



Serf City

New York Politics from a Libertarian Perspective

Volume 4 Issue 1

Michael Bloomberg, Serial Killer

by L. Neil Smith

Suppose I worked for you.

Suppose, when you hired me, I had sworn by everything I believed in to labor faithfully in your interests, to the very best of my ability.

Now suppose that we were walking down an alley when a figure with a nine-inch butcher knife sprang out from behind a dumpster and confronted you, demanding that you choose between your money and your life.

To your astonishment and dismay, instead of defending you (as I once promised), I grab you from behind and pin your arms so you can neither escape nor defend yourself, while the mugger goes through your pockets and takes everything valuable that you're carrying. When he whimsically decides to plunge his knife into your body, I ignore your screams, and even order you to shut up, while I hold you there as you're stabbed again and again and finally fall lifeless to the dirty pavement.

You're dead.

What does that make me?

You don't have to be a lawyer to understand that what makes me is an accessory to armed robbery and murder, after, during, and (if I had planned to do it to you all along) before the act. I am a criminal co-conspirator. And to make things even worse, in this scenario, it turns out that I've somehow arranged things so that I may never be prosecuted for my crime, or held legally accountable for it in any way.

Morally, of course, I'm pond scum. I'm as low and contemptible a creature as it's possible for a human being to be. I'm even lower than the basically honest and straightforward mugger who didn't work to gain and betray your trust, but simply took your life while robbing you. Any way you slice it (if you'll pardon the expression), I'm a cold-blooded killer. It doesn't matter that I didn't personally wield the knife. And if I do it often enough, to enough people, I'm a serial killer.

At this point, I want to make it clear that this is not a parable. It is not a metaphor, a simile, or any kind of analogy. It is an accurate, point-for-point description of the criminal behavior of the authorities in many of America's biggest cities—New York, Chicago, Denver—where you are forbidden to carry, or in some cases to own, a weapon of self-defense. Instead of using their resources to pursue criminals, the police in these jurisdictions are busy preventing you from exercising the unalien-

able individual, civil, Constitutional, and human right of every man, woman, and responsible child to obtain, own, and carry, openly or concealed, any weapon—rifle, shotgun, handgun, machine gun, anything—any time, any place, without asking anyone's permission.

The crime I'm guilty of in my scenario is the crime they're guilty of in real life. Through force or the threat of force, they pin your arms and make you helpless while robbers, rapists and killers do whatever they like with you. Certain of these authorities are even guiltier because they've mounted a deliberate, nationwide effort to spread their particular kind of deadly criminality as far and wide as possible.

If you have any doubt about the mortal threat that their heinous, criminal, unconstitutional scheming poses to you and to yours, order the astonishing video documentary *Innocents Betrayed*, as well as the amazing book *Death by Gun Control*, both of which can be found at jpfo.org, the website of Jews for the Preservation of Firearms Ownership.

Foremost among these schemers is New York mayor Michael Bloomberg. The easiest thing in the world to forget is how it felt to be poor. And if you've never been poor (or even middle class), you might as well belong to a different species from the rest of us. Worth about \$11.5 billion dollars, Bloomberg is rather typical of the arrogant, power-hungry "malefactors of great wealth" who are protected by heavily armed bodyguards, go everywhere by armored limousine and helicopters, and who have no idea at all what it's like for ordinary people to work hard, struggle to pay the bills, and brave the savage jungles that victim disarmament has made out of America's once great cities.



Fifteen years of data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (data Bloomberg and others of his ilk are certainly familiar with) for every county confirms that those counties that permit concealed carry see significant reductions of crime, the largest occurring in big cities.

According to University of Chicago Law School Professor John R. Lott, Jr., writing in his book *More Guns, Less Crime: Understanding Crime and Gun Control Laws* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998, p.159), the cost of denying individuals their legal and moral right to the means of self-defense is more violent crime: 1,500 additional murders, 4,000 rapes, 11,000 armed robberies, and 60,000 aggravated assaults. In

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We Are In Political Danger

by John Procida

Last month I went to Washington DC to attend a Rally for American Freedoms, the insistence that the government follow the written constitution and to hear Doctor (Congressman) Ron Paul speak on those subjects.

The turnout was about 300 people from all over our country. People who put their lives on hold and made the time and bore the expense to travel great distances to be there. Good but not what we were hoping for and I guess not newsworthy, as I am not aware that any media printed or broadcasted it.

In the recent Republican presidential debates, millions of people voted for Dr. Paul in spite of the fact that the media and the Republican Party tried everything they could to stop him from getting his message of freedom and constitutionality out to the public, but they did not show up for this event. Where were they?

What is sad and the reason that our country has drifted so far from the message of the Declaration of Independence and our incredibly great Constitution written by geniuses and administered by well-meaning oafs is that as our forefathers said "the constitution is only a piece of paper, it cannot defend it self, it's up to the people to defend it." The weakness of our system is if one party or if both parties think alike as they do now, as they both love big government, controls the presidency, both houses of Congress and the Supreme Court, they are in the position to ignore the Constitution, and this unfortunately has happened now and in the past, resulting in the mess we are now in. The people have not defended the Constitution!

The small showing at Dr. Paul's demonstration is symptomatic of the problem; the demonstration was not effective because you (If you are a Paul-ite) were not there. The same problem is evident with the participation of other political groups, and so our future is bleak. Our country is in the apathy stage of our decline, with only two thirds of our eligible voters actually voting and very few actually participating in any meaningful manner in our political system. We were a great country, but sorry kids, you will pay for our mistakes and you will never enjoy the freedoms that we knew and threw away.

Serf City

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Meet the Libertarians

The Manhattan Libertarian Party meets the second Monday of every month.

Guests welcome. Food and drink available.

Meeting begins at 7:00; Guest speaker at 7:30

Ukrainian East Village Restaurant

140 Second Avenue, between 9th St. and St. Mark's Pl.

Letters

Anti-War But Pro-Victory

The article by Glenville Ashby on the front page of the last issue of Serf City ("Civil War or Sectarian Violence? Just Blame the Occupation!") revealed my biggest worry about Libertarian Party influence in this election.

I consider most Democrats tantamount to traitors, as I believe they wish for failure in Iraq for their own political gain. At best, they simply don't care, except Lieberman.

Well, I get those vibes from this article. I agree we never should have invaded, but I still wish for a win. I happen to believe that it is likely, despite the big mistake, that Middle East may be better in a generation because of Iraq, but that's not a sufficient reason for USA to invade Iraq.

I've learned that the only intelligent opposition to Bush's aggression came from Libertarian Party. Thanks.

Now is now, we broke it, and have a big responsibility in trying to fix it. I want us out ASAP, but not on the schedule of those who truly don't care if we lose.

That is truly failing all those who risked, and gave their lives to the effort, but more

importantly, believed, and still believe, if erroneously, that it is a noble effort.

I think this article goes beyond any such comments I've heard Ron Paul say, but my concern proves valid the more I hear this ridiculous analysis.

Read the first paragraph of Ashby's article! What it implies is that the invasion was validated by Bush's re-election. This is silly analysis, it was no more validated, than refuted by most recent Dem victory.

Despite all my agreement with Libertarian ideals, and some wish to accept that Ron Paul may not retreat the next day, I say my biggest moral obligation today is how to exit Iraq with optimal results. Sadly, it appears McCain is in the lead on that issue, and perhaps only that issue.

Equally sad is the probability that McCain will not know when to cut bait, which I fully expect will be necessary.

I fully expect that the improvements brought about by the Petraeus strategy (not the surge, by the way) will not be sustainable, but know it is necessary to give it a chance.

Patrick Sullivan
New York, NY

The Audacity of a Dope

Senator Obama's recent perverted analysis of why people "cling" to certain traditions reveals a profound ignorance of the American psyche and character. It was not bitterness that inspired our Founding Fathers to write, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights..." Neither is the second amendment an expression of frustration and despair.

He is convinced that people during times of hardship and adversity become impotent and "cling" to what he implies are less than worthy ideals and traditions. He is unaware that those traditions to which he alludes are the essence and spirit embedded in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution: it is even emblazoned on our currency: "In God We Trust".

Senator Obama's cynical view of the nature

Separate School and State

Imagine for a moment you love bagels. Imagine you live in a neighborhood where only one bakery is allowed to make and sell bagels. Imagine the bagels are below par and unappetizing but you are compelled to purchase them by law and are forbidden to make your own. Now substitute "education" for "bagels" in this scenario and you will understand the true nature of compulsory public education.

A bakery that produces an unsatisfactory product would soon be out of business because people are free to choose and find a better bagel. However, competition and

of man is rooted in his belief in the supremacy of an omnipotent state with the power to rid mankind of bitterness, despair and what he believes is its "clinging" nature. The Founding Fathers instead exalted and codified individual



rights in the Constitution to protect us from those who see us as helpless "clinging" masses.

The senator's views are at odds with those of our Founding Fathers and closer to Karl Marx who believed "religion is the opium of the masses."

Ed Konecnik
Flushing, NY

freedom of choice which nurture creativity and excellence are conspicuously missing in the sphere of scholastic instruction.

A recent international study involving 26 countries places American fourth grade students in the middle of the group, by grade 8 in the bottom third, and at the finish line, almost dead last. Public high school graduation rates are equally disheartening: 70.7% in California, 56.5% in New York, 51.5% in Washington DC, with a national average of 69.1. The state education monopoly does not allow parents to make choices regarding their children's education even though there is convincing evidence some alternatives have achieved better results.

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Diversity in New York

by Rick Miller

Diversity of culture, background and origin are praised in New York, but I wonder about political diversity. Here are some of my recent experiences with New York diversity:

My Friday night doubles tennis group

After the “Super Tuesday” primary in which Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama battled for the Democratic nomination, the three other players discussed the results. They agreed the dream ticket would be Clinton-Obama. Then we could have eight years of Clinton, with Obama set up for eight more years of Democratic rule.

One said Giuliani wanted another 9/11 so he could have something to talk about.

What amazes one of the three is how the rest of the country is on such a totally different page than “we are,” what with the election of people like Reagan and Bush.

The Republican impeachment of Clinton was much ado about nothing—they made fools of themselves.

My Wednesday night doubles tennis group

Again three of the four discussed the primaries; Clinton-Obama would be the ideal ticket and presents the inviting prospect of eight years of Democratic rule and possibly eight more.

Republicans are so mean-spirited; they’ll stoop to such vitriolic tactics to attack others. The mean Republicans stopped the expansion of government-funded medical insurance for the children.

Bus stop ads on Broadway, Upper West Side

Is your closet as scary as Bush’s agenda? (ad for mini-storage)

You’re liberal, cool, an Upper West Sider. And you like good phone service (ad for wireless telephone service)

I do have one Republican tennis-playing friend and respect him for daring to be different, even though we don’t

agree on major issues such as immigration and civil liberties. At least he recognizes the Republicans deserved to lose the last election after their profligate spending.

Sometimes I’m tempted to say I’m a Republican to challenge the near unanimity in New York City. But I can’t. If I lived in some Republican bastion I’d want to challenge their conventional wisdom too. And I know they use the same language as Democrats to discredit the opposition. For example, I’ve read more than once in Republican and conservative sources about the “vitriolic” nature of the Democrats and

liberals, in contrast to the supposed reasoned manner of Republicans and conservatives. If only the Democrats and Republicans, the liberals and conservatives, could hear how similar they sound. That’s why many libertarians call them “Republicrats.”

John Stossel captured it well when he wrote about fellow Upper West Siders exclaiming he must be a conservative when they heard his views.

No, I’m a libertarian he pointed out.

When I have expressed similar libertarian views to Upper West Siders I’ve usually gotten stares of incomprehension or dismissal. In one area at least, New York isn’t so diverse.



Trying To Work In New York

by Robert Goodman

I never thought occupational licensure would affect me as a personal limitation, but it’s doing so now. I have a Ph.D. in Biochemistry but I’ve always had trouble staying employed at a level commensurate with my training and aptitude, on top of my general difficulty selling myself.

I did manage to get several years of teaching in as an adjunct professor of various sciences, which was a full-to-nearly-full teaching load for part time pay, but even that has dried up now, so I’ve looked into primary and secondary school teaching. No problem getting a volunteer job coaching football last year (they did some CYA trivial background checking), but school teaching is dominated by government institutions who demand teaching credentials—basically a Master’s in Ed. and passing some written test. It’s possible to pick up work as an uncredentialed substitute teacher in the city schools, but if you do more than a certain number of total hours in a year they won’t let you do it again until you’re a certified sub, which requires 6 credits of Ed and gives you a little pay increment, but it still may not be enough to live on and sounds like a lousy living even if it is. It’s more the sort of thing someone does for pin money, taking only those assignments that appeal.

However, I’d been told that science teachers are in such great demand that one could get hired in advance of credentialing, and that the school would take care of the formalities. While that was the case for a brief period, the education bureaucracy apparently couldn’t stand that for long. Now they’ll take you only if you’re at least enrolled in a Master’s program. So I applied for a fellowship with New York City Teaching Fellows, the most heavily advertised program, whose fellows I’d already seen among

the students at the institution where I taught. However, they only take 1 in 8, and I was not one of those they took, and besides, I felt foolish entering a Master’s program at my age with my training, even if I was getting paid to do it and had a nearly guaranteed job waiting.



Not that big a deal, I thought, I could always be a tech in a clinical lab. I knew that years ago, after I’d already been a hemodialysis technician, New York had instituted licensing for clinical techs, but I also knew that a Ph.D. sufficed (duh) instead of such a license, so I applied for a bunch of such jobs. Then I found out that last September the exemption for Ph.D.s was eliminated. I’m told the

new requirements (which also took away some grandfathering) caught many off guard, producing many pink slips in clinical labs, which is why they were advertising so many jobs, and the Department of Education (which does most of the professional licensing in New York State) was backed up processing applications. The application fee is \$245 for technician, \$345 for technologist, and another \$50 for an interim license, so you can work sooner while they work on the regular license, plus you need a passport type photo. When it finally comes through, you get to take a test, but the hell of it is that I’m not sure they’ll consider me qualified enough to take it, because the application just asks for references on my education. I think the odds are strongly in favor of their finding a doctorate in biochemistry to be sufficient, but it’s no guarantee because I’m sure they’re geared towards applicants who’ve gone to school for lab technology specifically, so what if they send me back to the kitchen?

Recently I met someone who had passed the bar many years ago but gotten away from law, got a Master’s in Library Science and worked as a librarian for years, but was currently working in a nursing home owned by his family and doing a little certified substitute teaching. Although libraries aren’t quite as sewn up as schools by

the state, he told me that without a Master’s specifically in that, even though I’d worked as the librarian in a small hospital in Chicago, I would not be able to get anything other than some ancillary position in a library that really wouldn’t pay someone’s living expenses.

What I want is something I can move into and make a living at right away without committing to a whole new career. I need flexibility. But everywhere I look I see only people who are in a career of long standing or working with family connections or other special circumstances, and other people who are living with family and working at jobs that don’t pay their expenses. There seem to be no legal entry level jobs available paying a living wage, and fields are now defined so narrowly that you’re entry level unless you have very particular experience. And I don’t think I could make it by sucking a dick, as Doug Stanhope suggests.

I have, however, found a way I can put my knowledge to work without any licensing: faith healing. Because of the still strong protections the country and its several states have for religious practice, faith healing is a protected activity. New Jersey has a statutory definition of it that Ralph Fucetola dug up, but New York does not, and case law seems to imply I would not be allowed to use diagnostic tools here as I would in New Jersey. The New Jersey definition doesn’t allow billing for the service, but it doesn’t forbid donations (tax free!), so that’s how I’d operate. The trouble is advertising; I suppose I should make connections through some church congregations, but for now I’m just listing at Craig’s—and here. I do think that I have some psychic abilities, but I guess I’ll find out now for sure, for which I intend to use the runes wunyo, nauzi, elhaz, and ummo.

Meanwhile, please send money! PayPal accepted. All work considered, legal or not.

Get the freshest political commentary from our writers every day at the Serf City blog:
serfcity.wordpress.com

Shooter in the Rye

by Jim Lesczynski

Bring a Gun to School Day
by Darian Worden
Arise Press

There is something about a good teen angst novel that really resonates with me, even as a 42-year-old. You'd think a quarter of a century since leaving high school would have given me some detachment, and it has for the most part. But every once in awhile, the old feelings of frustration, anger and cynicism come rushing back as vividly as if I were 16 all over again. Re-reading *Catcher in the Rye*, for example, makes me feel like a teenager, and not in a good way.

Darian Worden's powerful first novel, *Bring a Gun to School Day*, had a similarly disturbing effect. Erik Shylding, like Holden Caulfield before him, is the perfect embodiment of the alienated male teen of his day. Of course, in Holden Caulfield's day, a fascination with guns would have characterized him as a healthy, normal young man. Times have changed.

Erik Shylding likes guns a lot, which in itself would be enough to get him branded a weirdo by his teachers and peers. He also likes hard-

core music and black clothing, has the wrong friends, and goes through his school days simmering with anger. In other words, he "resembles" a typical school shooter, such as the one who just committed the worst school shooting ever at the novel's opening.

The faculty and students at Suburban Regional High School have pegged Erik as a ticking time bomb. In their infinite collectivist wisdom, they deal with this perceived threat through a combination of condescension, ostracism and police state tactics that could only make matters worse and would have seemed absurdly over-the-top a generation ago. Today they seem entirely believable, if no less outrageous.

A lesser writer might have made Erik just a misunderstood misfit who's really a sweetheart once you get to know him. To Worden's credit, Erik is a flawed—if ultimately sympathetic—protagonist. He really isn't very



likable, even once you get to know him. Erik knows he doesn't fit in, and if it were up to him, he wouldn't be in school at all.

Owing to compulsory attendance laws, however, Erik and his enemies are stuck with each other. All he wants is to be left alone, but he is surrounded by those who refuse to do so. The final straw for Erik is the placement of Orwellian "school safety" (i.e., anti-self-defense) posters throughout the halls. He responds with a poster of his own, announcing "Bring a Gun to School Day" on April 19th (a date that resonates with freedom-minded people). That provocation quickly escalates the tension between Erik and the school faculty and federal goons who have taken over campus security. Not to give away too much, but those readers who pick up a novella with "Gun" in the title hoping for thrills and action won't be disappointed.

Nevertheless, *Bring a Gun to School Day* isn't really about guns, nor is it really about school. It's about the self-destructive compulsion of modern society to forsake freedom for the illusion of security, to retard the capacity for

critical thought in our youth, and to stamp out any trace of real individuality wherever it is found. As a condemnation of the modern police state and nanny state, it succeeds brilliantly.

Equally as important, it succeeds as a drama and a character study. All too often in political novels, the characters are one-dimensional vessels for the author's polemics. Erik Shylding, by contrast, is a fully developed young man, whom the reader gets to know uncomfortably well. I wouldn't go so far as to say there is a little Erik in all of us (some might say thank goodness for that), but there is in me, and there is in a lot of former and current high school outcasts. To paraphrase Bill Clinton of all people, I feel Erik's pain. From the first page, the sense of isolation and anger is palpable, and it builds like a pressure cooker until Erik's inevitable confrontation with authority.

If the book has any shortcoming, it is that the supporting characters are not as fully drawn. We barely get to know Erik's best friends David and Henry, and his apparent love interest Liz even less so. The bureaucrats and law enforcement officers who are the villains of the story were so scantily portrayed that I occasionally had trouble keeping their characters' names straight. The one really fascinating character, aside from Erik, is his grizzled neighbor Harry, a gun-toting old-timer who doesn't suffer fools gladly. I would

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A Sick Joke: The Medical Industry's Tyranny of New York

by Nic Leobold

In my long history of doctors' appointments and medical treatments, never have I been so offended as when I finally found my identity as a libertarian.

Previously, for the most part I treated my doctors as gods, fawning on them a respect and reverence usually only reserved for my favorite celebrity filmmakers and pro athletes I would meet. Being a new libertarian opened my eyes to how helpless, exploited and disadvantaged I was as a patient, and how brutish, obnoxious and vile medical professionals and the medical establishment could be.

When I requested results of my blood tests to be sent to my house, I was informed by a know-it-all technician that under state law I didn't have a right to my results without my doctor's permission. Imagine, not being allowed to see the results of my own blood test. Is a blood test result a matter of state security or a threat to public health, I wonder? I even had to engage in a debate with one doctor on whether he would order a blood type test on my test form, because he "didn't believe in that stuff", i.e., the relevance of blood type to nutritional requirements. Doctors have a monopoly on medical testing, just like their monopoly on every other type of medical procedure and product. Those they no longer do, like Tylenol or Ensure, have only been deregulated for the "collective" good, not for my individual health or that of my family.

Going to a doctor or dealing with haughty nurses can be a demeaning experience, especially when you desperately need medical care. Monopolies are not a good thing when you're desperate for something.

As a purist libertarian, of course I favor the complete

deregulation and decriminalization and de-scheduling of ALL drugs and medicines. This is an idea that thoroughly horrifies most doctors and health professionals. Yet countries with far more deregulation and legalization like Mexico and Lebanon function just fine as far as health care goes (as long as they're not mired in a U.S.-created war or financial crisis), and far less people were poisoned in unregulated societies like Rome than are killed and maimed by doctors and the medical establishment each year in modern America. Doctors, hospitals and medicine continue to be the leading cause of unnatural deaths in our country despite all the money, science and human capital we pour into them. Isn't it possible that with such a lousy track record, perhaps more freedom and decision-making in the hands of the individual would be a good idea?

No one likes getting sick, but that doesn't deter the doctors and scientists from using us like guinea pigs for their medical and research whims and experiments. The Tuskegee Airmen scandal was bad, but it's much worse when an entire industry is doing this to a whole country.



It's not clear to me or any other libertarian why we need medical licensing and regulations in the first place. Doctoring used to be local and a business of referrals from trusted friends and neighbors. We have a Zagat and Michelin rating system for restaurants, and there's absolutely no reason we couldn't have one for doctors and hospitals.

But what really irks me is the overarching arrogance of the people in the medical professions. Doctors think God was created in their own image. It's not THEIR life we're talking

about here. It's MY LIFE and my body they're messing with, and they're asking me to pay up my nose in addition. When it's my life, my body, and my money, to me that means it's my choice. We don't have many choices under the current system, and some options are completely off the table. That's not how it should

be in a free society. Of course, a "free society" is a joke or misnomer to the dictators and moral fascists who run our country; they think we'd all perish without the foresight and

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In Defense of Teachers

by Ryan Tolboom

Children are forced from their homes under threat of violence and corralled in a central holding area where tools of the state indoctrinate them with ideas that have been approved by the government. This is public education, and I am a public school teacher and therefore an instrument of the state. I understand the violent pretext and despite it all I became a teacher because, like most teachers, I want to help kids. Your average teacher is an idealist who does not care in the least about the political conditions that allow them to work with children.

There are two teacher stereotypes that are burned into the public's consciousness. There is the lazy, coffee-swilling, newspaper-reading teacher who cares little about the subject and even less about kids. Then there is the radically different, driven reformer who takes a group of abandoned and unmotivated students and against all odds, transforms them into award-winning scholars. These stereotypes are perpetuated by books and movies, and as students most of us have caught glimpses of both sides in the

teachers we've had. The truth is most teachers start their careers wanting to change the world and reform education. When confronted with the horrors of the system they slowly slide to the other end of the spectrum and await an early retirement or experience catastrophic burnout.

The public education system shifts responsibility from parents to the state. Teachers, as representatives of the state, have a heavy burden to bear and often are sacrificed by the state when matters of liability and responsibility are



called into question in the courts. For these reasons teachers formed unions that have since risen in power and bloat to become a major entity in their own right. Ask a teacher how much time they spend teaching. Their answer will probably surprise you. A good portion of

time is spent filling out forms, attending meetings, scheduling meetings, learning about state assessments and proctoring state assessments.

So much bureaucracy is involved in teaching that many teachers find it hard to believe they can have any impact at all on the students they teach. The state tries to assess teachers with standardized tests, a proven poor performance metric, which makes teachers even more bitter. Finally schools and the department of education at both the state and federal level are notorious for changing their focus. The volatility of expectations cause both the teachers and the students to become confused and ultimately apathetic. These are the things that turn bright-eyed, hopeful new teachers into hardened, dejected alcoholics.

So the next time you think back on your schooling and you remember all the terrible teachers you had and reflect on how they represent some of the worst that the state has to offer, remember this: Most teachers start their

careers wanting to change the world and reform education. Under the coffee stains, ungraded papers and who-gives-a-damn facade lies an idealist who really does care. If you are going to complain, you should complain about



the system that forces teachers to try to sell the same product to a bunch of people who may not want it. You should complain about the fact that teachers are rewarded for longevity and the ability to put up with bureaucracy as opposed to their ability to teach. You should complain about the fact that IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) has effectively mandated that 80% of teacher time be spent on 20% of the students. The one thing you shouldn't complain about is the teachers.

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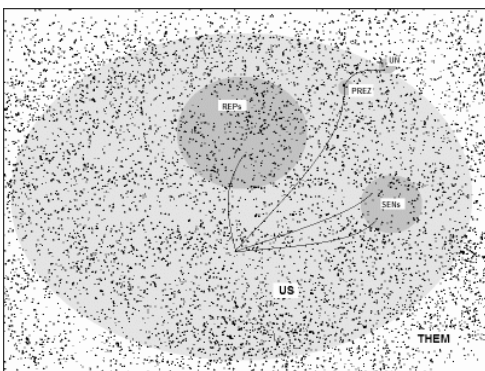
Topology of Political Space

by Bob Armstrong

I saw a quote I really liked—something like, “any course of study which has ‘science’ in its name most likely isn’t one.” If any reader knows the source, please let me know. A case in point is political science. I never even thought of taking such a course when in university; I naively thought that if one just lived an honest life in our “land of the free,” the rest would take care of itself.

But, perhaps at least at MIT the tools of science are taught. David Nolan, MIT, '66, PolySci, co-founded the Libertarian Party and created the Nolan Chart (which I discussed in *Serf City* volume 2, issue 2), which unfolds a freedom-authoritarian dimension from the more simplistic traditional left-right spectrum. I consider this the first example I can recall of Political Science being worthy of the term.

I've been thinking of discussing the interesting issues intrinsic in the quantization of any continuum. An example is the splitting of the life cycle (sort of a saw tooth from dust to dust) into such as the age of consent or adulthood—or for that matter the “beginning of life” itself. These sorts of issues are a tiny corner of the branch of mathematics named topology. I have only a dilettante's knowledge of the subject, having only sat in on one topology class near the end of my decade in grad school. But those basic ideas of sets, relations, mappings and neighborhoods proved to have immediate use. Having lost my tenure in grad school, I shortly thereafter sped up Xerox's global forecasting data base by a factor of 3,000 using my new understanding that a relation may be defined simply by a Boolean array specifying which members of various sets are “related” to each other. APLs with roots in that era had highly optimized operations on (bit-packed) Boolean arrays.



It all starts with sets. The political universe is the large but finite set of the approximately $6.6e9$ of us scattered around the planet. On this, $2^{6.6e9}$ subsets can be defined. That's a

lot of potential constituencies. The most basic political subsets are the geographical force monopolies called states.

I've included here what must be considered a loose sketch of the basic political relationships of an individual in the U.S. to the subsets which presume power over him. **THEM** is the rest of the world. The relation between one individual



and his congressional representative and one of his senators and the president is indicated, and from the president to the **UN**. Their decisions affect him whether he voted for them or not. The UN, which as with all political entities has a constant bias towards increasing its power to tax and control, is only indirectly selected through the president. This is similar to the structure of the **EU** whose structure shares much in common with the old Soviet Union.

Of course this is only one set of relationships between the individual and the political entities regulating his life. It's common to cover a space with hierarchies of neighborhoods, and political structures reflect this with a hierarchy of entities from the precinct, township, county, state and country or their equivalents common throughout the world.

Many libertarians imagine a world without a body at the apex. I think that's a hopeless hope; the question is how to keep this state of all states toothless. Perhaps the best chance is to form a competing direct peer-to-peer global internet-based directly elected forum.

Getting back to the problems intrinsic to quantizing continua will have to wait till next time. Suffice it to say the U.S. is particularly screwy with the age for voting at 18 and having a drink the highest in the world (where not totally prohibited) at 21.

Live Free in Socialist Canada

by Werner Hetzner

I now spend summers in Canada. As a libertarian, summers in Canada make me feel good. How libertarian can Canada be? That all depends. Canada has a very different structure from us. The American Constitution intended the government to have a short list of specific powers; everything not mentioned in that list belonged to the states “or to the people.” In contrast, the Canadian national Parliament has power “to make laws for the peace, order and good government of Canada,” except for “subjects assigned exclusively to the legislatures of the provinces.” In other words, the provincial governments have limited powers.

The U.S. Constitution is about separation of powers, while in Canada the government is about concentration of powers in Parliament where the Governor General, as the Queen's representative, is the head of state and the Prime Minister of the party in power in Parliament is the head of the government.

There is also no fixed term of office in government. All bills to spend public funds or impose taxes must be introduced by the government, not either House of Parliament. Neither House can raise the amounts of money involved. The government has power as long as it can keep the support of the majority in the House of Commons.

An American President can be blocked by Congress for years on end. A Canadian Prime Minister, blocked by the House of Commons, must either make way for a new Prime Minister, or allow the people to elect a new House of Commons that will settle the matter within two or three months.

Such centralization of government power is not a libertarian notion.

Canadians pay more in taxes. Our tax freedom day, the day of the year when we start to work for ourselves instead of the government, is around the end of April. In Canada that day comes about two months later. Canadians have the highest tax burden of all G-7 countries.

High taxes are not part of a libertarian political platform. Then, you may ask, what is so libertarian about Canada?

Municipal governments—cities, towns, villages, counties, districts, metropolitan regions—are set up by the provincial legislatures, and have such powers as the legislatures see fit to give them. There are roughly 4,000 municipal governments in Canada. These provide such services as water supply, sewage, garbage disposal, roads, sidewalks, street lighting, building codes, parks, playgrounds, libraries and so forth.

In Canada I live in a municipality that provides fire

(continued on page 11)

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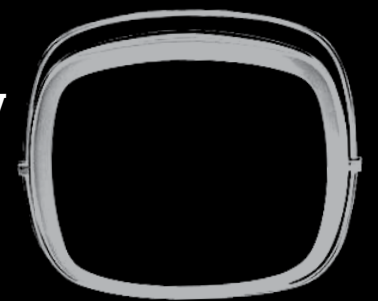
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Why Reverend Wright is Right On

by Isaiah Matos

Unless your head has been in the sand over the last election cycle, the fiery Reverend Wright has been lighting up the news networks with “sound bites” critical of American policies both foreign and domestic. The so-called pundits have had no shortage of claims that Wright’s resurgence on the national scene will derail Mr. Obama’s campaign for the democratic nomination by “scaring” the white working class into the Clinton camp or become fodder for the Republican political machine in the general election. The overriding “issue” is constantly attributed to race; however, whether deliberate or not, the real issue is policy, American policy.

When actually listening to the full sermons, or his recent appearance on Bill Moyers Journal, the Reverend Wright’s ideas on American foreign policy sound very familiar to most all Ron Paul supporters. The argument made prior to and purposely omitted from the now infamous “Goddamn America” sound bite of Reverend Wright is nearly identical to the remarks made by Ron Paul at the South Carolina Republican debate on Fox News:

MR. GOLER: Congressman, you don’t think that changed with the 9/11 attacks, sir?

REP. PAUL: What changed?

MR. GOLER: The non-interventionist policies.

REP. PAUL: No. Non-intervention was a major contributing factor. Have you ever read the reasons they attacked us? They attack us because we’ve been over there; we’ve been bombing Iraq for 10 years. We’ve been in the Middle East—I think Reagan was right.

We don’t understand the irrationality of Middle Eastern politics. So right now we’re building an embassy in Iraq that’s bigger than the Vatican. We’re building 14 permanent bases. What would we say here if China was doing this in our country or in the Gulf of Mexico? We would be objecting. We need to look at what we do from the perspective of what would happen if somebody else did it to us. (Applause.)

MR. GOLER: Are you suggesting we invited the 9/11 attack, sir?

REP. PAUL: I’m suggesting that we listen to the people who attacked us and the reason they did it, and they are delighted that we’re over there because Osama bin Laden has said, “I am glad you’re over on our sand because we can target you so much easier.” They have already now since that time—(bell rings)—have killed 3,400 of our men, and I don’t think it was necessary.

MR. GIULIANI: Wendell, may I comment on that? That’s really an extraordinary statement. That’s an extraordinary statement, as someone who lived through the attack of September 11, that we invited the attack because we were attacking Iraq. I don’t think I’ve heard that before, and I’ve heard some pretty absurd explanations for September 11th. (Applause, cheers.)

And I would ask the congressman to withdraw that comment and tell us that he didn’t really mean that. (Applause.)

MR. GOLER: Congressman?

REP. PAUL: I believe very sincerely that the CIA is correct when they teach and talk about blowback. When we went into Iran in 1953 and installed the shah, yes, there was blowback. A reaction to that was the taking of our hostages and that persists. And if we ignore that, we ignore that at our own risk. If we think that we can do what we want around the world and not incite hatred, then we have a problem.

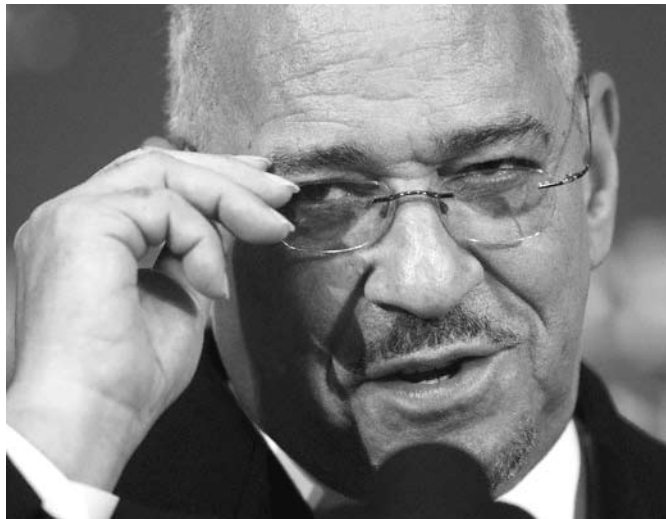
They don’t come here to attack us because we’re rich and we’re free. They come and they attack us because we’re over there. I mean, what would we think if we were—if other foreign countries were doing that to us?

Obviously, despite Mr. Giuliani’s assertion of “I don’t think I’ve heard that before,” many Americans have heard and know this to be true, not only Libertarians, but also Reverend Wright’s Trinity United Church of Christ 8,000 plus members. The interventionist policies of both the Democrats and Republicans in federal government have been the strongest contributing factor of all terrorist activities against American citizens. This is true of the government since World War I. The sinking of the Lusitania was not a result of it sailing in international waters, but because it was loaded with munitions for the allies, enemies of Germany. Former President Bill Clinton constantly bombed Iraq whenever he needed some distraction on the domestic front to keep the Republicans out of his pants. There are numerous examples of this, and as history shows, the Reverend Wright is right on.

Still, as pundits continue to label Reverend Wright as a militant black and by extension Senator Obama as such, the presidential candidate continues to distance himself from Wright. Why not embrace his roots in the Reverend’s church? Why not explain the remarks in full context instead of labeling them as “incendiary” and “divisive?” I have a good idea why, albeit it being a personal opinion, but could it be that Senator Obama represents no “change” at all, and only a continuation of overspending on overextending our military, policing the world, and adding to the debt?

Rather than embrace the church leader who wed him and baptized his children, perhaps even gaining the support of some Libertarians and keeping the support of the church he has distanced himself from, shouldn’t the Senator who loves the word “change” consider a change to our interventionist policies? All the distancing and disowning of Wright by Obama only serve to make him a marketable product, and not a man of principal, as

Ron Paul is. Obama must have paid attention to the Republican primaries and saw how the media shunned Ron Paul for speaking truth, and being the media darling that he is, Obama could never let the truth of American imperialism and funny money economics escape his lips in front of the cameras.



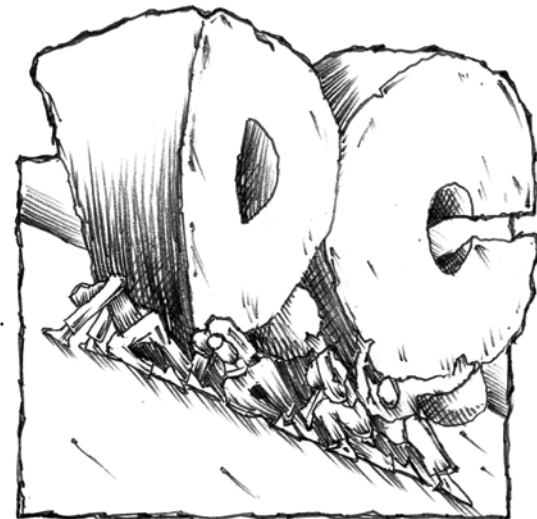
The real truth of the matter is that we need a president of honesty, integrity, and principal, which none of the candidates have displayed as of yet. Warlord John McCain is ready stay in Iraq for a hundred years and to deploy unavail-

able troops into Iran despite seeing the tragic disease of war first hand. Ironically, McCain has the backing of the Reverend John Hagee, who claimed Hurricane Katrina was God’s punishment for the “homosexual parades” in New Orleans, and of Pat Robertson, who McCain himself dismissed as divisive. Why the free pass for white ministers who condemn freedom? Hillary Clinton is too busy ducking from imagined sniper fire on her ambitious road to the presidency and still counting the Florida primary (with only her name on the ballot) in a way that would make Josef Stalin proud. Then there is Obama, a man who at the bare minimum must have been exposed to the flawed imperialistic foreign policy of the federal government by his reverend and treats the criticism of such as an “unfortunate” remark. None of these three have shown an ounce of integrity, or concern for the truth as politics and campaigns become drawn out episodes of American Idol-esque popularity contest.

The idea of demonizing a man as a demagogue for critiquing the foreign policy of our federal government only shows what chicanery modern politics has become. Dr. Ron Paul was a 72-year-old breath of fresh air in this campaign and as improbable as it will be, I still hold out hope for him to run for president under our banner. Liberty and the Libertarian Party are the better choice for 2008, at least while we still have some semblance of a choice in America.

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Juror Power Blows a Fuse

by Jim Lesczynski

Ever since I became actively involved in the freedom movement, I've been a fan of the concept of jury nullification—a.k.a. juror power or fully informed juries. My recent unpleasant experience on jury duty has made me much less of a fan.

The concept is simple but sublime—jurors have the right and duty to judge the law itself, as well as the facts of the case. If it's an unjust law, or the law is being applied unjustly, vote to acquit, regardless of the facts of the case or the judge's instructions.

It sounds like a radical notion, but it's a common law tradition dating back at least a millennium. Back in jolly old England, jurors used their inherent power to acquit William Penn of the crime of preaching a Quaker sermon. A century later, colonists in New York refused to find the publisher John Peter Zenger guilty of libeling the British governor—blatantly ignoring the judge's instruction that "the truth is no defense" in cases of libel against the king's men. The Zenger case laid the foundation for freedom of the press that would later be enshrined in the First Amendment.

In the 19th century, juries exercised their right to judge the law by routinely acquitting harborers of fugitive slaves. In the 1930s, it was widespread jury nullification that brought about the end of alcohol prohibition, once it

became clear most jurors had no more regard for the 18th Amendment than the defendants.

I've donated money to the Fully Informed Jury Association, the foremost advocates of jury rights, and for years I even made a practice of handing out FIJA brochures in front of the courts on Jury Rights Day, September 5th, the anniversary of the Zenger acquittal.

The only thing I had never done was actually exercise the power of a juror myself. Since I became aware of juror rights, I have been called three times for jury duty. The first time, I rotted in the juror waiting room for three days without ever being called for a case. The second time, I was selected for a jury, but a plea deal was reached just before the trial started, and we never heard the case.

The third time was just last month, and I was psyched. I was ready for jury power action. My greatest hope was that I would be selected for a nice, unambiguous trial of a victimless crime—prostitution, drugs, guns, or any of the other libertarian favorites. This time, I hit paydirt. I was selected as a juror on a drug case—specifically, the defendant was accused of possession of heroin with intent to sell. It was one count, with

no aggravating factors like violence. In other words, it was a jury power activist's dream.

I'm not going to get into specifics about my participation in the jury deliberations or my vote, for reasons that will become obvious momentarily. I'm not dumb enough to set myself up for perjury or contempt of court charges. No prosecutors or judges should infer anything from the following discussion about my own actions. I hereby deny everything and admit nothing.

However, I can tell you what you will be in for if you are ever confronted with a similar case, and it will be anything but empowering. It will be exhausting, frustrating, stressful and disillusioning.

The first clue that this whole juror power thing is less than advertised will come during *voire dire*—French for jury-stacking, as Vin Suprynowicz wrote.

If you are planning to exercise your supposed rights as a juror, you

had better get a lot of practice lying through your teeth. I have no idea what the *voire dire* (or jury selection) process was like during the 19th or early 20th centuries, but I can only surmise that judges and prosecutors have gotten a lot better at screening out troublemakers. These guys may be evil, but they're not idiots. The techniques have been perfected over years by the best and brightest legal minds.

Before the questioning even starts, you will be required to stand and take an oath to answer all questions truthfully and fully. The judge will ask you a bunch of very pointed questions that leave no wiggle room—even Bill Clinton would have difficulty parsing the very deliberate wording. You will be asked if you have any moral, ethical, philosophical or other objections to the law in question. You will be asked if you will put any qualms about the law aside and simply render a true verdict as to the facts of the case. You will be asked these questions 20 different ways, by the judge and the prosecutor, while you are under oath.

Now I'm not saying it's wrong to lie under oath in such circumstances; it's an oath they have absolutely no justification requiring of you in the first place. If it's a question of fibbing to some guy in a black dress in order to nullify an evil law that will put a man in jail for years, the moral course of action should be obvious.

But most people simply won't have the stomach for it. There are plenty of decent people out there who are appalled by our insane drug laws, but being decent people and having never been informed of their rights as jurors, it would never occur to them to lie under oath. During *voire dire*, I watched dozens of good citizens honestly answer that they have big problems with drug prohibition, and tell the judge that their consciences would prohibit them from ever finding someone guilty of

(continued on page 10)



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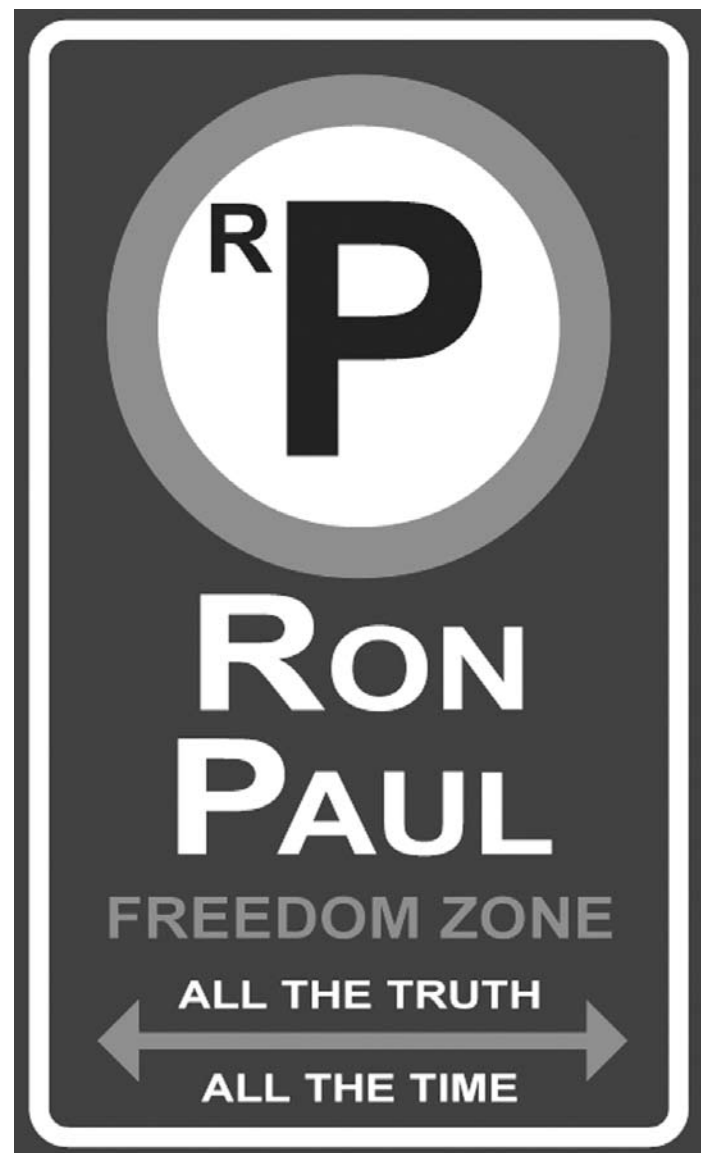
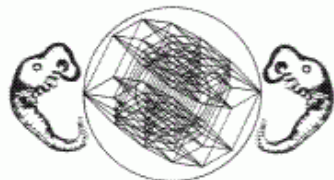
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The City Drove Us Off the Streets

by Joseph Dobrian

For decades, municipal governments—not just in New York City—have been trying to get newsracks off the streets. They create obstructions, it's argued, getting in the way of bus stops and fireplugs. They can easily be pushed into the street or walkways, where they present safety hazards. They lead to dirt and clutter, as the newspapers inevitably get scattered about and rude people use the boxes as garbage cans.

That's all true enough, but another reason to get rid of newsboxes—which governments don't like to admit—is that they're sometimes used to disseminate unpopular ideas. Just about every time a municipality tries to restrict or prohibit newsboxes, the effort is thwarted by the courts on First Amendment grounds. In 2002, though, New York City carefully crafted new newsbox regulations that so far have withstood court challenges from *The Village Voice*, *The New York Press*, and others. These regulations call for steep fines—\$250 to \$500 per violation—if a newsbox is found too close to a hydrant or bus stop, or is too far from the curb, or for any number of other reasons. Sometimes, the violator is given a brief amount of time to cure the situation; in some cases, however, citations have been issued before the owner of a newsbox could have made the necessary adjustment.

I suspect that the City Fathers would rather get rid of newsboxes entirely. As they can't, they'll continue to use these fines as a tax on those who would exercise their First Amendment rights. After all, why not? If an unpleasant situation can't be avoided, it can at least be made profitable.

More and more—and with greater speed under the Giuliani and Bloomberg mayoralties—the government of New York City has placed itself in an adversarial position relative to the citizenry. Despite the window-dressing of free elections, our government is not a matter of the people regulating and protecting themselves through representative democracy. Rather, the government has become a separate entity, a ravening monster that requires constant feeding—with the mayor, city councilors, and other elected officials living off it as parasites, like pilotfish or buffalo birds. Or, more to the point, like fleas on a giant rat: spreading plague wherever they go.

I don't say that the Libertarian Party is singled out for suppression by the city government. The government is an equal-

ment Districts (BIDs) have set up modern, immobile newsboxes on curbsides in various neighborhoods; perhaps publishers of *Serf City*, *The Voice*, *The Onion*, et al. could lobby for more of this enterprise from the private sector. Perhaps (horrors) the city government could set up such boxes, and rent them out for profit. That might not be a great solution from a Libertarian point of view, but at least in that case we'd be paying a set amount every three or six months, instead of living in fear of another costly violation.

It's useless to talk about solutions, though, when the current government is so interested in playing "gotcha." More and more—and this is true of governments all over the United States, but it seems especially acute in the Apple—governments operate not for the convenience and protection of the populace, but as an end in themselves. The means to that end,

of course, are provided by mugging the citizenry. It costs money to empower and to glorify, to establish and maintain dominance. We all understand that.

By and large, our elected officials reckon themselves not representatives of the people, but as part of the ruling elite. Over time, they have been taught that their objective is to oppress and suppress, to forbid, to compel, to devise ever more codes and rules for the sake of coercion, subjugation, and revenue. It's fun to do that. It's no way to get really rich, but money isn't the point; power is. And as long as we keep electing the same gang, or clones thereof, we can expect the same treatment, only progressively worse.

The only long-term solution is to get rid of office-holders who are there to push other folks around, and elect those with a commitment to putting government back in its proper place and teaching it humility—and then, if it behaves and only as long as it behaves, allowing it to work for us.

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—Scoring: For each statement, circle A if you Agree, M for Maybe (or don't know), or D if you Disagree.—

How do you stand on PERSONAL ISSUES?

- | | |
|--|---------|
| | 20 10 0 |
| ◆ Government should not censor speech, press, media or Internet. | A M D |
| ◆ Military service should be voluntary. There should be no draft. | A M D |
| ◆ There should be no laws regarding sex between consenting adults. | A M D |
| ◆ Repeal laws prohibiting adult possession and use of drugs. | A M D |
| ◆ There should be no National ID card. | A M D |

SCORING 20 for every A, 10 for every M, and 0 for every D: _____

How do you stand on ECONOMIC ISSUES?

- | | |
|---|---------|
| | 20 10 0 |
| ◆ End "corporate welfare." No government handouts to business. | A M D |
| ◆ End government barriers to international free trade. | A M D |
| ◆ Let people control their own retirement: privatize Social Security. | A M D |
| ◆ Replace government welfare with private charity. | A M D |
| ◆ Cut taxes and government spending by 50% or more. | A M D |

SCORING 20 for every A, 10 for every M, and 0 for every D: _____

► NOW FIND YOUR PLACE ON THE CHART!

Mark your **PERSONAL** score on the lower-left scale; your **ECONOMIC** score on the lower-right. Then follow the grid lines until they meet at your political position. The Chart shows the political group that agrees with you most.

► WHAT DOES YOUR SCORE ON THE CHART MEAN?

LIBERTARIANS support a great deal of liberty and freedom of choice in both personal and economic matters. They believe government's only purpose is to protect people from coercion and violence. They value individual responsibility, and tolerate economic and social diversity.

LEFT-LIBERALS generally embrace freedom of choice in personal matters, but support central decision-making in economics. They want the government to help the disadvantaged in the name of fairness. Leftists tolerate social diversity, but work for what they might describe as "economic equality."

RIGHT-CONSERVATIVES favor freedom of choice on economic issues, but want official standards in personal matters.

They tend to support the free market, but frequently want the government to defend the community from what they see as threats to morality or to the traditional family structure.

CENTRISTS favor selective government intervention and emphasize what they commonly describe as "practical solutions" to current problems. They tend to keep an open mind on political issues. Many centrists feel that government serves as a check on excessive liberty.

STATISTS want government to have a great deal of control over individuals and society. They support centralized planning, and often doubt whether liberty and freedom of choice are practical options. At the very bottom of the chart, left-authoritarians are usually called socialists, while right-authoritarians are generally called fascists.

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opportunity bloodsucker. I'm sure the backers of a left-wing paper like *The Village Voice* are just as indignant about these fines as we are, and the fact that the *Voice* can better afford to pay them is no mitigation.

The city no doubt is happy enough to let us put out our message—as long as the government can profit thereby. But the trifling amount of money they collect from us via fines is far more significant to us than to the city: a few of those fines could bankrupt us. Accordingly, it's likely that we'll have to take our newsboxes off the streets, and find other (probably much less efficacious) ways of distributing *Serf City*.

Other solutions exist, of course. Several Business Improve-

How the Liberty Dollar Can Help New York City

by Nic Leobold

Much is made of how socialistic New York City is. City government burdens us with never-ending laws, regulations, harassments and taxes. Many freedom activists refer to the city as the DPRNYC--“Democratic People’s Republic of NYC”. But New York City also deserves recognition as one of the freest and more tolerant cities of the world, one where inhabitants can satisfy almost any desire for how to live and pursue happiness.

Inherent in any free system of commerce and modern life is a form of money, and New York City like the rest of America is burdened with the Federal Reserve System’s fiat Federal Reserve Note currency bills of debt. New York’s finances are thus built on the same rickety house of cards as the national and state economies are, currently crumbling from the Fed’s 95-year history of destroying the venerable U.S. dollar, which was the most dynamic engine of growth and prosperity and liberty in the world for more than a century while on the gold standard.

Mired in debt as New York City and State currently are, there is a virtuous and solid solution to our current financial shenanigan-laced government: Just as the Berkshires and Ithaca have adopted their own local currencies, New York City could use the Liberty Dollar (www.LibertyDollar.org) platform to convert to a gold- and silver-based currency. This would restore discipline, integrity and sanity to our current budgetary and fiscal processes.

A gold- and silver-based currency will not bend to the selfish whims and fancies of gluttonous politicians, nor humor the petty dictates of would-be autocrats. Gold and silver standards keep us out of wars and repression, both foreign and domestic. They grow only as fast as a natural market provides, preventing overspending, over-legislating and over-bureaucratizing. They reward individual liberty rather than socialized tyranny. New York City as the capital of the free world deserves a money system as sterling as its character, diversity and opportunity. No politician or petty dictator can ruin what our city is, but they can certainly drag us down as long as we do not control our own money system.

The Liberty Dollar platform is ideally suited for our free United States and our states, communities and localities. The Liberty Dollar’s inherent inflation-adjusting mechanisms ensure that the Liberty Dollar money supply rises in value as inflation rises, preserving value and buying power for businesses and families and individuals who use it and hold it. It is a private and free alternative currency which can replace Federal Reserve Notes just as Federal Express replaced the United States Postal Service even for many governmental customers. Our government, if indeed it has any integrity left, should desire the Liberty Dollar more than anyone else since its allegiance is supposed to be to our Constitution. The Constitution clearly states that our money shall be of silver and gold. The Founding Mothers and Fathers of our Republic knew with good reason that fiat money and a central bank would be our eventual ruin. Their experience with the “Continental” fiat money in the

early days of the Revolution cemented in their minds the importance of a value-based currency.

Liberty Dollars are easily convertible for use locally because they have face values that exchange one-to-one with FRN’s. They tend

to remain in the communities where they are spent, eliminating the expropriation of our wealth to far-off corporations. And the Liberty Dollar can be personalized for individuals, organizations and businesses. You can create your own money with a personalized design, and spend it into circulation. Spending real gold and silver is the greatest favor you can do for those you trade with, and an economic educational boon to those who receive real money. The government of New York City could even order a personalized Liberty Dollar to issue for itself, while individuals and businesses continue to do so in a free market.

Liberty Dollar was raided in November by the Secret Service and FBI and all their metals and computers seized, but since then they have decentralized their operations and introduced more features to distinguish their money as a unique private product. I encourage all New York City libertarians and like-minded people to support and join Liberty Dollar, profit from and enjoy our distinctive product, and take a practical and effective stand against the oppressions and evils of the Welfare-Warfare State.



Juror Power Blows a Fuse (continued from page 8)

breaking a drug law. The judge thanked them for their candor, excused them, and sent them back to the juror pool room to wait for a nice, uncontroversial civil case.

The FIJA website and literature say that you can survive *voire dire* without perjuring yourself simply by answering carefully and succinctly. I no longer believe that. The judges’ and prosecutors’ standard questions are too artfully crafted. If you are a jury rights activist and a libertarian, I don’t see how you can survive *voire dire* to serve on a drug case without committing multiple acts of perjury.

If you do make it through *voire dire* and get to hear the case, you will find yourself in a real bind once you get to deliberations. You will be faced with two choices: One, you can tell your fellow jurors how you were just kidding about promising to follow the law and the judge’s instructions, and that you intend to follow your conscience and acquit regardless of the facts of the case. One of your fellow jurors will then promptly squeal on you to the judge, and you’ll find yourself removed from the case in favor of one of the alternates. You’ll also find yourself facing perjury and contempt of court charges, as happened to jury rights and drug reform activist Laura Kriho.

Your other alternative is to continue to lie through your teeth, only now it’s face-to-face with 11 of your fellow citizens in close quarters. If the prosecution has a solid case, you can either acknowledge the obvious facts and vote guilty—defeating the whole point of your prior perjury—or you can try vainly to get the other 11 jurors to doubt the facts. In the case on which I served, the prosecutor had such a slam-dunk, the public defender merely offered a lame cross-examination of the prosecution witnesses and then rested his case without even bringing a defense.

Your anxiety will grow as you grasp for any slivers of doubt about the defendant’s guilt. Keep in mind that each and every potential juror who might have been an ally was removed during *voire dire*. The only jurors remaining besides yourself are those who have sworn in advance to convict. Also keep in mind that nobody really wants to be there; all they have to do is turn in a unanimous guilty verdict and they can go home. The only thing stopping them is one idiot (you) who seems to be devoid of any common sense.

If you have balls of steel and a will of iron, you might even drag the ordeal out several hours or an entire day. Eventually you and your fellow jurors will come to agree on at least one thing—further deliberation is futile. The foreman will send a note to the judge that the jury is unable to reach a unanimous verdict, and you’ll console yourself that at least you’ve caused a mistrial. The judge will call the jury back into the courtroom, smile, and instruct you to return first thing in the morning to resume deliberations.

On day two of deliberations, your anxiety and your fellow jurors’ loathing of you will be palpable. You will regret ever getting yourself into this mess. The foreman will glumly start to rehash the case, and everyone will pretend to deliberate, wondering how long the lone idiot can hold out. You’ll wonder how much

longer you can continue to hold 11 basically decent (albeit unlibertarian) people hostage, torturing them, keeping them from their livelihoods and their families.

Eventually either you or the judge will cave in, probably you. The judge can continue to tend to the other 70 cases on his docket, and it’s not much skin off his nose to yell at the

jury and send them back for deliberations every time they send out another pathetic

note. You’ll also realize that even if you channel your inner sadomasochist for however many days it takes to cause a mistrial, all you will have accomplished is to delay the inevitable. Because when they retry the case, they won’t end up with a one-in-a-million juror who not only understands his or her rights, but who has the mental and emotional endurance to lie through *voire dire* and days of deliberations. They’ll get 12 people who have sworn to follow the law and the judge’s instructions, who will see a slam-dunk case for the prosecution and immediately return a guilty verdict. Your ordeal will have been for naught.

In theory, I still think jury nullification can be a powerful weapon in the fight for liberty. But a few things will have to happen before that weapon can truly be effective.

First, many more citizens need to buy into the juror rights concept. Many juror power advocates will tell you that the beauty of it is that you can make a difference all by yourself. That is simply not true. Judges do not easily declare a mistrial, and it is the rare person—even among hardcore freedom activists—who has the fortitude to go the distance. And the odds are overwhelming that the retrial will result in a conviction if there aren’t more fully informed jurors in the jury pool.

Second, true jury nullification—i.e., an outright acquittal—is only likely to happen when there are not only a lot more fully informed jurors, but also overwhelming public opposition to a law. Drug prohibition is increasingly unpopular, but still probably nowhere near as unpopular as was alcohol prohibition. Think about the odds of twelve jurors unanimously voting not guilty regardless of the facts of the case. For a law to be that unpopular, one wonders how it could remain the law for long.

Third, and I believe most importantly, the *voire dire* process needs major reform. If it really is our 1,000-year-old right and duty to judge the law as well as the facts of the case, then it is unconscionable that modern judges universally abridge that right. My understanding is that some state constitutions actually acknowledge the right of juries to judge the law, but for all I know the judges ignore those constitutional provisions (the same way they ignore the rights protected by the U.S. Constitution). Either by legislation or litigation, judges must be forced to respect the rights of jurors.

Until these things happen, being a fully informed juror means being informed that you are essentially powerless.



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Shooter In The Rye (continued from page 4)

have loved to have spent more time getting to know him.

Bring a Gun to School Day is a novella, so the author didn't have the luxury of leisurely digressions into the lives of secondary characters. It is first and foremost Erik's story, told mostly from his point of view, and that alone is reading time well spent. This is an important debut work by a talented storyteller and social commentator. I enthusiastically recommend it to teen misfits of all ages.

The Medical Industry's Tyranny (continued from page 4)

wisdom of their supposed brilliance.

But what brilliance? In so many ways, ours is not a healthy society, so something

must not be working very well. The verdict is out, and our medical system is a failure; not because we don't have brilliant knowledge and potential in medicine but because we don't have freedom and free markets for it. And because we don't fully acknowledge that this is purely an issue of self-ownership.

We are not cattle and rodents for doctors to dictate to. We are individuals who should have every right and freedom to any treatment and medicine or drug we deem to be in our self-interest. The Medical State is an utter failure as we all become sicker each year, while our money is plundered by a ravenous hoard of charlatans. Clearly doctors and the medical industry are fooling a great many people in this country. But my question is, how can these eminently intelligent medical professionals live with themselves and what they do to others, innocent people who are sick, vulnerable and needy?

Live Free in Socialist Canada (continued from page 6)

protection, water and garbage removal. It provides nothing else. There is no government agency as we know it. Fire protection is contracted out (outsourced) to another municipal government. So is garbage removal. The community water system is operated by volunteers. This is all arranged by the Local Service District, a kind of board of directors for the community comprised of volunteers. The "Chairman" of this Local Social Service District is a fisherman. He also monitors and ensures the water quality. When a water line breaks, village volunteers do the repairs. Taxes

are collected and checks for expenses are issued by a woman who works in a fish factory. Property taxes for my house are about \$150 Canadian dollars a year. This is half of the standard tax because I'm a part-time resident. The tax is the same for everyone in the municipality. There is no property "assessment."

The people there have an amazing sense of community. The Local Social Service District also holds an annual community dinner which is operated by volunteers and well attended—much like a church dinner. When somebody needs something, somebody else seems to show up to help out.

How much more libertarian can it get?

Bloomberg, Serial Killer (continued from page 1)

other words, 1,500 individuals die each year for lack of a gun—which makes officials like Bloomberg serial killers.

Mayors and other big city types hate the very idea of an armed citizenry because it makes their administrations look bad. From World War Two onward, violent crime in America's biggest cities rocketed upward, until it was predicted that something like one in three or four individuals would eventually become victims sometime in their lives.

Billions of dollars and millions of man-hours were thrown at the problem, and it only seemed to make things worse—although whenever a statistical blip occurred, and crime dropped by one or two or three percent, the bigwigs, stuffed shirts, and police brass slapped each other on the back and took credit for it, as if it actually meant something.

Then came a genuine revolution, sparked, I think, by movies like *Death Wish* (ironically, the Brian Garfield novel on which it was based was written from the opposite motive, as a cautionary tale against "vigilantism") and *Dirty Harry*. In spite of heartfelt pleas and dire threats from the police and others, ordinary people started arming themselves. Desperate to retain some appearance of control, state legislatures began changing carry laws—Florida was the first—making it microscopically easier for folks to defend themselves, and violent crime began to plummet over the next 20 years or so, in double digits.

Even more significantly, the state of Vermont, which requires no such licensing or permit, enjoys the lowest violent crime rate in the nation.

Despite that lesson—or more probably because of it and the way it makes them look—cities like New York, Chicago and Denver, and their mayors, Bloomberg, Richard Daley and John Hickenlooper, cling to long-outdated notions about individual weapons ownership and self-defense. Denver has gone as far as declaring that because it's a "home rule" city, the Bill of Rights doesn't apply within the city limits—and an impossibly idiotic or corrupt state supreme court has agreed.

In many ways these places are not the sophisticated, cosmopolitan hubs of Western Civilization they advertise themselves to be. They're smug, self-satisfied, backward, provin-

cial potholes in the road, much more comparable to Oxford, Mississippi, Selma, Alabama, and other towns that fought against civil rights for black people in the 1950s, and their mayors are like the cliché overweight sheriffs and police chiefs with mirrored sunglasses standing in the way of moral and legal progress.

Nearly everywhere else in America, in rural areas and more and more small cities, the horrendous mid-20th century crime problem has been solved by the proper application of modern technology and the Second Amendment. Is it going to take a new generation of Freedom Riders—or the domestic equivalent of the Nuremberg War Crimes trials—to drag the big cities and their authorities into the 21st century?

Will they ever be punished for their many crimes? *Of course* they will, because we demand it and will never rest until justice has been served.

P.S. We have just learned that a U.S. federal court of appeals has shoved a thumb in Michael Bloomberg's eye by ruling that a lawsuit he had mounted against the nation's gun manufacturers violates the 2005 Lawful Commerce in Arms Act—designed to prevent this very kind of lawsuit.

Congratulations, court—too bad, Bloomie!

Letters (continued from page 2)

A study of scholastic achievement of home schooled children by Lawrence M. Rudner at the University of Maryland found: "eighth graders who are home schooled perform approximately four grades above the national average, on standardized testing, they average in the 87th percentile while public school peers average in the 61st percentile, and on the 1999's SAT, they scored 67 points above the national average of 1,016".

In spite of this report, the California Court of Appeals has outlawed home schooling. The message is clear: "Parents do not have a constitutional right to home school their children". Home schooling is no longer an option for parents who might disagree with the state-developed, state-sponsored curriculum and teaching methods.

What we desperately need is separation of schools and state.

Ed Konecnik
Flushing, NY

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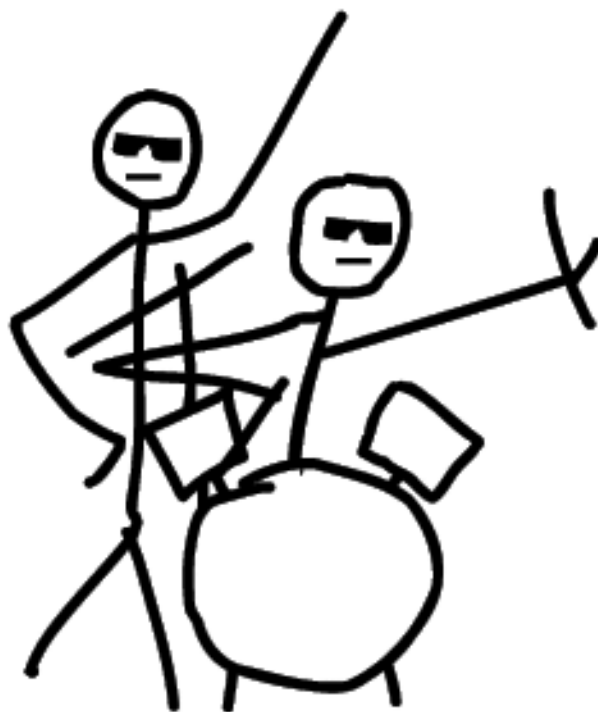
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