

LIBERTY



C O L O R A D O

Published by the Libertarian Party of Colorado

August 2001

The next meeting of the board of directors will be held at 7:30 pm on Tuesday, August 14 at Libertarian Party Headquarters.

Party members are welcome at the meeting. Please call John Berntson for details at 719.532.0118.

www.lpcolorado.org

720.941.2344

www.lp.org

John Ross (Unintended Consequences) comes to Colorado this October! See page 15.

Glass, Vance Seek Governor Nomination

“You can no longer be elected to public office by trampling on the Bill of Rights.”

Bob Glass, who’s considering a run for governor under the Libertarian banner, said that’s the message Libertarians should send to politicians next year. Speaking at the Boulder Public Library on July 8, Glass detailed his views and answered questions from an exclusively Libertarian audience.

On Tuesday, July 10, James Vance presented his proposals to members of the Denver Metro Libertarian Party. Vance has already openly declared his intention to seek the party’s gubernatorial nomination next year—he filed his official declaration of candidacy with the Secretary of State’s office on the third of July.

Bob Glass

Glass said that as a Libertarian governor he would “appeal directly to the people” to pressure old-party



James Vance, left, speaks at the Denver LP meeting July 10. Bob Glass makes his case in Boulder on July 8.

legislators to adopt pro-freedom legislation. He offered his views on a wide range of issues.

Growth: Glass said we should “not use government to foster growth”; tax money shouldn’t be used to lure tourism or businesses to the state. But we can’t keep new people out of Colorado, either.

“Nomination” continued on page 13

Stanley’s Mission: Register Libertarian Voters

“The unregistered and unaffiliated voters outnumber the Republicans and Democrats combined in this state,” Rick Stanley reminded Libertarians, and he wants help in turning those votes into a strong Libertarian voting block able to restore the principles of individual liberty and limited government.



Stanley has personally registered several hundred new Libertarians in the last few months. “We’re not going to win unless we get lots of registered Libertarians,” Stanley told the Denver LP July 10, when he also discussed his Senate campaign.

“People know what the issues are,” Stanley said; “they just don’t think there’s anything they can do about it.” He said the task for Libertarians is to convince

people “there’s somebody to vote for—there’s something that matters.”

Stanley issued a challenge to every Libertarian in Colorado: find one new person to register Libertarian every month. He said increased numbers of Libertarians will “give us credibility with people and the media.”

“Make your vote count,” says Stanley. He strikes up conversations about our country being turned into a police state, and when people start listing their own gripes, he tells them they can make a difference and send a message to our government by filling out a voter registration card and affiliating Libertarian. Stanley carries the cards wherever he goes.

Stanley said the top three issues in his Senate campaign are repealing drug prohibition, reforming the tax system, and restoring the right to keep and bear arms.

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Notes from the Chair: Grand Old Fraud

Something happened to Ronald Reagan on the way to the White House. Here was a man who spoke the language of liberty better than anybody who has come since—who spoke it in a way that Mr. Average Joe could understand it. He didn't have to. Doing so did not ingratiate him to the press or to that great mass of people who believed they already lived in the land of the free. To say some of the things he did, he must have really believed them, from the bottom of his heart.



Yet, when all was said and done, Mr. Reagan's administration did not reign in spending, cut bureaucracy, or convince federal employees to recognize the Bill of Rights in any meaningful way. His initial tax cut was offset by tax increases in later years, and his people wrote far more regulations than they ever cut.

At best, the Reagan Administration slowed the growth of government, even though Mr. Reagan held the veto pen and one house of Congress.

It is this last point that is most telling. The Republican Senate, from 1981 through 1987, did nothing to decrease the influence of government in our daily lives except to help repeal the 55 MPH speed limit. Likewise, the Republican Congress of the Nineties never spent less money in any year than in the previous year, and never dissolved any of the agencies that they said they would. Here in Colorado, our legislature, even with a Republican governor, cannot seem to find a program worth cutting.

The GOP, the self-anointed party of smaller government and individual rights, is nothing more than a fraud.

Not that I am any more fond of the Democrats, mind you, but it is important to point out the fraud that is Republican. We can get one thing from the Republicans that we cannot get from the Democrats: leverage. This is because their politicians pretend to be us. They pretend to believe in freedom.

Undoubtedly, many Republican politicians got into politics because they truly believed in freedom. So why

did they betray the cause? Because they needed to win elections to get things done. So, they compromised and made deals. They told the press what the press wanted to hear. They started courting moderates.

You see, the way politics works in the modern era is that each party has to pursue the middle-of-the-road voter to get elected. They hold bidding wars, trying to buy the middle with new programs paid for by tax money (recent example: Bush vs. Gore and the prescription drug benefit). Neither side worries about the non-moderates, their base supporters. The base on each side has been made to fear that other party, seeing in them the focus of evil in the modern world. They can be depended on to vote the "right way" in each election. The politicians believe this is the only way to conduct business. It may not be right, but it's practical.

They are mistaken. There is another way. Instead of trying to buy the middle with new programs, they can sell the middle on freedom. They can conduct education campaigns, explaining to people exactly why free trade makes their lives better, why guns make for safer societies, how environmental laws cause pollution, and how regulations hurt their jobs and their wallets. With the money the major parties have, they could conduct the kind of campaigns most Libertarians can only dream about.

Of course, neither of the major parties will run this kind of campaign on their own. It is untried, untested, and unsure. Better to stick with what you know. After all, if you don't win, you can't help anybody.

This is why I propose we help the Republicans—they, because they pretend to be us, which gives us leverage with their supporters. I want to knock their legs out from under them. I want to put them in the position of losing seats and majorities unless and until they succeed in selling liberty to moderate voters. Call it "tough love" for recalcitrant politicians. I want to steal away their base support, the true believers in freedom, and thereby make the moderate voters useless to them. Once that is done, the GOP will have no choice but to start selling freedom, that being the only way they can both sway moderates and get their base back. Of

"Notes" continued on page 12

LIBERTY

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Owens Should Support Medical Marijuana

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by Sean A. McKittrick, Ph.D.

Governor Owens opposed the medical marijuana law as passed by a majority of Coloradans. This is no mystery to anyone, especially to those who believe in the Libertarian principles of “hands-off” government. Surprisingly, the Republican Party vows to support less government so that more Americans can have more control over their own lives, yet when it comes to the use of marijuana by those who are ill, or the prescribing of marijuana to patients, it becomes the party of “hands-on” control.

Why support the medical marijuana statute passed by the voters? Coloradans believe that the government has no right to interfere with the relationship between patient and doctor. This is a states’ rights issue. It is interesting to note that many Republicans claim to believe in less federal government and more state government. Yet local Colorado Republicans believe that federal drug laws should be given higher priority over state drug laws. Predictable? Yes. Hypocritical? Even more so.

One need not support the decriminalization or legalization of drugs to support the medical marijuana

initiative. The Colorado initiative in particular allows doctors to prescribe the drug and maximizes the patient’s choice. If both patient and doctor agree that the use of marijuana relieves pain and suffering, then let it be so.

Owens should leave it to the patient and doctor to make a deeply personal decision about the type of medication that should be used to relieve suffering. By supporting the implementation of the medical marijuana law, Coloradans are able to preserve that right for all fair-minded adults and for those who deserve relief from pain and discomfort.

Let Coloradans Opt Out of Big-Brother ID Scheme

The Colorado Department of Revenue plans to record face-print data on all new drivers’ licenses issued and to set up cameras throughout the state “to fight ID theft,” according to the AP (July 5). John Berntson, Chair of the Libertarian Party of Colorado, said, “People need a way to opt out.”

Berntson elaborated: “Combined with the use of high-tech cameras in public places, as they’ve been doing since 1997 in Tampa, Florida, this proposal brings Big Brotherism closer than ever. It will make us all feel like fish living in a glass bowl. And to what end? ID theft is certainly growing, but it can be protected against by taking a few simple precautions. The cost of losing our privacy and submitting every waking moment to government inspection is not worth it.”

“Senator Ken Gordon (D-Denver) was right when he said, ‘Information obtained for one purpose is sometimes used for reasons that were not contemplated by people who set up the system to begin with,’” said Berntson.

Berntson comments “As the potential ID theft victims, I want people to have the right to opt out of the system. Even better, to have the ‘opportunity’ to opt in. I’ll protect my own ID and take my chances, thank you. Given history, the potential for government misuse of this information scares me more than identity theft does.”

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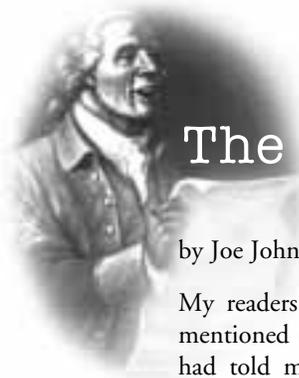
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The Activist's Corner

by Joe Johnson

My readers may remember that several issues ago I mentioned meeting a man at an outreach booth who had told me of his introduction to the Libertarian Party. This man had written a letter to the editor of the *Denver Post* pointing out the need for more liberty. Not long after his letter was published, he received a letter from the Libertarian Party letting him know he is not alone. His views were shared by the only political party that advocates individual liberty and personal responsibility—the Libertarian Party, the party of principle.

This man told me he was impressed that there was a political party which shared his views and which took the time to contact him. At the booth, he gathered Libertarian information and promised to check out the web site.



In my previous article, I wondered who had sent the follow-up letter and wished I could thank him or her personally. I recently found out that it was P. Scott Williams. Here I include Scott's letter to me.

You had wondered in a past issue of The Colorado Liberty who had sent a letter to a man you had met at a gun show — it was me! For almost a year now, I've been scanning the "letters to the editor" sections of the Rocky Mountain News and Denver Post, looking for people with libertarian viewpoints. When I find them, I send them a letter and perhaps a pamphlet on the subject of their letter, if one is available.

This was really David Bryant's idea, and he's been very helpful in this project by looking up these folks' addresses. At first, I just got the names out of the phone book, but I had to call David anyway for folks outside the Denver area, so he suggested that I just get all of the names to him, so he could transfer them to the Colorado Liberty subscription database and send them our newsletter for a while as a follow-up measure.

What's really great is when I get letters back from people. Some say they're intrigued and will give our ideas some serious thought. One man you've already met at the convention said he'd been in the military, stationed overseas, and had lost contact with us. He was formerly a member and wanted to get involved again now that he

was back in civilian life, but he didn't know where to call or write until he got my letter!

Of course, once or twice I've received replies from people who don't agree with us. One lady even sent me the pamphlets back, which was good, since I could then send them to someone else.

However, many people who reply say they support our principles, but they feel voting for a "third" party is a "wasted vote." These are the people who will get on board when we get enough other people. It's like the couples who don't want to go out onto the dance floor unless there are already enough people out there so they don't look conspicuous.

To all who are reading this, be glad that you're one of those to be "first on the dance floor," encouraging all of those wallflowers out there to get out of their chairs. This is the same type of thing Ari Armstrong was writing about in his "Tsunami Event" article in the LP News a few months ago.

David Bryant did some math and found I was getting an 8% response rate of people writing to the national LP for more information, which I am told is good for a mail campaign. No statistics on people who have joined are available as of this writing.

If anyone wishes to do this in Boulder with letters in the Daily Camera, or in Colorado Springs with letters from the Gazette, or in any of the other newspapers around the state, I would strongly encourage it.

It is letters like these which keep me doing what I do. Knowing that there are everyday heroes—today's Patrick Henrys—who are fighting for liberty makes me want to do even more! I would like to personally thank Scott (and David for his help) for "making it happen." Far too often we have good ideas, but we wait around for someone else to do it. But people like Scott don't wait for that ship to come in; they swim out after it! And the results show it.

I'm an example of the wallflowers Scott mentioned. It took me more than six years from the time I was first introduced to the libertarian philosophy until I finally came to realize the only "wasted vote" is the one you throw away by voting for less than what you want. Our party is growing because of the efforts of people like P. Scott Williams.

David Bryant can be reached at 303.744.6577 or davidbryant@worldnet.att.net. Send your notes about local activists to Joe Johnson at joejohn@us.ibm.com.

"This man told me he was impressed that there was a political party which shared his views and which took the time to contact him."

Thank You 1776 League & Donors!

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The Libertarian Party of Colorado is thankful for the many donors who make our continued success possible. Our goal is to reach at least \$1,776 in monthly donations to fund day-to-day operations, including production and distribution of the *Colorado Liberty*.

Our current total stands at nearly \$1,000 of monthly donations. Thank you!

If you would like to help us reach our goal by becoming a "1776 League" monthly donor, please

contact David Bryant at 303.744.6577 or davidbryant@att.net. We also need to start building a campaign fund now, to compete effectively in the elections next year. Your donations are always welcome. Help the party restore your liberties!

Here is a list of recent donors. An asterisk indicates a 1776 League member. Thanks also to those donors who wish to remain anonymous. Recent donations may not be reflected. Any omission is inadvertent—please contact Ari Armstrong at 303.412.835, or ariarmstrong@hotmail.com if you spot a mistake.

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OPPORTUNITY!

Would you like to host the 2002 Libertarian Convention?

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Applications to host the 2002 State Convention are now being accepted by the party's Board of Directors. Your application should include the estimated duration of the convention, the general location or city where you're proposing to hold it, and your ideas about convention highlights and speakers who might be invited.

Send your application to Libertarian Party of Colorado
6280 E 39th Ave, Suite L
Denver CO 80207-1319

If you would like to learn more about running conventions before submitting your application, please feel free to contact the 2001 convention committee members: Michele Poague (303.690.2907, mcbeth@ecentral.com); or BetteRose Smith (303.639.5530, betterose@aol.com).

Preservation Of All American Citizens' Rights

Return this country to Constitution-based principles. All laws and government regulations would be subject to review before a new court.

Higher than the Supreme Court, the Citizens' Constitution Court would be empowered to review and repeal any law at any level that violates the Constitution or the Bill of Rights. It cannot make any new laws, just review and repeal existing laws.

5000 citizen signatures will be needed to petition the state requiring a review of the law in question. This venue would be the State Constitution Review by citizens of that state on an Internet site all citizens have access to. For 30 days after a successful petition, the law in question would be posted and debated by the local state citizenry.

On day 31, all citizens who wish to vote would do so over the Internet, using their names, addresses and phone numbers for verification of their votes. Each citizen is allowed one vote. A majority vote would pass the law on to the National Citizens' Constitution Court.

The National Citizens' Constitution Court would post, debate and review the law in question on its own national internet site for a period of 30 days. This public posting, debate and review will allow every citizen of this country full knowledge of the discussions of the

issues that affect our lives. On day 31, the court members will vote and a simple majority will prevail upon the issue. Any law struck down by the court will be repealed immediately.

How are the court members of the National Citizens' Constitution Court appointed? Each state will hold an election every two years for ten highly respected citizens from that state to sit on this court.

This position is unpaid, and each Justice can serve for only one term. Each Justice cannot hold any other public office during his or her tenure in the National Citizens' Constitution Court.

Upon election, each Justice must agree to uphold the Constitution and the Bill of Rights as a personal service to the country. Each Justice will serve on this court from his or her private home. The ten individuals from each of the 50 American states will comprise the 500 members of the National Citizens' Constitution Court.

Our Constitution and Bill of Rights will constantly be guaranteed with such a daily review of laws by our citizens and will protect us from any law of tyranny and oppression.

This amendment to our Constitution will help preserve the rights of all individuals in this country.

Press Watch: Libertarians in the News

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Post Covers Stanley Bid

The *Denver Post* published an article July 7 about Rick Stanley's potential U.S. Senate run. The story appeared on the web page, and it was linked on the popular libertarian page <http://free-market.net>.

The article was titled, "Libertarian eyes Senate race." It began, "Denver businessman Rick Stanley said Friday that he plans to run as a Libertarian for the U.S. Senate seat held by Republican Wayne Allard. Stanley, 46, chief executive officer of Stanley Fasteners and Shop Supply, said he would work to ensure that citizens' rights are upheld. He said rights have been eroded through the war on drugs."

The paper quoted Stanley: "The government is turning our country into a police state, and they're doing it by hammering all of the Bill of Rights, and the drugs issue is just one more part of it."

Stanley's announcement was also picked up by the Associated Press. The AP article ran in newspapers such as *Steamboat Today*.

Westword Picks Up LP Gov. Race

The "Off Limits" section of *Westword* for July 5 covered the Libertarian gubernatorial hopefuls, Bob Glass and James Vance.

The article began, "Every day is Independence Day for Bob Glass. The owner of a Longmont gun store, host of a patriot-minded radio show and publisher of a similarly themed magazine, Glass is also the founder of the Tyranny Response Team, a pro-gun group whose members show up at rallies wearing matching T-shirts and carrying bullhorns to shout down Million Mom Marchers and other gun-control advocates."

The article also reported: "Now it looks as though Glass may want to bring out the big guns—and run for governor on the Libertarian ticket. (He wouldn't be alone, either: James Vance is set to announce his gubernatorial candidacy July 10.) Glass was a recent panelist on ABC's Politically Incorrect With Bill Maher, and although he didn't mention any political ambitions

on the air, Glass not only has the charisma to run for office, but he might even attract some people to the party, says Libertarian Party spokesman Kent McNaughton. 'Because of what Governor Bill Owens has done with gun laws,' McNaughton says, 'a lot of Republicans might, as a one-time protest or as a conversion, go with the Glass candidacy.'"

More Available On-Line...

Readers may have noticed the June/July issue of *Colorado Liberty* did not contain a Press Watch column. We didn't have enough pages available to include it. Now, this August issue is again too full to include the complete Press Watch.

The two items included here represent less than ten percent of the total material available. The material intended for this issue and the last one includes about 25 entries. The largest newspapers in the state, including the *Rocky Mountain News*, the *Denver Post*, and the *Colorado Springs Gazette*, covered the Libertarian Party. Two papers—Boulder's *Daily Camera* and Longmont's *Daily Times-Call*—ran front-page stories about Bob Glass, who is considering a run for governor under the LP banner. The LP convention also earned coverage, and numerous Libertarians had letters published. Read more at www.lpcolorado.org!

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Manson Rallies Invoke Columbine

by Ari Armstrong

On June 20 I spoke at a free speech rally prompted by the controversy surrounding shock-rocker Marilyn Manson. Following that rally, Pastor Jason Janz led his own rally asking Manson to stay out of town.

Janz invoked the Columbine tragedy as a motivating factor in forming his group. Columbine victims showed up to support both sides. Angela Sanders, daughter of the slain teacher, said people shouldn't blame music for violence. "Blaming Marilyn Manson for Columbine is like blaming Eminem for domestic violence, Britney Spears for teen sex, or Bill Clinton for adultery," she told the crowd.

Steve Schweitzberger, author of the insightful "40 Flags of Columbine" (<http://users.sedona.net/~redstone/columbine/fortyfla.htm>), circulated flyers at the free speech rally denouncing violence in entertainment. Schweitzberger's daughter was in the library during the Columbine murders. Tom Mauser, who suffered the loss of his son, attended the second rally in support of Janz.

In many respects, the two rallies were not in conflict. The first rally supported the right of free speech; the second rally used free speech to ask Manson to stay away.

Still, Janz laid out some positions at odds with libertarianism. He supports pornography laws, and he suggested he wants strict enforcement of drug prohibition. He also called for new legislation to restrict minors from attending select concerts. While most libertarians would praise Janz for practicing "citizenship, not censorship," as Janz put it, they would be uncomfortable with the state involvement Janz advocates.

At the free speech rally, some speakers also criticized Manson, though they said he should be allowed to perform. In my speech, I defined censorship as "the use of force to prevent or discourage someone from speaking freely." I pointed to a recent FCC fine imposed on a Colorado Springs radio station for playing Eminem as an example of censorship. I said the FCC flagrantly violates the First Amendment and should be abolished.

I also called for tolerance. "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it," I said, invoking Voltaire. I said that David Horowitz, Mark Twain, and John Steinback have recently been targeted by the politically correct crowd.

Old Questions Revisited

Libertarians have suggested specific solutions to the Columbine tragedy. In this issue of *Colorado Liberty*, three of those solutions are detailed. Barry Fagin argues that responsible parents don't resort to calls for censorship. For libertarians, freedom literally means responsibility. If we are free, we must take responsibility for our own lives and for helping to build a healthy community.

In another article, Larry Welshon describes an education system he believes works better than the government school system. To my mind, education reform is the single most important policy change that would help prevent problems in our schools. In a recent fundraising letter, Marshall Fritz of the Separation of School and State Alliance referred to policies at Columbine High School as a reason to end government involvement in education.

Finally, philosopher David Kelley offers an Objectivist take on Columbine. He urges students to become independent thinkers and actors and to start contemplating the basics of morality.

The debate about Marilyn Manson isn't really that significant. What's significant is the deep wound that remains in our community following the horrifying deaths at Columbine. The recent debate shows that wound still needs our attention.

In the wake of Columbine, we've seen reactionaries on both the left and right. The left proposes more statist controls of civil arms; the right proposes more statist controls of entertainment. Libertarians remain steadfast in their belief that we need more liberty, not less. In the words of Alexander Berkman, "Be it never forgotten that the cure for evil and disorder is more liberty." This issue of *Colorado Liberty* offers a few essential ingredients for the libertarian cure.

*"I disapprove of
what you say,
but I will defend
to the death your
right to say it."*

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Responsible Parents Eschew Censorship

by Barry Fagin

Colorado has often been said to be a major battleground in the culture wars. If the past two weeks are any indication, I'd have to agree. Shock rocker Marilyn Manson's visit to Denver got the "free speech" versus "protect the children" crowds going at each other, and in my hometown of Colorado Springs, a radio station drew national attention when it was fined by the FCC for playing a song by Eminem. As a parent with an interest in civil liberties, and as a diehard rock fan, I've been following these issues closely.

Make no mistake, Eminem is not for the squeamish. He is vulgar, shocking, profane and deliberately provocative. He makes fun of those who idolize him and seems to have contempt for anyone who'd actually buy one of his albums. His lyrics are misogynistic, his riffs are as thin as water, and musically he's completely forgettable. It's hard for me to find anything redeeming in his work.

That's why, as a parent, I can sympathize with the mother who complained to the FCC when she heard Eminem's "The Real Slim Shady." Even the radio edit version is pretty vile. It's hard enough being a parent these days without having to deal with your kids' exposure to songs about cannibalism, graphic sexuality and bestiality. That's why the vision of government as a helper in the daunting task of parenting is so seductive. When it comes to parenting, we all could use a little help now and then.

But it's a vision parents everywhere should resist. Parents should not be enthusiastic about giving up any part of their role as primary caretakers of their children. Make no mistake, when you assume that the Federal Communications Commission's job is to make sure your kids don't hear bad words on the radio, you are falling down on the job as a parent. In my opinion, parents are much better off in a world where there are no legal restrictions on what radio stations can play. That way, all of us will have to engage our kids at an early age to discuss what is out there and why.

That's what I do with my children, and you know what? It works pretty well. My kids are 13 and 11, and my wife and I make sure they're well versed in the excesses of modern popular culture. This has two advantages. By exposing them to some of pop culture's more radical efforts in an environment free from anger and fear, it takes away the "forbidden fruit" syndrome that attracts many teenagers to otherwise unremarkable cultural artifacts. Better still, carefully exposing children to the negative elements of a dynamic capitalist society helps them better appreciate the positive ones. My son, for example, hates "The Real

Slim Shady," but loves Mystery Science Theater. And why shouldn't he? One is garbage, the other is terrific.

While we're on the subject of what we can and can't hear, must we have the FCC tell us what we can and can't see? Why can't television content be left to people to decide for themselves? No one has to watch TV (our family doesn't), and content providers can't make money by making shows that alienate their audience. What exactly are we afraid of? There is every reason to assume that if parents know they're the sole source of control over what their children watch, they'll take a much more active role in scrutinizing it.



Libertarians Jennifer Armstrong, April Chase, Jamie Kent, and Russell Robertson attend the free speech rally June 20.

Nor should movies be let off the hook. The entire movie rating system is silly and pointless, rendered obsolete by technology. When a new film comes out that we might want to see on a family movie night, my wife and I ignore the ratings and go straight to internet sites like www.kidsinmind.com. As an added bonus, that can help get a good family discussion going about what writers put into movies, and why.

In my own personal journey through politics and parenting, I've become convinced that content-based regulations in any medium accomplish nothing more than making their advocates feel good about themselves. Most parents, including myself, would rather raise children than fight political battles, but I think it's an issue we ignore at our peril. Raising moral, responsible children is simply too important a task to entrust to anyone else.

Barry Fagin is the Senior Fellow in Technology Policy at the Independence Institute, for which he wrote this article.

10

Time is On Alpine Valley Students' Side

by Larry Welshon

Children benefit from a Sudbury education because they have many years to explore the world and perfect their abilities. Naturally, students who have been here the longest benefit the most. These children have a quiet strength that serves them well, now and later.

A seven-year-old stepped up to a staff member the other day. "Debra, can you teach me how to make jewelry, but alone? I can't concentrate when there are others around."

A five-year-old said to a much older and larger student, "If you don't stop bugging me, I'll write you up."

At a recent school meeting, a matter of grave concern was being debated. The issues revolved around whether School Meeting should accept a student back after an indefinite suspension. A seven-year-old moved that School Meeting accept him back and reevaluate his behavior after two weeks.



A fifteen-year-old sat working with concentration. After a considerable amount of time she exclaimed, "I actually drew something and it looks right!"

On the way to school a parent looked at her kid deep in thought. "What are you thinking about?" The student replied, "I'm thinking about what I'm going to do at school today."

What is the significance of these vignettes? These are young people who are experiencing life to its fullest now. The "lessons" about how to get along with others, achieve what you want, know and understand your own limits, and be part of a community are preparing these children for a world of rapid change that demands personal responsibility.

Students as young as five and as old as nineteen benefit tremendously from a Sudbury education. People sometimes wonder how it is that children who are so unencumbered can possibly make something of their lives later. We at Alpine Valley School and at other Sudbury schools challenge the traditional school premise that to be successful in adulthood, children must be told what, when and how to learn, and that their efforts should be evaluated by an arbitrary and externally-imposed set of standards.

I see on a daily basis the benefits of a Sudbury education for all our students. The intangible nature of true learning eludes many traditional educators and politicians, causing them to obsess about standards and the quantification of learning. They have so little trust

in their own system of enforced curriculum that they must quantify their students' achievements using standardized tests.

On the other hand, at Alpine Valley we have tremendous faith in our students' innate desire to learn and trust that they will learn what they need in life. Let's look at the reasons behind our trust.

First, we understand that human beings are naturally curious and social beings. These traits are a fundamental part of our human nature and have been so recognized since the time of Aristotle. Unfortunately for most children, traditional schools ignore these traits—or worse, control them to such an extent that they are destroyed or stunted. At Sudbury schools, we understand that kids, left to follow their own curiosity amidst an interesting community of people of diverse ages, will blossom into capable, happy adults.

Second, we look at the 32-year track record of Sudbury Valley School in Framingham, Massachusetts. 80% of their graduates go on to post-secondary schooling. Over time, 40% of Sudbury Valley graduates become entrepreneurs. Small wonder. They have experienced for years the reality that finally dawns on most of us after college. That reality is that each individual must wake up every day and determine the course of his or her life. If a student is lacking in knowledge or ability, it is up to him or her alone to locate and acquire that which is necessary for continued progress toward becoming a self-actualized person.

Third, we recognize that children need an enormous amount of time and space in which to develop. By way of contrast, traditional schools try their hardest to cram a huge amount of curriculum into the children's heads during the school day, then pile on the homework. The cost of this (in terms of the lost opportunity for children to listen to their inner voice and come to grips with who they are at a fundamental level) is incalculable. At Sudbury schools, time is the most important element. Children need time to fully benefit from their curiosity and social nature.

Finally, we trust our children to this model because we know that to constantly test and poke at these little seedlings in the garden will not yield a beautiful plant; instead it will stunt or kill the plant altogether. The Sudbury model asserts that when left alone to be who they want to be, children will flourish and bloom into happy, self-aware and successful adults.

Larry Welshon is a staff member and parent at Alpine Valley School in Wheat Ridge. His article originally appeared in the school's newsletter.

The Lessons of Littleton: A Letter to Teens

11

by David Kelley

It's the issue that won't go away. The tragedy at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, was only one in a series of violent episodes at America's high schools, but it has galvanized the nation. Thirteen people were murdered in the hallways and library of Columbine High. Many more were wounded, and many more still spent hours hiding in terror as the killers roamed the building.



We can't bring the dead back to life, and we can't erase the trauma of those who lived through this awful event. But we can at least try to learn something from the tragedy. What are the lessons of Littleton?

Schools are banning book bags, removing lockers, and installing metal detectors in order to keep weapons out of the hallways and classrooms. Politicians are considering new gun-control measures and pressuring Hollywood and the video-game makers to tone down the violence in their products. President Clinton has called for a national campaign against youth violence.

Obviously we should do what we can to reduce violence in the schools—and everywhere else, for that matter. But that's a big and complicated project, and there are limits on what you can do as an individual. Meanwhile, there are other lessons to learn, lessons about the meaning of what happened in Littleton.

If you are in high school now, you have a special connection with those events. The killers, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, and most of their victims were students like you. Columbine High is a typical school, probably not that different from your own. I know that many of you are wondering, "How could this happen? What does it mean?"

I can't begin to know the whole answer. But if we could talk face-to-face, there are two things I'd ask you to think about, two lessons I think we can learn.

The first is that what Harris and Klebold did was evil. They were deliberate and malicious killers. They planned their actions in advance. They deliberately stalked their victims, laughing as they went. They taunted those who were trapped in the library: "Who's next? Who's ready to die?" They asked one girl if she believed in God, and shot her when she said yes.

If your school is like most, you have been taught that right and wrong are matters of opinion, not fact; that you shouldn't be judgmental; that you should tolerate everybody's lifestyle; that it's important to clarify your own values, but you shouldn't impose them on anyone

else. All of this adds up to a concept called relativism. If you go to college, you're going to hear a lot more of it.

Don't believe everything you hear. Relativism is okay if we're talking about things like the movies you watch, the music you like, the people you hang out with, the people you sleep with, the clothes you wear. But when you get beyond lifestyle to the fundamental things in life, relativism is a dead end. Harris and Klebold were not just practicing an alternative lifestyle. They destroyed human lives. We insult the memory of their victims if we fail to condemn the murders as objectively wrong.

And once we do that, we have to ask what other things are objectively right and wrong. When you think about your values, where does relativity end and objectivity begin? What about lying, or cheating on exams? Are they objectively wrong? What about working hard, developing your talent, striving for success? Are they objectively right?

There's no point in my telling you what I think about these questions. The answers wouldn't mean anything unless you understand the reasons. It's like a problem in algebra: the teacher can give you the solution, but you haven't learned anything until you know how to solve the problem on your own. What I can tell you is that you need a moral compass in order to guide your path in life. Finding that compass is one of the most important things you can do for yourself.

That's lesson one. Lesson two is the importance of independence.

Harris and Klebold were social outcasts, rejected and teased by the popular cliques at Columbine High. Everyone's talking now about the social pressures of high school—how teenagers try to fit in, and how they feel if they don't. Many of you have spoken about the tense reality of cliques in your schools, and the conflicts among them, and the stupid, hurtful things that students do to each other in the scramble for popularity and status. I know. I was in high school once, and it was no different then.

Most people take the existence of cliques for granted. They only have one solution for all the nastiness: groups should tolerate each other. "All of the popular conformists need to learn to accept everyone else," said one young woman on an Internet forum. "Why do they shun everyone who is different?" Well, of course it would be nice if people were nicer to each other. But that's not the essence of the issue, and the "tolerance solution" is not likely to work unless we get to the essence.

"Relativism is okay if we're talking about things like the movies you watch, but when you get beyond lifestyle to the fundamental things in life, relativism is a dead end."

"Lessons" continued on page 12

It's natural for people to get together on the basis of what they have in common, like an interest in alternative music. It's natural to like one person more than another because your personalities are more similar. But cliques are different. For one thing, they breed conformity: the members of a clique put pressure on each other to dress alike, talk alike, think alike. They also look down on outsiders. "I'm an athlete and you're nobody." "I'm a rebel and you're clueless." In fact, the point of a clique is as much to exclude as to include.

So why do people form cliques? Why do people care so much about status, about being popular or cool? Isn't it because they feel unsure of themselves? In a sense, they don't really have selves; they feel the need to define their identity by how they relate to other people. They get their attitudes, lifestyle, and values from the people they look up to. They get their self-esteem from looking down on people who are excluded. That's why it won't work to say, "Let's all tolerate each other." People who need to be insiders in order to feel secure will always need to sneer at outsiders.

And what happens to those who are excluded, the ones who are equally unsure of themselves and don't get the approval they need? As one student put it, "If you go to school and people make fun of you every day, and you don't have friends, it drives you to insanity." A psychologist quoted in a magazine article said, "All kids need to belong, and if they can't belong in a positive way at the school, they'll find a way to belong to a marginal group like a cult or a gang."

But it doesn't have to be that way.

course, this means that Democrats would hold the reins for a time. Frankly, this does not bother me. I do not see much real difference between the two parties, once you get past the rhetoric. Even so, we have survived Democrat majorities in the past; we will do so in the future.

But, if you are one of those who is frightened by this notion, one of those who clings to the Republicans because you think they will protect your freedoms just a little better than the Democrats, then you have already lost. You are admitting to the Republicans that you will support them no matter what they do, so you have no leverage with them. You have only two things they want: your money and your vote. Money they have no problem in getting, from people with a lot more of it than you or I have. Your vote you are giving them for free. You are choosing the lesser of two evils, and that is exactly what you will get.

When you graduate, you're going to leave behind the groups that are part of your life now. There will be other cliques in college and at work, and you'll leave them behind, too, when you move on. But there's one person who will always be with you, one person whose judgment will always matter. That person is you.

If you're willing to think for yourself, if you're willing to choose your own goals, if you're willing to mount your own search for that moral compass I mentioned, then you won't need others to give you an identity. You can be your own person. It can be risky to stand alone, but isn't it riskier to count on the approval of others?

We all want others to respect us. But if you have self-respect, the respect of others is a secondary issue. No one likes to be excluded or made fun of, but the real nobodies are those who need approval so badly they can't live without it.

I hope you never have to deal with the kind of horror that occurred at Columbine High. The statistics say that violence like that is pretty rare. But you will have to deal with the issues I've been talking about, because they're inherent in human life.

You will need to decide what kind of values you accept, the moral compass you steer by. And you will need to decide whether independence of mind and soul is worth the effort. Your decisions will shape the person you become.

David Kelley is Executive Director of the Objectivist Center, which can be reached at <http://objectivistcenter.org>, 800.374.1776, or 11 Raymond Ave., Suite 31, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603. His article was originally printed in Navigator, vol. 2, #10, June, 1999.

This is the message we must send to all of the freedom lovers: the tax cutters, the anti-regulators, the gun owners, the pot smokers, the property owners, and all the rest. "You are choosing evil; choose freedom instead." They must be made to understand that if they limit their choices to the two major parties, nothing will ever change, equilibrium will be maintained, and our liberties will continue to vanish.

This party has two possible futures. We will either reform one of the major parties or we will replace one. The formula for getting one is the formula for getting the other: we keep building our party, running more candidates, and getting more votes. By giving the pro-freedom crowd a place to go, we deny their votes to the major parties and make those parties change their behavior in order to get them back.

Maybe they will. Maybe they won't. Either way, we win.

In Liberty, John K. Berntson

"You can be your own person. It can be risky to stand alone, but isn't it riskier to count on the approval of others?"

Education: Glass believes the best way to improve the education system is to convert government schools to free market schools. He’s skeptical about vouchers.

Immigration: Glass said immigrants should be able to come to America, as our ancestors did previously, but the state should not provide welfare benefits to immigrants. Immigrants who escape tyranny to come here “remind us what this country is all about.”

Police Accountability: “We have to hold police officers responsible for their actions,” Glass said, citing the police killing of Ismael Mena.

Flag Desecration: Glass would oppose legislation to criminalize flag burning. But when asked if he would burn a flag to protest such a law, he said he would never do that. “I have too much respect for people who put their lives on the line” in defense of the country.

Drug Prohibition: Glass will provide “amnesty for every non-violent person rotting in jail” because of drug prohibition laws.

Civil Arms: Glass said the mere possession of property, including civil arms, should never be restricted. Instead, the use of guns to harm others should be prohibited.

Abortion: Couples shouldn’t rely on abortion to deal with unwanted pregnancies, and the state should never fund abortions. But abortion should remain legal.

Transportation: “We should put mass-transit on the free market,” Glass said, adding that government-run transit is “phenomenally inefficient.”

“We need to shake people out of their complacency,” Glass said. “Liberty is the most precious gift any human being can have.”

James Vance

Two days after Glass spoke in Boulder, James Vance laid out his top five campaign planks at the Denver Metro LP meeting.

1. Streamline state government. Outsourcing government programs and agencies will save money and improve performance. Vance wants to review state laws and repeal some of them.

2. Eliminate the state sales tax. The sales tax can be wiped out if the state income tax is increased slightly. Vance would like to eliminate the state income tax, but research indicates that move would require too large an increase in the sales tax.

3. Retool the school system. Vance said a “hybrid of vouchers and corporate-managed schools” will increase efficiency and accountability in education.

4. Support the freedom of speech. Colorado should be a national leader in supporting the freedom of speech, Vance said. “The First Amendment is constantly under fire these days.”

5. Protect the Second Amendment. “I’ve always been a defender of the Second Amendment,” Vance said. His main proposal is to pass a concealed-carry law linked to drivers’ licenses. After talking to a number of Libertarians, Vance has changed his stance on automatic weapons. He now asserts they should be legal.

Vance wants to run on those Libertarian ideas that resonate with the public. “For this campaign to work, for this campaign to win, it cannot be 100% idealistic.” A Vance campaign will “express libertarian ideals,” but it will also emphasize “what the public can support.”

When asked if he’s more interested in winning or sticking to principles, he said he’s trying to merge the two. Vance supports industrial hemp and medical marijuana, but he doesn’t think a plank to completely repeal drug prohibition will appeal to voters. Vance also wants to “use existing tax dollars more efficiently” to promote the state’s economy.

Vance became interested in running for public office because of his “utter disgust” with the elections last year. He thinks running for president, governor, U.S. House, or U.S. Senate will have the greatest impact.

Earlier this year, Vance pursued the Reform (a.k.a. Freedom) Party’s nomination, but he doesn’t like the “right-wing social issues” of the group, such as its positions on abortion and gay rights.

Vance will not accept contributions from corporations or PACs, relying entirely on gifts from individuals instead. He plans to court the Gen X voter by speaking at universities, and he’ll “approach people who are forgotten about.”

Several Libertarians have expressed some interest in the lieutenant governor’s slot.

- **John Cochran**, chair of the economics department at Metropolitan State College.
- **Desiree Hickson**, a homeschool mom and a candidate for state House last year.
- **Carol Hill**, an activist in Leadville and a school board candidate in 1999.
- **Sandra Johnson**, LP candidate for governor in 1998.
- **Shawn Elke Glazer**, a medical doctor, member of the state board, and a state House candidate last year.

“Liberty is the most precious gift any human being can have.”

—Bob Glass

“The First Amendment is constantly under fire these days.”

—James Vance

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LIBERTY CALENDAR

August • September 2001

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| | | | | | | |
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| August KEY DATE: Fruit Picking and INS protest, August 18, Palisade. Contact Richard Lamping at 970.379.8448 or m1group@yahoo.com. To car-pool from Denver reach Ari Armstrong at 303.412.8356 or ari@oneimage.com. | | | 1 Broomfield | 2 Jefferson County Douglas County Bus. | 3 | 4 Denver Breakfast Morgan County Douglas County Four Corners |
| 5 | 6 Boulder Lunch Southside | 7 Denver LP Fort Collins Bfast Colorado Springs | 8 | 9 Boulder Board | 10 Douglas County Fair, Aug. 10-12 Contact Barb Rachoeki to volunteer at barbrachoeki@earthlink.net | 11 Denver Breakfast Morgan County Four Corners Douglas County Fair |
| 12 Douglas County Fair | 13 Boulder Lunch | 14 Colorado Springs Fort Collins | 15 Routt County | 16 | 17 | 18 Denver Breakfast Morgan County Douglas County Four Corners |
| 19 | 20 Boulder Lunch | 21 Colorado Springs | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 Denver Breakfast Morgan County Douglas County Four Corners |
| 26 | 27 Boulder Lunch | 28 Colorado Springs | 29 Co. Springs Bus. | 30 | 31 | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|--|-----------------|---|----|--|
| September Key Date: John Ross , author of Unintended Consequences , will speak in Colorado Springs on October 20. The event, the LP Fourth Annual Awards Banquet, costs \$40. RSVP by October 16 to Carol Geltemeyer, 719.596.6799, EIPasoLiberty@aol.com, www.LPEP.org. | | | | | | 1 Denver Breakfast Morgan County Douglas County Four Corners |
| 2 | 3 Boulder Lunch Southside | 4 Fort Collins Bfast Colorado Springs | 5 Broomfield | 6 Douglas County Bus. Jefferson County | 7 | 8 Denver Breakfast Morgan County Douglas County Four Corners |
| 9 | 10 Boulder Lunch | 11 Colorado Springs Denver LP | 12 Routt County | 13 Boulder Board | 14 | 15 Denver Breakfast Morgan County Douglas County Four Corners |

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