

Libertarians offer alternative to partisan baloney

As election time rolls around, we are once again treated to the age-old saga of the republicans and the demopublicans, arguing over each other's make-up and personal lives; this time to a background symphony of deception, delay and denial over the budget crisis. The public wearily awaits another opportunity to stand in line at the polling booth and choose between people who mainly differ on which ridiculous program gets your (future) tax dollars.

If you feel like you don't have a real



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Columnist

choice, read on. There's a party that offers a serious, considered alternative to business as usual.

In the modern world, we have come to view government action as the solution to all of the problems we face. Slipping into a mire of irresponsibility, we find our political conflicts reduced to one group of people trying to get the government to force something on another group, asking a third group to pay for it.

The Libertarians favor a different approach. Instead of being a conglomeration of special interest groups, this party bases its positions on a

consistent philosophical approach. The starting point could be stated simply; government by the people means, if anything, that government should not be in the business of forcing people to do things; rather, it should protect their lives, liberty and property. If I don't have a right to barge into my neighbor's house with a gun to stop him from having oral sex with his wife (or anyone else), then neither does the state of Georgia. If I don't have a right to take my neighbor's property just because I think he makes too much then neither does the government. The point is that you and I are the government. If we misuse its power against our fellow citizens we hurt ourselves as well.

Many people have forgotten that there is no magic genie in Washington who hands out money. That money comes from you and me. When we authorize our government to take so much from us, it is virtually guaranteed that we will soon be fighting over how much to take from each other.

Enough political philosophy. Where do libertarians stand on issues?

Foreign policy. While the two major parties are falling over each other to send American young people to Saudi Arabia (where we can be almost sure that many of them will die), libertarians believe we should just say no. If the major oil companies want to fight a war over oil, let them pay for it themselves.

Personal choices. The government has no business telling people what they may eat, drink, smoke, ingest, inject or own, what drugs or medical procedures they choose, what kind of sexual relations they may have, what to think, read, hear or watch, what clubs they may belong to, what they say or believe, or how they worship or teach their children. Period. This is a very simple

idea, but freedom has become extremely unpopular in the United States, among both "liberals" and "conservatives."

Economics. Government may require business to operate honestly, and enforce liability (each person is responsible for their actions), but it should not tell businesses how to operate, and may not set wages or prices.

Secret Police Forces. The CIA, FBI counterintelligence operations, and NSA should be abolished. They have no place in a free society. Citizens should be able to live without their governments spying on them; furthermore the CIA and NSA presently operate completely outside the law. No one is outside the law. "National security" (read "government security") does not justify violating citizens' rights.

These are but a few of the issues where the major parties are in partial or complete agreement; the Libertarians offer a real alternative. They believe that excessive government fosters irresponsibility, lethargy, and (eventually) poverty from declining economic power. They support the rights of everyone to choose how to live their life, as long as each respects the rights of others in turn.

Jeff Daiell is the Libertarian candidate for governor this November. I don't know Mr. Daiell, but I don't need to — since he's a Libertarian, I know what he stands for. If you are sick of the same old song and dance, and are thinking of staying home on the 6th, please don't. Check out the Libertarians. Vote for some people who mean what they say. For once.

Jeff Farmer is a graduate student in mathematics.



Steps must be taken to end rape of environment

Mother is being raped and plundered. Her name is Earth and her children (the animals, the plants, the humans) are dying at a sinister rate. The children feed off the Mother, and the Mother is being poisoned. The killing of her children even seems to be accelerating. The situation is sickly; the details are gross and alarming.

There is an ozone hole over Antarctica the size of the United States, and it's growing every day. Even if the production of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs — the main culprit in the destruction of the ozone) stopped today, the disintegration of the ozone would continue for several years.

The Earth is becoming hotter everyday as the result of air pollution and forest and plant destruction. This is called global warming or the greenhouse effect. George Bush, on the campaign stump, vowed that the greenhouse effect would meet the "White-House effect," but that phrase seems to have met the same fate as "no new taxes."

The rainforests are being mowed down as if they were some obnoxious, overgrown global lawn, not the cornucopia of life that they really are. As rainforests are turning into deserts, 1,000 species are becoming extinct every year, and the indigenous peoples that live in the rainforests are systematically being killed.

Our food, drinking water, rivers, lakes, oceans, air, ground, our unborn babies and our bodies are being filled with toxic chemicals and radioactive substances.

The problems of the environment intensify upon entering the big cities



Irwin Tang
Columnist

and the inner cities. In fact, 75 percent of all toxic dumping in America occurs in minority and poor neighborhoods (which are predominantly located in large cities).

But we must not simply dwell on the direness of the situation. We, the humans, must look for solutions to clean up the mess we've made. The fight for an inhabitable earth must occur in all theaters of possible change: at home, at the voting booth, at the supermarket, everywhere. Here is a list of what can be done.

First, we can live our everyday lives in an environmental manner. Some of the less obvious things we can do are becoming vegetarian, stop using styrofoam, conserving energy in all ways possible, and so on. For more information, read a book or ask your friendly neighborhood environmentalist.

Mindless American consumerism helped to create the environmental catastrophe, but conscious and caring American purchasing can help solve the problem. The boycott is the most powerful consumer tool. The United Farm Workers is currently calling for a boycott of grapes. The people who work in the grape vineyards of California are

exposed to toxic pesticides. The workers and the people living around the vineyards suffer a cancer rate several times that of the American population as a whole. Just taking a fraction of the profits away from the vineyard owners will cause them to quit the use of toxic pesticides.

Then there are protests, demonstrations and educating the public. These are all regularly used by activists. But simply living green and doing green activism is not enough.

We must restructure the way our democracy and our society works. In the most basic terms, Big Business has too much control over our lives.

Big Business owns our politicians. It takes a lot of money to win an election these days, and that money is available from political action committees (PAC's). Big Business uses PAC's to buy off our politicians. It's time to abolish PAC funding of political races and limit the amount that can be spent on a race. Non-millionaires should be able to afford to run for office.

Big Business controls our media and our entertainment. Only a handful of corporations control most of the important newspapers, magazines, books, broadcast stations, movies, recordings and videocassettes. Our children are being raised by the big corporations with the pop culture that they manufacture and sell through controlling America's TV screens. And if the same corporation that owns your local newspaper owns huge amounts of Exxon stock, how will they report the Valdez disaster? We must pay attention to our media sources and support alternative news sources that do not

have conflicting interests or are trying to "sell" news.

Finally, Big Business controls our resources and our capital. Not only do they dump and spew their toxic waste in American cities and countryside, they also export toxic waste to the Third World, dumping it on unsuspecting peasants. You can't trust Big Business. Let's keep government on their backs. Regulate. Enforce. Make them pay for their messes. Send the corporate killer

to prison just like you send the Ted Bundy's to prison. Building a plant that causes the neighborhood kids to get cancer and die is murder.

The Earth has not become a complete wasteland yet. Not everything is extremely poisonous yet. There are still a few trees and some ozone left. Let's get Big Business off our backs and work for a brave, green world.

Irwin Tang is a junior political science major.

Mail Call

Slocum says come to Houston, 12th Man

EDITOR:
First of all, I would like to thank the Texas A&M student body — the 12th Man, for the outstanding support they have shown over the years at football games.

We have won 21 of the last 22 Southwest Conference games played at Kyle Field, thanks in a large part to the 12th Man. Included in this streak was a 17-13 victory over the Houston Cougars last season. The crowd noise added pressure to the Cougars' offense and really pumped our players up.

This Saturday we face the Houston Cougars again, but this time in the Astrodome. We have a large group of former students in the Houston area, and they should turn out for the game; but we really need the help of the student body, the true 12th Man, to help make the game Saturday another "home" game for the Texas A&M Aggies.

The Houston athletic department gave us 10,000 tickets for the game. The 12th Man Foundation used 4,200 tickets, which leaves more than 5,000 tickets for the Aggies at our athletic ticket office. The Astrodome seats 60,000, and I would like to think we can outnumber the Houston fans.

There is no live television for this game, which will have a major bearing on the race in the Southwest Conference and who will play in Dallas on New Year's Day in the Cotton Bowl. It's been two years since the Aggies have played in Dallas, and I think it's time to make a return trip. It all starts this week in Houston. I hope to see you all there.

R.C. Slocum
Head football coach

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Adventures In Cartooning

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