp. 166-167.

Rights have taken on a new role in America. Whenever there is a perceived injustice, new rights are created to help the victims. These rights are different: While the rights-bearers may see them as "protection," they don't protect so much as provide. These rights are intended as a new, and often invisible, form of subsidy. They are provided at everyone else's expense, but the amount of the check is left blank. . . .

Rights sound so righteous. But the new rights aren't rights at all: They are blunt powers masquerading under the name of rights. They have nothing to do with rights. The rights our forefathers died for are a shield - government can't tell me what to do or say - to preserve our freedom from others ordering us around. The new rights are a sword. They are hailed under the flag of freedom. But no one doing the saluting is looking at how these rights impinge on what others consider to be their own freedoms. The coinage of the new rights regime has a flip side; it is called coercion.

Philip K. Howard, *The Death of Common Sense*, pp. 117 and 167.

## Sabrin Qualifies for NJ Debates

Dr. Murray Sabrin, the Libertarian Party candidate for governor of New Jersey, has been invited to participate in the televised debates with Republican Governor Christine Todd Whitman and her Democratic challenger, State Senator Jim McGreevey.

This is a significant achievement, as Sabrin had to raise at least \$200,000 in campaign contributions to qualify for matching funds and thus secure his seat in the debates. Then, after submitting the qualifying paperwork, the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC) bent over backwards trying to find some way to keep him *out* of the debates.

They claimed that, rather than merely raising \$200,000 by September 1, 1997, as they had first told him was necessary, they then decided that the rules required him to *spend* \$200,000 by that deadline. Outraged that ELEC had changed their own regulations simply to prevent him from receiving the matching funds and appearing in the debates, Sabrin then spent \$25,000 in legal fees to fight them in court. Fortunately, the money was well-spent, as the courts and the media sided with Sabrin, and ordered ELEC to allow him to participate in the debates.

New Jersey law requires gubernatorial candidates to debate twice before the election, but Whitman and McGreevey decided to add a third debate to the schedule, a free-form "town meeting" type of affair where questions will be submitted from citizens in the audience, rather than from a panel of journalists. The two other candidates reluctantly decided to invite Sabrin to this third debate, since the publicity surrounding his campaign has reflected so poorly on their own mudslinging efforts. It is noteworthy that this third debate will be sponsored by the *Philadelphia Enquirer* newspaper, which has consistently supported Sabrin's underdog position throughout the rocky campaign.

The first "town meeting" debate will be held on October 18, 1997 at Rowan University in Glassboro. The two more traditional debates will be conducted on October 21 and 24 in North Jersey. □

# Redevelopment: The Establishment

by Lou Filipovich

Redevelopment is an entrenched special interest. It thrives on contributions from its beneficiaries and from lack of awareness of the general public. Its advocate is the California Redevelopment Association, a Sacramento-based lobby that seeks to protect and expand redevelopment power.

The CRA claims to represent the interests of cities. It is, in fact, a self-perpetuating money machine that reacts against any reforms that would diminish its power. The CRA's annual budget now tops \$1.6 million. Its Executive Director draws \$156,000 annually in total compensation. Its contract lobbyist in 1996 was paid \$122,800, although the CRA is only one of his several clients.

The public has no voice in CRA operations or policies. The CRA is governed by its seven officers and a 12-member board. All are redevelopment agency administrators. None are elected officials. The CRA is operated by redevelopment insiders to serve their interests. Good public policy is not their concern!

The real beneficiaries of redevelopment are not "local communities," which must bid against each other for corporate retailers. They are not individual citizens, who have seen their property rights eroded as public debts mount. The real beneficiaries are those employed by redevelopment agencies. Redevelopment staff (controls agency agendas and recommends agency actions). Agency members—usually elected city councils—mostly rely on their staff than their own judgment. Though simple to understand, redevelopment is often presented as too complex for ordinary elected citizens—and local taxpayers—to comprehend.

Other real beneficiaries too are the consultants, lawyers, bond brokers and developers who create, finance, advise, build and otherwise make vast sums from redevelopment projects. They are easy to find. The California Redevelopment Association's 1996 directory lists as members 25 commercial development companies, 101 separate consulting firms, 26 bond brokers and 37 law offices. Together, they form

redevelopment's core constituency and its only profit-center.

Among these companies are California's biggest developers, priciest law firms and some of Wall Street's most powerful brokerage houses. They are relied on by public officials for "expertise" which is always geared to expanding redevelopment power. They are "cash" donors to the CRA's political action committee, which supports compliant state and local lawmakers. Thus, the tax increment is recycled into political contributions.

What also allows redevelopment to thrive is the lack of "public" understanding of what it is and how it operates. By current law, redevelopment policies are not subject to the same public overview as those of the state, schools, counties and cities. This isolation has spawned activities that would never be tolerated by any other government agency.

Footnote: redevelopment without any taxpayer/voter approval is clearly by no manner of means a mutual agreed destruction whenever it takes place. Redevelopment not only subsidizes but is a Civil Right "discriminating" in favor of one group over another group of taxpayers! Therefore, the unanswered question—whose civil rights are in violation? The redevelopment civil employee/taxpayer or the tax-producing non-civil employee/taxpayer? □



*"Follow me boys... Another town needs us to save it!"*

This is the ninth installment of a ten part series on the impact of Redevelopment Agencies in California. The conclusion of this series will appear in the November issue of the **Libertarian Lifeline**.

# The Republicans— Where are they?

by Constance Chase

Many Libertarians have considered themselves philosophically closer to the Republican Party than to the Democratic Party. But where are the Republicans? What do they believe? What will they stand and fight for, or stand and *die* for?

Apparently, nothing. They are professional politicians. They are willing to lie, cheat, forget morals, and even destroy to preserve their power structure. They are no better than the Democrats. Even though they hold a majority position in both houses of congress, Republicans continue to be cowardly, fearful and apologetic. The government they control at the present time is not only deplorable, but it is also dangerous.

John Glenn, a Democrat, has said the Constitution is an antiquated document. Our Constitution, our rule of laws, our Bill of Rights are being systematically annihilated. We need proactive leaders who are able to present a rational philosophy and ways of downsizing government. Most of all, we need non-professional leaders who will stand by their word.

James Traficant, a Democrat, said in a radio interview in June that a change will have to come from the *outside*; no significant changes in our government are going to come from the inside.

Libertarians are these leaders. Libertarians have a well developed philosophy that involves personal integrity, honesty, and a belief that the individual is sovereign. The main requirement for being a libertarian is the belief that each person is an individual and has certain unalienable rights and that that individual cannot force others to do or believe as he does. Only Libertarians have completely abdicated the use of force unless it is for self defense.

A recent issue of *Media Bypass* carried an article suggesting that people start attaching flyers to public bulletin boards listing recent governmental abuses and the fine-print portions of current legislation.

This is a survival contest for a nation, a people, and for ourselves as individuals. Ayn Rand once called an individual "the largest minority in the world." There are millions of individuals, but they need leadership and organization. Libertarians, are you there?



## 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.

**Libertarian Party**

**of California**

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS **OCTOBER**

**Thursday, October 8, 1997. John Lennon** would have celebrated his 57th birthday on this date, had he not been assassinated in 1980. Libertarians can honor his memory on this day by doing what we often do: "Imagine there's no countries... It isn't hard to do... Nothing to kill or die for... And no religion, too... Imagine all the people, living life in peace..."

**Saturday and Sunday, October 18-19, 1997. Success '97 Regional Conference.** A two-day comprehensive conference for state and local LP leaders, candidates, and campaign managers being held in Los Angeles. Sponsored by national LP and LPC. For more information, contact Kris Williams at (202) 333-0008.

**Tuesday, October 28, 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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