

San Mateo Libertarian

Volume VII, Number 2 Editor: Delmas Gault February 1997

Quotes & Notes

"Many of the ideas that are on the [political] front burner today were floated by Libertarians in recent years - balancing the budget, reducing regulation, scrapping the Internal Revenue Service, eliminating welfare, reducing troop deployments abroad."

--Rena Pederson, *Dallas Morning News* (Texas), September 29, 1996

"[The Libertarian Party] is not a political party that is funded by special-interest groups making huge campaign contributions, or built on the ego of an individual billionaire. This is literally a political joining together of individuals, from every corner of the United States, to fight the American government, its bureaucracy and its increasing hold on the dollars earned by hard-working Americans."

--Jim McGrath, *Brooklyn Graphic* (New York), August 19, 1996

Certifying Signature?? by Christopher Schmidt

A reader asks "*What is the certifying signature required on the membership form included every month in my newsletter?*"

The certification has a long and interesting history which cant be summarized very well on the form.

When David Nolan started the party 25 years ago he was concerned that the FBI might see the LP as a revolutionary party because we hew so closely to the ideology of the founding fathers. To avoid the potential mis-perception of libertarians as "bomb-throwing anarchists" he created the pledge to make it clear that we seek reform through persuasion, not violence.

And, indeed, perhaps due in part to the "pledge" we have not been harassed to nearly the same degree as the Communist or Black Panther parties.

The "pledge" has served individuals well, too. In the past, when mail boxes have been firebombed on tax day, and Libertarians have been police suspects (because we traditionally hand out anti-tax literature at post offices on that day), they have been released immediately when the "pledge" has been produced. It lets the authorities know what kind of people they are accusing. And if (God forbid) such a nut actually joined the party, the pledge would allow us to disown his misbehavior publically, and proclaim that his violent behavior proved that he was not a "real" libertarian. Consider how difficult it is for the Republicans and Democrats to disown David Duke and Lyndon Larouche.

[The LP of California](#) and the [LP National Committee](#) each require the "pledge" separately. (The [LP of San Mateo County](#) is organizationally a part of the LPC.) In local practice, we have not made an issue of paid membership or pledge signing. It would come up if there were an otherwise irreconcilable conflict, but in the 4 years I've been active weve been able to work by consensus. When voting at conventions, paid and signed membership is scrupulously accounted.

You may encounter Libertarians who want to imbue the "pledge" with a lot more meaning than Nolan intended. Some consider the phrase "non-initiation of force" as the essential distillation of libertarian theory, for example. I try to avoid arguments with them because they are unproductive. It's easier to observe that we can agree on almost all issues, though our reasoning may be different. A true statement can have many proofs, after all.

Every few years the LPC votes whether we should drop the "pledge". To date, the motion has always failed. *I* would vote to make it optional, but I have observed that the longer people affiliate with the party, the more likely they are to favor the "pledge" requirement, and those are the people who tend to attend the conventions.

(Note: I use 'scarce quotes' around the word 'pledge' above because party doctrine holds that it is a *certification* of a belief held; not a "pledge" to change one's behavior because one has signed. Informally, though, it is usually called the "pledge".)

Given the present hysteria in Congress calling for persecution of militias, the certification may once again be serving its original purpose!

Christopher Schmidt (CVASchmidt@ACM.org) is the former editor of the San Mateo Libertarian.

The Ten (Revised) Truths of Tyranny by Ira Brodsky

1. You know you are living under tyranny when the failure of the legislature to churn out new laws on a daily basis is called "gridlock."
2. The easier a law is to pass, the harder it is to rescind.
3. Any law that claims to protect rights that already exist will actually diminish those rights.
4. All laws passed "for a good cause" are actually for bad causes.
5. Laws enacted to help any one group always harm everyone else.
6. All good things the government says happened thanks to regulation of commerce happened for other reasons or never really happened at all.
7. Anything the government "plans" for has already happened.
8. When there is a budget shortfall to cover non-essential government services, those services will simply be reclassified as "essential" and taxes promptly raised.

9. Citizens who oppose new legislation are always portrayed as villains.
10. Governments do not grant freedoms; they only take them away.

--Ira Brodsky (ibrodsky@ix13.ix.netcom.com); submitted by Kate O'Brien.

January Meeting Minutes by Rich Acuff

During the 1-15-97 business meeting we held our annual SMLP local elections. The results are:

Chair
Mary Steiner
Vice Chair
Kate O'Brien
Treasurer
Mary Steiner
Secretary
Christopher Schmidt

We also elected delegates to the state party convention: Delmas Gault and Kate O'Brien, with any member of the "Central Committee" (i.e., a dues paying member of the SMLP) as an alternate.

Our friend Chuck Olson has offered some books free for the taking. Books discussing Libertarian ideology will be available at the next meeting, which will be on Feb 19 at 7:30, at Amy Guthrie's office. Our plans for a more northern site haven't born fruit yet.

Libertarian Party on the Move

The number of registered Libertarian voters is increasing eight times faster than the number of Democrats and five times faster than Republicans, according to newly released figures.

In the 28 states that allow partisan registration, the number of Libertarians grew by 49% in the past two years.

A nationwide Gallup poll taken last year revealed that about 50 million Americans, or 20% of the population, broadly define themselves as Libertarian, meaning they favor a dramatically smaller, less intrusive government.

Several books about Libertarian values have hit the bookstores last month. The two receiving the most press are "*What It Means to Be a Libertarian*," by Charles Murray and "*Libertarianism*," by David Boaz of the [Cato Institute](#).

Hold On to Your Wallet, Here Comes Tax Reform by Delmas Gault

Bashing the Internal Revenue Service has become a popular sport among politicians and journalist recently. A senate panel has requested an investigation into IRS misconduct, while private Whitewater investigators charge the White House is using the IRS to intimidate.

While we anticipate the shameless confession that 'mistakes we're made,' another threat looms on the horizon--tax reform. Like a wolf in sheep's clothing, tax reform by Congress and the chameleon-like Clinton administration holds more opportunities for tax increases.

A proposal for a national sales tax continues to show interest in spite of its flaws. Supporters of the tax praise the abolition of the current system which burdens American households with billions of dollars in preparation costs. However, with a national sales tax, the burden is merely shifted from individuals to a few million businesses nationwide which would be obligated to collect the revenues for the federal government. And for their efforts, be subjected to costly Federal audits. Moreover, businesses with sales invoices based on a credit system with their customers, would berequired to shoulder the tax burden.



Consider California's sales tax. Current collection methods require businesses to calculate, collect and remit the state, county, city and district taxes on all retail sales. If Acme Office Supplies sells Bob's Broom Company pencils and paper, they are most likely invoiced with 30 day credit terms. In other words, Bob needs to pay his invoice within 30 days. The state requires that Acme remit the tax revenues invoiced the previous month by the end of the current month. However, if Bob is late on paying his bill, Acme is obligated to pony-up the money for Bob. The state views dated invoices as monies already collected. In other words, Acme is forced to finance Bob's tax obligation or face fines and risk loosing their business license.

A proposed national sales tax of 19% - added to state and local taxes -would create severe restrictions in cash flow management and effectively wipe out most small businesses in the first year. A major shake-out of under capitalized businesses would create less competition and higher pre-tax prices for consumers.

The tax proposals offer nothing in the way of budget and spending cuts. Proponents of the tax declare that the tax payer would see their tax obligation with each purchase. But how much tax will continue to be hidden in the price of alcohol, milk, and long distance service?

Also, consider the willingness of Congress to raise the tax rate during global conflicts; regional disasters, or a recession. In light of a likely Balanced Budget Amendment, we can expect Congress to continue to hide taxes in targeted commodities like gasoline. Does the average American remember the tax hike at the pump a few years ago? Those revenues were never ear-marked for highway improvements, but instead went to the general fund.

We can expect smoke and mirrors with almost every tax reform proposal coming out of Washington. I'm reminded that NAFTA raises over \$5 billion in new tax revenue every year. Would it surprise anyone if Washington's idea of tax reform resembles their idea of free trade?

Harry Browne's campaign lighted a fire among Americans who are finally questioning the Federal tax system. Libertarian ideas on abolishing the IRS are all the buzz on radio talk shows and editorial columns around the country. By making your voice heard, we can keep the debate alive and up-front.

Delmas Gault (MelangeGroup@MSN.com), Editor