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8 September 1984

Dear Southern Libertarian Messenger:

Your March and April issues arrived today, stamped "EXCHANGE?" Whatever mailing list you obtained our names from, I can't help but imagine there's been some mistake. As anyone familiar with our magazines could probably tell you, we haven't the slightest intention of trading with anyone who is willing to accept advertising from organizations such as the Duck Book.

Such publications have a perfect right to exist. And we have a perfect right to regard them as morally repulsive. I would probably go farther, and say that your acceptance of their ads is a signal indication of the problems of modern American "libertarianism": its willingness, in eagerness to avoid the authoritarianism of the Left, to embrace identification with the authoritarianism of the Right. You may say that there is no difference. I disagree: the Left's mistakes are made through misplaced love, whereas the Right's proceed from resentment and, ultimately, hatred.

Please delete us from your mailing list.

### Davis blasts import quotas

Libertarian Party candidates usually don't sing to the same political tune as other politicians, and the case is no different on textile imports.

U.S. Senate candidate Stephen A. Davis said the quotas are unnecessary and that some textile leaders in South Carolina are hypocritical in calling for them. He said some of these same industrialists are leading spokesmen for free enterprise and less government regulation.

"You can't say you believe in free enterprise for everyone else but want government protection for yourself," Davis said in a statement.

Davis also said the U.S. government could help the import problem by requiring Japan and other countries to assume more defense responsibilities.

# the Southern Libertarian Messenger

October, 1984

Rt. 10 Box 52A, Florence, S. C. 29501

Vol. XIII, No. 6

## The Libertarians' U.S. Senate Hopeful Quietly Making Rounds



CHARLESTON (AP) — Although it's not Labor Day yet, South Carolina's U.S. Senate race has had a bit of everything — a political legend seeking re-election, primary recounts and protests, a flagging Democratic write-in campaign and, for a while, speculation that the Rev. Jesse Jackson would jump into the race.

It's against that backdrop that Libertarian candidate Stephen Davis has been quietly roaming the state in his motor home spreading the word about the way his party thinks things should be.

The party philosophy is one of individual independence and reducing the role of government in everyday life — themes Davis says both Presidents Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter campaigned on during the past two presidential elections.

Davis, a 38-year-old computer management consultant from the Spartanburg County town of Gramling, says such a

philosophy should appeal to most South Carolinians.

"South Carolina has a history of being independent, freedom-loving and obstinate — and that's an affectionate term to me — obstinate to the federal government," said the candidate during an interview here Wednesday.

Davis says he's been pleased with public response to his campaign to unseat Republican incumbent Strom Thurmond. Davis started his tour of the state last week and plans to stay on the road through election day.

He says while voters have a deep respect for Thurmond "yet at the same time, I get this sentiment: 'I wish he wasn't running again because of his age.' People are really concerned Strom will make a fool out of himself. They respect the man so much they do not want him to ruin his very fine reputation."

But Davis has no delusions he might be

able to upset Thurmond.

"I don't frankly think in two months I can reach enough people and tell them about the Libertarian Party and get the votes. If I had the time and money to reach every voter in the state I would have a good shot," he said, adding he would spend only about \$30,000. But Davis says anything accomplished this year will stand the party in good stead in 1986.

"If I do the proper job of campaigning this year, I honestly feel I can win the governor's race in 1986. I think we can elect some Libertarians in 1986 on the statewide level," he said.

The recent primary has left the Democrats in disarray with Melvin Purvis of Florence squeaking out a narrow primary win and opponent Cecil Williams of Orangeburg planning to stage a write-in campaign.

But Davis says the infighting won't help him because the candidates won't be "concentrating on the real issues of the day which are common sense solutions to problems."

He said one of the biggest problems in the state, unemployment in the textile industry, could be addressed by his party's call to bring home all American troops abroad.

"For 40 years we have subsidized the national defense of Germany and Japan. But now they're big boys. They can take care of themselves," he said.

"We're subsidizing Japan and Germany's defense and Japan and Germany are subsidizing their textile manufacturers. If they took on their burden of defense they wouldn't be able to subsidize textiles," he said.

**Taxpayers' Pursuit:** If you want to know how the government is squeezing the cash out of your wallet, take a moment to play Taxpayers' Pursuit. How many of the following questions can you answer? (The answers appear at the end.)

1. How much has the median family's income increased in 35 years?

2. How much have the median family's income taxes shot up during the same period?

3. To erase the deficit and balance the federal budget, how much more would taxes have to be increased?

4. What is the real cause of the bloated national debt—too little taxation or too much federal spending?

Answers: 1. 7.6 times. 2. 246.4 times. 3. About double. 4. Too much spending. (Join our protest against government misspending.)

Yours, &c.,

*Patrick Nielsen Hayden*  
Patrick Nielsen Hayden  
co-editor, IZZARD

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## ACCOUNTANTS AS CRIMINALS

by Robert Brakeman

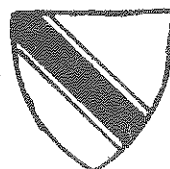
All of America thinks of lawyers as criminals, and doctors too are usually thought to be heavily represented in the ought-to-be-in-Leavenworth category; while both groups are often thought to be composed of merry bands of thieves, doctors fare a little better in the public's estimation because even the super-cynics concede that most of them do something truly useful in return for their high fees — and there's no such concession in the case of attorneys. Although it's powerfully tempting, there'll be no comment here on the accuracy of those perceptions (I've done that elsewhere); the subject here is another profession, one which doesn't have an atrocious reputation — but which ought to, in at least one respect....

In modern America, by which I mean post-WW2 America, the country's accountants, virtually every one of them, whether CPA or plain-ol'-accountant, have spent every day of their lives committing fraud. I don't wish to be misunderstood; they haven't been making honest mistakes, saying things they thought to be true even though they were not — they've been making dishonest mistakes, attesting to things they knew to be untrue, for personal financial gain. Fraud.

To understand just what they've been doing, it's necessary to understand inflation. If there's no room to comment here on the wonderfully interesting subject of the extent to which lawyers/doctors deserve their unsavory reputations — a subject which could be handled fairly briefly — there's obviously no room to outline in any detail the nature of the inflationary process — a subject which is a book-length one, and a multi-volume book-length one at that; those readers interested in gloomy tours through inflationland can find them in the elsewhere articles of the present author, in such introductory book-length treatments as Henry Hazlitt's What You Should Know About Inflation, and in such advanced work as Ludwig von Mises' The Theory of Money and Credit. In all of those writings, the "high points" (which is to say, the low points) of inflation's nature are these:

Inflation is a purposeful process, not an accidental one; those creating it are politicians — not business leaders and not union leaders and not farmers and not middlemen — for only they have the power to produce the creation of new paper money which constitutes the inflationary process; those people (pols) want the inflationary process to be created because it is a method of seizing resources from the public — and one which is ever so much more pleasant than taxation, because it's so much less visible; the inflationary process robs everyone holding fixed-dollar assets in the economy (the primary ones being cash, demand deposit accounts, time deposit accounts, bonds of all kinds, pensions, annuities, and the cash value of life insurance policies — anything payable in a certain number of paper dollars without reference to the purchasing power of those dollars) and distributes those stolen dollars to the beneficiaries of federal spending

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# the Southern Libertarian Messenger

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John T. Harlee  
Robert Brakeman

Editor  
Associate Editor

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(which invariably means the voting blocs which keep the regime in power); that process, once begun, leads to massively distorting effects on the economy, effects which, on the one hand, grievously misdirect production, and, on the other, make economic calculation impossible, for both business decision-makers and consumers; and, once begun, the inflationary process can have only one of two possible results — neither of them attractive: If the government backs off (that is, re-acquires some sanity and stops inflating the currency fairly early in the process), the economy will readjust, come back to an even keel, through a painful recession — and if the hacks persist, and continue the inflation as a means of avoiding the inevitable correction (recession), hyperinflation, followed by the total destruction of the currency and then a massive correction (depression) will be the result.

Out of that gloomily accurate catalogue of horrors, we need only to extract one item for our purposes here: Inflation's effects on economic calculation and the direction of production — for it is in those areas that accountants have made themselves parties to fraud with amazing regularity. Consider first:

Depreciation. When a corporation issues a quarterly or an annual report, or when it issues the mandatory SEC documents in connection with a new debt or equity (bond or stock) issue, a key line-item is depreciation. It is "key" because of the Internal Revenue Code. That collection of laws, insane in its general nature and in most of its specific provisions, does, accidentally, occasionally toss up a rational provision — and the allowance for depreciation is one of them. That allowance simply takes cognizance, in the tax law, of two interrelated facts: First, equipment and buildings wear out; and second, the amount by which they wear out each year is just as much a cost of doing business that year as the amount paid in wages to employees. So, the tax code allows that amount to be deducted from gross profits before arriving at net profits — the amount on which a tax is due.

Consider the case of a (small) corporation whose pre-depreciation profit is \$100,000, and whose only piece of depreciable property is a single lathe which when new cost \$50,000. If the estimated life of that particular lathe is 10 years (the government has strong opinions on the life of approximately everything, and will be happy to tell you what the life of your equipment is), the corporation will be allowed to assume that the depreciation in the lathe's value

## ACCOUNTANTS AS CRIMINALS, continued

for the year in question is \$5000. Since that amount, a cost of doing business, must be deducted from income before figuring the amount on which a tax is due (final profit), the company will only pay taxes on \$95,000. The theory behind all of this (amazingly rational) stuff is that the company will thus be able to set aside \$5000 each year for ten years — just enough to allow it to replace whatever is wearing out whenever it wears out.

All of that "stuff" (one should go out of one's way to speak disrespectfully of everything in the I. R. Code) works out wonderfully well in noninflationary times, and in noninflationary times accountants are honest people — or at least they're no more dishonest than any other large group of people, they're not criminals as a class. When, however, the Federal Reserve Board's money-printing machinery gears up to the point at which 5/10/15/20% inflation sloshes across the country, accountants do become criminals as a class, and their criminality derives from their universal willingness to certify obvious lies as entirely accurate. All of those annual reports and quarterly reports and new-issue reports mentioned above are worthless — will not be accepted by either the SEC or the investing public — without the certification of a recognized accounting firm. That certification is simply the statement of the accountants that they have examined the data found in the document in question and found the whole thing to be in order. And that is just the point: In inflationary times not a corporate document is prepared which isn't radically out of order on the score of depreciation.

Using the same example again, we have a corporation with profits, before depreciation is considered, of \$100,000 — and we still have \$5000 worth of depreciation each year; but now let's add yearly inflation of 20% (a figure being approached in America as this is written, and one which has long since been passed by such European degenerocracies as Britain and Italy.) On the basis of the printed figures, the firm is being allowed to exclude from taxable income enough each year to allow it to replace the lathe when it wears out; but the figures lie, and the accountants know it as they certify them as correct. The reality is this: At 20% inflation per year, at the end of ten years the cost of the lathe will have increased by 200% — it will have tripled in cost. The firm has not been allowed to write off/set aside enough to replace that lathe, it's only been allowed to sock away enough to pay for one-third of a new one; the company will no doubt be able to do many wonderful things with one-third of a lathe (I'm phrasing that facetiously, but the firm's situation will be just as bad if it begins with three whole lathes and is only able to replace one). When the time comes to replace that lathe, it will have to dip into capital to do it, or borrow to do it. For the moment, what matters is that accountants are attesting to the truth of something which is self-evidently false — they are saying the firm is allowing enough for depreciation when it's clear nothing of the kind is happening.

With the extraordinary importance of depreciation in modern accounting, and tax law, and corporate planning, this bit of consistent lying on the part of the accounting profession would be enough to — putting it very gently — give them a very bad name; but there's more, more of the same. Once again, it's inflation which makes liars out of them....

Let's return once again to that wonderful little exemplary firm which was so helpful to us above. Assume now that the boys and girls who run the place are in the aluminum storm-door business (no, I don't know why I picked that business; must've just struck me as a glamorous business). Assume also that during the course of a year their average inventory of storm-doors is \$100,000 worth. When that inventory is evaluated on January 1, it goes down on the books just as it ought to, as \$100,000 worth; the accountants in attesting to that amount have managed to stay honest through an entire day of the new year; and, if the times are non-inflationary, they'll still be honest folk on December 31, when they once again assign a value to those piled-up (or however you store them) storm-doors. But (and you just know this "but" is leading to more CPA criminality) if there is 20% inflation, what will happen is this: On January 1 the storm-doors will be assigned a value of \$100,000 — and on December 31 those same SDs, those same storm-doors which changed in any way, will be given a value, by our heroic accountants, of \$120,000. That wondrously-appearing \$20,000 difference represents profits in the eyes of the IRS, and the firm will pay full taxes on it, just as they would on any other kind of profits. Just as they would on "real" profits I might have said, for it's perfectly obvious that these so-called profits are purely illusory, that they don't exist, that they're the product of a book-keeping/inflationary illusion accountants decline to correct — and that, of course, they shouldn't be taxed (even the Internal Revenue Code ought not to be irrational enough to tax that which doesn't exist....)

I know that every one of my readers is kind-and-gentle-spirited, so you of course are now saying that at least there's this much to be said on the side of accountants' truthfulness: Their attesting to lies on the profits-front at least is limited in its scope, because it doesn't apply in the cases of firms which have no inventories — including those firms which produce services rather than goods, and which now dominate the American and other advanced economies. Do not leap to agree that you are thinking that — for it's an inaccurate thing to think. The grossest lying of the profession occurs in connection with audits of firms having inventories of physical goods, but it also occurs in a slightly less virulent form in the auditing and certification of other firms as well. Here's how:

Let's leave the storm-door business, glamorous as it is, and enter the equally intriguing field of: Maid service. If we have a company which is in the business of providing maids to private homeowners, its profits obviously aren't going to be overstated due to the accountants' swearing on a stack of whatever book they hold dear that illusory inventory profits really exist. But they'll be grossly overstated in another way — again assuming inflationary times — the kind of times experienced by every single country on every single continent in every single decade of the modern world. To gain perspective, think first of what happens in noninflationary eras — of what did happen in, say, the America of 1903. If the maid service has an invested capital (a shareholders' equity) of \$100,000, and if profits for a given year are such that each shareholder earns 10% on his money — well, he or she has earned 10% on that money; there is no "catch", no qualifying factor which destroys an illusion. The catch arrives only when inflation enters the picture. Let's assume 20% inflation per annum. Let us now also assume that Arthur Andersen or Coopers & Lybrand or Haskins & Sells or Ernst &

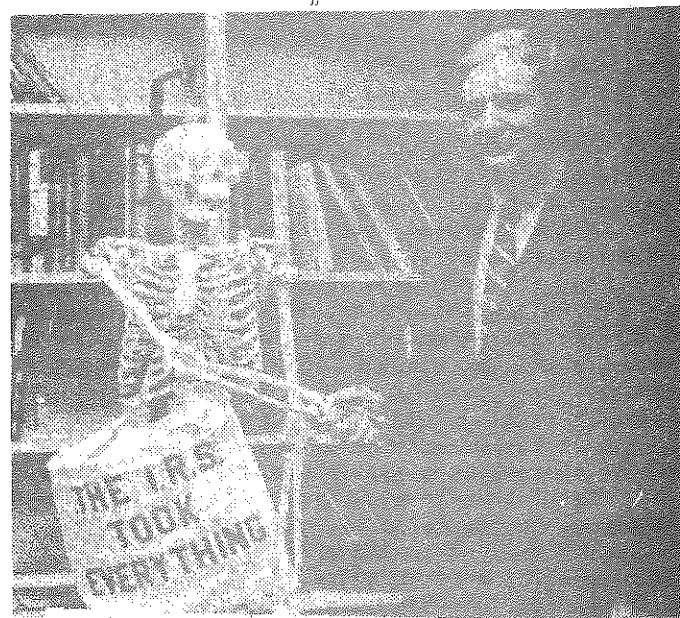
## ACCOUNTANTS AS CRIMINALS, continued

Whinney or Seidman & Seidman or one of the other big firms certifies that our maid-service company earned 20% on equity that year (that is, 20% of the amount of capital invested in the business; that amount will almost always work out to a different percentage of sales, but let's keep this simple....) They are telling shareholders, in the annual report or whatever, that each of them has increased his investment by one-fifth -- and of course they are lying. With 20% inflation per year their invested capital is losing one-fifth of its purchasing power every twelve months, and so all the 20% "profit" of the firm does is keep them even, keep them from losing any of their capital -- but they haven't made a dime, in terms of real dollars, as opposed to nominal ones. That real/nominal distinction of course is the key to this whole sad analysis, for America's accounting profession could cleanse itself of its various high felonies by the simple expedient of adopting real-dollar accounting -- by reporting everything that they report adjusted for inflation. As long as they continue not doing that, accountants are surely the leading misleaders of the American public (excepting politicians, of course): They tell shareholders in corporations that their officers are deducting enough in depreciation allowances to replace equipment when it wears out, when in fact it will be necessary to dip into capital to replace it; they create inventory profits which don't exist -- and create along with them the "opportunity" for the stockholders to pay taxes on them; and they violently overstate profits in all firms (even those without appreciable inventories) and (A) make investors think they're getting ahead when they're not, and (B) allow them to pay taxes on "profits" they're not really making. Intelligent economic decision-making, for individuals, for firms, and for the American economy as an aggregate, requires accurate knowledge of what's happening at any given moment; by violently distorting our vision of where we are at any point in time, the accounting profession causes investors to make malinvestments, causes them to invest unwisely, causes them to do things they wouldn't do if they understood the reality the accountants are hiding from them. Since malinvestments are corrected, sooner or later, by recessions/depressions (those phenomena are nothing but corrections of previous errors of judgment), it can readily be seen that, as things now stand, accountants are not our friends....

It remains only to be asked why they do what they do. A minor reason is surely incompetence. Accountants and economists are not the same people, and it is a rare CPA who's had any serious economic training -- and the ones who have had any have generally learned not economics, the body of knowledge which would allow them to understand the inflationary process, but rather the socialism-which-passes-for-economics in most universities. Still, at the policy-making levels of the big accounting firms, the highest levels, there is enough competence in general and economic competence in particular to assure us that -- these people know what they're doing, know that the financial documents which they certify as accurate are ridiculously misleading. Another minor reason is inertia. The current rules of the accounting profession, the rules promulgated by such bodies as the Financial Accounting Standards Board and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, largely date from the days when we had a stable economy, a non-inflationary economy. It is inevitable that those rules would hang on for a long time into the new (inflationary)

era -- long after they've not only outlived their usefulness, but also become downright dangerous. But, the fact remains that those rules could be changed any time those controlling the profession wished to do so, and since at least the key (most intelligent) people in the business realize that they should have been, an explanation is still needed of why they haven't been.

The most likely candidate is this one: For the accountants to do what ought to be done would be to radically antagonize the government -- and the accounting profession is just as much government-controlled, through licensing, as the professions of law and medicine. The fact that one does not become a CPA unless approved by a government-approved licensing board is not disputable, so let's focus on the other point: Admitting that the accounting profession is no more likely to want to offend the government than the legal profession, why would sane inflation-accounting do that? For two reasons, the first a symbolic/intellectual/propaganda one, the second a very practical dollars-and-cents one: #1 Honest inflation-accounting would be the equivalent of the accountants placing a large red flag on every document saying, "This is what the government is doing to your money, and your savings, and your bonds, and your pension..." #2 Honest accounting would also make it clear that all kinds of "profits" thought to exist really don't -- and would create powerful pressures to end the taxation of those non-existent profits, and thereby rob the politicians of what they most admire -- our money. Though the intensity of inflation makes it likely the profession will move a little in the direction of honest inflation accounting, their terror of the government makes it certain they'll not do anything like what they should do. They will continue to lie to us -- but we can live with that; all we need do is perform our own inflation-correction on each document a CPA certifies as "true".



Libertarian congressional candidate Hugh Thompson said he never knew how thorough the Internal Revenue Service was. But the other day he found a hospital lab skeleton with a towel inscribed, "The IRS took everything." "The former taxpayer here is just a sample of what will become of all of us if taxes keep increasing," said Thompson, a physician who lives in Darlington.

"Social security taxes increase automatically next year," he said. "It is disastrous, as (President Herbert) Hoover found in 1939, to increase taxes in a recession." Thompson joked that Libertarians do not usually get much support from deceased voters even though there are "reports that Democrats and Republicans often get votes from deceased voters."

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# 6th District Libertarian Candidate

By LEVERNE M. PROSSER  
Post-Courier Reporter

FLORENCE — Dr. Hugh Thompson will admit his chances of his being elected to Congress "are not all that great."

Thompson is the Libertarian Party's candidate for the 6th District Congressional seat now held by Democrat Robin Tallon and being sought by Republican Lois Eargle.

"Republicans and Democrats are both big spendthrifts. They spend money in different ways, talk different games. When it comes right down to it, both have been stealing from the taxpayers at absolutely phenomenal rates," Thompson said.

He suggests that the IRS is "an electronic, economic gestapo. It's a force that's above the law. It has no respect for individual freedoms, liberty or privacy." He favors ending the federal income tax, which he says furnishes money for politicians to waste.

"Take constituent service, for instance. That's nothing but a way to use tax money to keep incumbents in office. The congressman has people on his tax-paid payroll who are constantly campaigning for his re-election," Thompson said.

"Constituent service is just another bureaucratic boondoggle. Bureaucracy such as social security offices are already available to supply help to people needing it," Thompson said.

A Darlington anesthesiologist who practices in Florence area hospitals, Thompson has been campaigning on promises that he'll do everything possible to do away with bureaucrats and cut down on government if he goes to Washington.

"The welfare system is a disgrace. Only a few cents of the welfare dollar gets to the really needy. Most of it is welfare for bureaucrats," he said.

"Of course I would be only one member of Congress but I would do what I could to reduce taxes. We must have a taxing limitation. I would cut everything. There must be a concrete limitation on the national debt."

He said he has run into very few card-carrying Libertarians in his quiet campaign trips to the 10 counties of the 6th District.

"I am getting a pretty good reception especially when I get the opportunity to talk with voters. Libertarians, for the most part, prefer not to get involved in politics. They prefer to go about their business without too much involvement with the government," Thompson said.

Thompson has gotten some attention with appeals to sheriffs that they collect revenue for their counties by enforcing fines up to \$100 each for placing campaign signs on utility poles.

On the other hand, he has called for an end to police enforcement of laws in most "victimless crimes." He thinks police raiding poker games among the elderly and arresting prostitutes are a waste of time that could be better spent chasing real criminals.

Thompson sees the U.S. Department of Agriculture as "an enormous, inefficient, bloated bureaucracy as are most arms of the government involved in things they have no business being involved in."

Farmers, he suggested, "would be better off if there was no USDA. They need a free market unfettered by government interference."

Thompson said that while he is for non-aggression, he is against unilateral disarmament.

"I favor an ironclad, case-hardened, invincible defense for this country. I would prefer that our allies in Europe and Japan do more to defend themselves, though," Thompson said. He served in the Marine Corps in 1958-62.

Thompson, 44, received his undergraduate degree from the University of South Carolina in 1967 and graduated from the Medical University of South Carolina in 1973. He did his surgical internship at the Charleston institution and his residency in anesthesiology at Duke University.

He and his wife Sarah expect their first child in November.

## the Southern Libertarian Messenger



*A newspaper is not for just reporting the news as it is, but to make people mad enough to do something about it.*  
— Mark Twain

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### William Griffin

William Griffin of South Congaree has announced his nomination as the Libertarian Party candidate in House District 88 in Lexington County.

Rep. Lenoir Sturkie is the Republican candidate, and Harold Jordan is running as a Democrat.

The district includes parts of Cayce and the Springdale, South Congaree and Swansboro areas.

Griffin said he is running because he

was "amazed and outraged over the passage of Governor Riley's 25 percent tax increase. Everything that I had heard and read before passage was that the increase did not stand a chance. I decided to get involved instead of complaining that there was nothing I could do."

He said his primary reason for running is "reducing government control over my life and my children's lives."

### Libertarian News

When I moved to Florence in 1946, it was a small town where everyone knew his neighbor. We also had a small town newspaper consisting mostly of the country club activities, debutante balls, amateur plays and music recitals, price of tobacco, etc. Once in a while some national news was copied from some big city paper.

Since then, Florence's population has increased by the tens of thousands of people, but we still have a smalltown newspaper. The majority of our population is lower and middle-class working people, retirees on fixed incomes and people on welfare. These people are very concerned about what the future holds for them. The only way we can get this information is for our newspaper to publish all the news, not just the canned propaganda put out by the Republican and Democratic parties.

I have read of the formation of the Libertarian Party. This party was formed in 1972 and grew to over a million through 1980. It has grown much more and will continue to grow if it can get fair coverage from the news media. I have read about the Libertarian Party in The State newspaper.

There is always much ado about vote-buying in smaller towns and counties. What do you call these millions of dollars in contributions donated to the big wheelers? It is well known that it is the party with the big bucks that usually wins.

The people want to know the facts about taxes, Social Security and welfare, not just promises. We want less government both national and state. Above all we want people in government from the national level on down who are capable of spending our money wisely. Start out with the Pentagon.

George H. Griffin, Florence

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