

East Palo Alto's Measure I Fails--Thanks in part to local Libertarian

by Robert Giedt

June's special election in East Palo Alto contained two key ballot measures--Measures I and J--designed to increase property and business taxes in the guise of increased police services and city operations. Thanks to a little wordsmithing from San Mateo Libertarian Party member Christopher Inama, Measure I, the big fish of this election, was thrown back to a rousing defeat!

Christopher was the author of the "Argument Against Measure I" in the *EPA Voter Information Pamphlet* soundly punching holes in the arguments supporting the measure. In part, thanks to his effort, one less local tax was imposed on unwilling citizens. Great work!



Although Measure I received 1,031 votes for to 729 against, it fell short of the $\frac{2}{3}$ vote needed to pass. Unfortunately, while Measure J won with 59% of the vote, the defeat of Measure I is a triumph to the perseverance of Libertarian values. As a postnote, if you hear of any local ballot issues that you object to as a Libertarian, let us know. With constant vigilance, we can let our politicians know that our county won't stand for additional taxes!

San Francisco's "Critical Mass"

--Expression (or repression) of First Amendment rights?

by Robert Giedt

While we sift through the rubble of July's "Critical Mass" bike event in San Francisco, as Libertarians we can ponder whether the bicycle riders were simply expressing their First Amendment rights, and at the same time denying others the same. As both a Libertarian and a rider in that Critical Mass, I realized partway through the ride that I was no longer part of the solution I envisioned, but that I was part of the problem. The disruption and chaos the event caused trampled on the personal freedoms of those motorists helplessly involved by their non-involvement.

The value of expressing personal freedoms without interference is a tenet I adhere to in my Libertarianism. Unfortunately, the freedom I was expressing by assembling for the ride (and the solidarity I wanted to share with my fellow riders to promote alternative transportation), turned sour when small groups of riders chose to ignore the "official" route. These riders instead trooped straight down Market Street disrupting hundreds in their wake. After a couple blocks of this, I managed to detour out of Critical Mass just as many police squad cars and motorcycles converged on the scene.

I saw many hostile cyclists, motorists and police during my short stay in the ride, which led me to wonder if this truly constituted freedom of assembly? Remember that Amendment 1 of the Constitution expressly states the "right of the people *peaceably* to assemble." By resorting to hostile actions, some (and I repeat *some*) of the riders were in violation of the very Amendment they stood for. Instead of making a statement about alternative transportation and the hazards of coexisting with cars, these Mass riders blatantly infringed on the rights of others. Granted, this might sound like a blanket statement--and it is--although many of the cyclists seemed out of place in the ride. (And in all fairness, quite a few of them took the same avenue of escape that I did.)

So, what is the Libertarian lesson we can take from all this? Perhaps it can be summed up to include that while the right to peaceable assembly is granted to us by the Constitution, no man, organization or government should use this to deny our personal rights. I can only hope all involved left the experience the wiser for their efforts.

The preceding was an editorial opinion of the author and should not be taken as the official position of the Libertarian Party at the national, state or county level.

Local Newspaper Publicity Kicks in to Gear

by [Steve Marsland](#)

I took on the role as Publicity Co-Chair two months ago and my first priority has been to get our monthly meetings notices publicized in the local weekly newspapers. By having our meeting notices printed in advance all over San Mateo County, it means several positive things for us. First, it shows everyone in the county that the Libertarian Party exists and is active. It also increases our name recognition and helps people to feel more comfortable with us. And most importantly, it shows people who are interested in Libertarian ideas where they can visit or call learn more--this helps to grow our membership.

Another big attraction of this approach to publicizing the party's meetings is that it's very costeffective. For the price of a stamp to send a letter to a single newspaper, we can broadcast our news to their thousands of subscribers. Some weekly newspapers are in newspaper groups, so with one letter we can contact six newspapers. As an example, each of the last two months I purchased five stamps (\$1.60) to send our meeting notices to 10 newspapers--newspapers that have a combined circulation of 170,000 readers!

Of course, simply because we send our news notices in doesn't mean that newspapers will automatically publish them. There is a certain approach to getting your news published, which takes a little time but builds up a positive and strong relationship with the newspaper or newspaper group. I have been gradually building up contacts and relationships with the publications to make sure our notices *do* get published.



I am pleased to report that in July two publications, the *Pacifica Tribune* and the *San Mateo Weekly*, chose to run our meeting notices. Now that some papers have started publishing them, it's only a matter of time before we can persuade all of the publications to run our meeting notices. I expect that over the next six months, we will get our meeting notices published in all the newspapers in San Mateo County. Once a paper starts publishing our news, they will continue to do so out of habit and precedent.

I am even more pleased to report that as a result of one of our meeting notices, someone called who wanted to join the party! We sent out an information package and look forward to this person joining us. As our meeting notices are published more widely, we can fully expect more people to join.

I also want to thank those who responded to my last article in this newsletter and offered to help by checking their local newspapers for our meeting notices. Thanks to Mary Steiner, Mike Moloney, John Blevens, Frank Minishak, Margret Schmidt, Christopher Schmidt and Bernie Jackson.

Although most of the county is now covered, I still need help in a couple of areas. Do you subscribe to, or would you be willing to subscribe to the *Peninsula Independent* in Millbrae or the *Sun* in Daly City? How about the *Stanford Daily* or *Stanford Review*? If you can help me out with these newspapers, please let me know. All you need to do is wait for my call telling you the news has gone out, and then look for the news in the respective paper. If the news is published, give me a shout at 415/738-5926.

I would like to close by saying what a delight it is to promote the cause of liberty with other Libertarians. The Libertarians I have met in San Mateo County are helpful, creative, friendly and very, very dedicated. I enjoy the experience of being with people who share my values and respect what I believe in. It's fun bringing liberty back to America!

July Meeting Notes

by [Christopher Schmidt](#)

If you attended July's meeting at the Prime Time Athletic Club in Burlingame, you know the [Libertarian Party of San Mateo County](#) is reviewing the way we operate; revisiting some old treasury business and laying the groundwork for the next few years. After a somewhat contentious business portion of the evening, we relaxed and enjoyed an enthusiastic presentation by our guest speaker, Arnold "Sam" Stamps.

Elections:

We opened the meeting by electing a new Vice Chair (Lacy Nelson), and Treasurer (Margret Schmidt). Lacy has been active in the party since the '96 election: attending and reporting on San Mateo city council meetings. Margret has been active in a number of roles, including: working on the production of every newsletter since the March '93 issue; selling Entertainment books as a fund raiser for the last three years; and organizing our successful candidate petition drive in 1995. After the meeting, Robert Giedt, a professional technical writer, stepped forward and volunteered to serve as the new editor of this newsletter. Welcome aboard!

Treasurer's report:

Margret presented a treasurer's report--the first written report since Jim Proffitt's last, of December 31, 1994--covering all spending since that date, reconstructed from sketchy records provided by outgoing treasurer, Mary Steiner, and from conversations with Mary, Mike Moloney, Rich Acuff, Amy Guthrie, Kate O'Brien, and me.

Two major problems emerged: 1) Much spending had been conducted without prior discussion or subsequent reporting, and 2) Combined with our regular spending, the treasury had been exhausted--leaving us unable to continue production of this newsletter or to conduct a ballot access effort in '98.

Because we had a speaker scheduled, I had spoken with Mary and Mike some days prior to the meeting. Failing to reach agreement on the propriety of past spending, we decided to submit the questions to the rest of the members at the meeting: either ratifying Mary's spending (on a piecemeal basis), or requiring repayment. Mike agreed to reimburse the party for any of Mary's spending for which ratification was not forthcoming.

I had forced the issue because of our inability to pay our debts, but far more discussion was required than could be compressed into half an hour. When Mike offered to donate \$500 to avert a cash-flow crisis we voted unanimously to postpone the discussion and votes until August's meeting. It also proved clear that we need to unearth or adopt regional bylaws. Steve Marsland is working on this problem with Jon Petersen, the LPC's Northern California Vice Chair.

Note: This matter is too extensive to treat adequately or fairly in this space, so I have tried to limit myself to a bare outline.

Guest speaker:

Arnold "Sam" Stamps, representing the Taxpayers' Action Network of the [Citizens Against Government Waste](#), delivered a lively litany of wasteful government programs and circulated a number of clippings and CAGW publications to illustrate his points. He admitted that he was "preaching to the choir," but that the first step in speaking to any group is to get people angry at such abuses. People have to

realize "We are being ripped-off!" His next goal is to harness that anger and "build steam." Finally, he wants all the groups he speaks to "March together" because "If you drop the labels, we're all in the same fix." He commented on the danger of indifference: how it led to totalitarianism in Germany and how it is a common characteristic of student groups he speaks to. (Mostly, they believe the government can and should do everything.)

Departing from the CAGW agenda, he went on to sketch some ideas he had for spending all the money that would be saved if CAGW's reforms were adopted. For example: he would like to see the government build a "subway" across the United States. Needless to say, the Libertarians present had some words to say to that! He handled the dialogue good-naturedly, and, in answer to Frank M.'s question "What would you do if you were my age?" he answered, "I'd join the Libertarian Party!"

Additional notes:

One of Steve's press releases resulted in an announcement's being printed in the *Pacifica Tribune*. Despite its brevity, it resulted in Steve's hearing from a caller who wanted to know how he could join!

Next meeting:

Wednesday, August 20
Prime Time Athletic Club
1730 Rollins Road, Burlingame
Informal chat: 6:30-7:30pm in the cafe
Business meeting: 7:30-9:00pm in the multipurpose room

The front desk can direct you to either location. Come on by for either or both events!

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Libertarian Party of San Mateo County, 853 Middlefield Road #4, Palo Alto, CA 94301

Questions? Call Margret Schmidt at 415/833-1300. Thank you for your support!