

Coming home to New Hampshire

By BRIAN WRIGHT
Columnist

Thank you, Neighborhood News, for your fair story and hospitable editorial on the Free State Project (FSP) and some of its earlier-arriving people. As one of these early movers, I was invited to contribute a human-interest column from time to time from an FSP perspective.

However, we have to be careful when we talk about an "FSP perspective." Even though the FSP site acknowledges "friendly organizations," the FSP doesn't endorse any particular political or philosophical group. Most people who come to New Hampshire through the project are seeking to achieve more freedom in their lives immediately, as well as to leverage liberty to the rest of the world through active, highly individualized, demonstration of its virtues here.

A colleague of the staff writer who interviewed me for the article in the Nov. 9, 2005, issue supposedly expressed alarm at the prospect of hundreds or even thousands of liberty-loving FSP people "taking over" the state. He fears some sort of "Invasion of the Body Snatchers" scenario. The problem with this colleague's image is that he has it exactly backwards!

The pod people are those who want to take more control from actual people and give it to the state. These sirens of central-government author-

ity have been lying down next to the privileged classes for decades, to the point our remote leaders have disconnected from popular reality. When was the last time you wrote a letter to your congressman or senator and received a reply within several months, if at all?

We are here to be good neighbors and to help our neighbors recover some of the self-government they've lost. We want a humane system of free choice, live and let live. Ideally, we'd like to see the government not aggress at all against its citizens.

The Free State already resembles this ideal of the nonaggression principle more than any other state in the union. That's why New Hampshire got picked. It's also a big part of why I'm here. I'm also here because, as a Son of the American Revolution, New Hampshire, to me, is hallowed ground, a natural political-spiritual center for the rekindling of the ideas of liberty worldwide.

Being free means you get to live how you want to (or not live some particular way), so long as you don't initiate force against other people. Simple as that. And what I'd like to do with my opportunity with Neighborhood News is to bring this ideal of liberty down to earth. What does it mean in practical terms?

At the street level, literally,

an obvious Libertarian virtue of our fair state is people get to "ride free." One of the first things I noticed when



I came to a festival up in Lancaster, two summers ago, was the large number of motorcyclists. Not only were they plentiful as beers at a biker bar, more than half were riding "lid free," sans helmet. (New Hampshire is one of a handful of states that do not interfere with a rider's choice.)

Further, the Free State is the only state in the union that does not mandate seat belts in automobiles. Google to http://www.iihs.org/laws/state_laws/restrain3.html. Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, and read down the column for New Hampshire. You see this lonely little "n/a" winking back at you. I can only imagine the gut-level horror of your average safety tyrant: "Egads! These people in New Hampshire are hostile, non-conformist, suicidal maniacs; we have to crush them."

And that's the issue in a nutshell: tyranny vs. liberty.

Safety equipment, whether to use it or not, whether it makes sense to use it or not, is not the issue. It isn't even close to the issue. Assuming helmets and seat belts prevent serious injury and save lives – and I'm convinced about seat belts, anyway, and helmets at lower speeds – that fact does not entitle anyone

to coerce you to use them. If acting against one's best interests is subject to government aggression, then why not write tickets for eating cheeseburgers? Obesity, after all, kills.

No the issue is who your life belongs to. That's it, and that's all of it.

In seatbelt sting operations back in my origin-state, Michigan, you can see it in the eyes of the corrupted cops who pull over mostly unsuspecting victims. It isn't about safety. It's: "I own you, scumball. I've got the gun and I've got the badge, so send a C-note to my friends at that address, right there. Click it or ticket, baby. Next."

Oh, yeah. The issue is also government banditry.

Well, New Hampshire, you complete me. On the rider-freedom policy that seems so mundane on the surface, you restore my faith in humanity. You take the position, with overwhelming popular support I might add, that on the road our lives belong to us. You show me that "Live Free or Die" is no idle slogan. And I'm here for the former. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Brian Wright moved to New Boston in 2005 and will occasionally write about his experiences and views as a believer in the Free State Project and new resident of New Hampshire.

