

# Santa Clara Libertarian

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## Mountain View Renters Reject Rent Control

by Scott M. Olmsted

In a special election held January 13, Mountain View voters rejected, by a margin of nearly 2 to 1, the imposition of rent control in their city. In the same election, which cost taxpayers \$25,000, voters rejected by almost the same margin a measure to place restrictions on the procedures that may be legally used by landlords to evict tenants.

It was only last April that Mountain View rejected a similar rent control measure by a similar margin. Both measures were placed on the ballot by the same pro-rent control forces, headed by Lenny Siegel of the Campaign for Economic Democracy, a California political organization founded by former left-wing radical Tom Hayden.

In Mountain View, 80 percent of the residents are renters and rents have not exactly stood still as the housing market has tightened and the money supply has been inflated, so one might think that rent control would be popular. But when Lenny Siegel organized meetings to discuss the proposed measures at apartment complexes, the renters would often not let him get through his talk before peppering him with free-market arguments and queries about why he didn't learn something about economics first.

It would appear that in Mountain View, where many *choose* to be renters rather than homeowners, most voters understand that, in a controlled market, it is the *consumer* who loses the most. The standard arguments about price controls and shortages apply to rental housing, of course, but it is the unintended *side effects* of controls that often hurt the most.

One well-known side effect is the deterioration of the existing stock of rental housing. With no way to recoup the investment made in maintenance, the landlord simply lets the place go. In its terminal stages this effect has rendered many square miles of New York City indistinguishable from ruins of war.

A less well known side effect is the increasingly inefficient use that is made of existing units. With rent control vacant apartments become difficult to find and rents do not, in general, reflect the conditions of scarcity. So people who, in response to changing circumstances that reduce their need for living space, such as a child going away to college, might ordinarily search for new quarters find it quite satisfactory to remain. Those who are looking for more space find it harder to get.

Rent control is especially hard on those who must move frequently for personal or job-related reasons. Because rent control, in effect, gives an existing renter a financial asset—access to a rent-controlled apartment—it inadvertently grows “roots” for those who would rather *not* grow roots, and thus impedes general mobility. In England this effect has had serious consequences, as new industry has been unable to attract workers who are very reluctant to leave their rent-controlled apartments in other areas.

It was these and other bad effects of rent control, such as the cost to the city of maintaining the rent control bureaucracy, that received all the attention during the campaign. But there is another side of the issue that strikes much deeper into the nature and philosophical underpinnings of our society, and that is the

moral case against controls. Why didn't the rent control fighters make a case for freedom of contract and the rights of owners to control their private property?

One reason is that the involvement of apartment owners in the anti-rent control campaign would open them to charges of “selfish pursuit of their own interests.” It has become dogma that political arguments must always appeal to the “social welfare,” the “public interest,” and the “common good.” Never mind that these concepts don't make any sense. That society is nothing more than a name we give to a collection of individuals and cannot receive benefit, or have an “interest,” or have any existence apart from the individuals that comprise it, is never appreciated.

Another reason is the mistrust, spawned by a century of socialist rhetoric, of the profit motive. As Ted Dienstfrey, Director of Research and Planning for the California Housing Council, a statewide trade association of apartment owners and managers,

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## Libertarian Council Hears About Tax Reduction Thursday, March 19

At its regular monthly meeting Thursday, March 19, at 8:00 p.m., the Libertarian Council of Santa Clara Council will hear Lee Phelps of Aptos describe current plans for tax limitation initiatives this year. Phelps, a libertarian from Santa Cruz County, represents the organization which, under the name of *Committee to Abolish the Sales Tax*, sponsored an unsuccessful voter initiative to do just that. Now back with a new name, stronger organization, and less ambitious but more achievable goals, the group, *Citizens Asserting Supremacy over Taxation*, plans to qualify two initiatives for the June 1982 ballot. One would reduce the Sales Tax. The other would put a sunset-type limitation on taxes approved by the voters.

According to Lee Phelps the group has now almost half of the support (in the form of pledges of time and money) that it needs to launch a winning campaign. Goals to be met prior to initiative circulation are \$100,000 and pledges of time sufficient to collect 725,000 signatures. Proportional goals for Santa Clara County are \$5,317.50 and 38,560 signatures.

Are California voters ready for another step in the right direction? Come to the Thursday night meeting and find out. Also be prepared to discuss plans for our April 15th tax protest.

The meeting room is located above the Co-op Grocery Store in the Fremont Corners Shopping Center. (From 280 take Saratoga-Sunnyvale Road north. The shopping center can be entered via a right turn immediately before Fremont Avenue. Stairs to the meeting room are located just inside the grocery store entrance closest to the Saratoga-Sunnyvale Road.) The Libertarian Council meets the third Thursday of every month. There is no admission fee and the public is welcome.

# The San Diego Scene

by Ray Strong

It all began on Friday the 13th. The annual convention of the California Libertarian Council held sway in San Diego at the Kona Kai Club from February 13th through the 16th. San Diego is beautiful. The weather was perfect. But even those of us without colds had little time to enjoy the scenery because of the jam packed schedule of business meetings, seminars, and events.

Memorable highlights of the convention included a running dialogue among libertarian theorists David Friedman, George Smith, and Tibor Machan, structured into an excellent series of events including a debate and several meal events. At the Ed Clark Roast following the Sunday night banquet, Ed Crane (past national chair of the LP and Clark's Communications Director) seemed to be perfectly typecast in his role of primary roaster. Most at home with the blatant insult, he also extended himself to the parry and subtle thrust of that arch villain J.R. His final remark to the audience continued his performance: "According to the schedule, you have all been dancing for over an hour."

After a multi-candidate panoply of electioneering all weekend, the day of officer elections surprised us all with several prominent pre-election withdrawals. The office most contested (before the election) was that of Libertarian Party Chair, vacated by the resignation of Jack Sanders. Jack had been chair of both the CLC and the California LP. At the end of his CLC term he resigned from the other post as well.

Elected were **Bill Evers**, LP State Chair; **Mike Hall**, CLC Chair; **Melinda Pillsbury Foster**, CLC Southern Vice Chair; **Martin Buerger**, CLC Northern Vice Chair; **Mark Pickens**, Secretary; and **Kevin Dye**, Treasurer.

The climax of the convention came Monday afternoon for many of us who had worked to develop our San Jose Convention bid. The CLC executive committee decided between our bid and that of Long Beach in a heated contest with most division along geographic lines: most residents of Northern California voting to bring the convention up here; Southern residents, the other way. Our executive committee representatives, Mark Hinkle, Karen Huffman, Scott Olmsted, and Bill Evers, all worked for our bid. At one point we had a plurality but not a majority of the votes. Then time got away from us and our strength eroded as Northern representatives left to catch planes and rides home. It was a good fight, capping a stimulating meeting of California Libertarians.

The convention was well organized and well planned, resulting in fairly general satisfaction for the participants. Even though we lost our bid to hold the 1982 convention in San Jose, I came away with fond memories and high expectations for 1982 on the Queen Mary in Long Beach.

## Rent Control *continued*

said recently, "The most common argument for rent control assumes that all, or at least most, landlords receive "exorbitant" profits and the government is therefore needed to curtail such greed. Profit limitation is urged more on moral grounds than on any real conception of its actual level. The major political support for rent control rests on our fundamentally ambiguous views toward profit, privately owned wealth, and the 'social good.'"

The next time rent control comes up for a vote in this area, as it undoubtedly will given the lust of CED for political power, this must not be allowed to happen again. Because the very existence of our free society rests ultimately on the foundations of private property, freedom of contract, and individual rights, the voters must be educated in these matters, and the fight over rent control provides an excellent classroom.

The voters should be made aware that they are choosing be-

# Proposed New County Office, Fair Booth Head List for Needed Funds

by Ray Strong

Each spring the Libertarian Council begins planning and fund raising for its major vehicle for meeting the public on a person-to-person basis: the Santa Clara County Fair. According to Activities Chair Dante DeAmicis, a minimal budget of \$600 should see us through this year, if we have a lot of help from volunteers. Our fair booth requires remodeling and refurbishing and our stocks of literature require replenishing and some rewriting. The fair usually takes place over a ten-day period in August. This year our need for volunteer staff may be even more critical than normal because of time conflicts with the national convention of the Libertarian Party, planned for August 26 through 30, in Denver. But what we will need much sooner is money to pay for the fair booth space rental.

A somewhat related need of \$600 per month in pledges was mentioned in the February SANTA CLARA LIBERTARIAN. This money will be used to run and supply a permanent Santa Clara County headquarters for Libertarian Party and Council. Although we have not found the office yet, we must begin now to collect the funds that will be used to make an initial rental deposit.

As Fund Raising Chair, I invite each of the readers of SANTA CLARA LIBERTARIAN to search their pockets, bank accounts, etc. and help promote the growth of libertarianism by contributing now to these two important funds. (Make checks payable to the Libertarian Council and send them to 184 North Sunnyvale Avenue, Sunnyvale, CA 94086.) This month and each subsequent month I will report to you on how well these and other special funds are doing toward meeting their goals.

March 1, 1981

Fund	Goal(s)	Current Status
Fair Booth	\$300 by May 1; \$600 by July 1	\$0
Office Fund	\$600 per mo. in pledges	\$105 per mo. pledged

## THANKS

The staff of the SANTA CLARA LIBERTARIAN would like to thank the following persons who helped with writing, folding, stuffing, sorting, stamping, mailing, etc., during January and February of 1981: Steve Alexander, Bob Bennett, Bob Burkhart, Dale Burrow, Jim Clark, Dante & Lory DeAmicis, Russ Fridley, Jerry Gray, Mark Hinkle, Ross Parlette, Clora Perez, Roger Pope, Peter Van Sant, Bill & Kathy White. Special thanks to Adelle Rossi, Mary Rotunno, who, together with Gloria Rotunno, did the entire mailing while all other local activists were in San Diego attending the 1981 CLC Convention (normally done by 15 people).

tween the only two alternatives that exist. One is the *social economy*, the economy of voluntary exchange, of the rights of individuals to the fruits of their labors, and of prosperity for its participants. The other is the *political economy*, the economy of control and privilege, of irreconcilable conflict, of power struggles and political ambition, and of stagnation, lost development, and falling standards of living.

The best group for doing that will be, for the above-mentioned reasons, a group of tenants organized to oppose rent control who take a principled, moral stand for the free economy. That way, they will not only be fighting the potentially disastrous results of controls for renters, they will be making progress toward a truly free society.

## NOTES

• **At its first hearing** the California Assembly Committee on Election and Reapportionment voted 7-6 against our recently submitted Libertarian Party Organization Bill. The March 9th hearing included testimony by Bill White and newly elected State Chair Bill Evers (both from Santa Clara County). Most opposition seemed to be aimed at our election provision for "none of the above." Although no organized party position was in evidence, the vote split along party lines: 7 Democrats, against; 6 Republicans, in favor. Lobbying efforts to obtain reconsideration are already under way.

• **Among the 30 largest cities** of the United States, the highest percentage vote for Clark was obtained by none other than **San Jose**, according to a report by Rich Winger at the February CLC Convention.

• **A permanent meeting place** is needed. If you know of a better room than the one we are now renting that will hold at least 50 persons please telephone CRY-FREE to let us know.

• **The National Libertarian Party Convention** is scheduled for August 26 through 30, 1981 in Denver, Colorado. Get your vacation bid and airline tickets now so you will be able to attend.

• **Advertising wanted** for the SANTA CLARA LIBERTARIAN. Many local libertarians would like to patronize area businesses that are owned or operated by local libertarians. This newsletter circulates to over 600 members, subscribers and new inquiries every month. Your advertising would help to support this outreach to more potential libertarians living in the Santa Clara County area. Business Card Rates (camera ready copy): \$10/month, \$100 for 12 months. Full Page: \$100, \$200 for 3 months. Half Page: \$50, \$100 for 3 months.

• **Wanted—Administrative Assistant.** Highly organized, self-directed individual with strong office skills and general knowledge of libertarian philosophy and movement, to assist Academic Program Director, Institute for Humane Studies. Duties include: type letters and reports, make telephone contact with program coordinators, applicants, and allied institutions, do research at Director's suggestion. Note: This position is temporary and terminates September 1, 1981. Apply to: Walter Grinder, Institute for Humane Studies, 1177 University Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025. Information telephone: 415/323-2464.

• **The Libertarian Supper Club** of San Francisco meets monthly at various San Francisco restaurants. If you would like detailed information on the upcoming dinner please telephone the sponsor, Beverly Locke, at 415/864-3969 or write to her at 117 Pierce St., San Francisco, CA 94117.

SANTA CLARA LIBERTARIAN is published monthly by the Libertarian Council of Santa Clara County, and is distributed to all members of the Libertarian Council of Santa Clara County.

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SANTA CLARA LIBERTARIAN staff are Gloria Rotunno, Karen Huffman, and Ray Strong. Typesetting services are provided by Jean Graphics and Typesetting Company, San Jose.

## Movie Review

# The War Against the IRS

by Ray Strong

The war against taxes is just beginning in this country. A movie about the war, with the IRS portrayed appropriately as the dastardly villains, is now making its way through the neighborhood theaters. Maybe **HARRY'S WAR** is just what we need to remind people about that fight.

Too often in the past, voters have taken a small tentative step in the right direction, only to grow timid with success and retreat from further battles. Libertarians have lots of war stories about individuals who have taken on the IRS. Much of the anger, frustration, and bitterness about the blindness of our fellow citizens is captured early in this film. IRS bureaucrats are displayed in all their loathsome, power-seeking pomposity. Our hero is a real hero, with whom we can identify, especially in his outrage as he discovers the basic unfairness of the system. With the help of obsolete army surplus equipment and his trusty crossbow, he wages real war on the IRS in defense of his property. The battle escalates from minor mayhem to serious explosive violence, as Harry takes on the national guard and thugs from the IRS intent on murder.

Audiences enjoy the action. Be prepared to cheer on the good guys and boo the baddies. But the key to organized tax revolt lies not in Harry's outrageous reaction and exploits, but rather in the dialogue among the IRS bosses when they are not speaking to the public. We are told by them that the whole tax system is "based on a bluff," and that there are currently two million people who refuse to pay their taxes. With dialogue like this, it is no wonder that the producers of the film had to search for two years to find someone willing to distribute it.

The movie is not a best picture contender. While the acting is fair, the character development is sketchy at best. The plot is a little too thin; the ending, a little too predictable; but the heart is in the right place. Libertarians may wince when our hero says he doesn't mind paying taxes, though we can easily understand by this that he doesn't mind paying for services he uses. But we can all rally 'round his battle cry in the form of a question, "Who gave them the right to take my property?"

"I didn't!"

### The United Libertarian Fellowship



1220 Larnel Place  
Los Altos, CA 94022  
(415) 961-4837

The United Libertarian Fellowship is a Religious Order whose members are organized to promote the belief that "God is the supreme universal reality; all that has ever existed or will ever exist; the fundamental force of the universe."

Our members are dedicated to the spiritual and moral development of free, independent, and self-responsible individuals. We emphasize knowledge and self-improvement as the path to spiritual fulfillment and human freedom.

*"Know the Truth . . . and the Truth shall set you Free."*

# Calendar

## SANTA CLARA COUNTY LIBERTARIAN COUNCIL MEETING

**Thursday, March 19. 8:00 p.m.**

Lee Phelps, Northern California Director for CAST (Citizens Asserting Supremacy over Taxation), will speak on the status of the upcoming petitioning effort that would abolish the sales tax. REPEAT LOCATION: Second Floor Meeting Room of the Co-op Grocery Store in the Fremont Corners Shopping Center at the corner of Saratoga-Sunnyvale Road and Fremont Avenue in Sunnyvale. Meetings are held the third Thursday of each month. For more details about the speaker or location phone 408/CRY-FREE.

## GALATIANS FELLOWSHIP: BAY AREA

**Sunday, March 22. 4:30 p.m.**

Evangelical and Libertarian fellowship will meet at the home of Ross Parlette at 201 W. California Avenue #1308 in Sunnyvale. The next meeting will be March 22nd in Sunnyvale. Telephone the sponsor: Ross Parlette at 408/739-5614.

## VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SYSTEMS COURSE AT STANFORD

**Tuesdays and Thursdays. 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.**  
**Tuesday, March 31st through Thursday, June 4th.**

Exploration of the ethical theory, feasibility, and the desirability of a libertarian social order in which people pursue ends on a voluntary basis. Topics include: Natural rights, the non-aggression principle, property rights, homesteading, contracts, defense, class theories of the state, historical fallacies, transition

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## Giant Flea Market

at

## De Anza College

Stevens Creek Boulevard and  
Stelling Road in Cupertino

**April 4**  
**8 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

For information or booth reservations call 996-4946

*Sponsored by Associated Students of De Anza College*

strategies to a voluntary society and other subjects. Location: Engineering Building, Room 332. Sponsor: Department of Engineering-Economics. The public is welcome to attend this 3-unit course. Information phone: Scott Olmsted at 415/497-1667.

## LIBERTARIAN COUNCIL BOOTH AT THE DE ANZA FLEA MARKET

**Saturday, April 4. 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

Volunteers are needed, especially in the morning, to staff our permanent information and merchandise booth at the De Anza Flea Market in Cupertino. Help us to raise money to support our many local projects and educate yourself and others on the issues, by talking to the public about libertarianism. Donations of books and other fast-selling items are needed and may be dropped off at the flea market. Location: De Anza College Parking Lot C, Stevens Creek Blvd. & Snelling Rd. in Cupertino. For more information or to volunteer call Dante or Lory DeAmicis at 408/CRY-FREE.

## PREPARE FOR ANTI-TAX DAY

**Wednesday, April 15. 8:00 p.m. to 12:00 midnight.**

Volunteers are needed to staff our anti-tax tables at various post offices around the county. Come to the March 19th meeting to discuss plans and preparations. To volunteer call Dante or Lory DeAmicis at 408/CRY-FREE.

## FUTURE OF FREEDOM CONFERENCE

**Friday, May 8 through Sunday, May 10.**

"The Technology of Freedom" is the theme for their Ninth Conference. Speakers include Karl Hess, Timothy Leary, Robert LeFevre, Irwin Schiff, Frank Fortkamp, David Friedman, Sam Konkin III, John Matonis, Lowell Ponte, Robert W. Poole, Jr., George H. Smith, Charles Curley, Linda Abrams, Spencer MacCallum, Anthony Hargis, David Bergland, Thomas Hazlett, and others. The banquet will feature "A Tribute to the Early Years" with John Hospers; the Saturday Party will be an evening with libertarian radio personality Dr. Dimento. Location: California State University, Long Beach. Fees: \$10-35. Discount price deadlines: April 15 & May 1. Sponsors: CSULB Students for Rational Individualism, Society for Libertarian Life, Rampart Institute, Society for Individual Liberty, Libertarian Supper Club of Orange County & Libertarian Law Council. For Conference brochure write to: P.O. Box 4, Fullerton, CA 92632. Telephone: 714/979-5737 or 213/869-6051.

## UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL REALITY: THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE SPONTANEOUS ORDER

**Sunday, July 19 through Saturday, July 20.**

A college-level interdisciplinary seminar devoted to the intellectual and moral foundations of the free society. Lectures will weave together insights from economic theory, economic history, and legal and moral philosophy. Based on the insight which has been emphasized by F.A. Hayek that a viable social and economic order results from human purposes, but not from central design, the lectures by Murray N. Rothbard, Joseph Salerno and George H. Smith will analyze the nature and function of the private property, voluntary free market exchange system. Applications for fellowships (which will cover all but travel expenses) will be accepted from any student enrolled in an accredited senior college. Location: Stanford University. Fee: \$10 and a college transcript. Apply to: Seminar Director, Foundation for Advanced Studies in Liberty, Institute for Humane Studies, Suite 10, 1177 University Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025.