

LIBERTARIAN LIFELINE



What Happened to the Signers of the Declaration?

The brave Americans who committed their names to the historic document we celebrate this month did not do so lightly. Laying down their signatures on the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776 profoundly changed the course of history, but the consequences of that decision were not at all pleasant for them. Five signers were captured by the British and brutally tortured as traitors. Nine fought in the War for Independence and died from wounds or from hardships they suffered. Two lost their sons in the Continental Army. Another two had sons who were captured. At least a dozen of the fifty-six had their homes pillaged and burned.

What kind of men were they? Twenty five were lawyers or jurists. Eleven were merchants. Nine were farmers or large plantation owners. One was a teacher, one a musician, and one a printer. These were men of means and education, yet they signed the Declaration of Independence, knowing full well that the penalty could be death if they were captured.

In the face of the advancing British Army, the Continental Congress fled from Philadelphia to Baltimore on December 12, 1776. It was an especially anxious time for John Hancock, the President, as his wife had just given birth to a baby girl. Due to the complications stemming from the trip to Baltimore, the child lived only a few months.

William Ellery's signing at the risk of his fortune proved only too realistic. In December 1776, during three days of British occupation of Newport, Rhode Island, Ellery's house was burned, and all his property destroyed. Richard Stockton, a New Jersey State Supreme Court Justice, had rushed back to his estate near Princeton after signing the Declaration of Independence to find that his wife and children were living like refugees with friends. They had been betrayed by a Tory sympathizer who also revealed Stockton's own whereabouts. British troops pulled him from his bed one night, beat him and threw him in jail where he almost starved to death. When he was finally released, he went home to find his estate had been looted, his possessions burned, and his horses stolen. Judge Stockton had been so badly treated in prison that his health was ruined and he died before the war's end. His surviving family had to live the remainder of their lives off charity.

Carter Braxton was a wealthy planter and trader. One by one, his ships were captured by the British navy. He loaned a large sum of money to the American cause; it was never paid back. He was forced to sell his plantations and mortgage his other properties to pay his debts. Thomas McKean was so

hounded by the British that he had to move his family almost constantly. He served in the Continental Congress without pay, and kept his family in hiding.

Vandals or soldiers (or both) looted the properties of Clymer, Hall, Harrison, Hopkinson and Livingston. Seventeen lost everything they owned. Thomas Heyward, Jr., Edward Rutledge and Arthur Middleton, all of South Carolina, were captured by the British during the Charleston Campaign in 1780. They were kept in dungeons at the St. Augustine Prison until exchanged a year later.

At the Battle of Yorktown, Thomas Nelson, Jr. noted that the British General Cornwallis had taken over his family home for its headquarters. Nelson urged General George Washington to open fire on his own home. This was done, and the home was destroyed. Nelson later died bankrupt. Francis Lewis also had his home and properties destroyed. The enemy jailed his wife for two months. That and other hardships from the war so affected her health that she died only two years later. "Honest John" Hart, a New Jersey farmer, was driven from his wife's bedside when she was near death. Their thirteen children fled for their lives. Hart's fields and his grist mill were laid waste. For over a year he eluded capture by hiding in nearby forests. He never knew where his bed would be the next night and often slept in caves. When he finally returned home, he found that his wife had died, his children disappeared, and his farm and stock were completely destroyed. Hart himself died in 1779 without ever seeing any of his family again.

Such were the stories and sacrifices typical of those who risked everything to sign the Declaration of Independence. These men were not wild-eyed, rabble-rousing ruffians. They were soft-spoken men of means and education. They had security, but they valued liberty more. Standing tall, straight, and unwavering, they pledged: "For the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of the Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

Are there any among us who would do likewise? ☐

This article appears courtesy of Liberty Activists (liberty@csranet.com), who urge all Libertarians to remember the sacrifices of our founding fathers and keep the spirit of their revolution alive. Would *you* be willing to sign your name to such a document? Li

High Court Strikes Down "Decency" Act

While the Supreme Court struck down the Communications Decency Act last month as unconstitutional, the battle for freedom of expression on the internet is far from over. The CDA was merely a trial balloon launched to see just how restrictive the government could be on the issue of regulating the content of speech on the internet; the next attempt to censor electronic free speech may be less draconian, but will be no more acceptable to Libertarians.

President Clinton said his administration "remains firmly committed" to the anti-obscenity provisions of the CDA and promised to cooperate with industry to develop technology to help protect children from online smut. Representative Rick White (R-Washington) and Senator Patty Murray (D-Washington), immediately announced after the Court's decision that they will be introducing legislation that would avoid the CDA's First Amendment problems by adopting a more moderate and precise legal standard. Apparently, some of our elected representatives are simply incapable of understanding the very first words of the First Amendment, "Congress shall make no law..."

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The major victory for free speech advocates is the court's confirmation that the free market has already responded to the problem with the introduction of many competing software solutions (Surfwatch, NetNanny, Cyberpatrol, etc.) which put the control of internet access to children firmly in the hands of parents where it belongs. Another good sign was the lopsided 7-2 decision, showing that only two of the nine justices were at all persuaded by the government's lame argument that Congress had a responsibility to protect children from "indecent" and "patently offensive" material in cyberspace; the bad sign was that the two dissenters were Chief Justice William Rehnquist and Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, neither of whom are particularly sympathetic to the rights of individuals. Associate Justice John Paul Stevens, writing for the majority, noted that "use of the undefined terms 'indecent' and 'patently offensive' raise special First Amendment concerns because of its obvious chilling effect on free speech," implying that had these terms been better defined in the Act, it might have met constitutional scrutiny.

Although the major battle for freedom of speech may have been won, the war is not yet over. Robert and Carleen Thomas, who operated an adult computer Bulletin Board System in San Jose, are still in prison serving time for violating the obscenity laws of Tennessee, passed before the CDA was enacted by congress. The court's decision has no effect on their status as victims of arcane obscenity laws already on the books.

The court *did* recognize that the internet is a worldwide communications medium, and that the laws of the United States cannot be imposed on the other countries with whom we share cyberspace; however, there are other nations who would also wish to restrict and control what you write, read, view and download on the internet.

The Bavarian Republic of Germany has arrested the regional manager of the Compuserve Information Service for failing to comply with that government's harsh moral restrictions on internet content, even though such content may originate outside of their jurisdiction, and the operator of an information system has little control over the content of the files transmitted over a network.

Iran even refuses to allow its citizens to connect locally to the internet, for fear that the ideas available there might undermine the religious ideology of their Islamic Republic. Of course, we have no problem with countries who choose not to participate in the electronic information revolution; that is their choice and they will deal with the consequences. The Iranians are not imposing their views on the citizens of other countries. If only our own government could be so enlightened.



From the Chair

by Doug Ohmen

Welcome aboard for all the new people who are receiving this newsletter for the first or second time. The membership list of the National Libertarian Party is now consolidated with the Libertarian Party of California and also the East Bay Region Libertarian Party. If you were a National LP member before, you are now automatically a California and Regional member (no extra charge.) We are delighted to welcome you and we hope that you will all become active members of our Region and local groups.

This is a very large region encompassing both Contra Costa and Alameda Counties, so we have set up local groups in Richmond/Berkeley, Concord/Walnut Creek/Lafayette, Danville/San Ramon/Pleasanton, Hayward/San Leandro, Oakland/Alameda, and Fremont. We have meetings every other month in one of these local areas in rotation. The next meeting will be in Lafayette on Tuesday, July 15, at 7:00pm. The location is shown in the calendar on the back page. We invite and encourage all Libertarians in the region to come. It will be a chance to meet a lot of fine people and to hear an interesting talk. Do come!

This region has four major goals for 1997 and 1998: first, to double the number of people registered to vote as Libertarians; second to double the number of people who are members of the Libertarian Party; third, to double the number of people who are active in the Party; and finally, to have Libertarians running for every major office in the 1997 and 1998 elections.

In this issue of the **Libertarian Lifeline**, we have listed all of the offices that will be up for election on November 4, 1997, in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties. These are all local, non-partisan elections where Libertarians have an excellent chance of getting elected. Getting on the ballot is simple: for city offices, check with your city clerk. For the rest of the Region offices, check with the election clerk (Registrar) for your county. It may cost you a small filing fee but then you will be on the ballot. Your main advertising may be in the handout that comes to every household from the election office. You do not have to run petitions to be on the ballot in most cases. Obviously, the more seriously that you take your election, the more likely you are to get elected. The Libertarian Party takes its elected officials very seriously, and we have a growing number of them. Last November, our own Anne Lindl was elected as a

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Board Member to the Livermore Unified School District.

The thing to remember is that if you do not run, the office is likely to go to someone who wants the job as a stepping stone to greater power, or to pay back some special interest. It may be a union or some other group, but it is almost certain that they want the organization to spend more money on their interests. They *do not* want efficiency; they just want to expand the empire. All of this will cost more money and they will go to the taxpayers to get that money.

The only people who can be trusted to hold the line on spending are Libertarians. Only Libertarians can be expected to ask if the District *really needs* that shiny new program with all the glittering whistles and bells. In other words, the taxpayers of the county need **you** to run for office. That is the only way you can really make a difference. We all complain about the high cost and intrusiveness of government. Now is the time to raise your hand and say that you will try to do something about it. Since all these offices are non-partisan, you have just as good a chance of getting elected as anyone else.

Just by running, you will make a difference, regardless of whether or not you get elected. You will be asked to speak at civic gatherings to say *why* you should be elected. You will probably be the only one there who will actually run on a plank of lower taxes and less intrusive government. That will make the others explain why they want to get more taxes and more government. You will make the others look like big spenders in contrast. This will make you unique and when the votes get counted, a lot of people will see it your way.

If you can't personally run for office, then urge one of our other Libertarians to run and you be their campaign chairman or treasurer, put up signs, gather money, ring doorbells, etc. There is a lot you can do.

What will the Party do to help you? First of all, we have a lot of experience at running campaigns and there are some good people who can advise you. Second, if you let me know, we will keep listing you in the **Libertarian Lifeline** to get your name out to the rest of the Libertarians. Third, we will put out press releases from the Libertarian Party urging people to vote for you. Just let me know and I will get the Party wheels in motion.

This is an exciting time. Next year, we will want to have people running in every partisan campaign in the Region: Congress, Assembly, State Senate, etc. The experience you gain this year will help leapfrog you into a partisan campaign next year. Libertarians can make a difference!

In Freedom! Doug Ohmen

WOULD YOU LIKE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Now is the time! There are a lot of offices opening up for election in November and there is very little that you have to do to run. Mainly you just have to sign up. If you *don't* run, these offices will go to some pointy-headed, big spending liberal who will just raise your taxes and reduce your services while doubling their own staff. The liberal will get a big expense account and go to study groups in Antigua, all at the taxpayers' expense. You can make a difference. All you have to do is RUN!

In general, for most of these offices you must: (1) live in the district; (2) be a registered voter; (3) file nomination papers between July 14 and August 8; (4) pay a small filing fee (in some cases, but not all); and of course, write a candidate statement, which you should do in any case.

These are the offices open in Contra Costa County. File at the Contra Costa County Election Office, 524 Main Street, in Martinez:.

School Districts:

- Acalanes Union High School District (3 openings)
- Antioch Unified School District (2)
- Liberty Union High School District (3)
- Brentwood Union School District (3)
- Byron Union School District (3)
- Canyon School District (2)
- Knightsen School District (2)
- Lafayette School District (3)
- Martinez Unified School District (2)
- Moraga School District (3)
- Mt. Diablo Unified School District (3)
- Oakley Union School District (3)
- Orinda Union School District (3)
- Pittsburg Unified School District (3)
- Walnut Creek School District (3)
- West Contra Costa Unified School District (3)

Special Districts:

- Diablo Community Services District (3)
- El Sobrante Municipal Advisory Council (3)
- North Richmond Municipal Advisory Council (4)
- Castle Rock Water District (2)
- Contra Costa Water District, Div. 1 and 2
- Diablo Water District (3)
- San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District (2)
- Byron-Bethany Irrigation District, Div. 1, 2 and 3

- East Contra Costa Irrigation District, Div. 1 and 4
- Bethel Island Municipal Improvement District (2)
- Green Valley Recreation and Park District (3)
- Rollingwood-Wilart Park and Recreation District (2)
- Byron Sanitary District (2)
- Mt. View Sanitary District (2)
- West County Waste Water District (3)
- Ironhorse Sanitary District (2)

City Elections: (Call city clerk first to file nomination papers.)

• City of Concord, Member City Council (3), City Clerk, Treasurer

- Town of Danville, Member Town Council (2)
- City of El Cerrito, Member City Council (3)
- City of Lafayette, Member City Council (2)
- City of Pittsburg, Member City Council (3), City Clerk, Treasurer

- City of Pleasant Hill, Member City Council (2)
- City of Richmond, Mayor, Member City Council (4)
- City of San Ramon, Member City Council (2)

The following offices are open in Alameda County.

The numbers of available positions were not available at press time. File at the Alameda County Registrar of Voters, 1225 Fallon Street, Oakland (in the basement of the Court House.)

School Districts:

- Castro Valley Unified School District
- Emery Unified School District
- Hayward Unified School District
- Pleasanton Unified School District

Special Districts:

- Byron-Bethany Irrigation District
- Castro Valley Sanitary District

City Elections: (Call city clerk first to file nomination papers.)

- Emeryville
- Livermore
- Newark
- Union City

Go for it and make a difference!

WANTED

We need someone to help organize and manage the Libertarian Party Fair scheduled for October 4, 1997. We will be inviting people from all over the Bay Area and from every political party. Pay will come out of everything made after expenses. Are you good at running things? Here is a great chance to make a difference! Call Doug Ohmen at (510) 820-0812.

Noah's Ark - A Modern Tale

And the Lord spoke to Noah and said: "In six months I'm going to make it rain until the whole earth is covered with water and all the evil people are destroyed. But I want to save a few good people, and two of every kind of living thing on the planet. I am ordering you to build Me an Ark," said the Lord.

And in a flash of lightning He delivered the specifications for an Ark.

"OK," said Noah, trembling in fear and fumbling with the blueprints. "Six months, and it starts to rain" thundered the Lord. "You'd better have my Ark completed, or learn how to swim for a very long time."

And six months passed.

The skies began to cloud up and rain began to fall. The Lord saw that Noah was sitting in his front yard, weeping. And there was no Ark.

"Noah," shouted the Lord, "where is my Ark?" A lightning bolt crashed into the ground next to Noah, for emphasis.

"Lord, please forgive me," begged Noah. "I did my best. But there were big problems. First I had to get a building permit for the Ark construction project, and your plans didn't meet Code. So I had to hire an engineer to redraw the plans. Then I got into a big fight over whether or not the Ark needed a fire sprinkler system. My neighbors objected claiming I was violating zoning by building the Ark in my front yard, so I had to get a variance from the city planning commission.

"Then I had a big problem getting enough wood for the Ark because there was a ban on cutting trees to save the Spotted Owl.

Then the carpenters formed a union and went out on strike. I had to negotiate a settlement with the National Labor Relations Board before anyone would pick up a saw or a hammer. Now we got 16 carpenters going on the boat, and still no owls.

"Then I started gathering up the animals, and got sued by an animal rights group. They objected to me taking only two of each kind. Just when I got the suit dismissed, EPA notified me that I couldn't complete the Ark without filing an environmental impact statement on your proposed Flood.

Then the Army Corps of Engineers wanted a map of the proposed new flood plain. I sent them a globe.

And the IRS (The tax authorities) has seized all my assets claiming I'm trying to avoid paying taxes by leaving the country, and I just got a notice from the state about owing some kind of use tax.

"I really don't think I can finish your Ark for at least another five years," Noah wailed.

The sky began to clear. The sun began to shine. A rainbow arched across the sky. Noah looked up and smiled. "You mean you're not going to destroy the earth?" Noah asked, hopefully.

"Wrong!" thundered the Lord. "But being Lord of the Universe has its advantages. I fully intend to smite the Earth, but with something far worse than a Flood. Something Man invented himself."

"What's that?" asked Noah.

There was a long pause, and then the Lord spoke: "Government." □

The preceding parable was forwarded by Denise Kalm from the Oracle Humor Mailing List. The author is the famous "anonymous". To subscribe, send an email message to oracle-list-subscribe@synapse.net

Dave Hollist Announces Presidential Candidacy

As a Libertarian candidate for President, I would like to persuade you that we need to add the following amendment to our constitution: Our government will not tax. After working many years on an idea called contract insurance, I have discovered a way to operate our government without taxation. Please contact me for a free 2 page prospectus or a copy of my 20 page booklet, which is only \$2 (including postage and tax). Also, each \$100 investment in my campaign pays \$200 when I win. Thanks for your consideration.

Dave Hollist (909) 980-4198 Secretary of Region 36 San Bernardino P.O. Box 1414, Alta Loma, CA 91701-8414
constitution@compuserve.com <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/constitution>

Predatory Redevelopment: Sales Tax Shell Game

by Lou Filipovich

A drive north on the Santa Ana Freeway from Disneyland toward Los Angeles reveals the chaos redevelopment has wreaked. There is Buena Park Auto Square, built around dealerships lured from nearby Fullerton. Just north is the old Gateway Chevrolet site. Where did it go? To La Mirada, just across the county line, which lured it from Buena Park with its own publicity-financed automall land (on land conveniently designated as "blight").

Still further north is another auto mall in Santa Fe Springs, long vacant with numerous parcels waiting for dealerships that will never come. To the west is Cerritos, who's giant redevelopment-funded "Auto Square" came to be a pioneer in auto dealer piracy, draining off dealerships (and sales tax) from its neighbors (witness San Leandro and its neighbors).

Nearby Lakewood lost so many car dealers that its city manager properly labeled Cerritos the "Darth Vader of cities." Drive any stretch of freeway in San Diego, Los Angeles, Santa Clara or other urban counties and you will see redevelopment-funded auto malls with hopeful reader boards carefully graded—and vacant—dealer sites. They are the product of a "bitter" fiscal free-for-all, as cities coax each other's dealerships away with ever-sweeter giveaways.

Car dealers, of course, are loving it. That is, some may no longer have to make a profit from mere customers. They can now play city against city for cheap land, tax rebates and other free public improvements. You cannot blame them, but you can blame the laws that encourage this shell game.

The same pattern is repeated with department stores, discount chains and even home supply centers and sports franchises. The Los Angeles Redevelopment Agency has committed a \$50 million bond to lure the NBA Lakers and Kings from Inglewood back to the city that bears the teams' names. Corporate decisions once based on market forces are now determined by which city's redevelopment agency will cut the best deal.

Some cities are winners, some are losers. Some are merely able to stay even. Per capita sales tax revenues vary widely among cities. Even for the

winners there are pitfalls. A major retailer will, after all, draw many customers away from existing businesses within the same city. Later, it may hold the city hostage, threatening to move away unless even more subsidies are provided. Is this good policy? Is it good economics?

The problem is not limited to California. It is part of a troubling national trend by which states outbid each other to attract new industry. The economic incentives often bear little or no relation to the benefits realized. When considering plant location, foreign companies now routinely play one state against another for the biggest subsidy package. When a Ford Foundation sponsored conference on "The Economic War Among States" was held in Washington, DC on May 21 and 22, 1996, on this problem, it was handled by an economic truce being proposed among the states. Such leadership is needed here to halt California's own redevelopment revenue wars.

Footnote: Taxes, specifically sales taxes: are they good or bad? Is sales tax a productive or a destructive force? By its own nature, if left all alone, redevelopment agencies will destroy what they need the most, our tax revenue producing systems!

How does one justify sales tax on high-priced individually paid luxury items like planes, boats and automobiles, and also justify the .22 cent sales tax on less than 5 ounces of shaving cream, a product produced for less than one cent an ounce? Who then produces sales revenue on equal terms, the individual buyer of luxury items, or the millions and millions of individual minimum wage taxpayers who have to shave every day?

In the real world, economy production depends on duty-free nations—without any underground economies. If sales tax was eliminated in California, then in all probability the state's multi-billion dollar "underground economy" would fail overnight. It is ironic that, just as we encourage former Soviet-bloc countries to privatize their anemic state-run industries, we increasingly entangle our local and state governments in subsidizing private business, all in the name of "economic development" and policies that have repeatedly failed elsewhere! Mostly leaving average taxpayers and renters to pay off the debts.

This is the sixth installment of a ten part series on the growth of Redevelopment Agencies in California. Part Seven, "The Myth of Economic Development," will follow in next month's *Libertarian Lifeline*.

Good-bye, Freedom's Forum Bookstore

A landmark of Bay Area Libertarian history closed its doors forever in June. Freedom's Forum Bookstore was forced to vacate its familiar storefront located for the past 17 years at 1800 Market Street after the San Francisco Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender Cultural Center (another tenant in the building) received a public grant from the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to take over the entire property and evict all the other tenants.

The little Libertarian bookstore was no match for the politically powerful Cultural Center with its millions of tax dollars and greedy ambitions, and did not have the resources to fight the eviction. Other locations in the city were evaluated, but no feasible alternative was found, so it was determined that the bookstore would have to fold.

San Francisco is still home to two other Libertarian book distributors, Liberty Tree and Laissez Faire Books, but these operations do most of their business by mail order, and there will never be another venture quite like Freedom's Forum.

The location had become something of an institution over the past two decades as a central office for the San Francisco Libertarian Party, the International Society for Individual Liberty, Lysander's Mail Central and several other entrepreneurship. Many of

us have fond memories of book signings, campaign fundraisers and other events held within those walls, and we will miss the place very much.

ISIL will continue of course, as will the SFLP, but Bay Area Libertarians will no longer be able to browse the shelves of that fine establishment, sit in its comfortable chairs and discuss the issues of the day.

Since the revenue generated by bookstore sales cannot be replaced, ISIL is seeking contributions to help finance the relocation of its offices and printing operations to the East Bay. Send contributions to ISIL at 836-B Southampton Road, #299, Benicia, CA 94510. Please try to make a generous donation to ISIL to help this important cause recover from these new circumstances.

Our hats are off to Vince Miller, Mark Valverde and Jim Elwood, and all the other hardworking individuals who gave their time, energy and enthusiasm over the years to that beacon of freedom on Market Street.



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 **JULY**

Friday, July 4, 1997 Independence Day, the holiest day on the Libertarian Calendar. Celebrate the founding of our nation with your family. Have a picnic, go to a ballgame and watch the fireworks, but remember *why* this day is so important. Read the Declaration of Independence out loud to your children and make sure they understand the sacrifices required to keep us free, that wars should not be fought over trivial matters, and that the freedom we enjoy today did not come to us easily. This should help them understand why you are a Libertarian.

Tuesday, July 15, 1997, 7:00 p.m. East Bay Region General Meeting at Round Table Pizza, 3637 Mount Diablo Boulevard in Lafayette. Special Guest Speaker will be Jon Petersen, Northern Vice-Chair of the Libertarian Party of California. RSVP is not necessary, but is encouraged for planning purposes. Leave your acceptances on the answering machine at (510) 283-5876. Round Table serves small individual pizzas as well as their traditional large pies and also features an impressively healthy salad bar. If you're driving east to Lafayette, take Highway 24 to the Central Lafayette Exit, turn right on Mt. Diablo Blvd. and follow the street to the shopping center at the intersection with Happy Valley Road. If you're driving west from Concord/Walnut Creek, take the Central Lafayette exit from Highway 24, make two right turns to go under the freeway, then turn right on Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Tuesday, July 29, 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. If you have internet access, check out the Free Radio Berkeley Web Site at <http://www.freeradio.org>

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