

Let Freedom Ring!

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The Benefits of Local Activist Groups: A Candidate's Perspective

When I ran for State Senate in 2002 I had the one thing that all Libertarian candidates need but rarely have. A group of local Libertarian activists! Without this group I would not have done as well as I did.

What can a Libertarian activist group do for a candidate? Local groups can assist with mailings, help petition, give constructive comments on campaign literature or speeches and assist with the other tasks small and large that need to be done for every campaign. And it isn't all one sided. An active campaign will help the local group grow.

Local groups can be comprised of people who share an issue or live in a single town or live in a specific region. A single issue group can help a candidate by providing contacts, places to speak and fundraising assistance. The candidate helps this type of group by bringing attention to the issue through speeches and campaign literature.

[Local Activism Helps!] (Continued on page 3)

PVLA Activism in Action Brickner Routs Rent Controllers

John Brickner writes us:

In May of 2003 the Town of Wales Annual Report was distributed to the citizens for their inspection. One of the items within that concerned me was a comment by the outgoing Select Chair about a Rent Control Committee being formed. Having held several positions on Town Boards and committees I was surprised because I had never heard of such a committee before.

A visit to the Town Offices and a conversation with the Executive Secretary revealed the Town had previously had a Rent Control Committee several years back to control the rent on a trailer park in town. This park is inhabited mostly by senior citizens and the owners had applied for a rent increase. She also asked me if I wanted to be on the board. I declined.

[PVLA Activism in Action] (Continued on page 2)

Free State Project Hits New Highs

5000 Members in Two Years—Largest Libertarian Mailing in Massachusetts History

The Free State Project, dedicated to the proposal that Libertarians and others of like mind should band together and move to a single small state, as a model for the rest, now has over 5000 members, all gained in little more than two years. Members have all committed to move to the chosen Free State as soon as the Free State Project gains 20,000 members. More than half plan to move as soon as a state is selected. In accord with its founding plan, when the Project gained its 5000th member, it began balloting of its members to choose between New Hampshire, Delaware, Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, Vermont, Maine, and South Dakota. Results may well appear in our next issue.

New Hampshire Free State advocates did a mailing to Massachusetts Libertarians. They sent postcards advertising the Project to 20,000 Massachusetts libertarians. **This was the largest mailing to libertarians in Massachusetts Libertarian History, and was accomplished by volunteers in a few weeks with no administrative salaries.**

PVLA and WCLA News Stand Up for Liberty! in Spanish

I have taken on the project of translating "Stand Up for Liberty" into Spanish. I am still working out the technical issues. Translated portions will be put on www.cmlc.org as they become available. The working title is **Lucha por tu Libertad**. (with potential editorial apologies for lack of a spell checker on the title).

...Robert J. Underwood

I have contacted 450 registered Libertarian voters and others in the greater Worcester area, telling them about upcoming WCLA events, sending them a Volunteerism sheet they can fill out (copies will go by and by to the State party), and including a stamped return envelope. Events? *The Tent* will appear on the Boston Common on September 20 for the Relegalization Rally. *Amanda Phillips* is addressing the WCLA and the PVLA on the Free State Project, at our regular October meetings.

...George Phillies

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(Continued from page 1) [PVLA Activism in Action]

Not wanting property rights eroded any further than they already are for landlords in Massachusetts, I wrote the following letter to several Town Boards

John Brickner
47 Stafford Holland Road
Wales MA 01081

Town of Wales Select Board, Planning Board,
Finance Committee, and Rent Control Board
Wales MA 01081

Honorable Town Administrators:

While studying the Town Annual Report I noticed mention of a Rent Control Board. Being unaware of such a board within our town or of the authority it would carry, I researched the following:

In 1970, the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled in the case Marshal House, Inc. v. Rent Review & Grievance Board of Brookline, 375 Mass. 709. That the enactment of rent control required state enabling legislation to authorize it and was not a home rule power. And on May 5, 1994 in a case argued before the Court regarding Question 9 (a ballot initiative,) Chief Justice Paul J. Liacos opined for the court the conclusion:

The rent control ban contained in the act, by its terms, applies to every municipality in the Commonwealth. Although it may appear to be a purely local issue, it is not . . . The Massachusetts Constitution (home rule amendment) has reserved the power to regulate the landlord-tenant relationship to the Legislature to the exclusion of municipal governments . . . It is within the power of a municipality to enact a rent control program only when the Legislature has explicitly delegated that power to the municipality. Thus, rent control is an issue of Statewide concern (p. 384)

On November 8, 1994 the citizens of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts approved Question 9 thereby, passing a law that effectively abolished rent control throughout the Commonwealth.²⁰

Titled the Massachusetts Rent Control Prohibition it enabled any city or town the power to adopt rent control on the following conditions:

A) compliance of rent control by the property owners is voluntary after six months from the date of adoption; B) rental property having 10 or fewer units or having a fair market rent of more than \$400/month are exempt; C) the municipality imposing such regulations will compensate owners of controlled units from its general funds for

the difference between the controlled rents and the fair market rents of such units; and D) any other form of rent control in Massachusetts is prohibited.

While I am not an attorney, I believe the above to be fairly accurate from my sources listed below.

It is hoped, the Rent Control Board of the Town of Wales does a complete and detailed job of doing its homework and carefully considers the current state of affairs regarding the Town budget before acting, and vigorously enforces the law as intended by the Citizens of the Commonwealth of the State of Massachusetts when acting.

Most sincerely,
John C. Brickner

I gave the letter to the Town Executive Secretary to read and comment on. She said "The Select Board will be acting as the Rent Control Board as no citizens have volunteered for the positions and I know they know nothing about this." We looked in the Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) together and sure enough, found the above as law. We did notice a line that mentioned rent control was allowed on trailers but, it wasn't clear if rent control was on the trailers themselves or the land they were on.

In any case, I was informed by the Executive Secretary on a later date, the Select Board had read my letter and decided to dissolve the Rent Control Board totally and take no action on the application for increased rent by the owners of the park.

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Pioneer Valley
Libertarian Association**

(Continued from page 1) [Local Activism Helps!]

A group from a single town can form a town committee and be the official point of contact in their town. This type of group can provide a candidate with voter lists, assist with petitioning and provide local volunteers. When not helping campaigns this type of group stays active at the local level by attending town meetings, helping people get appointed to local office and working on local issues.

A regional group can do many things for a candidate. These include helping with petitioning, registering voters, assembling mailings etc. This is the type of group that helped me receive 19% of the vote when I ran for State Senate. Without this group I would not have met my campaign manager and I would not have collected the 300 valid signatures I needed to get on the ballot. Candidates help this type of group by speaking at meetings which increases attendance, referring campaign volunteers who wish to stay active after the campaign is over to the group and by helping the group with its activities.

I'm not a candidate, don't know any candidates but want to do something to help the Libertarian party grow. What can I do?

Local groups are the ideal starting point for Libertarians who want to do something but don't know where to start. When you join or form a local group you immediately gain several benefits. You meet other Libertarians in your area, you learn about local activist opportunities and you now have the opportunity to do something that will help make the Libertarian party grow.

For more information on starting a Libertarian group or locating one in your area contact Carol McMahon at 413-250-6608 or cjmcmahon@mindspring.com

...Carol McMahon

BILL'S 12 AXIOMS OF HUMAN NATURE

1. *The goal of existence is to survive, acquire material subsistence or wealth, attribute purpose to life, and enjoy relationships, pleasures and meaningful work.* Individuals may interpret this differently. All human conflict arises as a result of others who try to take these things away.

2. *Almost all people are lazy and selfish.* "Lazy" means that given the opportunity, individuals will expend less effort to perform a given task, as long as the reward is the same. Similarly, if more reward is given for the same amount of work, then the individual will agree to this situation as an im-

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provement over the previous state of affairs. "Selfish" simply means that the individual cares more about himself, his friends, his family, and the things personally meaningful to him (or her), than about society as a whole.

3. *All humans will tend to abuse power once they have it.*

This means that once in possession of power, an individual will be more likely to infringe on the rights of others for the personal benefit it brings. When that power is the absolute power uniquely enjoyed by government, then the corruption is even more certain. Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

4. *There is no such thing as pure altruism.* Those who assist others always derive personal benefit on some level. This could be as simple as feeling good about helping someone else.

5. *None of the four principles above are really that bad.* People simply try to do what is in their own best interests. They survive and give their lives meaning as best they can.

6. *Everyone is responsible for their own happiness and their own destinies.*

7. *The correct role of "government" is to uphold the rights of the individuals.* Where there are no violations of rights, there is no need for government. Because of the tenets of human nature noted above, a good deal of effort in successfully implementing a government which upholds human rights will be spent on limiting that government (which is staffed by infallible humans) to its legitimate functions.

8. *A limited government gives the best chance for individuals to overcome the tendency to be lazy and selfish.*

9. *Once government is used to selectively benefit some individuals more than others, then the bitter end of society is near.* By asserting, for example, that "everyone has a right to a free education" (which really only helps those who can't afford to educate their children, or who are incapable of doing it themselves), or by establishing the principle that "everyone has the right to adequate healthcare" (which gives no benefit to those who don't need healthcare), an "aristocracy" has been created that undermines the very equality of rights that creating government was designed to uphold. The polarization will play itself out via the modern form of Marxist class struggle: hatred and racism between competing groups vying for government support.

10. *A government capable of giving you anything you want is also capable of taking everything you have.*

11. *Charity is the answer to all of the problems that government attempts to solve, but fails at anyway.* It has the added essential attraction of allowing those who wish to help others to do so without infringing on the rights of those who don't. Also, charities almost always work better than government programs at accomplishing goals, and usually have effective

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built-in checks and balances to keep people from taking unfair advantage, or becoming dependent.

12. Socialism and all of its forms (communism, socialized medicine, the “right to shelter”) have failed miserably in the past, and will continue to fail in the future, as a result of the human tendencies noted above.

...Bill Bryant
PVLA Member

BILL’S RATIONAL INTERPRETATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS:

1. All people have the right to speak freely, be secure in their own physical bodies, and enjoy the products of their labor; they have the right to own and acquire property, and be similarly secure in property rights as with their own bodies, as long as these actions do not interfere with others’ same rights. This is the “right to freedom.” These self-evident, inalienable rights exist as a characteristic of nature and come before anything else.

2. The use of force against another is only justified to protect the above noted right to freedom.

3. There is no other valid human right other than the right to freedom. The “right” to shelter, adequate healthcare, food, clothing, etc., is just socialist, liberal nonsense-social worker blather-that ultimately violates the right to freedom described above. These ideas should be rejected vehemently. The only way to guarantee anyone anything other than freedom is to take those resources from someone else by force.

4. If it is justified for the individual to act with force to protect his rights, then it is acceptable for him to designate an outside agent to act on his behalf in the protection of those rights.

5. Accordingly, humans may choose to allow a “government” to act as a proxy for their inalienable rights, as long as such a government likewise only acts with force to defend individual rights.

6. Where rights violations are concerned, there is no difference whatsoever between people and government. Government, of course, is comprised of people. But both entities are subject to the same principles of respecting human rights noted above, and must be held to identical standards. If a man can’t steal 50 dollars from another, then neither can a government. If the individual cannot use force except to defend his rights, then neither can the police. The only practical distinction between people and government is that government uniquely possesses the coercive power of authority. Although people and government are the same in theory, the absolute power of government adds a new dimension to the potential for rights violations and other corruptions, and as such must

be monitored and constrained even more carefully. The Bill of Rights should be followed at all times. Governmental authority, however, is granted to government by the people, and they have a responsibility to eliminate it if it no longer upholds the rights of the individual. A government that fails to follow the Bill of Rights must be destroyed.

7. A government may not impede upon the rights of anyone without due justification. And once again, the only legitimate, permissible grounds for such action is to correct a previously occurring infringement of rights. Any violation of this principle by government ought to subject those responsible to the exact same consequences as an individual’s violation of another’s rights.

8. Freedom is all you get. It is up to the individual-not government-to decide on the things he needs, to find ways of acquiring the things he needs, and to enjoy those things. These might include material possessions, relationships with others, a work career, or a state of mind. Probably he will need to work in some way for these things. He may choose to acquire things he doesn’t need, or may instead choose not to acquire things he does need. The wealth, culture, and greatness of a society hinge upon individuals looking out for their own perceived self-interests, and taking responsibility for those choices. It should not be the business of anyone else to decide on these personal, private aspects of individual choice. Once these issues become a matter for government, then the decline of society is highly predictable.

9. Beliefs in God, family composition, sexual preferences, other religious views, educational priorities, work ethics, viewpoints about caring for the weak, the use or non-use of drugs and alcohol, the attainment of wealth, notions of duty to others, or ideas of “good” and “evil” or “right” and “wrong,” are completely irrelevant to the establishment of an effective government, and must be left out of the picture. These issues are subjective values that cannot be addressed by government without infringing on the rights of others, who may have different values. The only one, “true” value-that allows everyone to arrive at their own personal perspectives that suit them best, without imposing those particular beliefs on anyone else-is the right to freedom described above. All other attempts by government to legislate morality, piety, sin, selflessness, or goodness, are unacceptable. The only significant qualities of human nature that have any objective validity where the establishment of government is concerned are measured by the question of whether the individual’s right to freedom is upheld and protected.

10. It is inappropriate for government to be involved with education, healthcare, feeding people, clothing people, granting or denying marriage, meddling in foreign affairs, giving shelter, banning prostitution, providing Social Security, or fighting the War on Drugs (except insofar as any such involvement constitutes a response to a violation of rights). These are issues-causes,

actually-necessarily and better left to people acting independently of government. They are value judgments that have no legitimate place in a political system. Conceding that these aspects of life ought to fall under the auspices of government means relinquishing the right to freedom. Anyone who desires security over freedom deserves neither.

11. Free market capitalism with limited government is the only political form of society that honors and respects the basic human rights indicated above. It is also the only economic system that makes any logical sense.

12. Currently we do not have anything remotely close to free market capitalism, but rather, a hybrid of capitalism and government control that magnifies the worst possible features of capitalism. True "laissez-faire" capitalism should be tried before government and socialists trick us into abandoning the free market system entirely.

13. A free society means that all are free to choose the types of economic relationships they wish to enter into. If you're altruistic and don't like capitalism then you can design a product that makes fun of it, and use the profits to feed the oppressed, or provide discounted prescriptions to the elderly. Or you are free to live on a commune where everyone thinks the way you do. But remember that people in government almost certainly won't think the way you do.

14. Where freedom exists, there is no such thing as true equality. The reality of life is that people have varying constitutional differences, intellectual skills, temperaments, environmental influences, and other abilities and traits that render the idea of absolute equality absurd. All we can hope for is an equality of rights. The question is whether the disparities between people will occur naturally, or whether government will artificially exacerbate and distort them by creating new-and more diabolical-opportunities for inequity.

15. Freedom does not always work in everyone's favor. There is no perfect system of government. It is a utopian fallacy to expect that we can solve all of society's problems. However, we can solve most big government problems by limiting it and thusly upholding the basic rights described above. In so doing, life would improve dramatically for almost everyone. It is very likely that the vast majority of society's troubles are in fact caused by government overstepping its legitimate constitutional authority.

...Bill Bryant

Letters

(As sent originally to your Editor and to the LP of California Governing Body.

Editor:

Re: Let Freedom Ring - www.cmlc.org

I've suggested reading Let Freedom Ring several times as it has news about the LP that we do not see elsewhere.

However this month I saw the following about the LPCa.

"By report on the state chairs list, the Libertarian Party of California overwhelmingly passed a resolution supporting supporting a dues increase."

Now don't get me wrong - I support a dues increase. But since the LPCa ExCom is now suggesting that we all pay higher dues, shouldn't we mere "members" hear about this from our own elected officials?

Some have complained about candidate and region access to our membership lists, which are on line and available to all, except for some glitches in access. Other regions seem to make getting membership access very difficult indeed, unless you are part of the "in crowd".

"Let Freedom Ring - Libertarian Strategy Gazette" are available by mail - \$15.00/year or on line www.cmlc.org also www.pvla.net Maybe not all the truth, but lots more than you'll read about elsewhere.

Keep up the good work, George Phillies
"Jonathan Zwickel" <jonathanira@pngusa.net>

Editor:

I'll start with an over-due thanks for sending me your newsletter. I enjoy it, and more important, it makes me think. So thank you indeed!

Now for the immediate reason for this letter. In a recent issue David Jahn writes that, while he personally is opposed to vouchers, he sees them as being a necessary step toward privatizing the government schools. This is in my opinion absolutely the ass-backwards way of looking for the necessary solution. The only way to privatize the schools is to make their financing private...that is, via parental tuition fees introduced into the existing free schools themselves. That is, introduce such a fee concept at a very modest initial level and then raise it in equally modest annual increments.

There is a very large constituency out there—comprised of non-parents, second-home owners, homeschoilers, private schoolers, not to mention people whose kids went to public school when it cost a tiny fraction of what it is now—who would be delighted to back libertarians in this. In terms of libertarian principles, this is the way to go. After all, even temporarily legitimizing free private schooling automatically en-

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dorses a list of similar programs. If I could endorse school vouchers, I would feel compelled to endorse free private daycare, free medicare for all kids, and so on. Why not?

My real point, from a practical standpoint, is that expanding government financing of schooling will only make an already bad situation worse. I'll give you one example, from a recent conversation with a local Catholic priest who touts vouchers.

ME: Father, if all kids got a \$5000 voucher this year, what would you ask their parents to request next year when the legislature meets?

HIM: (With a grin) Why, a \$6000 voucher, of course, I'll admit that freely. And to forestall your next question, I'll add that the next year I'd push for a \$7000 voucher, and so no and so on.

ME: That's honest. Now, this one. You're in your late 30s or early 40s. Do you see any later time in life saying: Okay, that's enough of vouchers. Now is the time to end government finance for all schooling.

HIM: Good question, Jack. And I'll give you an honest answer. No how and no way do I foresee any parents I know telling the government they don't want 'free' school vouchers. Why would they ever think along those lines after 10 or 20 years of vouchers. George, you do good work! Keep At It!

Jack Simons Vermont

Where Your Money Went

Inquiries as to some of the spending by the LNC reveal that the disbursements to David Bergland for "Travel" and to the American Liberty Foundation were for copies of Bergland's book, which had been promised to major donors and others, and which had to be purchased. The \$90+ a month for a cooler turns out to be a budget for an office water bubbler.

Report has it that the two mailings from the new National Director, finally telling the membership of the National Party the actual truth about the National Party's debt, have had a very large positive effect, and UMP payments may be substantially caught up this month.

National Party financials for July are somewhat less positive. For July, the National Party received \$151832 in income, spent \$170626, and ended with \$2648 in the bank. At the end of the month, nominal debts were \$137478, leaving a debt net of cash on hand of slightly less than \$135,000. At the end of June, there had been about \$144,000 in debt, almost \$19,000 cash on hand, and thus a net debt of about \$125,000. In other words, the Party's nominal financial position deteriorated in July. Disbursements in July included approximately: \$5477 for staff health insurance, \$4700 and \$8300 for postage and mailing services, \$500 for a clipping service, printing costs of \$1500, \$9145, \$3000, & \$2000, rent payments at start and end of month of \$8130 and \$9091, \$3943 for a survey, \$1000 for shipping, direct mail consulting for \$5100, computer consulting for \$3010, legal fees of \$2600, accounting consulting for \$2000,

staff benefits for retirement of \$3900 including payments at the start and end of the month, accounting services for \$1013, web site maintenance for \$750, \$628 and \$149 a month for insurance, \$585 for convention staging, miscellaneous expenses for copier leases, bank fees, telephones, express mail, office supplies, conference calls, close to \$16000 for payroll service and taxes, and payroll payments to Ananda Creager, Ron Crickenberger, Steven Damerell, Nick Dunbar, George Getz, Erin Hollinden, Alex Koroknay-Palicz, Dollie Parker, Dianne Pilcher, Joseph Seehusen, and William Winter, not to mention UMP payments to most states other than Illinois. We are advised that for the past year Illinois had been receiving only half-UMP payments because it owed the National party for literature—a debt not shown on FEC form C—and is now being put 2 months behind, to match all other state parties, which have been two months behind for some time now.

Major debts include \$9420 for mailing services, \$3200 for a clipping service, \$1826 to David Bergland for copies of his book, \$4215 for convention hall rental, \$3578 to a telemarketer, \$17735 to the California State party, \$2474 to the Massachusetts State party (recall that State party debts include UMP payments not due until the 15th of the next month), \$6100 and \$2700 for printing, \$1810 to the National Chair for travel reimbursement, \$3000 to an accounting consultant, \$12672 for an accountant, a negative \$8130 for rent \$8330 in legal fees, and \$1053 for phone service. Some debts are rotating, shown because we owe but do not pay until after the start of the month.

Editorial

For several months, we have been describing negotiations between the Worcester County Libertarian Association and the Libertarian Party of Massachusetts. The WCLA is a recognized affiliate of the State Party. Unlike most other affiliates and town committees established over the years, the WCLA continues to meet regularly, albeit not with nearly as many attendees as the PVLA has.

To reach out to activists, the WCLA asked for a list of dues-paying Libertarians in its district. In most other states, this sort of contact information is routinely shared, indeed is vigorously pushed, down from the state party to regional and local affiliates. The LPMA declined to share names and addresses, though it did permit a blind use of their email list. The LPMA lists of names are "the party's chief asset" in the words of one State Board member, to be vigorously protected. The State Party held that the State Executive Director did not have to defend with facts her claim that the WCLA leadership is untrustworthy, when it is headed by a long-time libertarian activist.

The LPMA approach is not the most effective way to run a state party. We need openness, not cliquish secrecy. We need a State Party that works for the benefit of the entire party, not just for a few select friends of an inner circle. Now it is time for a change. But if you want change, you will have to work for it, not wait for it to happen spontaneously.