

California Freedom

November–December 2007

The official publication of the **Libertarian Party of California**

■ Building the Party

Welcome to YOUR Office

by **Thomas M. Sipos**

You probably know the LPC has an office. You've read the pleas for members to drop by and volunteer some time. But even if you live too far away to visit the office, you still deserve to see it. It is, after all, *your* office—paid for with your monthly dues and pledges.

Your money buys the LPC two small rooms, on the second floor of a two-story building at

14547 Titus Street, in Panorama City, Los Angeles County. The building doesn't look too ritzy from the outside, but every office faces an interior courtyard

For all its benefits, the office's future is in limbo.

with large, green trees. It's like a motel, with the courtyard where the pool would be. And

the rent is low: \$420 a month (utilities included).

"The Executive Committee decided, several years ago, that we needed an office so that we'd look like a real political party," said LPC Secretary **Beau Cain**, adding that the decision was made before he was on ExCom, so his information is second-hand. "We'd have an address to promote an image of validity. We'd have a place where an Executive Director could work, and we could keep our archives and such."

Last August, Cain replaced **Angela Keaton** as the LPC's fulltime office manager. But unlike Keaton, Cain's duties do not include fund raising, which is why he shuns the title of "Executive Director."

"I answer the phone," said

• See **LPC Office** page 8



Photos: Thomas M. Sipos

• **This Panorama City office building may look drab on the outside...**

...but it bustles with Libertarian activism on the inside!



■ Fighting City Hall

Marin LP Douses "Car Wash Ban"

by **Matt Turley**

Last September, Fairfax town councilwoman Susan Brandborg proposed an ordinance to criminalize residential car washing, intended to prevent the runoff from polluting local streams and creeks.

When LPC Chair **Kevin Takenaga** read of the proposal in the *Marin Independent Journal*, he contacted me, the Chair of the Marin County Libertarian Party (MLP). I wrote to the

Fairfax town council, opposing the anti-pollution ordinance and requesting the scientific data underlying it. I received no response.

On October 3, the Fairfax town council convened to discuss Brandborg's proposal. MLP Secretary **Paul Kelley** (a Fairfax resident) spoke against the plan. Most attendees opposed it, including Fairfax Mayor Larry Bragman, who recommended the town consider adopting "best management practices" to address creek pollution without assigning criminal penalties.

One of the lone supporters of the bill was a Fairfax carwash owner.

Because of public opposition, and a lack of scientific data supporting the proposal, its adoption was postponed pending further study.

Thomas Jefferson was correct about eternal vigilance being the price of liberty. Thanks partially to MLP activism, Fairfax residents may continue to wash their cars without becoming criminals. ●

MATT TURLEY is Chair of the Marin County Libertarian Party. Their website: www.marinlp.com

■ Building the Party

Monterey Conference Affirms Freedom in America

by **Richard W. Friesen**

On October 13, three diverse libertarian speakers convened at the Monterey Mini-Convention to address the question: "Is freedom dead in America?"

Anthony Gregory, research analyst at the Independent Institute, galvanized the audience with his "Prospects for Peace and Liberty," decimating the notion that either Left or Right would defend freedom. Both George Bush and the Democratic Congress have lessened our freedoms. But then Gregory parsed the question into long and short terms. Short term, prospects for freedom look bleak. But long term, we are winning!

Dr. David Henderson, research fellow with the Hoover



Institution, demolished the broken window fallacy (the economic theory that building things and then destroying them could improve the economy). He demonstrated, through clear examples and an easy conversational style, that

the economic costs of war are underestimated.

Mark Carbonaro, host "Wake Up Monterey," recounted how he broadcast libertarian philosophy to conservatives through one of the few libertarian radio shows in California. Speaking on "Talk Radio and the Fairness Doctrine," he gave personal examples of how mandatory "fairness" frightens producers into airing pabulum—a failed

• **Below, left to right: Anthony Gregory, Dr. David Henderson, and Mark Carbonaro**

• See **Mini-Con** page 5



Photos: Lawrence K. Samuels

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

by Kevin Takenaga

If you've been watching college football this year, you'll know that it has been an interesting season. Lesser ranked and sometimes lower-division teams have defeated bigger, stronger opponents on a regular basis. Some attribute these upsets to a growing parity among the myriad teams. Others say that pre-season hype overrates mediocre teams with storied pasts.

But the important lesson is that so-called underdog teams arrived with a competitive mentality—regardless of the experts' predictions and the

Why I Am Hopeful

Vegas betting lines. In addition to a winning attitude, the underdogs capitalized on their opponents' mistakes and beliefs in their own superiority.

What does this mean for us?

In this past election in the city where I live, an independent challenger defeated a



well-funded, establishment-endorsed, rising star incumbent for a council seat. Similar to this year's collegiate football situation, the underdog city council candidate entered the

game prepared to win. He'd been active in building a neighborhood group, studied the local issues, and built a network of supporters long before his run for office.

During the campaign, this independent candidate walked many precincts, sent hand-addressed direct mail, and ran a campaign highlighting open government and public safety. These efforts paid off handsomely on Election Day.

Over the past six months, traveling up and down the state, I've found many instances where we've been the underdog in the past and prevailed. We're not hapless, contrary to our

detractors' claims.

Like the underdog football teams and the city councilmember-elect mentioned above, we must prepare to win regardless of the odds we face. If we see that it's not impossible to face a greater foe and win, it gives us hope to find ways to succeed together in the future.

As we enter into the holiday season and find ourselves busy with family, friends, and personal reflection, please squeeze in some time to carve out a level of commitment you'll offer to our team in this important, upcoming election year. Every bit counts and we need your help. ●



FROM THE EDITOR

by Thomas M. Sipos

This is my sixth issue as editor. Half a year. An appropriate time to self-assess my achievements and shortfalls.

My biggest disappointment is that *California Freedom* is not reaching members quickly enough for my satisfaction. My first issue (June) was fast on the heels of May, but later issues took longer. It's been a rocky road.

In June our printer dropped *CF* because our account wasn't large enough. LPC Executive Director **Angela Keaton** began a frantic search for a new printer that could do the job in time for the July issue, and within our budget. She came through, as always.

But then the post office created additional delays regarding our non-profit, periodical rate postal permit for the new printer. Angela worked hard to cut through the postal red tape.

An Executive Director (by whatever title) facilitates the efficient delivery of *CF*. She maintains the membership database, keeping track of who's joined the party, who's paid up, who's lapsed. She forwards the current mailing list to the printer. She collects dues from members and payment from advertisers. She sends complimentary copies to advertisers and contributors.

In August, Angela left. She was replaced by LPC Secretary **Beau Cain**, who's been working

hard on the database, learning what needs to be done. (Read about Beau's work and his call for volunteers in this issue's "Welcome to YOUR Office.") Treasurer **Don Cowles** now handles *CF*'s financials, sending invoices and making payments. They've both done a fine job.

Days before Angela left, *CF*'s layout editor, Muffet Brown, announced that she was resigning to pursue other work. She expected September to be her final issue, but upon hearing of Angela's departure, she agreed to stay on a bit longer, in order to ease the transition.

I expect to take over the layout work and am learning Adobe InDesign. (Kudos to **Mike Laursen** for generously lending the LPC a copy for my use). For now, Muffet is doing the layout, though her new work takes priority over *CF* which she continues to do largely as a favor to the party.

The post office continues its slow pace. Some members report getting *CF* up to a month after it leaves our Georgia printer.

One ExCom At-Large Member suggested we hire a local printer. That would speed delivery, but might increase costs. It's expensive doing business in California.

But delivery is only one stage. Producing *CF* involves four separate stages. First, I write and edit the paper. When that stage is mostly complete, Muffet begins the layout, fol-

lowed by my proofing its text. In the third stage the layout file goes to the printer, after which Muffet examines their proof, and Beau confirms the current mailing list. Then the post office takes over.

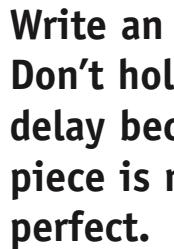
Hopefully, merging editorial and layout in a single person will speed things up.

How can *you* help? By submitting articles, letters, photos, and cartoons. This is a combined issue partially because I haven't gotten many submissions. (I need you to *write* articles, not send me *ideas* for someone else to write.)

Maybe you've not written anything because you don't think you're good enough?

Don't "not submit" because your piece is not perfect. Just write it. I'm here to edit. Almost nothing has been published these past six issues without my meddling—from minor punctuation changes to extensive rewrites. I've had people submit raw outlines that I've polished into articles. I expanded

Write an article. Don't hold back or delay because your piece is not perfect.



a single paragraph into a short article, and I trimmed 2,500+ word submissions to under 700.

Don't *delay* because your piece is not perfect. Someone promised me an article last June, and has since periodically

informed me that he's "still working on it."

I'm grateful to **John Briscoe**, **Norm Westwell**, **Lawrence K. Samuels**, and **Elizabeth C. Brierly**, all prolific contributors. In addition to her own pieces, Elizabeth routinely submits material from the Independent Institute and (like Lawrence) has directed me to other contributors.

But though I'm unsatisfied with *CF*'s current delivery speed, many of my goals I have achieved:

- I wanted greater coverage of the most important political issue facing our nation and state: the current and future wars. Mission accomplished.

- I wanted to encourage discussion and debate of philosophical and party procedural issues. Done.

- I wanted a larger and livelier "Letters to the Editor" section. Done.

- I wanted greater coverage of libertarians in the arts. Done. Most past issues have profiled a Hollywood Libertarian. (But I need your help on this — if you know of any libertarians in the arts, please inform me so that I can promote them!)

- We've also increased our advertising sales. Since I've taken over, *CF* has lost one advertiser, but gained two.

I hope to have speedier delivery of *CF* by spring 2008, after the holiday madness and convention chaos have subsided. I also expect to attend our state convention in San Diego. Look for me and let me know what you think. ●

Letters to the Editor



Bylaws Proposals Sought...

The Bylaws Committee is seeking proposals from counties and their members for proposed bylaws changes to be taken up at the 2008 LPC convention in San Diego.

In the past, it's been difficult to submit bylaws proposals at the convention due to time constraints, floor rules, and other handicaps. With election of national delegates this year on the agenda, timing at the convention is even tighter than usual.

We'd like to make bylaws proposals easier. A bylaws proposal has a better chance of being passed on the floor if the Bylaws Committee reports it. In this case, we're opening up this opportunity to all LPC members.

We can't guarantee that the Committee would approve proposals for our report. But we will guarantee that we'll give a fair appraisal to each proposal submitted.

Proposals can be submitted to: michael@seebeck.us.

We'll also have a Bylaws Committee meeting to review our draft report on Monday, December 10, 7 p.m. at the LAX Sheraton, the site as the 2005 convention. It's open to any member who wishes to attend.

—Michael Seebeck
Riverside, CA

... And Offered

Proposed Bylaws changes:

1. Allow individual counties to have their own members. For example, allow someone to become a member of the county without having to become a member of the state party. Or to be a member of the state party without having to be a member of the county. I believe this is presently possible, but there seems to be some debate about what is presently allowed within the state bylaws.

2. Allow different membership levels. I'm coming to accept the notion that the LP should be more inclusive. I'm willing to accept that anyone who registers LP should be considered an "associate member," though not allowed to vote unless they're a "full member," which would require them to pay dues and sign the pledge, for example.

We must do *something* to get our membership numbers back up. We need to make joining the party more accessible. We need to look at everything we're doing and accept that the world has changed.

For example, the big selling point used to be that by paying to join, one would get a newsletter. But who still pays to get a paper newspaper delivered to their door every morning vs. reading their news on the internet? Why should we continue to spend considerable mon-

ies to print our party newsletter? Why not simply publish it online and let the *whole world* read it?

Once we get people to join at the simplest, lowest level, we'll be better at increasing the numbers of full members and donors.

—Edward Teyssier
San Diego, CA

Editor replies: *California Freedom* has long been available online at: www.ca.lp.org/cafreedom.shtml.

Going "purely online" (i.e., ditching the paper version) has been discussed. Printing and postage for *CF* is one of the LPC's larger expenses. And due to the slow delivery from our Georgia printer, some members receive their paper copies up to a month after the issue goes online.

However, a physical newspaper (like a physical office) increases the LPC's validity in the eyes of the world. A "real" newspaper looks better at outreach events than an online edition run off an inkjet. Advertisers prefer a publication that's *both* online and on paper (so while going "purely online" would save on printing and postage, it'd lose money on advertising). Finally, there's a psychological argument that members will more likely rejoin the LPC if they receive a tangible benefit for their dues money.

U.S. Must Help Islam

I get amused reading articles from Libertarians who possess little first-hand knowledge and commensurately less insight about how to end our conflict with Islamic terrorism. Ivan Eland ["U.S. Role in Islamist Terrorism", September 2007] thinks Islamists harbor animosity towards us because of our occupation of their lands, umbrage that, according to him, dates back to the Crusaders. As one who was born and raised in an Islamic land, I have a somewhat different take on this.

Christianity emphasized reforming of the individual. Defending its community

from external threats was never its major preoccupation. It thus lost all of its battles with its external enemies whether they be Islamic or pagan.

Islam sought to correct this weakness in the newfound religion. It fashioned its Islamic state to quell domestic dissent and conquer external enemies. Democracy and individual rights didn't matter. This worked well for them but lost its advantage over the West after the Christian Reformation.

A similar Reformation movement for Islam is long overdue. They need a helping hand to bring them to the standards and principles of the international community that every one of us in the international community abides by. Our own self interest and moral duty should compel us to see this happens within our lifetime.

That's all Bush has been trying to do. He is trying to help Islam come out of its Dark Age's grip and embrace the ideals of the Enlightenment that have done such wonders for our Western Civilization. It's a luxury to think that we can afford not to do this when the cost-benefit ratio is so far in favor of paying that price.

It's not that they want to die early or that they want to go to heaven. It's that they're miserable enough not to mind dying early. In a culture that forbids self-criticism, someone else will always be blamed for its miseries.

If we denied them the help they needed to make this transition, we may never see the day where our cultures could peacefully coexist in a mutually beneficial and harmonious relationship that would benefit all of us.

Until such a time, I don't think Islamic hostilities against us will cease regardless of how meticulous we were in constraining our behavior to warrant their approbation.

—Aarde V. Atheian
Los Angeles, CA

"Global Warming" Is For Cats

I have a black and white cat named Shadow. Shadow has piercing green eyes that seem to look into your soul. Shadow has a perpetual expression of amazement on his face and never smiles. I have reason to question this cat's mental stability.

Recently, I observed Shadow attacking a small object on the carpet. He would leap high in the air and come down with all claws and teeth. The object was doomed—such ferocity!

Naturally, I assumed the object must be a mouse or a bug, but it was actually a chip of wood!

When I pointed this out to Shadow, he became uneasy and resented my comments. He indicated he had reached a consensus with my other cat, Brownie, and determined this was not a chip of wood, as I claimed, and that I was a denier of the consensus. As a denier, I was considered antisocial and perhaps even a danger to the cat community.

This reminds me of the climate scare. The proponents of man-made earth warming theory claim that increased levels of carbon dioxide cause earth warming. However, the ice core records indicate the opposite. Increased levels of CO₂ follow earth-warming, and thus could not cause it. To keep the hoax going, they must silence or isolate the scientists who deny their theory. For if they fail, and the hoax gets exposed, the whole plan of socializing America would collapse like a house of cards. This could actually result in our children living in a free and prosperous country. What a novel idea.

In the meantime, Shadow is still attacking chips of wood.

—Albert J. Segalla
Copperopolis, CA

I Want to Join the California Coffee Club!

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Combat Vet Turns LPC Peacenik

by Thomas M. Sipos

David Larkin is known to many California Libertarians for his activism, most recently serving two years as Los Angeles County LP Chair (2004–06). As an anti-war activist, he speaks from experience—he had fought in Vietnam, a war for which he volunteered.

Larkin joined the U.S. Navy Reserve in 1964 while still in high school. In 1966 he became active duty and worked in the *USS Okanogan's* boiler room. “The worst job on the ship,” said Larkin. “One of our chiefs came up to me and said, ‘They’re looking for volunteers for Vietnam, you wanna go?’ I said, ‘Can I think about it?’ He said, ‘Yeah, I’ll give you 30 seconds.’ So I said, ‘I’ll go.’ I figured anything was better than working in the boiler room.”

After additional training, Larkin was flown to Vietnam in April 1967. Thirty-six hours flying time from San Diego to



• Machine Gunner David Larkin in 1967.

Saigon on a four-engine propeller plane. He landed at Tansanute Air Force Base and was assigned to a naval patrol on the Mekong Delta and Saigon River. One of seven men in his boat's crew.

“We were Rivron 111-1,” said Larkin. “Part of the transports. Drop troops off, pick them up. Provide fire if needed. Generally, in the Navy you have two jobs. A regular job—I worked as an engineman. And your general quarters job—I was a machine gunner on general quarters. I had a 50 caliber machine gun and an automatic grenade launcher.

“There were other types of boats in our group. A kind of patrol boat, not for carrying troops, just for fighting. Another like a battleship. Over

time, the Navy developed lots of different weapons, because the VC would fire at you from these hardened bunkers. They were like adobe, made of clay, sunbaked. Even a 50 caliber round wouldn't penetrate one of those things.

“We had the same problem they have now in Iraq. They'd

“We wanted to get the people on our side. Instead we infuriated them half the time.”

ambush you from the side and shoot rockets, RPGs. We had a lot of armor. They made the boat wider to accommodate the extra weight, for buoyancy. But RPGs can penetrate armor plate like a hot knife through butter. Our armor was about 3/4 of an inch thick. It'd stop a heavy bullet, 50 caliber, but not these RPGs. It's called a shape charge. They detonate against the armor and blow a hole through it. If you're on the other side, too bad for you.”

Seeking a solution, the crew welded rebar to the boat. “The RPGs would hit these outside bars first and detonate,” said Larkin. “This widens the blast, so it's not concentrated, and the armor can stop it. Well, that's how it worked in theory. But it still detonated the armor, and guys were killed.”

Larkin recounts being under enemy fire. “One night we were cruising up the channel. I was cockswain, on the wheel driving the boat. All of a sudden

a rocket shot across and hit the boat ahead of us. Boom! Stuff flying everywhere. Well, the armor saved them, nobody got hurt. But I didn't want to cross the line of fire, so I threw the engines in reverse. I heard rockets go *whoosh*, exploding. Two or three more fired. Maybe they were shooting at us but they missed. Had it hit the

to constantly bail them. When we came back, his boat was under water. He was madder than a wet hen. I thought to myself, if he wasn't a Vietcong before, he probably is now.

“I saw a lot of incidents like that. We wanted to get the people on our side. Instead we in-



• Rivron boats in Larkin's patrol group in 1967.

armor where I was, there wasn't any rebar. It'd have wiped me out. We lost one guy like that. One of those things hit, turned him into jello on the inside.

“I kind of saw the futility of it all. How we treated the Vietnamese, not really good. I remember a fisherman. We took him off his boat. He didn't get tortured, but we took him for questioning. We brought him back at the end of the day. Well, the boats leak. They have

furiated them half the time. Not that we didn't do good deeds. We'd throw them our C-rations and stuff like that. We tried to help them when we could.

“It's kind of how libertarians see the government. An elephant in a china shop. They may have the intention of doing well, but they just manage, with their brute force, to screw things up.”

• See **Larkin** page 5



• David Larkin (left) in 1967.

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www.CA.LP.org/cafreedom.shtml



Libertarians Join Nationwide Peace Rallies



• Bicyclists rally for peace in Monterey

Photo: Lawrence K. Samuels

by Lawrence K. Samuels

On October 27, thousands of peace activists rallied nationwide to demand an end to the war in Iraq. An estimated 30,000 protesters marched in San Francisco alone.

The Libertarian Party of California, and other libertarian peace organizations, joined many of the demonstrations that called for peace and non-interventionism in the Middle East.

One peace rally in Monterey, California displayed over 150



Photo: Alan Lundegard

white memorial crosses stapled with photos and descriptions of fallen American soldiers, lined in rows across a grassy knoll overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Not far off, a “walk-in-their-shoes” exhibit displayed hundreds of shoes tagged with the names of Iraqi children killed since the beginning of the war.

Bicyclists decked in pink peace signs and ribbons were given a police escort through Monterey’s main streets. Other

peace activists marched to the former Doubletree Hotel where they joined another group engaged in singing and flag waving. After the song-fest, some 30 to 40 activists marched through the center of Monterey.

This author was one of the event’s organizers. ●

LAWRENCE K. SAMUELS is co-chair of the Libertarian Party of Monterey County. He also co-chairs Monterey County Libertarians for Peace, with Prof. David R. Henderson, an economist with the Hoover Institute. Samuels’ email: lawsamz@hotmail.com.



Larkin

continued from page 4

Larkin returned to the U.S. in October 1967 with a Navy commendation medal bearing a combat V. “I was still in favor of the war, because this was before I became a libertarian. But I began to have questions

last year. I still have the citation for it.”

A former Republican, Larkin shifted toward libertarianism in the 1980s. “What really got me interested was their position on the war on drugs. It made sense. I think I joined the party in ‘89. I’d been going to meetings and somebody says, ‘Why don’t you become an officer?’ So I said, ‘Oh, okay.’

Libertarians know how gov’t spins. How could it be so bad in everything else and good about this war?”

“When the Gulf War came, I was not antiwar, because I identified with our troops. But later I saw that a lot of the informa-

tion and justification for the war was spin, and not necessarily true.” Larkin has since continued his political education, and has opposed the recent wars in the Balkans and the Mideast. He can’t understand why any libertarian would feel otherwise.

“What really shocked me was libertarians agreeing with the government’s use of torture. I’ve had some libertarians say, ‘These are bad people, torture’s okay in this case,’ forgetting everything the party stands for. Everything that liberty and freedom are about.

“Plus, this war’s costing us a fortune. It’s devastating our economy. We’re spending so much on this military that is not redeemable. That’s not doing anything for us. The average citizen, I don’t believe, benefits from this stuff. They maybe say, it’s protecting him, but I don’t think so. It’s just making the risk of [future] war very high.

ing media and consumer choice. Henderson closed the day by concluding that freedom is *not* dead in America. Progress is uneven and freedom has less-

ened in some areas, yet in terms of slavery, military draft, and economic choice, the bigger picture is better than ever. For instance, personal video cameras and YouTube has made the documentation of political insanity available to everyone, exposing many politicians’ gaffes and misdeeds.

The Monterey conference was organized by **Lawrence Samuels** and moderated by this author. It was sponsored by Libertarians for Peace of Monterey County, the Sam Adams Forum, the Libertarian Party of California, the Libertarian Party of Monterey County, and Freedom Watch. ●

RICH FRIESEN was the LP’s candidate for Congress in Marin County in 2006. E-mail: rich@friesenconsulting.com

Mini-Con

continued from page 1

outcome in a world of explod-



Photo: Lawrence K. Samuels

• 2007 Monterey Mini-Convention on October 13

YOUR Advice Wanted

Don’t like the *national* LP’s Bylaws or Convention Rules?

M Carling invites members to submit their proposed changes to the National Bylaws Committee at bylaws@lp.org.

Proposed changes under consideration will appear in the national *LP News* and at <http://lpbylaws.blogspot.com> so members can offer comments.

Three Californians currently serve on the 10-member Bylaws Committee: **M Carling**, **Aaron Starr**, and **Frank Manske** (Counter clockwise from top)



Democrats waste a lot of money, but at least it’s spent here, on stupid social projects. Those are preferable to war.

“Being libertarians, being against the war on drugs, you

know what the government is like. You know how they spin. How could they be so bad in everything else and good about this war?” ●

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■ News You Can Use

Campaigning With Signs & Banners



by John Briscoe

Signs are an inexpensive way to build visibility and candidate name recognition. A single sign at a busy intersection could gain thousands of impressions per day as voters drive past. Especially for local elections, candidates must make a concerted sign effort. “No signs” often means “no standing” in the minds of voters.

Signs are typically made from printed paper stock (cardboard) or corrugated plastic. Signs basically come in three sizes: small, medium, and large (4' x 8').

Small “Yard” Signs

These are 22" to 36" wide, and 13" to 24" high, with the candidate's name, political position, and maybe a short slogan.

Cardboard signs can be single-face, or “fold-over” double-face for a two-sided sign. They can be held up with 36" wooden stakes (about 45 cents each) or wire “U” frames (about 85 cents each), in each case using a stapler to install.

Corrugated plastic signs are supported by “H” wire frames that slip into the corrugated holes.

Small signs cost least. And they are least “seen,” so there must be many more put up compared to medium and large signs. “Fold-over” signs can be cut in half to double total signs. Intact “fold-over” signs cost \$1.20 each.

Medium Signs

These are 18" to 24" wide, and 36" to 48" high, with room for the candidate's picture in addition to name and slogan.



But consider pictures carefully. Pictures can attract voters. They can also attract graffiti mustaches and eyeglasses, making the sign a mockery of the candidate.

Medium signs are posted using 5' to 6' stout wooden stakes with a cross “T” bar at the top to support the sign. These signs are too large to be supported by wire.

Large Banner Signs

These are 8' wide, and 4' or more high, with room for a large candidate name, plus message and photo.

Banners are hung over concrete block walls and fences using a bent bracket support system that does not damage property. They can also be fastened into the wall, but this leaves permanent damage and is not recommended. Sometimes the sign can be tied between corner landscape trees using heavy string.

Banners should be put up early to claim the best corner locations. They are least likely to be damaged if hung with a ladder between landscape trees on high traffic corners.

Banners are best for quick name recognition. They are costly; \$25 to \$35 each.

Banners *can* be overkill. Know your voter audience and their appetite for a large public presence.

Sign Strategy

Do *not* crowd words into signs. The candidate's name is the most important part of any sign and should be as large as possible. The office sought is also important.



• In 2004 Norm Westwell stood out from the crowd with his giant, handpainted, recycled signs and memorable nickname.

Signs must be ordered and posted *early*. Single signs standing alone, ahead of the “junk sign wave,” will get early attention for absentee balloting.

Candidates should have at least one sign everywhere that competing candidates have a sign. But to transcend the clutter, also have signs where opponents do not.

Post as many signs at houses near schools as possible. Hundreds of parents see these signs every day, as do voters on election day if the school is a polling place. Signs at private homes are less subject to vandalism. Candidates should introduce themselves to the homeowner with literature, and request permission to post a sign in a flower bed or yard's edge. After a quick yes or no, move on.

All candidate friends and acquaintances should be asked to host a sign.

Know Your Rights

Signs may *not* be posted on public right-of-ways, flood control channel fencing, or utility poles. But if opponents have signs there, everyone should.

Check local ordinances regarding political signs from each municipality in the election district. Many cities have pamphlets or websites to explain their rules.

Ask local police departments about their policies regarding signs. Many cities have senior retired volunteers to patrol and (legally) remove garage sale signs and (illegally) remove political signs.

Illegal ordinances that are enforced are still illegal and subject to successful court challenge after the election, with attorney fees paid in full.

Be aware of the following case law:

Baldwin (& C.O.G.S.) vs. Redwood City 540 F 2d 1360 (9th Circuit, 1976). Political signs on private property are protected under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution; size limits serve no compelling municipal interest and are thus unconstitutional.

C.O.G.S. vs. City of Antioch 557 F Supp. (N.D. Cal. 1982). Setting time limits prior to which no political signs may be posted are unconstitutional (i.e., the First Amendment applies 365 days of the year).

Vincent (& C.O.G.S.) vs. City of Los Angeles, (U.S. Supreme Court, 1983). Cities may place a total ban on political signs on public property. (This means all candidates must be banned equally.) Part of the reasoning was that private property sites were freely available for this form of free speech.

Write the City Attorney requesting clarification of ordinances in conflict with the U.S. Constitution, case law, and California law. Demand a response under Freedom of Information. Demand the removal of illegal free speech constraints (e.g., time limits, sign size, distance to public property, types of signs, etc.) under threat of legal action and cost—\$10,000 plus attorney fees!

California Civil Code, Section 52, provides in relevant part: (b) *whoever denies the right provided by Section 51.7 (the right to free speech), or whoever aids, incites, or conspires in that denial, is liable for each and every offense for the actual damages suffered by any person denied that right and in addition, (1)*

an amount to be determined by a jury, or a court sitting without a jury, up to a maximum of three times the amount of actual damages; (2) a civil penalty of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) ... and (3) attorney fees as may be determined by the court.

Local civic “beauty zealots” often remove signs without basis in law, under color of badge. This threatens free speech and a candidate's election efforts. It must be challenged early and aggressively.

After the Election

All signs should be removed. The public is annoyed by continued visual pollution. Municipalities can remove signs on public right-of-ways and fine candidates. All yard signs should be removed, and a small Thank You flyer put on the door letting the homeowner know how their sign helped (win or lose).●

JOHN BRISCOE, a Libertarian from Orange County, was elected to the Board of Trustees of the Ocean View School District in 2006.

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■ Book Reviews

For a Less Painful Convention

by Mark Lamendola

Robert's Rules of Order, 10th Edition, by Henry M. Roberts III, William J. Evans, Daniel H. Honemann, and Thomas J. Balch, 802 pp, Perseus Books Group, 2000)

I find it appropriate that this book has a gold cover. Following the old cliché, it's worth its weight in gold.

Having been involved at all levels in various organizations, I've found that 98% of the headaches that arise are due to someone's ignorance of the rules of how to "play nice with others" who are also on a given committee, board, or panel.

People who don't take the time to learn *Robert's Rules of Order* have no business serving on a committee, board, or panel. Such people do more harm than good. They hurt people's feelings and propagate misunderstandings. They create rework, pointless discussion, and inefficiencies. All of these problems would have been prevented by applying the basics of *Robert's Rules*.

A person can learn the basic rules by observing, but such learning would occur over too much time for that approach

to work well. It's much better to just buy your own copy of *Robert's Rules* and study selected parts for a few minutes a day over the course of a week or so.

Some folks object to *Robert's Rules* on the grounds the rules are too formal or hard to learn. These objections are not valid, because the rules are not overly formal and are fairly easy to learn.

Another objection is the rules create too much of an administrative burden. Again, not true. The reality is the rules facilitate communication and reduce administrative burdens. The rules provide a flexible structure that any organization may modify, but less modification means less of a learning curve for people new to the organization.

I've served on bylaws committees in which we did modify *Robert's Rules*, mostly because the rules are based on face to face meetings when electronic meetings are increasingly the norm. Yet, the same principles apply—only a few details need to change.

Yes, the book is thick. This can lead people to think it's full of stuff to memorize. But the core of what's needed for the typical organization member is relatively small and all of it

makes sense. Making things easier for the reader, the book explains the rationale behind the rules as you go.

The bulk of the book consists of "extra stuff" that falls outside of what a person normally needs to know. The core is pretty light. So don't be intimidated by the page count.

As you might expect, *Robert's Rules of Order* is, well, orderly. It consists of 20 sections. An astute reader can quickly pick out which sections are applicable for studying right away, and which should be referenced later. The former far outweighs the latter, for the typical board member or meeting attendee.

If you want to succeed as a member of a board, committee, or panel (or if you simply don't want to be a pain to everyone else), you must have this book. ●



MARK LAMENDOLA has served on several boards, committees, and subcommittees, and has held a variety of offices in various organizations. He's authored over 6,000 articles. This one is reprinted from www.mindconnection.com

■ News You Can Use

Do's and Don'ts for a Fun Convention

by Elizabeth C. Brierly

Participating in California and national LP conventions is a great joy. I haven't missed a one. What a ball to surround oneself with people who reflect the rational, moral, and practical elements of one's values! But the business of an LPC convention and its pace can be confusing for first-time delegates, so I've jotted down a few handy tips.

Do:

...go! Trust me on this. You will not be bored.

...pack *Robert's Rules of Order* in your carry-on bag so you can bone up. This tried and true tool really does help large meetings run smoothly and stay on track.

...visit convention registration early. Know your county number to speed up your credentialing process. Check in with your region's chair; inform him or her if you'll be away from the business session; check in upon return.

...review the LPC's platform, program, and bylaws—at least so that you know the difference. Proposals will be put forth affecting them, so it helps to be familiar with them.

...hang out with other LPC conventioners after hours!



See what creative projects, discourse, costuming, and poetry your fellow innovators are up to.

Don't:

...be afraid to ask questions about the proceedings. Also, the microphone is your friend; if you use it, the Secretary will be, too!

...be surprised if a passionate delegate asks to suspend the rules to take up whatever this year's controversial issue is, nor if a rousing debate ensues.

...watch what you say. Let loose for a change! Libertarians are so polite and always holding back how they really feel; it's just heartbreaking.

...forget to chip in for the late-night refreshments offered by hospitality suite hosts. Free trade rocks!

Most of all, enjoy yourself. Be proud of your part in the libertarian community and all we're fighting for. You're in for a treat. ●

ELIZABETH C. BRIERLY is a past editor of *California Freedom*. She's currently Public Affairs Media Coordinator for the Independent Institute.

Laughing at Ourselves

by Thomas M. Sipos

The Pianist Who Liked Ayn Rand, by Gene H. Bell-Villada, 240 pp, Amador Publishers, 1998

Libertarian satires of Ayn Rand extend at least as far back as Jerome Tuccille's nonfiction *It Usually Begins With Ayn Rand* (1971). Such works appeal to libertarians' conflicted admiration for Rand; her books inspired many readers to trek down the intellectual path to libertarianism, yet Rand's authoritarian personal life was a Stalinist parody of her individualist philosophy (e.g., her living room "show trials" of acolytes who'd violated the Objectivist "party line").

Rand herself was in no way conflicted over libertarians, whom she called "a random

collection of hippies of the right." In 1976, she enthusiastically supported Gerald Ford for president over both Reagan and Carter, never mind the LP's Roger MacBride. Nor did she share many a libertarians' self-deprecating humor, which she regarded as a form of "sanction

of the victim." She'd reputedly said that "laughing at yourself is like spitting in your own face." Who would John Galt laugh at? Not himself, certainly.

But all this history is mostly unknown to "outsiders," who often confuse Rand's Objectivism with libertarianism. Thus it may surprise Gene H. Bell-Villada (a National Book Critics Circle Award finalist and, one presumes, a good "progressive") to learn that many libertarians will delight in his "The Pianist Who Liked Ayn Rand," a 63-page novella that also lends its title to his 13-piece collection.

The novella will resonate with libertarians. Many of us have seen, or read of, or heard of real-life versions of Bell-Villada's characters. (I had a high school classmate who turned "Randroid" for a few years.) In "The Pianist," a uni-

versity music student studies Rand to impress an Objectivist coed. But despite mastering an ability to spout boilerplate Objectivism, his amorous advances fall short of the Roarkian aggression needed to impress the coed.

Most of Bell-Villada's protagonists are nerdy Latinos; bookish beta males with a love of classical music. In "The Prize" a Puerto Rican boy is obsessed with a classical music radio station. But when he finally finds the courage to call the station and win a classical recording, it turns out to be an LP—and his family's record player only accepts 78s. In "The Customer" a lonely engineer spends every Saturday savoring *The New Yorker*—articles, advertising, and all. His admiration for an

unseen model's legs inspires him to drive to the liquor store and see if he can find a display ad featuring that same model.

In Randian terms, Bell-Villada's stories are naturalistic rather than romantic. Brief sketches of ordinary people pursuing minor dreams, defeated by petty, random events. His stories are satirical, minimalist, and literary. The sort of "slices of life" favored by university presses. Heavy on character rather than plot.

The Pianist Who Liked Ayn Rand remains in print, and inexpensive used copies are available on Amazon.com. Some of the stories are better than others, but libertarians shouldn't care. "The Pianist Who Liked Ayn Rand" alone is worth the price. ●



LPC Office

continued from page 1

Cain. "I respond to mail, and to email. I do a considerable amount of filing. I make bank deposits. I authorize credit card charges. I maintain the database. That's the ordinary stuff that happens here."

Unlike the extraordinary stuff of October 6, a designated "volunteer day." On that sunny Saturday afternoon, libertarians

the mass mailing of a "membership renewal appeal letter." Volunteers sat around a table, signing letters and stamping envelopes.

The volunteers were **Don Cowles, Zandier Collier III, Matthew Barnes, Michael McMahon, Crystal Updegraff, LeRoy Nelson, Murray Levy,** and this author. But our labor did not go unrewarded. As "ranking officer," Collier bought pizza for everyone — four pies!

"There hasn't been anything

Photo: Thomas M. Sipos



- **Southern Vice Chair Zander Collier III stamping envelopes in the back room.**

arrived from as far away as I could have directed a volunteer to do for the past two



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The LPC will hold its 2008 state convention at the Marina Village Conference Center, on the shore of San Diego's Mission Bay, near SeaWorld.

This year will be a presidential year, so we expect to have the national LP candidates speaking, as well as very entertaining performances. There will be an evening banquet following the Saturday business conference. This will not just be a business meeting, but also a very exciting and memorable experience!

Please *mark your calendars* for Friday, February 22nd through Sunday, the 24th.

Tour the site virtually at www.marinavillage.net

Note that overnight accommodations are *not* at Marina Village itself. Package information, schedule details, and much more coming soon.

Photo: Elizabeth C. Brierly, 2004



months," said Cain, "because I myself have been learning what needs to happen on a daily basis. But just this past week, I've identified some crucial updating that needs to happen in our database."

Volunteers who can assist Cain with data entry and data correction should phone the office at: (818) 782-8400.

For all its benefits, the office's future is in limbo. "Nothing's quite as sure as change," said

Cain. "Think about that as we go through deciding whether we're going to keep the office open, or take all our operations virtual." ●

THOMAS M. SIPOS, of LA County, is the Editor of California Freedom.

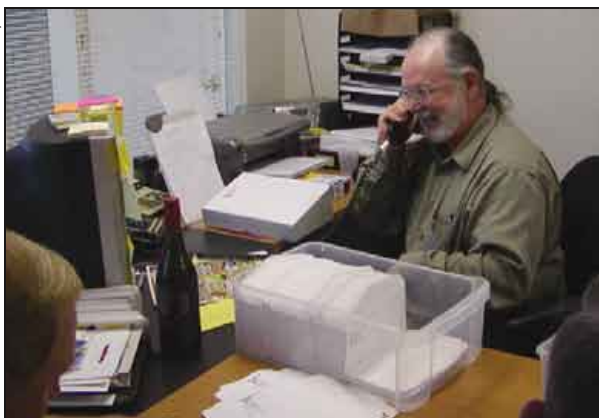
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Photo: Thomas M. Sipos



- **LPC Secretary Beau Cain mans the phone at the LPC Executive Office, in west Los Angeles County.**

Anyone who can assist Cain occasionally with data entry and data correction should phone the office at: (818) 782-8400.

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