

The Free State Project

“Liberty in Our Lifetime”



The Quill

The Free State Project – Membership

By Tim Gordon

Members, members, members, members, members — *hai!* — members, members, members, members, members — *hey!* Hey!/? Hey this: If there’s anything that Porcupines like

to talk about, discuss, debate, prognosticate and take sneak peeks at, it’s our growing membership numbers. As a result, I’ll bet one of the most popular places on the Free State Project (“FSP”) Web site is the top of the home page.

Haven’t you looked at it lately? Oh, yes you have. Go on, admit it! We all do. I

just did myself: We’re 3,061 members strong as I write this, and probably more by the time you read this article. We’re rocketing toward the big number of 5,000 signed-up FSP members, and then we’re going to stage what arguably may be one of the most important events in American history: We’re

going to have a vote to choose the Free State, and begin staging a migration that will result in liberty in our lifetimes.

Let’s check out a little history using the cool line graph that shows our membership growth; there’s a link to click on right there at the top of the FSP home page. “Where’s the link?” I asked after FSP director and tech guru Matt Cheselka proudly announced the new graphs. “It’s right there on the home page,” he said. I looked, poring over the entire table of contents that is on the left-hand side of the home page.

“Call me a dummy,” I said, “but I can’t find the damned thing!” Matt finally helped me by pointing out where he had hidden the link — in plain view: All you need to do to get to all that good extended membership information is click on the blue-colored word “members” at the top of the FSP home page. *D’oh!*

Anyway, you click on “members” and you’re di-

rected to another page where there are additional links for membership information. My favorite link is “Membership Growth Curves” at <http://www.freestateproject.org/membership.htm>. That little baby reveals quite a bit about our short, successful history. First of all, take a look at the growth curve line graph, and something immediately becomes clear: Jason Sorens *et al.* had a tough row to hoe at the inception of FSP when they officially inaugurated it on September 1, 2001. As a result of the 9/11 attacks, not only did membership growth become stagnant for about six months, some people even quit in the aftermath of 9/11, thinking erroneously that the FSP is a secessionist movement. Under the circumstances, it’s a wonder

that the growth curve didn’t just plummet down into the x-axis.

But then a funny thing happened: The number of signed-up members started increasing. Not real fast at first, but little by little. And then, at the 48th week since 9/11, the line graph goes nearly vertical, membership explodes upward and the FSP server crashes under the deluge of Web hits. What happened? Libertarian hero and teacher, Professor Walter Williams, mentioned the FSP in one of his nationally syndicated columns, and even

endorsed us! This is more than what the Libertarian Party’s national executive committee would do, since they refused to endorse us or give us even the time of day. Retrospectively, that was when the FSP first began to register on the Big Political Radar Screen and first began to jiggle the little needles on the ideological movement’s Richter scale.

Of course, after the deluge of new members, things slowed down for two or three weeks. Then the line graph turns upward again, starting at the 51st week and then goes even steeper at the 58th week. Today, as we pass the 80th week, the line graph keeps going up at a very respectable pace.

What’s going on here? I’m indebted to my fellow

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Welcome to the May edition of “The Quill,” the Free State Project’s monthly newsletter! “The Quill” will be published on the Web every month in PDF format, and you are encouraged to print out copies and distribute them in your local community! We welcome suggestions, articles and questions from readers; send these to us at: newsletter@freestateproject.org.

Mary Lou Seymour
The Quill Project Manager

Signed-Up Members
as of
April 25, 2003:
3,373



Gold & Silver

The financial state of the FSP

By Debra Ricketts

Here's an update on what's been going on lately. First, the Board of Directors has made the decision not to pursue tax-exempt status with the IRS further. Jason announced, "The IRS was clearly stonewalling our application and burdened us with so many requirements that we decided it was simply not worth it. We hated to

see for sale? E-mail your comments to finance@freestateproject.org. I'll make the results known in next month's issue of *The Quill*. ✪

From The President

By Jason Sorens

People who have lived longer than I have sometimes noted how the United States has lost much of its regional diversity. The South has been colonized by Northerners, the Mountain West by Californians, and people everywhere have become more homogeneous because of the influences of television, movies, and so on.

This increasing homogeneity has sometimes provoked authoritarian, statist attempts to reverse it through zoning laws, "historic preservation" regulations, and various legal attempts to "keep outsiders out." But because continuity and sense of place are matters that are important to people, we should expect that people will find ways to accomplish these when they are free from bureaucratic *diktats*. A bottom-up approach to community would be based on the right to contract and form exclusive associations.

A Free State is therefore not so much a place where no one pays taxes, no one is prevented from taking drugs, and where one does what one pleases, but a place where people can join together and live their lives as they see fit. In a Free

State, there would be a panoply of different communities — villages with a religious orientation; groups of friends "Galt gulching" together on a farm, ranch or wide open "frontier towns"; and even socialist communes! Thus, many of our Free State communities would not look like free markets or "libertopias," but the key thing to remember is that all restrictions on private behavior will be fundamentally voluntary.

Voluntarism is not just a moral imperative; it's a necessary condition for the good life. I keep thinking back to Steve Cobb's brilliant article, "The First Dimension of Association"

(<http://www.freestateproject.org/assoc.htm>), where he argues that without freedom, none of our other values matter. Freedom — the lack of externally imposed control — is the basic requirement for pursuing our values most effectively. In the Free State Project ("FSP"), we have people with all kinds of values — from conservative, religious folks to libertines and just about everything else in between! Because we are all committed to working together for the fundamental value of liberty, I expect that the Free State will end up being the most kaleidoscopic of regional diversity that you could find anywhere in the world. The "FSP" offers each of us a chance to create a sense of place and liberty in our lifetimes. ✪

Phil Boncer and Kristine Brooks are together in love and in their support for the FSP.

Phil first found out about the Free State Project ("FSP") in February 2002 from a blurb titled "Project seeks 'Free State' for Libertarians" in the *LP News* (<http://www.lp.org/lpnews/0203/newsbriefs.html>). Phil says, "I was immediately interested, as I was already gathering information to research what state to escape to from San Diego, Calif. I looked at the Web site and was impressed by the thought and effort put into the Project, and I brought it to Kristine's attention. We discussed it for a couple of evenings, and then signed our letters of intent and sent them off." Kristine adds, "We are both longtime libertarians and are very excited about FSP. We want to bring up our kids in a place where they know what freedom really is. We met four years ago and were immediately attracted to one another for myriad reasons, but most especially because we had similar political and social leanings. We live our lives on the principles of kindness, respect and freedom."

Phil and Kristine help out the FSP by volunteering for many different projects. Kristine helps with the Southern California media listing, and has been a major driver of the database of state LP conventions, while Phil helps manage the traffic on the main e-mail list. They pass out FSP brochures and talk about the FSP with everyone they know.

Phil and Kristine have concrete plans for their future, which include the Free State. "Our current plans are to stay here until 2006, get married, tour Europe on motorcycles for a year or so, then come back to the Free State, settle in and start a family. We look forward to seeing y'all there!"

We are so very grateful for volunteers like Phil and Kristine — we couldn't do it without any of you! Like Phil and Kristine, you too can volunteer your services to further the FSP's agenda of seeing liberty in our lifetimes. If you would like to volunteer for any of our many projects, please send an e-mail to info@freestateproject.org and welcome aboard!

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let them win, but in the end it was clear that with our limited resources, succumbing to their demands would be too much of a strain."

Second, we are having our taxes done by a Las Vegas CPA firm specializing in nonprofit organizations. It's been a little hairy since our status with the IRS is up in the air. Consequently, the tax preparation has cost us just over \$1,200. *Ouch!* If any of our members is or knows of a CPA with nonprofit expertise who could prepare our taxes for less money next year, please contact me at dricketts@freestateproject.org.

Finally, we're having a debate regarding merchandise. As many of you know, we sell through Café Press, which doesn't cost us anything but has a low profit margin and limited selection. However, it's not clear if it would be advantageous for us to tie up cash in inventory. Furthermore, there is much discussion over what merchandise would sell best; we've had suggestions ranging from buttons, temporary tattoos to Porcupine plush dolls. Obviously, we don't want to spend hundreds of dollars on premia no one will buy.

So, my question for you all is the following. Do you think the FSP should expand the merchandise offered, and if so, what merchandise would you like to



Membership

Continued from page 1

Florida Porcupine friend, known as Zack Bass on the e-mail lists and fora, for explaining. "It's going to be an exponential curve," he confidently declared some months ago when we met for lunch in Tampa, Fla. "Weell, I dunno," I demurred, but he was adamant. "As membership grows," he said, "we can expect it to grow even faster." "Why?" I asked. "Because you don't have to re-inform everyone who's already heard about us. Once someone knows about us, that's an additional person who's able to talk to others who don't yet know about us. It just keeps building!"

Looking at the graph, I've must say Zack was right.

Right now, we're past the halfway point and rising fast. Now comes the Big Question: When will we hit 5,000 and have the vote? Opinions fly fast and furious as to when we're going to hit that magical 5,000 number. Jason weighed in saying he thinks we'll

Now comes the Big Question: When will we hit 5,000 and have the vote?

get there around July or August 2003. I've stuck my head way out and predicted that we'll hit it before the end of May.

Want to help us get to liberty in our lifetimes quicker? Go get just one person you know who loves liberty sign up and promise to move to the Free State. My buddy Brad has been watching the whole thing with a cynic's jaundiced eye. He doesn't cotton to big government, high taxes and bloated bureaucracies much, but he previously had the standard stance of disbelief. Then the *St. Petersburg Times* article hit in March. "Did you see that?" he asked me. "I think I may want to sign up!" I told him to come on over to my office and I'll get him on the Web and on the way to liberty in his lifetime. If everyone who's a member now does the same we'd have the Free State vote in no time!

So tell all your freedom-loving friends: "Join the FSP and help create liberty in *your* lifetime!"



Classifieds

F seeking M, 19-90, must have brain and own courage. (Freedom seeking Manacled, reply Free State Project)

Have graphic design skills? We need your help! Join the publicity volunteers at fsp-publicitysubscribe@yahoo.com

Rational Review News Digest Freedom news briefs Mon-Fri Delivered to your in-box <http://rationalreview.com/news>

S & H Enterprises, Hassle-Free Web sites & Copywriter services 870-743-1848 www.website-copywriter.com

Beautiful Stuffed Animals. More great items. We Will donate 10% of your purchase to FSP! Go to melaniesemporium.com

GAS MASKS / CHEM SUITS - Masks with sealed NATO filter; 2 pc. vacuum-sealed NBC suits; gloves; \$55. bioline@swbell.net

The Liberty Dollar, get it at a discount and use it at a profit while returning America to value. 1-888-421-6181. LibertyDollar.org.

Kansas City Metropolitan Porcupines Let's get together and promote the FSP in our area! Richard Johnson 816-741-8089 richj@northcs.com.

TAKE ACTION on libertarian and conservative issues! FREE Action Alerts daily! ConservativeAlerts.com

Adopt "LP" the Liberty Penguin as your personal libertarian mascot. Six states have made it official, 1-888-453-4332 www.libertypenguin.com,

Escape to New Hampshire! Join us June 21-29, 2003 Lancaster, NH 603-431-1618 www.lpnh.org/escape.htm

Double your victory! Help elect two Libertarian FSP supporters to office this year in New Hampshire! Visit monadnocklibs.org.

Dr. Irvin's Tampers & Tobacco Blends Handmade cherry wood pipe tampers & Am. Indian & Western pipe tobaccos <http://members.tripod.com/ben-irvin> or order via e-mail: birvin@allidaho.com, or USPS: Dr. Ben F. Irvin, P.O. Box 4014, Pocatello, ID 83205-4014

Editors' Note: All Web sites begin with <http://www> unless otherwise noted.

FSP Board of Directors

Jason Sorens,
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Matt Cheselka,
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Stephen Cobb,
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Amanda Maxwell,
Organization/Publicity

Mary Lou Seymour,
Publicity/Analysis

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THE GRAND WESTERN CONFERENCE

Featuring:

May 24th

Mike Fellows,
MTLP Chairman

Vin Suprynowicz

J.J. Johnson

Sen. Jerry O'Neil,
R-Mont.

When: May 24 and 25, 2003

Where: Missoula, Montana

Site: Best Inn,
3803 Brooks Street
1-406-251-2665

Cost: \$25.00 Single or
\$35.00 Family*

Featuring:

May 25th

Claire Wolfe

Comparatives on
Idaho, Montana,
and Wyoming

Jason Sorens

Meeting of the
Libertarian Party
of Montana

* Pay at registration on May 24, 2003

The Quill

Volume I
Issue 2
May 2003

Our Staff:

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Events Calendar

FREE STATE PROJECT EVENTS

May 6, 2003
Nevada

West Charleston Library, 6301 W. Charleston Blvd., Las Vegas.

FSP Treasurer Debra Ricketts is addressing the Libertarian Party of Clark County at 6 p.m.

For more information contact Debra Ricketts at dricketts@freestateproject.org.

May 10-11, 2003
Ohio

The LPO 2003 State Convention.

Crowne Plaza Hotel, 33 E. Fifth St., Dayton

FSP Vice President Elizabeth McKinstry will be attending and manning a vendor table, although not speaking, at the OH LP Convention.

For more information visit <http://www.lpo.org/LPO2003Convention.htm>.

May 17, 2003
Wyoming

FSP Treasurer Debra Ricketts will be speaking in Casper. There will be a closed morning meeting for only Wyoming Libertarian Party members, and an open afternoon meeting for the FSP and for the public. Print and radio coverage is expected.

For more information e-mail ccurley@trib.com or dricketts@freestateproject.org.

May 24-25, 2003
Montana

The "Great Western Conference"

Best Inn, 3803 Brooks St., Missoula.

J.J. Johnson, Claire Wolfe, Jason Sorens, Vin Suprynowicz and Sen. Jerry O'Neil, R-Mont. have been confirmed as speakers.

The full agenda is available at <http://www.freestateproject.org/gwc.htm>.

June 7-15, 2003

New Hampshire

Motorcycle Week in Laconia. FSP outreach volunteers are needed.

June 21-29, 2003

New Hampshire

The Libertarian Party of New Hampshire's "Welcome to the Granite State Committee" and Northern New England Porcupines are sponsoring an "Escape to New Hampshire" getaway vacation in Lancaster.

FSP Vice President Elizabeth McKinstry and John Babiarz will be speaking on June 22.

For detailed information see the local groups' Web page or e-mail rich_tomasso@yahoo.com.

June 28, 2003

Texas

FSP President Jason Sorens will be addressing the Libertarian Party of Texas Convention in San Antonio. More details will be posted.

LOCAL PORCUPINE GROUPS

Third Saturday of the month (May 17/June 21, 2003)
Regular meeting of DFW local Porcupines (Dallas/Ft. Worth)

Bailamos Mexican Restaurant, 1922 West Irving Boulevard, Irving TX

Contact Aaron at kesthesculptor@bbnow.net

May and June 2003

Free State Project members in Colorado meeting online

Location: groups.yahoo.com/group/fspco

Contact James Reyes at james@libertyforums.com

Florida Porcupines

Location: To Be Announced

Contact Tim at tcondon@freestateproject.org

May and June meeting - Kudzu Porcupines

Location: To Be Announced

Contact Cathleen Converse at chcdwc@bellsouth.net



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"Liberty in Our Lifetime"

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