

# BOREGASM

A METAPHOR, IF YOU WILL ... TITULARLY, OF COURSE.  
HART WILLIAMS' BLOG. © 2006

## **Reportage on Perfidy Made Simple, or, Read the Series in Series**

If you only have time to read ONE , then read "The Locusts" (Part V.)

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*08 July 2006*

### **Unlimited Terms of Endearment or, A Ball of Snakes**

**Question:** What does an Oregon Ballot Measure have to do with Arnold Schwarzenegger, voter registration fraud in Florida and Nevada, Jack Abramoff, the Republican National Committee, wildly various ballot petitions this year in Idaho, Missouri and South Carolina AND Grover Norquist?

**A:** Plenty, as it turns out.

I am working on a BIG blog story, but it's going to take some time for the research to "digest." More tomorrow.

Courage.

*posted by ed waldo at [9:43 PM](#)*

*09 July 2006*

### **Unlimited Terms of Endearment - Part I: 48 Bucks**

**Question:** What does an Oregon Ballot Measure have to do with Arnold Schwarzenegger, voter registration fraud in Florida and Nevada, Jack Abramoff, Richard Mellon Scaife, the Republican National Committee, wildly various ballot petitions this year in Idaho, Missouri and South Carolina, AND Grover Norquist?

Plenty, as it turns out.

Friday, the umpteenth reincarnation of "Term Limits" was placed before the Oregon Secretary of State by petition, with great hullabaloo. If the signatures are verified, then we, the voters of Oregon, will vote once more on whether or not to impose mandatory term limits on the time that any person may spend in our

legislature.

The last time this was voted, it was overwhelmingly approved, but was set aside by the Oregon Supreme Court a few years ago for violating the rule that only one item in the state constitution might be altered by any one ballot measure (called 'propositions' in California, 'questions' in Maine, etc. but it is well to remember that a century ago, Oregon invented the citizen initiative process.)

**Part One: 48 Bucks.**

It is, in essence, metaphor, but it is a good place to start:

When Paul Jacob was a young man in the early 1980s, he was a vehement opponent of draft registration, and vigorously lobbied for the "all-volunteer" armed forces. When it came time for him to enter the post-Vietnam draft, he refused to register, slipped outside the law, and was captured, prosecuted and convicted by the Department of Justice during the Reagan Administration. In 1984, he spent five months in a Federal penal institution for his criminal evasion of the draft, the longest term served since Vietnam.

It is significant that Jacob did not object to the draft on the basis that he was a conscientious objector to war, or that he was adamantly opposed to the unjust and unlawful (as opposed to illegal) nature of the Vietnam war -- with which he was not involved.

No: he objected to any demand that society or government might have on him, personally, to serve in time of war.

Fast forward twenty years: Paul Jacob is now a spokesman for, and the chief mouthpiece of the U.S. Term Limits Foundation, one of those odd groups whose donors are unknown, but who contribute huge amounts of money and resources to imposing term limits on a state by state basis. And his commentary is syndicated on over 100 radio stations. He has a regular column featured on right-wing mega-site townhall.com.

Formed in 1992 (actually the renamed Citizens for Congressional Reform), USTL originally had a lot to do with the term limits plank of 1994's Republican "Contract With America" until their fundamental issue -- term limiting members of congress - - was overturned in the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1995 decision "*U.S. Term Limits v. Thornton*."

According to [www.oregonfollowthemoney.org](http://www.oregonfollowthemoney.org), as of May 27, 2004, "The Citizens' Term Limits Restoration Act" (Oregon committee members -- remember these names -- Leigh Anna Foxall, Paul R. Farago, Ted Piccolo) had raised \$112,287, almost ENTIRELY from US Term Limits (DC): \$104,239 (93%); US Term Limits (IL): \$3,000; Paul Farago: \$47.94.

You will note that the entire Oregon in-state contribution was less than \$48.

USTL would shovel in six more figures before the Oregon committee would throw in the towel. This year, many of the same players would accept ANOTHER six figures in "contributions" to qualify a similar ballot measure. Their collected signatures were turned in on the statutory deadline, Friday, July 7th.

According the C&Es filed with the Oregon Secretary of State's office, USTL got the ball rolling with an initial check for \$60,000. Another \$40,000 was ponied up by Grover Norquist's Americans for Tax Reform.

In 2004, nearly a quarter of a million dollars was chipped in from out-of-state 'foundations' to force Oregonians to vote on their agenda. Oregonians didn't sign their petitions in numbers sufficient to qualify the measure.

But they're back with hundreds of thousands of dollars more.

Oregon Public Broadcasting reported that Governor "Kulongoski criticized measures aimed at cutting taxes and imposing term limits -- which he says are backed by out-of-state interests."

Yes. Oregon has long been a laboratory for cranky zillionaires to perfect their electoral Frankensteins. The amount of money that pours into the state over "local" issues is often astonishing. So, while the focus is on the Term Limits crowd, what is happening is, in many ways, typical of the manner in which home rule is being poisoned by out-of-state money -- and, as Follow The Money notes, over 90% of all races are decided by who has the most money. The voting part seems to have less and less to do with it.

Well, never fear. US Term Limits (and their PAC Term Limits America, founded and funded by Howard Rich) is willing to drop six figures any time that the Usual Suspects ask.

And, as in 2004 (and 2002, 2000, 1998, 1996, 1994 and 1992), the vast majority of all monies have come from shadowy right-wing contributors from out of state.

As of the May 2006 Campaign finance filing date, the Oregon Term Limits group had received \$156,497.25. Of that total, they claimed to have spent \$145,499.64.

A donation of \$5000 for legal fees was recorded from "Americans for Limited Government" which has the same address as "US Tax Limits" -- which is unsurprising, since both are chaired by the same gentleman, Howard Rich (no pun intended) who also serves on the Board of Directors of the (Libertarian) CATO Institute in Washington, D.C., where Paul Jacob is located. Rich, a wealthy real estate developer, lives in New York. Interestingly, the USTL and ALG contributions come from the same address in Illinois:

240 Waukegan Road  
Glendale, Illinois 60062  
(a suburb of Chicago)

USTL contributed another \$50,000 during the May reporting period, for a CASH aggregate of \$110,000 so far in this cycle. USTL is a 501 (c)(4), according to the Oregon C&E, which means that they don't have to say where their money came from:

From Ralph Nader's Public Citizen website:

501(c)(4). Section of the IRS tax code reserved for civic leagues and other organizations operated exclusively for the promotion of social welfare. These groups have tax-exempt status but may not receive tax-deductible contributions. They may engage in unlimited amounts of lobbying activity, which the IRS defines as attempts to influence legislation, but they may not be primarily engaged in efforts to affect the outcomes of elections. Those groups that attempt to influence elections are required to pay taxes on their election-oriented expenditures or their organization's overall investment income for the year, whichever is less. Section 501(c)(4) groups must make their annual tax forms available to the public but are not required to disclose contributors' names.

<http://www.stealthpacs.org/about/page.cfm?pageid=7>

The in-state "Committee to Restore Term Limits" had contributed \$947.23 to the campaign as of the February 6 filing (and nothing since). Eric Winters (whose home address, coincidentally, is the same as the Committee's) gave \$450.

Kurt Webber of Portland contributed \$100, but, as we shall see, as treasurer he has already been paid that sum BACK from the committee several times over.

Which means that, for an Oregon ballot measure, thus far, USTL has ponied up \$110,000, Grover Norquist's Americans for Tax Reform bunch \$40,000 (From their website: P.J. O'Rourke says, "Grover Norquist is Tom Paine crossed with Lee Atwater plus just a soupcon of Madame Defarge."

<http://www.atr.org/home/about/ggnbio.html>) and Howard Rich's OTHER group, located in the same building outside of Chicago has chipped in another \$5000 (for "LEGAL FEES") as an "in kind" donation -- meaning that there was no actual cash involved.

Just like "self-employed" attorney Eric Winters' contributions were three "in-kind" donations totaling \$450 as well, although he received on March 25 a cash payout of \$450 for "management services."

Kurt Webber's "donation" was listed as "LR" or "loans received," which seems to have been reimbursed. By the May reporting cycle the campaign had paid him \$792.25 for "2anagement services," although \$42.25 of that was a "reimbursement." (The \$100 loan repayment is listed separately.)

So, the entire Oregon state donation to the \$156,497.25 term limits war chest has been \$947.23 (or 0.00605 or 0.6% of the total for the campaign thus far).

But Oregonians on the Committee have been paid back \$1200 (not including reimbursements), which means that Oregonians have actually gotten MORE money back from the "Oregon" ballot measure than they've actually contributed: at least \$252.77.

There's a good libertarian "less government"/"home rule" paradigm for you: have your issues pushed and financed from out of state, and make some "political tourism" dollars on the side.

The \$110,000 from Chicago, however, was cash on the nail head. Cash that we don't actually know where it came from, by the by.

Neither do we really know where the \$40,000 from Norquist comes from, except that we DO know he's been caught laundering money through ATR for Jack Abramoff and skimming a fee off the top for ATR before sending Abramoff's money on. ATR is also a 501(c)(4) whose members include Jack Abramoff, Grover Norquist, and Richard Mellon Scaife, according to Wikipedia.

What will shock you is how much of that cash went straight back OUT of state -- over \$100,000, but that's for tomorrow.

There will be more on Paul Jacob and Howard Rich, on CATO and USTL, ALG and the stealth campaigns they're running in other states -- not all about term limits, either. These two operate under a blizzard of astroturf group names. And there will be more on Paul Farago, who has been on virtually every version of this committee going back to the early 1990s, when Ted Sizemore was carrying water for Grover Norquist in Oregon, back before Sizemore was convicted. And when Sizemore was the chief petitioner for term limits.

Until then, though, it would be good to bear in mind one of the conclusions of the Thompson Report issued by the Republican-controlled U.S. Senate Governmental Affairs Committee in 1998:

"The evidence before the Committee shows that a myriad of tax-exempt organizations assisted Republican candidates during the 1996 election cycle, serving variously as tools of Republican candidates, conduits for Republican donors, and money-making operations for conservative fundraisers. One thing they all had in common is that they violated the spirit--and, in some cases, probably the letter--of the federal tax and election laws.

"If these de facto political organizations are not brought under control, they will be used even more extensively in future elections. It is possible, for example, that a single wealthy donor could influence the outcome of dozens of congressional races by channeling millions of dollars through tax-exempt organizations. If large donors are allowed to operate on that scale--and with no

disclosure and no accountability--the campaign finance laws will be meaningless."

*105th Congress; 2nd Session, Senate Report 105-167 Part 5*

But what is more interesting is that, easy as it is for that out of state largesse to appear, the monies spent go BACK out of state almost as rapidly.

**Tomorrow in Part II:** Big bucks for signature gathering. Oregonians can't be trusted, so we use sleazy Californians.

Courage.

*posted by ed waldo at [6:51 PM](#)*

*10 July 2006*

### **[Unlimited Terms of Endearment - Part II, Kids! Make BIG Money as a Political Consultant!](#)**

The fact that's flying under the radar in state after state is that our "political consultants" (that's an euphemism for a much darker but more accurate descriptive) know no borders, nor, in many cases, loyalty to any ideology other than that of the almighty dollar -- or euro, as the case may be.

Yesterday, we dealt with the \$150,000 plus that slushed into Oregon to put a term limits initiative on the ballot. Today we'll see how that money went right back out of the state -- for the same reason.

#### **Part II. Kids! Make BIG Money as a Political Consultant!**

On June 22, 2006, the AP reported, in part:

Michael Arno, owner of Arno Political Consultants, said Wednesday the company is reviewing its payment methods and will bring them into compliance with Oregon's law, known as Measure 26.

"If there's a problem with it, we will err on the side of caution," Arno said in an interview from the company's office in Rancho Cordova.

Rancho Cordova is a suburb on the Northeast corner of Sacramento, California.

The comment was oddly familiar. It was akin to his comments made in 2004, when an Arno subcontractor was accused of voter registration fraud in Florida, as Arno worked on behalf of the Republican National Committee to register voters on Florida campuses. It was also a lot like the statements he made in Massachusetts in 2005, when Arno petition gatherers were accused of doing a "bait and switch" by gathering signatures on a wine and beer petition and then asking signers to sign a "backup" petition, which turned out to be an anti-Gay Marriage petition that Arno

had been hired to get on the Massachusetts ballot.

2005 had been a lucrative year for Arno Political Consultants. In California alone, they'd pocketed a cool \$3.78 million dollars as one of the two subcontractors for Arnold Schwarzenegger's "back door the legislature" ballot initiatives, run by a shadowy group of Schwarzenegger cronies and operatives calling itself Citizens to Save California.

***Inland Valley Daily Bulletin*** (Ontario, CA)  
Mar 07, 2005 by David M. Drucker, Staff Writer

### **Committee spearheads governor's reform efforts**

SACRAMENTO -- Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has turned to an independent committee led by seven of California's most influential and prominent business advocates to drive his efforts for fiscal and political reform.

The group, Citizens to Save California, has supplied most of the funding and manpower for Schwarzenegger's statewide push to get the 600,000 signatures to qualify each of his proposed constitutional amendments for a November special-election ballot.

The group was so closely aligned to Schwarzenegger that California election oversight officials ruled that it was essentially an extension of the Schwarzenegger campaign machine, and subject to lawful contribution limits.

Luckily for CSC, a conservative Sacramento judge ruled that, due to a technicality, the CSC was "independent," and they spent both an astonishing war chest of money, and their PR time making public pronouncements about how above-board and up-and-up the whole deal was. But, they openly coordinated with Arnold.

In this toxic political soup, Arno Political Consultants was only mentioned as one of the two contractors hired. The campaign was so huge that it took two companies to scare up the required number of signatures.

According to some reports, signature gatherers were paid \$2 per signature and more.

CSC poured tens of millions into the ultimately failed campaign. But Arno did their part, to the tune of \$3.78 million. Between California and Massachusetts, it was a good year, financially.

But this was all par for the course for Arno Political Consultants. Since its founding in 1978, it had acted as a facilitator and highly lucrative contractor for Republican and far Right agendas and candidates.

According to Max Blumenthal, "Nader's Dubious Raiders", The American Prospect Online, Jun 25, 2004.



Nader's bid for the Arizona ballot began this spring when members of his campaign sought a contract with Arno Political Consultants, a California-based Republican consulting firm that has handled past ballot-qualification efforts for GOP icons like Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush, as well as anti-immigrant groups like U.S. English. Arno's client list also comprises a virtual Who's Who of the corporate cartels Nader routinely rails against, including Occidental Petroleum, Phillip Morris, and Wal-Mart. Arno Political Consultants rebuffed the Nader campaign's request. "I thought it would be bad for us to go in with anyone like Nader," said the company's co-director, Michael Arno. "And even though I don't know [George W.] Bush personally, I have a relationship with some of the people close to him, so I didn't want to be part of anything that could be seen as nefarious. I have too much respect for the process."

This year hasn't been as kind to Arno's company. Over the state line in Nevada, the ***Reno Gazette-Journal*** reported this denial:

Michael Arno, owner of Sacramento-based Arno Political Consultants hired by TASC to collect signatures, said allegations that his contractors committed fraud are baseless.

"This is absolutely false," Arno said. "There's going to be no proof of it."

The allegations?

State officials are investigating a discrepancy between the official version of the Tax and Spending Control for Nevada petition filed in December with the secretary of state in December and the version circulated on the street for signatures.

Opponents of the measure say the typo would have a \$1.3 billion effect on the state budget, making the two versions different enough to disqualify it for the ballot.

(byline: ANJEANETTE DAMON, RENO GAZETTE-JOURNAL,  
6/21/2006)

If TASC doesn't sound familiar to you (Tax and Spend Control), perhaps it's because it was called TABOR in Colorado, and in Missouri, where it failed to make the ballot this spring, and in Oregon's Initiative Petition, "IP 6 Constitutional State Spending Limit."

TABOR stands for "Taxpayers' Bill of Rights," and is another Grover Norquist/Howard Rich special. In Missouri, yet another Howard Rich astroturf organization the "Fund For Democracy" poured \$295,000 -- between January and March -- into getting TABOR onto the Missouri ballot for 2006, according to documents filed with the Missouri Ethics Commission.

The effort failed. Another contractor out of Michigan was used (National Voter Outreach), but the modus operandi was the same: virtually all funds came from well outside Missouri. And were spent on non-Missouri operatives.

In Oregon, Americans for Limited Government (Rich) poured \$178,077 into the IP6 TABOR measure, while Americans for Tax Reform (Norquist) chipped in \$40,000.

Eric Winters, the self-employed Wilsonville attorney who contributed \$450 to the Term Limits campaign -- headquartered at his home address -- also contributed \$450 to the TABOR petition drive. Also in-kind.

And, out of overwhelmingly out-of-state contributions of \$232,199.31, Arno Political Consultants of Sacramento, California were paid in excess of \$200,000.

Of course, the controversy is swirling in Oregon that Arno is breaking a 2002 Oregon ballot measure that passed by a crushing 3-1 margin prohibiting per-signature payment for signature gathering.

According to KATU-TV in Portland: "KATU News obtained a copy of Arno Political Consulting's employee handbook which lists how much the California company pays its signature gatherers. Payment ranges from \$13 for 9-12 signatures gathered per hour to \$64 for 46-50 signatures per hour, clearly laying out a formula that the more signatures gathered, the more money a person makes. (June 20,2006)

This week, *The Portland Mercury* reported:

### **Illegal Signature Gathering Continues**

by Scott Moore

Originally posted Friday, July 7, 2006 at 12:20 pm

Yesterday, on the last day of collecting signatures for initiative petitions, the illegal signature gathering payments we witnessed on Wednesday continued unabashed.

The setting this time was 10 am, in front of the Greyhound station at NW 5th and Glisan. While waiting for his "employer" to show up with cash, a signature gatherer, John, who is homeless, admitted multiple times that he was being paid \$15 for two full sheets of signatures-which is a violation of the law. The payment and conservative petitions he was carrying-term limits for legislators, districting of Oregon Supreme Court justices, and the "TABOR" state spending cap-were all in line with what we had seen the previous day.

We were talking about Term Limits, weren't we?

And that's the great problem. It isn't just term limits, or TABOR, or the rest. This is

a highly orchestrated campaign that has extended over several years, featuring the same players in an ever-shifting kaleidoscope of interconnections, but finally, those interconnections -- which purport to restore a "libertarian" democracy, and power to the people -- are fundamentally undemocratic.

Worse, we Oregonians (and, increasingly, every state in the union) are being treated as **COLONIES**. Howard Rich sits in his penthouse in New York, laughing at us, while we who value home rule have to dig into our pockets, knock on our neighbors' doors, wear out our shoelather in opposing ballot measures that were not conceived nor funded nor facilitated by Oregonians.

And that is why there is not -- nor will there be -- any discussion of the "issues" involved. When an Oregonian wants to qualify a measure for the ballot, with Oregonian money, I will be happy to debate and vote as an Oregonian. Until then, I am not a colonist, and I do not accept my home rule as emanating from east of the Mississippi River.

As a Westerner, I would hope that you would feel the same about YOUR state. And as an American, ditto with YOUR state. Moreover, as a democrat (small 'd') anywhere in the world, take this as a warning, and as a call to action. You cannot have democracy without home rule, and these Machiavellian dodges are the antithesis of democracy, no matter how neatly dressed in drag as "citizen action." You can't put lipstick on a pig and change the fundamental nature of the pig. It's still a pig.

So, whether you live in Oregon, or the USA, or are a citizen of the world, the important thing to keep in mind is this: in all of the reports I've sifted through, state by state by state, one thing has become clear: they prey on our provincialism. Oregon doesn't know that Arno is in a scandal in Nevada, one state over. Nor that Idaho is facing the same money/political machine. Nor do those neighbors know that Oregon is in the same sour soup.

We can no longer afford the luxury of allowing our awareness to stop at our provincial borders. Because these anti-democrats don't, and they prey on our tunnel-vision.

So: Aron Political Consultants is the hired gun for not one, not two, but THREE ballot measure petitions:

From the excellent website ["Our Oregon" \(which you should immediately go to after reading this\)](#)

Using Arno Political Consultants (an out of state signature gathering firm)

IP6 (TABOR)

IP39 (Term Limits)

IP57 (Eminent Domain)

How much money was spent of Norquist's and Rich's money to hire Aron Political Consultants to try and put Term Limits on the Oregon ballot this fall?

Of the more than \$150,000 contributed so far by these two (and more will come, I promise, if the Term Limits initiative makes it to the ballot), Arno Political Consultants of Sacramento, California\* has been paid, according to the May Contributions & Expenditures report filed with the Oregon Secretary of State, \$100,846.75. (Several thousand more went to a San Jose data firm, etc.)

The money left the state almost as quickly as it came in.

And the aggregate for all three measures follows the same pattern.

*[\* NOTE: In one filing, Rancho Cordova, CA is mysteriously identified as Rancho Cordova, OR, even though the Term Limits people have paid over \$2000 for C&E filing software to an Oregon company, Prime One Software of Portland.]*

There is not space here to pay much attention to the report that Arno has outsourced a large part of their signature verification operation to Poona, India. It will have to wait. Indeed, there is much, much more.

There is one final grace note. According to a report aired on Oregon Public Broadcasting, Michael Arno says that he's not going to do business in Oregon anymore. Complying with the law costs too much money, he said.

**Tomorrow:** Who are the "Oregon" petitioners? And how has this process been promulgated in South Carolina, Missouri, Nevada, Idaho, etc?

Courage.

*posted by ed waldo at [9:33 PM](#)*

12 July 2006

### **Unlimited Terms of Endearment: Part III, Under A Western Sky**

There used to be a commercial that enjoyed quite a lot of success here in the West: A group of cowboys is hunkered down around a campfire, eating chili, and someone pulls out his jar of salsa. The most grizzled old cowpoke tells the cowboy to read the label. "New York City," the cowboy reads.

And all the cowboys exclaim in horror: "NEW YORK CITY!!?!"

What that image has to do with the story to follow will shortly become clear.

#### **PART III, Under A Western Sky**

What does a lawyer's office in Kalispell, Montana have to do with two ballot petitions in Nebraska? And what does a rancher in Winifred, Montana have to do with a \$600,000 donation to the Proposition 90 Campaign in California, a "protect our homes" initiative? And what does a fired former director of the National Libertarian Party have to do with a school voucher campaign in South Carolina?

Everything.

It has been a brutal petitioning season in Nebraska. All the state's major papers have reported hot tempers and incidents aimed at paid out-of-state petitioners, getting paid \$2.50 per signature to qualify two initiatives for the Nebraska ballot: A state spending cap, styled after Colorado's voter-repealed TABOR (Taxpayer Bill of Rights) law, and a "Must Feed" law based on the Terri Schiavo case in Florida.

The state's media have generally ignored the puzzling fact that all of the funding for the signature gathering campaigns has come from out of state. Specifically, a mysterious group calling itself by the Orwellian moniker "America At Its Best" contributed virtually the entire (and substantial) funding for the campaign.

Nebraska StatePaper.com reported on July 05, 2006:

It was also learned that an organization from outside Nebraska put up \$380,000 and is paying virtually all the costs to gather signatures on a controversial petition to limit state spending. That fact flew in the face of earlier statements by Mike Groene of North Platte who spearheads the drive. During a joint radio appearance last month with Democratic candidate for governor Dave Hahn, Groene said most of the money for the petition drive would come from within the state; in fact, only some \$2,000 has been raised within the state.

In an interview with another paper, Groene admitted that the people behind the campaign were term limits activists. According to papers filed with the Nebraska Secretary of State, the co-petitioner (with Groene) is an Illinois group called

"Americans for Limited Government." But ALG didn't make any contributions -- at least that are apparent. All of the money came from "America At Its Best," a mysterious group headquartered in an Attorney's office in Kalispell, Montana, in the shade of Glacier National Park.

Montana newspapers picked up this story last week, as did Nebraska papers, and even the Sioux Falls, South Dakota paper -- all too late to affect the outcome of the signature drive. The initiatives appear headed to the November ballot, assisted by glowing editorials in the Omaha World-Herald, the Kearney Daily Hub and others.

(Stop OverSpending Nebraska -- "SOS Nebraska" -- 'supporters' include: Committee for State Stewardship, Western Nebraska Taxpayers Association, Nebraskan Taxpayers for Freedom, and Pete Ricketts, Republican nominee for U.S. Senate -- which must have been easy, since they didn't have to pony up a dime.)

It's too bad that the Associated Press reporter who dug up the story didn't dig just a little deeper.

The oxymoronicly entitled America At Its Best is run by an Idahoan, Laird Maxwell, who also runs a group called "Idahoans for Tax Reform" who are ALSO placing a TABOR-style initiative on the Idaho ballot, ALSO with six figures of cash from an out-of-state benefactor.

Luckily, for the diligent researcher, Nebraska has a disclosure form that states:

List all persons from whom contributions totaling more than \$200 were received by the major out of state contributor during the period covered by the report and all persons who have a cumulative total over \$200 for the calendar year.

I'm not going to keep you in suspense. The SOLE contributor to America At Its Best (and also a mystery to Idaho newspapers) is listed as follows:

[\(click here to see the Nebraska filing document\)](#)

AMERICANS FOR LIMITED GOVERNMENT  
20 N WACKER DR  
CHICAGO, IL 60606

\$ 2,030,000.00

AMERICANS FOR LIMITED GOVERNMENT  
73 SPRING STREET, #408  
CHICAGO, IL 10012

\$ 400,000.00

AMERICANS FOR LIMITED GOVERNMENT  
20 N WACKER DR

CHICAGO, IL 60606

\$50,000.00

AMERICANS FOR LIMITED GOVERNMENT  
108 N ALFRED ST  
CHICAGO, IL 22314

\$100,000

Isn't that odd? Americans for Limited Government is the co-sponsor of the bill. Why would ALG want to hide their financial largesse by laundering their contributions through a Montana law office?

But there's something that the Nebraska Ethics Commission didn't notice about those four listings. Two of the addresses aren't Chicago addresses. One, in particular, 73 SPRING STREET, #408, CHICAGO, IL 10012 is correct (minus the Chicago, IL designation). It is a New York City address. It is also the address of Howard Rich, chairman of ALG, Foundation for Democracy and US Term Limits.

The mystery money in Idaho comes from the same source. You might have noticed that ALG's contribution of \$2,580,000.00 is quite a bit more than America At Its Best's \$380,000 contribution to Nebraska's political process. Well, another nice chunk of that money went to Idaho.

According to reporter Gregory Hahn, in *The Idaho Statesman*, June 29-2006

Idaho voters have another question to answer in November.

An initiative to change the state's eminent domain and "regulatory takings" laws qualified for the ballot Wednesday with 49,053 signatures - more than the 47,881 required by law.

Pushed by conservative advocate Laird Maxwell of Boise, the initiative would restrict governments from making decisions that lower a property's value without "just compensation" to the landowner.

"We now are gearing up for the campaign to get it passed in November," Maxwell said.

[...]

Maxwell used \$330,000 from two out-of-state groups to pay signature-gatherers to meet the state's requirements. The money came from New York term-limits and property rights supporter Howard Rich and from "America at its Best," a group based in the Montana law office of Duncan Scott, a former Republican state senator from New Mexico. Maxwell is the chairman of that group.

Except that Laird Maxwell is laundering ALG/Howard Rich money across the border to himself. *The Statesman* got the connection right, although the contribution is officially from Americans for Limited Government. And ALG handed "America At Its Best" \$2.5 million dollars to play with. On a per capita basis, Idaho got even more cash to run its petition drive than Nebraska. Six-figures have been routinely dumped into nearly every state in the West from ALG, Fund for Democracy, and/or US Term Limits. Howard Rich is the chair of all three.

In Maine, where Maine petition-whiz Mary Adams ran a drive to qualify a TABOR initiative, but which prohibits professional signature gatherers, and a six-figure contribution would be noticed, ALG kicked in a mere \$20,000, but, to be fair, a lot of Maine folks chipped in, too, utterly unlike what has happened here in the West. In both Arizona and California (eminent domain measures), the actual contribution FROM that state consisted of exactly \$100, as we shall see.

But we can't leave Montana just yet. On the other side of the range from Kalispell, a "staunch conservative" farmer/rancher from Winifred, Montana, without any discernable office, staff or political accoutrements poured quite a bit of cash into three ballot measures, and sent \$600,000 to California to help the Proposition 90 committee. And all without telling anyone where the money comes from.

### **\$230K spent on ballot petitions**

By MIKE DENNISON -  
*Billings Gazette* State Bureau - 06/15/06

HELENA - At least \$230,000 has been paid to freelance signature-gatherers in the effort to qualify three initiatives for the November ballot in Montana, including the measure to place a constitutional limit on state spending.

The money has come almost entirely from a recently formed political education group that isn't revealing its donors, drawing criticism from opponents of the spending-limit measure....

The campaign coordinator for the three proposed ballot measures, Winifred rancher and political activist Trevis Butcher, said Wednesday he's confident the initiatives will get enough signatures to qualify for the ballot this fall.

But the Butcher of Winifred did make one interesting revelation during his non-disclosure, to a reporter from *The Great Falls Tribune*:

By GWEN FLORIO  
Tribune Capitol Bureau

An Illinois-based group called Americans for Limited Government helps promote spending-cap measures around the country. Likewise, the Washington, D.C.-based Center on Budget and Policy Priorities works to oppose those measures.



Americans for Limited Government has already floated a loan to Montanans In Action, the group spearheading SOS, according to Trevis Butcher, the initiative's coordinator. He wouldn't give the amount.

Now, supposedly Howard Rich's ALG (and I'll explain about the "Illinois" office later) only "loaned" Butcher some money to get him started. Who knows? Perhaps the bulk of the funds came from America At Its Best over in Kalispell. Lord knows they ought to still have some of that \$2.5 million that ALG gave them. But one can make an educated guess as to where the money for the ballot measures came from.

In Arizona it's cut and dried: One Arizonan contributed \$100. All the rest came from either ALG or Fund for Democracy. In other words, and, according to the Arizona Secretary of State's online campaign reports, of the \$186,600 contributed to the Arizona Home Owners Protection Effort (Arizona H.O.P.E. -- clever, ain't it? Just like SOS Nebraska and Montana), 2006 June 30 Report, of the \$186,600.00 received so far, \$186,500 came from Howard Rich chaired entities.

Now, whether it is Rich's personal money or he's fronting for a consortium of cranky zillionaires, Rich controls the money, which is the same thing. Both are, as pointed out in part I of this report, 501(c)(4) entities, which means that their donors don't have to be disclosed.

Sort of like "Montanans In Action," come to think of it. MIA, by the by, is listed as being one of the organizations in one of the states that ALG has a state campaign going in.

These states are in ALG's sights this fall (from their webpage):

#### Arizona

The Arizona Home Owners Protection Effort (Arizona HOPE) plans to give hope to Arizona property owners facing eminent domain and regulatory abuse.

#### California

In California, citizens are fed up with eminent domain abuse, and we're teaming up with local activists to pass an initiative that will protect the property rights of all Californians.

#### Idaho

In Idaho, we're working to protect property rights with an initiative that will appear on the November 2006 ballot.

#### Maine

Mary Adams and her crew are working to stop government waste and put the people in charge of state spending with a Taxpayer Bill of Rights.

#### Michigan

The Michigan Stop OverSpending Committee has filed an initiative to put the people in charge of state spending. Additionally, the Protect Our Homes Committee is supporting Proposal 4, which will protect the property rights of homeowners across the state from eminent domain abuse.

#### Missouri

Missourians in Charge has filed an initiative to secure property rights (Protect Our Homes) and empower voters to decide in matters of state spending (Stop Over Spending).

#### Montana

Montanans in Action has filed the Stop OverSpending initiative to give taxpayers control over state spending. Additionally, there is a Protect Our Homes initiative to protect property rights and a Citizens Right to Recall initiative to restore judicial accountability.

#### Nevada

The Nevada Tax and Spending Control Committee is working to stop out-of-control spending in Nevada.

#### Nebraska

The Nebraska Stop OverSpending committee is working to give taxpayers a say in state spending this year.

#### Oklahoma

Oklahomans in Action is working to stop eminent domain abuse and out-of-control spending this year.

#### Oregon

Initiative 6, the Rainy Day Amendment measure, would put limits on state spending in Oregon. Initiative 49, the Neighborhood Protection Act, would prohibit condemnation of private property by governmental units intending to transfer the property to private parties.

Washington

In Washington state, Initiative 933, the Property Fairness Initiative, would require elected officials to avoid damaging the use or value of private property.

STAY TUNED FOR ADDITIONAL CAMPAIGNS IN A STATE NEAR YOU!

So far, we've only covered Oregon, Nebraska, Montana, Maine, Arizona and Idaho. There's a whole lot more where that came from.

In California, for Proposition 90 -- recipient of that mysterious \$600,000 donation from Montanans in Action -- Arno Political Consultants of Sacramento (and subject of yesterday's report) was paid \$651,236.30 to qualify the measure for the ballot. As in Arizona, exactly \$100 came from California. The remainder of the \$1,500,000.00 came from The Fund for Democracy of New York (FFD), according to the California Secretary of State's online campaign finance reports. But there's little filip in this one. The \$100 was a "loan" from the KAL Group, which, to be charitable, one would presume to be Californian.

In Washington state, ALG has contributed over \$200,000 thus far -- that we know of -- but you can't find it in the Washington state C&Es. It was given through the Washington Farm Bureau, which is the donor of record.

More money laundering? Certainly in Arizona, five donations are recorded, sequenced to look less suspicious perhaps. In California, FFD didn't even worry about it. In Washington state, the money is filtered through the Farm Bureau, and in Montana, the money appears and disappears as mysteriously as it does in Idaho and Nebraska.

on Friday, July 7, 2006, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer reported:

Property measure likely on ballot  
Proponents deliver tractor load of voter signatures

By JENNIFER LANGSTON AND CHRIS McGANN  
P-I REPORTERS

... Nearly half the pro-933 cash contributions have come from Americans for Limited Government, a Chicago\* organization founded by New York landlord Howard Rich, who also advocates for term limits and conservative issues. The group, which has contributed \$200,000, is bankrolling ballot measures in 12 states.

[\*There seems to be either two offices or one move involved with the Illinois ALG. There's the Wacker Drive address, and the suburban Glenview, Illinois office. The Glenview IL return address on a petition mailed to me last month was the oddity that first started my poking into these matters. What was an Illinois organization

doing sending me an Oregon petition?]

But, really, the money comes from 73 Spring Street, New York City, 10012 USA.

In Nevada, Tax and Spending Control for Nevada (TASC), another TABOR-style bill, has a rocky history. But ...

The Associated Press reported on Jul 7, 8:49 PM EDT,

Petition moves step closer to qualifying for Nevada ballot  
By KATHLEEN HENNESSEY  
Associated Press Writer

TASC supporters contracted with Arno Political Consulting to coordinate the signature-gathering effort. The Sacramento-based group has come under fire for similar irregularities in petition campaigns in Ohio, and has recently been criticized for paying employees per signature on a tax restraint measure in Oregon.

Firm principal Michael Arno said the allegations of fraud were "100 percent political and sour grapes on their part."

And who is funding the Nevada TASC? Anjeanette Damon reported in the RENO GAZETTE-JOURNAL, 12/13/2005:

... Illinois-based Americans for Limited Government has promised to match all local dollars raised in the state. And Grover Norquist's group Americans for Tax Reform also has pledged support.

"What it basically does is put politicians on the same kind of budget that families and individuals have to live by in the real world," said Heather Wilhem, spokeswoman for Americans for Limited Government.

Of course, the ALG spokesman/petitioner in Nebraska said the same thing, and not a penny of Nebraska money showed up, so the last comment must be viewed with a healthy skepticism.

There is not time today to go into Michigan, Oklahoma, Missouri and South Carolina. And I haven't brought you back to Oregon, where this series started. But there is a clear pattern here: Recruit a "front" person for either a TABOR, a Term Limits, "eminent domain" or miscellaneous (Terry Schiavo, Judge removal) initiative. Fully fund the petition drive -- using paid petition-gatherers -- as far under the radar as possible. ("Launder" the money, if you have to.) And fully fund a campaign that the people of the state in question didn't realize that they were even upset about until the New York City money from Howard Rich's multiple astroturf organizations showed up.

But the crazy thing about it all is that this chicanery (that is at least an

euphemistically accurate description) is being done by "Libertarians" in the name of "returning power to the people."

However, Howard Rich lives in New York City. His old Libertarian Party cronies (and USTL/ALG Board members) Eric O'Keefe and Paul Jacob live in Wisconsin and Washington, D.C. respectively. What are they doing in Montana? Why are they stirring up fights in Nebraska? Nevada? Oregon? California? Oklahoma? (Et al)

This isn't a partisan scandal. It isn't about Democrats or Republicans (although Rich does tend to show up hand in hand with Grover Norquist quite a bit). This is about a self-appointed fellow named, appropriately enough, Rich, playing with the electoral processes of most of the Western states and several midwestern, eastern seaboard and southern states as a slightly sadistic boy plays with his plastic ant-farm.

Americans for Limited Government is misnamed: it would be more accurately called "Rich Americans for Unlimited Meddling." And the "Fund for Democracy"? And how can anyone in good conscience call themselves a "Term Limits" group, when they show zero interest in campaign contribution limits (as we shall see tomorrow)?

But any consideration of democratic process, or of "the people" by these misguided "libertarians" is sure hard to find. It seems the antithesis of Libertarianism.

Is it real democracy? Or should we, with those grizzled cowboys of the commercial recoil in horror, moaning "New York City?"

Tomorrow: The Old Libertarian connections, the Cato Institute and the sham campaign they're running in Oregon with a retired dentist and a lot of money. Virtually all from, well, NYC.

Courage.

*posted by ed waldo at [8:57 PM](#)*

16 July 2006

## **Terms of Unlimited Endearment, Part IV, The Friends of Howie Rich**

I will try to keep this simple, in case the mainstream media tries to access and read it. (Complexity seems to utterly confound them, by all evidences.) But, simple as I can try to make it, it is a labyrinthine morass of cross-connections extending over millions of dollars and dozens of years.

"The political process no longer represents the people -- it represents money. It's been bought. While we were being sold a bill of goods about how the market 'empowers' us because we get to choose between the mint-flavored and the cinnamon-flavored toothpaste, thus expressing our individuality, we lost something important in our vision of a just society...."

Molly Ivins - 7-13-06

**Our Story So Far:** In Part I, we established that a shadowy group, allied oftentimes with Grover Norquist, was funding multiple ballot initiatives in multiple states. In several, like Nebraska, Oklahoma, California, Idaho, Oregon and, perhaps Montana, Michigan, Missouri and Nevada, they were supplying over nine dollars in every ten to hire professional out-of-state petition collectors, with unprecedented amounts of cash, to qualify their initiatives.

Those initiatives fall into several categories, the main two being slick eminent domain (Save our Homes) measures and slick "TABOR"-style "Stop OverSpending" (SOS) initiatives. They are also behind a Terri Schiavo style law in Nebraska, a school voucher law in South Carolina, some sort of judicial recall initiative in Montana, and others.

And, this year, as TABOR so wrecked Colorado that the voters repealed it, Measure 37 --passed in 2004 -- is gutting Oregon's land-use planning, and is now in a version being pushed in several other states, including Idaho funded with a huge influx of Howard Rich/ALG money.

In Part II, we showed you one of their initiative subcontractors, Aron Political Consultants, who qualified measures for the ballot in Oregon, California and Nevada.

In Part III, even as the regional and national media began to connect this all to a face in New York, one Howard S. Rich, a/k/a "Howie" Rich, we established that, at least in Montana, one Rich-controlled group, "America At Its Best" was laundering money into Nebraska and Idaho from an ex-New Mexico state senator's law office in Kalispell, Montana, and wondered if "Montanans in Action" was funded from the same source.

We showed you how, through several astroturf groups ("astroturf" = "fake grass roots")-- including Americans for Limited Government, the Fund for Democracy, U.S. Term Limits, America At Its Best, and others -- the money was being shuffled around to make it look as though Howard Rich was contributing less than it actually appeared.

So, while the national media attempts to catch up, never quite asking the next question (no one has yet reported on the Nebraska campaign finance document disclosing that ALG supplied ALL funding to "America At Its Best" to the tune of \$2.3 million), it's time to take this to the next level.

We have a face, sort of. Howard Rich has a very few images available on the internet. And we know that he lives at 73 Spring Street, New York City, 10012. But there is still more to this story than meets the eye.

#### **Part IV: The Friends of Howie Rich.**

On July 13, [Capitol Weekly published a report by Shane Goldmacher](#), entitled

##### **New York developer's eminent-domain crusade comes to California**

... Through a web of organizations, Rich is backing eminent-domain initiatives in Arizona, Idaho, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, Oklahoma and Washington with \$4 million --though no state has received as much financial support as California. In each of these efforts, Rich himself is never disclosed as a major donor. Instead, he steers his contributions through nonprofit intermediaries, such as the Fund for Democracy, which he is using to finance California's Proposition 90 campaign.

As readers of this column already know, the tally of states, and of cash in the Capitol Weekly is low. In fact, Rich's "Fund For Democracy" kicked off the Prop. 90 campaign with a straight-up donation of \$1.5 million. (So far.) At LEAST Mr. Goldmacher didn't just stop with the "an Illinois-based organization" for ALG, which is where most media have thus far stopped. I'll tell you WHY ALG has that Chicago suburban address later on.

But WHO is Howard Rich? That's the question that no one seems to have asked. The Capitol Weekly piece is recommended -- as far as it goes. But there's a whole lot more.

In the photos from Thomas Szasz's (pronounced, "sauce") 85th Birthday Party, Howie Rich looks more than a little like Mr. Burns from "The Simpsons," sitting in a suit with a lavender shirt and matching lavender tie.

<http://www.szasz.com/group2.JPG>

He's third from the left. The rest of the photos (with better of "Howie" Rich) are at:

<http://www.szasz.com/reasonbanquet.html>

There are several photos of his wife, Andrea Millen Rich.  
<http://www.szasz.com/andrea1.JPG> about whom more later. And pay special attention to the photo captioned "Ed Crane, President of the Cato Institute, gave a final toast to Tom." It's important: <http://www.szasz.com/crane1.JPG>

To make sense of this, it is necessary to take a little trip back in time to 1982, where a major dustup and schism within the Libertarian Party ranks was underway -- in a strange historic irony, in Billings, Montana.

The document I quote from is obviously skewed to a specific point of view. (I am not providing the "Craniacs" point of view, because it isn't important to what we're covering. Be certain that they have a point of view, however.) What you need to see is who is on Howie Rich's side of the controversy. From a report by *The Libertarian Forum*, vol. XV, no. 7, September 1982.

"On Sunday, August 8, in Billings, Montana, only a few miles from where the imbecile General Custer got mowed down at the Little Big Horn, the National Committee of the Libertarian Party held one of the most dramatic and significant meetings in its history. Eric O'Keefe, ex-radical turned Craniac National Director, was ousted from his long-held post by National Chair Alicia Clark. Alicia's right to fire O'Keefe was upheld by the NatCom by a vote of 17-11, after which it was approved by 20-7 Alicia's naming of former Texas L[ibertarian] P[arty] Chair Honey Lanham as interim Director for a six-month period."

[You can access the complete LIBERTARIAN FORUM in .pdf form from 1969-1984 at <http://www.mises.org/journals//libertarianforum.asp> ]

(The term "the Crane Machine" is prominent over several months of the FORUM, as well.)

Eric O'Keefe is a name that shows up today as the treasurer of Americans for Limited Government. It is, as we shall see, not only the same Eric O'Keefe, but the O'Keefe who's been leading the charge on school vouchers in South Carolina, under the name of yet ANOTHER group, "LEAD Foundation."

South Carolina's THE STATE newspaper carried a story on June 11, [bylined AARON GOULD SHEININ, that reported, in part:](#)

[Howard] Rich is president of U.S. Term Limits and is a major sponsor of national school choice campaigns. He is also active in the libertarian Cato Institute.

Efforts to reach Rich were unsuccessful.



U.S. Term Limits has the same address as the LEAD Foundation, the nation's top school choice advocacy group. LEAD also has the same address as Americans for Limited Government, the registered agent of [www.scr.gov](http://www.scr.gov), the Web site for SCRG [South Carolinans for Responsible Government].

And, in a 1/3/05 story, STATE reporter Claudia Smith Brinson reported:

During the 2004 elections, the Michigan-based All Children Matter paid for radio ads and mailers here that promoted candidates supporting tuition tax credits.

"Our current focus is in South Carolina," says the Web site home page for LEAD Foundation in Washington, D.C. LEAD stands for the Legislative Education Action Drive, a conservative group supporting tuition tax credits.

Several factors turned LEAD's attention south, said Eric O'Keefe, president of both. First was Sanford's gubernatorial campaign. "School choice became an issue, and it didn't seem to hurt him" during the campaign, O'Keefe said.

That O'Keefe and Rich were thick as thieves (pardon the colloquialism) in 2006 is not surprising. They were prominently linked in 1982, as well. From that same LIBERTARIAN FORUM:

But the most revealing ranting of the day was emitted by Howie Rich, possibly the top Craniac straw boss on NatCom. In her explanation of why she fired O'Keefe, Alicia had mentioned that Eric had repeatedly failed to carry out NatCom and her own directives to: expand much-needed internal education, help build state parties, and assist in fund-raising.

All these three vital areas of activity were grievously and consistently neglected by O'Keefe, despite Alicia Clark's repeated urgings. What he had done instead was to devote virtually all Headquarters' resources to campaigning, particularly to assisting the Craniac ventures of Howie Rich's Campaign of '82 and especially the Randolph race for governor of Alaska. In the course of his philippic, Howie Rich thundered that all these other matters were "peripheral," that only campaigns really counted. Evidently, ideas, principles, state parties and even financial stability could go hang. There spoke the naked, sinister voice of the Crane Machine.

The Crane being referred to here is, Edward Crane III, the founder and President of the Cato Institute, on whose board Howard Rich sits to this very day.

While you may not yet know what this means, surely at this point we can draw some conclusions. First, that these folks have been connected and working in

league at LEAST since 1982 (or 24 years, now) if not longer. And, secondly, even at that early date, there were accusations that the only thing they cared about politically was winning, by whatever means necessary.

Oh, and the most vehement opponents of the O'Keefe sacking (today, Eric O'Keefe proudly lists "former National Director of the Libertarian Party" on his bios. He does not mention that he was tossed out on his ear) are listed as: "The seven opponents were the hard-core Craniacs: Herbert, Hocker, Johnston, Key, Palm, Andrea Rich and Howie Rich."

Undoubtedly, they had their point of view. But the charges leveled at them in 1982 seem eerily familiar in 2006. Ed Crane and Eric O'Keefe also are board members of Americans for Limited Government, which has been donating all that money in Nebraska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington State, Missouri, Arizona and Nevada.

The first pattern that we saw emerging in these reports was one of interlocking groups funding similar initiatives through multiple astroturf organizations, all emanating from Howie and Andrea Rich's townhouse in New York, at 73 Spring Street.

The second pattern that emerges is that the same players show up over and over again on each other's boards, at each others' parties, and in each others' political campaigns. Rich writes glowingly of an O'Keefe book published by his wife Andrea's (recently sold) company, Lassaiz Faire Books in 1999, WHO RULES AMERICA? (77 pages):

"Eric O'Keefe wrote the plan that produced a term limit sweep across the country in 1992 and 1994 establishing term limits on legislatures in 18 states and a strong national movement to limit congressional terms. In this book, he outlines a new strategy for Americans to take back Congress from the career politicians."  
--Howard Rich, U.S. Term Limits

Andrea has her OWN astroturf group, as well:

Center for Independent  
Thought, New York, NY  
Andrea Rich, President

Eric O'Keefe writes papers for Ed Crane's Cato Institute.

And they're all Presidents and Chairs and Board Members of a dizzying array of "groups" -- and so on and so forth until one becomes dizzy just trying to follow the endless interweaving of monied, ex-Libertarian radicals.

And all of them left the Party in 1983 -- O'Keefe, Crane, Rich and Rich and others - - evidently together. Crane had run the most successful campaign the Libertarians ever mounted, Ed Clarke's Presidential campaign in 1980.

Term Limits was where this series started, with Paul Jacob (whose radio spots are syndicated through ALG and who formerly headed USTL), and Rich's money coming back into Oregon to RE-introduce term limits (as they're doing in Michigan and other states as well). And USTL, ALG and, evidently, LEAD all have the same address (an office building near a golf course in Glenview, Illinois, if you use Google maps to view the satellite shot). And lord knows what else. There seem to be more organizations that this old confraternity of ex-Libertarians run than there are ex-Libertarians to run them.

The office of USTL and ALG in Illinois is, by the by, in the suburb in which ALG "President" (as opposed to Chair Howie Rich) John Tillman lives (and has his OWN astroturf group, <http://www.socialsecuritychoice.org>. Tillman is currently the ALG "donations" point man, and most (though not all) ALG monies are disbursed from that address: 240 Waukegon Road, Glenview IL 60025. Earlier, when O'Keefe was handling the exchequer, the disbursement address was 504 E Madison St, Spring Green, WI 53588 (phone book listing). Spring Green, Wisconsin, coincidentally, happens to be where Eric O'Keefe lives.

National Review, March 9, 1998

[http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m1282/is\\_n4\\_v50/ai\\_20370961/print](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1282/is_n4_v50/ai_20370961/print)

"USTL president Howard Rich was involved in Ed Clark's 1980 presidential bid on the Libertarian Party ticket. Cato Institute president Ed Crane sits on USTL's board of directors. ALT president O'Keefe was on Cato's board for several years. Jacob is a former national field coordinator for the Libertarian Party who served nearly six months in a federal prison in 1985 for refusing to sign his draft registration card."

Another pattern: In the case of Paul Jacob (formerly Chair, and now spokesman for USTL), Jacob has listed USTL at a Virginia address, which is ALSO the address given for yet ANOTHER astroturf organization "Citizens in Charge" or CIC -- which attempts to get ALL US states to adopt initiative and referendum laws, so that, one presumes, the endless ex-Libertarian cabal can start back-dooring the legislatures in the NEW states as well. The address is clearly a residence (as I learned from tracking it on Google Maps' satellite photos). And from the smallness of the trees it seems a relatively new subdivision in the suburbs of Washington, D.C.: 2617 Pheasant Hunt Road, Woodbridge, Virginia, 22192.

This is nothing new with this gang.

Let me ask the question now: if this is on the up and up, then why the endless mix-and-match of organizations that always claim "grass-roots" support, but often seem to have as few members as they have many dollars? By their fruits ye shall know them, and these ballot drives seem to be the poisoned fruit of the poisoned tree.

In the case of Measure 37 in Oregon, the state has already lost, by one estimate,

\$3.5 billion that it can ill afford, but Howard Rich and Ed Crane and their cronies don't have to pay for the consequences in the other states they're sponsoring it in. They only pay for causing the trouble. And their ideology, while strongly held, seems not to care for pragmatic considerations. An irony, when you think about it. They left (or were kicked out) of the Libertarian Party in 1983 because of their pragmatic win-at-all-costs approach, and yet, that approach is invariably applied to potentially disastrous ballot initiatives that have never been attempted in the "real" world. They are mere figments of ideology -- and, if, as in the case of Colorado's TABOR, they prove disastrous to Colorado and its voters repeal it, they shrug, turn their back on the evidence and reintroduce it, as they're doing this year in Nebraska, Washington State, Idaho, Maine, Oklahoma, Nevada, and other states.

(We will talk about that ideology another time. This is already complex enough without bringing Ayn Rand SuperGeniuses into it.)

This is by no means an exhaustive list. I am attempting to "sample" some of the Gordian knot of connections that crop up in what can only be termed an electoral initiative conspiracy spanning decades. When you shoot a research pinball into this political machine, so many lights and bells go off that you can take your hands off the flippers. The ball isn't escaping the board any time soon.

One last example. Let's fast-forward to the 1990s. From COMMON CAUSE Magazine:

**The money behind the movement: term limits is touted as a grassroots uprising. But guess who's paying the bills?**

Amy E. Young

... In early 1992 Howard Rich bought C[itizens for] C[ongressional] R[eform]'s assets -- mainly a mailing list and some office furniture -- assumed its liabilities and set up shop as US T[erm] L[imits]. The group contributed \$1.8 million to various 1992 state term-limit campaigns, while members of its finance committee kicked in another \$119,700 in personal donations and loans. USTL's donations went for petition printing, signature gathering and, late in the campaigns, advertising. The group also provided political advice to the campaigns, emphasizing local coalition building and paid media ...

For the most part, the financial backers of these groups remain a mystery. Of the 14 states that passed term limits, only Michigan law requires out-of-state organizations that donate to political committees to disclose the sources of their funds. A close look at documents filed last year by Michigan's Vote Yes on Proposal B committee, however, sheds some light on USTL's backers. According to the records, less than half of USTL's \$370,000 contribution was in small donations, while \$102,940 came from the Howard Rich Irrevocable

Trust; \$60,000 from OKE Associates, a business partnership of USTL finance committee member Eric O'Keefe ....

[http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m1554/is\\_n2\\_v19/ai\\_14702168](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1554/is_n2_v19/ai_14702168)

They've been playing these electoral stunts for at least 13 years (odds are a lot longer, but 13 years is what can be immediately and undeniably proven).

What is their agenda? It's undoubtedly as complex as their endlessly incestuous interconnections. Certainly a big part of it is permanent tax cuts, abolishing the estate tax, separating "schools and government," (abolishing public education), shrinking government; privatizing Social Security, initiatives in all 50 states, term limits, and the unlimited "free market" accumulation of capital. Those agenda items are irrefutably part of the mix. (The visible portions of the agenda read like Ayn Rand on steroids.)

Ed Crane's CATO Institute is currently being heavily endowed with ExxonMobil money to convene "global warming is a myth" panels and symposia. And that's only one example. There's oodles and oodles more. (e.g. the ultra-conservative Scaife foundations and the John M. Olin Foundation have provided a huge chunk of CATO's funding.)

Crane, Tillman, Jacob and Rich are on record as signatories to an October 2005 manifesto entitled "Kill Malarial Mosquitoes NOW!" supporting bringing back DDT -- claiming that DDT is necessary to "exterminate malarial mosquitoes.\*"

[\*Which features quotes like this: "Physician-author-medical researcher Michael Crichton has said the de facto ban on DDT to control malaria 'has killed more people than Hitler,'" and "in the nearly half-century since Silent Spring was written, no connection between DDT and cancer, birth defects or any other human malady has ever been scientifically demonstrated. The only documented environmental effects of residual DDT are possible reproductive harms to raptors, including thinning of their eggshells, and even these have not been demonstrated conclusively."]

Thomas Szasz -- whose awards shows the Riches host annually, and whose birthday parties the Riches and Mr. Crane attend -- is a leading Libertarian contrarian in psychology, claiming in his manifesto: "'Myth of mental illness.' Mental illness is a metaphor (metaphorical disease) .... As Americans before us have eventually replaced involuntary servitude (chattel slavery) with contractual relations between employers and employees, we seek to replace involuntary psychiatry (psychiatric slavery) with contractual relations between care givers and clients."

And so forth. But they also like to keep a goodly portion of that agenda (and their checkbooks) hidden, as well. That much is certain.

As is this certain: There is no reasonable doubt that Ed Crane and the CATO Institute are up to their eyeballs in this electoral shell game. Howie Rich is only

the masthead on this pirate ship of state. (Or, perhaps it is his wife, Andrea, who lists herself on speakers' bureaus, and evidently serves as toastmaster at many of their events.)

To quote John Kenneth Galbraith (1908-2006): "The modern Conservative is engaged in one of man's oldest exercises in moral philosophy; that is, the search for a superior moral justification for selfishness."

Howie Rich and his fraternity of free-marketeers sure seem to have come a long way from that Libertarian dustup of with the "Crane Machine" in 1981 and the "Craniacs" in 1982/3.

Or have they?

Let me leave you with this:

The STATE (South Carolina)  
**Follow the mystery money**  
By ROSS SHEALY  
Sat, Jul. 01, 2006

... your average Missourian apparently doesn't appreciate this sort of out-of-state puppetry. Despite being amply subsidized, Missourians in Charge failed last month to garner the support necessary to adequately petition for ballot initiatives to amend the state constitution. The group subsequently engaged the Missouri government in a lawsuit.

Even though I'm pretty sure I've never set foot in Missouri proper, it all sounded eerily familiar - a tax organization with a misleadingly local name, in reality subsidized from New York, and failing to demonstrate any semblance of the grass-roots it purports to have.

If it rings a bell for you too, there's good reason: The Fund for Democracy was set up by libertarian multimillionaire Howard Rich ...."

Courage.

*posted by ed waldo at [7:11 PM](#)*

19 July 2006

## **Unlimited Terms of Endearment: Part V, The Locusts**

This all sounds like the wildest sort of conspiracy theory, of course: that a group of wealthy pseudo-libertarians and their sympathizers have been hot-wiring elections all over the US by hiring low wage, migrant workers to fill petitions at \$2 to \$2.50 a signature, and, when the ballot measures are approved, the money is transferred elsewhere, and the workers move on to other, more fertile fields.

It seems as unimaginable as a biblical plague of locusts, as the petition contractors move their swarms from state to state, clashing with the locals, with accusations of scandal following in almost every case. Why haven't I heard of this? you're probably asking. Why doesn't the media cover this?

Well, they do. The problem is that in each state, the state media cover the story while it's hot in their state. They cover it -- generally in the spring or early summer, when petition-gathering is a visible story at the malls, the markets and the gatherings -- and then, as is happening now, when the petitions are turned in, the local media turn their attention back to fires and particularly gruesome car wrecks.

In the West, the paradigm is invariably one or two big newspapers in the big city, and then an army of marginal small-town papers and television stations, barely able to keep up with the farm news, the state fairs and the PTA meetings that form the bread and butter of their coverage.

But what happened in Oklahoma during the winter and early spring is a perfect example of what's going on here. What? you ask. Oklahoma? I hadn't heard of that.

Of course not. We remain a highly provincial nation. You might know who won your state's high school football or basketball championship. But it's doubtful you have any idea of what happened one state over. The same holds true for most state issues, as anyone who's ever been stuck in a motel room, waiting for the local weather report for tomorrow's journey can attest.

If you're driving on I-80 from the east in Iowa, you'll hear about "the Quad-Cities." In southwest Washington state, it's the "Tri-cities." In Southern California, they talk about "the Inland Empire," in Texas, events often happen in "the Metroplex." To an outsider, it is perplexing. (You won't find any of them on a map, so don't bother.)

So, when these locusts appear in the Quad Cities, or the Tri-Cities or the Inland Empire, the chances are that you'll hear as much -- and know as much -- as you do about the state championship in the next state. The story never gets the kind of national traction that cues the press into that sort of wild feeding frenzy that big stories get. There's no competition for the "scoop," no daily revelations, no

investigative reporting, except for the occasional talented reporter who digs up the facts and the story gets a few days' play. Then, it's back to covering school board meetings and kiddie porn charges.

And that's what the friends of Howie Rich are counting on.

Oklahoma is a good example. There, the local bloggers, the political groups and the local media got on the story. And they did a pretty good job of uncovering the story. Much of what I've written so far was caught -- like the Capitol Weekly reporter quoted in Part III -- for OKLAHOMA.

In December, newspaper readers in Oklahoma were greeted by this story over their Cheerios:

Outside groups pay to influence Oklahoma taxes

By Ryan McNeill  
The Oklahoman

Nearly all the money raised by an organization pushing a taxpayer bill of rights is from out-of-state groups, despite a grassroots direct mail plea for money.

Oklahomans in Action Inc. reported raising more than \$350,000, most of it in large donations from groups such as the Colorado Club for Growth and the National Taxpayers Union.

When its next campaign finance report is filed today, Oklahomans in Action will likely report spending and raising about \$500,000, the group's chairman said.

"The groups from out of state? Thank God for them," Oklahomans in Action Chairman Rick Carpenter said. "If someone wants to come in and help Oklahoma solve some of its governmental problems, then we'd be stupid not to take it."

[...]

"This is not a grassroots initiative in Oklahoma," said Gary Jones, president of the Oklahoma Public Employees Association....

This sounds eerily familiar. Compare to the Montana story:

\$230K spent on ballot petitions

By MIKE DENNISON - Billings Gazette State Bureau - 06/15/06

HELENA - At least \$230,000 has been paid to freelance signature-



gatherers in the effort to qualify three initiatives for the November ballot in Montana, including the measure to place a constitutional limit on state spending.

The money has come almost entirely from a recently formed political education group that isn't revealing its donors, drawing criticism from opponents of the spending-limit measure.

"You see how the money is doled out, but you don't know where it came from," said Eric Feaver, president of MEA-MFT, the state's largest employee union. "I think the public ought to know that."

The campaign coordinator for the three proposed ballot measures, Winifred rancher and political activist Trevis Butcher, said Wednesday he's confident the initiatives will get enough signatures to qualify for the ballot this fall .... "We need to bring in (outside groups) to help coordinate our local people," Butcher said. "If we're going to have to go against their national effort to try to block this, we certainly need to be prepared to do what it takes to accomplish our goals and objectives."

Compare it to the Nebraska story:

Petition drive to limit spending gets \$100,000 donation (G.I. Independent, 6-02-06)

SCOTT BAUER  
Associated Press Writer

LINCOLN, Neb. - Almost all of a \$100,000 donation to a petition drive aimed at capping state spending is being spent on gathering the signatures needed to put the issue on the ballot.

The donation from a group called America at its Best was reported in filings made Thursday with the state Accountability and Disclosure Commission.

The petition drive, working under the name Stop Over Spending Nebraska, seeks a constitutional amendment that would tie state spending to cost of living and population changes.

America at its Best is listed as having a Boise, Idaho, address that happens to be the same address as a group called Idahoans for Tax Reform. The chairman of that group, Laird Maxwell, could not immediately be reached for comment on Thursday.

His group received money for an effort it was spearheading in Idaho

from an America at its Best organization based in the Kalispell, Mont. law office of former Republican state Sen. Duncan Scott from New Mexico ....

Sponsors of the petition drive are listed as Mike Groene of North Platte and Americans for Limited Government of Glenview, Ill. Groene, who is with the Western Nebraska Taxpayers Association and one of the leaders of the effort, said Friday that the group supporting the petition drive consists of term limits backers.

As the term limits movement matured, they began supporting efforts to control state spending, Groene said.

He defended outside money being used to fund the Nebraska effort.

"It's no different than the ACLU coming in," Groene said ....

Or the Idaho story:

Idaho's Measure, New York's Money

BY SHEA ANDERSEN  
Boise Weekly JULY 5, 2006

Laird Maxwell disdains taxes. But he apparently welcomes out of state money.

The proponent of the newly-certified ballot measure against property takings in Idaho used a healthy chunk of out-of-state cash to get his brainchild on the ballot. In a nutshell, the measure would require Idaho state government to pay any Idaho landowner for any impact to their property value created by a new land-use law.

Except for \$50 donated by Maxwell, the entire budget for This House is My House came from out of state, according to reports from the Idaho Secretary of State. \$100,000 came from Montana-based America At Its Best. Another \$237,000 came from the New York-based Fund for Democracy, headed by Howard Rich, a libertarian activist and major donor.

[...]

Maxwell paid \$322,834 to Kennedy Enterprises, a Colorado Springs, Colo.-based signature-gathering group, which fanned out across the state to get the necessary signatures to get on the ballot.

Or the Oregon story:

Initiative would put 14-year cap on total service for legislators

STEVE LAW  
Statesman Journal

February 7, 2006

Oregon voters may get a chance to reinstate term limits for members of the Oregon Legislature.

Two national conservative groups provided a combined \$100,000 to pay for signature-gathering for a term-limits initiative on Oregon's November ballot, campaign-finance reports filed Monday show.

[...]

"I think that the voters deserve another opportunity to vote on this," said Ted Berthelote, a retired dentist from Bend who was recruited by term-limits supporters to serve as the measure's sponsor ... "It's important because the problems in the Legislature are largely due to the effect of incumbency," he said ...

Berthelote, who moved to Oregon four years ago, said he was approached by term-limits backers who read a guest opinion column that he wrote for The Bulletin in Bend. He declined to say who would run the campaign or identify the backers.

"I guess you'll just have to find out," he said.

Campaign-finance reports revealed that \$60,000 came from U.S. Term Limits, an Illinois group that has provided the financial muscle for many other state term-limits measures. An additional \$40,000 came from Americans for Tax Reform, a group led by Grover Norquist that has supported past Oregon tax-limitation measures.

[...]

Patty Wentz, a spokeswoman for Our Oregon, a labor-backed group involved in initiative campaigns, said Norquist's involvement is troubling.

"This is the corrupt right-wing D.C. political machine moving their political agenda in Oregon," Wentz said.

Berthelote said voters should be concerned with what the measure will accomplish.

"It's not important as to who is backing this," he said.

Does this sound eerily like an echo-chamber? With minor variations the story runs as follows:

Out of state interests (either unidentified or merely labeled without analysis) are backing a petition drive. The petition gatherers come from out of state. So does all the money. a qualified opposing spokesperson says: "This isn't a [state name goes here] grassroots movement."

The local cranky All-American front man pooh-poohs the charges: "It doesn't matter where the money comes from. This is important to the citizens of [state name goes here]."

And there the story ends. Again and again and again and again. The story ends at the petition filing date, and at the state line. And now that state's citizens are left with an exhausting fight and a vote on something they'd never realized they wanted to fight about.

And the locusts move on.

But another friends of Howie Rich organization makes this revealing statement on their website "Parents in Charge":

["The Parents in Charge Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit research organization dedicated to the study of choice in education. Founded in March 2001 by Howard Rich, Eric O'Keefe and Bill Wilson ..."]

Parents in Charge Foundation determined that Colorado was ripe for a full public debate over school choice in early 2002. The Foundation undertook grassroots education of the public on the key issues involved and engaged in all forms of media to involve the general public. As a result of the groundwork laid by Parents in Charge Foundation, legislators in Colorado enacted a school choice program in early 2003. Unfortunately, it is tied up in litigation on a state constitutional issue.

"Colorado was ripe ..."

That's not a concerned citizen talking. That's a locust speaking. But without national traction, without the ability of the lazy national press corps to hone in on the small cadre at the center of these endless astroturf groups, NOTHING further happens. Just the same story over and over and over again. And then it's back to covering the state fair, and the rancher who raised the prize bull.

Colorado was ripe indeed. Just for the sake of argument, let's presume for a moment that this website is playing it straight:

Not in Montana: Citizens Against CI-97

Pig in a poke

By Bob Bartholomew  
April 20th, 2006

.... Newspaper reports from Oklahoma show that ALG has spent \$150,000 to promote the SOS initiative in that state. ALG even hired out-of-staters to gather signatures putting SOS on Oklahoma's November 2006 ballot. ALG is also pushing an SOS initiative in Michigan.

The SOS initiative is modeled after Colorado's so-called Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR). Colorado voters passed a TABOR initiative in 1992 and overturned it in 2005. TABOR caused so many problems in Colorado that the state's business community led the effort to roll it back. SOS and TABOR are twins with different names.

ALG and other national groups are also pushing TABOR proposals in Arizona, Missouri, Maine, Ohio, Oregon, Nevada, and Wisconsin.

This is a well-heeled, well-orchestrated national movement to underfund state services.

After TABOR passed in Colorado, that state went from being a middle-of-the-pack state to the bottom of the barrel in funding for public services. The state fell:

From 35th in the nation for school funding to 49th;

From 23rd in prenatal care to 48th;

From 24th in child vaccinations to 50th;

Roads and streets deteriorated;

Senior citizens lost important services;

Colorado was the only mountain state to lose jobs between March 2001 and November 2005 according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. TABOR was a disaster in Colorado. Why would Montana want to repeat our neighbor's mistake?

My point is not to take sides on the TABOR question. Just for the sake of argument, however, we need to ask, if the aforesaid is true, did ANY of Howie Rich's friends suffer as a result of their "success"? The citizens of Colorado seem to have. Their babies, their children, their seniors all suffered. The roads suffered from potholes. Disease prevention (surely a "common interest" of the state's citizens) suffered.

Or perhaps they didn't. Some cranky All-American type spokesperson is sure to

pooh-pooh these assertions. But, while the cranky all-American might have shared in the fortunes of the state, the friends of Howie Rich suffer no consequences from their (some would contend disastrous) agitation.

And there is something fundamentally anti-democratic, and anti-libertarian in all of this. If "no taxation without representation" is their battle cry, then how is it that they can meddle in the lives of literally millions of Americans in dozens of states without any personal liability, without having to face any consequences, should their ideological obsessions prove to have grievous consequences?

The luckless citizens of Colorado might beg to differ that their state is "ripe."

So, let's go back to Oklahoma, and take an early preview of the drama that's playing out across the country. Here's a quote, and then some websites to check.

UrbanTulsa.com

12/15/2005

<http://urbantulsa.com/ArticlePrint.asp?id=3034>

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Donors

TABOR-toothed tax activists embrace the holiday spirit.

by G.W. Schulz

The recent full-court press across Oklahoma to get a "Taxpayer's Bill of Rights" on the next statewide ballot has come at a price--but not a price national special-interest groups are unwilling to pay.

Complete with a giant pink, papier maché pig painted with the phrase "www.stopthepork.org" and transported on a truck trailer, TABOR activists are zigzagging the state holding regular press conferences and lobbying for the spending formula Colorado voters put on a five-year hold in early November.

Urban Tulsa Weekly reported last week that a group calling itself Oklahomans in Action had spearheaded Oklahoma's TABOR petition initiative that would allow voters to constitutionally limit annual spending by state lawmakers.

But changing Oklahoma's constitution is no short order, and OIA needed to hire a Tulsa-based group of professional petition circulators known as [www.politicalactivists.org](http://www.politicalactivists.org), which is contracting with a company called National Voter Outreach\*, to meet a Dec. 17 deadline of 219,564 signatures.

[\*Note: National Voter Outreach was also hired for Montana and Missouri SOS initiatives -- HW]

OIA filed its petition and incorporation papers in September with the Secretary of State's Office opening a 90-day window permitted by

state law to gather the necessary signatures.

Funding Oklahoma's pro-TABOR effort, including, presumably, the cost of the giant pink, photogenic pig, are a number of national groups specializing in TABOR advocacy and supported by some of the nation's most vocal libertarian and fiscally conservative tax reformers.

State records obtained by UTW after deadline last week show OIA has been funded largely by five out-of-state organizations that each gave at least \$50,000 to help with TABOR's move toward the next statewide ballot.

Colorado Club for Growth, Americans for Tax Reform, National Taxpayers Union, Americans for Limited Government and the Legislative Education Network made the contributions throughout September and October. Additional records show that OIA has so far spent \$417,000 on its campaign and was \$67,000 in debt by early November.

Likely the most notable contributor on OIA's donor list is D.C.-based Americans for Tax Reform, which gave \$50,000 in September, records show ....

Sadly, at this point, the obvious target of Grover Norquist becomes the focus. But if you've read thus far, you'll recognize the following friends of Howie Rich groups along with their oft-ally, the National Taxpayers Union:

LEAD (misidentified here as "Legislative Education Network") who we've seen in South Carolina; ALG, and the "Colorado Club for Growth." The National Taxpayers Union has cropped up several times as an ally of the friends of Howie Rich: in Oregon, Oklahoma, Washington state, Idaho and others.

The Club for Growth ([www.clubforgrowth.com](http://www.clubforgrowth.com)) is another friend of Howie Rich, and Rich has a heavy hand in it. Originally founded by CATO Institute senior fiscal analyst Stephen Moore\*, there was a dustup last year, with the National Director fired. The charges flew that it was because he was gay.

[\* Moore continued to draw a CATO salary even as he drew a \$30k salary as Club for Growth President, according to financial disclosure statements filed before Moore moved on to found yet ANOTHER astroturf group, of which he serves, naturally, as President.]

Nothing could be further from the truth, Howard Rich said, in a rare interview.

NATIONAL NEWS [washingtonblade.com](http://washingtonblade.com)

Anti-tax group drops gay affiliate president  
Arizona conservatives criticize May's record as legislator

By JOE CREA  
Sep. 26, 2003

PHOENIX Former U.S. Army Reserve lieutenant and ex-Arizona state legislator Steve May said a conservative anti-tax group dropped him as president of its first state affiliate because he is gay. The group denies the charge.

Some Arizona conservatives had criticized the Washington-based Club for Growth for selecting May to head the week-old Arizona affiliate.

May told the Associated Press that he received a voicemail from Club for Growth national president Stephen Moore saying the group "thinks we need to make a change in leadership to someone who is less objectionable and to someone who is not a lightning rod."

May, who was traveling at press time and unavailable for comment for the Blade, told the AP last week that he was denied his position with the Club for Growth because he is gay.

[...]

Howie Rich, a spokesperson for the Club for Growth, said that May was not dismissed because he is gay but rather for his lack of support for fiscal conservative policies.

"It's my fault," Rich said. "It turns out that he has not been solid on the free market economic issues that we care about. I knew zero about his record beforehand and it is my fault for not doing due diligence."

Rich said that as a legislator, May introduced a bill to repeal Arizona's school choice tax credit measure, sponsored an initiative to raise sales taxes and supported mandates for private employers.

The Washington-based Club for Growth is a national supply-side advocacy group that until now has sought only to influence the outcome of congressional races with donations and by running ads criticizing incumbents it opposes.

The AP reported that the Arizona affiliate was the group's first foray into state-level politics.

But it wasn't the last. The CFG has expanded into state politics in a big way in the past couple of years.



The Club for Growth are yet another of the friends of Howie Rich. From the internal evidence, Rich is more than just a heavy donor (the financials are available on-line from the FEC). He's in a 'hire and fire' position. Else, why would he blame himself? And why would he be a 'spokesperson'?

Here are some Oklahoma websites to look at. Of particular interest is the sign in the window telling workers that turning anything under four pages of signatures is "unacceptable." (Oh, and you can win a scooter, too!) It's picture number 4.

<http://jmbzine.com/wordpress/?p=176>

<http://www.jmbzine.com/graphics/taborokc122005/1.jpg>

<http://www.jmbzine.com/graphics/taborokc122005/2.jpg>

<http://www.jmbzine.com/graphics/taborokc122005/4.jpg>

<http://www.okbudgetalliance.org/tabor/index.aspx>

<http://www.essentialokie.com/tabor.htm>

The use of the pig symbol seems to be a Howard Rich specialty. It was reported that a couple of years ago, he funded a large pig that was paraded around New York state in furtherance of yet another Rich agenda item.

But Howard S. Rich got it wrong. The symbol shouldn't have been a pig. A more appropriate symbol would have been a locust.

Courage.

*posted by ed waldo at [12:38 PM](#)*

26 July 2006

## **Unlimited Terms of Endearment, Part VI: Media Hash**

Well, the story broke yesterday, state wide. Our crack investigative journalists pored over the Contributions and Expenditures reports filed in Salem (the state capitol) Monday, and came up with not exactly stunning revelations.

The Portland *Oregonian* (our 'big' state paper) reported:

### **Out-of-state cash fuels petitions**

Nov. 7 [Election] - **Illinois groups spend more than \$1 million on initiatives to limit Oregon spending and legislative terms**

Tuesday, July 25, 2006  
EDWARD WALSH and DAVE HOGAN

Two groups based in Illinois have poured more than \$1 million into Oregon this year in an attempt to win passage of two initiatives that would limit state spending and reimpose legislative term limits, campaign finance reports showed Monday.

Supporters of the spending limit initiative have spent \$671,705 in their drive to qualify the measure for the Nov. 7 ballot, and all but \$100,000 of that came from Americans for Limited Government of Glenview in suburban Chicago.

Another Glenview-based organization, U.S. Term Limits, contributed \$510,000 to the Oregon term limits initiative, nearly all the money spent so far by that campaign .... Headed by Chairman Howard Rich, who lives in New York City, Americans for Limited Government emphasizes the use of initiative campaigns to achieve objectives such as reducing taxes and government spending and protecting property rights. An entrepreneur in real estate and business since 1965, Rich founded U.S. Term Limits in 1992. The term limits group is reportedly moving from Illinois to New York ...

Frankly, I think they pulled that last little revelation straight out of their ... er, uh, the ether. Either that, or they talked to Heather Wilhelm, their Illinois "spokesperson" -- about whom more later.

For those who've read this series thus far, we know that U.S. Term Limits wasn't exactly 'founded' in 1992. It was bought by Rich: a group called "Citizens for Congressional Reform." The purchase seems to have basically been a mailing list and some office furniture. Present at the birth were Paul Jacob, who is Howard Rich's brother-in-law (he married Rich's sister) and Paul R. Farago, Yale, '78, both of whom figure prominently in media coverage around these parts: Farago is the

"spokesperson" for the Term Limits initiative, and Jacob, who Farago quotes a lot - and who quotes Farago a lot in his "Common Sense" radio commentaries and column, which is produced out of Rich's OTHER organization "Americans for Limited Government." According to their websites, Jacob is syndicated on about 130 radio stations nation wide, and his column is carried by -- among others -- the Mother of all Conservative websites, TownHall.com.

But "reportedly moving from Illinois to New York"? I'd love to know where they got that one.

If you've been following along, you already know that "Chairman" Rich lives in New York, and the "president" of ALG, John Tillman, lives in Glenview, Illinois. Jacob lives in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. and, oddly enough, checks from USTL and ALG show up from all three addresses, according to where one lives.

In order to form such an organization, all you really need is an attorney, some filing fees, a bank account and a mail drop. As long as you file your forms regularly (financials and C&Es), everything's jake.

The fact of the matter, as seen in the Nebraska filing document (at [CLICK HERE](#)) is that Americans for Limited Government/U.S. Term Limits/etc. sends checks from Howard Rich's townhouse at 73 Spring Street, NY, NY 10012. And from the Chicago ALG office at 20 Wacker Drive. And from the other office in the Chicago exurb of Glenview, Illinois. And from Alexandria, Virginia from the same building that the National Taxpayers Union is located.

[In Idaho, South Carolina and California -- among others -- it's the "Fund for Democracy" which seems to donate from Rich's home in New York City, but the same ballot measures get funded.]

ALG/USTL/et al have had an actual office at 20 Wacker Drive in Chicago, Illinois. We know this because Oklahoma and Arizona news stories have identified this address for their cites of ALG "media spokesperson" Heather Wilhelm.

[Wilhelm is a young woman, a couple of years out of college -- her email address ends with alumni.uchicago.edu -- and is trying to make a name for herself on the conservative media circuit, with a number of pieces in the Wall Street Journal Online and another publication called something like the "Wall Street Journal for Women." Michelle Malkin helped her get her first 15 minutes of fame, but that's another story for another day.]

Now, this rather confusing collection of barely corporeal (but quite corporate) entities have an office in Glenview, Illinois. That is what is reported, and that is generally where it ends.

I've looked at it on a satellite photo, and it looks pretty clearly like a standard, nondescript office building. Given the size of the parking lot, I'd guess it's a two-storey building, with perhaps retail on the first floor and non-descript offices on the second. There is some sort of institution right next to it, looking like, perhaps,

a very nice little private college, or maybe a ritzy high school. There are train tracks a couple blocks to the east, and on the other side, a golf course. (Try it yourself. Plug the address below into Google Maps and take a gander.)

That is the "Illinois organization" that the OREGONIAN (and a hundred other papers) gleefully reveal in that Pulitzer-prize-winning style of journalism that we're all coming to expect from the "legitimate" media.

And, perhaps, that is the point.

Are you confused?

Exactly.

It surely worked for U.S. Term Limits as far as the Oregon media goes. But there is a deeper nuance in all of this that even a newspaper reporter ought to be able to grasp.

Americans for Limited Government gave \$570,000 in this election cycle to match U.S. Term Limits' earlier \$60,000 contribution from the same office in Glenview, Illinois. The checks were probably -- with a probability approaching certainty -- written and signed on the very same desk in that office.

Here's another tidbit:

They publish the "Term Limits" newsletter out of the Glenview office (masthead of the March/April 06 issue):

Edited by Heather Wilhelm  
info@getliberty.org  
Contributing Writer:  
Nick Zahn  
A Publication of  
U.S. TERM LIMITS FOUNDATION  
240 WAUKEGAN ROAD, SUITE 200  
GLENVIEW, IL 60025

Foundation?

What is the nuance? Well, you will note that this is the U.S. Term Limits FOUNDATION, which has been set up as a separate entity from U.S. Term Limits (whose structure I'm hazy on), so it can handle the 501(c)4 money: not tax deductible, but ANONYMOUS to donors. This is slightly different than the CATO Institute [from their website]: "The Cato Institute is a nonprofit, tax-exempt educational foundation under Section 501(c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code." So, for that matter, is the Heritage Foundation. You can contribute to further your various right wing agendas and write it off your taxes *just* like it was a donation to UNICEF or the United Way.

Now, as a funny bit of meaningless irony, Edward H. Crane III, sits on the Board of Directors of the U.S. Term Limits Foundation (the 501(c)4) Chaired by Howard Rich, just as Howard Rich sits on the Cato Institute's board (the 501(c)3) presided over by Edward H. Crane III.

Since they originally funded and have continued to fund the Cato Institute from its inception, the Koch brothers, Charles and David, have donated a lot of charitable money to Cato, but there is no way of knowing whether they've given a penny to the U.S. Term Limits Foundation.

Such is the advantage of differently structured organizations. But nothing in the world stops that office on 20 Wacker Drive in Chicago from moving to an office in Glenview, Illinois, or even to a closet in Paul Jacobs' den in the DC suburbs.

All that is needed are some bank accounts, some checkbooks, some files, and maybe a computer to store the mailing list data. You can cram as many foundations, PACs, corporations and shell entities as you want into a small closet. They are all "entities," but they need not resemble corporeal entities.

Becky, over at Preemptive Karma, has done an exceptional job of tracking down literally dozens of names, entities and aliases that this same anonymous group of monied interests -- with Howard Rich as the point man -- run. See it at: [preemptivekarma.com](http://preemptivekarma.com).

But the catch is that you aren't anonymous, and 501(c)3s can't actively participate in political campaigns. Not only do they lose their tax-exempt status, but they lose it permanently. 501(c)4 contributions are not tax deductible, but you can fund them anonymously. (Pay attention, this will be important later.)

Are you confused yet?

Well, that's the whole point.

And, none of the reporters on this seemed to "get" that the \$100 grand that was kicked in to jump start this process has now been seen and raised tenfold to a cool million. These people have some *serious* money to throw around.

Here's something that the state media forgot about:

**The Citizens' Term Limits Restoration Act 2004**

Leigh Anna Foxall, Paul R. Farago, Ted Piccolo, chief petitioners  
US Term Limits (DC): \$354,239 (97%); US Term Limits Foundation  
(IL): \$5,000 (1%); US Term Limits (IL): \$3,000 (<1%);>Gee. You don't suppose that U.S. Term Limits in DC was Paul Jacob, US Term Limits IL was the Wacker Drive office and US Term Limits Foundation was the Glenview, Illinois office, do you? And Paul Farago was right there then, too. (He has been a petitioner or co-petitioner every time this comes up, going back to 1992, when he was a founding Board Member of USTL).

Total in 2004: \$364,155

Are you confused yet?

That confusion reigns in the local coverage. Here's what the AP had to say (in part) yesterday:

**Illinois groups spend heavily for Oregon initiatives**

7/25/2006, 12:04 a.m. PT

The Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. (AP) - A Chicago suburb is playing a prominent role in Oregon politics this year.

Two groups based in Glenview, Ill., have spent more than \$1 million in an attempt to win passage of initiatives that would reimpose term limits and limit state spending.

According to new campaign finance reports, an organization called U.S. Term Limits contributed \$510,000 to the Oregon term limits initiative, almost all the money spent so far by that campaign.

Supporters of the spending limit initiative have spent \$671,705 in their drive to qualify the measure for the Nov. 7 ballot. All but \$100,000 of that came from Americans for Limited Government - another group from Glenview. ... Headed by Libertarian Howard Rich, Americans for Limited Government emphasizes the use of initiative campaigns to achieve objectives such as reducing taxes and government spending. He founded U.S. Term Limits in 1992.

"It just shows that these measures don't have much local support," said Phil Donovan, the campaign manager for a coalition formed to defeat the spending limitation.

He said the measures appear to be a case of "national groups trying to move agendas in Oregon."

But Don McIntire, a conservative activist who co-wrote the spending lid, described donors to Americans for a Limited Government as "patriots" who believe in smaller government.

He said it's insignificant where the money comes from.

"The important thing is how many people sign it," he said. "And then you have a debate, and the important thing is how many people vote for it."

Naturally, the story slavishly follows the standard form that this story takes in EVERY state (*as I sketched out in Part V.*): Out of state money, group in Illinois, bonus points for identifying Howard Rich -- penalty points for identifying him as 'Libertarian' -- a spokesman for the opposition asking WHO THE HECK ARE THEY? and a local, quaint, picturesque, All-American 'spokesperson' saying: It's not important where the money comes from. It's only important what we're proposing.

You are getting sleepy. Sleepy. *Sleeeeepy*. Watch our crusty homespun [*insert state name here*]ian spin. "It's about FREEDUM! It's about the PIPPLE!"

Bang. Standard story number 236, and now AP moves on.

But look what is missing: the original story was that Americans for Tax Reform (Grover Norquist's group -- this year, it should be noted, four of their board members were Norquist, ex-congressman Duke "Doing Federal Time" Cunningham, Ohio Secretary of State and GOP gubernatorial hopeful Kenneth Blackwell, and millionaire ex-GOP presidential candidate Steve "Flat Tax" Forbes) and USTL had kicked in \$100,000 (actually \$110,000, but what's \$10,000 among reporters?) to jump start the Term Limits initiative.

And now, USTL's doppelganger, secret identity or siamese twin 'Americans for Limited Government' has kicked in nearly a MILLION dollars more. That's impressive.

Moreover, if you look at California (\$1.5 million through "Foundation for Democracy"), the Idaho/ Montana/ Nebraska/ California money machine called "America At Its Best" but running out of the Kalispell, Montana law office of Duncan Scott (\$2.38 million) and that other \$1 million plus that Howard Rich's groups have spent, we're already over \$5 million. I don't think -- and interviews with Libertarian insiders suggest -- that Howard Rich's pockets are *that* deep. He's well to do, of course. Even a rich Rich. But I have a feeling that this money is coming from somewhere else: the contributions are a bit too rich for even Rich's blood.

It is all a shell game. And, as in any shell game, one cannot escape the sneaking feeling that it's a con game as well.

Remember, we are dealing with dozens of organizations floating

multiple ballot measures in more Western states than not and other states all the way to Maine. And the harder you look at it, the more bewildering the labyrinthine interconnections become.

That cannot have transpired by accident. These people are hiding, and they're using some bad stage magic to do it. It's sleight-of-hand, but, often it's ham-handed sleight-of-hand.

As you can probably already tell from the news stories, it's working just fine with the local media.

Oh, and it's very important that you understand Howard Rich is not affiliated with the Libertarian Party (although Paul R. Farago here in Oregon seems to be). Ed Crane, Howard Rich and several other "Craniacs" left the Libertarian Party after the great hoo-haw at the 1983 Libertarian Party National Convention.

Remember: this is NOT ideological -- at least in any commonly-held sense of the term. These are NOT Republicans, although they might move in Republican circles. These are not Democrats. And, these are most assuredly not Libertarians. This is an electoral cabal fixed around one Howard S. "Howie" Rich of 73 Spring St. #408, New York, NY 10012, and it has been going at LEAST since 1992.

I only point this out because Libertarian Party members probably don't want to be tarred with the Howard Rich brush. The Libertarian Party is a legitimate political party who run legitimate candidates collecting legitimate donations in legitimate elections. They identify themselves as such, and conduct themselves in a more-or-less honest fashion (we ARE talking about politics, after all). To my knowledge, they have NOT:

- Created dozens of astroturf groups to funnel money into elections surreptitiously.
- Engaged in *sub-rosa* initiative and legislative campaigns in dozens of states -- none of which they seem to live in.
- Recruited local "front" men to push their agendas, **AS IF** the ideas and issues originated from within the state.
- Attempted to hide their money, their donors and their agenda.

But, so far, the deepest that anyone in the "legitimate" media seems to have penetrated this story (in state after state, Oregon is only an example) is: Howard Rich, a New York Libertarian is funding a bunch of petition drives. Oh, and: "The term limits group is reportedly moving from Illinois to New York."



Good grief.

No: this is an entirely different story than that.

The grass roots in *these* campaigns are to be found on neatly manicured fairways and putting greens.

Courage.

*posted by ed waldo at [1:23 PM](#)*

28 July 2006

## Unlimited Terms of Endearment: Part VII, Objective Journalism

Let me begin by commending [Ray Ring's excellent article in High Country News](#) from July 24th.

Unlike my writing, it actually makes sense. And ...

Every so often, one must take a break from pulling on the same old thread as the sweater unravels; every now and again, it's refreshing to tug on a different thread and see how much unravels there. If you've read this far, you don't know any of these people, but have some patience. It will all come out in the wash, white or otherwise.

And, to respond to the critic who blogged last week that blogs are automatically suspect: I report 'internet' material that is authoritative, with a high degree of confidence. When I use sources like, say Wikipedia, or SourceWatch, I check another source, and only use information that is clearly factual. Sometimes, I go to Right Wing websites and sources to confirm facts, just to filter out any ideological bias.

I do this because "objectivity" per se doesn't actually exist. In order for "objectivity" to be real, you would have to have an objective being, e.g. a Supreme Being, and the S. B. doesn't seem much inclined to write. Objectivity is a paradigm that philosophers and gonzo journalists have quibbled with and derided extensively, but, all in all, it is still a good and useful paradigm.

[We can retreat into utter solipsism, in which case no one can prove to you that they actually exist. Or we can accept imperfection and move on.]

But, from a human perspective, reporting a temperature and adjudging it 'hot' or 'cold' is a matter of fact and not mere opinion. Disbelieving in gravity don't make it so.

On the other hand, value judgments and opinions are 'subjective' journalism (and, increasingly ARE journalism), and the presumption that bloggers are automatically suspect by virtue of their 'facts' and their automatic, presumed 'subjectivity' implies that Objective news organizations are automatically objective and factual.

I make no claims of 'fair and balanced.' I try to give you the story, and enough verifiable information that YOU can double-check my facts, rather than trusting that I've transcribed a phone call or tape (that you can't verify) in the actual news.

What newspaper cedes you that courtesy?

There are sleazy bloggers and there are sleazy newswriters, and ***caveat lector: let the reader beware.*** Read critically. Think. Keep an open mind. In other words,

and to paraphrase that paragon of journalistic integrity, Rupert Murdoch's Fox News:

"I'll distort; you deride."

Now, fasten your seatbelts.

### **i. How Objective Journalists Are Born**

Conservativenews dot com didn't get around to changing their domain name when they changed it to Cybercast News Service:

"(also CNSNews.com) is a conservative news website operated by the Media Research Center. It was founded on June 16, 1998 under the name "Conservative News Service"; "Conservative" was changed to "Cybercast" in 2000 after the MRC was unable to trademark the name "Conservative News Service." [1]. CNS sees its role as serving an audience which puts a "higher premium on balance than spin" by covering stories that mainstream news organizations ignore."  
[Wikipedia]

They published this oxymoronic 'news' item at for Christmas of 1999:

#### **Phillips Foundation Promotes "Objective Journalism"**

By the Phillips Foundation  
CNS Information Services  
16 December, 1999

(CNSNews.com) - The Maryland-based Phillips Foundation, a non-profit organization founded in 1990 to advance the cause of objective journalism, is now accepting applications for one full-time fellowship (\$50,000) and two part-time fellowships (\$25,000 each) for working journalists who wish to complete a one-year project focusing on "journalism supportive of American culture and a free society."

Working journalists (US citizens) with less than five years of professional experience in print journalism are eligible to apply for the Year 2000 Phillips Foundation Journalism Fellowship Program.

The Foundation said it established this annual journalism fellowship program to assist print journalists who share the Foundation's mission to advance constitutional principles, a democratic society and a vibrant free enterprise system....

"Oxymoronic" because the news story is a press release about setting up a program to increase press 'objectivity.' And uncritically reprinting a press release is the nadir of objective reporting.

I suppose that "objectivity" is best served by seeing who's on the board of directors of the Phillips Foundation.

From their webpage:

**The Phillips Foundation Trustees**

**Thomas L. Phillips, *Chairman***

Mr. Phillips serves as Chairman of Phillips International, Inc. and Eagle Publishing, Inc.

**Becky Norton Dunlop**

Mrs. Dunlop is Vice President for External Relations at The Heritage Foundation.

**Thomas A. Fuentes**

Mr. Fuentes is Senior Vice President of LFC in Orange County, Calif., and Senior Fellow at The Claremont Institute.

**Robert D. Novak**

Mr. Novak is a prominent national journalist and author of one of the longest running syndicated columns in the United States.

**Alfred S. Regnery**

Mr. Regnery is Publisher of *The American Spectator*.

**Ronald E. Robinson**

Mr. Robinson is President of Young America's Foundation

*Trustee Emeritus*

**Donald P. Hodel**

Mr. Hodel is on the Board of Directors of Focus on the Family and served as Secretary of both Interior and Energy during the Reagan Administration.

Foundation Secretary

**John W. Farley**

Foundation Assistant Secretary

**D. Jeffrey Hollingsworth**

Foundation Treasurer

**Peter De Angelo**

Gee. Who are these guys? From SourceWatch:

In 1993 Thomas L. Phillips founded and is the chairman of Eagle Publishing, the parent company of the conservative publishing house, Regnery Publishing.

Phillips is Chairman and President of Phillips International which he founded in 1974 to publish newsletters.

"The firm's 500 employees produce widely respected newsletters and on-line information services for the consumer investment and health marketplaces. Phillips International is also recognized for its thriving vitamin and nutritional supplement business. The company closed calendar 2000 with more than \$350 millions in sales," [his biographical note states](#).

According to his biographical note Phillips was a founding member of the Newsletter Publishers Association and "serves on the Board of Young America's Foundation\*, sponsor of the Ronald Reagan Leadership Program."

*[NOTE: "Young America's Foundation" -- a 501(c)3 -- and its sister entity, "Young Americans for Freedom" -- a 501(c)4 -- are the lineal descendants of the group "Young Americans for Freedom" founded at William F. Buckley's estate in 1960 and merged with "Students for Goldwater" in 1961. The Libertarian Party has deep roots in the old YAF organization. The point is to keep the old YAF acronym. YAF was reactivated in its current dual configuration in 1974 to promote Ronald Reagan for president. The YAF bought Reagan's "Western White House" ranch in 1998, and maintains and runs several additional Reagan shrines. -- HW]*

"He is on the Board of the Fund for American Studies and Chairman of the Board of Visitors for the Institute on Political Journalism. Tom also serves on the Board of the National Legal Center for Public Interest," his biographical note states.

"He is also a member of the Republican National Committee's Regents Program, and the Advisory Board of the Claremont Institute. Tom is Chairman of the Chairman's Council of the Republican Party of Orange County, California, and a member of the World Presidents' Organization, an international organization of business leaders," his biographical note states.

The Phillips Foundation is a 501(c)3, just like the Girl Scouts, the Red Cross, or Save The Children. Donations are fully tax deductible. Luckily, the Phillips Foundation gets nearly all of its donations from other Foundations.

What's really fun is how the Directors are linked to Phillips: According to SALON's Mary Jacoby:

[Robert] Novak's son's employment at Regnery, revealed by the *New York Times* on Aug. 30, isn't Novak's only tie to the Washington publisher of conservative polemics. Novak also has a long-standing

professional and personal relationship that he did not reveal -- with Regnery's owner, newsletter magnate Tom Phillips. Phillips owns Eagle Publishing, whose subsidiaries include Regnery; Human Events, a 60-year-old conservative newsweekly; and the Evans-Novak Political Report, Novak's subscription-based newsletter (\$297 a year). In addition, Novak is an unpaid member of the board of Phillips' private foundation, the Phillips Foundation, which awards journalism fellowships to young conservatives.

[\(Salon, October 1, 2004\)](#)

Phillips controls one of America's most potent print media fiefdoms: through his various subsidiaries, he publishes THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR (which was, you might recall, originally funded by Richard Mellon Scaife, and was the source of the so-called "Arkansas Project" and "Troopergate" -- see David Brock's BLINDED BY THE RIGHT for details), and HUMAN EVENTS which has a stable of writers that's a veritable who's who of Republican/Conservative poisoned penmanship: Ann Coulter, Newt Gingrich, Robert Novak, Michelle Malkin, Pat Buchanan etc. etc.

Regnery Publishing? THE conservative publisher. Gleaned for their website:

#### Best Sellers

Recent bestsellers of the company [Regnery] include Gary Aldrich's **Unlimited Access**, Barbara Olson's **Hell to Pay**, Goldberg's **Bias** and several others. The company is presently located in Washington, DC. It is a sister company of conservative newspaper *Human Events*.

Notable books published by Regnery in 2004 include:

\* John E. O'Neill and Jerome E. Corsi, **Unfit for Command: Swift Boat Veterans Speak Out Against John Kerry**. ISBN 0895260174.

\* Robert Patteron, **Reckless Disregard: How Liberal Democrats Undercut Our Military, Endanger Our Soldiers, and Jeopardize Our Security**. ISBN 0895260867.

\* Michelle Malkin, **In Defense of Internment: The Case for "Racial Profiling" in World War II and the War on Terror**. ISBN 0895260514.

\* David Horowitz, **Unholy Alliance: Radical Islam and the American Left**. ISBN 089526076X.

Oh, and let's not forget the book that started a certain Neocon writer on her quest for bestsellerdom:

#### **High Crimes and Misdemeanors: The Case Against Bill Clinton**

Ann H. Coulter, Hardcover, 358 Pages, Regnery Publishing, August 1998.

According to Wikipedia: "One of the first well-known books [Regnery] published (in 1951) was **God and Man at Yale** by William F. Buckley, Jr."

Thomas A. Fuentes is, surprise! director of Eagle Publishing, parent company of Regnery.

Alfred S. Regnery is the publisher of the AMERICAN SPECTATOR (whose editor-in-chief is R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.)

Ronald E. Robinson is President of Young America's Foundation, of which Phillips is a Board member -- among several other interlocking foundations, etc. It's a sort of youth recruiting service for conservatives.

Donald P. Hodel served in the Reagan Administration, as did Becky Norton Dunlop, who seems to be the Heritage Foundation liason (Heritage Foundation is the 1000 lb. gorilla of Right Wing foundations) and who serves on several other Boards with Phillips. Hodel served as President and CEO of Focus on the Family 2003-2005 (\$137,848,520 came in the FOF door in 2004, according to FOF's IRS form 990 tax filing).

All nice and cozy, right?

It gets even more incestuous.

**National Conservative Campaign Fund**

<http://www.nccfpac.com/officers/index.cfm>

Edwin Meese, III., Honorary Chairman  
Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, Honorary Vice Chairman

Officers

**Thomas L. Phillips**, Chairman

**D. Jeffrey Hollingsworth\***, Executive Director

*[\* Hollingsworth is the Phillips Foundation's Assistant Secretary]*

Directors include: **Becky Norton Dunlop, Thomas A. Fuentes**

National Advisory Board includes: George A. Alcorn, Sr., Gary Aldrich, L. Brent Bozell III, Angela "Bay" Buchanan, Ann Coulter, C. Boyden Gray, **Donald P. Hodel**, G. Gordon Liddy, Ralph Reed, Jr., **Alfred S. Regnery**, R. Emmett Tyrrell.

Well, let's make this easy. The *only* National Conservative Campaign Fund names missing from the Phillips Foundation Board are Treasurer Peter De Angelo and Secretary John W. Farley.

But not to worry: Peter De Angelo is the CFO & VP of Operations Eagle Publishing, Inc. And John W. Farley is Phillips International's Corporate Vice President. From their website:

Mr. Farley is responsible for corporate communications, government relations and corporate contributions. He joined the company 23 years ago as Executive Editor for business-to-business newsletters and later served as Group Publisher for The Defense Group...

There. Now we have some sort of notion as to what kind of "Objective Journalism" the Phillips Foundation is promoting.

I probably shouldn't mention that the Foundation is funded by Charles W. Koch's Foundation -- the Cato Institute's sugar-daddy -- \$20,000; and the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation (\$50,000).

According to Media Transparency: *"With over \$700 million in assets (down to \$489 million in 2002), the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation of Milwaukee, Wisconsin is the country's largest and most influential right-wing foundation. As of the end of 1998, it was giving away more than \$30 million a year...."*

There are a couple of others, but Phillips International contributes the lion's share: \$150,000 in 2004.

One of those others is Robert Novak himself, who was the 2003 "Lifetime Achievement Award" winner from the Phillips Foundation has contributed \$10,000 for 2003 and \$10,000 again for 2004 (the last 990s available -- they file for extensions to prepare their taxes quite often, it appears).

The 2006 Lifetime Achievement Award winner was Rupert Murdoch. For a priceless photograph of the award ceremony, [CLICK HERE](#). According to the 990s, they pay about \$30,000 a shot for the annual dinner at the National Press Club.

Some prior recipients: William Rusher, who retired as publisher of National Review in 1988 (1999), George F. Will (2000), and James J. Kilpatrick (2001), William F. Buckley, Jr. (2002), Robert D. Novak (2003), Robert L. Bartley, editor of The Wall Street Journal (posthumous) (2004), and "Kenneth Y. Tomlinson, chairman of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and former editor-in-chief of Reader's Digest" (2005).

Objective journalists, one and all.

And that's how objective journalism is being encouraged by the [Phillips Foundation](#).

But, that's only half of the story. Tomorrow, in part ii of part VII (this blog seems to be rapidly metamorphosing into a borg), we will meet someone I've already told you about, and tell you about the Phillips Foundation connection in all of this. The picture that forms when you connect all of the dots might just astonish you. Stay tuned!



Courage.

*posted by ed waldo at [6:02 PM](#)*

30 July 2006

## **Unlimited Terms of Endearment, Part VII, Objective Journalism (concluded)**

### **part ii. Martin Luther King in Oklahoma**

In the previous column, we learned about the Phillips Foundation's program to promote "objective journalism" through the handing out of fellowships, carrying stipends of up to \$50,000 for one year. From their FAQ (included with the application filed as an exhibit with their 990 tax return):

During the course of the one-year fellowship, the journalism project will be delivered in four quarterly installments with the potential to be published sequentially in a periodical or all together as a book.

This is lovely. Tom Phillips' Regnery Publishing or Human Events or even The American Spectator may or may not have right of first refusal on the piece that's been approved and written. There is no indication as to WHERE the completed fellowship piece will be published "in a periodical or all together as a book." But one might hazard a guess.

Still, given the Regnery Press' books-in-print listings, the following approved Fellows and topics aren't beyond their sphere of interest (from their 2005 press release):

- **Rachel DiCarlo:** "The Great Train Snobbery: Why Liberal Ideologues are Wrong About Rail Transit, Highways, SUVs, and the Suburbs."
- **Jeffrey Jackson:** "Equal Opportunity for Men: Why a Men's Movement is Forming."
- **Anna Parachkevova:** "Democracy in the Birthplace of Communism."
- **Judith Person:** "Murder Capital: An Examination of D.C.'s Criminal Record."
- **David Sanders:** "The Reluctant Convert: Why Arkansas Has Not Joined the South's Republican Realignment."
- **Katherine Mangu-Ward:** "How 25 Environmentalists Set Out to Save the Planet - and Wound Up Making Everyone's Lives Just a Little Bit Worse."
- **Cara Hughes Marciano:** "A Path Out of Purgatory - How a Few State Programs are Building on the Reagan Legacy of

Helping the Mentally Ill Transition from Silent Suffering to Independent Lives in Today's America."

- **Heather Wilhelm:** "Unholy Alliance? Government, Religion, and Ideology in America.

You might recognize that last name. That's Heather Wilhelm, **U.S. Term Limits** and **Americans for Limited Government's** "Director of Communications," Editor (of the USTL newsletter) and/or "spokesperson" according to the narrative you're perusing.

*Human Events Magazine* published an edited version of the Phillips Foundation's press release in their May 23, 2005 issue, noting:

Winning the \$7,500 Alumni Fund fellowship was Heather Wilhelm, 27, a freelance writer in Illinois and director of communications for Americans for Limited Government.

It wasn't one of the \$50,000 or \$25,000 prizes, but the five trustees of the Phillips Foundation agreed to fund her (objective) *journalism* project. She has the official Robert Novak/Regnery seal of approval, in other words. She might be the next Ann Coulter or Michelle Malkin. They started writing books for Regnery, after all.

The Foundation's [Fellows Profile Page](#) adds this:

Heather Wilhelm  
*Special Alumni Fund Fellow*

**Project:** "Unholy Alliance? Government, Religion, and Ideology in America." Heather is director of communications for Americans for Limited Government and a freelance writer. She previously held positions as corporate communications consultant at ABC Television and assistant editor at *Wine Spectator*. She does freelance writing for *Doublethink* magazine and *National Review Online*. She earned an M.A. in social sciences from the University of Chicago and a B.A. in English and political science from Northwestern University.

Still, between fulfilling the requirements of her Fellowship, pursuing her freelance career as a "working journalist" and acting as spokesperson for all the Howie Rich & Friends initiative battles, time must have been short for Ms. Wilhelm, a recent graduate of the University of Chicago -- to which Regnery Publishing has had a long connection since its founding in the 1950s.

She found a way to combine two of those tasks in a piece she wrote for the [National Review Online in January of 2006](#). As you will quickly see, it fairly reeks of "objective journalism."

January 17, 2006, 9:26 a.m.  
**Unholy Land Grab**

In the spirit of Kelo.

By Heather Wilhelm

For seven years, Reverend Roosevelt Gildon has preached the gospel at the Centennial Baptist Church in Sand Springs, Oklahoma. His congregation, around 50 strong, is like a small family. The elderly members, and those without cars, often walk to Sunday services.

"Rosey," as his friends call him, figured he'd go on preaching in the tidy steel structure for years to come. That was, until the government told him they were taking his church away.

Since the Supreme Court's controversial Kelo decision last summer, eminent domain has entered a new frontier. It's not just grandma's house we have to worry about. Now it's God's house, too. "I guess saving souls isn't as important," says Reverend Gildon, his voice wry, "as raking in money for politicians to spend." The town of Sand Springs, Oklahoma, has plans to take Centennial Baptist - along with two other churches, several businesses, dozens of small homes, and a school - and replace them with a new "super center," rumored to include a Home Depot. It's the kind of stuff that makes tax collectors salivate. It's also the kind of project that brakes for no one, especially post-Kelo. "I had no idea this could happen in America," says Reverend Gildon, after spending Monday morning marching in the Sand Springs Martin Luther King Day parade.

This unholy takeover goes back to Sand Springs's controversial "Vision 2025" project, which emerged in 2003. The plan includes, according to its website, the "largest set of public redevelopment projects in the history of Tulsa County." The money earmarked for Sand Springs was supposedly meant to focus on redeveloping an abandoned industrial area for big box retailers and other stores. One problem: Centennial Baptist Church isn't abandoned, and unlike some of the other buildings in its neighborhood, it is in pristine condition. More importantly, the church doesn't want to sell - and they have good reasons. "After I heard the news, we started looking to see if we could move," Gildon said. "I just don't think we can afford it. It's too expensive. And if we can't move, and they take our building, what happens to the church? If we leave, who is going to minister to the black community in Sand Springs?"

Reverend Gildon is a practical man. He's not a firebrand, and he's not looking for a fight. He just loves God and loves his church, and wants to continue serving his community. Unfortunately, local officials would rather have an extra parking lot for a new Bed Bath & Beyond.

It makes sense on one level. Churches don't generate any tax

revenue for the government to spend. They don't "stimulate" the economy. They often, much to their peril, occupy prime, envied real estate. With the supercharged powers granted by Kelo, be very, very afraid.

What's most egregious about this application of eminent domain is that there's already plenty of room for development, even if the pesky church sticks around. Many community residents were happy to sell their property. Two other churches in the area decided to move to Tulsa. Other structures in the area were dilapidated and ready for the deal. The way things are now, Centennial Baptist Church could easily live side-by-side with new stores, houses, or businesses. Yet Centennial remains in the crosshairs - even though two nearby national chains, a taxpaying McDonald's and a taxpaying O'Reilly's muffler shop, have been left alone.

In December, Reverend Gildon joined up with Americans for Limited Government and our partner group, Oklahomans in Action, to gather signatures for the "Protect Our Homes" initiative, which will go on the ballot in November 2006. Protect Our Homes is a measure designed to stop eminent-domain abuse. Right now, Americans for Limited Government is working with citizens in Michigan, Montana, Missouri, and several other states to do the same.

"I hope that my story makes people more aware," said Reverend Gildon, "and that maybe it stops other people's homes and churches from being taken against their will." Meanwhile, he awaits his next meeting with the planning board, where they will tell him how much his church is worth. If things don't change, it promises to be an offer he can't refuse.

*- Heather Wilhelm is a Phillips Foundation fellow and serves as the director of communications for Americans for Limited Government.*

Well, that's objective journalism all right (although you might need a hankie to dry your eyes after reading it). It's so great that Howie Rich and his friends are standing up for these poor church-going, God-fearing Oklahomans.

And, ESPECIALLY these BLACK Oklahomans. I mean, "Martin Luther King Day" and all.

Focus on the Family's CitizenLink Action Center picked up the report, as:

January 19, 2006

[\*\*Oklahoma Church Losing Property to Eminent Domain\*\*](#)

There's only one problem with this "objective journalism": it's a lie.

Now, one blogger quickly noted that it was a "hoax," posting this at:

<http://www.lifelikepundits.com/archives/002113.php>

January 21, 2006

### **Blogosphere Spreads Eminent Domain Hoax**

This past week, National Review Online posted a story about an alleged case of the misuse of eminent domain. Heather Wilhelm, the story's author, wrote the following:

For seven years, Reverend Roosevelt Gildon has preached the gospel at the Centennial Baptist Church in Sand Springs, Oklahoma. His congregation, around 50 strong, is like a small family. The elderly members, and those without cars, often walk to Sunday services.

"Rosey," as his friends call him, figured he'd go on preaching in the tidy steel structure for years to come. That was, until the government told him they were taking his church away.

. . . The town of Sand Springs, Oklahoma, has plans to take Centennial Baptist - along with two other churches, several businesses, dozens of small homes, and a school - and replace them with a new "super center," rumored to include a Home Depot.

. . . What's most egregious about this application of eminent domain is that there's already plenty of room for development, even if the pesky church sticks around.

This story was featured at Right Wing News under the title "Kelo Vs. Churches".

There is a problem with the NRO story - it makes a false claim. The city of Sand Springs isn't trying to use eminent domain to seize church property.

Here is the beginning of a story published by the Tulsa World:

SAND SPRINGS -- A church that lies in the path of Sand Springs' proposed Keystone Corridor redevelopment project is being cited nationally as an example of government flexing its power of eminent domain to take property for private commercial use.

But there's a problem with the National Review Online's assertions, city officials said: The city hasn't filed any condemnation action against Centennial Baptist Church, nor does it intend to.

"There's no eminent domain action going on against any properties there," City Manager Loy Calhoun said. "No actions, no intents -- nothing like that's been done in the area."

According to the city manager, "no specific businesses have been selected to build in the vacated area." Furthermore, National Review Online didn't contact the Sand Springs government prior to posting its story. Thus, the city wasn't given a chance to refute the eminent domain claim made in the story.

If you want more information about this story, then you can contact Tulsa World reporter Louise Red Corn at 1-918-581-8480 or at [louise.redcorn@tulsaworld.com](mailto:louise.redcorn@tulsaworld.com).

*[Note: the TULSA WORLD Story is available for purchase [CLICK HERE](#) from High Beam.com HW]*

Folks, this story pertains to a larger plan involving all communities within Tulsa County, which is where I live.

Let me fill you in on a little detail about my little corner of the world.

Sand Springs is a bedroom community of Tulsa, the buckle of the Bible Belt. If the city of Sand Springs were to try to seize church property through eminent domain, the resulting uproar would be so great, that any elected public official involved would be voted out of office.

There is already a movement in Oklahoma to restrict the use of eminent domain. This issue will most likely be a hot topic during the 2006 session of the state legislature, which begins February 6th and ends May 26th.

Oklahoma lawmakers don't need a hoax to prompt them to protect the property rights of Oklahoma residents.

Well, thank you "**Dodo\_David**."

But the news story was picked up by [the crack journalists at KTUL 8 TV in Tulsa](#), the ABC affiliate:

It begins breathlessly:

Wednesday January 18, 2006 5:29pm  
Reporter: Nicole Burgin

Sand Springs - Imagine losing your home, your home of worship or your business. It's happening to residents in one Green Country

community, all in the name of urban renewal. It has renewed debate about eminent domain and people being forced from their land. NewsChannel 8's Nicole Burgin takes a look at why residents are opposed to what's happening....

The story ends with:

Since it's voluntary right now, negotiations between the property owners and the city will continue. Sand Springs hopes to have all 165 pieces of property bought by the summer.

The City of Tulsa says it has not filed any more condemnations since a Supreme Court ruling expanding eminent domain ....

Protect Our Homes Oklahoma (the ALG-funded group that Heather Wilhelm promotes in her NRO piece) breathlessly quotes the New York TIMES on the controversy:

<http://www.protectourhomesoklahoma.com/>

"With bulldozers churning up the earth at the front door, the small Centennial Baptist Church in this struggling industrial hub west of Tulsa seems about to fall to the wrecker." - *The New York Times*

Well, if the New York TIMES says it's so, then it must be true, of course. Except, that eminent domain was never used, and no one has ever said that it was even contemplated. This did not stop the crack reporters of KTUL and the NY TIMES from getting it all wrong, however.

Ralph Blumenthal of the New York TIMES wrote, in part: "The Sand Springs Leader stepped up coverage of Mr. Gildon, and a local radio host, Dillon Dodge, broadcast a program on the dispute. 'Hannity and Colmes,' the talk show on the Fox News Channel, plans a program from Sand Springs on Wednesday, Ms. Wilhelm said." (You can pay for the story at the NY TIMES, or find it at: <http://www.bizzyblog.com/?p=1326> )

As a spokesperson, Heather Wilhelm had more than done her job.

The "official blog of the Libertarian Party" posted a story on January 30 that included this laudatory reference to Ms. Wilhelm and her employer: ([READ WHOLE ARTICLE HERE](#))

Heather Wilhelm from the National Review criticizes the Sand Springs redevelopment project, saying although it is designed to redevelop blighted industrial and residential areas, she points out that the church is in "pristine condition." Wilhelm says the real reason for the town to pressure the church to relocate is "churches don't generate any tax revenue for the government to spend." She wrote in her article that churches "often, much to their peril, occupy



prime, envied real estate." Many local governments would rather have a tax revenue-generating Bed Bath and Beyond to "stimulate the economy" than a church.

Reverend Gildon in partnership with Americans for Limited Government are fighting back. This past December they began to gather signatures for the "Protect Our Homes" ballot initiative to stop eminent domain abuse. [misattributions: sic]

Now, the objective facts of this story are unassailable: the city of Sand Springs developed a plan for a redevelopment area that was approved by the city's voters.

Eminent domain was never used to the time of the NRO story to enforce this plan, and all property owners in what can charitably be called a somewhat downscale area have been contacted to sell their land voluntarily. The church is a steel barn, frankly. Look at the pictures for yourself and [read the story at Tulsa Today](#).

In May, [the Oklahoma Supreme Court ruled](#) that:

May 10, 2006

Muskogee - Muskogee landowners are breathing a sigh of relief after the Oklahoma Supreme Court ruled economic development alone cannot be used as public purpose for the seizure of property by public entities....

To be entirely fair, the case is NOT entirely black and white:

**Church not included in condemnation effort**

By MANNY GAMALLO [TULSA] World Staff Writer  
5/16/2006

SAND SPRINGS - The Sand Springs Development Authority voted on Monday to begin eminent domain action against 14 properties in an area targeted for economic redevelopment.

No condemnation action was scheduled, however, against the Centennial Baptist Church, 123 W. Morrow Road, which has refused a city offer for its property, insisting it will not move ... Last week, the state Supreme Court ruled that governments can't use eminent domain to seize private property and grant easements to a private company in the name of economic development ... The high court ruling, though, left open the possibility that eminent domain can be used against blighted properties.

But the FACT remains that eminent domain was never threatened or used against the church in question. Without that FACTUAL basis, the entire NRO story becomes a particularly odious bit of propaganda, all the worse because it is a lie manufactured to advance Heather Wilhelm's employer's political agenda, and

because the NRO uncritically published it, and the right wing media flogged it, not because it was true (it was demonstrably not, at least the NON-tear-jerking-oppressed-minority parts weren't true) but because they WANTED IT TO BE TRUE.

Is THAT "objective journalism"?

Alas, the Americans for Limited Government petition was struck down by that same Supreme Court, despite Heather Wilhelm's best spokesefforts:

Tuesday June 20, 2006

Oklahoma City (AP) - The Oklahoma Supreme Court today ruled an initiative petition proposing to restrict government use of eminent domain is unconstitutional ....

Still, a lie is a lie, and the Sand Creek, Oklahoma church was never threatened with eminent domain, except, perhaps, in their collective imagination. I had been under the impression that "objective journalism" relied on facts, but perhaps the Phillips Foundation has been reading a different dictionary. Or, worse, perhaps Heather Wilhelm has been two-timing the NRO and the Phillips Foundation.

The NATIONAL REVIEW ONLINE has never issued a correction or a retraction, being the good "objective journalists" that they are. The NEW YORK TIMES has never corrected its story.

Still, as nearly as can be ascertained, Robert Novak and the Phillips Foundation have never asked for their money back from Heather Wilhelm.

Isn't it great that "Objective Journalism" is being so effectively promoted by the Phillips Foundation?

And, thanks to the Oklahoma Supreme Court, it's still safe to be an Okie from Muskogee, no matter what Ms. Wilhelm and the friends of Howie Rich might think.

Courage.

*Note: In a couple of days, I will be publishing a **major** story in this series, smoking guns and all. Stay tuned.*

*posted by ed waldo at [8:44 PM](#)*

03 August 2006

## Unlimited Terms of Endearment, Part VIII: America At Its Worst



Where does the money come from? Where does the money go?  
**i. the tube of mystery**

We return to Nebraska, which has been a key in unraveling many mysteries of this election season. "We" because this is no longer an investigation conducted solely by one writer/researcher. Information, tips and the sharing of research have expanded to the point that this has truly become a team effort. Thanks to the several who have given freely of their time to answer impertinent questions or fill in the gaps for a clueless author. This is what the team found in Nebraska this week:

In May of 2006, a number of very interesting transactions took place as reported to, among others, the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission. But even before those disclosure statements were filed, the domain name "RenewalVoterOutreach.com" was registered anonymously with Network Solutions, Inc. on April 27, 2006:

Renewal Voter Outreach  
ATTN: RENEWALVOTEROUTREACH.COM  
c/o Network Solutions  
P.O. Box 447  
Herndon, VA. 20172-0447

Domain Name: RENEWALVOTEROUTREACH.COM

Administrative Contact, Technical Contact:  
Renewal Voter Outreach  
ga7e38z29gq@networksolutionsprivateregistration.com  
ATTN: RENEWALVOTEROUTREACH.COM  
c/o Network Solutions

P.O. Box 447  
Herndon, VA 20172-0447  
570-708-8780

Record expires on 27-Apr-2009.  
Record created on 27-Apr-2006.

On June 6, the Nebraskans for Humane Care Committee, who would soon hire Renewal Voter Outreach registered this domain name:

Registered through: GoDaddy.com, Inc. (<http://www.godaddy.com>)  
Domain Name: NEHUMANECARE.COM  
Created on: 06-Jun-06  
Expires on: 07-Jun-07  
Last Updated on: 06-Jun-06

Administrative Contact:  
Mann, Thomas [tom@lawdirectory.com](mailto:tom@lawdirectory.com)  
One Valmont Plaza, 4th Floor  
Omaha, Nebraska 68154  
United States  
(402) 964-3700

Technical Contact:  
Mann, Thomas [tom@lawdirectory.com](mailto:tom@lawdirectory.com)  
One Valmont Plaza, 4th Floor  
Omaha, Nebraska 68154  
United States  
(402) 964-3700

This wasn't so mysterious. It made sense, of course. Mann, an Omaha attorney, is the public face of the "Nebraskans for Humane Care Committee." But there was something very odd about this all. The Omaha WORLD HERALD reported:

July 30, 2006

**Petition's full impact a surprise to signers**

BY NICHOLE AKSAMIT  
[Omaha] WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

... Thomas Mann, the Omaha attorney who heads the committee that filed the petitions, said Friday that he doesn't feel the measure is overly broad.

"It's a basic human rights issue," he said ...

Mann said out-of-state authors - including a law professor who was raised in Omaha - drafted the amendment. He declined to identify any in-state contributors, but said: "There was input from Nebraska."

Mann's organization, the Nebraskans for Humane Care Committee, has so far been funded entirely by out-of-state interests - \$605,000 from a group with Montana, Idaho and Illinois ties....

The last quoted sentence from the story is accurate, but unfortunate. Had the Omaha WORLD-HERALD followed up on those connections, they might have unraveled the mystery.

But, already something astonishing and unprecedented had occurred: a ballot measure had (tentatively) been approved for petition to place it on the Nebraska ballot -- authored and funded by mysterious out-of-state interests. The money came from the mysterious "America At Its Best" in Kalispell, Montana, and would soon be sent to an equally mysterious company, "Renewal Voter Outreach."

There was definitely something odd in the genesis of the proposal to guarantee that no feeding tube could ever be removed from a comatose, brain-dead or otherwise completely incapacitated patient. Some called it the "Terri Schiavo" initiative. The more cynical called it the "Feed 'em 'til they rot," measure. But the "Terri Schiavo" connection was more than just casual, as we shall see.

The initiative came from mysterious sources, funded by mysterious sources. Nebraska, it seemed, was just the tube through which the money flowed, all but untouched by Nebraskans, even though it was their state and their laws that would be affected. And there was another initiative -- the "SOS Nebraska" initiative -- that came from those same shadowy backers.

We've already established that, according to the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission, the co-petitioner of "Stop OverSpending Nebraska" (Kin to "Stop OverSpending Idaho," "Stop OverSpending \_\_\_\_" -- Michigan, Missouri, Montana, et al.) is "Americans for Limited Government." From their website (and confirmed by ALG's 990 filings with the IRS), [the board of directors of ALG](#) are:

**Board of Directors: Executive Committee Members**

Howard Rich, *Chairman*  
Eric O'Keefe, *Chair, Executive Committee*  
John Tillman  
Ed Crane  
William Wilson

Meantime in Nebraska, the odd transactions continued.

On May 4, 2006, "Renewal Voter Outreach, LLC" was registered as Nebraska Limited Liability Corporation number 10084392.

On May 26th, a statement of organization was filed with the Accountability office, with Thomas Mann as the treasurer of (and, thus, the only name associated with) the NEBRASKANS FOR HUMANE CARE COMMITTEE.

From the filing: "*Ballot Question - Ballot Issue Humane Care Initiative*"

He already had quite a busy treasury, if not a very complex financial situation:

The first filing states "THIS STATEMENT COVERS A PERIOD FROM 05/19/2006 TO 05/27/2006.

It lists one donation:

AMERICA AT ITS BEST  
PO BOX 1678  
KALISPELL MT 59903

05/19/2006 \$125,000.0

And it lists two expenditures:

PETTY CASH FUND (reason) NOT GIVEN 05/27/2006 \$50.00.

RENEWAL VOTER OUTREACH  
PO BOX 6210 OMAHA NE 86106  
(reason) COLLECTION OF SIGNATURES FOR PETITION

05/27/2006 \$110,000.00.

Renewal Voter Outreach, LLC of Nebraska had been existence for a shade more than three weeks, and it was already looking like a profitable concern.

Meantime, over at "SOS Nebraska" AMERICA AT ITS BEST of Kalispell, Montana was donating to that campaign as well (using 100% ALG money, as official campaign filings indicate. See part III, "Under A Western Sky" for full details.) The Nebraska AP office filed this report, published on June 2 (the day after SOS NE's first campaign filing):

SCOTT BAUER  
Associated Press Writer

LINCOLN, Neb. - Almost all of a \$100,000 donation to a petition drive aimed at capping state spending is being spent on gathering the signatures needed to put the issue on the ballot.

The donation from a group called America at its Best was reported in filings made Thursday with the state Accountability and Disclosure Commission.

The petition drive, working under the name Stop Over Spending Nebraska, seeks a constitutional amendment that would tie state spending to cost of living and population changes.

Sadly, our AP writer is being coy. The ENTIRE \$100,050 (received 5-15-06) was from AAIB in Montana -- save \$50, which exactly matches the petty cash expenditure -- and the official filing states: "No Individual Contributions." WHY the AP writer would give himself wiggle room on clearly stated legal facts is entirely beyond the scope of this inquiry. (Although "almost all" is not the same as "all," as any tax accountant can tell you, and we are dealing with hard NUMBERS and dates here.) However, it must be noted that the AP writer didn't bother reading the rest of the document: SOS NEBRASKA makes exactly ONE contribution in that same filing period:

RENEWAL VOTER OUTREACH  
PO BOX 6566\* OMAHA NE 68106

(reason) NOT GIVEN 05/18/2006 \$95,000.00

[\*Note, there is a discrepancy here between the address given here, and the address thereafter. It seems to be a typo. The documents from both ballot campaigns hereafter consistently report the post office box number as 6210. However, the postal address will become extremely significant in unraveling the mystery of "Renewal Voter Outreach."]

America At Its Best has contributed \$225,000 to two Nebraska petition drives between the 18th and the 27th of May, and, of that money, \$205,000 has immediately been spent with a Nebraska company that's been in existence for less than a month. Good work if you can get it.

Still, it's odd that the PO Box numbers don't match, and that SOS NEBRASKA doesn't give any reason for the expenditure. But, these documents are often filled out by activists with little experience in these forms, and typos slip in all the time.

But there is no doubt that only \$19,950 of the \$225,000 from Montana hasn't gone indirectly from "Americans for Limited Government" to the brand spanking new "Renewal Voter Outreach."

Within a month, even more money will appear from AAIB, and another \$195,000 will be paid by NE Humane to Renewal Voter Outreach. There will still be no individual contributions.

The next filing, on 06/30/2006, reveals that (only) America At Its Best of Montana has contributed another \$230,000 to NE Humane, in two installments: \$100,000 on June 5th and \$130,000 on the 8th. Thomas Mann is paid \$4000 for "office contractual services," and Alexis Mann who is listed at the same address is paid \$4000 for "COMMITTEE SPOKESPERSON, OFFICE CONTRACTUAL SERVICE" (sic). Thomas Mann seems to be heavily cross-wired in computers and law. His firm offers to convert law offices to paperless systems, and offers double-spam filtering, among its services. Here, from his website. (GOOGLE hint: look for "Thomas J. Mann," else you'll be stuck with a googzillion references to the author of THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN and DEATH IN VENICE.)

[Thomas J. Mann, Attorney at Law](#)

Thomas Mann has been involved in legal software development and consulting for over twelve years.

Mr. Mann has extensive experience with practice management software and document automation solutions. He has personally worked with over 500 law firms to assist them with automated document production and practice management software. Tom also has extensive experience providing legal software training to over 2,000 attorneys and law office staff.

Tom graduated from the John Marshall Law School in Chicago and is licensed in Nebraska and Illinois. He also graduated with honors from the Milwaukee School of Engineering.

There is also a photograph of Mr. Mann.

The NE Humane Committee also pays \$7500 to Parsons Public Relations of Lincoln, Nebraska, \$8244.30 for printing, copying and mailing, and \$7424.59 for postage. In that grand old Nebraska fundraising tradition, they mail from the Boys' Town post office, so that they'll get the warm and fuzzy postmark. Thomas J. Mann's law/computer office does the same thing, coincidentally.

The address for "RENEWAL VOTER OUTREACH" is now PO BOX 6210 OMAHA 68106. The \$195,000 is paid for "COLLECTION OF SIGNATURES FOR PETITION." They are paid on June the 21st, the longest day of the year. In business less than two months, RVO has a stunning economic track record for a Nebraska signature-gathering enterprise.

"SCHEDULE A - Contributions Over \$250 Received from the Candidate and Other Individuals" still lists only "No Individual Contributions." It all seems rather odd for such a hot-button issue as the care and feeding of persons in a persistent vegetative state. NO grass roots? The financial summary was revised on 7/03/06 (they evidently forgot to fill it out) and, according to it, there were no contributions under \$250 received, either.

So far, the whole NE Humane campaign has been a funneling of massive amounts of cash between two mystery organizations. Neither of which is located in Nebraska.

Over on the other side of the state, SOS Nebraska also filed their disclosure statements on July 31st. AAIB of Montana contributed two checks, on the same two dates: On June 5, SOS Nebraska received \$100,000, and on June 15, they received \$180,000.

\$1865.00 in donations were received in amounts smaller than \$250, but from who or where is impossible to ascertain. But at less than half of one percent of the total it probably isn't important where the 'grass roots' contributions came from.



And then, on June 20, 2006, \$270,000 is paid for "EXPENSE IN CONDUCTING PETITION DRIVE" to:

RENEWAL VOTER OUTREACH  
PO BOX 279  
SPRING GREEN WI 53588

It is the only expenditure SOS Nebraska makes, and the last that will be recorded until the October filing deadline, well into the election season.

Wisconsin?

What on Earth has happened? Spring Green, Wisconsin is an 'artsy' community in the pipestone region of southern Wisconsin, best known for being the site of Frank Lloyd Wright's "Taliesin," the Wright-designed compound where the architect lived, worked and taught in his final years.

What does Spring Green, Wisconsin have to do with "Stop OverSpending Nebraska" and "Nebraskans for Humane Care"?

[Note: I am breaking this into two parts because the blog posting gear gets cranky above about 2,000 words. Blogger never designed their system for the terminally verbose, evidently, which means that I must, needs, adapt.]

Courage.

*posted by ed waldo at [6:55 AM](#)*

03 August 2006

## **Unlimited Terms of Endearment, Part VIIIb: America At Its Worst**

### **part ii. How Green Was My Spring, or The Long Way 'Round The Bed**

Like the Platte River that bisects and defines the Nebraska plains, the money flows in from the West; and it exits to the East at Omaha -- like the Platte -- headed for Spring Green, Wisconsin -- unlike the Platte.

The legal disclosure documents filed with the Nebraska Accountability Office give this address:

RENEWAL VOTER OUTREACH  
PO BOX 279  
SPRING GREEN WI 53588

And the papers filed with the Nebraska Secretary of State give this address for Renewal Voter Outreach, LLC:

Corporation Member

LESLIE GRAVES  
P O BOX 279  
SPRING GREEN, WI 53588

(Former State Tax Commissioner John W. Biehn, now in private practice in Lincoln, filed the papers and is the listed agent, the only other name on RVO's public record.)

Tracking down Ms. Graves becomes a daunting task. First, who is she? Secondly, how is she connected to the two petition drives, and, more importantly, how is she connected to the money flowing from Montana?

Let's review: \$380,000 has gone to SOS Nebraska and another \$355,000 has been donated to NE Humane by America At Its Best in Kalispell, Montana.

Between 6/28 and 7/11, AAIB will send three more checks to NE Humane totaling \$480,000. Of that total, \$435,000 will be paid to RVO, still using the PO BOX 6210 Omaha address.

Without throwing more numbers at you, we know that the vast majority of money given IN Nebraska has gone to the brand new "Nebraska" company of Leslie Graves, in Spring Green, Wisconsin.

We already know that America At Its Best is funded entirely by Howard Rich and friends of the peripatetic "Americans for Limited Government." And we know that AAIB is led by Laird Maxwell in Boise, Idaho, but that monies have been

disbursed to Laird Maxwell's Idaho "This House Is My House" initiative from AAIB in Kalispell, and to Nebraska from Duncan Scott's law office in Kalispell.

In Idaho, the "House" initiative has been mysterious because the money came from AAIB in Montana, and no one knew where AAIB was getting its money. But Missouri documents reveal that America At Its Best in Boise, Idaho sent \$640,000 to "Missourians in Charge." (While Howard Rich's "Fund for Democracy" contributed another \$1,658,000 to the failed Missouri petition drive "Stop OverSpending Missouri," but that's a tale for another day.)

Why the attempt to deceive? And, while it's difficult to track the huge (relative to what these states usually see spent on initiative and referendum campaigns) amounts of cash involved, who is behind it -- and behind Howard Rich -- and why?

What is their connection?

Well here's one: William Wilson, the treasurer and on the board of Americans for Limited Government is also on the board, treasurer or both (I'm quoting TPM Cafe here, to give credit to "mrs panstreppon," whose legwork gave us the clues to crack this code. This information has all been verified independently, and we've carried it much further, but credit where credit is due:)

<http://www.tpmcafe.com/node/30501>

William A. Wilson, NAWER treasurer, is the owner of Associated Public Affairs Professionals, a consulting firm which was paid \$15k by Gary Bauer's campaign in 2000. Wilson is associated with numerous conservative organizations. Here's a partial list:

US Term Limits  
US Term Limits Foundation  
Term Limits America PAC  
America At Its Best  
Council For Responsible Government  
Parents In Charge (formerly Legislative Action Drive)  
SocialSecurityChoice.org  
SocialSecurityChoice.org Foundation

She leaves out "Americans for Limited Government," and there is the connection. Wilson's address is his home address (we've looked at it on satellite -- it is about six blocks from the golf course at the Fairfax Country Club of Fairfax, Virginia), and it is the same on America At Its Best. According to [Guidestar](#):

AMERICA AT ITS BEST  
10424 WOODBURY WOODS CT  
% WILLIAM A WILSON  
FAIRFAX , VA 22032

- This organization is a 501(c)(4) Civic Leagues and Social Welfare Organizations
- This organization is required to file an IRS Form 990 or 990-EZ.

No 990s were available, and full disclosure of board members is only available to premium members. (Which is beyond our humble budget for this project).

If you go to [the ALG, website](#), you will find Board Member William Wilson (It's the same Wilson. We've cross-checked).

We will deal at length with Laird Maxwell and Duncan Scott another time. But, America At Its Best seems to exist, at this point, solely to launder monetary contributions. The cross-connections with Howard Rich and friends are voluminous (detailed in Parts III and IV).

So, we know WHERE the money is slushing into Nebraska from. But we don't know where it is going. Let's return to "Renewal Voter Outreach" and the sole member listed in the Nebraska legal records:

LESLIE GRAVES  
P O BOX 279  
SPRING GREEN, WI 53588

At first it seems intensely murky:

It is a common enough name that one must be very careful that one gets the RIGHT Leslie Graves. But the giveaway ended up being very simple. She has kept the same email and mailing address for several years (at least since 1998):

**LBGraves@aol.com**

and

P O BOX 279  
SPRING GREEN, WI 53588

From the RVO webpage,

<http://www.renewalvoteroutreach.com/nowhiring.html>

Renewal Voter Outreach is hiring people now to circulate initiative petitions in Nebraska. Please read our FAQs and then call 1-800-989-8521 or email us to learn more.

[The link on the email reads: **mailto:LBGraves@aol.com**]

That email address is the key to Ms. Graves' past.

Leslie Graves has, for the past several years, been involved with a ministry founded under the aegis of Fr. Frank Pavone, the head of Priests for Life. You might remember Pavone. He was the priest who became the spokesman for the Terri Schiavo parents and relatives in the last week of the controversy in 2005. When Ms. Schiavo died, Pavone was the media spokesman for the family and the Catholic Church.

The VILLAGE VOICE reported in 2001

<http://www.villagevoice.com/news/0121.gonnerman,24947,1.html>

Over the last 12 years, Pavone has transformed his organization, Priests for Life, from a fledgling nonprofit into a multi-million-dollar operation. Its main purpose is to urge priests to be more militant in their pro-life activism. The organization also urges voters to pick antiabortion candidates and has launched a campaign to draw women who've had abortions back into the church. Pavone, who worked in Rome for two years, has been called the pope's "vicar for life" and serves on the Pontifical Council for the Family, which coordinates the Vatican's policy on abortion issues.

For several years Leslie Graves edited the "Rachel's Vineyard" newsletter, and was a fixture at their seminars.

Here is her bio, evidently recent, although this seems to have been a 2004 workshop in Madison, Wisconsin:

<http://www.humanlife.org/conference/workshops.html>

**Saturday, 10:00am - Workshop I**

B. Philosophical Foundations of the Pro-life position - Leslie Graves

Leslie Graves facilitates Rachel's Vineyard weekend retreats for healing after abortion in Madison, Wisconsin and trains new Rachel's Vineyard teams throughout the country. She is the author of the newly published "Rachel's Vineyard: A Guidebook for Gardeners". Leslie taught contemporary moral issues for the University of Wisconsin philosophy department in the late 90s, where she won the Oliver Prize in 1998. She has published articles in the philosophy of science and art. Currently sidelined due to injuries, Leslie rowed as a Masters athlete for Nike in 1997 and 1998 and was featured in an ESPN documentary. Leslie says that her journey toward embracing the sanctity of life came after many years in the desert following her own experience with abortion.

There are multiple references to her email address LBGraves@aol.com and her mailing address: <http://www.abortionrecoverydirectory.org/Wisconsin.html>

Organization Name: - Rachel's Vineyard of Madison  
Abortion Recovery Director: - Leslie Graves  
Address: - P. O. Box 279  
City: - Spring Green  
State - WI - Wisconsin  
Country: - USA  
Zip: - 53588  
AR Director Phone #: - 608-588-7834  
Email: - LBGraves@aol.com  
Hours of Operation: - varies  
Website: - [www.rachelsvineyard.org](http://www.rachelsvineyard.org)

Meantime, Rachel's Vineyard is directly affiliated and/or controlled by Fr. Frank Pavone:

Frm their website <http://www.rachelsvineyard.org/welcome.htm> :

Dear Friends:

You have found a safe place to come with your pain -- a pain that you often feel will never go away. (sic) Here at Rachel's Vineyard, you will meet people who understand, because they are in the same position that you are. You will meet people who care about you and about the child (or children) you have lost. You will meet people who know the way of healing, and are ready to welcome you into that journey that leads to mercy and peace.

Whatever your religious faith may be, Rachel's Vineyard will assist you to find God's mercy for your abortion(s). Rachel's Vineyard can provide you the individual attention you need, as well as the retreat experience, by which you walk hand in hand with others on the road of healing.

Welcome to a new chapter of your life!

Fr. Frank Pavone  
Chairman of the Board and Pastoral Director, Rachel's Vineyard  
National Director, Priests for Life

What is not so well-known is that Fr. Pavone traveled with Schiavo's parents to the Vatican later that spring, and was granted permission by Pope Benedict XVI to expand his organization. The press release from "Priests for Life" begins with:

May 13, 2005  
<http://www.priestsforlife.org/pressreleases/05-05-13johnpaul.htm>

## **Founder Dedicates New Pro-Life Society to Memory of John Paul II**

Rome, Italy -- Fr. Frank Pavone, National Director of Priests for Life, announced today from his Rome office that the new Society of Priests he has been given permission to establish will be dedicated in a special way to the memory and teachings of Pope John Paul II. This announcement comes on the same day that Pope Benedict XVI announced that he has begun the process by which John Paul II could be declared a saint.

So, it certainly makes sense that a committed member of Fr. Pavone's flock would be deeply involved in the drafting of the Nebraska "Humane Care" amendment.

But the group that surrounds Howard Rich are not noted for their deep affection for religion. At the first meeting of the New York Libertarian Party, in 1973, when Andrea Millen (later Rich) was elected the first NY LP Chair -- Howie Rich was one of two vice-Chairs -- the party refused to take a position on abortion. According to Murray Rothbard writing in the Libertarian Forum:

The final act of the convention underlined the good sense and even wisdom of the party membership. A proposal was made for the party to endorse legalized abortion. But while a large majority of the Party favors abortion-freedom, it decided by a 2-to-1 majority to respect the deeply held beliefs of those party members who are convinced that abortion is murder - a position which, for any libertarian, is not self-evidently absurd. In short, the FLP decided not to take a position on the abortion issue. (LF Vol. V, No. 4, April 1973)

The Libertarians -- and the group under Ed Crane that would split off at the 1983 National Convention in New York City -- have never particularly taken a position on abortion rights. There is a Libertarians for Life website, so the connection seems tenuous, at best.

But Leslie Graves has a long history within the specific group mentioned. As we researched, the connection moved from tenuous to definite, and, finally, to concrete.

Leslie Graves or Leslie Key was known in the late 1970s and early 1980s as the Chair of the Wisconsin Libertarian Party and as a National Delegate for several years.

Rothbard called her a "Craniac" and wrote about her several times in the Libertarian Forum. (Please note again that Murray Rothbard had his point of view which is not definitive. Certainly his opinions were and are strenuously opposed by others of that era, but what he writes in the Libertarian Forum of the era give us one lens into the tightly interwoven group that is still connected, and running these ballot measures that we've been investigating.)

From page 2 of the February 1983 issue of the LF, in an article entitled "THE CRANE MACHINE EXPOSED." (Available at the von Mises Institute webpage) some excerpts:

<http://www.mises.org/journals/libertarianforum.asp>

Edward H. Crane III The Big Boss: capo di tutti capi. Main power base: Head of the Cato Institute, which moved from San Francisco to Washington, D.C. early in the Reagan Administration to be close to the Corridors of Power. Also, Boss of: Libertarian Review Foundation, and its publications Inquiry and Update; National Taxpayers Legal Fund; and the Crane Machine in the Libertarian Party. Formerly, boss of Students for a Libertarian Society, and formerly, National Chairman of the LP. Managed the LP presidential campaigns in 1976 and 1980.

[Note: Crane is on the Board of Directors of ALG]

Howard ("Howie") Rich (New York businessman.) Top Craniac politico. Ran the disastrous Guida campaign for national chair in 1981, the equally disastrous Randolph campaign [for Alaska Governor] in 1982, and the likewise disastrous Northrup for Governor campaign in New York in 1982. Craniac straw boss (on LP NatCom.)

[Note: Rich is the Chair of ALG]

Andrea Millen Rich (Wife of Howie. Proprietor of Laissaz-faire Bookstore in New York, which has become a social center for New York Machiners. Banned the Libertarian Forum from the bookstore for being critical of the Crane Machine. (NatCom member.)

[Note: Published Eric O'Keefe's book WHO RULES AMERICA? in 1999]

Eric O'Keefe (The Martyr.) Former National Director of the LP; when ousted, went to Alaska to help Guida run the Randolph fiasco. Present whereabouts unknown.)

[Note: O'Keefe is the Chairman of the ALG Board, under Rich]

David Boaz (Crane hireling. Vice-president, Cato Institute. Research director, LP Presidential campaign, 1980).

[Note: Boaz is still the VP at Cato.]

Robert Costello (formerly in California, now working for free-market investment letter in Chicago.)



[Note: This is the same ROBERT COSTELLO, 518 DAVIS ST, STE 201, EVANSTON, IL, listed on ALG's 2004 990 as a Director.]

And, we find:

Leslie Graves (alias Leslie Graves Key.) Crane hireling. Former editor, now reporter, for Update. NatCom member. Boss of the Wisconsin LP, based in Madison, now rumored to be suffering a revolt from the long-downtrodden Milwaukee forces.)

Rothbard wrote more about Ms. Graves in several issues (at one point referring to her as "Madame DeFarge"), but this purloined memo reprinted by Rothbard in the August 1982 LF cements that there was a strong relationship between Graves and Crane and the old "Crane Machine."

September 16,1981

Memorandum

TO: Chris Hocker, Leslie Key, David Koch,  
and other Interested Parties  
FROM: Ed Crane  
SUBJECT: Update

What with all the changes going on these days I thought it would be appropriate to put down in writing some thoughts concerning the future of Update. To begin with, Dr. Hocker's new position as publisher of Inquiry probably makes it inappropriate for him to continue to be responsible for Update. This is true both because of the more than full-time job involved in getting Inquiry on its feet and headed in the right direction and because the magazine should not be directly connected to the libertarian movement (this despite the fact that it needs to become more explicitly libertarian in its editorial policy). Which means we're stuck with the lovely and vivacious Leslie Key who resides in Madison, Canada. (sic) I would recommend that she begin her responsibilities as editor of Update with the November issue. We could pay her, say, \$500 a month for assuming this responsibility. David Koch has indicated he will kick in \$10,000 to Update next year. If Leslie is very nice to him we might be able to talk him into \$5,000 more (right, David?)....

You might recall from Ms. Glass' bio that she was a rower. She still has a website referring to it at:

<http://members.aol.com/LBGraves/index.html>

### **Welcome to Team Four Sisters**

Team Four Sisters is a crew team consisting of Carie Graves, Leslie

Graves, Tia Fisher, Alison Graves, and our coxswain, Hal Menendez. We're competing in the Nike World Masters , a two-week event that includes 20,000 masters athletes from around the world competing in 25 different sports.

Let me know what you think about my page. Send mail by clicking here.

(link is "mailto:**lbgraves@aol.com**")

And they were even featured in an Associated Press article that made the national wires:

[http://news-star.com/stories/081598/spo\\_sisters.html](http://news-star.com/stories/081598/spo_sisters.html)

Shawnee, Oklahoma News Star  
Saturday, August 15, 1998

### **Sisters doing it for themselves**

VANCOUVER, Wash. (AP) -- Rowers call it "keeping your head in the boat" -- focusing on the task at hand, keeping time with your teammates and shutting out distractions.

Until this week, not only was Leslie Graves' head not in the boat, her whole body was far away from the boat, the water and any roads leading to it.

Leslie, 42, is the least famous of the four rowing Graves sisters, three of whom have been winning medals since their college days. Carie Graves, 45, was on the first University of Wisconsin women's crew team, and went on to row in three Olympics, winning a gold medal at the 1984 Games.

Alison Graves, 37, and Tia Graves Fisher, 39, rowed together at UCLA, and Alison later at Wisconsin. Leslie, on the other hand, was more inclined toward academics. She's pursuing doctorate degrees in philosophy and biology at Wisconsin.

...

Robert Graves, 72, now has converted the whole family to his sport.

"I can't imagine them just stopping."

Leslie gets the most cheers.

"The others are revisiting college glory days. For her, it's all new," said her husband, Eric O'Keefe. "It's been very invigorating for her. I

loved her the other way also, and I never put any pressure on her to do that at all. But she feels great about it. She likes herself better now."

All of the links of the chain are now present. (Duplications and cross-checks have been eliminated for the sake of brevity.)

You see, Eric O'Keefe is the Chairman of the Board of Americans for Limited Government, who gave ALL the money to America At Its Best. America At Its Best gave all the money to SOS Nebraska and Nebraskans for Humane Care. And those two "grass roots" groups sent nearly all of their petition money to something called "Renewal Voter Outreach," which is Leslie Graves, a\k\ a Leslie Graves Key, a\k\ a Leslie Key, a\k\ a Leslie B. Graves. And Leslie Graves in Spring Green, Wisconsin, is Eric O'Keefe's wife.

This is the same

ERIC O'KEEFE  
504 E MADISON ST  
SPRING GREEN WI

listed on ALG's 2004 990 as a director.

He might have just handed the check across the bed.

Courage.

*posted by ed waldo at [6:54 AM](#)*

08 August 2006

## Unlimited Terms of Endearment, Part IX: Autolycus Among The Rubes

[NOTE: A story appeared this weekend on the front page of the Portland OREGONIAN. (Front page; Saturday edition: which sort of cancel each other out.) I am one of the "Oregon bloggers" identified (or, rather, not identified), and it is an interesting piece, as far as it goes. Read it [HERE](#)]

\*\*\*

*"It was beautiful and simple as all truly great swindles are."* -- from "The Octopus Marooned," by O. Henry

There is a book by O. Henry, all but forgotten now. How it came into my hands is a story in itself, but, having obtained the (at that time) rarity, I casually started to read it, expecting not a lot.

You remember O. Henry: He wrote "The Ransom of Red Chief" (the kid so obnoxious that the kidnappers pay his father to take him back) and "The Gift of the Magi," about the impoverished newlyweds with her beautiful long hair and his pocket watch. Some English teacher surely forced you to read one or the other at some point.

I don't really like reading O. Henry. He had one trick that he liked to work to death, and that was the twist at the end. And, because his stories are always a kind of straight-faced joke, punctuated by an often cutsie or corny punchline, I'd not read him since my teens. But the first story was surprisingly delightful, and so, I kept reading.

What he was writing about was perfectly suited to his writing trick, and the stories together formed a thematic novel.

He'd collected together a number of stories that indicated -- from their internal evidence -- that the author had a deep fascination with the confidence games and swindles that abounded in his day.

It is a catalogue of con games, flim-flams and the gullibility of rubes -- decent, honest folk who, given a chance to make a quick buck, willingly let the flim-flammer fleece them. The scoundrel moved on to greener pastures, and rube would keep his mouth shut, generally, because to explain how he'd been duped was both an embarrassment, and a self-indictment of his own temptation that had allowed the con.

from [\*The Gentle Grazier and other stories\*](#), by O. Henry, 1908:

## THE ETHICS OF PIG

On an east-bound train I went into the smoker and found Jefferson Peters, the only man with a brain west of the Wabash River who can use his cerebrum, cerebellum, and medulla oblongata at the same time.

Jeff is in the line of unillegal graft. He is not to be dreaded by widows and orphans; he is a reducer of surplusage. His favorite disguise is that of the target-bird at which the spendthrift or the reckless investor may shy a few inconsequential dollars. He is readily vocalized by tobacco; so, with the aid of two thick and easy-burning brevas, I got the story of his latest Autolycean adventure....

"Autolycean"? Alas, it comes from another age, when everyone knew the players of Greek Mythology, and often used them by way of analogy.

Autolycus is the son of Chione and Hermes (or Mercury, in the Roman parlance); he is called the "Prince of Thieves."

It's pronounced: aw-TOL-ih-kuhs.

Autolycus was a renowned thief (skills passed down from his father, the God of Thieves) and wrestler (which he taught to Hercules). Autolycus stole the cattle of Eurytus and the helmet that his grandson, Odysseus, eventually wore during the Trojan War. Autolycus was one of the Argonauts. [Wikipedia]

As in Jason and the Argonauts. His mother Chione was, by the by, so beautiful that even the gods fell in love with her, and she was killed by Artemis (the Roman 'Diana') for her vanity.

O. Henry should be taken as something of an expert in the subject of confidence games, having begun his writing career in the Ohio State Penitentiary, in Columbus. He may well have learned about the classic swindles from other inmates as he began writing under his pen name, and not his real name, William Sidney Porter. Porter swore to never speak of his prison experience -- for what may or may not have been embezzlement -- but he certainly knew his swindles. He wrote as O. Henry to keep his prison history secret.

You can read the rest of "The Ethics of Pig" [for free] at <http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/1/8/0/1805/1805.txt>

But these lines from the tale should suffice if you don't:

"Mine was a legitimate and moral attempt at speculation. Buy low and sell high--don't Wall Street endorse it? Bulls and bears and pigs--what's the difference? Why not bristles as well as horns and fur?"

rationalizes the con-man in the story.

Now the con here seems to be that the friends of Howard Rich want to swindle you out of your vote. They offer you a proposition that's too good to be true, and, sure enough, it generally is.

They're going to cap spending. They're going to get rid of "professional politicians" with term limits. They're going to protect you from bad "activist" judges. And they're going to save your home from the bulldozer and the wrecking ball.

And meantime, our ever-wide-eyed media are gathered 'round the table, as the shell game is run on them.

To run that con, all you need is a practiced barker, and a good shill, as O. Henry well knew -- although he used the term "capper." The term "shill" was originally applied to the partner in this particular con, but has since come to mean a "planted" person in an audience who laughs at the right time to get the audience to laugh, and applauds when it's the right time for an applause line. (Comedians and politicians use them all the time. Listen for that FIRST, overeager clap, and don't be surprised if you don't hear that hasty first clap throughout the performance.)

That's a shill.

In this shell game, a local shill is recruited to lead a 'populist' movement on term limits, eminent domain, state spending, or what-have-you.

From O. Henry:

"That night I went down to the circus tents and opened a small shell game. Rufe was to be the capper. I gave him a roll of phony currency to bet with and kept a bunch of it in a special pocket to pay his winnings out of. No; I didn't mistrust him; but I simply can't manipulate the ball to lose when I see real money bet. My fingers go on a strike every time I try it.

"I set up my little table and began to show them how easy it was to guess which shell the little pea was under. The unlettered hinds gathered in a thick semicircle and began to nudge elbows and banter one another to bet. Then was when Rufe ought to have single-footed up and called the turn on the little joker for a few tens and fives to get them started. But, no Rufe. I'd seen him two or three times walking about and looking at the side-show pictures with his mouth full of peanut candy; but he never came nigh.

"The crowd piked a little; but trying to work the shells without a capper is like fishing without a bait. I closed the game with only forty-two dollars of the unearned increment, while I had been counting on yanking the yeomen for two hundred at least. I went

home at eleven and went to bed. I supposed that the circus had proved too alluring for Rufe, and that he had succumbed to it, concert and all; but I meant to give him a lecture on general business principles in the morning. ("The Ethics of Pig").

It is a problem finding good help. The Nebraska connection between Missoula and Spring Green, Wisconsin would have never shown up, had not the "SOS Nebraska" spokesman slipped up and put the Spring Green post office box of Leslie Graves on one of the Contributions and Expenditures reports, instead of using the Omaha PO box that appears on all other SOS Nebraska and NE Humane filings.

Nor would another spokesman have inadvertently linked Howard Rich and another purportedly "independent" group in the story that we're working on right now, had he not inadvertently transposed suite numbers on the C&E filing in another state that we've uncovered.

Still, the shell game is the shell game, and finding good help is always important. Which is why, in Michigan, they chose spokesmen who they knew could be counted on.

O. Henry, again:

"In my line of business," said Jeff, "the hardest thing is to find an upright, trustworthy, strictly honorable partner to work a graft with. Some of the best men I ever worked with in a swindle would resort to trickery at times.

"So, last summer, I think I will go over into this section of country where I hear the serpent has not yet entered, and see if I can find a partner naturally gifted with a talent for crime, but not yet contaminated by success.

The friends of Howie Rich have found at least two talented partners, however. And the shell game that has commenced in Michigan has a familiar ring to it.

[The Heartland Institute](#) published this:

<http://www.heartland.org/new/Article.cfm?artId=19073>

Author: Kurt O'Keefe  
Published 06/01/2006

Voters in Michigan may get a chance this November to make big changes in state policy and how the state manages its tax revenues.

Petitioners across the state are gathering signatures to put the Stop OverSpending (SOS) initiative on the 2006 ballot. SOS, as its supporters call it, is designed to give voters a say in state spending

decisions. The goal of SOS is to stabilize state spending so it doesn't go through a bust-and-boom cycle.

Given state spending conditions in Michigan in recent years, some people believe the timing couldn't be better.

"We're getting a tremendous response on the grassroots level," said Scott Tillman, who serves on the Michigan Stop OverSpending committee. "We're working to put the people back in charge of how their money is spent, and that really resonates."

Tillman, who also works with Americans for Limited Government, a national group sponsoring similar measures across the country, said the committee is working hard and gaining volunteers every day. The petition signatures are due July 10.

Well, they have a willing capper in Scott Tillman, whose name is suspiciously akin to that of Americans for Limited Government's Board member John Tillman. And Kurt O'Keefe, whose name sounds suspiciously like that of Eric O'Keefe, Chairman of that same board that John Tillman serves on. Whether they are related or not, though, certain similarities attend.

They are the two spokesmen for "Stop OverSpending Michigan," that franchise ballot operation that's running in Nebraska, Nevada, Oregon, and Montana, and which was disallowed for the November ballot in Missouri and Oklahoma. In Oklahoma, the "pig" symbol for "politicians" figured prominently, as it did in the fall of 2005 in New York State, when Americans for Limited Government loaned it to New York groups backing Proposal 1. (This has been discussed in Part V, "The Locusts.")

And their "populist" rhetoric is stirring, if disingenuous: remember, this is a self-appointed wealthy elite, pushing their carefully test-marketed and slickly packaged agenda in a raft of states in which they do not live, interfering in the lives of the citizens of those states without facing any consequences should their laws prove harmful, hurtful or disastrous. But listen to these would-be overlords railing against the powerful and those who would hold themselves unaccountable:

The "grassroots" to which Tillman refers, in the article attributed to O'Keefe, with whom he has a long history of campaigns in the service of Rich friends, are only the paid petition gatherers, often a bare step from homelessness, if not already there; the "Okies" from THE GRAPES OF WRATH migrating into Michigan to pluck ripe signatures from fertile fields, paid for piecework, and then asked to move on when the harvest is in.

Thus far, their campaign consists mostly of O'Keefe and Tillman as spokesmen, a clever staged photograph of O'Keefe posing with boxes of signatures in temporary fiberboard file boxes, and one of O'Keefe -- who runs a bankruptcy legal practice with satellite offices all over Detroit -- wheeling a stack of boxes on a hand-truck, with the Michigan state capitol dome carefully framed in the background. That



out-of-state money buys very good PR campaigns.

It is reminiscent of George Bush's moment in Jackson Square in New Orleans, with the cathedral and equestrian statue neatly lit in the background. A classic sort of photo op. See it [HERE](#).

<http://www.eagleherald.com/images/spendpet.gif>

With unintentional irony, O'Keefe was quoted in an AP story July 6:

By TIM MARTIN  
Associated Press Writer

"We want to let more people participate," O'Keefe said. "We want to have as many signatures as possible. You can't have too many."

But O'Keefe's sympathy for the "little guy" goes further than that. On July 1, interviewed by a different AP reporter, who seems to have written her report based on a TV show she watched: "During the taping this past week of public television's 'Off the Record' program, Detroit lawyer Kurt O'Keefe said the Michigan Stop Overspending Committee expects to be comfortably over the 317,757-signature minimum when it hands in its petitions to state election officials July 6."

The story goes on to show O'Keefe's fiery rage at those who consider themselves "above" the rest of us:

July 1  
KATHY BARKS HOFFMAN  
Associated Press Writer

"We're not professional politicians or Lansing lobbyists. We're just concerned citizens," said Kurt O'Keefe, executive director of Don't Touch Term Limits. "But government is supposed to work for the people, not powerful special interests. So, we're going to fight them."

...

"Term limits, by ridding our state of legislative dinosaurs, have thwarted powerful lobbies like the Chamber, Blue Cross Blue Shield and others," O'Keefe said. "That's why voters love the current limits. The Chamber may be slick, but not slick enough to fool the voters."

O'Keefe, however, said the proposal would give voters more of a say over how their tax dollars are spent.

"I'm in favor of letting the people decide. It's their money," he said...

The proposal also would prohibit state-paid pension plans for lawmakers. Opponents say that's included only as a deceptive "bait

and switch" technique to get people to vote for the measure.

O'Keefe said lawmakers should not receive pensions because "it's supposed to be public service."

Michigan is one of several states this year with voter petition drives aimed at limiting the growth of state government spending. In many states the proposals have been backed by national groups such as Americans for Limited Government and Americans for Tax Reform.

O'Keefe said more than half the money to support the petition drive has come from out-of-state groups, but he added that more than 250 Michigan donors also have given money. The group spent about \$200,000 to collect the needed signatures. He didn't say how much the group has raised.

As O'Keefe quoted Tillman in his Heartland Institute article, happily, in the fall, Tillman had returned the favor of quoting O'Keefe in a press release from "Don't Touch Term Limits," a group which, coincidentally, they also are spokesmen of, and which is, again, mostly funded by the friends of Howie Rich.

For Immediate Release  
Contact: Scott Tillman  
(231)282-1167  
September 15, 2005

Term Limits Group Vows to Fight Chamber  
"These lobbyists need term limits, too" says leader

(Lansing, Michigan)-Michigan term limits leaders today announced that they will fight a new initiative constitutional amendment proposed by the Michigan Chamber of Commerce to weaken the state's legislative term limits by allowing state senators to serve 75 percent longer and representatives more than twice as long as under the current term limits law.

"We're not professional politicians or Lansing lobbyists. We're just concerned citizens," said Kurt O'Keefe, executive director of Don't Touch Term Limits. "But government is supposed to work for the people, not powerful special interests. So, we're going to fight them."

...

"Term limits, by ridding our state of legislative dinosaurs, have thwarted powerful lobbies like the Chamber, Blue Cross Blue Shield and others," O'Keefe said. "That's why voters love the current limits. The Chamber may be slick, but not slick enough to fool the voters."

Well, not as slick as Howie Rich, Eric O'Keefe, John Tillman, Ed Crane and those providing the money for these campaigns, certainly.

[And yes, that press release is, **verbatim**, what the AP reporter printed. No one will make a fuss about the plagiarism, however.]

It must have been a frenzied fall for Scott Tillman of Fremont, Michigan. Not only was he the "go-to" guy for the two Michigan campaigns, but he even had time to travel to New York on behalf of Americans for Limited Government:

### [WXXI Local Stories](#)

Group Uses "Porky" to Oppose Budget Proposal  
by Bud Lowell

The giant pig itself was sculpted from plastic foam around a metal frame by Scott Tillman. He's a trucker from Fremont, Michigan who decided to go into business building protest symbols.

After election day, he plans to tow "Porky" the pig back to Michigan. He says he's already got several groups interested in using it in for political campaigns back home.

Tillman also drives the van that tows "Porky," who is 18 feet long, ten feet high and eight feet wide.

[The Washington POST ran [this photo](#) with the caption:

*Oct. 27: Scott Tillman walks next to a huge pig he built in Rochester, N.Y. Opponents of an amendment that would give the legislature greater control in writing state budgets have taken to the streets, saying the proposal would provide more pork barrel spending.]*

And, we find the same "populist" rhetoric from this "trucker" from Fremont, Michigan, expressed in the mediagenic form of a giant foam pig:

<http://newyorknews2142.blogspot.com/>

### **This Little Piggie Went To ... Rochester**

An 800-pound pig rolled through Rochester, NY on Thursday as part of a statewide campaign urging New York voters to vote "No" to Proposition One on Election Day. The proposition would give more power to the legislature in regards to the state budget, which has been late 20 times in the past 21 years. Also, the proposition would allow legislators to have more control of the budget if it is not passed by the spring deadline. The pig was built to represent a legislative kind of pork. Scott Tillman, the builder of the pig, and other critics of Proposition One fear that if it passes legislators will

push millions more dollars of pork projects into the budget. However, legislators argue that this is not that case and that they require more power over the state budget so that they can finish it on time, as they did this year, in years to come.

Oh, Kurt O'Keefe is not only involved in two of Eric O'Keefe's ALG campaigns, but he is also a signatory to the Alliance for the Separation of School & State's Michigan register, as is Eric O'Keefe a signatory to their Wisconsin register. One is curious as to what their connection is. We find this on one of their blogs:

<http://www.stopoverspending.blogspot.com/>

Saturday, May 20, 2006

Fwd: Fw: Colorado Governor Owens Sets Record Straight on TEL

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From: Kurt O'Keefe koklaw@hotmail.com

Date: May 12, 2006 2:09 PM

Subject: Fw: Colorado Governor Owens Sets Record Straight on TEL

To: koklaw@gmail.com

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From: "Eric O'Keefe" eoke@mhtc.net

To: "Kurt O'Keefe" koklaw@hotmail.com

Subject: Fw: Colorado Governor Owens Sets Record Straight on TEL

Date: Fri, 12 May 2006 10:56:24 -0500

----- Original Message -----

From: FreedomWorks

To: KELO-ScottTillman ; KELO-PaulJacob ; KELO-John Tillman ;  
KELO-Heather Wilhelm ; KELO-Eric O'Keefe

Sent: Thursday, May 11, 2006 5:12 PM

Subject: Colorado Governor Owens Sets Record Straight on TEL

Setting the Record Straight on Spending Limits

By Bill Owens, Governor of Colorado

May 10, 2006 [...] (article snipped)

Well, they certainly are all in it, thick as thieves, whether they are related or not (tomorrow I will add someone who definitely IS related).

Kurt A. O'Keefe was on the 1980 Michigan Libertarian Party's slate of presidential electors, as well. Had Ed Clarke won the Michigan vote, he'd have cast a vote in the electoral college.

But this does not bespeak any sort of grass-roots movement. It simply traces out a shell game. We've shown a lot of other shells in prior columns, and even, very occasionally, the pea. But here is that classic shell game of which O. Henry writes:

two shells in Michigan, one shell in New York, and, of course, the ethics of pig:

[Evan Dawson \(Rochester, NY\) 10/27/05](#) -- An 800-pound pig rolled through Rochester Tho" to Proposition One on Election Day. (sic)

The proposition would give the legislature more power over the budget, which has been late for 20 of the past 21 years.

Scott Tillman built a 15-foot pig to represent a legislative kind of pork. Critics of Proposition One fear that if it passes, lawmakers will shove millions more dollars of pork projects into the budget.

Tillman said, "This just opens things up for people to talk about it. They say, 'Hey, did you see the pig?'"

Autolycus would be pleased.

Courage.

*(the O. Henry story is at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/1/8/0/1805/1805.txt>)  
posted by ed waldo at [11:11 PM](#)*

14 August 2006

## Unlimited Terms of Endearment Part X: The Present Through the Past



I don't get it.

I don't get that the media doesn't get it. I don't get that the people don't get it. I don't get that the politicians don't get it. These friends of Howie Rich are snake oil salesmen, slithering unctuously into the various states, using the electoral process for grand social experiments, and nobody seems to be upset.

[I keep hearing this hoo-haw about the "land of the Brave, and the Home of the Free," and yet every time Osama does something bad, we get punished. I don't get that, either.]

And nobody's upset. It's just the way things are, you know.

Or the various Libertarian party members across the USA who opine that what "Howie" is doing is in the best traditions of democracy, and say, did you know that America is a REPUBLIC and not a DEMOCRACY?"

[It's actually the "United States of America," but we arrogantly pretend that the Canadians, the Mexicans, the Central Americans and the South Americans don't count. It is our nationalistic hubris. How many AMERICANS were killed in that plane crash? As though the other lives were inconsequential..]

But we, proud, free, brave Americans don't take offense when some rich New York apartment landlord fronts for various other shadowy rich cranks. To the extent that they're "libertarian" they believe that, as David Bergland, the former

Libertarian presidential candidate wrote in *Libertarianism in One Lesson*: "Taxation is immoral, indistinguishable from theft."

They're also against Social Security (the Cato Institute brags that it was responsible for the 'privatization' notion); against public education (currently under the code phrase "school choice.") They disdain religion (but will, seemingly, take Father Frank Pavone's cash to put a "Terri Schiavo" initiative on Nebraska's ballot.) They're fanatically "free market" (the late LP presidential candidate of 1996 and 2000, Harry Brown, wrote in "The Great Libertarian Offer: "Low wages abroad are no reason to restrict imports," and "Sweat shops abroad disappear as workers gain wealth.") They're anti-union, anti-safety-net, anti-tax, and pro-unlimited wealth, untaxed, passing down all the generations.

In other words, at a minimum, they're in favor of a hereditary oligarchy. (The uneducated, one presumes, can clean their children's mansions and dredge their moats.)

If the entire "libertarian" agenda were laid before the public, there is so little doubt as to the public's reaction that there is equally little doubt as to why they mask their money behind an endless series of shell foundations all with highfalutin' names: Americans for Term Limits PAC (often used, as in Idaho, to attack politicians who disagree with them), the "Foundation for Democracy," "Americans for Limited Government," the "Club for Growth, States," which is controlled by Rich, and which has bundled thousands in maximum contributions from all over the USA in the service of Idaho GOP congressional nominee James Sali, about whom more in future.

If the public were given a real peek behind the phony-patriotic masks that these "libertarians" use, these "libertarians" obviously fear that they would be justly tarred as Machiavellian, Molochian manipulators. Self-appointed meddlers, malefactors of great wealth. Their very attempt to hide is their own self-indictment.

Attempting to flee from a crime is admissible as evidence of guilt in a court of law. Why is conscious deception not seen as evidence of guilt in the court of public opinion?

How can you (through your paid media consultants, paid Public Relations firms and paid media advertising) claim to speak FOR the "people" when your very actions belie the very concept of home rule?

And, while Howie Rich and company are endlessly in favor of "term limits," they impose no such restriction upon themselves, and insist in picking electoral fights in any state whose policies offend them. This will focus somewhat on term limits, since it's their track record, but the past holds the key to the future, and it's really about ALL of their current proposals. The modus operandi is well-established over time.

I'm not remotely the first to uncover this: There is ample evidence that this shell game has been run several times in the past, and the public never quite finds out

what it needs to find out before the election. Only in the squabbles of the aftermath do we see the tracteries of this cabal of wealthy cranks. And by that time, it's too late.

In 1998, this item appeared on [CNN's All Politics website](#):

### **How Not to Lobby**

U.S. Term Limits all but killed a popular cause through inflexibility and meanness.

For a lesson in how not to lobby, look no further than the recently failed attempt to enact congressional term limits. In 1995 term limits had won overwhelming voter approval in 23 states, and the issue was one of the ten planks of Newt Gingrich's Contract With America. But its lead interest group, U.S. Term Limits, committed two fundamental lobbying errors: It refused to compromise, and then it attacked supporters for deviating even slightly from what it considered the righteous path. According to GOP Rep. Bill McCollum of Florida, a term-limits enthusiast: "For U.S. Term Limits, winning meant defeating everything except its own view, which has hurt the movement considerably."

At the insistence of New York developer Howie Rich, U.S. Term Limits' president and major benefactor, the organization prescribed one, and only one, kind of limit: three two-year terms for the House and two six-year terms for the Senate. Why three House terms? Because public opinion polls of term-limit backers indicated three terms is what they liked best. That sounds like a preference, but to Rich and his associates, the poll results were akin to divine sanction.

Politicians like Bob Inglis, Republican of South Carolina, pleaded with U.S. Term Limits to be flexible; six terms was the most popular alternative, he told them, because it gave lawmakers in both chambers 12-year limits. "But they refused," Inglis recalls. "They said, 'If you get in our way, we'll mow you down.'" And in fact, lawmakers who didn't support U.S. Term Limits' position were labeled traitors to the cause in advertisements. Worse, at the group's urging, nine states passed "scarlet letter" laws that placed next to the names of candidates on the ballot a notation stating whether they supported a specified type of limit. Such coercion is resented on Capitol Hill and has resulted in a deep decline in the issue's prospects. Today, Rich says he was naive to think politicians would ever curtail their own service. Then again, his actions have assured that they probably never will.

Several GOP leaders who have abandoned the cause assert privately that U.S. Term Limits doesn't really want to win but instead wants to use the movement for its own fundraising purposes. Even Cleta Mitchell, once Washington's most visible proponent of term limits,



has given up. At the urging of her friends in Congress, Mitchell has taken a job with the National Federation of Independent Business. Says Mitchell: The views of people who run U.S. Term Limits are "nuts."

USTL is the same bunch, in essence that are ALG, are the Fund for Democracy, are America At Its Best, are Club for Growth, States, are Citizens in Charge, etcetera. Hear their spokesman, Paul Jacob screaming about "accountability" (while hiding in the maze of mirrors that these "Illinois-connected" -- to use the term of the still-uncomprehending media glazes our eyes with -- groups) in his [July 24, 2006](#) "[Common Sense](#)" column (which may or may not be extensively ghost-written):

### **Accountability Card**

... But don't give in on taxes. I'm not convinced that a tax increase will lead to big decreases in government! Are you?

The answer? As always, the voters. This November as many as eight states will vote on Stop OverSpending initiatives. These measures put a cap on what politicians in the state can spend without express voter approval. This means that politicians have to actually sell new spending to the people. What a novel idea! Accountability.

Common Sense is published by Americans for Limited Government. Their website can be visited at [www.limitedgov.org](http://www.limitedgov.org).

Funny. Accountability doesn't apply to them. In fact, Jacob wrote his July 31 column "'Hoping for the Next Punch,' By Paul Jacob In Nebraska":

As with all the campaign finance laws, you as a candidate are not allowed to simply rely on your ideas and appeal to acquire campaign contributions. Instead, if you're up against a millionaire, you have to wait for him to clobber you beyond a certain point.

Oh, so if OTHER millionaires are warping the electoral process with THEIR money it's bad? Glad to hear it, Mr. Jacob.

Well, they're still at it right now, of course, the "my way or the highway" approach that CNN chronicled a decade ago:

### **Capitol Weekly (California) News**

#### **Group threatens to strip lawmakers of per diem if they change term limits**

By Shane Goldmacher  
published August 7th, 2006

A leading figure in the national term-limits movement arrived in Sacramento Monday to head off the ongoing discussion to alter

legislative terms. U.S. Term Limits President Paul Jacob said if the Legislature tries to tweak the current term-limits law, his group will fund an initiative that would eliminate legislators' tax-free, \$153-per-day stipend, and force any future legislative pay to be approved by a popular vote.

"If they mess around with term limits, we will be much more inclined to say we need to go on offense," said Jacob. "The public has made up their mind but we continue to get legislators who ignore the public and decided they are going to do what's best for their careers."

U.S. Term Limits has spent millions on initiative campaigns across the country for more than a decade. In 2002, when then-Senate President Pro Tem John Burton, D-San Francisco, qualified a term-limits extension for the California ballot, Americans for Limited Terms, a sister organization, poured \$1 million to defeat the measure.

"We will fight any effort to hoodwink the voters and mess around with term limits," says Jacob, who works closely with Howard Rich, a New York developer and driving force behind Proposition 90, an eminent-domain measure on the November ballot....

Here are some more episodes from their delightful electoral history (call them "The Friends of Howie Rich" for want of a better term):

From 1993:

### **Common Cause Magazine Spring/Summer 1993**

The money behind the movement: term limits is touted as a grassroots uprising. But guess who's paying the bills?  
Amy E. Young

Term limits is touted as a grassroots uprising. But guess who's paying the bills?

In October the 1992 Washington state term-limit campaign was in crisis: three weeks to go and not enough money for radio ads critical to its effort. So the head of the campaign, Sherry Bockwinkel, picked up the phone and called Howard Rich, founder of U.S. Term Limits (USTL), a Washington, D.C.-based group.

Within days, the wealthy New York developer rustled up \$150,000 for the Washington state effort. "Howard was basically dialing for dollars," she says. "He called up ... 28 people who each sent us \$5,000 checks." Voters approved the measure 52 to 48 percent. "Without that money we couldn't tip the scales in our favor," says

Bockwinkel, who also headed a 1991 Washington state term-limit campaign that voters rejected.

In all, Bockwinkel's group raised \$410,112 in cash and in-kind contributions. But while hundreds of people sent \$10 and \$15 checks, more than 80 percent of the receipts came from two national term-limits organizations and 69 donors of more than \$500. USTL contributed \$55,600 in cash and in-kind donations, and 17 members of its National Finance Committee were among the large donors.

On Election Day last November, more than 20 million voters in 14 states approved ballot measures that would cap U.S. senators' service at 12 years and representatives' at six, eight or 12. USTL spokesperson Jeff Langan calls term limits the "biggest grassroots movement ever in the United States." But if proponents describe support for term limits as a spontaneous, populist prairie fire driven by local outrage over entrenched congressional incumbents, a Common Cause Magazine analysis of campaign finance reports filed in the 14 states suggests that something else is fueling the fire: More than three-fourths of the movement's financing in 1992 came from four national groups and a relatively small number of wealthy individual donors.

According to the analysis, term-limit committees in 14 states raised \$5.9 million in cash and in-kind contributions, of which 80 percent was raised from the four groups and just 624 donors of \$500 or more. The groups -- USTL, the now-defunct Citizens for Congressional Reform (CCR), Americans Back in Charge and Americans to Limit Congressional Terms -- supplied more than \$2.2 million, while more than \$2.5 million came from the 624 individual donors.

Term-limit proponents say they were forced to raise big money in anticipation of a strong opposition financed by special interest groups out to protect their friends in Congress. While powerful interests indeed helped finance opposition efforts, term-limit backers outspent them by nearly 6 to 1.

### **A Continuing Trend**

From the very beginning the term-limits movement was financed by large donors. The first major national term-limits group, CCR, spent more than \$1 million in California, Washington and Michigan and then closed shop amid controversy surrounding its funding sources. CCR was bankrolled largely by two conservative billionaire industrialist brothers, Charles and David Koch of Wichita, Kan., who often wired money from their bank accounts directly to the term-limit committees. The group disbanded in late 1991, just after term-limit opponents filed a complaint with the Michigan secretary of state

questioning the validity of a list of donors CCR filed to comply with a state law.

In early 1992 Howard Rich bought CCR's assets -- mainly a mailing list and some office furniture -- assumed its liabilities and set up shop as USTL. The group contributed \$1.8 million to various 1992 state term-limit campaigns, while members of its finance committee kicked in another \$119,700 in personal donations and loans. USTL's donations went for petition printing, signature gathering and, late in the campaigns, advertising. The group also provided political advice to the campaigns, emphasizing local coalition building and paid media.

[...]

For the most part, the financial backers of these groups remain a mystery. Of the 14 states that the passed term limits, only Michigan law requires out-of-state organizations that donate to political committees to disclose the sources of their funds. A close look at documents filed last year by Michigan's Vote Yes on Proposal B committee, however, sheds some light on USTL's backers. According to the records, less than half of USTL's \$370,000 contribution was in small donations, while \$102,940 came from the Howard Rich Irrevocable Trust; \$60,000 from OKE Associates, a business partnership of USTL finance committee member Eric O'Keefe; and \$20,000 from Crunch Fitness, a health club in New York run by USTL finance committee member Doug Levine. USTL also donated more than \$5,000 in staff time and expenses for fundraising and advertising. This amounted to nearly 75 percent of Vote Yes's total \$504,556 fundraising effort. A separate Michigan committee, Campaign to Limit Politicians' Terms, raised \$346,782 for the signature-gathering effort -- \$202,782 from CCR....

Golly. You could almost run that same story this year, just changing the dollar amounts and a couple of names. But, in essence, it is the same story in 2006 as in 1992.

As we'll see in a future article, Americans for Term Limits PAC, which included Rich, O'Keefe, Ed Crane (President of Cato), David Boaz (Cato's VP), Joseph Stilwell, of ALG's current board, made huge contributions in Idaho in 2002: \$92,000 given TO friendly politicians and spent AGAINST unfriendly politicians in the same race. The pattern of vindictive self-righteousness and "punishment" of office holders who don't go along with the "program" is not a coincidence limited to a couple of years.

Listen to Paul Jacob in 2004:

Last month, 38 Arkansas legislators attended a National Conference of State Legislatures convention in Utah. Next month, 57 legislators

will attend conferences in Alaska. That's taxpayer-paid vacations for 70 percent of the entire legislature, at a cost to taxpayers of about a quarter million dollars.

Moreover, many term-limited legislators, who will not even be returning to the next legislative session, are junketing on the taxpayers' tab. Fifteen term-limited legislators traveled to Utah and 24 more are headed to Alaska.

Several term-limited legislators justify the cost of their attendance at these conventions because they might run for office again or be involved in state government. Tim Jacob, chairman of Save Term Limits, says, "There are over 2 million Arkansans that fit that description, and we certainly aren't paying for everyone's summer vacation."

Legislators are also asking voters to water-down the state's term limits law this November. Apparently, they need more time to "See the world."

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.

And now listen to Tim Jacob in Arkansas in 2004:

[\*\*Term limits poll show lagging support\*\*](#)  
[Tuesday, Oct 26, 2004](#)

By Wesley Brown  
Arkansas News Bureau

... "The people of Arkansas are letting out-of-state money influence their decision just as they did in 1992," said Jim Pledger, campaign chairman for Arkansans FOR Term Limits That Work. "We don't have the money available to us that they have available to them."

Pledger said the Save Term Limits coalition, the group opposing Amendment 1, has received 99 percent of its funding from a Washington, D.C.-based lobby group. He said the out-of-state special interest group has reserved an estimated \$500,000 to blitz the state with negative campaign ads heading toward the countdown to the Nov. 2 election.

Pledger said his group has filed a complaint with the state Ethics Commission alleging that only \$4,000 of the opposition's total funds were reported in the most recent financial statement.

"We play by the rules and we think they ought to play by the rules," Pledger said, adding that Save Term Limits' most recent financial report was filed three days late.

Pledger said if the opposition group has its way, "the citizens of Arkansas will be stuck with what are the most restrictive term limits in the country."

However, Save Term Limits chairman Tim Jacob dismissed Pledger's criticism, and countered that those supporting the amendment include lobbyists and special interest groups such as the state Chamber of Commerce and big business.

Jacob said the money is from both in and out of Arkansas, and that much is from the Woodbridge, Va., -based Citizens in Charge, which promotes citizen involvement in government.

Pledger claimed that most of the money donated by U.S. Term Limits. Jacob's brother, Paul Jacob, is former president of the group and a current fellow of that group.

"It's like Goliath calling David a bully," Jacob said of Pledger's criticism. "This (term limits extension) is the biggest power grabbing scheme in the history of Arkansas, and all they can talk about is a two-day old campaign report.

"It is shameful behavior like this that made voters vote for term limits in the first place."

Two days later, this Jacobite screech of pure populism ran:

[Thursday, Oct 28, 2004](#)

By Rob Moritz  
Arkansas News bureau

... U.S. Term Limits spokesman Eric Winters said his organization opposes changing Arkansas' current term limit law, but did not contribute money to Save Term Limits.

Citizens in Charge is run by Tim Jacob's brother, Paul Jacob, who has worked with U.S. Term Limits in the past. Paul Jacob said Wednesday that his past affiliation with the group may have caused a mix-up in the name of the advertiser listed as purchaser of the media buys.

"The citizens of Arkansas have a right to raise money just like the powerful lobbyists and the powerful interests in the Legislature," Tim Jacob said.

"I think they're a little desperate," he said of Pledger's letter. "They're shocked that average citizens have worked so hard and raised money. They're used to being able to control all the money

themselves.. It's like Goliath calling David a bully."

[...]

Tim Jacob said the more than \$400,000 raised is from both in and out of Arkansas, and that much is from the Woodbridge, Va., -based Citizens in Charge, which promotes citizen involvement in government.

Of course, WE now know that "Citizens in Charge" might as well be US Term Limits, or Americans for Limited Government, or Fund for Democracy, et al for that matter.

Howie and his friends must have laughed over that one.

But, again, one of their contractees inadvertently screwed up.

On Oct. 30, the following astonishing report was published, also by Rob Moritz.

How could a totally separate organization like "Citizens in Charge" have gotten this odd transposition in its TV and radio ads? Oh, it's not "CIC." Whoops! Now, the part is played by "Red Sea." But, alas, the murky waters seem to part not at all.

[When the radio and television](#) ads began running earlier this month, U.S. Term Limits, a Washington, D.C.-based group, was listed as the advertiser on purchase orders for the ads, with a disclaimer that they were paid for by Save Term Limits.

Thursday, a Washington-based company, Red Sea, sent letters to the Little Rock television stations and asked that their firm be listed as the one that purchased the ads, not U.S. Term Limits.

Pledger said in a news release Friday that opponents of Amendment 1 have "failed to disclose their advertising expenditures on the latest campaign report."

Tim Jacob, spokesman for Save Term Limits, said earlier this week that a mix-up occurred and U.S. Term Limits should not have been listed as the group purchasing the television advertising.

A message left on Jacob's telephone Friday was not returned....

After the 2004 election, brother Tim Jacob (who had been their Arkansas connection back to 1992, as well, please note) was told of the outrageous amounts of money coming from out of state, and he simply pooh-poohed it. Thereafter, with the election over, the matter was dropped:

**Arkansas Democrat-Gazette**

Reports: \$640,000 spent on campaign

BY LAURA KELLAMS  
Saturday, December 4, 2004

... Campaign groups that successfully fought to maintain Arkansas' legislative term limits reported spending more than \$640,000 to defeat a proposed constitutional amendment that would have increased the number of terms lawmakers may serve.

That's easily more than any other group spent for or against a ballot question in the Nov. 2 election, according to financial reports filed with the Arkansas Ethics Commission.

But Tim Jacob of Little Rock, chairman of Save Term Limits, the Little-Rock based organization that led the fight against the amendment, said his group along with a national organization spent less than the amount listed on the reports. Jacob said the reports include money that a Virginia-based group, Citizens in Charge, spent outside Arkansas.

He said Save Term Limits and Citizens in Charge combined to spend more in the neighborhood of \$400,000 to defeat Arkansas' proposed Amendment 1.

But Bill Paschall of Little Rock, a consultant who worked on the campaign to pass the proposed amendment, said that can't be right. "I don't know what he's talking about," Paschall said of Jacob's estimation of what was spent to defeat the amendment. "There's no way."

Paschall said Friday that supporters of the amendment, with the ballot committee called Arkansans For Term Limits that Work, tracked the opposition's advertising spending and counted well over \$500,000 without including most of the state's radio stations or cable TV outlets.

He said there are all kinds of discrepancies regarding the campaign reporting of the amendment's opponents. That the reported amount differs from what opponents estimate is just one more reason for the Ethics Commission to resolve the financial questions at a Dec. 17 hearing, Paschall said.

...

In the reports, filed Thursday, Citizens in Charge is listed as having financed the bulk of the campaign, with spending of \$611,607.

Contributors listed included the national organization U.S. Term Limits, which, according to the report, contributed \$175,000. Another



\$147,000 came from a group called Americans for Limited Government.

Tim Jacob, whose brother Paul is president of Citizens in Charge, said it was important to term-limits advocates nationwide to defeat the measure. He said Arkansas legislators referred the amendment to voters with wording that made it sound as though being in favor of it was a vote for the state's current term limits. "It was the most dishonest amendment that I have seen in the history of the state," Jacob said.

But Paschall said the amendment's opponents were the ones being dishonest - about how much they spent and whom their contributors were.

Todd Elder of Beebe, director of compliance for the Ethics Commission, said it was news to him that the opponents claim to have spent less than they reported on their financial disclosures. "Their information should reflect certainly what they did in Arkansas.... It's supposed to report their activity here," Elder said.

The report shows that Save Term Limits, Tim Jacob's group, spent \$34,732. That's an accurate figure, he said.

Well there you have it. Nothing to see here. Move along, move along.

In a very real sense, every penny spent in opposing the bills propounded by the friends of Howie Rich, every volunteer's minute, every fundraiser, every person walking door to door, everyone buying ad time, pigeonholing their neighbors; everyone who writes letters to the editor, all the campaigning, every bit of that represents a double theft:

It is a theft of the time and capital -- literally, the life's blood -- of the people of the state involved. And, it is a theft of their time, life and capital that MIGHT have been spent on something that THEY, the citizens of the state to whom the laws apply, care about.

So, Howie Rich and his friends are stealing our money, our time, and our laws. And our home rule, surely the most precious conceptions of (US of) American democracy.

And we are reduced to the role of laboratory rats, or, more accurately, bacterial cultures in petrie dishes. As we open the freezer of democracy we can see them there, neatly labeled: Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Arizona, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Michigan, Maine. And, alas, the culture seems to have died in three other petrie dishes: Oklahoma, Missouri and South Carolina.

Perhaps.

But, while they fatuously rail against the "millionaires" and the "powerful interests," that oppose the "will of the people," it doesn't seem to concern them in the least that what they're doing -- by consciously deceitful means -- is the very antithesis of the "freedom" they'd like to gift us all with. (The stench of hypocrisy is nearly overpowering.)

Sadly, it doesn't seem to concern the news media, either; or the politicians or the people, finally.

Oh, wait. The people aren't getting told, so we really don't know HOW they feel about it, other than what Paul and Tim Jacob tell us they feel.

I guess I just don't get it.

Courage.

*posted by ed waldo at [6:33 PM](#)*

16 August 2006

## **Unlimited Terms of Endearment, Part XI: As The Stomach Turns**

Part of the value of a blog -- originally derived from the term "*web log*"-- is that it is simply a medium, like pencil and paper. As such, it is best to match manner to matter, i.e. style to fit substance.

Since this whole morass is beginning to resemble a soap opera so much, manner must follow.

**Previously on "As The Stomach Turns":** In far Spring Green, Wisconsin, Leslie Graves had created a petition gathering company to fulfill the contract that her husbands' organizations and friends were sending money through Montana and through Nebraska. The money was ending up on the other night table by the marital bed. What was previously not known was that the amount of money has been revealed to be far larger than previously reported: from the previously reported quarter of a million dollars to the now-released one and three quarters of a million dollars.

Oh. If you call the home of Eric O'Keefe and Leslie Graves in Spring Green, Wisconsin, you will get a phone message naming them both, and giving both cell phone numbers. One would presume that they're still married, and not -- Father Frank Pavone withstanding -- living in sin.

NewNebraska blog has done an exceptional job of covering this, and has graciously cited this blog, and Sandlapper's superb DailyKos diaries. Kyle Michaelis, the blog's author, has been on the Nebraska part of the story from the beginning. Kyle is a writer of passion and skill. He is worth a careful reading -- at the very least for his transcription of a story on the front page of the Lincoln (Neb.) STAR-JOURNAL on Sunday that WASN'T published on the web.

You can find the Nebraska report at:

<http://newnebraska.blogspot.com/2006/08/plot-thickens-new-level-of-petition.html>

and don't forget to check out:

[http://newnebraska.blogspot.com/2006/08/few-more-pieces-in-petition-puzzle\\_10.html](http://newnebraska.blogspot.com/2006/08/few-more-pieces-in-petition-puzzle_10.html)

And, if you want to see "America At Its Best" in black and white, donating \$1,225,000.00 as reported to the Nebraska Accountability Commission:

<http://nadc.nol.org/ccdb/search.cgi?page=formb9b&IDNO=06CFL000505>

and

<http://nadc.nol.org/ccdb/search.cgi?page=formb9a&IDNO=06CFL000505>

Oh, and speaking of which, to see:

\$83 dollars in small and local contributions to SOS Nebraska:

<http://nadc.nol.org/ccdb/search.cgi?page=formb1f&IDNO=06BQC00135&OFFREC=08/08/2006>

\$860,000 in NYC via Montana AAIB Contributions to SOS Nebraska:

<http://nadc.nol.org/ccdb/search.cgi?page=formb1b&IDNO=06BQC00135&OFFREC=08/08/2006>

For "Nebraska Humane Care" you're on your own. We now pause for these commercial messages.

**[FADE TO BLACK. Organ Music. Commercial BREAK. COMING BACK: The "As The Stomach Turns" logo: an Hourglass in the foreground in tight focus. Instead of sand, it is slowly filling with pink Pepto-Bismol. In the background, out of focus -- NARROW depth of field shot -- spinning globe of the Earth, colors muted, almost black-and-white.]**

Organ Music FADES:

Sandlapper, meanwhile has traced the story of Howie Rich's man in Idaho, Laird Maxwell. And, using the Murray Rothbard archives at vonmises.org has shown the long-standing and intimate ties between the Brothers Koch, the oil-billionaires from Wichita, Kansas, who own the second-largest privately-held corporation in the USA.

And they detail the long and interconnected history of the Kochs, the Cato Institute, and its president, Ed Crane, and board member Howard Rich. The reader must decide how closely these old "friends" are linked.

Sandlapper's scholarship is deft and the writing superb. (Or is that the other way 'round?)

The Howie Rich/Koch Brothers story is at:

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2006/8/15/233536/362>

Read all of Sandlapper's coverage of the Koch/Rich/Cato gang at:

<http://sandlapper.dailykos.com/>

And if you REALLY want to take a detailed look at the whole Koch Conservative Kamp, it's a little tin-foil-hat, perhaps, but very detailed:

[http://www.ecosyn.us/adti/Koctopus\\_01.html](http://www.ecosyn.us/adti/Koctopus_01.html)

Sandlapper is in no wise connected with the aforementioned site, nor, for that matter, are we. Just offering the link. (Insert standard "opinions of" disclaimer here in really tiny type and spoken at a speed beyond human comprehension, you know, like car commercials).

**[LOGO - ORGAN MUSIC - COMMERCIALS - ORGAN MUSIC - LOGO - FADE UP FROM BLACK]**

With the ALG Convention starting in Chicago in only two days, many have expressed a hope that Chicago bloggers or media could cover/record the speeches and/or panels on mp3.

See yesterday's post for details.

<http://www.hartwilliams.com/blog/2006/08/theres-still-time-to-get-tickets.html>

Given that the junior Senator from Oklahoma, Tom Coburn, is ALG's "President Emeritus," and will chair the convention, this AP story from Oklahoma last year seems particularly fascinating in retrospect:

<http://okblawg.blogspot.com/2005/09/land-rights-spur-new-tax-petition.html>

Tuesday, September 27, 2005

By RON JENKINS  
Associated Press Writer

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) - An organization once headed by U.S. Sen. Tom Coburn is among those backing a plan to roll back state government through Colorado-style restrictions on legislative spending. Oklahomans for Action was formed in Tulsa to lead an initiative petition drive after input from the Illinois-based Americans for Limited Government, according to state Sen. Randy Brogdon.

... Americans for Limited Government was formed in 2001 and is headquartered in Glenview, Ill., a Chicago suburb. Coburn, the conservative Oklahoma senator elected in 2004, is listed on the group's Web site as chairman emeritus. John Hart, the senator's spokesman, said Coburn helped form the group and was its chairman after leaving Congress in 2001 before running for the Senate last year. Hart said Coburn has no current role in the organization or the petition drive. Americans for Limited Government lists as "partners" the Club for Growth State Action, US Term Limits and two organizations that promote home schooling and tax credits for parents who want to send their children to private schools - the Parents in Charge Foundation and LEAD Action.

... Brogdon, R-Owasso, said Americans for Limited Government "showed interest in an initiative petition" after hearing his TABOR resolution had been sidetracked in the Senate. "From what I understand, that is a local issue," Heather Wilhelm, spokeswoman, said of the Illinois group's involvement in the Oklahoma petition drive.

Americans for Limited Government, meantime, is advertising for UNPAID "fall interns." (Guess they don't have the money to pay anybody. Poor impoverished Howie Rich.) Although there has been some confusion, with Ms. Wilhelm telling an Oregon reporter that the group is moving to New York City, the job posting suggests otherwise:

<http://www.americasfuture.org/jobboard/archives/021302.php>

### **Development Intern**

Americans for Limited Government | Posted on July 31, 2006

Interested in politics, development, and helping grassroots groups across the country? Americans for Limited Government is looking for development interns. Candidates should be enthusiastic with strong organizational skills and an interest in politics.

Responsibilities will include prospecting donors, internet research, filing and assorted office duties as needed.

This opportunity is open to current students and former students.

The type of internship is unpaid.

The number of hours can be flexible, ranging from 20-40 hours per week.

The location of the internship is downtown Chicago, Illinois.

If you are interested in the position, please email Nicole Burke-Likoudis at [nicole@getliberty.org](mailto:nicole@getliberty.org).

There is also a posting for a "communications intern" for a fall internship at:

<http://www.americasfuture.org/jobboard/>

Finally, as we will learn later from the mystery Nebraska editor,

The GOP nominee for the Third Nebraska Congressional District, "*Adrian Smith got something like \$300,000 from the Club for Growth.*"

Many have wondered what the connection between Americans for Limited

Government and the Club For Growth - State Action is. Well, buy the coffee mug and find out:

<http://www.cafepress.com/amlimgov.18416697>

**[GO TO COMMERCIAL BREAK. ORGAN MUSIC.]**

And now, this faux newsbreak on the half-hour from CNN, MSNBC and FAUX NOOZ:

There has been an arrest in the Jon-Benet Ramsey Case. Jon-Benet, you will recall, was that little girl they dressed up in those pre-school beauty contests who was found dead in Boulder, Colorado ten years ago. We would like to tell you that the port of Seattle has been all but shut down after explosive-sniffing dogs went crazy over two containers from Pakistan whose customs seals had been broken. We would like to tell you that the port has been evacuated and a bomb squad has been brought in.

We would like to tell you that, but this whole necrophiliac Jon-Benet story is such a great soap opera that it's far more important to yak about a ten year old murder than it is about an immediate and occurring situation in a major North American port. You can probably read about it on the internet, of course, like the other day when CNN and MSNBC were so busy talking about the "war" in Lebanon that they didn't have any time to cover the primaries, most especially the shocking win of Democratic challenger Ned Lamont over Senator Joe Lieberman in Connecticut. Astonishing that the only 24/7 cable channels that covered it were CSPAN and FAUX Nooz, isn't it? It's like we're more into ratings than telling you the news, isn't it? We'll bet that you won't be able to tell when this news break ends, and the soap opera "As The Stomach Turns" returns. Now, these surreal images from the famous manufacturers of mysterious prescription pills that are purple and stop giant daisies from smashing tennis players. This has been news break.

**[Commercials. Network promo. Local promo. LOGO. BLACK.]**

**ANNOUNCER: We now return to "As The Stomach Turns."**

**[ORGAN MUSIC. FADE UP FROM BLACK]:**

Laird Maxwell had been a busy boy. Not only did he meet his future sweetie at a National Taxpayers' Union convention last year. But they both worked the KELO petition drive together in Arizona this spring before Laird returned to Idaho to run the "This House is MY House" KELO petition drive in Idaho. Two weeks ago, they found time to rest. You can read the heartwarming story of two tax-cutters tying the knot near Yellowstone at:

[www.lairdandlori.com](http://www.lairdandlori.com)

And, finally, after a long and tortuous day of trying to decide whether to print the following responses from yesterday's mini-blog "What's The Matter With Nebraska?" we have finally decided to print it, but to hide the identity of the newspaperman who wrote it, not because he has any reasonable expectation of privacy, but because any publisher worth his salt would fire an editor for making a public statement like this about his perception of the newspaper's subscribers.

I received two letters from Nebraska newspapers this morning. This is the first one, and my response:

From: NAME AND ADDRESS WITHHELD  
To: Hart Williams  
Sent: Wednesday, August 16, 2006 7:37 AM  
Subject: RE: What's The Matter With Nebraska?

[no salutation]

I've written an editorial on a related topic: the use of paid petition circulators and the influence of out-of-state money in Nebraska elections. There appears to be no legal means of stopping it. Adrian Smith got something like \$300,000 from the Club for Growth, which opposes agricultural commodity support payments, and yet he's probably a lock for Congress in the 3rd District.

Unfortunately, more Americans can name two of the Seven Dwarves than can name two Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court. If I thought all this would change anyone's mind, believe me, I'd run with it. I suspect most voters would head for the astrology column before they got through two paragraphs.

[no signature]

My response:

Sir:

A mysterious group sends hundreds of thousands of dollars into Nebraska for two weirdly unrelated ballot measures and then virtually all of it goes right back out of state in the name of a company only incorporated in Nebraska in May. That company turns out to only be a Nebraska mail drop in Omaha.

The mysterious funding group's chairman of the board ends up being the husband of the woman who incorporated the mysterious company that gets all the funding.

That's too complicated? Nebraskans can't understand that?



You have -- as Kant called it -- a moral imperative to tell your readers where the money came from and where it went. And WHY only about \$20k stayed in Nebraska, although the ugly aftermath of the looming ballot battle and the consequences will remain with Nebraskans for (potentially) generations to come.

I'll tell you what: you walk out on the street and tell any passing Nebraskan what I just told you in the first two paragraphs and see if THEY think it's newsworthy. I realize you're jaded and your readers are too dumb for you, but just try it, and see what happens. I'll bet Ma and Pa Main Street will get it, and it will make them more than a little hot under the collar to learn that you've been sitting on the story for ten days because it's "too complicated."

If you can't or won't do your duty as a journalist, then you are in the wrong profession.

Bests,

Hart Williams

The other response was from a Nebraska journalism professional. And, professional courtesy applying here, I shall withhold further discussion of the subject.

But, having poked a stick into the Hornets' Nest of Nebraska newspaperdom, the hornets are starting to buzz.

This may not be good news for the Green Hornets.

In fact, 'round hereabouts, we've taken to calling this whole labyrinthine morass the "Green Hornet Affair." Because, it seems, no matter who it is, finally, behind the mask in the back seat, in the front seat, Cato seems to be behind the wheel.

And Cato, as we all know, has the chops.

**[OREGON MUSIC]**

Courage.

*posted by ed waldo at [11:10 PM](#)*

19 August 2006

## Unlimited Terms of Endearment Part XII: Adrift In A Sea Of Lies (And Cash)



I am going to put aside my journalist's hat for a moment here, and pick up my social critic's tinfoil hat, so be forewarned.

Today, in the Lincoln (Nebraska) Journal-Star, an impossibly snooty Heather Wilhelm decided to snark the redoubtable newspaper for ... well, let's let HER explain it (all the while, please remember that Ms. Wilhelm is the "Communications Director" and PR flack for Howie Rich's ALG, USTL, Club For Growth State Action, et al, and politesse would seem to suggest that one obtains more flies with honey than with vinegar, but let's let "Vinegar" Heather Wilhelm do her thang):

### [A less dramatic story](#)

I was surprised to see your article on Americans for Limited Government ("Group led by N.Y. mogul funded petition drives," Aug. 10), especially since no one contacted me for comment.

Perhaps that was part of the plan, since the reality of the situation is much less dramatic than your story implied. It's also much more mundane than conspiracy theorists - or those who would like to distract from the real issues at hand - would like.

Americans for Limited Government is proud to support groups that are working for limited, accountable government across the country. We broadcast this on our Web site, in our newsletters and in just about every communication we have with reporters. I guess we

could skywrite it over Omaha, but then fans of big government would probably accuse us of subliminal advertising.

It's no secret that we're helping out the Nebraska SOS coalition. This year, we have been inundated with requests from local groups for help, and we're happy to do so.

As for America at its Best, it is another group that shares our mission: helping local activists in their uphill climb against big money, special interests, and, often, politicians. They have done a great job of supporting campaigns for responsible state spending, which is precisely why we support them. When it comes to other issues, on health care or otherwise, America at its Best will fund who it chooses to fund.

If it decided to fund, say, a Center for Responsible Journalism, it would be completely free to do that. In fact, that's sounding like a better idea all the time.

Heather Wilhelm,  
Chicago,  
director of communications,  
Americans for Limited Government

Get it? A "Center for Responsible Journalism." This, from our bargain-basement Phillips Foundation Fellow, best known for snarking France, Chicago, Moooslims for song lyrics, et al, etc. The sheer hypocrisy of a hate-filled, pretentious pseudo-journalist snarking that a newspaper ran a report on her nest of vipers and DARED to NOT allow her to give the story her spin is ... irresponsible journalism?

But let's take Heather's epistolary mendacity point by point:

1. Heather is surprised that no one contacted her for comment. Get over it, Heather. She herself has a long 'journalistic' track record of writing vicious attacks without bothering, herself, to ask for comment.

The Sand Creek, Oklahoma church story is only the latest example. A slanted tale, based on an untruth (that eminent public domain was being used to take a black Baptist church, when no such action was threatened or provably contemplated) without bothering to ask city officials for comment? What pot is lecturing which kettle? Hmmm.

2. Now, Ms. Wilhelm decides to duck into the Twilight Zone:

"Perhaps that was part of the plan, since the reality of the situation is much less dramatic than your story implied. It's also much more mundane than conspiracy theorists - or those who would like to distract from the real issues at hand - would like."

Paranoia? Or the barest hint of "the LIBERAL MEDIA" saw? Well, Lincoln, Nebraska is no hotbed of wild liberalism, Ms. Wilhelm might note. But the accusation of a conspiracy is a nice pre-emptive strike, and will set up her NEXT accusation of "conspiracy theorists" below. (The "skywrite it" comment -- which doesn't seem to quite parse in English, alas. 'Sky-ligraphy,' perhaps?)

Joe McCarthy would surely be pleased at this mini-masterpiece of dark innuendo. I'm sure that I'm one of the "conspiracy theorists" she refers to. But there is a difference between the faux slur of "conspiracy theorists" and the actual evidentiary exposition of an actual conspiracy.

("I hold here in my hand the names of Communists ..." Turned out finally that Senator Joe's manila folder contained no names. Just blank paper. But nobody ever called his bluff.)

But, if not a conspiracy -- ALG, USTL, et al -- why, then do they go out of their way to hide contributions, involvement, and their actions? And why is William Wilson of Fairfax, Virginia the treasurer of IRS record for BOTH the ALG (Chicago, IL) and America At Its Best (Either Kalispell, Montana, or Boise, Idaho, depending on the state that money's being sent to)?

I've outlined the sleazy money transfers and the shell game of phony foundations at enough length that this accusation is merely laughable. (See Part IV: The Friends of Howie Rich, etc.)

And more than a bit paranoid: Heather pooh-poohs the demonstrable truth as karaaaazy "conspiracy theory" when she has not a chance in hell of proving that it's not.

So, in finest mendacious form she merely denies and moves on. *Fiat lux* (or, in this case, *fiat id est*).

The classic talk-show strategem: facts by fiat without any actual facts. "It IS so because I SAY it is so."

But who the heck are YOU? Oy.

3. "proud to support" groups all across the country and "inundated with requests." Then how come ALG manages to fund at nearly 100% levels when all those (by implication) grass roots people are just DEMANDING help? Don't they have any money? And where are their supporters? We have tried and tried, and can never find enough local supporters to fill a small elevator, but that's the long-repeated and oft-cited lie that's the favorite of the Friends of Howie Rich: "The PEOPLE" will be in charge. "THE PEOPLE" are doing this.

Bullshit. This is yet another machiavellian manipulation by a tight little gaggle of irresponsible and unresponsive plutocrats. They hide their cash (although I can guarantee you that if you oppose their ballot 'initiatives' they will outspend you 6-1, historically), their connections, and claim to be populists.

They create political mischief for well over a decade, but their "term limits" battle doesn't seem to apply to them. They create political firestorms, change constitutions, but are immune to the after effects: they do not live in the affected states.

But the normal rules of civil behavior don't apply. If someone questions you, ATTACK.

Heck. Heather just did. And, while dumping her nauseating little load of sarcastic treacle -- How DARE you question us? -- even manages a bit of martyrlike nobility. WE, who give so much, and YOU, who disobey the canons of JOURNALISM! Zowie. I mean, who would dare question ALG's own Heather?

OK: I dare. Back up ONE assertion, Heather. And live up to ONE 'journalistic' standard whose alleged absence you decry (de crocodile tears, evidently). Thus far, you're rather long on bullshit and short on facts. And, lest you think I'm not a supporter of equal rights for women: If you were a man, I'd promise I'd think you were just as full of shit.

How's that for egalitarianism? It's sure less nauseating than as load of faux populism spewed from a rhetorical satrap operating for crypto-Croesuses.

4. "It's no secret that we're helping out the Nebraska SOS coalition." No: but it IS a secret who "We" are, isn't it? And it's not like there was any attempt to "announce" the fact. Mostly, the spokesmen for ALG's causes deflect the question: "It doesn't matter where the money comes from" say they. Not exactly "no secret," after all. This is known as a "weasel."

5. Wilhelm continues: "We broadcast this on our Web site, in our newsletters and in just about every communication we have with reporters. I guess we could skywrite it over Omaha, but then fans of big government would probably accuse us of subliminal advertising."

This statement is such a slimy agglutination of fallacies that it's hard to know where to begin. That they broadcast a 'message' doesn't mean it's true. Many messages that we hear aren't true. We all know that. Nonetheless, the assertion is made irrespective of, like, rational thought.

But creating a straw man that they'd "skywrite it over Omaha" not only betrays the fact that Heather has no idea where Lincoln is (hint: it's 59 miles more or less due West of Omaha), but she also reveals an imperious sense of haughty rebuke for having DARED to question the integrity and/or methods of Americans for Limited Government, U.S. Term Limits, Club for Growth, States (all at that 30 Wacker Drive, Chicago, Illinois address, and evidently staffed and serviced by UNPAID interns.)

That's not the snippy mouthpiece of a self-appointed oligarchy? These are NOT 'malefactors of great wealth'? (To borrow Teddy Roosevelt's 1895 phrase).

Good grief. Let's take the emotional interpretation and baggage of the phraseology out of it, and just examine the statement:

"Americans for Limited Government is proud to support groups that are working for limited, accountable government across the country." That begs the question of what sort of 'groups' and how many collaborators are necessary to form a 'group'? When the initiatives are supplied, when local agents are hired, when money sluices in at just exactly the same flow necessary to a) pay the armies of the lowest-paid legal migrant workers in America to collect signatures like farmers used to pay per ton of cotton picked; b) when the only money that remains in the state are a few thousand dollars to a Public Relations Firm; c) several thousand dollars to hire a 'paid spokesperson' in the state, and for office and legal services from a cyber-lawyer in the Omaha suburbs; d) to send \$1.7 million dollars through the state without hardly any 'sticking' in the state, and only perhaps a handful of local donations ...

WHERE are these "groups" to which Ms. Wilhelm refers? Sounds more like hired hands doing Howie Rich's bidding. (And by Howie Rich, I mean a mysterious cluster of monied Molochians scattered across the land.)

Did you know that in 2002 in Idaho, less than \$8000 was contributed by Idahoans on a "Term Limits" initiative, that \$500,000 plus was contributed by the USTL group of astroturf foundations, and another \$100,000 plus by one woman in Hayden, Idaho?

She'd only moved to the state in 1992, after sitting on the board of e-trade, and had been a Manhattan investment 'professional' for years before her delightful semi-retirement in Idaho resort country. But she's not nearly as interesting as her husband, the former CEO of Clorox, Inc, and who sits or sat on the boards of Unocal, The Potlatch Corporation (hint: other board members are named, often, "Weyerhaeuser.")

Somehow, one finds it astonishing to assert that the Idaho vote (won by 52-48 after Rich & Co. spent nearly six times as much on the campaign as the opposition, who mostly entirely came from Idaho) was a 'people's movement.'

*Vox populi: vox bullshit.*

No?

Well, the plutocrats have certainly learned the old Joe Goebbels advertising lesson: Repeat the big lie often enough and it becomes the truth.

They don't waver, they don't vary the message. In every state I've shown you, you get the same denials from each spokesman -- whether said spokesman is brother to a member of the board or not: We didn't spend that money. It doesn't matter where the money comes from. It's those POLITICIANS and SPECIAL INTERESTS (like the "Chamber of Commerce" in Arkansas and Michigan campaigns) that are

keeping "THE PEOPLE" from being "in charge." (They like that "in charge" soundbite, and use it at every opportunity.)

OK. I'll bite. Where's all the people? I mean, if everyone who wasn't receiving remuneration in each state stepped away from the "grass roots" campaigns of the ALG, I have a feeling that you'd have a rough time rounding up enough players for a game of solitaire.

6. "It's no secret that we're helping out the Nebraska SOS coalition. This year, we have been inundated with requests from local groups for help, and we're happy to do so."

And Brutus is an honorable man. Onward.

7. "As for America at its Best, it is another group that shares our mission: helping local activists in their uphill climb against big money, special interests, and, often, politicians. They have done a great job of supporting campaigns for responsible state spending, which is precisely why we support them. When it comes to other issues, on health care or otherwise, America at its Best will fund who it chooses to fund."

The Reagan Meander is best described as an exercise in dream logic: string several points together that ARE connected, but not connected logically: teddy bear, baby, bath, candles, candlelight dinner, what's for dinner tonight? and where did I put my keys?

By the time you get to the end, you can't remember that you started out with "teddy bear." Teddy is long gone. Now, just do that with an accusation and you've got a Classic Meander:

America At Its Best is "another group" that "shares our mission." This, of course, begs the question.

Well, is it another group? It was formed this year, and has received almost all of its largesse from Howard Rich-associated groups, and its oft-times partner the National Taxpayer Union. Its "president" is Laird Maxwell, who runs the Idaho franchise of NTU (He met his new bride at the 2005 NTU conference) and told a Boise reporter last week that while he doesn't know "Howie Rich" he'd gone to Rich and said: "I've got the time, and you've got the money. Let's make this thing happen."

OK: they share the ALG mission. But a "separate group"? No time to process THAT question, though, because ANOTHER astonishing assertion is about to be made:

"helping local activists in their uphill climb against big money, special interests, and, often, politicians."

Right. It's them rich bastards! (Oh. We're rich bastards. Dang. Hope nobody notices. Well, we don't pay our office 'interns' and we barely pay our petition

gatherers, so I guess nobody will notice that we have truckloads of money. Well, except for those amazing C&Es filed in every campaign in every state in the West this year -- EXCEPT Wyoming, New Mexico and Utah).

Them RICH BASTARDS are keeping the "local activists" downhill, apparently. And ... hunh?

Teddy Bear.

But the meander hasn't concluded yet. Not by a long shot. The next statement is the doozy:

8. "They have done a great job of supporting campaigns for responsible state spending, which is precisely why we support them."

Excuse me? AAIB has only existed THIS year, and only WITH massive ALG funding. How could they have a track record, and what is the meaningless tautology "which is precisely why we support them"? unless it's a clever way of saying that we pay them well, and that they do what we say while SEEMING to say that "we agree with their lofty accomplishments." Because, of course, they HAVE no accomplishments.

A tautology is a statement that is self-evidently 'true' but tells us nothing: we support them because they do what we support them doing. (And, by implication: "Would you DARE ask that we DON'T support them because they do what we support them doing?") The argument veers improbably close to being a double negation of a double negation, ergo: No, NOT! Yes, NOT! No, not yes NOT! No, yes NOT no not!

*["Duck season!" "Wabbit season!!"]*

Teddy bear.

9. Ms. Wilhelm, undaunted, continues: "When it comes to other issues, on health care or otherwise, 'America At Its Best' will fund who it chooses to fund."

Leaving aside for a moment the 1984-ish nomenclature of "America At Its Best," Howie's Heather has cooked up a whopping soufflé of meander.

Which is the final meander: that a group funneling, now, literally millions of dollars into Nebraska via a Kalispell, Montana lawyer's office, HAS AN ABSOLUTE RIGHT to do whatever with their money that they want to do.

Oh. Sorry, we ...

WAIT A MINUTE.

The assertion begs the question and is constructed by-the-numbers from the textbook that our modern mendacious seem to have purchased (at reduced prices)



from the Heritage Foundation (or another).

You can't argue with it because it doesn't make sense.

Teddy bear.

It SEEMS to say that the Mysterious Brotherhood of America At Its Best (which does not reveal its donors, EXCEPT in Nebraska, whose 1997 sunshine law demands it) are saints and sanctified holy servants of democracy, above reproach, incorruptable, and able to wear white clothes without ever getting spots or stains on them.

Which utterly begs the question: who the heck ARE these guys? I mean, all we have is Heather Wilhelm's devastating sarcasm, and withering media criticism, and her shrill-yet-irrational screeching about the HIDEOUS VICIOUS UNWARRANTED SUSPICION of the mysterious benefactors who remain mysterious and are seeming less and less like benefactors.

Teddy bear.

10. And now, the *coup de grace*, the matador's killing stroke from Heather Unleashed:

"If it [AAIB] decided to fund, say, a Center for Responsible Journalism, it would be completely free to do that. In fact, that's sounding like a better idea all the time."

You are irresponsible journalists and AAIB may decide to GET YOU! (Hideous cackle undoubtedly suppressed.)

Oh, but we can't criticize YOU, right?

Teddy bear with fangs.

I don't know about Howie, but attacking local media doesn't seem like a great start to a sly campaign of pseudo-populism aided and abetted with humongous media buys late in the campaign (past experience suggesting future action to a high degree).

After all, it's the "people" who count. At least their votes do, and they're prepared to pay ten, fifteen and even twenty dollars per vote to fill up them ballot boxes. (Not direct bribery, of course, just more advertising shekels than the local TV and radio stations have seen in many a moon.) Besides, as most modern post-mortem political studies show, there's a direct correlation between money spent and campaigns won. The exceptions only prove the rule.

Were I Howie Rich, though, I'd caution my propaganda minister that Public Relations people do best when they attack local media least. The idea isn't to cold-cock them; it's to SEDUCE them. And Heather's letter was anything but seductive - - unless, of course, you're into S&M.

Of course, if all else fails, their messages can always be limned in skywriting over Omaha. I'm sure that the staff at Strategic Air Command Headquarters at Offutt AFB just south of Omaha will love it.

It's not like they don't have the cash.

Courage.

*posted by ed waldo at [7:25 PM](#)*

21 August 2006

## **Unlimited Terms of Endearment Part XIII: The Empire Strikes Back**

They held their pep rally in Chicago over the weekend, and they rolled out the first model in their fall advertising campaign: "THE INQUISITOR" -- a one-sheet .pdf pseudo-tabloid cover. I'll give you the URL in a minute.

Below the fold and below the salt is a photograph that you should look at:

That's right. ALG confirms that while they're spreading at least \$7 million to qualify their ballot measures (our informal total comes to something over \$10 million thus far, but the OREGONIAN says \$7 million, so let's leave it at that), they're too cheap to pay their "interns" a red cent. In other words, the college students have to 'pay' for the privilege of working for Howie Rich and his Richie Rich friends, by scraping up gas money, food money, lodging money, laundry, etc. while they're NOT working on simultaneous political campaigns in states from coast to coast.

But hey! ALG isn't thin-skinned! They "strike back" with "hilarious" satire. A fake supermarket tabloid with some side-splitting doctored photos!

Get their "hilarious" tabloid satire at:

<http://www.getliberty.org>

Or, click here to download the .pdf directly

[http://www.getliberty.org/media/alginquisitor\\_q32006.pdf](http://www.getliberty.org/media/alginquisitor_q32006.pdf)

But hurry, because they note:

**For a limited time only:  
THE ALG INQUISITOR!**

**August 10, 2006  
Read the shocking secrets today!**

**Click here to download a PDF file of the Inquisitor.**

And isn't that SPECIAL? Considering that this little blog is the only media of any sort to have -- thus far -- noticed that the wealthy, if shadowy, benefactors of the ALG initiative machine are staffing their Chicago office with unpaid interns ... we are THRILLED to have had such a salutary effect on their 'conscience' -- at least to the extent of offering a sort-of denial and confirming that at least five unpaid college students are being exploited as office workers, even as the Chairman of the Executive Committee's wife has received nearly \$1.7 million from Nebraska petition operations.

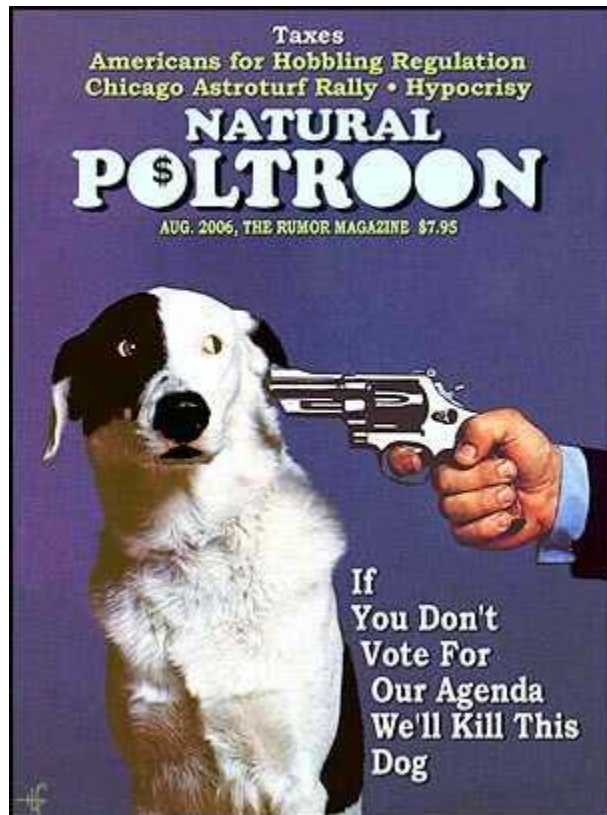
(To be fair, she's paid some back to the barely-paid petition gatherers, as well. What the net is, only they know.)

Believe it or not, these guys are too emotionally stingy to even say that the interns are "LOVED." Instead they are "not unloved."

Good lord.

Can you say "Scrooge"?

Well, their "satire" is just SOOOOOOOO darned funny that we thought we'd come up with something that's a bit more to the point. (And better graphic art, frankly. Say, you don't suppose that they conned some graphic arts student to design their "INQUISITOR" handout for free, too, do you? Naww. Nobody's THAT cheap. Right? *Right?*).



Courage.

*posted by ed waldo at [8:33 PM](#)*

27 August 2006

## Unlimited Terms of Endearment Part XIV: The Hoop Snake

One of this blog's readers anonymously posted a comment this morning. It was an excerpt from today's Omaha World Herald article on the Howie Rich gang.

Full disclosure here: I spent a couple of hours on the phone with one of the Omaha WORLD-HERALD writers who broke today's news story, entitled "**Petition's origins tied to at least nine states.**"

In its essential points, and independently, the OWH investigative reporters have confirmed what was reported in this blog on August 3rd, in [Part VIII, America At Its Worst](#).

Here is the article. To see the original, go to [http://www.omaha.com/index.php?u\\_pg=1673&u\\_sid=2231099&u\\_rnd=9793930](http://www.omaha.com/index.php?u_pg=1673&u_sid=2231099&u_rnd=9793930)

Warning, you will have to register (valid email address, basically: if you're paranoid, set up a Yahoo, Google, or Hotmail address), to access the article.

BY NICHOLE AKSAMIT AND PAUL GOODSSELL  
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITERS

CHICAGO - Who's behind a proposed Nebraska amendment requiring patients to receive food and water until death?

The trail leads to activists and attorneys in at least nine states and swirls through an office suite three blocks from the Sears Tower.

An Omaha couple filed the paperwork. Lawyers in Michigan and California helped draft the amendment.

An Idaho man funneled money to the campaign from interest groups in Illinois, New York and Virginia. A Wisconsin woman's company was paid \$1.4 million to gather signatures on the humane care petition as well as another proposal to limit state spending, known as Stop Over Spending Nebraska.

None say they know why Nebraska was chosen for the humane care petition drive or who initiated it. No one has identified where the money originated.

But most have some connection to Americans for Limited Government (ALG), a Chicago-based group whose members have backed petition drives in the United States since the early 1990s.

ALG made the single largest donation to America at Its Best, the

group that funneled all \$835,000 contributed so far to the humane care petition drive.

But ALG is taking no credit for that effort, despite its financial stake and the active involvement of at least one of its board members.

"We have no position on the humane care measure," said John Tillman, president of ALG. "I've not even read that amendment."

The proposal would amend the Nebraska Constitution by requiring caregivers to provide food and water by any means to patients, unless they have an advance directive or living will that says otherwise. The petition drive came about a year after the family dispute over the wishes of a brain-injured Florida woman, Terri Schiavo, sparked a national debate over feeding tubes and end-of-life care.

The Nebraska secretary of state has yet to rule on whether the petition has qualified for the Nov. 7 ballot.

The humane care amendment was created and funded in a way that makes it hard to sort out its backers.

That's a problem, said Deborah Goldberg, director of the Democracy Project at New York University School of Law's Brennan Center.

She asked: "Don't you have a right to know who's funding policy initiatives in your state?"

The World-Herald traced the measure's origins to the following states:

### **Nebraska**

The public face of the Nebraskans for Humane Care Committee is Thomas and Alexis "Lexi" Mann of Omaha. They are identified in campaign filings as treasurer and coordinator of the committee.

Thomas Mann is an attorney who runs Legal Software Consulting. Lexi Mann runs a business that arranges travel for the disabled. Thomas Mann said she recently left the campaign to tend to her business.

Mann said he met the organizers of the campaign after the petition language was drafted, but declined to name them. His contact, he said, was Steven P. Baer, who is a Chicago-area businessman.

The Manns have received \$14,408 from the campaign so far for contractual services, according to campaign disclosure reports.

## **Michigan, California**

Mann said the amendment was drafted by Steven J. Safranek, an attorney who was raised in Omaha and who teaches at Ave Maria Law School in Ann Arbor, Mich., and Wesley J. Smith, a California attorney who has written books on euthanasia and medical ethics.

Safranek and Smith said they worked on the amendment via e-mail and conference calls, but that it wasn't their idea and they don't know whose it was. They said they weren't involved in funding or running the petition drive and didn't select Nebraska as the target state.

Safranek said there had been talk of a humane care amendment percolating in pro-life circles since the spring of 2005, when Schiavo's feeding tube was removed. He said he wasn't sure how he became part of an e-mail group drafting it.

He said he was paid \$1,000 or less but doesn't recall who wrote the check.

"Americans for Limited Care maybe? Or Nebraskans for Limited Care?" he said. "I mean, I'm sorry, Nebraskans for Humane Care might have been it."

Nebraskans for Humane Care Committee has not reported any payment to Safranek.

Smith, a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute, a Seattle think tank that supports the intelligent design theory of human origin, said he wasn't paid for his work. He said his initial contact was Baer, the Chicago businessman, sometime early this year.

## **Illinois**

Safranek said he didn't know anything about Americans for Limited Government, the group that indirectly funded the Nebraska petition drives from its downtown Chicago headquarters.

He expressed surprise when told ALG and U.S. Term Limits share several of the same leaders. Safranek was a paid consultant for U.S. Term Limits in 1997.

Baer sits on the boards of both groups.

He ran for the Republican nomination for Illinois governor in 1990 and attempted to start a tax and term limits party in 1994. He was financed in those efforts partly by Chicago industrialist Barre Seid.



Baer has served on the board of Seid's foundation, which has contributed to U.S. Term Limits, religious organizations and conservative causes.

Through an exchange of e-mails, Baer said he is a self-employed consultant, real estate investor and father of 10. He said he has worried for years about unethical withdrawals of food and water. He described his role in the humane care campaign as "cheerleader."

### **Montana, Idaho**

If Baer is the cheerleader, that might make Laird Maxwell the quarterback.

Maxwell, of Boise, Idaho, heads America at Its Best, the Montana group through which money for the humane care and spending measures flowed.

"I kinda got a knack for petitions," said the white-bearded, bolo tie-wearing activist.

Maxwell and his wife, Lori Klein, also are involved with campaigns this year to limit land-use planning and government taking of private property in Idaho and Arizona.

Maxwell said he didn't come up with the humane care amendment. He said he could not recall why Nebraska was selected. He said he thought someone on his board pitched the humane care idea to him.

He said he signed off on it because it fits his philosophy.

"I don't think property rights are limited to dirt," Maxwell said. "Your right to work, your right to breathe, your body - those are yours, too."

When in doubt about what a person wants, he said, caregivers should err on the side of life.

Asked how he learned of Thomas Mann, Maxwell said: "Thomas Mann? Who's he?"

Reminded of Mann's position with the Nebraskans for Humane Care Committee, Maxwell said he recalled speaking with Mann and his wife once on a conference call.

As for who ultimately funded the effort, Maxwell said: "People from all over the nation. I don't really know. It's a national movement. I send donors to ALG. They send donations and donors to me."

During the keynote address at ALG's inaugural conference in Chicago this month, Eric O'Keefe said he, New York real estate investor Howard Rich and like-minded friends fueled the national term limits movement of the 1990s.

Their work continues today in ALG and similar groups. O'Keefe, chairman of ALG's executive committee, said they support citizens in taking back their government.

"It's a question of: Are we subjects or sovereign citizens?"

A recent report by the Oregonian newspaper estimated that ALG-affiliated groups have pumped more than \$7.3 million into ballot initiatives this year. Those measures include spending caps, eminent domain, term limits for judges and school vouchers in at least 13 states.

ALG gave money to Maxwell's group, which in turn was used for the two Nebraska petitions. ALG board member Baer was clearly involved. But other ALG leaders publicly embrace only the spending measure.

The decision to spend money on humane care, they said, was up to Maxwell.

"We haven't done anything on (humane care)," O'Keefe said.

But his wife has.

### **Wisconsin**

Leslie Graves, who is married to O'Keefe, started Renewal Voter Outreach, the company that was paid \$1.4 million to gather signatures on the Nebraska petitions.

Graves is no stranger to petition drives. The Spring Green, Wis., woman ran signature-collecting efforts to put third-party candidates on the ballot in the 1970s and 1980s, including Libertarian Ed Clark for president in Nebraska.

But she said the humane care petition was the first she's really cared about. Once she decided to do humane care, she was asked to circulate the spending petition as well.

Graves works for Rachel's Vineyard, a Wisconsin-based organization that holds retreats for women recovering from abortions.

Graves said she's been active in pro-life causes for more than seven years and feels strongly that the humane care measure is needed.

But she said it wasn't her idea and she wasn't involved in funding it. She said she heard about the amendment from Safranek, whom she said she had known for years.

Safranek, however, said he doesn't know Graves and didn't inform her about the measure.

The conflicting stories highlight the fuzzy origins of the humane care effort.

Goldberg, the campaign finance expert at the Brennan center, said the public needs to know who is pushing an issue onto the ballot.

"If you know who's behind it," she said, "you have a better sense of knowing what it's about."

World-Herald researcher Jeanne Hauser contributed to this report.

There's a nifty chart as well. The only organization not DIRECTLY linked to Howie Rich is the National Taxpayer's Union -- which, it turns out, has a LOT of connections to Rich & Friends. But that's a story for another day.

Obviously, for a daily newspaper, trying to make sense of this byzantine conspiracy is tough, and details have to be glossed over in the interests of space. They did a crackerjack job and I applaud them for it. But the story glossed over the following points:

I was in error when I published that all of the funding for "America At Its Best" came from Americans for Limited Government. The online document was in error. The actual documents produced the totals reported above. Howard Rich groups, as a result, merely provided the vast majority of AAIB cash, with the NTU kicking in the rest.

Laird Maxwell and his new bride, Lori Klein met at an NTU convention in 2005. They were married in early August in Idaho, near Yellowstone National Park, after having worked (romantically) together to get Arizona's "Don't Take My House" KELO initiative -- I might not be exactly correct on that ballot title, but it's close enough -- on the ballot. Lori has been a "tax activist" agitator in Arizona for a long time. Then, Maxwell came back to Idaho and put the "This House Is MY House" initiative on the Idaho ballot --the title is exactly correct.

During that time, Maxwell directed Duncan Scott in Montana to send \$1.7 million to Nebraska. He then sent \$650,000 to Missouri for their "Stop OverSpending Missouri" ballot measure, while Duncan Scott sent \$170,000 to Laird Maxwell's "Idahoans for Tax Reform" which, coincidentally is located in the same office as AAIB in Idaho, which sent ... well, let the [KANSAS CITY STAR try to explain it:](#)

Posted on Sat, Jun. 03, 2006

**Petitions backer sues secretary of state**

By KIT WAGAR

The Kansas City Star's Jefferson City correspondent

... Despite its name, Missourians in Charge has few ties to Missouri. Most of its funding - \$1.36 million - came from the Fund for Democracy, a New York organization bankrolled by developer Howard Rich. An additional \$190,000 came from America at its Best, a group listing an address in Boise, Idaho.

Tuohey said the two groups also are paying for his legal appeal.

America at its Best shares an address with Idahoans for Tax Reform, which has been funded by another group called America at its Best based in Kalispell, Mont.

America at its Best and Fund for Democracy have paid for similar initiative proposals this year in other states.

Fund for Democracy donated \$230,000 to support an initiative in Idaho that would force governments to pay property owners who claim their property value was damaged by zoning or other laws that limit use of the property. America at its Best donated \$100,000 to the same effort.

America at its Best also donated \$100,000 this year to support a spending limitation initiative in Nebraska....

The latest Nebraska figure is now \$800,000.

The latest figure was revealed, in August, to be \$650,000 to Missouri from Laird Maxwell's AAIB Idaho office.

Now you can, hopefully, appreciate how difficult it is to 'simplify' this Gordian knot of interconnections and money laundering. Money laundering is the precise term, although I explicitly DO NOT make accusations of any criminality. That the money for two ALG spending initiatives in Missouri and Nebraska would be supplemented or exclusively funded from ALG monies after passing through AAIB in Montana and Idaho is clearly an attempt to 'launder' money to at least keep the ultimate funders' identity secret. The motivations for this seeming-fetish for secrecy and pseudonymity seen in all the Howie Rich related groups remains obscure, whatever educated guesses might be made.

The group that Leslie Graves (Eric O'Keefe's wife in Spring Green, Wisconsin) works with, Rachel's Vineyard, is overseen by Father Frank Pavone. You will recall Pavone as the "Schiavo family spokesman" when Terri Schiavo's sad drama was played out on television in early 2005. Fr. Pavone is both the ministerial overseer AND the Chairman of the Board of the Rachel's Vineyard Foundation, which handles the money.

The fact that the Nebraska initiative is PRECISELY Pavone's answer to the Schiavo case, and that Leslie Graves specifically 'incorporated' in Nebraska to handle the petition-gathering drives -- to the tune of \$1.4 million as the OWH reports above -- raises more than a casual question about the causal connection between Graves and Pavone.

And Laird Maxwell of Idaho, President of the formed-this-year "America At Its Best" group (which only seems to have three actual members that we can definitively nail down: Laird Maxwell, of Boise, Idaho, Duncan Scott of Kalispell, Montana, and our old friend Bill Wilson of Fairfax, Virginia) has told the Boise Weekly that while he doesn't know "Howie Rich" personally, [Shea Anderson reports](#):

"Maxwell said his pitch to wealthy Libertarian activist Howard Rich and other well-off conservative activists was simple: `You got the money, I got the time. We'll make this happen.'"

And, in Idaho, the [BOISE WEEKLY also reported](#):

Except for \$50... the entire budget for This House is My House came from out of state, according to reports from the Idaho Secretary of State. \$100,000 came from Montana-based America At Its Best. Another \$237,000 came from the New York-based Fund for Democracy, headed by Howard Rich...

Bill Wilson, coincidentally, serves as Treasurer for America At Its Best, Americans for Limited Government, for U.S. Term Limits, for Club for Growth, State Action, and serves on the board of the Virginia Club for Growth; was a 2001 founder of "Parents In Charge" -- the Howie Rich, Eric O'Keefe and Bill Wilson-founded foundation that immediately garnered a \$10 million donation from the Walton Family Foundation (Wal-Mart) to attack public education via vouchers, tax credits, etc., and which just handed its Presidency off from Eric O'Keefe to Betsy DeVos, whose husband is the GOP nominee for Governor of Michigan, and who was -- with O'Keefe -- the two largest individual donors to Michigan's 1992 Term Limits ballot initiative.

Sound familiar? It's because Howie Rich, Eric O'Keefe and the rest were behind THAT ballot measure, as well, bankrolling it well in excess of any other contributors through US Term Limits, and Americans for Term Limits PAC, of which, coincidentally, Bill Wilson has also been the treasurer.

Kind of makes you dizzy, doesn't it?

Finally, Sandlapper has, at Daily Kos, come up with the day's OTHER smoking gun:

[DC-Based Anti-Worker Group Attacks Montana Public Employees](#)

... [Richard] Berman's group, Union Facts, recently launched an anti-worker ad campaign in Montana, Oregon, Nevada and Michigan targeting public employees. Why those states? The folks at the Progressive States Network say its pretty obvious. All four have TABOR-like ballot initiatives that would restrict how states raise and spend money that would impact vital services such as law enforcement, fire protection, education and other public services...

Berman denied the ads were tied to the ballot initiatives. But the Associated Press reported Aug. 21 that Berman attended a weekend conference of the group Americans for Limited Government and made a presentation about the anti-union ads. The group is backing the Montana measure and those in the other states. According to a July report by the Salem, Ore., Statesman Journal the group has funneled some \$561,000 to back an Oregon TABOR-like ballot measure and more than \$1 million for efforts in Maine, Oklahoma, Arizona and Nevada.

Read Sandlapper's exceptional investigative report at:

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2006/8/27/182257/896>

Finally, there's poor Lexi Mann, who, having been paid \$6000 by the NEBRASKANS FOR HUMANE CARE COMMITTEE to act as "COMMITTEE SPOKESPERSON, OFFICE CONTRACTUAL SERVICE" (according to the official Nebraska filing documents online) "recently left the campaign to tend to her business." [OWH article]

Nothing more is known of her story. Nor, likely, will there now be. But, Thomas Mann, her husband, is still the treasurer of record.

I guess that's what the friends of Howie Rich call "family values."

Courage.

*posted by ed waldo at [8:13 PM](#)*

31 August 2006

## **Unlimited Terms of Endearment, Part XV: Oregon, Chicago, ALG and Al Capone**

***Warning:** This column is about political incest. More impressionable readers might want to cover their eyes -- it's worked for most of the media so far.*

We have seen the outline of the fall campaign from Howie Rich and friends.

Piecing together the Chicago pep rally that the so-called "Americans for Limited Government" held a fortnight ago has taken some time. With the barest minimum of reporters from the "MSM" ('Main Stream Media,' you know, that liberal-controlled news media that has become the whipping boy of right-wing rhetoric and doesn't actually exist as such -- else why the savaging of Clinton by the same press that meekly whimpers and rolls over for Bush to pat its furry little belly?), the 'news story' was given over to "alternate media" like the Heritage Foundation, American Spectator Magazine (owned by Tom Phillips, from whom ALG's "Communications Director" Heather Wilhelm's niggardly \$7500 Phillips Foundation Fellowship was received by Ms. Wilhelm last year) and Human Events Magazine. (ditto)

But don't take my word for it. Listen to the former Executive Director of the California Republican Party from 1999 to 2001 flogging his weblog FlashReport on his weblog:

### **FR profiled in Human Events**

by Jon Fleischman - Publisher (bio)

3-9-2006 11:53 am

I have been a subscriber to Human Events Magazine for years. Frankly, it is one of the few 'paper' subscriptions that I still maintain. HE gives the perspective on what is really going on inside of the Beltway, from a conservative point of view. The publication is owned by FR friend Tom Phillips, a great conservative leader. You can always check out HE Online via our Websites menu above....

Also much in evidence were the "reporters" for "The Center for Union Facts."

[HUMAN EVENTS reporter Ivy J. Sellers wrote,](#)

"The conference attracted big names such as Sen. Tom Coburn (R.-Okla.), John Fund of the Wall Street Journal and Mike Krempasky of RedState.com. Representatives from organizations including the CATO Institute, Citizens for Responsible Government, and the

National Taxpayers Union participated. Campaign strategists and grassroots activists from across the country attended the conference and reporters from all spectrums gave it coverage....

Which is, when you think of it, absolutely accurate, if the spectrum one is referring to is the grayscale. There were (according to the two MSM reporters in attendance) two MSM reporters in attendance, period. Everyone else was a Right Wing faux news reporter. But perhaps the spectrum Sellers meant was the gamut from hard-core Fundamentalist to Mormon to Agnostic. Perhaps she chose the wrong word. She's just starting out in journalism, after all.

"Ivy J. Sellers" graduated from BYU last year with a degree in journalism. I say this only because Sellers, a staff reporter for "The Daily Universe" -- the modestly-entitled BYU school newspaper -- published her last piece for the BYU paper about the new Harry Potter book, "The Half-Blood Prince" on July 15, 2005, and then she is interviewed by the same school paper on July 5, 2006 in a piece entitled "Can a Latter-day Saint become president?"

... "There are jokes that Mormons and Christians can't be friends and there is a strong evangelical following that listens to their leaders," said Ivy Sellers, a reporter for Human Events, a national conservative weekly publication. "They [evangelicals] make up the strongest voting bloc in the Republican party."

Consider her official HUMAN EVENTS Bio (preceded by this personals ad for media incest:

**About the Editors**

If you would like one of our editors to appear on your television or radio show, please contact Patricia Jackson at (202) 216-0600 or [pjackson@eaglepub.com](mailto:pjackson@eaglepub.com) ....

**Ivy J. Sellers**

News Producer, Human Events Online

Before becoming the news producer for Human Events Online, Miss Sellers studied communications and print journalism at Brigham Young University. During her years as an undergrad, Miss Sellers worked as a reporter and editor for the Daily Universe, BYU's award-winning student newspaper. Previous to her current employment, she contributed to Human Events as an intern through the National Journalism Center, covering political events and press conferences taking place in Washington.

The National Journalism Center <http://www.njc.yaf.org/> [Nice picture of Robert Novak, suitable for frightening young children witless] is a subsidiary of Young America's Foundation, which, as we reported in [part VII](#) :

"Ronald E. Robinson is President of Young America's Foundation, of which [Tom]



Phillips is a Board member." Robinson is, conveniently enough, a Board member of The Phillips Foundation. So: Phillips "charitably" donates and serves on the board of the YAF, whose National Media Center checks out new BYU interns who, if they make the cut, go to work for Tom Phillips-owned magazines, like Human Events and the American Spectator. And, of course, when a Phillips Foundation Fellow, like Heather Wilhelm, sets up a "massive" pep rally for the newly-active friends of Howie Rich group, ALG, Tom Phillips' editors are more than happy to send a reporter to "cover" it for HUMAN EVENTS magazine.

[*Note: again, if media incest is troubling to your political sensibilities, please stop reading now.*]

She's a "News Producer?" Well, if they mean it in the sense of "oil producer" or "sugar beet production" Ivy Sellers is certainly that. I have been in print and publication for almost thirty years now (thirty-three, if you count the stuff I wrote for my college newspaper, THE DAILY SKIFF) and I have never seen the term "news producer" applied to print journalism. It is a TeeVee term, for the person who makes sure that the edited video is ready for broadcast. It is not a term of letters or of literature.

But that's the problem with our "New Media": they are in such a hurry to push the Agenda that there isn't time to learn properly. The editors at HUMAN EVENTS came up with that odd title. And, googling "Ivy J. Sellers" produces about 50 articles cranked out for HUMAN EVENTS this year. But listen to the "New Media" producer writing about the ALG and the old and new media:

"Panels were held on a variety of topics including "Does Anyone Really Care About Limited Government Anymore" (The conclusion: Big business, President Bush and Congress sure don't.) and "Getting the Word Out: Creative Media Strategies" (The conclusion: While old media lends a voice of authority, new media is easier to access and can be just as, if not more, effective.)" [*Human Events article*]

But poor Ms. Sellers is just a tad overworked here. Her summation of the ALG's "new media" strategy leaves something to be desired. According to one source who was at a different panel entitled "Understanding The Opposition":

I also caught the Q and A, during which -- in context of a discussion about using cameras as a violence- or scare-deterring measure when "union thugs" are blocking petition circulators -- [panelist Mike Flynn\* from The Center for Union Facts] made a comment something to the effect of: "You can get more with a smile, a kind word and a gun than you can with a smile and a kind word. It's time for us to have the gun." And in the context of "earned media," he said Union Facts does ads with the media as a target -- so that the media will notice the ads and then do a story on the issues they raise. "The important thing," he said, "is for you to set the terms of the debate."

[\* According to Mike Hall writing on the AFLCIO blog, the founder of the Center for Union Facts, Rick Berman, was there as well: "the Associated Press reported Aug. 21 that Berman attended a weekend conference of the group Americans for Limited Government and made a presentation about the anti-union ads." I am unable, however, to find said report, although others have noted that he sent staffers to the ALG event, which has been doubly confirmed by two in attendance. - HW]

The irony of using Al Capone's quote in Chicago may have been intentional, or it might have been reflexive, just as the characterization "thugs" was probably projection -- like the sudden Bush Administration fetish with calling their military enemies "fascists."

The actual quote is: "You can get much further with a kind word and a gun than you can with a kind word alone." -- Al Capone, from his [MySpace friends page](#)

Capone *also* said: "This American system of ours, call it Americanism, call it capitalism, call it what you will, gives each and every one of us a great opportunity if we only seize it with both hands and make the most of it" which one thinks would have also gone over big at the ALG pep rally in Chicago.

At any event, the plan is to attack.

It seems odd to me that the MSM has been so easily flummoxed by these "grassroots" organizations that spring up around the friends of Howie Rich overnight, like mushrooms.

The reporters of the MSM keep getting caught up in geography, when this has nothing to do with geography, and everything to do with, what Howie Rich told an Oregonian reporter at the ALG pep rally, even as he danced away from her:

[Monday, August 21, 2006](#)  
[LAURA OPPENHEIMER](#)  
[The Oregonian](#)

... This much, I glean quickly: Rich drinks red wine. He smiles easily, as do those around him. He gestures when he talks, puts his hand on somebody's shoulder and leads the person aside. An inexperienced state activist gets as much attention as a think-tank veteran. Rich is beloved by followers, who describe him as a visionary and a savvy businessman. And he detests journalists.

At a cocktail reception, Rich stops at my table to introduce himself. He is all smiles and handshakes -- until he realizes I'm a reporter. He tenses.

"You seem very nice and all," Rich says. "But I'm going to try not to talk to you very much."

That's too bad, I say. I want to explain why these issues interest him.

Rich says he'll tell me one thing. When I reach for my notebook, he waves his hand in protest.

I remember his words anyway. "It's all about the ideology."

Rich almost dances away to the next table....

But consider the [Honey mushroom \[from Wikipedia:\]](#)

*Armillaria ostoyae* is the binomial name for one species of fungus commonly known as a "Honey mushroom", and sometimes called "Shoestring Rot" ... quite common on both hardwood and conifer wood in forests west of the Cascade crest. The mycelium attacks the sapwood and is able to travel great distances under the bark or between trees in the form of black rhizomorphs ("shoestrings").

A mushroom in the Malheur National Forest in the Blue Mountains of eastern Oregon, USA was found to be the largest fungal colony in the world, spanning 8.9 km<sup>2</sup> (2200 acres) of area. This organism is estimated to be 2400 years old.

An apt, Oregonian metaphor. The "alternative media" present in Chicago are reminiscent of the Honey mushroom, all interconnected, and only seeming to be individual publications, as are the endless profusion of friends of Howie Rich Groups: ALG, US Term Limits (his original franchise), Club for Growth, State Action,; the Cato Institute, LEAD Foundation, Fund for Democracy, Parents in Charge and many others that, in turn, spawn still further groups: the newly-minted "Protect Our Homes and Churches," "America At Its Best," "Renewal Voter Outreach," "This House is MY House," and, perhaps not directly connected to the friends of Howie Rich, but eerily in harmonic, "The Center for Union Facts."

None of the newly-minted "grassroots" subgroups mentioned in the preceding paragraph EXISTED one year ago.

In the week following the ALG "Action Conference" Rick Berman's "Center for Union Facts" went on the attack -- here in Oregon, and across the West.

[Sourcewatch](#) reported:

In May 2006 the Center for Union Facts, launched its first TV ad campaign. The 30-second spot ([http://www.unionfacts.com/ads/downloads/tv\\_unionBosses.wmv](http://www.unionfacts.com/ads/downloads/tv_unionBosses.wmv)), running on Fox News and local markets, has "actors posing as workers" saying "sarcastically what they 'love' about unions," like paying dues, union leaders' "fat-cat lifestyles," and discrimination against minorities. The ad campaign cost \$3 million, which was

raised "from companies, foundations and individuals that Mr. Berman won't identify."\* [\* The Online Wall Street Journal URL]

And last week, following the ALG pep rally, the CUF (thank goodness they didn't name it the "Knowledge Center for Union Facts") attacked again. [The OREGONIAN reported:](#)

**Anti-Union ads appear in media in Oregon election** - The ads, sponsored by a Washington, D.C., group, are sharply critical of public employees

Friday, August 25, 2006  
Dave Hogan

Just in time for election season, Oregonians are seeing TV and newspaper ads featuring grouchy public employees this week, thanks to a new Washington, D.C., group that doesn't name its donors.

The Center for Union Facts also is running similar ads in Michigan, Montana and Nevada. Like Measure 48 on Oregon's ballot this November, those states have similar initiatives that will ask voters to cap state government spending. While the ads don't refer to those measures, they contend that public employees have wrangled expensive compensation packages...

Weirdly, it's an "issue" ad without an issue. There is nothing on the Oregon ballot in the fall that has anything to do with public employees.

Another puzzling attack was reported in [New West's \(an online magazine\) Missoula page:](#)

**Are Anti Union Ads a Push for Spending Cap Initiatives?**

By Pete Talbot, 8-27-06

... anti-union ads that were launched this week in Montana. The TV, radio and newspaper campaign portrays department workers as overpaid, lazy and nasty ... Montana isn't the only targeted state. The advertising campaign is also running in Oregon, Nevada, and Michigan. Three of these four states have initiatives on the November ballot that cap state spending. The fourth state, Michigan, is in the process of certifying signatures for a similar ballot initiative.

The most active opponents of the initiatives are the unions that represent public employees. Others oppose the initiatives, including The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), but it's "more difficult to slam seniors," one union official [Eric Feaver, president of MEA-MFT] said ... He's not sure who exactly is paying for the ad campaign. "It's impossible to follow the money," he said, "but it's just

too coincidental" that the ad campaign is running in states with spending cap initiatives on the November ballot ...

The organization behind the ad campaign is the Center for Union Facts. It is located in Washington, D.C., and its executive director is lobbyist Richard Berman. Berman has headed similar organizations that lobby for tobacco, alcohol and other industries, according to labor officials.

The organization's communications director, Sarah Longwell, said that the ads are an "educational campaign" and the advertising budget is \$1 million. She called the ads "funny, edgy." "It was taken into consideration," [Longwell] noted, in placing the ad campaign in four states with spending cap initiatives, but it wasn't the main factor. The campaign "is not trying to influence people," she added, but to drive them to the Center for Union Facts' website ...

[Note: to be fair, "[Guest Columnist Pete Talbot] ... is a board member of Missoula's Sustainable Business Council and treasurer for Missoula Community Access Television (MCAT). Politically, Pete has served on the Montana Democratic Party Executive Board and was chairman of the Missoula County Democrats."]

But he soundly makes the point that doesn't require a partisan lens: The sudden appearance of CUF anti-union ads are a political attack, and probably to hobble the unions in organizing opposition to the SOS and "Rainy Day" spending caps and KELO/Eminent Domain stuff. Talbot only links the CUF attacks to spending caps.

But he doesn't ask two even more pertinent questions: Isn't it an ODD coincidence that the Center for Union Facts launches million dollar campaigns in the same four states that the ALG is pushing its spending cap initiatives in? And isn't it even odder that CUF manages to ALSO be funded by mysterious funders whose identity they ALSO won't reveal in Montana?

As union president Feaver notes: it is impossible to follow the snaking tendrils of this shoestring root. And yet, one asks oneself: Where have we seen THAT modus operandi before?

Here's the Oregon local angle: my ALG Chicago source writes: "Other panelists with Flynn were Patrick Tuohey, Missourians in Charge; Bob Adney, Nevada Tax and Spending Control Committee; and Don McIntire, Taxpayer Association of Oregon."

Don McIntyre is an interesting fellow. According to Wikipedia:

"The leaders of the tax revolt include Don McIntire, president of the Taxpayer Association of Oregon, and Bill Sizemore, leader of Oregon Taxpayers United. Much of the money spent to promote

these anti-tax measures were provided by out-of-state backers including Americans for Tax Reform headed by Grover Norquist."

Norquist's ATR was the OTHER contributor to Howie Rich's "US Term Limits" term limits initiative on the Oregon ballot this November, just by the by.

*[As I said, this is about political incest, so avert your eyes if you become too uncomfortable, Gentle Reader.]*

According to the website of the organization that McIntyre runs:

<http://www.oregonwatchdog.com/mission.htm>

We are the Taxpayer Association of Oregon (TAO). It was founded by Jason Williams and Don McIntire in the year 2000. Don McIntire is most commonly known as the father of Measure 5 (the 1990 property tax limitation measure) and many other taxpayer activities going back several decades. Jason Williams is best known for working with Oregonians In Action. TAO also has partner organizations and Political Action Committees to assist on various fronts; ballot measures, candidates, education, lobby, and research.

McIntyre also co-wrote Measure 37 in 2004, which has been seen as the inspiration for the KELO measures that ALG is pushing in several states ... including Oregon.

McIntyre was also, reportedly, the TAO master brought in by Howie Rich and friends to author their ALG measures. So, perhaps it is unsurprising that he was on an "ALG ACTION CONFERENCE" panel [valet parking at the hotel was \$41 per day, according to the emailed information sent to registered attendees] called "Understanding The Opposition."

What IS surprising, however, is that McIntyre wasn't necessarily there to have CUF "defend" him. He was there as a member of the "new media," as well.

Their website brags that they are "Oregon's top Political Website: Our popular website, OregonWatchdog.com, is now ranked at the top of web searches involving 'Oregon political news' keywords." [ibid.]

And, the governor of Oregon challenged Howie Rich to a debate last week, Betsy Hammond of the Oregonian wrote on their political blog:

**Monday, August 28, 2006**

... The way {Governor of Oregon Ted Kulongoski sees it, Rich should have to explain why organizations he controls gave \$571,000 toward the spending cap and another \$510,000 to promote a term limits measure in Oregon. That is particularly important in the case of the spending cap, because its impact on Oregon would be so huge, Kulongoski says.

"If you are willing to pour millions into our state as a social experiment, the least you can do is come here and explain in person to Oregon voters why the face of our future is so important to you," Kulongoski wrote in a letter he sent to Rich - and copied to reporters - Monday.

Hammond goes on to note Rich's refusal to be interviewed:

"Rich shuns media attention. At the recent Americans for Limited Government conference in Chicago, Rich networked with supporters but did not make speeches or grant interviews. He said he has nothing personal to gain from supporting ballot measures in Oregon and refused to talk further, saying, "I'm not a media guy. That's not what I do."

Except wasn't that an "interview" that he gave in offering his standard Lady MacBeth line? No: he doesn't submit to interviews. That doesn't stop him from giving out precisely the sound bite he wants in the papers though.

Oregonian reporter Betsy Hammond reports from "Mr. Doesn't-Give-Interviews" the following email NON-interview:

"It sounds to me like the governor is afraid to debate local leaders like Don McIntire, or face up to the ... Oregon voters who signed the petition," Rich told The Oregonian via email. [August 28th]

Which is very odd, since this is almost precisely what "I Am Coyote" (whom I am reliably informed is one Ted Piccolo) wrote on the NW REPUBLICAN blog:

[does-governor-nesbitt-have-cajoneys-to.html](#) ('cojoneys' is sic)

Well aint (sic) that special..?? Is Kulongoski too afraid to debate the author of the measure Don McIntire? Doesn't Kulongoski have enough to worry about? Well I thought so.

Coyote sneered the party line.

And so did Don McIntire, who is calling for a debate with the 'real Governor of Oregon.'

Note the date: August 28. Maybe the unconscious echoing of Howie Rich's email to the Oregonian isn't so odd, though, because Piccolo has worked with (or for) Rich (via US Term Limits) before, in 2004, when he and USTL founding board member Paul Farago were chief petitioners for a term limits petition drive that failed:

<http://www.oregonfollowthemoney.org/>

**The Citizens' Term Limits Restoration Act, Petition #20**

**Petitioners:** Leigh Anna Foxall, Paul R. Farago, Ted Piccolo

**CONTRIBUTIONS:** US Term Limits (DC): \$354,239 (97%); US Term Limits Foundation (IL): \$5,000 (1%); US Term Limits (IL): \$3,000 (less than 1%); Taxpayer Association of OR: \$1868; Paul Farago: \$48.

**TOTAL \$364,155**

[NOTE: Farago's "48 Bucks" -- you might recall -- gave [the first installment of this series](#) its title, as it was the only provably private Oregon donation made two years ago. You know, "grass roots." - HW]

And, on August 28th Don McIntyre simultaneously attacked with this press release (which immediately and coincidentally showed up in its entirety in Coyote's 'cojoney' blog column -- no coordination of 'new media' going on HERE, right?):

**[DON MCINTIRE OF THE RAINY DAY AMENDMENT COMMITTEE RESPONDS TO KULONGOSKI DEBATE CHALLENGE](#)**

To Tim Nesbitt, AFL-CIO boss, and to his "yes" man, Governor Kulongoski:

Thank you for your letter, which offers yet another reason for Oregon voters to support the Rainy Day Amendment. It reveals, after all, the fact that Oregon's Governor has no clue as to what's going on in his own state...

We all know who pulls the strings here in Oregon, and forgive us, Governor, if we say publicly it's not you. Union bosses and special interests are openly running your campaign, so we, in turn, realize why you're doing their dirty work. You want to keep spending recklessly, and you want the taxpayers to just shut up...

Over 300 local donors have already given to the Rainy Day Amendment campaign, and that list continues to grow. We're thankful to Howard Rich for helping us get our campaign off the ground. Unions-as you well know, Governor-have a whole lot of money to splash around to keep the special interests in charge. Out of state unions have already given \$2 million to try and defeat the Rainy Day Amendment. We're working to put the people back in charge. Just whose side are you on? Here's a tip, Governor-or should we address this to you, Mr. Nesbitt?-you might want to keep it a secret that you're against giving the people a say in state spending....

But this isn't enough for McIntyre. He concludes with this bit of politesse:



As a Chief Petitioner, I accept the challenge to debate the real leader of the government class in Oregon - Tim Nesbitt, recent President of the Oregon AFL-CIO. I will debate Mr. Nesbitt as many times as he would like between now and election day. Oregonians would be well served to find out more about the "power behind the throne" in our state. I suspect such a series of debates would reveal much about what's really wrong in Oregon. If Mr. Nesbitt is unavailable or unwilling, I'd even take on the second in command, Governor Kulongoski.

One finds it difficult to believe that the CUF attack ads aren't coordinated with McIntyre's "thankful" campaign. (And, one notes that "300 local donors" proves "grass roots" just as effectively as the 150 reported in attendance to hear the keynote address at the ALG pep rally in Chicago.)

And it's WEIRD to compare and contrast with Rick Berman's (founder/proprietor of CUF) stated philosophy:

**Berman's Battle**

Richard Berman claims to help the average consumer. In fact, he works for corporate America.

[By Greg Sargent, The American Prospect](#)  
[Web Exclusive: 01.03.05](#)

... "Our offensive strategy is to shoot the messenger," [Rick Berman] once told Chain Leader Magazine, a trade publication for restaurant chains (whose readership presumably doesn't include too many ordinary consumers). "We've got to attack [activists'] credibility as spokespersons."

(for a more in-depth report on the link between Berman's CUF and the Richies, see Sandlapper's DailyKos diary:

<http://www.dailykos.com/storyonly/2006/8/27/182257/896>

All of which recalls another Al Capone quote:

"I have built my organization upon fear."

Courage.

*posted by ed waldo at [10:04 PM](#)*