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# LIBERTY PLEDGE NEWSLETTER

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## C-SPAN COVERAGE UPDATE

While C-Span was covering the National Convention gavel-to-gavel, our 800 line was being answered by a service. We have received over 1300 calls and over 100 written responses. We have mailed 1153 information packettes to those leaving their address. Whew! Some callers left messages..."I want to join", "Your Party is refreshing", and "How can I help". As soon as possible, these names will be passed on to the state Parties for prospecting. THANKS C-SPAN!

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## NATCOM CHANGES

The bylaws were changed to reduce the size of NATCOM, from 29 to 18. Toni Nathan was appointed to the full-time position of media relations for the party. Please consult the latest issue of LP News for a complete listing of NATCOM reps and committee chairs.

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## CONVENTION STATS

522 - Registered for the Convention  
350 - Delegates and Alternates  
120 - Registered for Outreach Day (Non-LP)

The "Proclaim Liberty" Convention had more LPers attending than did Pheonix or Seattle...and more votes casted for Chair than did Pheonix or Seattle. Look out Chicago... here we come!

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## CLIPPINGS WANTED

Although the HQ subscribes to a clipping service, we know they can't possibly catch every Libertarian oriented article. We would appreciate Liberty Pledgers scanning your newspapers for such articles, particularly letters to the editor. When sending in, please include the name of the paper and the date it appeared...THANKS!

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# Libertarians renew the call for making drugs legal in U.S.

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — The Libertarian Party announced plans to strengthen its self-proclaimed role as America's third party, but leaders acknowledge their opposition to the drug war isn't likely to win votes quickly.

Nevertheless, the party opened its annual convention Thursday by

“We will be seen as the ones who stuck to their guns.”

— Montana delegate  
Larry Dodge

renewing its call for the legalization of drugs.

“It does no good to back away from the unpopular issues,” 1984 presidential candidate David Bergland told delegates.

The party believes drugs should be legalized because the “war” is an excuse to trample individuals’ rights. Just as the prohibition of alcohol spawned organized crime, the Libertarians say current laws make drug dealing profitable.

“At this moment in time, the Drug Enforcement Administration is the greatest threat to the liberties of the American people,” said

Dave Nolan, a founder of the 18-year-old party.

The party boasts 200,000 members but had less than 500 in attendance at the opening session of the three-day convention. Delegates had to pay their own way.

Nolan conceded that the drug war “is popular at the moment, and our stand against it is going to be unpopular.”

But party leaders said their position would reap dividends eventually, because the war on drugs was doomed to failure.

“We will be seen as the ones who stuck to their guns,” said Larry Dodge, a one-time U.S. Senate and gubernatorial candidate in Montana.

The drug position is consistent with the Libertarian philosophy that government is too big and intrusive. That philosophy also leads them to support abortion rights and gun owners’ rights and advocate a non-interventionist foreign policy.

Several party leaders said the Libertarians should focus less on running for president and more on getting their message to the public. They announced a renewed effort to use the media and high school seminars to spread their ideas.

“When a representative of the Libertarian Party goes to a public high school, every student is impressed with the legitimacy of the party in the political system,” Bergland said.

## Should We Re-Legalize Drugs?

Libertarians, like most Americans, demand to be safe at home and on the streets. Libertarians would like all Americans to be healthy and free of drug dependence. But drug laws don't help, they make things worse.

The professional politicians scramble to make names for themselves as tough anti-drug warriors, while the experts agree that the “war on drugs” has been lost, and could never be won. The tragic victims of that war are your personal liberty and its companion, responsibility. It's time to consider the re-legalization of drugs.

### Libertarian drug message

“The exact contrary of what is generally believed is often the truth,” said La Bruyere. The media is reporting that the American public is most concerned about “the drug problem.” Wrong!

The public doesn't care who is anesthetized on alcohol, nicotine, or the high priced junk; what they are concerned about is the violence (maybe on their own street) that result from drug laws — foolish attempts to legislate morality, idiotic laws that glamorize the stuff, make it about 1,000 percent more expensive, put it in the hands of children and allow the businessmen involved to avoid taxes.

The Libertarians have been saying for years that it should be decriminalized, and I've often noticed that the only people who disagree are people making a living in “drug enforcement,” people who sell it and the folks who, believing pollsters always ask the right questions, have IQs lower than a Bush.

ROBERT GEHL.

Sacramento.



## Marijuana advocate says drug policy may aid his cause

By W. Dale Nelson  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Just across the street from the building where drug war director William Bennett sits at his desk in a two-story suite, the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws carries on its own quest from a small, warren-like office.

NORML, which opened its first storefront office in a run-down section of Washington in 1970, is emerging as one of the most vocal critics of President Bush's anti-drug campaign.

“The simple question is whether marijuana should be included in the war on drugs,” NORML's incoming

national director, Donald Fiedler, told reporters at a National Press Club press conference following Bennett's outline of the Bush plan this past week.

“If it is,” he said, “the price of a drug-free America is an America that can no longer be free.”

NORML wants legalization of marijuana but supports continued prohibition of cocaine. Although it has had its ups and downs, Fiedler said he believes harsh attempts to penalize the nation's millions of marijuana smokers eventually will bolster NORML's diminished strength.

“When Bush went after the

## NORML: Wants legalization

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ACLU, it helped their membership, when the recent Supreme Court decision on abortion came out, it helped NOW, and we fully expect the Bennett drug war plan will help NORML,” said Fiedler, a lawyer from Omaha, Neb.

In its early days, NORML gained attention by defending youngsters facing years in prison for lighting up. Its efforts helped spark decriminalization moves in many state legislatures.

As the marijuana laws changed, NORML's \$25-a-year membership roll shrank from a high of 20,000 people in 1978 to about 5,000 now.

To support its annual budget of \$250,000, the organization now holds seminars for criminal defense lawyers. In an article published in 1986, Washington Monthly said a

third of NORML's budget came from such conferences, which it claimed were “geared toward helping lawyers defend mid-level mobsters.” Some members told the magazine that the drug defense seminars had caused dissension within the organization.

Asked about the article, Doug McVay, activist coordinator for NORML, said: “The lawyers who are interested in this issue tend to do drug-defense work. Nowadays, however, if you are doing criminal defense work in general, more and more of it is drug defense. It's unfortunate, but it's the case.”

From its initial location in a seedy area of Washington that has since blossomed out in high-price hotels, NORML has moved to an office building it shares with such tenants as the International Joint Com-

mission, a governmental body concerned with U.S.-Canadian affairs, not with the kind of joints marijuana smokers talk about.

The drug war office is on the top two floors of a building across the street.

“They can peek in our windows and we can peek in theirs,” said Carole Moore, who, like a number of NORML activists, is also a member of the Libertarian Party. Jim Turney of Richmond, Va., former national chairman of the Libertarians, is treasurer of NORML.

The Libertarians' contention that the government should interfere as little as possible with individual rights meshes with NORML's stance on marijuana, although the two organizations differ on some other issues.

## America Can Handle Legal Drugs

Today's illegal drugs were legal before 1914. Cocaine was even found in the original Coca-Cola recipe. Americans had few problems with cocaine, opium, heroin or marijuana. Drugs were inexpensive; crime was low. Most users handled their drug of choice and lived normal, productive lives. Addicts out of control were a tiny minority.

# Libertarians speak out on liquor

The Utah Libertarian Party has launched an attack against the blatantly political liquor law proposals of the Alcohol Beverage Control Review Task Force. The Party considers the proposals an "insult to responsible alcohol users, and a giant step in the wrong direction for Utah's tourist industry."

Bob Waldrop, former chairman of the Utah LP, is heading the attack against the proposals. The Party is distributing fliers and lobbying packets to interested parties all over Utah, encouraging people to contact their legislators on the issues.

The Libertarian want "an atmosphere of responsibility, freedom and harmony for Utah. We want visitors and businesses to feel welcomed here. We want people from all backgrounds to live without fear of each other. Our current laws tend to pit one group against another, attempting to accomplish with force what only education and persuasion can do."

The following are alternatives proposed by the Utah Libertarian Party:

•**Get drunks off the street:** Current laws force drinkers onto the streets at the same time each night. We propose the following changes:

1. **Marketize Taxes:** Allow taxi companies to compete in an open market, so taxi service will become cheaper and more available.

2. **Allow sobering hours.** Current laws require that everyone be out of the clubs and taverns by a certain time. We propose allowing establishments to provide entertainment, soft drinks and coffee well after "last call" so people can sober up before hitting the streets.

•**End brown bagging:** Allow taverns to serve liquor by the drink. This would end the motivation to bring a bottle to a tavern and finish it before leaving.

It would also send an international signal to businesses and tourists that Utah is, finally, a friendly place to live and visit. The increase in business investment and tourism would undoubtedly more than compensate for loss of revenues from the state's liquor monopoly. It would also reduce the "brain drain," whereby students educated in state universities at taxpayer expense leave for more amiable environments in surrounding states and the west coast.

•**Require responsibility:** We must continue to punish them who hurt others because they abuse alcohol, and require them to provide restitution to their victims. Driving a car while impaired is a direct threat to

## Task force recommendations

Listed below are some of the proposed recommendations which will be presented to the Legislature in 1990:

- Mini-bottles eliminated except on airlines
- Brown-bagging illegal except for corked fine wines
- Restaurant liquor service moved up to 1 p.m. weekdays
- State control of outlets where beer is consumed
- Liquor dispensed by mandatory metered-pour devices
- No club "happy hours," no doubles, no setbacks
- Ban beer advertising in arenas, stadiums on scoreboards, billboards, etc.
- Eliminate cap on Dram Shop law liability
- Liquor consumption OK in limousines, for buses originating out-of-state
- No sales of beer by minors
- Increased penalties for minor sale/use
- Key sales more tightly controlled
- Licensed club advertising banned
- Airports allowed one liquor lounge per concourse

others, and we must make sure the law protects us from such threats.

•**Close liquor stores:** State ownership of liquor stores is a shameful insult to responsible store owners. We should allow stores to sell whatever they choose to adults, including alcohol. The state's unsightly liquor stores, with their inconvenient hours and high prices, send a signal loud and clear to tourists: "We don't want you here."

"The consumer is generally the worst person to implement control of his own consumption."

Here is yet another insult to responsible alcohol users. Who is a better person to implement control than the individual? the Task Force's answer: a bartender in a restaurant or private club, although the bartender actually makes money with each drink poured!

The proposed end of brown bagging means the only legal places to drink liquor will be restaurants and private clubs. This will shrink the number of places where liquor can be consumed by two thirds, despite a proposed increase in liquor licenses.

"Thus, the elimination of brown bagging with the accompanying increase in the quota will result in an overall decrease of approximately 1,000 in the number of locations where liquor can potentially be consumed.

•**Politics as usual:** It's another case of one business using the legislature to beat up on other businesses. In this case, the restaurants beat up on the taverns

## Try Personal Responsibility

It's time to re-legalize drugs and let people take responsibility for themselves. Drug abuse is a tragedy and a sickness. Criminal laws only drive the problem underground and put money in the pockets of the criminal class. With drugs legal, compassionate people could do more to educate and rehabilitate drug users who seek help. Drugs should be legal. Individuals have the right to decide for themselves what to put in their bodies, so long as they take responsibility for their actions.

may be the same as prohibition. With the elimination of over 2/3 of the places in Utah where one may consume liquor, speakeasies may start to appear again. And with black market dispensing of alcohol will come increased criminal presence and mob violence. Hardly a pleasant alternative to free agency.

Premises: If the report gave some nonsensical recommendations, we can attribute some of them to Task Force premises. While the Utah Code calls for regulations that "reasonably satisfy the public demand and protect the public interest," the Task Force has decided this means "improved control and decreased consumption."

The problem given to justify "improved control" is: "Unique social risks and public costs associated with alcohol abuse." The benefit given for "improved control is: state control can reduce problems associated with alcohol abuse.

Few will argue with the problems, both social and personal, associated with alcohol abuse. Yet the Task Force gives not one recommendation to control, help or regulate the abuser. All the proposals take a shotgun approach to every person who chooses to use alcohol in the state, including the great majority who use alcohol responsibly.

Liquor and business: The money the state raises with its alcohol monopoly goes two places: 1. Enforcement of its own monopoly. 2. The Legislature's general fund.

It is not surprising that the Legislature doesn't consider divesting itself of this monopoly.

Brown bagging: The Task Force recognizes the problems with brown bagging. Indeed, in a footnote, it even recognizes the cause:

"It results from other aspects of the law which so restrict the availability of liquor that the consumer resorts to bringing his or her own liquor into public establishments. Brown-bagging of beer on the other hand seldom occurs because of the alternate availability of beer in the establishments."

Consumers, unable to buy liquor in bars, bring it with them to a tavern. Then, because of the "open container" laws, they are forced to drink it all or throw it away before leaving the tavern.

Ignoring the real cause of brown bagging (general unavailability of liquor by the drink), the Task Force chooses to create yet another problem. They make a new law against it.

# What is a teacher worth?

By John Vernon

Are teachers paid too much or too little? Should teacher salaries begin at \$20,000 or \$40,000? Should the chauffeur of the superintendent of education be paid \$90,000 per year? Are school administrators really worth \$85,000 per year?

Should teachers be allowed to strike, or is what they do an essential public service that must be provided universally at a controlled price by individuals who do not have the same rights as others? Why is the dropout rate so high among Los Angeles high school students? Does bilingual education work, or should children be educated in English only?

Under a system with a bias in favor of public, as against private, education, it is impossible to find out the answers to these and similar questions because the public-education monopoly reacts only politically. It is not subject to market forces, and so the real value of the service it provides to consumers cannot be known. It is also impossible to discover just what qualities in education would best serve the needs of the parents and children who are the supposed beneficiaries of the educational process for whose presumed service the public school system exists.

Everyone probably knows that we would not be very happy if General Motors were the only organization allowed to produce automobiles in California, and yet most citizens seem to accept the arrangement that only one organization will provide most of the education produced in our cities. Most people know that if they don't like the cars that General Motors produces, there are numerous other choices that can provide them with suitable transportation at a price they can afford.

But there is a long-standing, and in



Chuck Asay/Colorado Springs Gazette-Telegraph

my view, erroneous, tradition afoot in California that only the state should be entrusted with the business of providing education. We know that the market provides Americans with the best choice in automobiles available to any people in the world. There is every reason to believe that the same principles that make automobiles abundant, varied, and available to even the poorest people in California can be applied to education with superior results.

The commitment of the California populace to public education has parallels to the commitment of the Soviet state to collectivized farming: Neither collectivized farming nor public education seems to work very well, yet there is great resistance to changing the approaches. In the Marxist world, however, there seems to be some softening of ideological rigidity, which is allowing greater freedom for the marketplace to

provide for basic human needs. Surely, in the land of the free, we are adaptive enough to recognize when established ways of doing things do not work, and inventive enough to successfully change them.

In this spirit, I propose the establishment of a 50-percent tax credit to be applied to the state income tax or property tax on the first \$4,000 spent for the education of any child. This credit would be available to any individual, corporation, or business contributing to the education of any child.

Some argue that private education is for the rich. Yet, in my acquaintance is a woman from El Salvador who cleans houses and still manages to send one of her children to a private school. She does this because she believes that there the child will receive the best foundation for his education. Such is the subjective judgment of a parent, and I

believe this judgment should not only be honored, but encouraged.

A tax credit for private education will have the benefit of encouraging innovations in education. Teachers who have fresh approaches to education will be encouraged to start their own schools, or to go to work at private schools that reflect their own values and their individual style of teaching. For those who excel, there is the prospect of greater financial reward. Only in a situation where there is competition can teachers find out what they're really worth.

The range of values will be as broad as the difference between a Yugo and a Rolls Royce. Even in education, only the free market provides a merit system that relates compensation to what consumers perceive as value received!

On the consumers' side, those who choose to use private education will be relieved of part of the burden of supporting a school system that they do not choose to use. And private schools will compete for their business, offering price incentives and comparative excellence as inducements to increased enrollments. Such real competition would have a beneficial effect on remaining public education, as it competes to keep from losing enrollments — and tax allotments.

Education tax credits can give the public what it needs in education, and can provide important opportunities for compensation, respect, and a feeling of satisfaction to those who are in the business of educating children.

Vernon is chairman of the Libertarian Party of California.

## Independents praise changes to Wyoming Election Code

CHEYENNE (AP) — A state Libertarian Party official is praising changes proposed for Wyoming's election code that would allow voter registration to occur on the day of a general election and relax the restrictions for a third party candidate to win a ballot spot.

Craig McCune, an unsuccessful candidate in Wyoming's special congressional election and a member of the committee reviewing the proposals, said the changes would help maintain the integrity of state elec-

tions and promote diversity on the ballot.

"(The changes would be) good for (Libertarians), but we think it is good for all the people in the state of Wyoming," he said. "If I didn't think it was good for the overall process, I wouldn't support it."

The Wyoming Revised Election Code Committee is considering election code changes that would allow voters to register at the time and place they cast their general election votes.

Another proposed change would

allow a third party candidate to win a ballot spot if his party obtained 3 percent of the votes cast in the previous general election rather than the 10 percent needed now.

The Libertarian Party won almost 4 percent of the vote in the special congressional election and if the changes were in effect now, the party would be guaranteed a spot on the ballot for the next general election.

The committee is conducting a thorough review of the proposals, McCune said.