

Editor's Notes

February's get-together covered enough territory for three different meetings:

First, those of us who had attended the LP of California's state-wide *convention* in Long Beach related our experiences there. (For me, it was a kick to drive around town and note the California Liberty news racks on the streets! We briefly discussed the possibility of doing the same here; in front of local post offices.)

Second, we all told a little bit about ourselves, as we were joined by two newcomers to the SMLP. One was a retired businessman who told us the appalling story of how the state Board of Equalization destroyed his business. As a "negotiating tactic," the state froze his checking account. Unable to pay his suppliers or employees, he soon lost his customers and had to close his doors. (No doubt Pete Wilson needed the money to hire some high-priced publicity men to persuade prospects in other states that California's reputation for hostility to business is undeserved...) I sure wished that people who think that a national *sales tax* is the solution to the problem of IRS abusiveness could have been present.

Third, we debated and decided the SMLP's recommendations for the state *propositions* we'll all be voting on at this month's election. See article below.

Our *next meeting* will be Wednesday March 20, at Amy Guthrie's office in Palo Alto from 7:30pm to 9:00pm. (See the map on the back page for directions) We plan to discuss ideas for increasing local Libertarian registration, paid membership, and volunteerism.

14th Amendment

...No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law...

Local Libertarians Speak to Students C. Schmidt

Local Libertarian speakers have been busy lately.

Kelly Russell Simpson and Chuck Olson each spoke to classes at area high schools about Libertarianism and its benefits to society. Chuck most recently spoke March 1 at Sequoia High School in Redwood City.

Mike Moloney represented us at the Junior Statesmen of America's "Presidential Nominating Convention" held at Stanford University on February 24. Most presidential candidates had representatives attend and present their respective programs and/or philosophies. Mike spoke last and, according to Kate O'Brien (whose report I here summarize 'third-hand'), was very well received. After Mike spoke, Robert Dole's emissary said something like "Those ideas make fine rhetoric, but they are just too radical." Mike replied "These are the ideas embodied in the Declaration of Independence and in the Constitution of the United States. Is the Constitution too radical for Bob Dole?" The audience roared with approval-the wisdom of Constitution being a central premise of the JSA program.

Co. Initiative to Force Referenda on Big Projects

The Voters' Approval Committee wants your signature on their petition (enclosed) to require that any San Mateo County government project whose cost will exceed \$3 million (regardless of financing) must be put to the voters in a referendum. They cite the \$8.2 million parking garage in Redwood City and the \$124 million expansion to Chope Hospital in San Mateo as projects so large that the taxpayers should have been consulted.

They need 23,000 signatures by mid-April, so, if you agree, fill in all the blanks on one of the numbered lines AND fill out the 'Declaration of Circulator' at the bottom of the form and send it to the address printed at the bottom of the petition. Don't put it off!

To volunteer to staff a table at a local shopping center on one of the Saturdays between now and the deadline, call Jim McLaughlin at (415) 593-5723.

Mr. McLaughlin (a member of the Republican Party Central Committee) is Chairman of the Voters' Approval Committee, which is circulating this petition. The Voters' Approval Committee is made up of volunteers from all political parties.

Our Positions on the Propositions

At the February 21 meeting we discussed the *upcoming election* and voted to make the following ballot recommendations: (The notes are your editor's)

Prop 192 Seismic Retrofit Bonds.

Vote: *No* (0-5-0)

Notes: The manifest un wisdom of increasing California's \$19.9 billion in bond debt made discussing this measure at length unnecessary.

Prop 193 Property Re-Assessment Waiver

Vote: *Yes* (5-0-0)

Notes: In general we don't favor hiking taxes. This proposition protects property transfers between grandparents and grandchildren from re-assessment when the intervening generation is deceased. (Of course Prop. 13's annual 2% tax hike still applies to these properties.)

Prop 194 Unemployment Insurance Exemption

Vote: *No* (0-4-1)

Notes: This measure would virtually eliminate the Unemployment Insurance tax paid by employers of California prisoners by ending unemployment benefits paid to parolees. (The tax rate paid by employers is based on these payouts.) A free society should not grant preference to prison labor.

Prop 195/196 More Death Penalty Circumstances

Vote: *No* (0-4-1)

Notes: Cases prosecuted under death penalty rules already clog our court system- slowing justice for everyone, costing millions of dollars more (than the life-in-prison option) and, ultimately, failing to result in an execution 98% of the time. Moreover, we find somewhat offensive the notion that some victims' lives are to be considered worthier than others when it comes to public retribution.

Prop 197 Wildlife Mountain Lions

Vote: *No* (0-3-2)

Notes: This smoke-and-mirrors measure would re-allocate regulatory and spending authority; reducing the habitat acquisition program, but increasing the cost to the taxpayers. It would also open the door to tampering by the legislature.

Prop 198 Open Primary

Vote: *No* (0-4-1)

Notes: Political parties should be allowed to run themselves as they see fit. They should not be forced to allow members of other parties to choose their nominees.

Prop 199 Mobilehome Rent Control Phase-out

Vote: *Yes* (5-0-0)

Notes: Ends rent control on individual mobilehome spaces as tenancy or unit ownership changes. When rent control has been phased-out in 90% of a park, up to 10% of the spaces must be made available to low-income tenants at a discount of 10% off the market price of the other spaces. We did not find this restriction objectionable enough to oppose the measure which is otherwise a major step in the direction of freedom.

If municipalities wish to make mobilehome ownership more affordable (and I hope they do!), they should (1) zone more land for them, (2) permit smaller lots in R-1 neighborhoods so mobilehome owners can buy their own spaces, and (3) end code restrictions on manufactured housing.

Prop 200 No-Fault Bodily Injury Insurance

Vote: *Position Not Taken* (2-0-3)

Notes: Although we had some misgivings about some un-libertarian aspects of the concept of 'no-fault' insurance in general, the present regime bears no semblance to 'libertopia' either! Two of us felt strongly that this proposition is worth a yes vote in view of the potential to save up to \$2.5 billion in litigation costs each year.

Prop 201 'Loser Pays' in Shareholder Class Actions

Vote: *No* (0-4-1)

Notes: This measure does nothing to address the greatest problem posed by shareholder class actions: no matter which side prevails in court, the shareholders (those who held their stock) get screwed, as they ultimately pay for the defense (if the corporation wins) and also the judgment (if the corporation loses). All major corporations indemnify their management, whose misdeeds (either real or imagined) form the basis of the suits. This measure proposes to discourage litigation by requiring plaintiffs to post "security bonds," and to recover defense costs (in the first case above), but creates the potential for paying plaintiff's costs (in the second case above), so could easily backfire and cost shareholders more than they might save. The measure also grants the court so much discretion as to render the specific provisions meaningless-not a good thing if one favors the rule of law.

Prop 202 Attorneys' Contingent Fees Limits

Vote: *No* (0-5-0)

Notes: Any government-imposed price controls obstruct the free market. And any cynic will tell you that it would take lawyers only about 5 minutes to figure their way around any technical limitations on their fees, should this one pass. Clients would not pay less. They'd just have a harder time understanding their bills. (Consult your cable TV bill for details...)

Prop 203 Still More School Bonds

Vote: *No* (0-5-0)

Notes: Libertarian Ted Brown wrote the excellent argument against Prop. 203 that appears in the state ballot pamphlet. This is just another proposal to load our children and grandchildren up with debt they have no control over.

Riddle

Q: What's the difference between ex-cons and congressmen?

A: Every now and then ex-cons pass a few good bills.

Seen in Playboy's Party Jokes, April 1996.

Posted by Michael Brinkman (LEAG96@aol.com)

Web Surfers' Corner C.V.A. Schmidt

The County of San Mateo has a home page at <http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us> which is a great jumping-off point for finding the web pages of many state and local agencies.

The "Real History Archives" collect a lot of first-hand stories not carried by the major media; eg. an interview with an OKC Bombing grand juror who tells the tale of how the grand jury was prevented from investigating any theory other than the one promulgated by the feds. The archives are at <http://www.webcom.com/~lpeace/>

The "Restoring America" pages, which can be found at <http://www.soltec.com/~shadow/restore/restore.htm> are also maintained by the "conspiracy theory" crowd, but are leavened with comic anecdotes. E.g., maintainer shadow@soltec.com quotes *George Stephanopolous* on "Larry King Live": "*The President has kept all the promises he intended to keep*". (2/16/96)

Joe Dehn Wins Karl Bray Award C.V.A. Schmidt

Kate reported at the February meeting that our own candidate for the 14th Congressional District (in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties), Joe Dehn, was one of three winners of the Karl Bray Award for outstanding volunteers in the LP of California. In my nomination (which I am sure was one of many) I wrote:

"I nominate Joe Dehn (region 43) for recognition as an outstanding volunteer in the LPC. Specifically: Serving as a congressional candidate; circulating petitions for other candidates; creating, fleshing out, and maintaining the LP and LPC Web pages on the internet; sponsoring, maintaining, and most cogently contributing to the LPC mailing list; sponsoring and maintaining the Dehnbase Rainbow BBS; and, finally: automating the distribution of prospect data from the LPC 800#, the LPUS 800#, and the WSPQ web page. Almost all prospects in our region come from these sources and they only became timely sources when Joe got involved. Previously they were routinely delayed by months."

How Many Republicans... Cajun Chris

Q: How many Republican politicians does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Four hundred and sixty-two:

Twelve to investigate Clinton's involvement in the failure of the old bulb; twenty-three to deregulate the light bulb industry; sixteen to cut funding for alternative lighting R&D; thirty-four to cut the tax rate on light bulbs; fifty-three to design a block grant so the states can change the bulb; forty-one to talk with defense contractors about night-vision gear instead; and two hundred and eighty-three to pass a law making it illegal to discuss naked bulbs (or screwing anything) on the Internet.

-Cajunchris@aol.com (submitted by Rich Acuff)