

## Clinton Wants You to Volunteer Or Else

President Clinton likes volunteering so much he wants to make it mandatory for millions of young people, the Libertarian Party declared recently. "Bill Clinton is taking the voluntary out of volunteering," said Steve Dasbach, the chairman of America's third-largest political party. "He wants to turn volunteers into forced government labor."

In a recent weekly radio address, Clinton urged state governments to follow the lead of Maryland, which requires "community service" as a condition for high school graduation. Clinton suggested that such mandated volunteering would teach young Americans "the joy and duty of serving."

"Nonsense," countered Dasbach. "What this forced labor will teach young people is that a desire to help their neighbors has been corrupted into another government program."

Just in case mandating service doesn't work, Clinton also proposed in his radio address to pay "volunteers." He announced the federal government will hand out \$500 checks to students who "performed outstanding service."

"Clinton can't grasp the notion that Americans don't need to be bribed or blackmailed into volunteering, said Dasbach. "People volunteer out of a genuine urge to help other people. Volunteering is the highest tribute to the American spirit of cooperation, teamwork, and compassion."

It's also an important part of the nation's civic landscape. According to a 1993 survey, 48% of Americans volunteer every year - a whopping 80 million adults. In all, Americans contribute 19.5 billion hours of annual voluntary service.

"But 80 million volunteers don't mean anything to Clinton - because the government doesn't control them," said Dasbach. "So he comes up with a typical Washington, DC response: If something is good, either mandate it or subsidize it."

In the case of volunteering, Clinton has a history of doing both. His mandated high school volunteering proposal follows his 1993 AmeriCorps program, which pays young people generous salaries to "volunteer."

In his radio address, Clinton boasted that 50,000 young people "served their communities" through AmeriCorps - neglecting to add that they were paid a \$7,400 annual salary, plus \$9,450 worth of college expenses. That works out to a \$7.27 per hour salary, plus medical benefits and free child care.

In all, it's been estimated that each AmeriCorps employee costs taxpayers \$30,000 a year, once overhead, administrative costs, and promotional advertising are factored in.

"This compares unfavorably to the \$0 per year that genuine volunteers cost taxpayers," Dasbach noted.

And the 50,000 AmeriCorps employees are dwarfed by the estimated 2.9 million young people (aged 18 to 25) who volunteer each year - without the incentive of a government paycheck.

"*Webster's New World Dictionary* defines a volunteer as 'one who offers to enter into service of his own free will.' Bill Clinton's dictionary defines a volunteer as 'one who must be forced to serve - or else he won't get a high school diploma or a paycheck,'" said Dasbach.

"Thanks to Clinton, the noble American tradition of volunteering - millions of individuals who generously give of their time, talent, and spirit - has been turned into just another expensive government program, financed by taxpayers and controlled by governmentbureaucrats," he said.

"And thanks to Clinton, 'mandatory, paid volunteering' now joins the long list of Washington, DC oxymorons - alongside voluntary income tax compliance, Social Security Trust Fund, and an honest politician."

*Webmaster's note: The [Volunteer Center of San Mateo County](#) has a list of volunteer opportunities on-line.*

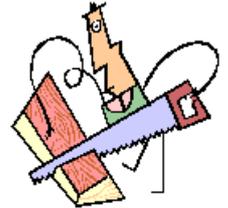
## The Perpetual Fund Raiser - Our School Children

by Delmas Gault, editor

Any parent of primary school age children is aware of the various fund raising events that schools put on. There are events associated with each season and every holiday.

There are bake sales, carnivals, and dances. Door to door, children are asked to pitch house wares, jewelry, cookies, candy, and trips to Maui. The money is used for various expenses the school requires ranging from computers to salaries for additional teacher's aids.

Parents donate their money and time. Sometimes with gusto and sometimes with reservations. Its not uncommon for parents active with fund raising events to be engaged in several activities at once. Often, parents consider these events important to their children's education.



They're doing something to improve their children's future.

The rural school district representing La-Honda and Pescadero are in a funding crisis. "We are fortunate to be surrounded by state and county parks, open space regions and camps, however, the resulting low growth, small population and lack of industry severely limits our financial resource base," declares a recent mailing to area residents. "On the weekend of May 31st and June 1st, La Honda Elementary will be the site of a massive volunteer effort to refurbish the buildings and grounds. Hundreds of men, women and children from our community, and others, will join forces with experts from The International Community Service Day Foundation to repair, repaint and rejuvenate the school."

The projects are not tiny by any means. They plan to build a 1200 sq. ft. library in the spirit of the original 1870 school house, rebuild the athletic fields, landscape, completely rebuild the restrooms, replace water fountains, refurbish the water system, repaint the entire exterior, repair the roofs and gutters, new playground equipment, repair the driveways, paint a mural, up-grade the electrical system. Some materials have been donated - much more is still required. There will be free day care for the volunteers.

I'm not sure where the money to maintain the school facility has gone over the years but its clear it wasn't managed responsibly.

While the larger school districts with numerous buildings approach the voters with bond measures, smaller districts in rural areas beg for volunteers and supplies. The rural voting populace complain bitterly about their high taxes but manage to offer their free time and money for the various fund raisers. They rarely ask questions.

There are plans to add an eighth grade class. The school is now teaching kindergarten through seventh. There is already an eighth grade class at the high school. Still no questions; just keep on volunteering.

Whether you have school age kids or not - how the school district spends your tax dollars matters. I'm reminded that California's test scores rank well below the national average.

California has the 7th largest economy in the world with one of the largest tax bases. I don't buy the funding dilemma. I've already volunteered my money in the form of taxes. I'm saving my quality time for my family and I'm asking lots of questions.

## Quotes & Notes

Responding to President Clinton's call for Volunteerism, Kathleen Parker writes in the *Orlando Sentinel*:

The majority of Americans aren't exactly gazing across rolling lawns. They're working, raising children, checking homework, worshipping together, helping neighbors, pitching in during emergencies, volunteering while trying to make the sucker float. They're tending their own gardens.

Instead of of insisting these good people do more, the president might sponsor a summit on personal responsibility. Insist on high standards, mandate moral behavior, urge parents to spend more time with their children. If we all did those things, the world would take care of itself."

"Everyone wants to save the planet but no one wants to help Mom clean the dishes."

P.J. O'Rourke, in *All the Trouble in the World*

Bill Archer (R-Texas), discussing the new agreement for a balanced budget:

"Under the plan announced today, the federal government should finally be forced to live within its means. Of course, we must still successfully implement this plan."

## Volunteerism for Fun and Profit

by **Bernie Jackson**

Last weekend I found out what is wrong with our country's private charity sector. I saw General Colin Powell on TV talking about volunteerism. He said that those of us who have "succeeded" in life should try harder to "give something back" through selfless volunteer work. I myself have been volunteering every week since June 1996 at Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic in Palo Alto, but General Powell's words did not resonate with me. The view he put forth -- apparently the prevailing American view -- is a very limiting one, one that I think holds back our private charities from accomplishing all that they might.

You see, since I'm only 27 years old, I am not sure if I have "succeeded" yet in life. If I get fired now or my investments go bad later, I could still end up one of those poor "unsuccessful" wretches to whom the rest of you owe community service. Perhaps I should wait and see. Furthermore, last year when I joined Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic, I never even thought about "giving something back." Who would I give it to, and how much do I owe them? I looked at all the things in my house, but none of them had tags saying whom they were from -- just bar codes that I can't read. My paycheck says it's from my employer, but I already work for him. All of this has given me a very sinking feeling that I'm not welcome in the General's volunteer army. With all due respect to Gen. Powell and the millions who found his words inspiring, I hope it isn't so.

Let me explain why I do volunteer work. It all started when I decided that I should get some experience in voice acting and/or audio production. I thought maybe someday I'd be the voice on a documentary soundtrack or a series of funny radio commercials. Since I have no experience of any kind in this area, and because I have a full-time job, the only way I can gain experience is to volunteer. So, what kinds of organizations would need volunteers to read things onto tape? I searched the Internet for "volunteer" and "audio," and I eventually found Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic. Now I read textbooks onto tape every Tuesday night, and my words are eventually heard by blind and reading-impaired students who might not otherwise be able to read their course materials.



Am I the only one who has taken such an apparently backward approach to volunteering? I don't think so. Many of the other volunteers at my studio have expressed an interest in audio-related fields, as hobbies or potential careers. My mother used to volunteer at an art museum near my home, and later she went back to school to earn a Master's degree in art history. It makes perfectly good sense for volunteers to have some personal interest or hobby that meshes with their volunteer activity; it helps them to be attentive and to do a good job. In fact, we should recognize volunteer work as just another form of economic activity: a voluntary exchange of goods, time, or services in return for something of value.

So, to you self-punishing stoic volunteers who doggedly slave away at repulsive and useless tasks, to those of you neo-Puritans who wouldn't dare drink of life too deeply before others have had a sip -- if you indeed exist -- I say, "Step Aside!" You are taking up space that would be eagerly filled by a more earnest and energetic citizen. Your uninspired trudging is short-changing your community, and your community's beneficence is wasted upon you. Get out of the way, and let a more suitable volunteer bring prosperity to himself and to your neighborhood.

## Libertarians Go Hollywood

The Libertarian Party seems to have its own segment of 'Hollywood types.' Among them are actors John Laroquette, Clint Eastwood, Kurt Russell, and Dennis Miller. In addition, TV personality and news commentator Hugh Downs of ABC's *20/20* has repeatedly supported ideas of the Libertarian Party.



Political talk show (*Cross Fire*) guest speaker Charles Murray discussed his new book *What it Means to be a Libertarian*. Host William Buckley referenced his publication - *The National Review* - as a Libertarian magazine with a strong support of national defense. Murray responded that he always considered Buckley to be a 'closet Libertarian.'

## April Meeting Notes

by Christopher Schmidt ([CVASchmidt@ACM.org](mailto:CVASchmidt@ACM.org))

April's meeting was our first at *Prime Time Athletic Club* in Burlingame. The ambiance of the cafe area was intimate (although the cafe tables somewhat awkward for our number); the light fare was made-to-order fresh; and the conversation was interesting.

Delmas told us about a scheme afoot to levy a new "**Medicare**" tax on limited partnership income. The Clinton administration claims it has the authority to create such a tax and congressional Republicans have let their understanding of the constitution atrophy so severely that they aren't even complaining about this violation of the Constitution's Separation of Powers (not to mention Enumerated Powers-but both major parties gave up on that aspect of the Constitution 65 years ago). Steve Forbes is trying to rouse Republicans to opposition, but unsuccessfully. Maybe the truth about the Republican Party will finally sink in on him...

The multipurpose room in which we held our business meeting was large and brightly lit and would easily handle 35 people. (12 were present.) Frank M. pointed out that we could really handle the business portion of the meeting in 15 minutes, so we debated the contention that we might be better off inviting guest speakers of interest to the public at large. (Many other regions of the LPC do this monthly.) Nothing definite was decided.

Frank mentioned that his city posts its **city council meeting minutes on the web** and suggested that Libertarians who want to check up on their cities' plans might want to keep tabs that way. (The hope is that if a Libertarian spots a bad scheme early enough, we might be able to muster opposition in some cases.) - Case in point: I reported that Mike, Mary, and I successfully teamed up to write and submit a rebuttal to the San Mateo-Foster City School District's **bond argument** for the upcoming June 3 ballot. We authorized a small get-out-the-vote mailing for the two school districts where we submitted ballot arguments.

Mike mentioned that there are now **1606 Libertarians** registered to vote in San Mateo County (up 5% since September). He proposed a special membership mailing to them, but we decided to hold off until we can get double-duty out of such a mailing (e.g. to collect nominating signatures). Rich Acuff noted that we already send trial subscriptions to registered Libertarians on a rotating basis and Kate added that the LP National Committee does direct-mail recruiting in California, as well. (Starting last month, their recruits automatically became members of the LPC and (locally) the LPSM.)

We decided that our best course would be to contact lapsed members by phone, since no other part of the LP is in a better position to take this up.

Jon Petersen dropped by our meeting to touch base with us in his capacity as Northern California Vice Chair of the LPC. He commented that the most tried-and-true method of **obtaining new recruits** is one-on-one contact with friends, family, and co-workers. He suggested revisiting old prospects who hadn't wanted to give up the (theoretical) ability to influence the big parties' primary races, now that we have blanket primaries in California. You can obtain voter registration forms by calling (415) 312-5222.

Jon also suggested that we might want to enter a float in the Redwood City Independence Day parade.

Mary reported that the San Mateo High School paper had a **positive article** on the LP. Steven Holly of the LP of Santa Clara described his personal **anti-tax demonstrations** in Palo Alto. He also showed us his \$300 signs.

Bernie Jackson was unable to attend the meeting, but sent word that he had attended an **Atherton Town Hall meeting** the previous week and was excited by the un-tapped libertarian sentiment expressed there. The dominant issue was a new building ordinance which would have outlawed a lot of existing structures and uses of structures. The public comments were mostly about "getting government off our backs," and "giving residents the freedom to use their properties compassionately" (since one rule would have made outlaws of those whose elderly parents were living in the "guest house"), and just plain, "what right do they have to tell us how we can *use* the properties

we paid for"

The **next meeting** of the Libertarian Party of San Mateo County will be Wednesday, May 21, at the Prime Time Athletic Club, at 1730 Rollins Road, Burlingame. Light dinner 6:30-7:30 in the Cafe; business meeting 7:30-9:00 in the multipurpose room.

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I read your article in the February *San Mateo Libertarian* about tax reform. It is my impression that the current Federal "Income Tax" is illegally imposed on people in the private sector, whose income can not be subject to Government claims.



I'm interested in finding a lawyer who knows about this, and will be an advocate for me if I determine that the IRS collection is in fact illegal, and decide to oppose it. I was wondering if you could suggest how to find such a lawyer. Any information would be helpful, since I'm not sure how to proceed on my own. Thanks for your article.

B.L.

Editor Delmas Gault responds:

Federal income tax is stated in the tax code as voluntary. In this manner the IRS has averted many lawsuits on its constitutionality. The IRS has done a fabulous job though of convincing citizens to volunteer or face stiff fines, property seizure and jail terms.

There are claims of successful challenges, however. I would explore the [Institute for Justice](#), a civil liberties law firm; (202) 955-1300, fax (202) 955-1329.

Webmaster Christopher Schmidt responds:

I personally believe that constitutional challenges to the income tax are doomed to failure if only for the reason that if the Supreme Court ever found that such an argument had merit, it would take but a few months for congress and the states to pass a revised version of the 16th amendment that satisfied judicial review. Therefore, the real challenge is to grow the Libertarian Party to the point where pro-tax legislators are on the defensive. Alas, I believe there are no short-cuts.

That said, I refer you to long-time Libertarian Irwin Schiff, who has written several books along the lines of your letter. He has a web site at <http://www.ischiff.com/>. I am sure he could put you in touch with appropriately specialized legal representation.

## **Vote NO on School Bonds June 3, or July 1 you might find yourself another \$2000 in debt! . . . . It's *that* simple! . . . . It's *that* important!**

The facts are clear:

- We **already** pay staggering property tax bills annually. A 1% tax, over 25 years, adds up to 25% of a property's value. For many home buyers that is their entire equity stake, or more. According to the "San Mateo County 1996 Citizens Report", 65% of property tax money goes to schools.
- We pay one of the highest state income taxes in the nation. More of this money goes to schools than to any other budget category.
- We pay one of the highest sales taxes in the nation.
- The state lottery, building permit impact fees, and federal taxes also contribute to school funding.

If our schools need repair, it is certainly not for lack of money! Rather, any such claim is an indictment of our schools' priorities and management.

When districts use bonds, only *half* of your tax money goes to schools. The other half goes to investors, in the form of interest payments. They get richer; you lose the equity in your house or your rent goes up.

Ironically, the advocates say this indebtedness is "on behalf of our children". \$79 million in debt would be an *appalling* legacy. With friends like these, who needs enemies! Keep our children out of debt: Vote NO on Measure E!

*Libertarian-authored Rebuttal to Measure E--one of six similar school bonds on the June 3 ballot in San Mateo County.*