
LIBERTY PLEDGE NEWSLETTER

March, 1989

Dear Pledgers,

By the time you see this, major changes will have come to the LP's national office: the computer network and procedural documentation authorized by Chair Dave Walter will be in place.

The networking system will support up to six computer work stations. (Although we have only two now, we have operated with up to seven in the past.)

With step by step manuals for both computer operations and office procedures, new employees, volunteers and interns can work more effectively, and staffers can shift more of their attention from office procedures to the ultimate LP goal: freedom in our lifetime.

New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah and Vermont are among those who organized membership drives during the first quarter of '89. Utah's membership rose 200%; Pennsylvania's drive garnered 143 new members.

Membership is now the highest since August '85. (We've used different criteria to determine membership status in the past, but it appears we'll soon top all records.)

February 28 membership totals, used to determine delegate allotments, will be available soon.

On the upcoming Convention:

* All are invited to hear JIM LEWIS ('84 vice presidential candidate and tax protester), recently released from prison, speak at the kick-off breakfast. Welcome back, Jim.

* Torch Club members will be guests of the LNC in an exclusive luncheon Friday. (Torch Club, as you know, are those who contribute \$1000 to the LP in one year. For more info, contact SHARON AYRES.)

* Recently announced: FRANCES KENDALL, co-author of the best-selling how-to, "South Africa: The Solution" (and recently nominated for a Nobel Prize) will also be a featured speaker.

* ED CLARK, DAVID BERGLAND and RON PAUL will be honored at the Saturday night Presidential Banquet. A great opportunity to show appreciation to our candidates of the '80s.

Meantime, the LNC meets in Washington, D.C. April 22 & 23, at

the Capitol Hill Quality Inn (\$62.50 single or double; call 1-800-228-5151 for reservations.) The DCLP hospitality suite will be open Friday night at the hotel (just 2 1/2 blocks from Union Station), with dinner & political comedy in Georgetown Saturday evening, and perhaps a moonlit visit to the Jefferson memorial. Pledgers, chairs, candidates, Torch Club members, staffers, and assorted other activists are urged to take part in the fun and attend the meeting in Washington, D.C.

My thanks to all those who have returned their surveys, and thanks again to those who wrote letters.

Results will be published next month; there's still time to get your views on record.

And while your at it, you state chairs might check to see if you've mailed your State Party Surveys back to MARY GINGELL.)

All for now. Hope to see you in April.



Humanist redefines liberalism

Substitute speaker talks to radical group about open-minded tradition

By Bryan Culp

Staff Writer U.S.C. Daily Trojan/LA, CA/c:11,000

Tom Palmer, editor of the *Humane Studies Review*, didn't make it to Monday's meeting of the Trojans for Radical Individualism — but his message did.

Palmer, a self-titled "liberal," was expected to present such ideas as laissez-faire economics and a person's right to harm himself. But Palmer has the chicken pox, the small audience at Topping Student Center learned Monday.

The replacement speaker was George Smith, a senior researcher from the Institute for Humane Studies at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va.

Smith discussed the differences between classical liberalism and the modern American meaning of the word "liberal."

"The liberal tradition has little to do with today," Smith said. "Classical liberalism is the philosophy of the founding fathers."

The classical liberal does not adhere to the modern Republican or Democratic point of view, he said, but is similar to the Libertarian platform.

"The Democrats want to take money from the rich and give it to the poor, and the Republicans are lousy on civil rights," he said. "Classic liberalism is leaving people alone to run their own lives."

Cornerstones of classical liberalism include property rights, spontaneous order and peace, he said.

Holding a pen in the air, Smith described how classical liberalism allows people to have control over their own lives.

"I own this pen. It's my property," he said. "The word property didn't always mean something tangible. It used to mean the right of moral

Smith said the idea of self-government comes from the classical liberal assumption that people have moral jurisdiction over themselves.

"This led to religious freedom when it was extended to the conscious," he said. "They used to call it free-market religion."

Life can exist and continue without a planner, Smith said.

He used the evolution of language as an example of spontaneous order.

"A group of people didn't sit down and design our language. It's the result of millions of people pursuing their own interests," he said.

The classical liberal opposes government interference in an individual's life, he said.

Smith said he believes in removing all trade regulations, discontinuing taxation, legalizing drugs and allowing women to decide whether they want an abortion.

Politicians including Ronald Reagan and President George Bush may sound like classical liberals on some issues, he said, but it's only lip service.

"Reagan drove us nuts because of his rhetoric, but he was so bad on civil rights issues," he said. "And Bush's speech — 'a thousand points of light, a kinder and gentler nation' — it sounded like classical liberalism."

For all Bush's talk, his policies are still restrictive of individual rights, Smith said. But as far as classical liberalism goes, he said, that may be for the best.

"It's easier for classical liberals to go out and talk when there's a president in the White House who doesn't say he believes in the rights of the individual."

Libertarian Group Study Calls For Elderly Income Tax Repeal

WASHINGTON (UPI) — A libertarian research group is calling for repeal of the elderly income tax surcharge in the catastrophic illness health care plan, saying Medicare now is hurting the people it was created to help.

The CATO Institute, an independent public policy research organization, released a study Wednesday saying the new Medicare income tax surcharge on retirees taking effect this year will raise marginal tax rates for elderly Americans substantially above the rates for everyone else, "reversing tax reform for those over 65."

The Medicare program has been expanded under the catastrophic illness health care law,

which provides unlimited hospital and physician care while limiting out-of-pocket costs in exchange for higher monthly premiums and an income tax surcharge for certain well-to-do elderly.

The surcharge is subject in 1989 to a limit of \$800 per beneficiary, or \$1,600 per couple. The study concluded that taxpayers over age 65 will be paying an extra 15 percent to meet their tax bills in April. The fee is scheduled to increase to 28 percent by 1993.

"The Medicare program itself is increasingly becoming a financial burden on the elderly," said Peter Ferrara, a CATO senior fellow and associate professor of law at George Mason

University, noting that the program "was adopted almost 25 years ago to carry much of the financial burden of medical care for the elderly."

Medicare provides health care to about 32 million elderly and disabled Americans. Part A pays for hospital care after a patient pays a deductible each year and Part B pays for services of physicians, surgeons, and other health care professionals after the beneficiary pays a portion of expenses each year. In 1990, Medicare will begin covering prescription drugs, after another deductible.

In 1950, India ceased to be a British dominion and became the Republic of India.

Libertarians blast S&L bailout

The Enterprise/Simi Valley, CA/c: 16,749

By Stephanie Stassel

The Enterprise Staff *7/2*

Although the agenda was changed, members of the Libertarian Party of Ventura County didn't miss the opportunity Tuesday night to educate a few people about a tax-free government.

When the group sent its meeting announcements out, it had on its agenda the proposed congressional pay increase. But that issue was diffused when the pay raise was voted down last week. Instead, the Libertarians turned their attention to other timely issues: the savings and loan bailout plan, the federal budget and gun control.

Chairman Aaron Starr said it was the Federal Depository Insurance program that got the savings and loans into trouble.

"The very insurance program that was instituted to make them secure, made them make risky loans," Starr told 15 people gathered at Round Table Pizza in Camarillo. "If the government bails them out, there is no bank manager in the country who will stop making high-risk loans. People will take risks because they know they will get bailed out."

Starr is no stranger to politics. Last year, the Simi Valley resident unsuccessfully tried to unseat incumbent state Sen. Ed Davis, R-Valencia, in the general election.

According to Starr, there is no reason why the government can't run on a fraction of its budget. President Bush introduced a \$1.16 trillion budget last week.

Bob Chatenever, an registered Independent at-

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— Aaron Starr

tending his first Libertarian gathering, asked what the federal budget might be like if Libertarians ran the country.

Presidential candidate Ron Paul wanted to eliminate personal taxes, said Don Trok, and he also wanted Europe and Japan to pay for their own defense, which amounts to \$150 billion a year out of America's budget.

Libertarians believe in replacing personal taxes with users' fees so that only the people using a service would pay for it. They believe this would increase customer service and lower the cost of operating the various programs.

The group plans to demonstrate at a Ventura County post office on April 17, the day income tax filings are due. The annual tax day has been moved back two days because the usual filing day, April 15, falls on a Saturday this year.

Last year, they protested in Thousand Oaks. A location for this year's event will be decided next week.

On the issue of gun control, Trok commented

that state Attorney General John Van de Kamp recently displayed an assault rifle to state legislators to point out the power of the weapon.

"He said he could wipe out everyone in just a few seconds, but nothing happened. That's the thing, in the hands of a reasonable person, no one will be hurt by a gun," Trok said.

Starr said he personally doesn't like guns, but sees them as a "cheap form of insurance."

"Whether or not it's in the Constitution, a person should have a right to own a gun," he said.

The issue of a \$45,500 congressional pay raise wasn't totally forgotten, even though Congress voted against the proposal last week.

"We're gathered here to discuss the pay raise, which is a moot point now," Starr said.

"Don't be so sure. They'll tack it on as an amendment to the budget," said Bob Jay, who unsuccessfully ran against Rep. Elton Gallegly, R-Simi Valley, in last year's election.

After the gathering, Starr said he would like to see each state pay taxes according to their representation in Congress. The funds would come from users' fees.

On highways, for instance, fees could be set according to the time of day traveled. Rush hour commuters would pay more.

In Hong Kong, he said a system has been devised to record the amount of traveling without having to stop at a toll booth every few miles. A scanner is placed under the car, which clocks the mileage. A bill is sent to the driver at the end of the month.

"We want to bring down government to the local level," he said.

S.C. Libertarians Select First Executive Director, Geb Sommer

Black News/Columbia, SC

South Carolina Libertarians selected their first Executive Director, Geb Sommer of Lexington, as well as naming several new committees to handle specific projects, in a Sunday meeting in West Columbia.

Sommer, who was the Libertarian candidate for Congress in the Second District last November, is an advanced engineer.

Mark Johnson of Peake will chair the Membership Committee to seek new members. Gonzalo Leon of Columbia will be in charge of the Finance Committee to raise funds for Libertarian Party activities. Ms. M. L. Seymour of Lynwood is the chair of the Education

Committee to train candidates and campaign workers and to prepare Libertarian brochures.

Bill Griffin of South Congaree, who is also vice-chairman of the South Carolina Libertarian Party, will serve as a chairman of the Outreach Committee to promote Libertarian contacts with the public. Two special outreach committees will be chaired by Ms. Tahirih Gelardi of West Columbia to promote knowledge of Libertarian ideas in the School Outreach, & Timothy Moultrie of North Augusta in College & University Outreach to promote this and also Libertarian clubs on South

Carolina campuses.

Congressional District Coordinators appointed were Phil Borden of Charleston (First District), Edward L. Underwood of Columbia (Second District), Tom King of Aiken County (Third District), Bill McCuen of Greenville (Fourth District), and Mitch Olinger of Hartsville (Sixth District). John Harlee of Florence was appointed to Media Liaison.

Committees will add additional members from members of the South Carolina Libertarian Party who volunteer to work on a particular project.

San Mateo supervisors rescind own pay raise

Tribune/Oakland, CA/c: 152,739

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors yesterday unanimously voted to rescind a 25 percent pay raise. A citizens group had turned in nearly 40,000 signatures opposed to the increase. The rejected salary ordinance would have boosted the supervisors' 1989 annual salaries from \$48,360 to \$61,917. The county clerk told supervisors the citizens group, known as ACCESS — Action for County Control and Establishing Salaries — had collected 39,880 raw signatures. The referendum drive was organized by Libertarian Party activist June Genis and had about 1,000 volunteers who helped gather the signatures over a six-week period.

Proposed FBI Crime Computer System Raises Questions on Accuracy, Privacy

Report Warns of Potential Risk Data Bank Poses to Civil Liberties

By Evelyn Richards
Washington Post Staff Writer

On a Saturday afternoon just before Christmas last year, U.S. Customs officials at Los Angeles International Airport scored a "hit."

Running the typical computer checks of passengers debarking a Trans World Airlines flight from London, they discovered Richard Lawrence Sklar, a fugitive wanted for his part in an Arizona real estate scam.

As their guidelines require, Customs confirmed all the particulars about Sklar with officials in Arizona—his birth date, height, weight, eye and hair color matched those of the wanted man.

Sklar's capture exemplified perfectly the power of computerized crime fighting. Authorities thousands of miles away from a crime scene can almost instantly identify and nab a wanted person.

There was only one problem with the Sklar case: He was the wrong man.

The 58-year-old passenger—who spent the next two days being strip-searched, herded from one holding pen to another and handcuffed to gang members and other violent offenders—was a political science professor at the University of California at Los Angeles.

After being fingered three times in the past dozen years for the financial trickeries of an impostor, Sklar is demanding that the FBI, whose computer scored the latest hit, set its electronic records straight.

"Until this person is caught, I am likely to be victimized by another warrant," Sklar said.

Nowhere are the benefits and drawbacks of computerization more apparent than at the FBI, which is concluding a six-year study on how to improve its National Crime Information Center, a vast computer network that already links 64,000 law enforcement agencies with data banks of 19 million crime-related records.

Although top FBI officials have not signed off on the proposal, the current version would let authorities transmit more detailed information and draw on a vastly expanded array of criminal records. It would enable, for example, storage and electronic transmission of fingerprints, photos,

tattoos and other physical attributes that might prevent a mistaken arrest. Though controversial, FBI officials have recommended that it include a data bank containing names of suspects who have not been charged with a crime.

The proposed system, however, already has enraged computer scientists and privacy experts who warn in a report to be released today that the system would pose a "potentially serious risk to privacy and civil liberties." The report, prepared for the House subcommittee on civil and constitutional rights, also contends that the proposed \$40 million overhaul would not correct accuracy problems or assure that records are secure.

Mostly because of such criticism, the FBI's revamped proposal for a new system, known as the NCIC 2000 plan, is a skeleton of the capabilities first suggested by law enforcement officials. Many of their ideas have been pared back, either for reasons of practicality or privacy.

"Technical possibility should not be the same thing as permissible policy," said Marc Rotenberg, an editor of the report and Washington liaison for Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility, a California organization.

The need to make that trade-off—to weigh the benefits of technological advances against the less obvious drawbacks—is becoming more apparent as nationwide computer links become the blood vessels of a high-tech society.

Keeping technology under control requires users to double-check the accuracy of the stored data and sometimes resort to old-fashioned paper records or face-to-face contact for confirmation. Errors have plagued the NCIC for many years, but an extensive effort to improve record-keeping has significantly reduced the problem, the FBI said.

Tapped by federal, state and local agencies, the existing FBI system juggles about 10 inquiries a second from people seeking records on wanted persons, stolen vehicles and property, and criminal histories, among other things. Using the current system, for example, a police officer making a traffic stop can find out within seconds whether the individual is wanted anywhere else in the United States, or an investigator

culling through a list of suspects can peruse past records.

At one point, the FBI computer of the future was envisioned as having links to a raft of other data bases, including credit records and those kept by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Internal Revenue Service, the Social Security Administration and the Securities and Exchange Commission.

One by one, review panels have scaled back that plan.

"There's a lot of sensitive information in those data bases," said Lt. Stanley Michaleski, head of records for the Montgomery County police. "I'm not going to tell you that cops aren't going to misuse the information."

The most controversial portion of the planned system would be a major expansion to include information on criminal suspects—whose guilt has not yet been established.

The proposed system would include names of persons under investigation in murder, kidnapping or narcotics cases. It would include a so-called "silent hit" feature: An officer in Texas, for instance, would not know that the individual he stopped for speeding was a suspect for murder in Virginia. But when the Virginia investigators flipped on their computer the next morning, it would notify them of the Texas stop. To Michaleski, the proposal sounded like "a great idea. Information is the name of the game."

But the "tracking" ability has angered critics.

"That [data base] could be enlarged into all sorts of threats—suspected communists, suspected associates of homosexuals. There is no end once you start," said Rep. Don Edwards (D-Calif.), whose subcommittee called for the report on the FBI's system.

The FBI's chief of technical services, William Bayse, defends the proposed files, saying they would help catch criminals while containing only carefully screened names. "The rationale is these guys are subjects of investigations, and they met a certain guideline," he said.

So controversial is the suspect file that FBI Director William Sessions reportedly may not include it when he publicly presents his plan for a new system.