

Liberty Rising

What's happening?

Liberty Day

March 16, 2009 – Yes, ever honoring Liberty, Congress has made every March 16 Liberty Day. Such devotion.



LP Sonoma Elections

April 1, 2009 – Election of officers will be held at 7:00pm, Round Table Pizza, Coddington, Santa Rosa. Per LP Sonoma bylaws the following offices will be filled by majority vote of party members in attendance: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer.

2009 LPC Convention

24-26, 2009 – Check out details at www.ca.lp.org/events.

April the

Liberty Marathon

July 4, 2009 – Instead of celebrating the 4th, celebrate Independence Day by exercising your rights – all that you dare.

Bill of Rights Day

December 15, 2009 – Cancelled due to the continuing economic crisis. You will be notified by the government when your rights have been restored. Until then, obey!

What's a Libertarian to do?

Act surprised

In your daily affairs assume you are a free person. Then, when confronted by the state, act surprised! Say something lame like, "How stupid, I wonder whose idea this was?"

Leverage your efforts

Acting alone to protect our liberties is rarely as effective as when joining with others. Rather than spend 4 hours fighting alone for liberty, spend 15 minutes with a hundred others doing the same.

In political parties the little efforts add up. Indeed, they multiply. Five people gathering to complete a mailing provide the motivation for others to join in. Soon, ten have gathered for the same task and find they have time to spare. They each make a few phone calls, and so it goes.

Another batch of postcards is being printed. Addressing, stamping, and mailing 600 postcards is a bit of a task. Doing sixty is easy. Request a batch of 60 and help out.

Writing a letter every week to the various local newspapers is quite a task. Writing one now and then is easy. Especially easy when you request our flyer on letter writing tips.

At every turn it is tempting to do too much. It is tempting to demand that others do more, and more, and more. The answer is just the opposite. Just do a little. A little is enough.

Contact LP Sonoma. They likely have some little task you can help with.

Pick a date

Any date will do, or rather any day. Every month on that day write a short, hand-written note to an elected representative. Be polite, target one issue, and keep the message simple. You, my elected representative, are making things worse. I need you to back off, get out of the way, and let those involved settle their problem on their own. Voluntarily. Thank you.

Personal notes to politicians are powerful. Isn't it time to take a simple and powerful step: Pick a date.

Contact LP Sonoma, they'll be happy to pick your date.

News break

Libertarian Party of Sonoma County elections will be held April 1, just in time for the new officers to attend and represent Sonoma County at the LPC state convention this April 24-26.

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Outreach kickoff

All registered Libertarian voters in Sonoma County will soon be receiving a series of three postcards – one per month February through April. The first 1,000 postcards are in the mail. That leaves 3,300 more to mail by mid-April. Can you help?

If you volunteer to help, LP Sonoma will send you a packet of sixty each printed address labels, postcards, and postage stamps. Your task is simple. Affix the labels and stamps, and then mail the postcards. If you're motivated, request two packets, and if sixty sounds like a challenge, request half a packet.

By contacting each registered Libertarian voter three times we will have demonstrated our seriousness about achieving local political success. In turn, a number of those 1,431 registered voters will volunteer to help with some simple political task. This organizing effort will pay dividends, especially as it will set us up to engage in effective political action as government flounders and seeks new revenue sources.

Just imagine, we can soon have an active Libertarian presence in Sonoma County. It all starts with your volunteering to help with a simple task.

As usual, contact LP Sonoma to volunteer.

LP Sonoma Elections

Local party elections have been scheduled for 4/1/2009 at the Coddington Round Table Pizza, 7:00pm. Sonoma County LPC members are eligible to vote.

LP Sonoma bylaws require the election of Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. Other offices may be filled by appointment. To secure a place on the ballot notify LP Sonoma by 4/2/2009. You may submit a candidate's statement of no more than 300 words to LibertyRising by 3/10/2009.

This newsletter is being sent by first class mail and fulfills LPC require-

ments of thirty days written notice to all dues paying members.

What's the answer?

*Q: Why did Vallejo declare bankruptcy?
A: Look at the wage and benefit amounts attached to the list of savings that Santa Rosa will achieve through layoffs. Overly generous wages and benefits, including pensions, are bankrupting local government. Hmmm, just as Social Security and Medicare are bankrupting the federal government.*

“Civilization is the encouragement of differences. Force, violence, pressure or compulsion with a view to conformity is both uncivilized and undemocratic.”

Gandhi

*Q: Why are public employees paid such princely amounts?
A: Politicians can't get things done if their employees are embroiled in a labor dispute. By caving in to outrageous wage and benefit demands politicians can at least pickup the garbage, roll the fire trucks, and issue parking tickets.
Q: How can private schools provide a better education at half the cost of government schools?
A: Google "Khan Academy." Teaching those who want to learn is cheap. Teaching students after they have been forced into boring classes is incredibly expensive.*

*Q: Why would two people engage in voluntary trade?
A: Because each saw an opportunity to come out ahead. That's why the market works and government fails.*

What do you know?

How do wage controls fail?

Employers need labor that meets its needs at the lowest cost (including the cost of hiring and training, not to mention various government required benefits). People looking for work seek the

highest paying job they can get (after factoring in commuting costs).

Since neither side can get what it wants (zero wages versus infinite wages), they have no choice but to compromise at a wage each finds acceptable. This voluntary cooperation produces a rough equilibrium price for labor.

All is well until government decides to intervene with wage controls. At the higher wage rate employers desire fewer employees. Meanwhile, at the higher wage rate more people are willing seek those jobs. Both factors increase unemployment. The first directly causes layoffs, while the second simply leaves new job seekers unemployed.

To see nice graphs detailing these effects, purchase a copy of "Quick Study Microeconomics," by BarCharts, Inc. At \$3.95 it is apparently too expensive for city council members and too technical for anyone with more than a high school education.

What caused the housing bubble?

What are the incentives to buy houses? Government tax policy that provides a tax deduction for mortgage interest while there is no (or very little) deduction for rents. Government policies to reduce interest rates which makes more expensive homes more affordable. Government sponsored home loan programs. Government pushed home loan programs. Government land use restrictions that force housing prices up. The shifting of taxes and fees onto housing developers which drives home prices up. The push of location, location, location in home buying which concentrates home purchases in ever tighter housing markets.

There is an awful lot of government involved in the recent bursting of the housing bubble. Now you know. How is it that politicians don't know?

Contact all the usual suspects.

How to answer questions about libertarianism

Start by taking time to compose your thoughts. It may help to restate the question. This also allows you to mod-

ify the question to better suit your skills and your message.

Now, reveal the underlying principle that is often easier to get people to think about (question on heroin becomes a question on the effectiveness of the war on drugs).

Offer a libertarian solution, and then explain how we can get from here (lots of government regulation) to there (lots of individual freedom).

Practice. Instead of arguing with your friends, encourage them to ask questions. Now, practice this four-step process.

Another school con?

The theory is simple. Housing developers build and sell houses. Families buy those houses, families with children. Those children increase the number of children in the school district. This adds greatly to the expense of operating government schools. Thus a fee is levied on the developers in order to recoup some of the costs.

Are there holes in this theory? A few. Many who buy new homes have no children living at home. Many who buy existing homes, built prior to the impact fees, have school age children.

Worst of all, even when enrollment is declining, schools maintain their impact fees. Truthfully, they never were impact fees. They always were an end-run around local taxpayer control. Instead of going to the voters for a needed tax increase, the school district just levies a fee (tax) on developers.

Ask your local school district if such fees will be lowered if enrollment declines.

Directory

LibertyRising is published by James R. Oglesby, Acting-Chair of the Libertarian Party of Sonoma County.

The deadline for the March issue is 3/15/09. Please submit your letters, opinion pieces, and news to:

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The same street address may be used to contact LP Sonoma.

Comics

2/4 *The Press Democrat*

Apparently \$1 billion won't buy a loaf of bread in Zimbabwe and a monthly salary of \$100 billion isn't a living wage. Zimbabwe's efforts to stimulate their economy says a lot about our federal stimulus plan, not to mention local living wage efforts. (Funny, right?)

2/15 *The Press Democrat*

A story on the Obama recovery plan leads with three photos from Depression era public works projects. The efficacy of such projects was not touched upon until the 47th paragraph. (Painfully funny.)

2/12 *The Press Democrat*

Savings to the city of Santa Rosa if various positions are eliminated: \$78K per police support staff; \$80K per park maintenance position; \$105K per building inspector; \$114K per plan checker; \$118K per planner; \$124K per police officer; \$150K per firefighter; \$230K per police lieutenant. (Laughing all the way to the bank.)

"Indians used to be wards of the government, but now we all are. Everybody is an Indian."

Will Rogers, 1934

2/14 *The Press Democrat*

After a thirty-year battle, plastic plumping pipe is finally legal in California. Endless hearings, expensive studies, fact-finding junkets, and campaign donations later, the public has finally received a real economic stimulus. If this took 30 years, how will government ever stimulate the economy? (Are we laughing yet?)

2/7 *The Press Democrat*

We are assured that the "Nation's jobless rate hits 35-year high." The number of unemployed is the highest since 1974. But, isn't our population much higher than in 1974? Shouldn't unemployment records be based upon percentages? (Statistics courses are a laugh riot.)

2/7 *The Press Democrat*

Japanese whalers clash with anti-whaling activists. The tragedy of the commons plays out again when the solution is as old as man – privatize. (Can we, may we, laugh at socialists?)

2/12 *The Press Democrat*

In a long story on the dangers of lead in toys and other products, we are never told any specifics. One product pulled from shelves was a child's sneaker with a slight amount of lead in the label. How many shoes/labels would a child have to eat to face what chance of suffering what harm? Unknown, unspecified, and who cares. (But, don't laugh.)

2/11 *The Press Democrat*

In a late New Year's resolution, "350 European cities agree to cut emissions." Portland did something like this in 1996. They even planted a bunch of trees to suck up carbon dioxide. I guess the millions of trees to the east weren't doing enough. CO2 failed to fall until the 2001 recession and bingo! Portland declared victory. (The joke's on us.)

2/5 *The Press Democrat*

Apparently, when Congress attempted to restrict executive pay in 1993, executives and businesses found ways around Congress through stock options. Isn't that what always happens when government attempts to regulate the marketplace? (It is funny watching regulators doing the same thing over and over and getting the same results.)

Media silence

Gun control hoax

Researchers in England recently asked a novel question. While we all know that the overall murder rate is lower in England than in America, we also know that the average age in England is also older than in America. Since older people seem to commit few crimes, what if we analyzed murder rates by age?

Using data from Chicago, covering males from 1965 to 1990, the researchers compared it to the data on males in England and Wales from 1974 to 1990. The murder rates were essentially identical at all ages. The overall murder rate is less in England and Wales because of age differences. See the 1/2/09 issue of *The Economist*.

My 0.02

National Review recently featured the 25 best Conservative movies. Surprisingly, two great movies were not mentioned. Neither the fairly recent *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (2002) nor the classic *Captains Courageous* (1937, Spencer Tracy) made the list. Perhaps it is because they are both marvelous libertarian films. The former deals with the horror of good intentions coupled with government power, while the latter with the horrors of child labor and worker exploitation. - J. Oglesby, Santa Rosa

This is the opinion section. Send in your two cents worth, just keep it short. Longer opinion pieces are welcome. Very long articles will be considered for publication on a \$20/page fee basis (you pay to cover the additional printing and postage costs).

Your Econ Guru

What do we know about federal spending? The feds can tax and spend, they can borrow and spend, or they can print money and spend. No magic wands, just three simple choices: Tax, borrow, or print.

Okay, let's tax and spend. Those who are taxed have less to spend and that negative economic impact ripples

through the economy. Those who receive the government spending in turn have more to spend and that ripples through the economy. If the government's spending choices are as wise as people's private spending choices, there is neither economic gain or loss. Certainly, there is no stimulus. More likely, government spending is full of bridges to nowhere, political paybacks, and social engineering that ensures a net economic loss. Tax and spend is a bad choice.

Okay, let's borrow and spend. The borrowing directly reduces the funds available for private borrowing. Worthwhile projects are cancelled, and those private projects that are funded now have to pay higher interest rates. Meanwhile, the government again spends on bridges to nowhere, political paybacks, and social engineering that ensures a net economic loss. Borrow and spend is a bad choice.

Okay, okay, let's print money and spend. As the money flows out of Washington the first to receive the funds are joyous and quickly spend, buying goods and services at current rates. But, the excess money hasn't produced any more goods. The extra money forces prices up in an inflationary spiral. Shortly, all are paying more for all their purchases, leaving everyone less well off. Print and spend is a bad choice.

Only private investing and spending can lead an economy out of a recession. Private investments, guided by profits, funds businesses valued by customers. These investments ensure future supplies of goods and services valued by customers. Meanwhile, private spending, guided by the desire to maximize value, rewards businesses providing consumers with the best value for their dollar.

Private investing and spending leads the way out of recession by strengthening businesses providing the best values to their customers. In contrast, government spending rewards failure and drives the economy down.

James R. Oglesby received his B.A. degree in Economics from Sonoma State University in 1984.

Freedom tracks

December 31, 2008: *The Press Democrat* online featured a Libertarian opinion piece on "Living Wage Fairy Tales."

January 22, 2009: A Libertarian letter critical of living wage ordinances was printed in *The Press Democrat* under the heading "Supply and demand."

"In the ideal socialist state, power will not attract power freaks. People who make decisions will show not the slightest bias toward their own interests. There will be no way for a clever man to bend the institutions to serve his own ends. And the rivers will run uphill."

David Friedman, 1973

February 14: Scott Moyer's rebuttal to Ben Boyce of the Living Wage Coalition was printed in *The Press Democrat* under the heading "What free market?"

February 24: John Speicher made the first donation in response to the LP Sonoma postcards, and very generous at that.

Are you laying freedom tracks? If yes, let us know. If no, ...

Help wanted

Reporters, columnists, researchers, movie critics, photographers, and other interested parties are invited to join *LibertyRising*.

That's right, just contact LibertyRising. Join the battle against big government zombies.