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# LIBERTY PLEDGE NEWSLETTER

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LIBERTARIAN PARTY NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS  
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NOVEMBER 1989

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## Addressing the Issues

### **LP Takes Lead on Drug Re-Legalization Issue; Provides Speaker for Nat'l Pro-Choice Rally in D.C.**

The LP has been in the forefront recently in opposing the Bush administration's "War on Drugs," (as illustrated by various clippings, page 2-3). After interviewing LP staff members Nick Dunbar and MeMe King recently, the Associated Press began adding the LP as a source for more information at the end of AP wire stories on drug legalization.

Libertarians were also well represented at last month's NORML (National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws) Conference in Washington, D.C., and LP activist Don Ernsberger of Pennsylvania recently appeared on ABC's "Issues and Answers" to speak about the drug issue.

#### **LP Speaker at Pro-Choice Rally**

LP activist Margaret Fries of New York was invited by rally organizers to be one of the speakers at this month's major pro-choice rally at the Washington Memo-

rial in Washington, D.C. Our 30-ft banner, reading, "Pro-Choice on Everything: Libertarian Party" should be a stand-out at the rally.

### **College Outreach Program Moving Into Full "Swing"**

The College Outreach Program has started a series of college swings across the country to motivate and assist students in setting up LP clubs there. Don Ernsberger recently completed a swing through University of Virginia and William & Mary, and four more are planned and funded.

Jim Lark of the University of Virginia (see picture of one of UVA club's events, page 2) will be traveling to Ohio later this month where he will meet up with Miami University of Ohio activist Jim Fuller for a swing through campuses in Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana. Among campuses targeted for other swings are University of Alabama, Auburn, Duke, North Carolina, and Clemson, and New Mexico campuses.

We now have over 200 college contacts and 71 clubs. "Care package" boxes which include about 500 pieces of assorted LP literature, an organizing manual, and other items helpful to a campus club are available from the nat'l HQ. So far, about 60 "care packages" have gone out.

#### **Membership Tops 7,000!**

LP memberships now stands at its highest number ever, breaking the old record of 6750 from May 1985. The increase in memberships signifies a new confidence in the LP, and gives us every reason to believe that we will reach our goal of 10,000 memberships before the Chicago convention.



# Libertarians face drug dilemma

Legalization stance is unpopular

By Jeff Barker  
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — The Libertarians, who bill themselves as America's third party, have a dilemma: whether to push their admittedly unpopular position that drugs should be legalized.

The party opened its annual convention yesterday by announcing a renewed effort to use the media and high school seminars to legitimize their place in American politics.

The three-day convention continues today.

Party leaders conceded that their drug stand would not immediately help them reach mainstream America, but said their position would eventually reap dividends because the war on drugs was doomed to failure.

"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, which has 200,000 members but had fewer than 500 in attendance here. Delegates had to pay their own way.

"The war on drugs is a war on the Constitution and a war on the American people. It must be stopped," Nolan said during a panel discussion on the party's hopes for the 1990s.

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

But he said the Libertarians should not back down from their stand, and other party leaders agreed.

"The consequence of continuing the [drug] war is going to be intolerable," said Larry Dodge, once a U.S. Senate and gubernatorial candidate in Montana.

"At this moment in time, the Drug Enforcement Administration is the greatest threat to the liberties of the American people."

— Dave Nolan, founder  
Libertarian Party

When the public sees that the drug war approach has failed, then "We will be seen as the ones who stuck to their guns," Dodge said.

Their drug position is consistent with the Libertarian philosophy that American government is too big and intrusive. That philosophy also leads them to support abortion rights and gun owners' rights, while advocating 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 Americans.

"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.

The Libertarians were thrilled that their convention was covered by C-SPAN, which covers Congress and offers national public affairs broadcasts on cable television.

"We look for balance," C-SPAN spokeswoman Kristin Wennberg said yesterday. She said 1988 Libertarian presidential candidate Ron Paul has appeared on popular C-SPAN call-in shows. Paul is a former Republican Texas congressman.

Mimicking the Republicans and Democrats, the Libertarians brought placards to the meeting site — a hotel ballroom — bearing the names of all 50 states. But some states had no representatives present.

Harrisburg, PA News—Sept. 1, 1989.

Los Angeles Times—October 8, 1989.

# Marchers Urge Legalizing of Drugs

About 60 Libertarians Protest Government Enforcement

By DAVID FERRELL, Times Staff Writer

Scarcely a week after the largest cocaine bust in history, outspoken Libertarians called Saturday for a moratorium on the drug war—the justification of all banned substances.

Holding hand-painted picket signs declaring, "Let Them Smoke Pot," "My Urine Is Mine" and "Say No to Drugs AND to Big Brother," about 60 members of the anti-government political party demonstrated Saturday for more than an hour outside the Federal Building in Westwood.

The message was simple and forceful. Legalize marijuana, make drugs such as cocaine, heroin and PCP available by prescription or through the open market, and in that way, end the monopoly now held by cocaine traffickers and organized crime.

One speaker made a humorous reference to the Sept. 29 drug raid in Sycamore, in which federal agents seized a record 19 tons of cocaine. Another raid was held on a warehouse in Washington, Libertarian activist Chris Hofland said jokingly, holding up a plastic bag of horse manure.

"There's an epidemic," he said. "The people are being overcome."

Neal Donner, who organized the demonstration for the Libertarian Party's Southern California branch, said it was aimed at federal drug czar William Bennett and the Bush Administration's escalating battle to crack down on illegal drug sales and drug abuse. The Libertarians liken drug abuse to premarital sex, gambling and "a whole slew of victimless crimes" that should not be regulated, Donner said.

"I wish there would be less drug abuse, but it's not up to me or the government to control people's decisions," he said. "If PCP is dangerous, I advise people not to take it. . . . [But] it is a plank of the Libertarian platform to allow individual control over what people put in their own bodies."

Not everyone in attendance was so sure that legalizing all drugs is a good idea.

Jerry Rubin, 45, who settled in Venice about the time a more famous Jerry Rubin was gaining notoriety for Vietnam anti-war protests, recalled years when he bounced in and out of hospitals because of addictions to amphetamines and heroin. About 15 years ago, he said, he watched one of his best friends—a guest in his home—overdose from heroin and die on his living room rug, Rubin said.

A few weeks later, another of his best friends also overdosed on heroin and died.

"I'm very lucky to be alive," Rubin said. "I'll do anything I can to speak out against drug addiction. I don't know what the answer is."

But Libertarians—who number about a million voters nationwide, including 50,000 in California—believe today's drug laws have done little more than drive up the price of contraband and make millionaires out of drug traffickers, said John Vernon, chairman of the

18-year-old Libertarian Party of California.

"If cocaine were legalized tomorrow, the economy of Colombia would probably collapse," he said. With widespread legalization would come a decrease in drug-related armed robberies and other crimes, Vernon predicted.

Protest organizer Donner conceded that more individuals, including children, might use harmful drugs if they were legal, but he said: "Parents are responsible for their children's behavior. I deplore the fact that government has taken over many of the parenting responsibilities in our society."

Chris Conrad of the pro-marijuana American Hemp Council touted the practical values of hemp, which can be used to make everything from shoelaces to motor oil.

"We're recommending that people go to the store, ask for hemp, look for hemp—buy hemp!" he shouted to the crowd.

# Libertarians call drug-war plan A by Bush futile

The Associated Press

AUSTIN — The Libertarian Party, describing President Bush's drug plan as futile, has called for legalization of all drugs.

"Sending helicopters and so-called advisers to Colombia will drag our young men into the quicksand of another no-win war like Vietnam and Lebanon," Gary Johnson, a party spokesman, said Thursday.

"Even if all the Medellín drug lords were captured, more gangsters will always be ready to fill the management vacuum as long as obscene profits can be made because drugs are illegal," he said.

He said Bush's plan to spend nearly \$8 billion on stopping the flow of drugs in the country, drug treatment and increased law enforcement will become a war on people's rights.

"This is an attack on our precious rights of privacy, due process of law, protection from unreasonable search and seizure, and other civil liberties."

"By calling this a 'war,' government can assume powers and impose Draconian measures people would only tolerate during wartime," Johnson said.

Bryan, TX Eagle—Sept. 8, 1989.

Sunday, October 1, 1989 THE CINCINNATI ENQUIRER Columnists

# Recover the freedoms forefathers envisioned

During his 1968 presidential campaign, Gov. George Wallace, D-Ala., was fond of preaching, "There's not a dime's worth of difference between Democrats and Republicans." I'd agree, although I'd bicker a bit on the difference. Massachusetts Sen. Ted Kennedy, a Democrat, makes the Internal Revenue Service reach into our pockets for poor people and cities, while Kansas Sen. Bob Dole, a Republican, has them do the same for farmers and businessmen. The bottom line is: Both parties serve the purposes of other people.



Walter E. Williams

## A different party

The Libertarian Party is different. Libertarians are against Congress forcing one American to toil for another American. They're also against government restrictions on activities that do not involve violence, theft, intimidation, threats or embezzlement. Libertarian values, virtually absent among today's politicians, are like those of Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and George Mason. Like these men, Libertarians believe that natural law — what some might call God-given — not government, gives people certain inalienable rights. Government's job is protection, not abrogation, of these rights.

The average politician, judge or president is either contemptuous or ignorant of natural law and the inalienable rights expressed in our Declaration of Independence. They self-servingly think the only rights we possess are those granted by government. As such, our leaders share much in common with history's tyrants. There is nothing older and uglier in human history, whether it's King George, Stalin, Hitler or the U.S. Congress, than the notion that some people should be forcibly used to serve the purposes of other people. The only debate among tyrants, big and small, is how, and how much.

"Come on, Williams," you say. "Our politicians are nothing like those sinister creatures." Check it out! The earnings of the first two hours of work every day are not yours to keep. The government takes them to give to poor people, farmers, businessmen and other hustlers. If you rebel against being so used, Congress sends its agents to get you. The main difference between us and a serf or a slave is simply the number of hours worked, and the way we're forced to

serve the purposes of other people. Libertarians take a strong stance against this injustice. I suspect most Americans would as well, if they thought about it. Then, why aren't the Libertarians a viable political party? The answer is either I'm wrong in believing that Americans respect liberty and private property, or Libertarians do a poor job of promoting the moral superiority of their values.

Part of the problem may be the Libertarians' call to decriminalize drugs, prostitution and gambling, leaving some people non-plused. Thus, left with the impression that Libertarians are immoral, the average American would never cast his vote for a Libertarian candidate. The truth of the matter is: Libertarians probably feel that drugs, prostitution and gambling are not really great activities; but government prohibition makes a bad matter worse. A more serious problem faced by the party is that Republicans and Democrats have rigged federal election laws so voters have little choice of political candidates.

## Halt government growth

Thomas Jefferson said, "The natural progress of things is for government to gain ground and for liberty to yield." Therein lies the real Libertarian agenda: halting the cancer of government growth. If Americans ever recapture the spirit of Thomas Paine and Patrick Henry, the Libertarian Party will be our ticket to restoration of constitutional and moral government.

If true liberty is too much for us to take right now, at least let us vote out every incumbent in the next election. Even a toilet can benefit from a flushing now and then.

Walter E. Williams is a professor of economics at George Mason University, Fairfax, Va., and a nationally syndicated columnist.

Roselle-Medinah, IL Voice



Gerry Walsh

# Less government pleases him most

In Gerry Walsh's world, there'd be no taxes, civil liberties would rein and there'd be less government — a whole lot less.

The former Roselle village trustee is in the midst of his fourth campaign against tax increase referendums waged by the Roselle Public Library District. Walsh has three anti-tax victories under his belt, but this campaign might be his last since he plans to leave Roselle in January.

But he'll continue his Libertarian fight against taxes because that has worked over and over again.

Libertarianism, says Walsh, works under the belief that "government that governs best governs least. It's the liberal stance on civil liberties and the conservative stance on economic issues."

"Government should not interfere on your personal life as long as you're not hurting someone else, and government should not be involved in your business unless you're defrauding someone or stealing," he said.

There'd still be village boards and library boards and police and fire departments, but they'd oversee a system of user fees. Walsh has promoted user fees as a way to avoid higher property taxes for the library.

Walsh believes public services should be financed by those who use them. For example, you might pay \$30 a year for fire protection. But, if you hadn't paid the annual fee, firefighters would still come to your house if it were burning, but you'd be billed for the service.

Contrary to popular lore, Walsh never suggested toll booths on Roselle streets to pay for road improvements, or pay toilets in private homes to pay for sewer costs.

"There would be village government, but they would not be dealing with zoning, regulations and taxes," he said.

Walsh said the user fee system wouldn't separate the rich from the poor. There'd be fewer poor people, he said.

Walsh, the former president of the Teenage Republican Club in his hometown of Mahwah, N.J., left the Republican Party after former President Richard Nixon began wage and price controls in 1971. He's been a party star since he joined the Libertarians in 1980.

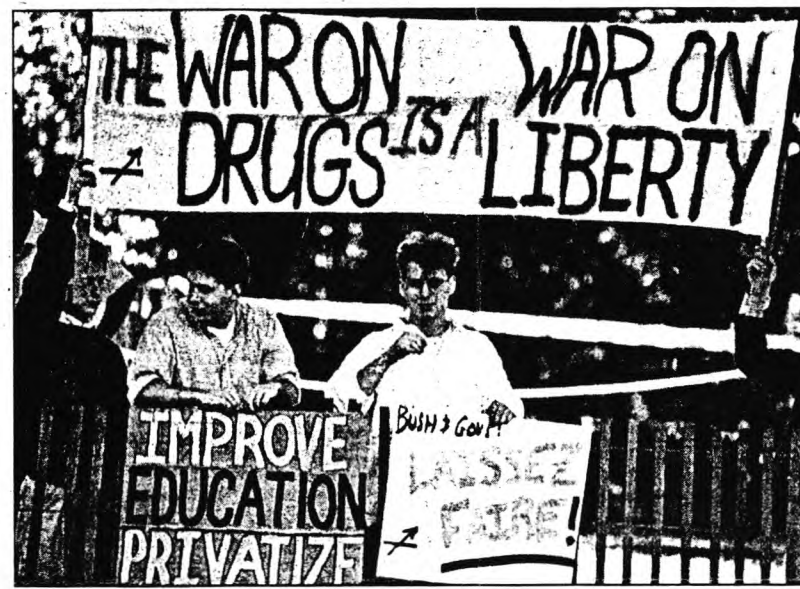
He's moved through the ranks from vice chairman to chairman of the state party, Illinois representative to the National Committee of the Libertarian Party, and now serves as a member of the national judicial committee.

Walsh said he hasn't convinced many Roselle residents to join the Libertarian Party. He's not ready to jump into political causes when he moves, but a political conscience will always be with him.

SUSAN SHERLOCK

Sept. 28, 1989.

THE DENVER POST/NATIONAL



OTHER VOICES: University of Virginia students had a few comments at summit yesterday.

Coatsville, PA Record—September 2, 1989.

# Are you politically homeless? Libertarians say they're the party for you

By JEFF BARKER  
Associated Press Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A group of Libertarians took time off from the party's national convention Friday for a recruitment drive in which noon-time pedestrians were asked, "Are you fed up with left-right labels?"

The party, which claims its membership of more than 200,000 makes it the nation's "third party," is spending much of its three-day convention developing strategies for reaching the general public.

The basic Libertarian platform is that government is too involved in citizens' lives.

That philosophy has won the party an odd collection of allies.

On Friday, representatives of the Gun Owners of America, National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, and Free Press Association all appeared at a Libertarian seminar called "Our Allies in the Movement."

Karl Hess, an author who moderated the seminar, said the groups were Libertarian "allies" because they decried government interference, regardless of whether they were associated with liberals or conservatives.

Also appearing on the panel was Robert Clarkson of Anderson, S.C., who is executive director of the Tax Patriots.

"We're generally known as tax protesters. Our motto is, 'If you

work for it, it belongs to you,'" Clarkson said.

Clarkson advised the Libertarians that they could skirt federal income taxes by avoiding banks and traceable sources of income. If you are self-employed, "and you close your bank account and deal in cash, you can kiss the IRS goodbye," he said.

The three-day convention, being held at a downtown hotel, wraps up Saturday with more seminars and the election of national officers.

On Friday, James Parker, a software engineer from Columbus, Ohio, stood on a downtown street corner with several other Libertarians and asked passersby to take a short quiz bearing

the heading, "Are you fed up with left-right labels?"

The quiz asked such questions as whether military service should be optional, and whether drug laws and the minimum wage should be repealed.

The answers were plotted on a grid that was to tell quiz-takers whether they fit into categories such as "Left Liberal," "Right Conservative," "Libertarian" or "Authoritarian."

"Some days you think you're a Democrat and other days you think you might be a Republican," said a Libertarian statement about the quiz. "If you are one of the millions of politically homeless, the Libertarian Party is looking for you!"

Wednesday, August 30, 1989

PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS

Page 13

# Libertarians Gather to Shrink Uncle Sam

By Joseph Grace

Daily News Staff Writer

At first glance, Linda Morrison, a Queen Village liberal, and Steven Givot, a conservative Chicago intellectual, seem to have little in common.

Morrison, 40, came of age in the '60s protesting the Vietnam War and supporting women's rights. "I was a liberal Democrat," she says. She's spent much of the '80s opposing the Center City Convention Center project as a waste of tax dollars.

Givot, 39, is a businessman who ran unsuccessfully for a U.S. Senate seat in Illinois in 1984 with heavy support from national conservative politicians. Givot saw Ronald Reagan as more of a "Roosevelt Democrat" than a conservative Republican.

But Morrison and Givot do share something in common — membership in the Libertarian Party and a devout belief in the party's central view: The American government is too big, too intrusive, and responsible for just about every

problem. Morrison and Givot spent yesterday at the Wyndham Franklin Plaza Hotel preparing for the Libertarian Party's national convention, which opens there tomorrow. The gathering is expected to draw about 500 — a hodgepodge of disillusioned Democrats, conservatives who disdain Republicans, and other political itinerants who have wandered in under the broad Libertarian banner.

"This is the party of the politically homeless," Morrison proudly declared as she stuffed envelopes.

Formed in 1971 by disgruntled Republicans who had lost faith in President Richard Nixon's conservative credentials, the Libertarian Party bills itself as the largest third party in the country.

Their candidate for president last year, Ron Paul, a former Republican congressman from Texas, got 650,000 votes. Though conservative in origin, the Libertar-

ian Party defies easy political labeling. Witness the Libertarian view on some of the issues on this week's agenda:

■ **Drugs:** Illegal drugs are a menace because the government makes them illegal, Libertarians believe, arguing that all narcotics should be legalized. They contend this will drive down the price of drugs, eliminating the profit motive for drug dealers and the illicit trade's runaway violence.

■ **Abortion:** A woman's right as an individual to make her own choices in life are paramount, Libertarians say, coming down squarely on the pro-choice side. But party leaders add, a vocal party minority says Libertarian beliefs in individual liberty should also apply to fetuses, and the divisive issue is expected to surface at the convention.

■ **Taxes:** Perhaps the party's most popular belief is the Libertarian view that all taxes are an unconstitutional government seizure of the "fruits of an individual's labor," to quote from the party platform. The party doesn't advocate tax evasion, but it

does view tax protesters who refuse to pay their income taxes on constitutional grounds as "heroes," says Dale Hemming, a Minnesota engineer here for the convention.

■ **U.S. foreign policy:** Libertarians oppose all U.S. aid to foreign countries as meddling interventionism. But the party also detests communism. That led party members yesterday to heap praise on the budding democracy movement in Poland — but oppose any U.S. aid to assist the struggling Polish economy.

Libertarians oppose apartheid in South Africa, but they're also against restricting American trade and investment in that country. One of the highlights of the convention is expected to be a speech by Frances Kendall, a Libertarian author who co-authored with her husband a book on South Africa that urges the government there to outlaw apartheid and install a decentralized form of government.

Another Libertarian speaker scheduled to appear is Russell Means, the American Indian activist who vied unsuccessfully for the party's presidential nomination in 1988.



# Gaining access to the state ballot

**T**HE Libertarian Party is seeking changes in the state ballot laws to gain access to the ballot without having first to overcome formidable obstacles, both financial and physical, to participate in the political process.

Restrictive ballot laws — unique to this century — guarantee the supremacy of the two dominant parties: the Democrats and the Republicans. It was not always so. In the 19th century, voters had far wider choices on the ballot than do voters today.

Indeed, the Grand Old Party of the Republic gained status as a result of voter dissatisfaction over the failure of the two dominant parties of the day — the Democrats and the Whigs — to take a stand against slavery in 1840.

The Liberty Party was thus formed, and polled only 7,063 votes nationally in its first election, but it signaled the start of the anti-slavery movement. The party was reorganized in 1848 as the Free-Soil Party, and this time polled 291,620 votes. In 1854, it was reorganized again as the Republican Party, which won second place in the election of 1856 and won the presidency in 1860.

If it were not for the lack of ballot restrictions in the 19th century, the GOP arguably may never have gained prominence. No ballot law restrictions existed at the time. Indeed, the government had no control over who ran for office. Political parties did. When government finally took over the job of printing ballots from the parties in the 1890s, limited access to the ballot became a matter only of time.

That time occurred as recently as the 1930s, when states began imposing restrictions by requiring signatures equal to various percentages of the total vote. Other obstacles, more cumbersome, stand in the way of candidates. In this state, for example, third-party candidates must file signatures with each community's board of registrars.

John Anderson in 1980, for example, spent more than \$6 million to gain access to the ballot in all states, money that would have been more efficiently

## Paul Salters



diverse dishes. The people invariably have a firm grasp of who the real cooks are.

Dr. Ron Paul, the Libertarian candidate, captured the attention of thousands of voters in the last presidential election. Talk-show host Gens Burns of WRKO has introduced his listeners to the Libertarian philosophy.

Thus are choices broadened and democracy made more secure.

*Paul Salters is a member of The Enterprise staff.*

spent on costly television ads.

There is no valid reason — except a desire to keep third-party candidates from access to the ballot — for restrictive ballot laws. Indeed, state Rep. John A. Businger, D-Brookline, has filed several bills this year that will simplify requirements and procedures to get on the ballot.

Opponents argue that such restrictions will prevent needless clogging of the ballot by every Tom, Dick and Harry with a grudge or a utopian vision. Experience in the real world indicates that such does not occur. Thousands of people are not lusting for political office. In 1984, Tennessee, with one of the least-restrictive ballot laws, had no third-party candidates on the congressional ballot.

Reasonable access to the ballot is mandatory in a free society. Voters, after all, exercise their own judgment. It may be that the Libertarian Party generates some mistrust among some people, but that is no reason to exclude it or make it pay dearly to challenge the notions of the two traditional parties.

Arguments that a third-party presence could siphon off votes in a crucial election may be true. But this rare event should not prevent access to the ballot. Good ideas and sound government need no protection.

The Libertarian appeal is indeed curious — fierce free-market economic freedom, a no-holds-barred individual freedom, and an isolationist mentality that would have made even Edmund Wilson blanch.

Nonetheless, freedom is best served by a menu of

## THE CINCINNATI ENQUIRER

Monday, October 2, 1989

## Better schools

Thomas Gephard's column of Sept. 24 dances all around the way to improve education but never comes out and says what to do. What we must do is decrease the number of children in government schools and increase those attending private and religious schools.

This shift of students from government schools to private and religious schools must also be accompanied by an increase in the number of parents who pay directly for their children's education. The accountability of even private schools is decreased when a third party pays for the education.

What our elected officials must do, and each of us as individuals must do, is face up to the fact that government schools do a poor job of educating our children. The Cincinnati school board, the Ohio Board of Education and the National Education Association must admit that government schools do not work, and stop lying to the public by promising that more money, higher teacher pay, curriculum changes, alternative education, individualized education, etc., will improve government schools in any meaningful way.

No matter how much we all claim to want better education, it will not happen as long as we continue to look toward the government for something that only we as parents can provide for our children.

JAMES A. BERNS  
1544 Teakwood Ave.

## Art funding

When it comes to government subsidy of the arts, both liberals and conservatives are off the mark.

Liberals like Sandy Grady ("Freeing Art From Helms' Grip," Sept. 16) say that conservatives are trying to censor art. Conservatives like George Blair ("Let Government Fund Only Art That Reflects Nation's Values," Sept. 24) say that liberals want "government's active support" of their "anti-right, anti-religious propaganda."

While they are both right, neither offers any practical or just solution to this problem. Their arguments focus only on who should control these handouts. It is time for all Americans to support and implement the libertarian option.

Instead of forcing taxpayers, of whatever political or religious persuasion, to pay for art that they find offensive or distasteful, why don't we privatize the National Endowment for the Arts, thereby removing all politics and government interference from artistic expression, which is a vital element for a free society? Only through privately funded art can people of diverse values peacefully support the art or artist of their choice.

Ge, isn't it amazing how such an apparently complex problem has such a simple, practical and ethical solution?

STEVE SCHULTE  
6744 Newbridge Drive.

Sunday, October 15, 1989/3D

The Augusta Chronicle

## Guest column

# An emergency lesson in Libertarian economics

(Editor's note: The author, Timothy Moultrie, is a member of the South Carolina Libertarian Party.)

I APPLAUD the tremendous outpouring of volunteerism across the South and the rest of the nation for the benefit of the victims of Hurricane Hugo. However, Governor Carroll Campbell, Charleston Mayor Joe Riley and President George Bush desperately need an emergency lesson in Libertarian free market policies if they wish to save the state from abject poverty.

These gentlemen need this lesson simply because the state of South Carolina will not have just one critical period, but two.

The first critical period extends from the time of the initial disaster to the point at which the most basic life services are restored. During this first period, people directly affected by Hugo are living a hand-to-mouth existence and they benefit from the efforts of volunteers.

The second critical period is characterized by economics. This period's effects can only be minimized if the local governments encourage trade.

The state and federal governments, as well as some local governments, have produced an obvious management disaster which can best be described as a mountain

range of red tape. These agencies could stop being part of the problem and instead be part of the solution if they were to allow the free market to do what it does best; provide a product or service at a price that the market will bear.

Many people, Democrat and Republican alike, have a knee-jerk reaction to the concept of a free market by screaming price gouging. But price gouging will not last.

The surest way to encourage builders, generator salespersons, and all other manner of suppliers to come to the region is by allowing them the possibility of operating at a profit. If the promise/possibility of turning a profit is greater in one area than in another, then entrepreneurs will gravitate to the second place almost immediately.

Any economist will acknowledge that, when a market is flooded, the result will be a reduction in consumer costs. This natural reaction of the free market is being undermined by the well-intentioned but short-sighted application of price caps by government officials.

Case in point: the supply of builders can be called into service as an example of Libertarian free market policies at work. Many reports abound that a sheet of plywood may cost \$100-\$200 without the benefit of the price caps. ...

IF A BUILDER goes to Charleston with only self-serving intent and charges \$200 for a sheet of plywood, no doubt the upper limit of what the

market would bear, he will obviously make a huge profit and then high-tail-it out of there so that he may repeat the process as soon as possible.

But there is a catch. Other builders will be doing the exact same thing. As items become plentiful the competition to make sales will increase and thus drive prices down.

On the other hand, suppose there is a contractor who has \$10,000 of surplus labor and lumber which he chooses to give away. The altruistic contractor will only be able to contribute \$10,000 before reaching the breakpoint at which any further action would impinge upon his economic health.

The result would be that only \$10,000 of goods or services could be infused into the area where it is desperately needed; whereas the first builder, armed with a profit motive, may contribute a vastly greater amount to the reconstruction effort.

What happens to those people who have zero assets beyond the labor that they can produce with their own bodies? Would not the price caps/trade restrictions benefit them? In a word, no.

Trade restrictions will actually, and unintentionally, harm those very people whom they are designed to protect. If trade restrictions are allowed to remain in place, the surplus of goods will never occur — thus causing scarcity — and prices for consumer goods will remain artificially high, becoming static at the upper limit of the permissible consumer cost.

This effect of artificial inflation occurs every time a market is dominated by government, rather than the laws of supply and demand. One need only look to the socialist countries around the world to verify this.

How can Libertarian free market policies benefit those with zero assets beyond their own labor? Quite simply, the free market will reduce the burden that voluntary contributions of commodities and labor will suffer.

Small wonder these victims of Hugo are mad. They, like the rest of the taxpayers in this nation, have been sorely misled by their federal government.

ON ONE SIDE we have F.E.M.A., an agency that is either woefully inefficient or non-existent, and on the other side we have the Army and National Guard, which have assisted in transportation and distribution of information and supplies. The issue here is: why should we pay for F.E.M.A. (and other similar agencies) when there is another organization (Army, National Guard) with all the necessary facilities and abilities to help?

I cannot help being frustrated when I see our leaders undermine the very foundations of the free market, which is the surest route to recovery for South Carolina. After all, if free market principles can save Poland, why can't these principles, coupled with volunteerism, save South Carolina?

