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THE FREE STATE IN WINTER

Freedom Elite meet and greet in customary real-people style

The Free State Project (FSP) Porcupine Festivals have been three in number thus far: 2004, 2005, and 2006; and they've been summer events in scenic northern New Hampshire campgrounds to keep costs down. This year the poobahs (i.e. supervolunteers) decided to add a winter gathering more in the nature of a convention... at a hotel setting.

So welcome to the New Hampshire Liberty Forum at the Holiday Inn in Concord, NH, February 23-25, 2007.

Head ramrod of this shindig is Irena Goddard, who with her host of hardworking helpers—Chris Lawless, Sandy Pierre, Denis Goddard, Jeff Jordan, Michelle Levell, Jean Alexander, and Rich Tomasso—are putting it all together. Featured guest speaker: ABC's celebrated "libercontrarian" John Stossel.

Transit to Scene

Formally, I'm a Free State early mover and I have an official pad in Amherst. Lately though I've been spending quite a bit of time for various reasons in my origin state of Michigan. But I've been to every FSP event, keeping the streak alive.

My route is via I-90 via Ohio, a sliver of PA, to Albany, NY, followed by bouncing up to Vermont winding HW 9, which turns into US 101 when you get to Keene. Sometimes getting there is half the fun. This time maybe 1/16. Mostly scenic EWay, then enthusiast's fare in the Green Mountains.

During the drive, I listen to Dr. Mary Ruwart's CDs on how to talk to liberals, environmentalists, and Christians.

Mary, whom I've known and appreciated from early Libertarian Party days in Michigan, declined to endorse my New Pilgrim Chronicles because of its "too-judgmental" nature wrt faith-based belief systems.

Though I "you're being a little hard on the Beaver here, Ward," I do see Mary's point. I'm removing the offending passages for the next edition.

As for Mary's CD, it's fine work. She shares so many good observations coming from her core trademark insistence we make our freedom case to people without morally judging them. I especially get what she observes about liberals:

- Their feeling that laws make it so. Want better schools, better wages, less poverty, better health care, etc., pass a law.
- Their feeling that gun control means less crime. Mary proposes that if you really feel that way, post a sign on your front door, "This dwelling is a gun-free zone."

Anyway, as she puts it, we do so much better for our cause when we "create a comfortable space" for the people we're trying to persuade. That's my main deep thought for the trip across, but let me scatter a handful of other miscellaneous road-warrior nuggets that come up:

- After we free the political prisoners, to keep the economy going for prison communities, excavate an area the size of a couple of football fields, haul in truckloads of sand, place a big golf dome above it, then announce you're hiring. Pay minimum wage, hand each job seeker or former prison employee a ball peen hammer, and have them pound away.
- This speed enforcement deal is a joke, especially along I-90 in New York. Talk about pounding sand! You LEOs (law-enforcement officers) needs to take a reality pill, then quit!
- Let's be constructive though. We should end the speed limit laws and post suggested speeds. If anyone sees someone driving recklessly, they call a three-digit number using their cellphone. Then a trained citizen-driver is dispatched to apprehend.
- My antidote to rejection and depression: Beanie Power! Righteous Beanies of the world unite! I have brought some Coffee Coaster bumper stickers for my table at the forum.

- Strange coming back, like I was just here. I arrive in New Boston in time to have a haircut. Let me plug my haircutter, or wait a minute, I mean say some good words about my haircutter Kim Cahill.

Later I have some great Thai food at The Orchid in Manchester with my former roommate and gourmet-troubadour-activist Matt Simon. He fills me in on all the latest, especially progress in rolling back drug prohibition at NHCommonsense.org.

Day 1—Friday

Get a slow start from the crash pad this morning. As an author and a Web columnist, I had purchased some table space, but forgot some of my wares and have to go back. On the way to the Concord HI, I get some encouraging job-prospect news that may mean I can return to the Free State for good, and relatively soon. Yippie!

First impressions of the Holiday Inn: too small for conditions. Indeed, the hotel is completely booked. Our conference rooms stay in use from morning 'til night. The lit tables—I'd estimate we have a dozen—are arranged around the foyer of the hotel just as you come in from the cold.

On the right you can see Katelyn Bradwell of the Marijuana Policy Project bundled up against the frigid blasts from the double doors. My table section is set up next to the hotel reservations desk, just behind the sign welcoming everyone to the Forum.



After several events, I'm getting used to seeing half the men and a good share of the women at these events walking around nonchalantly with .45 automatics holstered to their belts. (The percentage probably isn't that high, more like 1 in 10 for the guys.) This doesn't faze me any more. In fact, I'm beginning to like it. It removes one more worry from my list: any massacre of libertarians at the HI this weekend is out of the question.

I don't understand why the government doesn't launch an anti-terrorism gun-carrying (and training) program. If the government doesn't care about real methods of protection from terrorism, you have to wonder if its heart is in the right place. I guess we'll have to do it ourselves.

Speaking of where the government's heart is, today I get an education from Ron Jacobs about Ed Brown and his wife, who have decided to ignore a court order to come in. A lot of our people are openly supportive of Brown, who champions the end of the income tax. Eventually, we'll find out whether the tax is truly as voluntary as the government says it is.

But I agree with Christopher Gronski, featured later in this article, and others: it would be sad to see Ed die in a confrontation with the federales. So far, the feds seem to be laying off.

I don't attend all the sessions, but on Friday afternoon, I catch the tail end of Gentleman Jim Babka's talk about what they've been doing in Washington with Downsize DC. The title of his talk is "New Hampshire Can Change the Federal Government Forever," and he's supporting a new Read the Bill Act that requires Congress to know all the laws they pass.

In the next session, two high-level NH Democratic state senators (D'Allesandro and Hassan) and two high-level NH Republican state representatives (Weyler and Wendelboe) spar on the issues. For the first time in decades, NH has a Democratic majority in both houses. What does that mean for liberty?

It's not a pretty picture.

Nationally most of us were glad to brush back the Republicans at the 2006 election because of the war, the occupation, torture, kidnapping, arbitrary detentions, elimination of habeas corpus, etc., all the crimes of the Bushoviks. Unfortunately, our healthy repugnance of the war-corporatists painted a lot of good freedom-oriented Republicans with the same brush.

What this session confirms to my naive sensibilities is (most) Democrats in NH are the same as Democrats anywhere else. Just as the first business of Congressional Dems was minimum wage and not impeachment of traitors and criminals, so, too, the priorities of the NH Dems are:

- passing a smoking ban
- applying seatbelt laws to adults
- applying helmet laws to motorcyclists
- compulsory government schooling until 18 (vs. 16)
- ignoring spending limits and launching new taxes

...in other words, letting civil liberties slide and destroying economic freedom. It's rather comical that the Dems were taking credit for fiscal responsibility, having not had any power in the past to legislate it. I find out Herr D'Allesandro has a well-deserved reputation in our pro-liberty ranks for being 100% wrong on every single issue, and proud of it.

After the first volley of D'Allesandro platitudes showing willful ignorance of basic concepts of liberty, many in the audience succumb to the primal urge to boo and verbally protest. Moderator Don Gorman steps in to chide us on maintaining decorum. Several people approach D'Allesandro afterward to apologize; I do, too, though I keep my fingers crossed behind my back.

On the positive side, Hassan gives a nod to getting out of Federal Real ID. But in the context of the smoking ban, she talks about balancing freedoms. When people say they want to balance freedoms it means they want to remove them on principle for everyone.

I recall an earlier conversation with John Barnes, "These guys are even going after fat people now—some municipalities are banning trans fats. We're treated like slaves on the southern plantations, our bodies have to be kept in conformity with the masters' standards. Yessir, boss."

As I'm watching the two Republicans slice and dice the Democrats with wicked-good skill, I note the Bartlett Room is quite elegant and well maintained. But, again, the facility is small. Hey, if people were Munchkins like in the 1920s, these dimensions would be perfect.

Badnarik stumps for freedom



Tonight is the dinner with Michael Badnarik, Constitutional leader, Scoutmaster, skydiving instructor, and 2004 Libertarian Party candidate for president. I must confess to having had misgivings about his candidacy then, especially in light of the alternatives.

But time marches on, and I've come to a solid appreciation of what this brave suis generis American soul means to the freedom movement. In particular, he knows The Law and will not abide the high and mighty's inexcusable ignorance of it. This evening he starts in with a sundry list of egregious violations:

- The Patriot Act
- Kelo vs. New London, CT.
- Military Commissions Act '06
- Compulsory Farm-Animal ID
- The Trans-Texas Corridor

to name but a few. (The Trans-Texas Corridor (TTC) is a NAFTA superhighway that will result in the stealing of 586,000 acres of private land via eminent domain. Now we see why the Supremes ruled for New London in that takings case.)

He points out the compulsory nature of the farm-animal ID act (called NAIS) is concealed by some comical language: "this act is voluntary unless 100% compliance is not achieved."

But, folks, this is serious business. The above acts and several others "evinced a design to reduce us under absolute despotism." Continuing with the familiar wording of the Declaration of Independence, Michael asserts we have "the right, indeed, we have the duty to throw off tyrannical government."

He stresses the duty part. Tyranny is no longer academic. And we must not pretend to ignore this 900-pound gorilla tearing up the living room. As Ben Franklin put it, "We must all hang together, gentlemen... else we shall most assuredly hang separately."

After asking for a show of hands for who would have signed the Declaration of Independence, Mr. Badnarik refers to the excellent new book by David McCollough 1776. He says if we get to feeling sorry for

ourselves, we should read that book and consider that many of the Declaration's signers were tortured, imprisoned, and/or killed by British forces.

He asks us again who would have signed our fiery, august founding document. Close to the same number of hands go up. Tough crowd. But the point is well taken. Time to man up and put our lives on the line.

Badnarik concludes in a more immediately practical tone, saying that while most of us in this room are willing to die for our belief in liberty, a lot of the people we know haven't reached that level. Thus, we need to become effective persuaders, leverage resources as we do in the Free State, and build our citizen movement of tyrant rousters.

And one of the best things we can be doing is to work for the success of Ron Paul in the Republican primary. This is news to me, but apparently Dr. Paul, Republican Congressman from Texas, is likely to throw down in race for Prez. Mr. Bad feels Paul's candidacy is urgently vital; Michael will personally devote his "life, fortune, and sacred honor" to that cause.

So there it is for Day 1.

The unfortunate thing about being a single individual, and an exhibitor at that, is I can't be everywhere or personally witness all the presentations. I even miss the welcome by Sharon Harris of the Advocates for Self-Government. Also, I have to skip the Gardner Goldsmith talk on retaining local control of education funding. I'm sure both are first class.

On Thursday, a large number of people showed up to take a tour of the capitol with Don Gorman, former legislator and longtime leader and activist for NH liberty. I'd heard the number was something extraordinary, like 50. There was probably a gun seminar or event, too—these people, my people, are passionate about gun freedom—but I don't recall.

(Here's the link off the Free State site for all the events at the Forum, which will probably stay active for a while.)

Ironically, ABC this evening is carrying a special two-hour broadcast of John Stossel's story "Are we scaring ourselves to death?". This is good preparation for the keynote he'll be sending up for us tomorrow night.

Day 2—Saturday

The Forum is truly a gathering of very special people. Aside from the workshops and talks, I get a charge from simply walking around and chatting with other exhibitors and the Free State freedom fighters I've come to know through the previous two years.

An example of how one can open one's mind at such events is drawn from my conversation at a table displaying items ostensibly on the conservative-Christian end of the spectrum:

We the People Foundation and the John Birch Society (though these are possibly the Minutemen folks). Coming from the RCMP (reason-choice-market-peace) faction of the movement, I don't expect to see eye to eye with them on all the issues.

Still happy to engage them in conversation, I pick up some dynamite information. My thinking lately is focusing on citizen empowerment via "institutional vigilance" that Christopher Gronski of We the People advocates. We discuss some innovative concepts in federal dethronement.

The JBS rep is a cause-oriented elderly lady. While her focus seems to be on the issue of illegal immigration she says her main concern today is the North American Union and its plans to see massive transcontinental transportation channels built through vast acreages of private land to be confiscated via eminent domain. Badnarik touched on the pilot project for this last night, the Trans-Texas Corridor (TTC).

So I pick up a copy of the current copy of the JBS's *The New American*, which has a brief but incisive article on these mammoth construction projects. Folks, we have to help the good citizens of Texas kill the TTC; this battle is shaping up as the ultimate showdown between citizen constitutional governance and runaway global corporate monopoly power.

The immigration issue is a hot potato for so many reasons, and I expect to devote some editorial space to it soon. But I come away feeling Christopher and this lady aren't against Hispanics, rather they're concerned with constitutional and property rights of citizens. We all agree that noncitizens shouldn't be in the welfare or other government systems.

Of course, that's a deal most of my citizen compatriots would take in a heartbeat.

At the table to the left of my table, an industrious fellow named Michael Muise is promoting real estate in NH. He's offering residential property either for homebuyers or as an investment. Michael is innocent of the ins and outs of the freedom movement, but seems to find the conversations entertaining, even enlightening.

As a NH native, he's already oriented toward gun freedom. He says he used to be a cop. I ask him if he's working for Homeland Security and checking up on us. Ha ha. But not too ha ha. (Some hearsay came my way recently of a LEO interest in moi that smacks of unadulterated Homeland Stupidity.)

He sympathizes. In fact, I expect to see Michael soon to enter the fold of active friends of the NH/FS freedom portalists. Speaking of auspicious freedom portalists, my new friends Ian Bernard and Mark Edge at Free Talk Live are broadcasting live from the Holiday Inn, interviewing many in person and running their show.



I'm trying to interview and be interviewed by Ian, but the continuing appeal of scheduled events and my need to occasionally man my table conspire against it.

FTL is growing rapidly, and is the premier liberty talk venue in the country. Imitators are sure to follow. Those dinosaur hate-conservatives like Rush and Sean are sitting ducks. Our mutual interview will probably occur via me calling in, and it's a high priority for me next month.

Shuvom and Llalanian (sic) show up to grab the other half of my table, the half closest to the cool-breeze double doors. They're selling some spiffy bumper stickers that layout everything from the sedate "Ron Paul for President" to the more stirring "Hot Libertarian Bitch".

Though we mind one another's tables, I'd have to say a libertarian convention is unique in allaying any anxieties about being ripped off. You can leave a wad of hundred-dollar bills unattended in a closed room (with an arrow on a banner pointing directly at it) with near absolute confidence the stash will be there when you return.

In the morning we have the following sessions:

- Jim Harper of Cato discusses the status of Federal Real ID.
- Several pro-liberty candidates discuss their results in the "Run and Won (or Lost)" panel discussion; I believe the panel includes our successful pro-liberty candidate for the NH House, the Honorable Joel Winters.
- Don Gorman hosts a discussion "Becoming an Effective Activist," in his role as director of political action of the NH Liberty Alliance. "The Don" is the guru of state activism.
- In the Webster Room, a presentation "Proven Tools for How to Shrink Budgets" is offered by Geoffrey Segal of the Reason Foundation. Brian Sullivan, investment counselor and esteemed FSP Newsletter editor, drops by my table. He gives Segal's talk two enthusiastic thumbs up.

Moving on to the afternoon sessions. Chris Lawless, doing double duty as a very large megaphone, gives sequential countdowns to the session starts. The early afternoon consists of a taxpayer action panel, a NH jobs forum, and probably the more locally noteworthy event of the day, a talk by Mr. Joe Quaid, publisher of the NH Union Leader.

Lunch is an on-your-own adventure, especially if you wait too long. This is because the hotel restaurant closes after normal lunch hours, and I'm told the wait for food in the lounge is going to be epic. So I walk in the cool afternoon air over to the Tea Garden, a Chinese restaurant, for a satisfactory breaded-chicken special.

The second tier of the afternoon sessions takes it up a notch with:

- An educational freedom panel
- "Our Lives, Our Fortunes, and Our Sacred Honor," a challenging look at liberation of country and self, by Christopher Gronski of We the People.
- "Ending Marijuana Prohibition," an important, impassioned message for tolerance and personal liberty by Rick Kampla of the Marijuana Policy Project.

I personally attend the We the People presentation.

Even though my own priorities of liberty center on ending the tyrannically cruel drug laws, I already understand the arguments for this. My understanding is not so solid in the area of citizen empowerment via the law and Constitutional obeisance.

What Christopher says is inspiring. He begins with that quotation from Frederick Douglas, which ends with "...the limits of tyrants are proscribed by the endurance of those they oppress."

He quotes the full passage—Douglas's argument is we have to actively hook horns with the beast of tyranny to drive it to the ground; words w/o action are empty—and I feel the faint twinge of goosebumps creeping up my forearms. He goes on to describe how We the People is pursuing a 1st Amendment "redress of grievances" legal strategy.

The remainder of what Christopher has to say focuses on our personal need to behave ethically in the face of state power: we need to challenge ourselves to reject government welfare—whether in the form of direct wealth transfer or Social Security—, refuse to work for state entities, and intelligently "just say no" to taxes we do not owe.

I'll be connecting with these people this year to learn the ropes for opting out of coercive corporate-statist systems to the maximum extent prudent and possible. The We the People literature is first rate, and I especially like its forming a citizens-watch coalition to keep local government officials, such as county sheriffs, apprised of the right thing to do.

WTP is making widely available copies of Aaron Russo's watershed, blockbuster freedom hit, *America from Freedom to Fascism*. This is a must-see, must-tell-others presentation.

Returning to the tables, I encounter Caleb, who —speaking of opting out—I learn regarding the federal April 15 chicanery has declared himself exempt: "I can't support torture," he says matter of factly. Exactly so. Right in line with what Christopher was saying and what I've been thinking lately. Enough is enough.

"One man with courage makes a majority." — Lindbergh

The business of the day comes to a close with the final tier consisting of two sessions. Chris Lawless touts each of them with his natural bullhorn: a Second Amendment panel and a must-hear presentation by Jack Cole of the Law Enforcement Against Prohibition (LEAP) organization, "Ending Drug Prohibition." I so want to attend this one.

Unfortunately, it's time for me to discuss my book, *New Pilgrim Chronicles*, at the Alternative Exposition (Altexpo) set up by Jack Shimek and others.

Altexpo is an exposition of alternative ideas in energy, housing, farming, community, and so on. It's held most of its sessions in the conference rooms on Friday. Today it's moved to a couple of second-floor makeshift guest rooms.

I walk in on a small group of people listening to Steve Goodale of Sustainable Peace Builders. He seems to have as complete an understanding as I've yet witnessed of what the "Central Power" has been doing in secret to us in so many ways for decades... if not centuries. It's fascinating listening to how deep the rabbit hole goes.

The time is late in the day, people are starting to prep for the big event this evening. Still to the assembled throng of five, I describe my thinking in generating NPC, which is as yet the only book written about the Free State experience.

(I'd love to see more.)

A key concept I've developed in the course of writing NPC is what I call the Sacred Nonaggression Principle. So I discuss this a bit, and receive some positive feedback; I'm convinced SNaP is an idea that with a little bit more work—possibly a short monograph—and a little publicity can get legs, even wings. The freedom movement can use a moral-emotional short cut to turn popular sentiment our way.

Before moving on to the John Stossel event, I want to mention a couple of developments in connection with decriminalizing drugs. LEAP has been growing rapidly as more and more cops lose their stomach for abusing the natural rights of others and destroying innocent lives.

Closely related to the success on the pharmaceutical side of things, progress is being made toward the legalization of agricultural hemp. A dozen or more states have responded to the demands of farmers and businessmen to allow them to take part in this multibillion-dollar industry.

Now for the great news:

For the second time since the federal government outlawed hemp farming in the United States, a federal bill has been introduced that would remove restrictions on the cultivation of non-psychoactive industrial hemp. The chief sponsor of H.R. 1009, the "Industrial Hemp Farming Act of 2007," is Representative Ron Paul (R-TX).

I don't see how the popular pressure can be resisted on easing the lunatic hemp restrictions. Combined with medical marijuana initiatives and decrim initiatives such as NHcommonsense.org, we have an indirect flanking attack that can easily wind up collapsing the central power. I.e. yielding freedom in our time, in our space.

Just a happy thought.

Stossel provides celebrity kudos

Leading up the dinner and John Stossel's keynote speech, "The Enemies of Freedom," Mr. Stossel makes himself available for book signing.

Wow, you'd have thought (New England Patriots' Quarterback) Tom Brady had walked into a cheerleaders' convention. A hundred-plus people, mostly in dress clothes, stand in lines winding back and forth among the lit tables, holding their copies of Give Me a Break or the more recent Myths, Lies, and Downright Stupidity. They eagerly seek a signature and greeting from a genuine pro-liberty celebrity.



After the signing we file into a packed ballroom, and receive our sit-down banquet. The food is gourmet-worthy. As usual, conversation at these tables flows easily as the freedom elite tend to delight in one another's differences of background and perspective.



One thing that seems to distinguish this libertarian event from others is the even gender split. Even Mr. Stossel makes a point to that effect. And I must say what I'm coming to call the "fair-maiden factor" is even more noteworthy.

While taking a picture of Stossel listening to his introduction, I happened to have also caught a charming young woman named Brenna (a relatively uncommon name, same as my niece) who was sitting at my table. Whoops! Cheap thrills. Stossel's back there somewhere.

I realize in perhaps an ideal world of intellectual enlightenment the fair maiden factor—or even the handsome prince factor—shouldn't influence the popularity of a political cause. But we all know, like celebrities, attractive people are a draw; so let's not look a gift horse in the mouth.

The time comes. Mr. Stossel is introduced by Jason Sorens as I recall, and Stossel walks to the podium. He makes a humorous comment on the height of the microphone (Stossel is not a tall person), then proceeds to compliment the Free State audience. You can feel a kinship.

Much of what he has to say on this cold night in late February of 2007 he's set forth already in his books. Fortunately for me, I haven't read them yet.

My appreciation of John Stossel goes back to a broadcast he did on professional wrestling. He conducted an interview with 6'8" Dr. D (Dave Schultz). When Stossel said pro wrestling was fake, Dr. D brutally cuffed Stossel on the ear knocking him to the ground. When John tried to get up, Schultz hit him on the other ear knocking him down for good.

Though Stossel, ever disdainful of excessive litigation, resisted suing the wrestler, but his hearing was seriously damaged—loud noises became extremely painful. He eventually sued and won a reasonable settlement.

So on the basis of raw physical courage, Stossel is as brave as you're going to see. But it's on the basis of his moral and intellectual courage we applaud him.

He recounts how he first became interested in ideas of freedom by reading *Human Action*, by Ludwig von Mises. Then he says, "Naw, just kidding, I got bogged down in that tome in a hurry."

Paraphrasing, "What really happened is I discovered *Reason* magazine, which advocated 'Free Minds and Free Markets' and they called themselves libertarians. They wrote about the benefits of free markets that I saw as a reporter. I wasn't sure what it all meant, but what they wrote sure made sense to me... and to Hugh Downs, as well."

Both Downs and Stossel, like Milton Friedman (RIP), are well known opponents of the drug laws. Their reasons are simple justice as much as drug prohibition causing crime and economic distortion. Indeed, Mr. Stossel is as consistent an advocate for liberty as we're likely to see in the the conventional national media.

He skewers OSHA and business regulation, the labor unions, milk price supports, the FDA, the drug laws, fraudulent remedies, junk science, government schools, welfare, and so on. He also provides some valuable journalistic skepticism on environmental issues (though I'm confident when he's looked at the raw data, he'll conclude we should be alarmed about anthropogenic damage to the ecosystem).

Some of the lines I'll use again and again, such as referring to the petty tyrants of OSHA: "Patrick Henry did not say, 'Give me absolute safety or give me death.'" Also, "For every law passed, I say you have to repeal two."

We proceed to the question and answer. The man definitely tells you what he thinks, for example, from what John has seen of the Ron Paul media persona Paul would be a hard sell in today's political market. Then Stossel sticks around for some additional book signing and I trade my autographed book for his (of course, I bought his).

Possibly a caveat: One can never expect any reporter in the mainstream media, certainly the broadcast media, to question the government's official stories on major catastrophic events—such as, well, any of them.

From the instigation of World War II, to the assassination of JFK, to the downing of Flight KAL 007, to the Oklahoma City Bombing, to the attacks of 911, we have overwhelming evidence of the federal government's sustained deceit and coverup of major crimes. We also have a fair idea that the orchestrators of those crimes lie in the Pathocracy^[1], which is to say in the (relatively) monolithic power-elite behind the throne.

I'm only bringing this up here to suggest even a person so courageous and bright as John Stossel will not plunge into the depths of the Pathocracy. And we can't blame him for that. So I'm glad nobody asks him about the truth of 911 or CIA-Wall Street connections to international drug trafficking. Etc. All in due time.

Later I learn John's normal fee for this type of event is \$25,000. He graciously accepted our invitation for considerably less. But this number and the extraordinary attention he receives from large numbers of fans puts him the category of celebrity, which causes me to do some deliberation on the nature of such.

Celebrities, by virtue of the attention they receive from others, form a special category of personhood. People feel somehow uplifted by the presence of celebrity and are willing to send money. But it's a double-edged sword, too, and I'll wager a fair number of younger celebs (especially) are pathologically anxious about losing their fame overnight.

I don't think that worries John too much, because he's basically productive in the truth industry... a growing field.

Consider also if even one of the major celebs who has come out as a libertarian—Kurt Russell or Clint Eastwood, to name two—were to take an active, leadership role in the Libertarian Party... or the Free State Project. I'm just saying that could be a major boost. Advocates for Self Government has consciously attempted to cultivate celebrity support.

Not much more heavy thinking tonight. In the Capitol Room there's a brief cocktail reception sponsored by the Marijuana Policy Project. Also, I understand someone will be holding a reception in a private home for Ron Paul some miles away. In the old days, this would be big time party time.

Day 3 and Back Across

The essence of the gathering has been fulfilled, but we're due for a proper sendoff in the throes of wild enthusiasm. First some breakfast at the hotel dinery, managed superbly by Christine Lopez—a Second-Amendment Sister who's a Free State early mover with her husband Seth.

Anyway, the advantage of knowing a freedom person in a business establishment is you can be confident they'll take Liberty Dollars, at face value, too! Though the buffet looks good, I elect to order a substantial meal off the menu.

It's been an okay couple of days for me on the book-selling front. I now realize I need to revise my *New Pilgrim Chronicles* to focus on the joys of Free State living, as well as its huge lessons for citizen empowerment. My new friend in the Integrity Plus and Investments Real Estate business, Michael Muise, and his associate Lydia, are packing up the table.

They've been pleasant table mates.

Out on the convention floor—which seems to be a combination of the three main conference rooms—Irena Goddard is taking a supremely well-deserved bow for organizing the forum, then giving her heartfelt parting comments. Our total registration—at a winter event in still a rather obscure corner of the country—was 350!

Following her, Dr. Ron Paul comes forward to lay some principles on the line. I particularly like his statement, "We need a president who's strong enough to resist the temptation to take power he shouldn't have."

That's a good comeback to those minions who exclaim so about the "strength" or decisiveness of the current nitwit in the Oval Office.

I walk in on the parting ceremonies a little late. Even so, Mr. Rich Goldman makes a special effort to greet me and shake my hand as I head toward my seat. He says, "Brian, really good job on the column. Thanks for all you're doing." Or words to that effect. Wow! Thanks, Rich, and backkatcha. That's the sort of positive vibe that keeps us all going.

He also wants me to be sure to mention the 2007 Porcupine Festival, which is either the fourth or the fifth Porcfest depending on whether you count this Forum, so here 'tis:

The 2007 Free State Project Porcupine Festival is going to be held June 18-24 at the Gunstock Mountain Resort in Gilford, NH. This is coming right up, so make your plans soon. The facilities we've been using up in Lancaster (Rogers Campground) are no longer sufficient to accommodate the larger number of people this year. The activity list has also expanded.

Back to the Ron Paul sendoff speech.

My goodness, but this man is knowledgeable! About the income tax, the Federal Reserve System, Wall Street and the financial interests who benefit from the Leviathan State, the drug laws, the war and occupation. On and on. He remains coy about whether he'll run.

I checked out a video on YouTube that shows Dr. Paul has now formed an exploratory committee in preparation for entering the Republican presidential primaries. Even though the media will ignore him,

The rest of the day I'm spending working on this journal and decompressing, just chilling out, reading. Earlier I make a pass through the lit tables before they break them down. I really enjoy talking with Steve Goodale, Jack Shimek, others of the Alternative Expo crowd.

Then, back to my area in the hotel foyer, I catch up with my bud Matt Simon of NH Commonsense. He tells me they've really had a great convention, a lot of people coming by for support and to sign their petition.

As it turns out HB 92, which called for complete state decriminalization of marijuana, recently got voted Inexpedient to Legislate (ITL) by committee—meaning the bill as written is dead. However, virtually every member of the committee is receptive to decrim for small quantities. Thus, some rational reform seems imminent.

I'm staying the night at the hotel, rather than trying to rush right out on Sunday afternoon. Matt and I are meeting for dinner at one of our favorite dining establishments, well, anywhere, Buckley's Steakhouse in Merrimack.

As I'm driving down there around 6:30 p.m. I run into the southbound I-93 Sunday-night returning traffic—a lot of the Mass. people who have cottages or otherwise like to spend their weekends in the NH Lake area are returning. At some point not too far south of Concord, you get a traffic jam from the toll booths of the Everett Turnpike.

I leave the hotel right on the edge of being able to meet up at 7:00, but don't anticipate this traffic. As I reach for my cellphone to call Matt I realize I forgot to bring it along. This gets me pondering how people actually survived in the era before mobile phones.

I'm stuck, and I'm hosed. Can't get a message to him. Even if I find a rare public pay phone, I don't know Matt's phone number, because I've only entered it in my cell's database under his name.

In general if I have a problem with my car or something happens to me, I'm toast. Everyone I know is in the cellphone database; about the only phone numbers I remember anymore are my mom's and my own.

Maybe this is a good time to propose a new government program for aiding motorists without access to their cellphone databases! An underreported tragedy for sure. Film at eleven.

Anyway, I finally arrive 25 minutes late. The steak house has the usual good beer and good grub, though no entertainment tonight. We're going over the fantastic results of the weekend.

The bartender gets drawn into the conversation. Good opportunity to do a little networking; this guy, Steve—did I get his name right, Matt?—probably in his mid-20s, is completely sympathetic to rationalizing the marijuana laws. Matt produces a handful of the several thousand pro-decrist matchbooks NHCommonsense has had printed up.

Later I'm thinking, you know, almost everyone who attended the Forum spoke with at least half a dozen people in the course of the weekend who had minimal knowledge of the FSP or the freedom movement. And I bet most of them are now favorably inclined to our message. So by my count that's $350 \times 6 = 2100$ people. Not a bad mass outreach.

One of these days the scales will definitely tip.

Monday, I'm on the road back to the origin state in the VAW (vast authoritarian wasteland) of Michigan. I want to pick up US 202 out of Concord to cut off some miles. True to form, I spend half an hour bouncing around Concord trying to figure out how to do that. (Concord is not a big city and I even have a DeLorme map!)

When I do finally figure it out, some super trooper, obviously lacking a life, is pacing the cars at exactly 50 mph. I seem to have to stay behind him for 10 miles. (I'm no Dale Earnhardt, Jr., but generally like to set the cruise control to 4.5 mph over the stated limit.)

Then this is sort of funny. In Keene I branch off from State 101 and State 9 to State 12 in order to drop off a resume at a firm northwest of Keene. Then forgetting I'd made the turn onto 12, I proceed north on 12 maybe 20 miles before realizing I'm not westbound on 9. Free Staters know 20 miles in NH is like 40 miles on a straight flat road. So another holdup.



In Bennington, Vermont, I want to plug a litter diner I find off of Highway 9: Jensen's. Probably the best Reuben sandwich I've had in quite some time.

I do make it to Syracuse, NY, by 7:00 p.m., pulling into the Knight's Inn just as the snow squalls are hitting. Then into Michigan the next day. Let me comment that picking a winter festival/forum date at the end of February runs some risks of road travel being a problem.

Not to bore readers with any more of my deep personal thoughts and reflections, but these are exciting times. Everyone who attended the 1st Liberty Forum has wonderful memories, and

you'll find them up on the FSP site. Check it out.

Irena and the supervolunteers stepped up the plate of the 2007 NH Liberty Forum hit a towering home run out of the stadium. The 2007 Porcupine Festival approaches. We're on the threshold of seeing our freedoms renewed and expanded. New Hampshire is where the action is. See you there.

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[1] Once again, my friendship with Jack Shimek pays dividends in keeping up with the latest work and terminology on the truth front:

Someone—please refer to this link from Carolyn Baker about Andrew M. Lobaczewski's book, *Political Ponerology*—has come up with a study of evil (ponerology) and a term for "a small pathological minority taking over a society of normal people:" pathocracy.

The book's editor, Laura Knight-Jadczyk, in her footnotes names Karl Rove, Dick Cheney, and Donald Rumsfeld, under the intellectual sway of Leo Strauss, as linchpins in America's twenty-first century pathocracy. I'm using the initial capital "Pathocracy" to mean those people and their operational "ancestry" going back to the beginning of the 20th century.