

Santa Clara Libertarian

Volume 30, Issue 10, October 2002

News Of Local Libertarians' Struggle To Save Freedom



BIG MONTH FOR OUR CANDIDATES!

Reported by Marv Rudin and Cathi Brown

The Libertarian Party was well represented on local ballots mailed out to voters in October. 25 Libertarian candidates appeared on them, 3 federal, 12 state, and 10 local nonpartisan. All but Christopher Kuzmaul (for Mountain View City Council) and Owen E. Richter (for County Board of Education, Area 1) were listed on Pg. 1 of the September newsletter. Of course no voter saw all of them on his ballot, and 7 of the state candidates were not from the local area and were running statewide, but from the standpoint of running candidates, the LP was far and away the most active of the new parties. Most local candidates have run before, but Operation breakthrough recruited first time candidates Richter and Kuzmaul, plus Laura Ferrer (El Camino Hospital Board), Tom MacDivitt (Santa Clara City Council).



Laura Ferrer runs for El Camino Hospital Board

Several of our candidates, particularly Umphress, Brierly, Hinkle, Landauer, and Darnell were active and visible, appearing on radio and TV at various candidate fora around the county. Umphress and others were at candidate fora such as San Jose and Almaden Valley Community Associations, and on KTVU and Naked Radio.



Dennis Umphress Congress Candidate

(Continued on page 4)

CUPERTINO OKTOBERFEST LEADS OPH ACTION

Reported by Marv Rudin and Cathi Brown

After the poor OPH booth site at the big Mt. View Art and Wine Festival in September, Laura Stewart managed to more than turn things around at the big Cupertino Oktoberfest festival October 12th and 13th getting a corner booth at one end of the booth chain, albeit the end farthest from the main parking lot across Stevens Creek Blvd. at de Anza College. Zander Collier and Ray Strong manned the booth mornings and Cathi Brown and Tony Le afternoons. The traffic was excellent.



Laura Stewart arranges great Oktoberfest site

Brown reported: "The OPH was a success, thanks largely to Laura's having scored such a great location. We were near the food and beer booths and near the Community Center, so passersby were either on their way in

to the festival, on their way out, or hanging out while they ate and drank. Therefore, they had "time to answer ten quick questions." At the end of two days, we had filled with dots two large survey charts. We obtained 5 Libertarian voter registrations and added 16 people to our database. One person even made an on-the-spot donation. The announcer at the nearby musical performance area



Ray Strong has 3 visitors simultaneously taking OPH poll!

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announced our survey over the microphone and asked us how it was going. This helped stimulate interest as the festival was winding down. Interestingly, we had fewer authoritarians and more libertarians at the Oktoberfest than we had at either the Art & Wine Show or the Gun Show. Kudos to Laura for having

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Cupertino Oktoberfest OPH Photos

OUTREACH

Stories about local Libertarians publicizing and growing the party



Collier explains OPH chart to interested couple



Photo showing corner location of LP tent-booth



Tony Le covered the PMs with Cathi Brown



Zander has 3 people taking poll simultaneously!

(Continued from page 1)

the foresight to identify and schedule such a successful OPH!

OTHER OPH EVENTS IN OCTOBER

Cathi continued: "I was at the Foothill College amateur radio swap meet. Most of the activity was on the morning shift, and I was there in the afternoon shift. While I was there, activity was already thinning significantly. As far as distribution of political opinions, there were more authoritarian-leaning respondents than at the other events I've worked, but the majority were still to the left of center. The main personal freedom that people were leaning authoritarian was the FCC question ("The government should not control the radio, TV,....") My observation from the OPH data collected is that throughout the South Bay area, regardless of the type of event, people want their personal liberty, and many are willing or eager to sacrifice their economic liberty. The Libertarian Party would benefit greatly by educating people about how their loss of economic freedom impinges on their personal freedom as well.

GUN SHOW: At the gun show, we were at the very back of the main hall, so we didn't get a lot of foot traffic. One gentleman who took the survey took offense when I posted his dot in the "Liberal" category. He supported subsidies



Ray Strong persuading Republican who scored Libertarian to donate to LPSCC

EXTRAORDINARY PUBLICITY DURING ELECTION SEASON

PUBLICITY

Stories about local Libertarians publicizing the party

Extra Media Coverage Created By Local LP Campaigns and Ballot Arguments

Reported by Marv Rudin

Showing the publicity value of LP officials writing ballot arguments, LPSCC Secretary Joe Dehn reported on Oct. 4th "I was just interviewed by a reporter for the Palo Alto Weekly regarding Measure D. He was working on an overview of the election, and contacted me because the LP is the only organization listed as an opposition group for Measure D on the LWV web site. Also, I was interviewed by the Palo Alto Times regarding Measure D."

HINKLE AND LP GET MENTIONED IN MERCURY NEWS STORY ON HOTEL TAX

In addition, Mark Hinkle was mentioned in an article in the San Jose Mercury News regarding the Hotel Tax measure, F. The article was pro tax as usual for the SJMN. They quoted everyone who approved first including John Southwell, general manager of the downtown Hilton San Jose & Towers, Thomas Callahan, an executive vice president for PFK Consulting, a San Francisco-based firm that tracks tourism and the hotel industry, Jim Cunneen, president of the San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce, Regina Ridley, of CMP Media, a multimedia company that focuses on the high tech industry, and capped it off with Ron Gonzales saying ``We've made a huge investment in this business of trade shows and conventions. We've built the convention center. We've built hotels. . . . Now it's time to protect those interests, to expand those interests, and to make sure they are going to be profitable in the future.'' At the end of the article (after the reader was hopefully thoroughly prejudiced) they quoted just two against the measure, George Swenson of the Silicon Valley Taxpayers' Association, and our Mark Hinkle, "a Libertarian Party member who helped draft the opposing statement in the sample ballot," who they quoted as saying: "``If San Francisco has a 14 percent transient occupancy tax and San Jose has a 14 percent TOT, there is no economic advantage vs one another," Hinkle said. ``Where would you rather be? San Francisco or San Jose?"

UMPHRESS APPEARS ON TV AND RADIO SHOW

Umphress appeared for 5 min on a Meet The Candidates program on KTVU which over a week later aired on Sunday, Oct 20, at 3:30pm. And he also appeared on October 17th on Archimedes Garcia's "Naked Radio" show on KKUP 91.5 FM starting at midnight Wednesday night (12 am every Thursday morning).

RAY STRONG GETS OP ED PIECE ON SILICON VALLEY BIZINK BIZ/FINANCIAL WEB SITE

On October 22nd Ray Strong reported: "I am writing an Op Ed piece on this issue (Measure F) for Silicon Valley BizInk. I also plan an LTE to the SJMN. A longer version of the BizInk article will, I hope appear on our VoteNoOnF.org website soon."

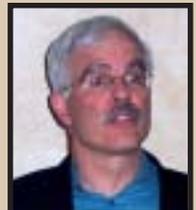
"San Jose's Measure F is a great example of the confidence game City officials keep playing on the voters: promise them lots of unrelated goodies; tell them that it will only hurt some other group and that they will get something for nothing -- all we need is a yes vote and that's free isn't it?"

The piece was published by Silicon Valley BizInk, as follows:

"Measure F authorizes San Jose to increase the transient occupancy tax rate from 10 to 14 percent "for the special purpose of funding the future expansion of the San Jose McEnery Convention Center and security and safety improvements to the center." This tax increase would come at the worst possible time. Like other businesses that depend on Silicon Valley business travelers, San Jose hotels are suffering. A tax increase now likely will cause more layoffs in the hotel industry. It will not create more jobs.

Wake up San Jose. Silicon Valley is no longer booming. The great days of the technology bubble are gone.

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Ray Strong op ed published on SV BizInk web site

MIKE LAURSEN PRODUCES LEGAL FUND RAISING LETTER

Reported by Marv Rudin



Mike Laursen publishes first FR letter

After being appointed Fund Raising Chair in July Mike Laursen has worked like a Trojan learning the ropes on his first project, a fund raising letter asking the members to finance a Legal Action Fund. The project proposed by Ray Strong and Mark Hinkle was passed by the Excom at its October meeting (see page 5), although the cost of the letter would come out of the party's general fund and not be borne by returns from the letter. Hopefully it will do much better, but if the letter were to just break even - donations equaling printing and mailing cost - the general fund would in effect be financing the Legal fund, and the donations would be absorbed by fund raising cost. We'll soon know - Laursen's excellent letter, written with major assistance from Zander Collier, was mailed out Oct. 29. ■

(Continued from Pg. 1)

Vice Chair Cathi Brown attended a Forum in San Jose that included the 15th and 16th U.S. Congressional districts. She reports: "The forum was hosted by the Berryessa Citizens Advisory Council and co-hosted by United Neighborhoods of Santa Clara County (UNSCC) and held at the East Side Union High School District office on N. Capitol Avenue near Berryessa. Candidates for Congressional Districts 15 and 16 were scheduled to speak. Mike Honda was there briefly but Zoe Lofgren didn't bother to appear, sending the message that her constituents are not important to her. To her credit, both Lofgren did respond to the Project Vote Smart questionnaire informing voters of her stances on key issues. Nevertheless, speaking as a constituent who drove 33 miles (roundtrip) to avail myself of the opportunity to question my elected representative directly, I was disappointed. We had a date, and I was stood up!

Attending the District 16 portion of the forum were several people who had been gerrymandered from District 15 into District 16; people who felt disenfranchised and very much wanted to make their concerns known to Representative Lofgren. Ms. Lofgren did send her chief of staff to represent her, but this representative only read a prepared statement from Ms. Lofgren and was not authorized to answer any questions. Candidates McNea and Umphress were present and available for questions from the audience.

Republican candidate McNea has followed the Libertarian Party's lead in championing individuals' property rights and made comments that individuals must defend themselves against their own government usurping their rights. When asked what he would do regarding the Patriot Act, candidate McNea ignored the question and chose to speak on small business. While McNea spoke sympathetically about the problems facing small business, he offered no solutions.

Candidate Umphress clearly stated his position that both the Patriot Act and the Homeland Security Act are items he would defeat and/or abolish should he be elected. Umphress spoke about specific challenges that small businesses face and how the Libertarian agenda will help by getting the government off their back.

Candidate McNea waxed poetic about new nuclear fuels and hybrid automobiles being the solution to the U.S. energy crisis. Umphress differentiated himself from his Republican opponent by pointing out that he actually owns and drives a hybrid automobile, rather than merely talking about hybrids' merits.

In summary, while both candidates McNea and Umphress agree on many key issues, it is Umphress who is the leader, the man who walks the walk rather than merely talking the talk.

CC RESOLUTION LAUDING S.J. CHIEF LANSDOWNE'S DROPPING DRUG TASK FORCE PASSES

MEETINGS

Internal business meetings of the local party

Reported by Marv Rudin

The fourth quarterly LPSCC Central Committee Meeting was billed as our "Oktoberfest" meeting and featured local LP candidate speakers, a resolution, and last but not least free beer. The nearly 30 assembled Libertarians passed a resolution applauding San Jose Police Chief Lansdowne for dropping out of the cooperative Drug Task Force arrangement the DEA federal drug warriors have been pushing on local law enforcement agencies. And speeches were delivered by several LPSCC candidates. Elizabeth Brierly described her candidacy for Bd of Eq District 1, Laura Ferrer a newcomer to Libertarian Party activities, who was accompanied by her husband, Allen Hacker, described her nonpartisan run for El Camino Hospital District, Dennis Umphress spoke about his candidacy for U.S. Congress 16th District, and Thomas MacDivitt spoke about his run for Santa Clara City Council.



Elizabeth Brierly



Dennis Umphress describes his campaign for U.S. Congress

Laura Ferrer introduces herself to attendees

Ferrer's husband Allen Hacker, & unidentified LPer



Laura Ferrer introduces herself to attendees



Ferrer's husband Allen Hacker, & unidentified LPer



Thomas MacDivitt

EXCOM MEETING 5 OCTOBER AT THE ROSEGARDEN LIBRARY IN SAN JOSE

Reported by Marv Rudin

SUMMARY: Another month went by with no discussion of how to turn around membership and registrations decline and grow the party. But a big step in the direction of doing something about growing the party when Randy Overbeck was appointed Membership Chair to fill vacancy left by Steve Prestrelski's resignation.



Oct. Excom meeting in session

Attendance: Chair: Ray Strong; Secretary: Joe Dehn; Activities Chair: Zander Collier
Campaigns Chair: Dennis Umphress; **Fundraising Chair:** Mike Laursen; **Newsletter Chair:** Marv Rudin; **LPC EC Representative:** Mark Hinkle; **Guest:** Randy Overbeck (appointed Membership Chair during meeting)

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR VACANCY: Strong reported that Steve Prestrelski had resigned as Membership Chair. Rudin moved to appoint Randy Overbeck as Membership Chair. The motion passed without objection.

CAMPAIGNS: Umphress reported that two candidates had signed up for a training session, Philip Green had "unofficially withdrawn" from his race, as a U.S. Congressional candidate, he had attended various events and talked with the press, numerous candidate appearances were coming up and needed to be listed on the LPSCC web site, Umphress reported that even fewer people showed up at the most recent medical marijuana protest.

LEGAL CONTINGENCY FUND: Strong proposed that: it only be for "emergencies" that must be acted on in less than one month, the issue should have the potential for publicity, there should be more than one person approving the spending,



Randy Overbeck seated at far right was appointed Membership Chair

(Continued on page 6)

(Meetings - Continued from page 5)

and alternative names might be "Legal Action Fund" or "Legal Emergency Fund". After a discussion of mechanisms for approving such spending, including: having a special small committee vs voting by all EC members, supermajorities, quorum requirements, and how fast decisions would likely need to be made, Collier moved to authorize the creation of a Legal Action Fund consisting of money raised specifically for this purpose, to be used in legal emergencies which require action in less than one month, are related to current LPSCC activities or positions, and have potential publicity benefits, with spending from the fund requiring a majority vote of the EC with a majority of the EC responding and 48 hours allowed for voting. The motion passed on a vote of 6 to 0.

FUNDRAISING FOR LEGAL ACTION FUND: Laursen reported on plans for a mailing to raise money for the Legal Action Fund. Collier moved to authorize \$1000 for a fundraising mailing for the Legal Action Fund. Strong explained that this would come from the general fund, as a way of starting up the new fund. The motion passed on a vote of 5 to 1(Rudin).

LPC 2004 CONVENTION: Hinkle reported that he has been awarded the contract for the LPC 2004 convention to be held in Fremont. He will be looking for local volunteers but this is not formally an LPSCC project.

LOCAL ORGANIZING: Strong said there were new ideas for local initiatives but we should plan our next moves in this area deliberately. Laursen reported that Steve Prestrelski is looking into doing something again in Mountain View.

STORAGE FACILITY: Collier reported on prices for a storage room where we could keep equipment and supplies and recommended renting a space at "Casa de Mini Storage" for \$68/month. Rudin said that, based on his experience when the party had an office for storage, there would be a big problem keeping track of party literature and items using a storage locker, that activists would find it far more convenient to keep items at home that they were using frequently, but for the central repository a member who is home most of the time - someone with a home business such as himself - could both store the common inventory and hand it out to activists while recording who took what; he then offered to store things at his home and also keep track of everything in a database for the same amount as proposed for the commercial space which would have no custodian. There was discussion of the alternative approaches, topics including: central location vs activists keeping what they are using, keeping track of inventory, accessibility, sign out procedures, and the relationship of this level of spending to our budget. Collier moved that he be authorized to spend \$68/month to rent a space at Casa de Mini Storage, plus up to \$50 in related initial expenses. The motion passed on a vote of 4 to 2.

MISCELLANEOUS: Collier said he would be willing to host an organizing meeting for San Jose. Hinkle reported that State Chair Aaron Starr is interviewing people to be the new state Executive Director, and that Scott Wilson is the new state newsletter editor. ■

(Cupertino Oktoberfest - Continued from page 2)

for farmers, tariffs among other government interventions, yet, because he is used to hearing the Press harp on gun enthusiasts as right-wing extremists, he could not imagine himself as a liberal. About a half an hour later, he came back with a friend, urging him to take the survey. The friend scored on the line between Centrist and Liberal, right in the middle of the board.



Zander helps Cupertino Oktoberfest pollee

It was this man who said he is a political science professor at [unfortunately I can't recall what college, if he even said which]. He asked if we would be willing to do an OPH in his classroom, and I said the Libertarian Party would love the opportunity to reach a young adult audience like that. He said he would give extra credit to any student who could correctly identify, in advance, where s/ he would be located on our graph. He

declined to give me any contact information, however, and refused any literature with specific contact information beyond his survey [which had the web site and phone number on it]. Since he hasn't yet called, consider the possibility that his college prof spiel was fabricated. At this point, I would say it isn't newsworthy....unless and until he does call to set up an OPH. ■



Strong at Cupertino tent-OPH-booth

RANDY OVERBECK COMMITS DOUBLY

Reported by Marv Rudin

Randy Overbeck bravely agreed to replace Steve Prestrelski as LPSCC Membership Chair and also made another little commitment - he got married to the former Kim Smith in October. As reported by the article on page 5 he was appointed membership Chair by the LPSCC Excom on Oct. 5.

On Oct. 20 your reporter attended his beautifully conducted wedding at the very appropriately selected place for two Libertarians to have a wedding - Freedom Hall in Santa Clara. Randy's full family - parents, brother, and sister came from Lebanon Ohio, and a throng of friends, coworkers, and many relatives of his and Kim attended and lived it up at the reception.

Your reporter found himself seated at a table with the minister who performed the service, Ms. Nelson, and her two daughters and their companions. When explaining my connection with Randy - the LPSCC - the opportunity arose to do a little planting of the freedom seed.



Kim and Randy Chat with Reverend Nelson

Asked by the Minister what the LP was about, I gave a summary for all at the large round table to hear and smartly whipped out and handed her and the man next to me a LIFE card.

For the marriage Randy said he planned to take a honeymoon, and was wisely noncommittal beyond that. For the Libertarian Party job as Membership Chair, Randy said he wants to work to find ways to get the party growing again.. He said "I'll run to continue as Membership Chair next year. Consistent membership growth is the key to the part's future. We'll be striving to turn the registered voter count positive instead of negative." ■



Kim and Randy and bridesmaids (left) at wedding reception dinner

UMPHRESS PLANS TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR CANDIDATES TO GET PETITIONS SIGNED

Reported by Marv Rudin

Our Campaign Chair Dennis Umphress not only has been extra busy running for U.S. Congress, but he also has been planning to make running for office easier for our Libertarians in future years. He will be working next year to get a single sided signature form reapproved for use. He said "I have a form that has been approved by the Secretary of State's office and the Santa Clara County Register of Voters. It looks like each jurisdiction will need to approve a form for use by their office. I just tried to get a form approved in San Francisco, but they weren't interested. I would have pushed harder, but it was just for one candidate for this November election. My idea is that the form can be emailed to potential signers and downloaded from the web. Instead of mailing the forms, a post card with the details and website address might be mailed. With a single sided form it should be easier to explain what information is need on each line. My goal is to collect enough signatures so that no local candidate needs to pay a filing fee.

I am also working on a "So you want to be a Libertarian Candidate!" brochure for first time candidates." ■

Announcing:

Libertarian Party of Santa Clara County

2003 Annual Convention

Date: Thursday January 9, 2003

6:00pm No-host Cocktails

6:30pm Dinner

7:30pm Convention Business Meeting (includes elections for officers and state convention delegates)

9:15pm Meeting Adjourns

**Location: Hong Fu Restaurant
20588 Stevens Creek Blvd
Cupertino, CA**

**This is in the western portion of the shopping center on the SW corner of Stevens Creek Blvd.
and De Anza Blvd.**

This is the same location as the 2002 Convention. Guests and non-members are welcome.

| | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Dinner Cost: | 6:30pm seating | 7:30pm seating |
| until January 6, 2003 | \$21 per person | \$26 per person |
| after January 6, 2003 | \$26 per person | \$31 per person |

No refunds after January 6, 2003, because the restaurant needs to know how much food to buy. You do not have to buy dinner to attend the convention, but since the restaurant has given us the room with the expectation of serving us dinner, please plan on having dinner with us.

Because of the inconvenience it causes to the orderly flow of the Convention, and the inconvenience it causes to the restaurant wait staff, we are charging more for the 7:30pm seating. If you want to avoid the higher price for the later seating, plan on arriving in time for the 6:30pm seating.

You can pay on line by going to <http://www.sc.ca.lp.org/conv/>

Or, you can make out a check to "Libertarian Party of Santa Clara County", and mail it to

**Libertarian Party
c/o Scott Lieberman
3200 Payne Ave, Apt 714
San Jose, CA 95117**

Menu: (subject to minor changes)

Hot and Sour Soup

Egg Roll and Spareribs

Family style: Vegetable Deluxe, Lemon Chicken, Mongolian Beef, Beef with Oyster Sauce, Sweet and Sour Prawns, Prawns with Snow Peas, Fried Rice, Steamed Rice, Fortune Cookie.

(Continued from page 3)

Surviving corporations are looking desperately for ways to cut costs. They already have made significant cuts in their travel budgets to reduce expenses.

The San Jose Mercury News' estimate of \$370 million in Measure F revenue assumes that business travel continues at the same rate as during the boom. A few years ago, at the height of the high-tech boom, it was impossible to find hotel rooms in San Jose. Visitors had to stay as far away as Morgan Hill and Santa Cruz. If San Jose hotels pass the tax on to their customers, the resulting rate increases will again drive visitors outside San Jose. Convention and visitor revenue will go to cities whose hotels charge more competitive prices. This extra tax burden will hurt all San Jose businesses that depend on business travel or business travelers.

The city argues that expanding the convention center will increase business revenue by attracting more visitors. Where is the evidence for this prediction? Where are all the bright new businesses with their new jobs that were to

Santa Clara Libertarian – Schedule of Publication to Year End

| <u>COVERAGE PERIOD</u> | <u>FINAL EDIT</u> | <u>PUBLICATION</u> |
|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| November Issue: | December 13th | printed & bulk mailed December 20th |
| December Issue | January 10th | on web site January 13th |

result from downtown redevelopment? How many store fronts are dark?

The ballot argument in favor of Measure F has the temerity to suggest Measure F will "create over 4,000 new good-paying local jobs, adding \$4 billion in salary and wages for local residents." (City officials must be well-paid to think that the average salary for these new jobs will be \$1 million.) Who will pay that additional \$4 billion? The corporations that have gone out of business? The laid-off business travelers? The surviving businesses with their uncompromising concentration on cost savings? A booming economy hides the results of poor city policies. A declining

economy will magnify the negative effects on all of us.

City officials sell the tax increase by saying "Measure F is free." They say it is only a tax on visitors. If the victims had no choice, it would simply be immoral and shameful. But these victims do have a choice and they will exercise it by going

COMING EVENTS...

Central Committee Meetings: January 9 at Hong Fu restaurant, Cupertino (see Pg. 6)

LTE Sunday - 3rd Sunday of month, 3:00pm - 5 pm;
Stoddards Brewery and Eatery, 200 E. Campbell Ave. at 2nd, Campbell

Executive Committee Meetings Normally 1st Saturday of month, 10:00am
Usually on 1st: *Saturday of month* at Rosegarden Library, Naglee & Dana Aves, San Jose

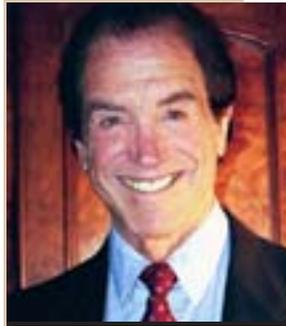
Speakers Meetings 2nd Thursday in months without central committee meeting
Cocos Restaurant, Sunnyvale (Oakmead Pkwy & Lawrence Expway)
Next speakers meeting: *Thursday 12 Dec.* Come at 7pm for dinner, meeting at 8pm

elsewhere. Beware of a city government that promises voters something for nothing!

Measure F is essentially a confidence game, claiming to take money from visitors and give it to others. Of course the voters will be the victims in the long run. This kind of dislocation of the free market prolonged the Great Depression and destroyed hope of recovery in the 1930s. Already, thousands of San Jose workers have been dismissed from their jobs, and the city's economy is on the brink of depression. This is the time to decrease taxes, not increase them.

Will San Jose voters realize in time that they are the ultimate victims? If they do and if they resoundingly defeat Measure F, we have a chance to turn our local economy around and make it an island of prosperity in what California government promises to make a sea of misery. Vote "no" on Measure F and save San Jose from not-yet-inevitable doom.

Ray Strong is chairman of the Libertarian Party of Santa Clara County. You can reach him at hrstrong@hotmail.com. To send a letter to the editor, e-mail vbowesmok@svbizink.com." ■



Marvin B. Rudin, Editor

SHOULD LIBERTARIANS SUPPORT WAR ON TERROR?

Libertarians believe in a noninterventionist foreign policy. But in a world with a proven anti American aggressor-tyrant and with anti American religious terrorists sharing the same religion as the tyrant who are believed likely to be supplied with mass destructive weapons by him, when is the threat so great that preemption should be considered? A recent dialogue between two of our deep thinking Libertarians - Zander Collier and Mike Laursen - triggered by a request to pay for Harry Browne to speak in the Bay Area against the "War on Terror", provided some thoughtful opinions. If you also want to opine on the very important issues they discuss below, please don't hesitate to write me.

OPINIONS

Share your thoughts on making our party more successful and advancing the individual freedom with responsibility movement

Your Editor

Stimulated by Chair Ray Strong's answer to a request by UC Berkeley Libertarian Club Anthony Gregory for funds to bring Harry Browne out to speak at an anti-war event at his college, Zander wrote: "I am of the opinion that it is penny-smart and pound-foolish to not help out. Let me elaborate, please... I agree that \$1000 out of our coffers is too much. However, I don't believe \$250 is too much. What if we could convince LP San Mateo, LP San Francisco, and LP Alameda County to pitch in similar amounts and facilitate a regional effort? Right now we have an opportunity for the NorCal Libertarians to reach out to college students of Libertarian leanings. We're hurting for young activists. We're not very good (yet) in appealing to youth - certainly not like the Greens or the Dems. Supposing we could turn this into a multi-campus outreach with UC Berkeley taking the lead? We could post fliers all over Bay Area College campuses promoting the fact that students from the other campuses will be taking part in this anti-war protest. If we could convince the LP's of the other counties to post fliers at their campuses I think this could be a very good means of outreach to college students - especially if we (and the other counties) help facilitate carpooling."



Mike Laursen

Mike responded with: "To me, spending LPSCC funds to sponsor Harry Browne's talk would depend on how the event is promoted. If we are sponsoring him as an insightful speaker, it might be a good way to spend some money. However, I don't think we should take an anti-war position. My impression is that there isn't a consensus among Libertarians on the issue. Personally, I'm still trying to figure out where I stand. I don't think that pre-emptively "taking out" someone or something that threatens one's life is a violation of the libertarian non-initiation of force concept, but I have lots of concerns about Iraq: Is Iraq a threat to the U.S. or are they really just threatening Israel? What happens after we win the war? How many Iraqi civilians will get hurt? Is the U.S. spreading its defensive capabilities too thin? It's not a simple issue - there is very real danger out there. Oh, well. Our job is to concentrate on Santa Clara County issues, anyway. We have an evil menace in our own backyard: Susan Shick of the San Jose Redevelopment Agency."

Zander responded with: "Agreed, but are you implying that we cannot fight both, or that fighting one weakens our ability to fight the other? I think if we could get some college age activists, that this would help us immensely. I think we improve our image by leaps and bounds if we can get more youth involved. I'd like the party to develop some political 'sex appeal'. Like any organization, we need to sell ourselves. While I don't want us to have the image of the Mile-High club, I'd prefer for us not to be thought of in the same league as the Elks or the Kiwanis... The Greens are a far younger group - both in demographics, and in the fact that they haven't been around 30 years. They get a lot more press, in my opinion, because they have a lot more 'sex appeal'."



Zander Collier

In response Mike wrote: "I do think that we should concentrate on local issues unless we are working in cooperation with a group of people roughly on the same scale as the issue being addressed (e.g. LPC for California issues, LP for national issues). That's just for practical reasons. We only have limited money, time, energy, influence, etc. I don't think the LP has to take a stance on every issue. If there's some issue where there isn't consensus, we should say so. If a significant number of Libertarians are not anti-war, all the anti-war Libertarians can still get together and protest. But they should respect their colleagues who haven't reached the same conclusions. An example of what I'm talking about. I used to support both the Americans for Separation of Church and State, and the Institute for Justice. The two groups ended up in the Supreme Court, arguing against each other over school vouchers. At first I thought I was trying to figure out which side was "the bad guy", but then it occurred to me that it was a wonderful situation: the argument was between advocates for religious freedom and advocates for educational freedom. Not the typical situation in Washington. (I since stopped supporting the Americans for Separation of Church and State because they started taking a pro-government school stance.) It's the same deal. Libertarians who aren't anti-war aren't bad guys. They might still be thinking it over. Or somewhat ignoring the issue because they are busy trying to avoid getting laid off from their job (like me). Or worried that Saddam might really be working on suitcase nukes. Since they're Libertarians, they most likely do care about doing the right thing. I think our message to the public should be: all Libertarians are concerned about freedom. But we don't always agree about everything. If you join our party because you want to band together with other people who care about freedom, nobody is going to give you an ideological purity test or criticize you if you haven't read a bunch of libertarian books. We'll even let you join our party if you're not interested in or opinionated about politics. We've turned a lot of people off with all our infighting. I'd like to see the party be more of a practical political enterprise, not a debating club or cult. I'm pretty sure you feel the same about that one."

Zander responded: "I think we improve our image by leaps and bounds if we can get more youth involved. I'd like the party to develop some political "sex appeal". Like any organization, we need to sell ourselves. Sigh. If only we could be as exciting as the Elks. On the plus side, my impression of some of the other county orgs is that they aren't as nerdy as the LPSCC. I include myself. We are in Silicon Valley, after all."

I don't think we can just do it by selling ourselves. Youth, and non-youth, will respond if we are out there saying intelligent things, knowing what we are talking about, showing some evidence that we check our theories against reality, proposing voluntary alternatives to centralized government programs (and helping build them), fighting for the underdog, etc. If we don't have any real values like that to offer, they'll blow us off as irrelevant.

One thing I'd love to see is every Libertarian activist involved in at least one community, volunteer activity outside the party. Outside politics. Networking with people and building up alternatives to government programs. I know from specific conversations with Libertarians that there are at least some who don't want anything to do with community involvement in the liberal sense: working at the homeless shelter, etc. But what about joining the Chamber of Commerce or professional organization or, heck, the Elks.

Editor's Note:

Had a Libertarian outreach experience? Converted someone?

Write about it to the editor! email or phone - see at right

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This is the publication of the Libertarian Party of Santa Clara County, a non-profit political organization.

THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY



of Santa Clara County

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I hereby certify that I do not believe in or advocate the initiation of force as a means of achieving political or social goals.

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