



Santa Clara Libertarian

Volume 32, Issue 5 May 2004

News of Local Libertarians' Efforts and Feats

■ Coalition Building

Redevelopment has Rivals in San Jose

by Michael Laursen
LP Candidate, State Senate District 13

On May 13, LP candidates **Zander Collier** and I attended the monthly meeting of **Coalition for Redevelopment Reform** (www.CoalitionForRedevelopmentReform.org). The organization is "a coalition of concerned citizens protecting the community against public and private entities engaged in Redevelopment abuse" in San Jose.



Michael Laursen

Focusing on the San Jose Redevelopment Agency, they provide education, advocacy, and a public forum, and on their web site they make available articles, published reports, and other information about eminent domain and Redevelopment agencies.

Collier and fellow local LP candidate **Allen Rice** have been involved in the CRR for years, and I couldn't help but sign up myself that night. Although I live in Mountain View, I'm quite interested in downtown San Jose. I have worked here for over ten years, giving me a front row seat for the shenanigans of the San Jose Redevelopment Agency.

Collier and I, along with Republican Congressional candidate **Douglas Adams McNea** (District 16), were introduced to the gathering and had an opportunity to network. McNea is involved in CRR and serves on the board of Silicon Valley Taxpayers' Association (www.SVTaxpayers.org) along with LPSCC members **Elizabeth Brierly** and **Dennis Umphress**.

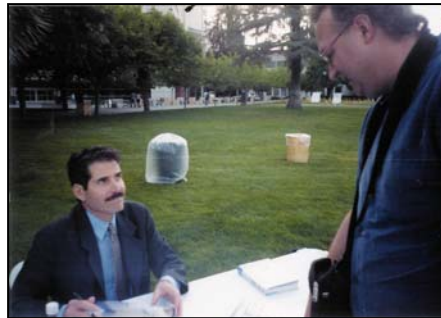
I was impressed by the seriousness and dedication of the volunteers, and especially the leadership skills of CRR Chair **Lorraine Wallace Rowe**, a downtown San Jose property owner who helped found the Coalition.

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Celebrity Stossel Delights at SJSU

by Lawrence Samuels
Northern Vice Chair, LP of Calif.

After 15 years of consumer reporting on various TV networks, **John Stossel** had an epiphany. And it was a big one. Suddenly, he realized that the biggest swindlers in America were not so-called selfish businessmen in the boardroom, but the power-hungry legislators in the hallowed halls of Washington, D.C. This was Stossel's message he gave to an enthusiastic and mainly libertarian audience of over 200 fans at



Photograph: Lawrence Samuels

Robert Ratto (right), Treasurer of Monterey County LP, has his copy of Give Me a Break autographed by libertarian author and TV journalist John Stossel.

San Jose State University on May 13.

Organized by SJSU's Economics Department as an installment in the newly created David S. Saurman Provocative Lecture Series, **Prof. Jeffrey Hummel** introduced Stossel as that rarefied species of news reporter that actually understands economics. And Stossel's understanding

was superb, prescribing free-market remedies in delightful doses to an appreciative crowd.

At other times, he delved into some of his ABC 20/20 specials that showed how government and the media scare people into surrendering their liberties to gain a false sense of security.



Lawrence Samuels

Often apologizing for his failure to understand sooner the dynamics of markets, Stossel argued that a free society increases the pie of wealth for everyone; that government regulations do not work and that self-policing is a better method to protect consumers. He accused the elite of attempting to close the freedom loophole, and turning America into their own exclusive feudal serfdom.

Stossel recognized that bad businesses would eventually atrophy, but that government has no such natural mechanism. He referred to government as the cause and not the solution, quoting Thomas Jefferson's sage statement: "The course of history shows that as a government grows, liberty decreases."

Much of Stossel's lecture can be found in his new book, *Give Me a Break*, which had been in the top ten of the best seller list for weeks. ■

■ Campaign 2004

The Importance of Education

by Michael Laursen
Candidate, State Senate, District 13

School choice and local control of public schools are the emphasis in my campaign for State Senate. It wasn't arbitrarily that I chose education—it *is* the top issue in California.

It is so important that children get a quality education. If future generations do not learn to think, question, and reason, they will be susceptible to all kinds of political nonsense. (I know; I know. I can hear you saying "We're already there.") And, whether we like it or not,

we are all competing in a global economy. Nobody is doing young adults a favor by graduating them without the ability to make their way in the world.

Even if you don't have children, the California public education system has a big effect on your economic life. Over half of California's budget goes to K-12 and higher education. Own a home? The quality of schools in your neighborhood has a tremendous effect on its value.

California has a highly centralized public school system. It dates back to the 1970s, when

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PUBLISHER

Libertarian Party of Santa Clara County
P.O. Box 60171
Sunnyvale, CA 94088-0171
Web site: www.SC.CA.LP.org
Telephone: 1 (877) 872-3007

EDITOR

Elizabeth C. Brierly
E-Mail: BrierlyServices@Netgate.net

Brierly Services Company

P.O. Box 611021
San Jose, CA 95161-1021

COUNTY CHAIR

Allen Hacker
Telephone: (650) 964-4488
E-Mail: Allen@LawfulGov.org

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Mark Hinkle, Chair
E-Mail: Mark@Garlic.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Beau Cain	Melisse Lusin
Brian Holtz	Arden & Hiram Pierce
Michael Laursen	Lawrence Samuels
Jascha Lee	

PAST ISSUES

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■ Message from the Chair

Tick...Tick...

I've just returned from a successful death watch in Hayfork, a sleepy town in Trinity County. I'm Trustee of a charitable trust that owns property nearby. A special woman had seen this property's potential as a place from which to do good; bought it in pursuit of that vision; but couldn't hold on to it. The trust took over so that it might remain "in the family" and fulfill its potential.

This woman spent her life working to help people get past life's traps and live better. Because of her, people who were lost are now found. She worked so diligently that she neglected emotionally her children and her husbands, and ignored what was best for herself. She died having achieved not one major point of her vision. Sure, she left a trail of helped individuals, but no infrastructure for them to build within and upon; the part she herself thought most important was the part she did not accomplish.

As a friend of some 33 years and a supporter of her vision, I had to be there with her. Some of her last words to me were, "I am not happy about this!"

When you lose someone who has been there more than half your life, you revisit your own mortality. For me that's particularly difficult, it being an unquestioned fact of my existence as the eternal Belligerent Claimant in Person that I will always be. But cars wear out; houses fall into ruin; and, bodies die. I may be certain that I as consciousness will endure, but in my sensible moments I must admit that this already shop-worn real-world vehicle I call my body will not be with me forever. And when it goes, many things abruptly will end.

How is this a political column? Simple: life is a religious and a political experience, a personal and a public performance, and much more, all wrapped up in one's fears and desires. But too often, those fears and desires distract us from our intentions and dreams. And that, I worry, is where most libertarians live: wrapped up in the moment and not calculating their lives into the future.

Are you fighting traffic tickets every few months but not saving anything for a contribution to a Second Amendment group? Are you running for office without money or hope of even getting into a debate? Are you broke because you've copped an all-or-nothing attitude?

It's OK just to *be* a libertarian. If that's what

you're really doing. But the fact is, many of you are not. And most of you don't begin to approach activism. And that's where the lie gets put to the notion that there is a libertarian movement.

I'll bet more babies have been born in Santa Clara County so far this year than new libertarians who've registered. Know what that is? That's 99% of you forgetting to hand someone a pamphlet when the moment invites. That's us going nowhere.



It doesn't have to be that way. All the effort you're already expending on isolated local battles could be directed into a group effort known as political activism. You would accomplish far more. That's what a political party is for. Not just to hold

press conferences and draw candidates into running for office, but to help the candidates and to form a communication infrastructure that can double as a social support structure.

Do you know all the registered libertarians in this county? OK, just the actual Party *members*? Come on, there are fewer than three hundred! Even I don't. Most never attend meetings, never visit the web site, never offer to pledge or to help. Do you think your \$25-a-year membership dues and an occasional libertarian vote in a race that doesn't really matter are enough?

Are we so busy that we can't make the time to do what we must? What will happen if we don't? In the end will we be as honest as my friend, when it comes time to admit that we've ultimately failed and that we're "not happy about this"?

Despite my calls for action, we're not growing. But we're getting older every day.

Will we heed the wake-up call?

Perhaps next month I'll be a bit more upbeat. But just now, I'm seeing too much of my friend's life reflected in what's happening here.

It's the usual, the same-old same-old: SSDD (Same S--- Different Day). Much ado about the pressing details, but little or nothing for the overview, the infrastructure, the true supports of the future we all say we want.

John Lennon wrote, "Life is what happens while you're busy making other plans." Heaven help us if we concede the point. ■

—Allen Hacker, Chair

Education *Continued from Page 1*

Serrano v. Priest deemed it a violation of the state constitution's "equal protection" clause for one school district to spend significantly more per child than any other school district. Soon, Proposition 13 established the current system where local property taxes for education are collected into one big pot at the state level, then re-

distributed. In 1988, Proposition 98 was passed, requiring a minimal level of funding for public schools.

It is fair, 30 years later, to ask whether the plan has worked. Has equalization of spending created equal education quality for all California's children?

There's a lot of evidence that it has not worked. Poor kids still aren't being educated as

well as rich kids.

Beyond the failure to achieve the original goal, the centralization of power has created new problems. Legislators in Sacramento are neither accessible nor accountable to individual parents. Try calling Secretary for Education Richard

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■ Campaign 2004

A Wager with Voters? Holtz Seeks Votes & PR

The Libertarian challenger to Rep. **Anna Eshoo** is betting voters \$2 each that if they read his web site they'll vote for him.

Brian Holtz, a Yahoo software engineer, is running for Congress against 7-term incumbent Democrat Eshoo in District 14, stretching from Saratoga to Belmont and Scotts Valley to Half Moon Bay. Holtz wants to shake up an election which threatens replay that of 1998, when Eshoo outspent the same Republican opponent \$450,000 to \$35,000 and outpolled him 69% to 28%. Republican **Chris Haugen**, a teacher at a private Christian school in Sunnyvale, had \$4,000 on hand in January compared to Eshoo's \$320,000.

The offer: "If you can pass a short quiz on my positions, and still say you won't vote for me, I'll send you \$2." (MarketLiberal.org/Bet.html) Holtz is currently capping his payout at \$5000, but doesn't rule out raising that limit. To claim the \$2, a voter in District 14 first must answer 20 multiple choice questions on Holtz's positions, with each linked to its answer on the campaign web page. If after passing the quiz the voter can deny she will vote for Holtz, he will return her stamped self-addressed envelope with a Jefferson \$2 bill. He explains:



Brian Holtz

"Thomas Jefferson was a classical liberal, meaning he believed in limited government that respected personal and economic liberty. Libertarians are the modern heirs to classical liberalism, so Jefferson is a natural fit for our views... it doesn't hurt that his bill is \$2, not \$20."

When asked to explain his peculiar marketing tactic, Holtz asks, "What other advertising can I buy where I pay only if the voter actually considers my message? At Yahoo we're strong believers in pay-for-performance adver-

tising, except here I've cut the middleman and will pay a direct bounty for a voter's attention."

Holtz says, "Democrats want government to be our nanny; Republicans want government

Brian Holtz's daughter Shannon Holtz appears disgruntled; her father has calculated that she "already owes \$94,000 in government debt and unfunded liability" (Market Liberal.org/Mortgage.html). The candidate claims the two older parties buy votes from special interests, and "that 98% of Congress gets re-elected, and they buy re-election with debt and promises Shannon will be paying for when these politicians are just a bad memory."



Photograph: Brian Holtz

to be our chaperone. I want government as just our referee and lifeguard, and to treat us like grown-ups." Holtz's priorities are "market-based reforms of bankrupt entitlement programs, eradication of corporate welfare, and protecting the environment by legally recognizing its economic value."

Predicting he'll win about 4% at the polls, the long shot denies that a vote for him is a waste. "The incumbent has won 4 straight elections by a 2-to-1 margin. Which vote is more wasted: one that ratifies a predetermined outcome, or a vote for your true principles?"

Holtz thinks his payments to voters won't be considered illegal vote-buying: "42 U.S.C. 1973i(c) forbids 'payment for voting,' but I'll pay only if they sign a statement promising *not* to vote for me. If they say they'll vote for me, they won't win \$2—but perhaps a free country." ■

Redevelop *Continued from Page 1*

One member reported on her investigation into affordable housing. She found that San Jose's housing agency's web site has no information on where such units are located or their availability. When she telephoned the agency they apparently could not provide her with such information. Inquiring in person at an affordable housing project in the Burbank neighborhood yielded the criterion that they're available only to those with incomes under \$50K, and the obstacle of the three-year waiting list.

Doug McNea had joined **Yolanda Reynolds**, a CRR board member, at a Sacramento hearing on a bill that would require eminent domain compensation to be equivalent to replacement cost rather than merely fair market value. My understanding is that CRR believes replacement cost is a fairer way of figuring the compensation.

Rowe reported on having attended a legal class in Hayward attended mostly by city officials. The course taught how to navigate the eminent domain condemnation process with minimal notice to the property owner, and while minimizing legal challenges.

A new battle that the CRR may be fighting soon is Measure I, which authorized building a new city hall in San Jose. One member brought up legal requirements in Measure I that seem to require the City to sell the newly constructed city hall and move into cheaper commercial office space.

CRR is hoping to broaden their reach in the community, indicating at the meeting that they're seeking more places to circulate their newsletter, either electronically or on paper. Since the LP shares with CRR the belief in private property rights, perhaps the LPSCC could work with CRR to offer their newsletter to Libertarians in San Jose.

CRR meets the second Thursday of each month from 7:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. For information, call (408) 817-5678 or e-mail C2R_Coalition@yahoo.com. ■

Education *Continued from Page 2*

Riordan—let me know if he returns your phone call. The legislators *are* readily available to lobbyists, including the powerful California Teachers Association.

It is telling that Sacramento hasn't even accomplished equalization of per-student spending. Special "categorical" funds and associated bookkeeping games have directed more money per student to some school districts than others.

In the last couple of years, in Santa Clara County, even parents who strongly believe in public education have come to Sacramento with skepticism. Sacramento has grabbed funds that local public school administrators have already included in their budget plans.

Even if the state legislature dedicated itself to straightening out the current public school

Laursen for Senate District 13
Web: VoteLaursen.org
E-mail: Info@VoteLaursen.org

system it could only do so much. Its hands are tied by Serrano v. Priest, and Propositions 13 and 98. Radical reformation of the system can occur only through the initiative process.

There is another front of attack on our messed-up education system: free the kids from the public schools. We Libertarians believe in the power of free markets to provide affordable, quality services. If we can get Californians to try private schools, even on a limited, pilot

basis, I think they would learn to love freedom from bureaucracy. We may not get there overnight, but there are plenty of incremental steps we can convince Californians to try. Vouchers and educational tax credits are just two of the possibilities. ■

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Libertarian Party of California State Central Committee
 Libertarian Party of Santa Clara County
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 Sunnyvale, CA 94088-0171

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Next LPSCC Meetings! Thursday, June 10, evening: Meet the Candidates!
Thursday, July 8, 7-9:30 P.M.: Business Meeting
 Usually held at **Coco's Restaurant**, Sunnyvale. Venue and other details subject to change; to confirm check at www.SC.CA.LP.org.

■ Campaign 2004

Aggressive Networking and Fundraising Define Collier Campaign

by Beau Cain

Collier for Assembly Campaign

Zander Collier, candidate for State Assembly District 24, expanded his campaign's pool of contacts and opportunities for fundraising at the glamorous Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group Charity Ball on Saturday, April 24.

Collier introduced himself and was introduced to a myriad of people during the event in order to promote his campaign. Collier says, "In this campaign, we understand that there is one thing and one thing only to winning: getting more votes than the others."



Zander Collier (center) meets fellow SVMG charity ball attendees; April 24.

My campaign consultant tells me that this race, given two disreputable opponents, can be won on the basis of simply having enough lawn signs."

To make that happen, the campaign needs volunteers to prospect for new fundraising sources, to help coordinate other volunteers, and to help with other areas of fundraising such as home parties and coffees. "Other special interests are amenable and should be pursued enthusiastically. We're approaching those interests and selling ourselves on this race."

"And while we will avoid selling out to special interests, we can find common cause with interests who are not served, nor likely to be served by the other contestants in this race."

Collier's understanding of campaign realities drives his efforts. "We're fighting for money and we're fighting hard. I've spent hours on the phone updating our records, expanding our networks, and soliciting campaign fund-raising. If we are going to win we can't be bashful about asking for money."

Confident that his opponents can be defeated, Collier expounds his ideas. "I am the only candidate in the State Assembly District 24 race who deserves the voters' money. I am like the people here: socially liberal, fiscally conservative, and incremental in approach. As the best candidate, I deserve those funds, and if you want me to sit in the legislature, I need your help. Please give often; please give generously."

"Let 2004 be the year we Libertarians make the halls of Sacramento shake!" ■

**Coalition to Elect
 Zander Collier**

Web: www.ElectCollier.org
Tel. (408) 369-1866
E-Mail: Volunteer@ElectCollier.org

According to Collier, the most important factor in earning more votes than one's opposition is to raise more campaign funds. "We must raise funds so that we can buy campaign materials, buy advertising, buy lawn signs.

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