

The Free State Project

“Liberty in Our Lifetime”



The Quill

My Struggle with Section 501(c)(3)

By Jean Alexander

*Signed-Up Members
as of
May 14, 2004:
5,725*

I started out very firmly against 501(c)(3) for the Free State Project. I was unyielding in my belief. I didn't understand how we could justify using government to get less government. I didn't like the idea of the loss of privacy I thought (c)(3) brought about. I didn't want to give any more information to the government than was necessary. I'd

heard that (c)(3) status could open us up to serious harassment by the IRS. I thought we could get by with less money and/or ask the membership for regular donations. I wasn't clear on why we needed more money. I

empt status. No bones about it, he said, the (c)(3) brings in donations in large amounts and with regularity. People want to contribute and really like to give the IRS a smaller cut of their income. Kevin doesn't know why anyone with an appropriate mission wouldn't be a (c)(3). The benefits far outweigh the costs in his opinion.

With respect to the IRS coming in and making a ruckus Kevin didn't think that was a problem. "Keep clean books and don't cross the political line and you'll be fine." "But, of course, we could be a target", I countered. But Kevin pointed out that if the government wants to get you they don't need you to be a (c)(3) to do so. If the government wants to harass you, it will, regardless of your tax status. "What about loss of privacy?" I asked. Kevin pointed out that the reporting requirements are pretty much the same though larger (c)(3) donations do need to be specifically reported. However, he added, the powers that be can subpoena records at any time, again regardless of tax status.

I must admit, I was somewhat depressed after my conversation with Kevin. My biggest concern was potential IRS harassment and he pretty much eliminated that argument. I dislike changing my position on something, especially something I was quite vehement about. And I was surprised by how wrong some of my assumptions were. As I processed all of this I realized I still had some concerns.

Why get into bed with the government? Unfortunately, this is just not avoidable. As many told me we already crossed this line when we needed a bank account. We had to form a corporation and get a tax id number. We are a Nevada corporation and have to file tax returns. Getting into bed with the government isn't an option – it's a requirement.

Why use government to get less government? Well, the first benefit is that the government gets less money if we have (c)(3) status. People who donate can reduce their taxable income. So, in a way, using government in the form of (c)(3) is getting less government. It is true, however, that this is a very, small difference!

Another significant factor is that 501(c)(3) is a passive use of government. We are not asking for a handout or unearned wealth. We are asking for government sanction so that people who give us money get a small benefit. The libertarian quandary about wanting less government but do we use government in the meantime is not trivial. If we want to live "on the grid" some things are just not an option. I

Quote of the Month

"The Free State Project has put the words 'libertarian' and 'movement' back together again, for the first time in something like thirty years, and I am more personally grateful than I can adequately express, because it is the Free State Project that stands the greatest chance, in my opinion, consistent with my understanding of history and human nature, of transforming the fictional worlds of freedom, adventure, and romance I have created in my novels into a reality.

"I send the Free State Movement and everyone in it my personal best regards. I look forward to calling them my friends, my allies, [and] my comrades for the rest of my life."

L. Neil Smith

thought people should be willing to donate to FSP without the tax benefit. And then, unexpectedly, I was put into a position to help make decisions about the future of FSP.

Every once in awhile I find I've adopted a position that I need to reexamine. I dislike this process because I usually adopt positions with careful thought and hate to think I erred. But reexamination often reinforces my positions. And being able and willing to question and accept questions is a strength I admire in others and try to do myself. So I began reexamining my position on 501(c)(3).

My husband and I contribute to Oregon Firearms Federation (OFF), among others. OFF has two arms, the Oregon Firearms Federation, a (c)(4) entity involved in lobbying, and the Oregon Firearms Educational Federation, an educational arm with (c)(3) status. As part of my due diligence process I phoned Kevin Starrett who runs both organizations.

Kevin was very forthcoming about the (c)(3) tax-ex-



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Can a Porcupine Save Your Guns?

By Evan F. Nappen, Esq.

I have been actively involved in the Gun Rights Movement for over 25 years in a place officially called "Gun Owner's Hell" by the National Rifle Association of America. I have watched first hand the State of New Jersey turn honest citizens into criminals. I view myself as a guerilla fighter behind enemy lines trying to save my clients from going to prison and becoming convicted felons. Unless I win for them, they forfeit their freedom, their property, their gun rights and their civil rights, including their right to vote.

For years the same old methods of how to fight the anti-gunners were heard and attempted by us. We were always hit with words and phrases like "grassroots," "contact your legislator," "get out the vote," "sign this petition," "take this poll," etc. And of course, do not forget the never ending requests for money. These methods failed in New Jersey and I'll tell you the dirty little secret of WHY we failed in Jersey. Its because of the apathy of our own people.

Consider this, at the height of the fight against the most unpopular Democratic Governor in New Jersey's history who was pushing the worst gun ban ever proposed in New Jersey's history (so-called Assault Firearm Ban), the

number of NRA members was only 90,000 out of 2 million known gun permit holders. Now get ready for this, ONLY 1/3 of the 90,000 members were even registered to vote! Now that's apathy with no excuse. As always, the ones who then complained the loudest at our defeat, did the least to try to stop it. Due to the citizens' hatred of this governor, we next had eight years of total Republican control of both the Legislative and Executive branch of State Government. Big Deal! We could not even get a Bill passed to grandfather the "Assault Firearm Ban" to save the 300,000 honest citizens who were turned into felons or even pass a Bill to reform our carry permit system to a "shall issue" permit. So much for our "friends" the Republicans.

This is where FSP is the great new hope for our gun rights. 20,000 ACTIVISTS concentrated in a low population state can kick ass for gun rights. Activists are the opposite of apathetic gun owners. These are folks who will walk the walk (to NH) for freedom and not just talk the talk about how our rights are disappearing and yell "Where is the NRA?" This is the newest, strongest, most effective political strategy to come along in years. Think about it, you can watch your

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The Most Sincere Form of Flattery... From the President

By Amanda Phillips

Imitation is - no doubt. People can admire you, compliment you, envy you - but to try to imitate ... wow! It is a vote of confidence and adulation. It warms the heart! The Free State Project (FSP) is worthy of imitation. It has had a remarkable life so far. Begun as the brainchild of Jason Sorens in a discussion forum, it has grown into the full-fledged movement for liberty it is today. The FSP forums are an unending source of discourse on liberty and discussions on how to attain it. Across the country, members work on spreading the word. It has achieved the major milestone of getting five thousand people signed up. It has arranged for the vote amongst its members to select the state to liberate.

While there is no doubt that the results of the vote impacted everyone involved with FSP, the fact is we all knew there were opt outs and there was going to be disappointment with the final selection. Those who opted out or otherwise decided against New Hampshire will, of course, seek freedom elsewhere. How could they not?! I celebrate their choice to not let go the dream.

For me, however, I'm keeping my eye on the prize. FSP *has* come a long way, but we have so much farther to go! Continuing the journey to increase membership, migrate and actively make change in New Hampshire is paramount. Not losing sight of the end goal is critical. I'm happy those who can't come to New Hampshire will continue the pursuit of freedom. I'm continuing the pursuit too. ❄

A Note from the Chair

By Jason Sorens

I've been very pleased with the Free State Project's progress these days. On the Web site, you can take a look at current operations by checking out the "Organization" page at <http://freestateproject.org/about/organization.jsp> and then the "Operations Report" at <http://freestateproject.org/about/ops-reports/040411.jsp>. We're moving rapidly to implement the strategic goals the Board set in February 2004.

Thus the Board hasn't needed to set any new guidelines lately, but there are two important new decisions of note. First, we invited Alan Weiss and Keith Murphy onto the Organizers E-mail list. We're very proud of their contributions in the past; Alan conducted the verification and count of our state vote last year, and Keith has been the force behind one of our most successful local groups, the Mid-Atlantic FSP.

Second, we decided to try having member elections for Board positions, starting May. By the time you read this, Porcupines should be voting among different candidates for the open Board spot. If this process works well, we hope to have member elections for every Board spot in the future. It's a way to get Porcupines more involved in the organization and make sure the FSP is getting input from a wide range of opinions.

I'm looking forward to seeing the hard work everyone has put in the last few weeks bear fruit in the coming months and years. Exciting things are starting to happen in New Hampshire and the FSP will be there to keep up the momentum. ❄

Can a Porcupine Save Your Guns?

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rights disappear one by one, or you can be part of a political

Something special is happening in NH, you can see it in the glow in folks eyes, the bounce in their step, A bond is forming, a resolve, a willingness to do what needs doing to create a place were Freedom flourishes! There is a willingness do whatever needs to be done, save dishonor, to get the job done. If you don't believe me, ask the folks who have come in to visit. They could feel it too, I am certain.

Much is being asked of our membership. Leave much that you hold dear behind - family, friends, jobs, and that comfortable feeling of home. We understand. We realize and do not take the task of making you welcome in NH lightly. Know that when you arrive you will have friends in NH. We will offer assistance in finding housing, employment, and, most of all, we will be able to help you find the proper people and organizations so you can immediately start to help create a free NH!

Now on to what's up in NH!

Well Janice, and Michael, made it in from California. We had dinner in Concord Friday night. Among the notables: John and Rosealee, Cal and Karen, and Martin. Amanda shot up from Massachusetts. It was Martin's maiden voyage with the group - he was born in Sweden. Janice and Michael made our meeting Saturday in Dover, also Francis was up from NY for a visit, and apartment hunting. A special thanks to Don for giving Janice, Michael and I a tour of the Seacoast area after the meeting.

I met Gary, visiting from NYC on Sunday in Portsmouth. We had an interesting discussion with a NH native. When I mentioned the FSP he said he had heard of us. "You're democrats, right!?" Oh brother! Well a couple of (sometimes heated) hours later, we smiled, shook hands with Bryan and he was on his way. He did say he really enjoyed talking to us and learning about the FSP. Gary loved Portsmouth and promised to be here within two years.

Next up Tonya and John were visiting, also from the People's Republic. We all met at Julie and Ron's in Newfields on Wednesday. I think over the next couple of days a friendship had been formed as Julie and Ron showed Tonya and John around the area. Lest we forget, there was another greet and meet at Alicia and Tony's place Friday....Getting bored yet? BULLETIN! While here

strategy to concentrate our power with genuine ACTIVISTS for the protection and advancement of our gun rights. Do not miss this opportunity to make political history in the fight for freedom. Do it for the greatness that was once America. Do it for your love of guns. Do it for your kids. Do it for yourself. Commit to The Free State Project! 🌟

Tonya said she would be coming to the Porc Fest, but alone. Well just looked on the list, and it seems as if John is on the list too! (grin)

In between all of this socializing and sightseeing, the conceal carry hearings were happening in Concord (SB454). We had at least a dozen porcupines there, many testifying for various groups. It seemed like about two thirds of the testimony was in favor. A number of us had dinner with several of the folks from GONH, and one of the state reps. I believe we are developing a good working relationship with the folks at GONH, as well as a number of the state reps.

Well it's Tuesday again, and time for the NHLA meeting. Gary Nolan, Libertarian candidate for president was interviewed by the press, and gave a brief talk before the meeting. Here's an interesting side note: While at the bar a seventy-eight year old active merchant marine asked me about the FSP. I'm not sure he agreed with all we are about, but he was interested and listened. He also promised to call me when he gets back from sea!

Wednesday George and I met Patrick for dinner in Dover. Patrick had been traveling the state, meeting folks, and checking out NH. He's from NV and expects to be moving in June. As fortune would have it, Patrick was also at the supper meet and greet at Alicia and Tony's Friday. I would be remiss if I didn't thank Alicia and Tony for providing the place to meet as well as the food and drink....Thanks guys! This time we had so many folks we ran out of dinner plates. Among the notables was Mike Badnarik, Libertarian Presidential candidate; and Joel, a new porcupine just two weeks arrived, from FL. When I asked Joel if he would like to help, his response was "That's why I'm here!" My kind of porcupine!

Can't close without one more note. President Phillips! The gal seems to be everywhere. Her energy, and tireless support of the FSP, has been something to behold. Heck, she was still at Alicia and Tony's when I left! Thanks so much Amanda!

Hey folks, "WE THE PEOPLE!" Be seeing you all down the road in NH!

David Mincin

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apply for a driver's license and pay property taxes. Sometimes, however, it is a choice. Do I take tax deductions? Do I apply for food stamps? Taking tax deductions is passive and I don't have any problems using them. But an active use of government, such as food stamps, is not something I would sanction.

Perhaps most importantly, FSP's mission is to get 20,000 people to New Hampshire, our chosen state. We are not yet officially working on getting less government and that has never been FSP's mission anyway. It's the mission of the 20,000 of us who will be there. FSP is the conduit for migration, not the political implement of change.

So why do we need money? Why can't we work with less? Well, I had a harder time with this one. But I realized that the issue here was time.

FSP's goal has been to get 20,000 people signed up by September 2006 and then have everyone move and be active. Our mission has a short and fixed timeframe. September 2006 isn't far away. This was one of FSP's great appeals for me. We are not a liberty movement, limping along, looking for change some decades ahead. It is a project for liberty in our lifetimes ... not our descendants' lifetimes! We still have 14,000 odd members to sign up! We need to get the word out! Can we do that with less money? Maybe. I don't know. I am not willing to risk it. I don't want the Project to fail. It just can't. Extra money can pay for more advertisements, more

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speaking engagements, more banners on the Internet, more ways to spread the word about FSP's mission and get new members.

The short time frame works to our advantage with respect to IRS harassment too. Since we'll accomplish our mission in the next two years the IRS is unlikely to have enough time to begin harassing us!

And I can't ignore that one of the reasons espoused for increased funding is the need for a paid president (and/or other paid staff). At first I thought that paying for a president was unnecessary. We are a volunteer organization; we can certainly find volunteers for this job. And, in fact, we have. But the presidency is a full time, no, really more than a full time job. Jason did it for a long time, while pursuing his academic career and having a family life. Ultimately, though, everyone has to pay their bills, have time off, have a per-

sonal life ... Most people just can't handle both a full time paying job and a full time volunteer one ... at least not for long. Every time we change presidents we lose momentum, momentum we can't afford to lose over the next two years. Having one key person, who can devote full time for an extended time to our mission, is a very critical milestone. With a person at the helm, who can focus on FSP, without interruption (except for that pesky personal life thing), without worrying about paying the mortgage, ... well, with that situation I have no doubt we will all be in NH before the decade is out.

I know that not everyone agrees with 501(c)(3) status. People are quite passionate about it. I know I was. But I encourage everyone to reconsider in the light of my experience. And I hope that all of us will support FSP even if we disagree with a specific decision. And 501(c)(3) detractors know this ... having been the "swing" vote in paving the way for (c)(3) status I am the bull terrier watching for compliance problems. Watch out! ;-)

Free State Project Speakers and Events

Where: Freedomfest 2004 Bally's/Paris Resort, Las Vegas, NV
When: May 13-15
FSP Speaker: Jason Sorens

Where: LP Colorado Convention, Estes Park Holiday Inn
When: May 21-23
FSP Speaker: James Reyes

Where: Fox Valley LP, Ill.
When: June 30, 7 p.m.
FSP Speaker: David Hughes

Where: Porcupine Festival, Rogers Campground, Lancaster, N.H.
When: June 24-27

Where: N.H. Liberty Alliance Dinner, Plymouth State University
When: June 25
FSP Speaker: Governor Craig Benson and Jason Sorens

See the latest schedule at
freestateproject.org/news/events.jsp

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