

The Free State Project

“Liberty in Our Lifetime”



The Quill

“What do You do When the World Is Not the Way You Want It to Be?”

By Matt Cheselha

Seventeen years ago, in the fall of 1986, an individual posed to herself the question stated in the title of this article. Instead of keeping the answer at a philosophical or theoretical level, she decided to do something to make it a reality. There are those who dream of freedom, and there are those who acquire it. Cairn, the project coordinator, single-handedly and energetically invited libertarians to voluntarily pack their bags and move to Fort Collins, Colo. in order to “congre-

gate our numbers” and “quickly become the model city of freedom advocates.” In her invitation she observed, “Our numbers are small in percentage when spread out over the globe. It is easy to be outnumbered and overpowered. You dream of being surrounded by other responsible freedom lovers. Here is a practical, realistic, right-now opportunity.”

Sound familiar? She called it “Freedom Now.”

When you get down to the details, anyone who firmly believes in nonaggression is by definition a libertarian. There are others who *think* they believe in nonaggression but actually don't. For example, when you ask a group of people if they believe in nonaggression, most likely every single one of them will raise their hands. But, if you ask how many of them support seat belt laws, most likely a majority will raise their hands again. That's the difference. Cairn was seeking out people who believed in nonaggression.

In this ideal society that was to begin as a seed in Fort Collins, “Fascists could control their volun-

tary subjects. Communists could voluntarily commune together. Individualists could voluntarily trade and interact.” But Cairn is not one to spend very much time in fantasy land. She's wise enough to understand that libertarians must actually live on two separate tracks: survive in the world we currently have while simultaneously pursuing the world that we wish to have. Fort Collins was chosen because of its unassuming and non-strategic nature. (An aside: Cairn urges members of the FSP to chose a state that has these same qualities. She warns us not to underestimate the force of the U.S. government to defend a strategically important state.)

Libertarians must actually live on two separate tracks: survive in the world we currently have while simultaneously pursuing the world that we wish to have.

Can this be done? Yes it can, just as it has in the past. Other large groups have done it with great success. Cairn cites the Mormons in Utah and the various Amish communities of the mid-Western and Eastern USA. Like-minded people come together and live in a way that doesn't pose a threat to anyone. In fact, for the most part these two groups are highly respected and accepted members of society. Yes, they're viewed as “different,” but certainly not a threat.

How did they do this? They congregated in one location and then negotiated a way to peacefully opt out of various aspects of “normal” society and created their own way of living. This was the ultimate goal of Freedom Now.

After a five-year effort to encourage 1,000 people to move to Fort Collins, Cairn ended the campaign having only gotten a handful of people to actually move. A few hundred more contacted her for more information, but ultimately the results hoped for were not to be.

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Welcome to the September 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
August 31, 2003:
5,372



Gold & Silver

The financial state of the FSP

By Debra Ricketts

An update on our financial situation. We have \$11,817 in our bank account, with another \$715 in our PayPal account. Our last month's expenditures have included printing the ballots

From The President

By Jason Sorens

This will be my last month as the Free State Project's ("FSP") President and I've enjoyed very much doing the job. A year ago I wrote an article detailing the FSP's history in its first official year, September 1, 2001 to September 1, 2002. What has happened since then?

Shortly after I wrote that article, we passed the 1,000-member threshold. Then 2,000 members, then 3,000, then 4,000, then 5,000. After reaching just under 1,000 members in our first year, we've had approximately 4,400 new members since then. If we can keep pace at 4,500 new members per year, we will reach 20,000 members just by the end of 2006, the deadline we set for ourselves in the very beginning.

When I wrote that article a year ago, the Web community (forum.freestateproject.org) had just 230 registered participants. Today it has about 1,500 and it is by far the largest spot on the Web for Free Staters to get together and network. The old "freestateproject" Yahoo list has increased to 750 members, and list moderation has taken the number of messages down from over 1000 per month to consistently fewer than 500 per month. Many other e-mail lists have sprouted up to discuss things such as current events, philosophy, and of course state discussion, which are not in the purview of that business-only list.

Last September, serious state research had just begun. This September, the general view is that we have more than enough information to make a good decision, and people are voting right now. Last September, we had just started the option whereby people

could sign up as a "Friend" rather than a "Member." This September, we have over 1,000 friends in addition to our 5,400 members. Last September, the deeply flawed Cumulative Count voting system was going to be used for the state vote. Since then, we've changed the voting system to Simple Condorcet's

Porcupine Profile — Doug Hillman

By Tim Condon

Doug Hillman, our Porcupine of the Month, joined the Free State Project ("FSP") on August 1, 2002 and ended up with Porcupine Number 720. He also is a "glass eater," an FSP member who is so committed to liberty in his lifetime that he opted out of no states at all. "I believe the [FSP] offers us the greatest chance for true liberty in our lifetime," he says. "I have no opt outs. I'm ready for real freedom and I'm betting the farm on the FSP."

Born and raised in North Carolina, Doug served in the U.S. Army where he was a long-range reconnaissance patrol soldier (the fabled "LRRPs"), having made so many parachute jumps that "only recently did the number of flights that I landed with the plane surpass the number that I did not." He was stationed in West Germany, but "traveled to many exotic places" where he jumped out of airplanes "and other fun things."

After the Army, Doug traveled throughout the United States and Europe. "I've been to all 50 states and 30-something countries," he recounts, "and backpacked around Europe several times." In addition, in his 20s, he helped found three different companies, and was the general manager of a multimillion-dollar business before he turned 30. Today he runs "a small niche business out of my home preparing construction documents."

Formerly a Republican, Doug bailed out of the GOP and became a Libertarian during Bush the Elder's presidency. "I considered myself a conservative Republican until I discovered that my strong belief in limited government and absolute hatred of forced collectivism aligned me with another political group," he explains.

Doug and his wife Jena, who is "also a signed FSP member and more of a libertarian than me," have a small farm in Alabama and four children in homeschooling. "I enjoy gardening, hunting — or more accurately defending my crops from trespassing deer — shooting all firearms, and I'm active in my church," he says.

In addition, he's the national coordinator of the FSP "Media Tree" that we use to blanket the country with FSP press releases when they come out, which he took over when only 13 states were covered. Today the Media Tree covers 46 states, "building in redundancy where possible," he says. As an aside, he asks if there's anyone living in Massachusetts, Missouri, Rhode Island or Tennessee who will "help us get to 50." Never one to sit still, Doug also started up the "Kudzu Porcupines" in the southeastern United States, where meetings regularly attract people from up to five states, he started up the "FSP Greeter Program," and he moderates the "Religion" section in the FSP fora. "I have very little spare time," he deadpans.

What does the future hold for this Porcupine family? Doug and his wife have already "started looking at acreage in a few of the leading FSP states," he says. "Depending on which state is chosen, we may be one of the first families to make the big move. I am itching to move and get started *now*. Patience has never been a part of my makeup."

(\$5,100 with approximately another \$3,500 due after all ballots have been sent), and purchasing T-shirts for \$741.

We also are giving EEMBC Certification Laboratories, LLC ("ECL") funds to hire a temporary employee to assist ECL in the ballot scanning process,

Gold & Silver

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since there are going to be quite a few ballots coming in at the last minute because of the August 15 sign-ups and resending unforwarded or unreceived ballots. The temporary employee will cost \$2,000, which will leave a nice nest egg for the Big Announcement taking place on October 1.

On another note: My hard drive died and I lost all my e-mail, so anyone who volunteered for snail-mail duty in the past, please contact me! I'm always looking for volunteers to help answer snail-mail letters or send out brochures upon request or both. If you're interested, please contact me at dricketts@freestateproject.org/.


Finally, a quick reminder for everyone: When you get your ballot, make sure you send it in the provided envelope directly to ECL in Texas. I've received a few ballots at the Henderson office, which I've already forwarded, but it's best if they go straight to ECL. Less chance of the U.S. Post Office losing them!

See you next month! 

What do you do. . .

Continued from page 1

Two factors, in my opinion, produced the disappointing result. First, while it's true that people from around the world contacted Cairn about this idea, the fact of the matter is that she was not able to reach everyone who would have been inclined to make the move. The means of effectively distributing her message just wasn't available at that time. Even today, with all the great communications technology that we have available to make it easier, we still can't reach everyone that might be interested or sympathetic.

Second, there simply aren't a large number of libertarians out there who are willing to make such a move. Cairn half-jokingly remarks that libertarians may be some kind of "genetic aberration" since our numbers are so few and unlikely to grow! Unfortunately, the other fact is that the vast majority of people in this world are not libertarian nor will the world ever be overrun by libertarians anytime soon. Most people are followers and are comfortable being told what to do, how to do things, and when to do them. The followers and those who want to be taken care of view libertarians as taking away that dependence. They are afraid of this and therefore fight to keep it. We are not viewed as liberators, but rather as dangerous people that need to be eliminated. Porcupines can change this negative attitude. 


From the President

Continued from page 2

Method, the most efficient strategy and least susceptible election system according to most game theorists and mathematicians.

Starting in January, we got fairly sustained media attention, although at first the flow was slow enough that we mentioned each article by name on the front page of the Web site. By April 25, the flow of new media articles became large enough that every few days since then we've simply carried a little notice that the media section on the Web site has been updated. Some of the major media attention we've received since last September includes: two articles in WorldNetDaily.com/, a feature on slashdot.org/, a piece in *Chronicles*, a 20-minute NPR/PRI documentary, a blurb in *Newsweek*, a story in *Playboy*, two appearances by Elizabeth McKinstry on MSNBC, at least two on-air plugs from Neal Boortz, and a recent mention by Paul Harvey. By the way, news.google.com is a great resource for finding the latest news stories on the FSP.

Now it is time to look to the future. We are going to be choosing a new President and Treasurer from the winning state, and the search will begin as soon as the state is announced on October 1. And as you'll be hearing shortly, there should be an open spot on the Board of Directors too, which we'll likely fill with a volunteer who currently lives outside the Free State. Finally, we will probably start a Board of Advisers, which would include high-profile people whom we could count on for endorsements but who would also take a hand in shaping the FSP's general direction. In all of these efforts, your role as a FSP member or friend is crucial. Please take part in discussing candidates and position roles, and if appropriate, stand as a candidate for a position yourself. We also need lots of volunteers to help in redesigning the Web site and all our materials once the vote is over. If you can help, please contact Matt Cheselka at mcheselka@freestateproject.org/.

It's been a good year; and here's to continued progress for the next! 

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Vice President

Debra Ricketts,
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The Quill

Volume I
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Events Calendar

FREE STATE PROJECT EVENTS

October 8, 2003 — At 7 p.m., Amanda Phillips will address the Pioneer Valley Libertarian Association at their monthly meeting at Bickford's Family Restaurant, corner of Old Boston Highway and Pasco Road, Springfield, Mass.

October 19, 2003 — At 6 p.m., Amanda Phillips will speak with the Worcester County Libertarian Association at their monthly meeting at Tweed's Pub Restaurant, 231 Grove Street, Worcester, MA 01605-1707, telephone: (508) 755-8047.

LOCAL PORCUPINE GROUPS

West Central Florida Porcupines have semiregular meetings on Friday afternoons at Hops Grill & Bar in Tampa on North Dale Mabry Highway, telephone: (813) 871-3600, a few hundred yards south of the I-275 Dale Mabry exit. For more information contact John DeHope at (813) 469-8827 or e-mail him at johndehope3@hotmail.com/.

Kansas City Metropolitan Area Porcupines.

When: To be announced

Where: To be announced

Topic: Planning meeting to promote the FSP in our area?

Contact: Richard Johnson at (816) 741-8089 or e-mail him at richj@northcs.com/.

Dallas/Ft. Worth Monthly Meeting

When: Third Saturday of the month, 3 p.m.

Where: Fuddruckers, Irving Mall

Contact: Aaron Holding at kesthesculptor@bbnow.net

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