



Santa Clara Libertarian

Volume 32, Issue 12 December 2004 News of Local Libertarians' Efforts and Feats

Night of January 20th: the LPSCC Jury to Reconvene

An evening of mystery awaits you at the 2005 convention of the Libertarian Party of Santa Clara County. Just what will be the verdict on LPSCC officers, committees, and activities for the coming year, and awards for 2004?

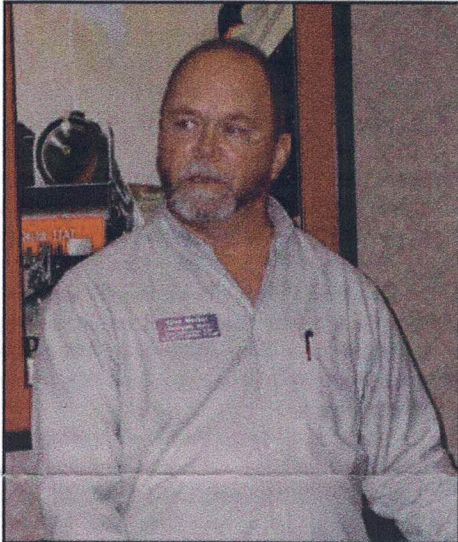


Photo: Elizabeth C. Brierty

Allen Hacker, up for reelection in January as Chair of LPSCC, giving a state of the party address at the quarterly business meeting in December.

You, the jury, are invited to dine, deliberate, and decide, as the party's direction for 2005 is revealed through your votes. You'll elect—or

re-elect—our 2005 officers, committee chairs, and delegates to February's convention of the Libertarian Party of California. You are invited also to consider carefully a proposal to alter the Bylaws.

For those of you inclined to serve as foreman, this is your opportunity to take on a leadership role, and to help drive the momentum from this year's election fervor.

Every member of the "central committee" (a.k.a. every LPSCC member) who has expressed a willingness to serve is eligible for election to these positions. (For full descriptions of the offices, see LPSCC's Bylaws on the web at www.SC.CA.LP.org; click on "Reference.")

The **Chair** presides at all Central Committee meetings and at all meetings of the Executive Committee. He or she is the CEO of the Party.

The **Vice-Chair** acts as assistant to the Chair, and performs the duties of the Chair whenever the Chair is unable to do so.

The **Secretary** is the Party's recording officer.

The **Treasurer** receives, expends, and accounts for the Party's funds under the direction of the Chair and Executive Committee.

There are also seven standing committees where your talents can help increase local liberty.

The **Membership Chair** is responsible for activities to maintain and increase Party and Central Committee membership.

The **Publicity Chair** is responsible for dis-

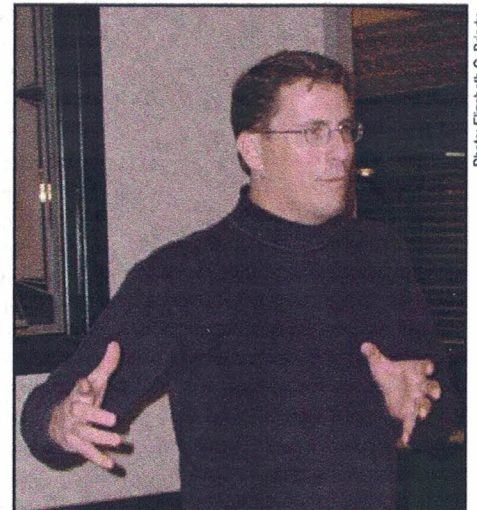


Photo: Elizabeth C. Brierty

Mike Laursen, LPSCC's 2004 Secretary, updating members on his campaign for State Senate, District 13; quarterly business meeting, Dec. 9.

seminating information about the Party to the media and the public.

The **Newsletter Chair** is responsible for publication of a newsletter for disseminating information about the Party to the members.

The **Campaigns Chair** coordinates candidate recruitment, training, and support.

■ See **Night**, page 3

■ Coalition Building

Milpitas Measure Opposed Jointly by LP, Allies, Residents

Apparently it's never too soon after an election to plunk another parcel tax on the ballot.

This month, not surprisingly, the Milpitas Unified School District filed a ballot measure for the March election proposing a \$140-per-parcel tax on property owners. They'll ask voters whether, in order to retain qualified teachers, maintain equipment for science and technology education, keep class sizes small in grades K-3, etc., and maintain quality programs in neighborhood schools, the District should levy \$140 per year for 5 years, with independent citizens' oversight and an exemption for senior citizens age 65 or older.

There's no rest for LPSCC activists, who endeavor to stay on top of such developments. As always, **Dennis Umphress**, chair of LPSCC's Ballot Measures & Initiatives subcommittee, spearheaded the task of writing the argument against the measure.

On occasion, when LPSCC has stepped up to the plate in submitting arguments signed only by activists who happen to reside outside a ballot measure's district, we have been labeled "carpetbaggers." No such aspersion can be cast this

Three possible positions exist when it comes to any new tax measure:

1. Taxes are too high.
2. Taxes are about right.
3. Taxes are too low.

If a voter agrees with position "3," he could support the tax. But if he agrees with position "1" or "2," he should vote "no" on the measure.

time, however, since this measure's signers in opposition represent not only multipartisanship but district residents. They include: Umphress, who's also President of Silicon Valley Taxpayers' Association, a nonpartisan taxpayer rights

group; **Jack Davis**, Chair of the California Republican Assembly; **Allen Hacker**, Chair of LPSCC, and not one but two district residents, **Kim Parker** and **Adam Herbel**.

Mark Hinkle, a past Chair of the LP of Calif., gathered these LP and allies' signatures and filed the arguments with the Registrar of Voters.

Just what are the arguments against the new tax? Here are a few:

• It's unneeded: The District itself filed a statement indicating it will be able to meet its financial obligations for at least two years.

• The promise of "independent citizens' oversight" has no teeth; such committees apply only to school bonds passed with a minimum of 55%.

• No specific plan exists as to how the District will spend this money, nor how it will measure its effectiveness.

Be sure to get out and vote on March 8! ■



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PAST ISSUES

From 1998 on: www.SC.CA.LP.org/scl/

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■ Message from the Chair

The Trap of Election Cycles & Year's End

A sigh of relief on November Third. An intense campaign season behind us, and for many, thankfully so. Another sigh of relief on January First, when yet another contentious and difficult year for Libertarianism has passed.

For most, these relief dates have been a mixed blessing: closure, yes; but renewal of commitment and the decision to do better, and more, in the next cycle or year.

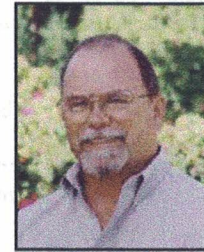
Ah, but what is time? And are we deceiving ourselves by marking it thusly?

After every election there is a lull. Every January, people try—and usually fail—to reset their lives. Is there a better way? I believe there is. A new outlook on time and a continuous-improvement approach to change. Let's address the easy one first: Continuous Improvement. We hear this term in business, along with its first cousin, Best Practices, but too many of us fail to apply the concept(s) to life and to our political activity.

Proceeding all year on habits and traditions that aren't working, at best, delays results. At worst, it wastes a chunk of your life and postpones the recovery of our liberty. Wouldn't it make sense to take a moment every day to ask oneself, "What could I change in myself right now to become more effective?" Why wait until the beginning of each year to think about change? The same thing goes for Best Practices: why not always be in a quest for, and studying and implementing, the best ways of doing things? Why let habit, convention, and belief patterns dictate the level and quality of action?

And what about time? Well, I'm not going to try to sell the idea that it doesn't exist, because obviously, things move around, and come and go; we can compare the relative rates of those changes. But that's the crux of measuring time: we use arbitrary standards, from the rotation and revolution of the Earth for our clocks and calendars, to completely private rules for all manner of deadlines.

But what if we paid less attention to the calendar and could do that in a continuous-improvement manner? What if instead of waiting (passive) for the next election cycle, we went on the offensive (proactive) with a pro-liberty public relations campaign? What if we spent the "down-time" researching the practical sides of issues so we'd have more to stand on than just principle and logic? Wouldn't it be nice to be able to say why, in real-world terms, a school bond or parcel tax is *always* a bad idea? Or, if it is *not*, know that it's not possible to say that and why?



Allen Hacker

The calendar year runs out.

The days grow longer and then shorter, and then begin to lengthen again. So what? Liberty is always under attack; she is always waxing or waning, as we allow (passive) or as we cause (proactive).

Our county has a great LP. Yet there's so much more we could do. The beauty of it is that we can do it. We always have more money than 99% of the nation's 4,016 county parties, and more than many of the 50 state parties.

We have a large population from which to draw and support members, officers, volunteers, and activists. And that's a relatively more-educated population, too.

Let's never let up. It doesn't have to be exhausting, or require long recovery breaks. It's easier to nibble away at tyranny a little bit every day than it is to muster all from nothing every March and November. After all, that's how we're losing our liberties, a bite at a time, day in and day out: take a lesson in Best Practices from our opponents! It makes a lot more sense to notice and remedy

■ See *Trap*, page 3

Election Correction

Last month, we reported the election results for two of the LP's local candidates for state elective office for just Santa Clara County, instead of across their multi-county districts, which include Santa Cruz and San Mateo.

Their complete returns from the November 2 election were:

U.S. Representative District 14
Brian Holtz 9,588 votes 3.6%
(not 5,335 votes, 3.62%)

State Senate District 11
Allen Rice 14,080 votes 4.0%
(not 7,876 votes, 3.97%)

Santa Clara Libertarian regrets the oversight. ■

Out and About: Top-notch Speakers in the Bay Area

Despite the Bay Area's bent toward fiscal liberalism, we're lucky to have a couple oases of libertarian policy advocacy. Three local organizations are busy ensuring that their students and fans can start the new year off right with speaking events that'll broaden our knowledge—beyond what we read in the local left-wing papers, about both local and national issues.



Randal O'Toole

The Civil Society Institute at Santa Clara University, SJSU's Economics Department, and the Independent Institute in Oakland offer these events:

Hong Kong Freedom Christian Wignall
When: Wednesday, Jan. 26, 5:30-7:00 P.M.
Where: Benson Memorial Center, SCU
For info: www.SCU.edu/csi/

Death Penalty on Trial Bill Kurtis & F. Zimring

When: Thursday, Jan. 27, 6:30 P.M.
Where: Independent Institute, Oakland
Admission: \$10 members; \$15 nonmembers
For info: www.Independent.org/events/
(510) 632-1366

Insanity of Urban Rail Transit: Randal O'Toole San Jose as a Test Case

When: Tuesday, Feb. 22, 5:15-6:45 P.M.
Where: SJSU, King Jr. Library
For info: www2.SJSU.edu/depts/economics/

Psychiatry and the State: The "Therapeutic" Assault on Liberty & Responsibility Thomas Szasz

When: Wed., Feb. 23, 5:30-7:00 P.M.
Where: Benson Memorial Center, SCU
For info: www.SCU.edu/csi/ ■

■ Public Office

Next Step for School Bonds

Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of the Libertarian Party of Santa Clara County, writing arguments against and paying for advertisements urging a “no” vote, bond issues in several county school districts were agreed to by the voters in the November 2 election.

These Districts Need Oversight Committees!

- San Jose/Evergreen Community College Bonds
- West Valley/Mission Community College Bonds
- Santa Clara Unified Bonds
- Sunnyvale School District Bonds
- Franklin-McKinley School District Bonds

LP of Santa Clara County members **Allen Rice** and **Dennis Umphress** already serve, as Chairs, on two such oversight committees, and have agreed to act as advisors to other

Libertarians interested in overseeing these districts and their spending. If enough folks

Fortunately, each of these bonds was passed under provisions of Proposition 39. As reported here last month, Prop. 39 allows passage of a school bond with just 55% of the vote, but requires the school district to form a so-called Citizens’ Bond Oversight Committee (CBOC), whose duty it is to ensure that the bond money is spent precisely on only those areas where the district said they would spend it.

Already, the Party has sent letters signed by our Chair, **Allen Hacker**, to the five districts which passed bonds, reminding them that they have this obligation, and asking when and how they will be forming their CBOCs. The Party will inform Party members and registered Libertarians within the affected districts exactly how to apply for positions on these committees.



Dennis Umphress

are interested, they’ll even create a short seminar to provide more background information on these committees and how they work.

Applicants to the committees must reside in the district where the committee is formed. The five affected districts are: the Franklin McKinley (San Jose), Santa Clara Unified, and Sunnyvale School Districts, and the San Jose/Evergreen and West Valley/Mission Community College Districts.

If you have even a slight interest in serving, please contact Allen Rice, at AllenMontr@Earthlink.net, or Dennis Umphress, at DMUmphress@Hotmail.com. They can confirm whether you live in an affected district, and you’ll get admission to their soon-to-be-popular seminar at no extra charge. ■



Allen Rice

Photo: Elizabeth C. Brierty

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Trap

continued from Page 2

bad habits and counterproductive methods when they occur, than to ignore them until the next New Year’s Resolutions landmark. After all, what will be so different about your life in January that you’ll be able to attend to the things for which you didn’t find the time all year long?

Aaron Russo, in his campaign for our Presidential nomination, exhorted: *All our Freedom, All the Time!* Yet, how do you find freedom in an unfree world? Why does the caged bird sing?

Because Freedom is a state of mind. Be the change you seek. Then bring reality into conformance. ■

—Allen Hacker, Chair

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Night

continued from Page 1

The **Fundraising Chair** is responsible for coordinating fundraising activities.

The **Activities Chair** coordinates activities intended to involve, motivate, and inspire members.

The **Judicial Committee** receives any appeals and petitions, and schedules hearings. Unofficially, they also have been responsible for evaluating nominees for LPSCC’s Activist of the Year award.

Jurors, please report for duty as follows:

When: Thursday, January 20, 2005

6:00 P.M. No-host cocktails

6:30 P.M. Dinner

7:30 P.M. Convention business

Where: Hong Fu Restaurant

20588 Stevens Creek Blvd.

Cupertino (408/252-2200)

The restaurant is at the shopping center at the southwest corner of Stevens Creek Boulevard

and De Anza Boulevard.

Dinner will be served family style, and is expected to include hot & sour soup, egg rolls, vegetables, lemon chicken, Mongolian beef, sweet & sour prawns, rice, fortune cookies, & more.

Who: Members. Guests are welcome too!

Cost: 6:30 seating \$27 per juror

7:30 seating \$32 per juror

To attend the convention you are not required to purchase dinner, but please support the restaurant and enjoy. Pay on line at: www.SC.CA.LP.org/comv, or send a check to: LPSCC, c/o Allen Hacker, Chairman, P.O. Box 1000, Mountain View, CA 94042.

These jury deliberations can be fun, intellectually challenging, and invigorating! So be sure not to miss the once-a-year intrigue of the LPSCC’s own whodunit. ■

Mark Your Calendar!

Every month on the second Thursday, LPSCC holds an evening meeting.

The annual convention in January will be followed by quarterly installments of our guest speaker event in February, and our Inspiring Freedom Forum in March.

Held at a local restaurant, in a relaxed dinner-hour atmosphere, these events offer plenty of time for discussion.

February 10 Guest speaker

March 12 Inspiring Freedom Forum

April 14 Business meeting

For location, changes, and updates, check the LPSCC web site at:

www.SC.CA.LP.org; click on “Events.”

Save the date, and take a friend!



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The Mercury Rises with libertarians' Letters

We consider it a good day when a libertarian voice is heard in a big-city newspaper such as the San Jose *Mercury News*. Well, December 7 was a great day. The *Mercury* rose to the occasion, printing letters by not one, not two, but *three* libertarians from Santa Clara County. Here we present the letters.

Keep two-thirds vote on taxes

I strongly disagree with plans to place a ballot measure before voters in 2006 that would lower the parcel tax approval threshold to 55%.

The two-thirds threshold helps protect people from unjustified taxation. Six of the 12 education-related November ballot measures to increase taxes in Santa Clara County passed with over 67.1 percent of the vote. This shows that if a school district makes a strong case, over two-thirds of voters are willing to pay higher taxes. Not every school district deserves more money. They must first show that they are not wasting current funds. They also need to lay out a solid, detailed plan for how the new taxes will be spent. If they cannot do this, they have not earned our vote or our money.

Dennis Umphress [LPSCC activist]
President, Silicon Valley Taxpayers' Assn.
San Jose

Bush is right about Iran

The EU3 (France, Germany and Britain),

negotiating with the dictatorial mullahs in Iran, hail their major success. Meanwhile, the Iranians themselves correct the record by saying that they're not abandoning their nuclear enrichment program, just setting it on a shelf for a limited period of time.

When are these people, incapable of defending themselves without U.S./NATO help, going to learn that you can't trust what a dictator tells you? I realize that President Bush is seen as a "cowboy" by much of the rest of the world. It's a measure of the greatness with which he will be acknowledged in the future that he is standing up against lunacy like what's going on with our "friends" in Europe.

Ron Berti [LPSCC member]
Cupertino

Light rail makes traffic worse

San Jose City Councilman Chuck Reed has it right: Let the market dictate building heights in

North San Jose. However, companies are not going to build there if their employees cannot reach their offices.



Lowell Grattan

Light rail causes road congestion because it takes up space where roads could be built or were removed. Our North First Street was four lanes and now is reduced to two. Walkable streets and traffic calming measures are yet to be proven effective transportation measures. We live in the time of cars, buses, and airplanes. Passenger rail is last century. For at least the next 20 years, cars are going to provide 95 percent of passenger miles, so we must provide roads to make our high-density buildings work.

Lowell Grattan
[member of SVTA, ally of LPSCC]
Los Gatos

Calling all LPSCC members, supporters, and allies! Let's turn up the heat with topical and timely letters to the *Mercury* and all our other local newspapers. ■

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