Liberty and Laziness Are Incompatible

by Aubrey Eyrolles

We have so many great people in the Libertarian Party. They care about others, they care about their communities, and they want to see government shrink while increasing the amount of personal liberty in this country. Their hearts are in the right place, but their good intentions are overrun by one thing: Laziness. You all know the ones I’m talking about. They sit online, complaining about everything, while never actually getting out into the community and influencing people to convert to libertarianism.

There is a common misconception in the Libertarian Party that people cannot influence their community unless they are an elected official. This is NOT true. Not even a little bit. There are many ways you can get involved without running for office.

The following is a non-comprehensive list of things that you can do to influence your community:

• Join community Facebook groups and find out about local events where activists gather (and show up at those events to try and influence the conversation).
• Join city boards and commissions and influence the way that money is spent in the community
• Go to city council and fight for/against things that matter to you
• Stay in contact with your city council member and make sure they know your opinion on all the hot topics. They’ll grow to respect your opinion if you do it right.
• Try to come up with free market ways to solve issues in the community. Bring those ideas to Libertarian meetings and find others passionate about that topic. Then you can get to work and present those ideas to the city in an effort to change how things are being done.
• Go block walking in your precinct and let your neighborhood know about libertarianism as often as you can.

The following is a list of things that will not influence your community or bring libertarian ideas to the forefront of the conversation:

• Complaining about the government on Facebook
• Complaining about what other activists are doing
• Calling people statists when they don’t agree with your principles
• Ignoring the calls to action from other activists in the community
• Posting memes
We have an amazing city and a very bright group of people who are Libertarians. None of that matters if nobody is getting involved in spreading libertarian ideas, though. I hope you’ll reconsider your involvement in the movement and get more active. We need you.

Want to help with local LP activities?

The Marketing, Outreach, Fundraising, and Candidate Recruitment Committees are looking for more warm bodies to help with their efforts to build our party. There are a lot of ideas to work on, but we need your help! Click on the link for the committee you’re interested in to e-mail the committee chair!

Libertarians Should Be for a Required Paper Receipt Option -- But Not for the Reasons You May Think

by Curry B. Taylor

I'm quite far from a Luddite: ask anyone who knows me. Hence, for me to be writing an article in defense of paper receipts and implicitly against the new trend of "virtual" receipts seems ironic (even to me). Paper receipts are among some of the oldest tech out there, at least in terms of modern human thinking about what is "old" and what is "new". Since almost everyone is familiar with what I mean by paper receipt, what is a virtual receipt?

You may have noticed a slow change over the last couple of years. When you buy something, you hand the vendor payment, and they hand you the item (or service) you purchased. But instead of also handing you a piece of paper which shows all of the information about the transaction for your records, they give you nothing, most of the time offering to send you an e-mail "copy" of the receipt (although no "original" ever existed) or a text message containing some facsimile of what may approach something which could possibly be called a "receipt". In order to facilitate delivery of this "virtual" receipt, the vendor then demands either your e-mail address or your phone number, or both. If you refuse to give them either your e-mail address or your phone number, then you will receive no receipt at all, not paper, e-mail, or text. In order to understand why this is a big problem, we first need to understand why receipts exist in the first place.

Back in the first days of commerce, trades happened without receipts. People just bartered items for items, or once currency graced us with its presence, people traded items for currency, or vice-versa. People also simply paid their taxes (or tributes) by handing items or currency to a tax collector. It was actually a few greedy tax collectors who first realized that they could re-visit the homes of people whom had already paid them taxes previously and demand even more tax. They could do this because there was no record of the transaction (the tax payment) at all. Victims of this scam had to pay taxes multiple times because there was no way that they could demonstrate that they had already paid. As a result of this dishonesty, people began to start demanding receipts at the time of transaction. That is, someone gives you a product or a service (or, in the case of taxes, nothing), and then you pay the amount due. The vendor or tax collector then hands you a receipt, which is a legal proof that you fulfilled your end of the contract (namely, provided payment). Receipts are one of the things which make commerce possible and orderly. This is why requiring receipts was codified in common law as required at the settlement of every transaction: it helps prevent fraud.

If you are holding a receipt and you walk away from a vendor and/or the location where the transaction took place, or the vendor walks away from you, you hold in your possession proof of the payment you just made. With this proof, you cannot be accused of theft.

(Well, such an accusation would not carry much weight, at least.) By contrast, walking away from
a place of business or a government building without proof of payment opens the door to a threat of accusation of theft against you. I know we assume most people are honorable and wouldn't make such an accusation without just cause, but that is not the legal point I am making. There can and will always be a tiny fraction of people who could abuse the system once again to claim that you did not pay for your goods or services, or did not pay your taxes. People may not be as honorable as we imagine them to be, given the opportunity to be otherwise.

So today, receipts are still provided to the buyer (or taxpayer) at the time that the transaction is completed -- and that is the key point. You must have proof of purchase the moment that the vendor fulfills his end of the contract so that you can prove that you fulfilled your end. But if no paper receipt is provided, then you are without that proof. Instead, you are perhaps offered a "virtual" receipt. What do you do then to verify that you do indeed have access to the receipt? You could, for example, drive all the way home and check your e-mail, but during your entire travel time, you would be without a receipt. That's bad, but it could get worse. What if the e-mail address you gave the vendor (or tax collector) was mistyped? You would be completely without a receipt then, even when you got back home to check. That is clearly a violation of the need of the vendor to provide proof of your purchase.

One may argue that it is possible to check for, and display, your receipt at the end of the transaction if you are carrying a smartphone. This is true in some circumstances, but there are large number of caveats. What if you are having wireless Internet issues and you cannot receive your receipt? What if your phone has run out of battery power? Those are both common issues with smartphones. What if you, being a conscientious consumer who is concerned about his privacy and security, do not wish to give out either your phone number or your e-mail address to every random vendor you may encounter on a daily basis? Many vendors these days sell your information to third parties, or sign you up for advertising which has little to do with the specific transaction you engaged in. Even if you trust that a particular vendor

won't do that, don't you have a right to prove how you spent your money without exposing your contact information to every vendor? Furthermore, are we all really expected to check to make sure we have received our receipts after every transaction? After EVERY transaction? That seems like a large amount of unnecessary work. Finally, what if you simply don't own a smartphone, and don't want to purchase one? Or what if you simply don't want to carry a phone (*cough* tracking device) around with you everywhere you go? Are we moving into a world in which one must necessarily own and carry a smartphone in order to even have the ability to prove that one paid for something? Will the law in the future require us to own and carry a smartphone? Surely that is a mark of an Orwellian world.

One more thing: receipts aren't just for proving payments. They are also used to comply with IRS tax filing regulations. Yes, the IRS can demand of you your receipts (of all flavors) up to seven years in the past if you are unfortunate enough to be audited. Does the IRS accept e-mail receipts? Short and cryptographic text message receipts? Sometimes, yes, but since digital files, e-mails, messages, and other "virtual" items are so easily copied, modified, and forged on a modern computer, I would assume that the IRS keeps a more watchful eye over them than would be necessary with paper receipts.

The growing trend to give customers or taxpayers a "virtual" receipt without the option of paper receipt is disturbing, and if it continues, we may have to take a deep look at one of the core features of human commerce as it relates to modern technology. It is clear why this is happening. Vendors and tax
collectors want to alleviate themselves of the costs of printing receipts on paper and having to deal with the receipt printing machine. They also want an opportunity to capture your personal contact information. From their perspective, moving to "virtual" receipts is a win-win scenario. But what about the heavy cost to consumer protections? The issues I have mentioned are not hypothetical scenarios, they are real-world considerations when forcing "virtual" receipts with no other option. To my knowledge, there has not been a high-profile court case involving the legality of denying a customer a paper receipt if the customer so requests one. I suspect such a case is inevitable in short order, and I predict that "virtual" receipts will be deemed inadequate if the payee requests a paper receipt for the purposes of valid proof of purchase at the time of the transaction, and also for more accurate record-keeping. I love technology in general, and I do not deny the seeming convenience of "virtual" receipts, nor do I wish to prevent any individual from being able to opt-in accept them, even if it jeopardizes their consumer rights. For me, though, I'll stick to paper (as much as I still can), and I should have the option of paper so that I can fully protect my rights.

For example the Internet has been littered for years with articles by people who can't seem to distinguish between a conceptual label called "libertarianism" and a specific, unique, individual person called “libertarian” and so they just keep getting it all wrong.

A typical instance of this is an article from Daily Kos by Tony Greco entitled “Four Reasons to Reject Libertarianism.”

While old by online standards—posted in 2012—the ideas in this article are still regurgitated on a regular basis today and embraced by huge numbers of people, especially those who regularly haunt the hallways of social media and revere coercive collectivist ideologies.

Libertarians vs. Labels: Real People vs. Stereotypes

by Garry Reed

Commentary From Your Libertarian Opinionizer

Consciously or subconsciously we all label each other until we get to know each other as individuals. But some people never get beyond their negative labeling.

And that’s the real problem; it’s not the labeling that matters so much as what we do with those labels.

LPDC Membership Program!

Want to help out the LPDC and at the same time get some cool libertarian swag? Check out our contributor membership program!

Your Libertarian Opinionizer’s Book Break: Government Labels Everyone
Death By Regulation: How We Were Robbed of a Golden Age of Health and How We Can Reclaim It

Few people who blame the tragic shortcomings of America’s health system on greedy capitalists have an inkling of how their revered “public healthcare system” is the real villain.

Ruwart takes us step by step through the massive disasters created by government regulatory interventions that drove a stake through the heart of the traditional patient-doctor-pharmacist relationship and turned us all into mere medical labels.

Whether this was a result of unintended consequences or intentionally created wealth and power grabs by the statist elitists isn’t really important since the outcome has been the same: A colossally failed health system for everyone but the elitists themselves.

Buy Now

Four Reasons or Four Rationalizations?

Keep in mind that throughout this example of labeling that the Modern American Libertarian Movement is based on the non-aggression principle (NAP) that rejects coercion, intimidation and fraud. Failure to acknowledge this easy-to-understand premise is the primary reason why so many people mislabel, misclassify, misidentify and misunderstand libertarianism.

Some of these “Four Reasons” are easily dispensed with, but because of some people’s obsessive beliefs other “Reasons” will require more detailed refutations.

“1. Libertarian values are repellent”

Greco gets off to a quick start with an all-too typical banality with his blanket statement, “Libertarianism celebrates greed and selfishness.”

This is absurd on its face. “Libertarianism” is a philosophical concept. Philosophical concepts cannot “celebrate.” Only actual people can “celebrate” or otherwise express greed or selfishness. There is no requirement, or even a proclivity, tendency, penchant or any particular inclination for any libertarian to be greedy or selfish.

Furthermore, any individual can be or not be greedy or selfish, including progressives, liberals, social justice warriors, right-wingers, fascists or any other category of people. These are individual choices, not dictated by any philosophical concept.

In a similar way he proclaims that people are most often attracted to the left because they have an interest in helping the less fortunate. Apparently he is ignorant of people who self-identify as “the libertarian left” who focus their concerns on exactly those issues but in a voluntary way that doesn’t violate the NAP.

He goes on with these prescriptive clichés, that libertarians don’t care about social or economic equality, the poor or the underprivileged. But the same response applies; each libertarian is free to pursue whatever he or she decides is most important as an individual. And, in fact, that is exactly what each individual libertarian does in the real world outside of Greco’s Label World.

Greco steps on his own tongue when he arrogantly declares “Do you really think that anybody ever became a libertarian motivated primarily by the conviction that that was the best way to help the underdog?” The answer is a resounding “Hell yes! Voluntaryism is compassionate for everyone involved. It’s your groupthink coercion that is repellent.”

This brings the discussion full circle to his opening reason for rejecting libertarianism: “Libertarian values are repellent.” Since the primary value for libertarians is their non-aggression principle Greco must be openly admitting that he finds coercion, intimidation and fraud to be non-repellent and therefore acceptable.
“2. Libertarianism is intellectually myopic”

His reason for this proclamation is “Libertarians cherish freedom above all” to which libertarians and all other freedom-lovers would likely respond, “Duh!” Freedom requires “self-ownership” which means you own your own body, your own brain, your own life, and therefore the results of your own efforts.

Without self-ownership no definition of freedom is possible; you are owned in every way by someone or something else.

Because he doesn’t understand that “freedom” requires self-ownership he claims that libertarians “understand freedom almost exclusively in terms of freedom from government” and then goes on to chirp about all of the other wonderful concepts of freedom envisioned by the intellectually and emotionally superior progressives such as freedom from poverty, hardship, and oppression.

Yet without the self-ownership definition of freedom none of those other definitions of freedom would be possible.

He also apparently forgets that freedom from government means the right for progressives and libertarians alike to voluntarily work together to find the best solutions to the very issues of poverty, hardship and oppression that all compassionate, well-meaning people care about no matter what label the Tony Grecos of the world try to box people into.

Then after whining about people who are “forced to move long distances in search of decent jobs”—as though not a single person has ever done exactly that voluntarily, i.e., the whole American historical wagon train migration of people westward—Greco steps on it again when he airily asks, “How many people do you know who have ever been forced to move from their home town by government?”

Has the man never heard of the “Trail of Tears” relocations that resulted in 15,000 deaths when the US government forced some 100,000 Southeast tribal people out of their homes and marched them thousands of miles to “Indian Territory” where they were shoved into concentration camps called “reservations?”

Never heard of the millions of men forced from their homes by military conscription to fight in the Civil War that killed 620,000 Americans and then the millions more forced every year into military servitude from then through 1973 (when the draft finally ended) for the purpose of fighting the government’s far-flung wars?

Never heard of the Tennessee Valley Authority that forcibly relocated an estimated 15,000 families—not individuals but whole families—to make room for dams and reservoirs?

Never heard of the 110,000 to 120,000 Japanese-Americans forcibly herded into “internment camps” (the American prison gulag) during World War 2 by government edict?

But even that misses the real point. Libertarians do not—repeat for emphasis, do not—“understand freedom almost exclusively in terms of freedom from government.” Libertarians understand freedom in terms of freedom from all forms of coercion, intimidation and fraud including government.

The NAP. Remember? This is what invariably happens when someone tries to force-fit individuals into a label called “libertarian” while ignoring the non-aggression principle of a manifestly individualist philosophy.

“3. Libertarianism is utopian”
Libertarians have a saying that the author has apparently never heard: “Utopia is not an option.”

His position is “An active state is a universal feature of advanced societies.” True, but other “universal features” throughout centuries of “advanced societies” are torture, nearly constant warfare and continuous slavery. Is that his idea of Utopia?

But he quickly adds: “The minimal government society that libertarians envision doesn’t exist anywhere in the industrial or post-industrial world, and never has, for good reason.” And that’s true. The “good reason” is that neither a “minimal government” nor a “free society” can exist in an industrial or post-industrial world any more than a democracy can exist in an absolute dictatorship. The free libertarian society requires a post-statist world.

If that sounds way too utopian for the likes of the Grecos of the world they should consider that most libertarians are both idealists and realists:

“Scientists at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute have found that when just 10 percent of the population holds an unshakable belief, their belief will always be adopted by the majority of the society.”—RPI News, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, July 2011

“4. Libertarianism is politically hopeless”

What he doesn’t get here is the same thing that most capital L Libertarians also don’t get; that politics is merely the practical application of philosophy and therefore the philosophy of libertarianism must be firmly established in society before a politics of libertarianism can be established.

Repeat: most libertarians are both idealists and realists.

Repeat: Rensselaer Polytechnic quote above.

Hopeless? Labeling something so doesn’t make it so.

The Government or Nothing Mentality

Now for that “more detailed refutation” mentioned earlier.

In Reason “2. Libertarianism is intellectually myopic” Greco asks, “Is a gravely ill person free if she lacks access to decent health care?” Ignoring that this is a different meaning of “free” used in a different context (a favorite ploy of progressives) this is the old unspoken cliché that pretends government cares about people while libertarians throw the poor, homeless, ill, elderly and all other needy out into the streets to die.

That’s childish progressive myopia writ large and slapped on libertarianism because it’s easier to label than it is to think.

Dr. Mary J. Ruwart’s new book Death by Regulation is a perfect example of a label—government—taking precedence over real people—individuals.

Dr. Ruwart explains how the 1962 Amendments to the original Food and Drug Act, created in response to the Thalidomide drug tragedy that caused horribly deformed babies, actually created an even bigger tragedy: It robbed us all of a “Golden Age of health.”

The book documents how the new regulations, among many other failures, increased the time it takes to develop new drugs from 4 years to 14 years; caused terminally ill patients to turn to the black market if they wanted to live; caused costs of everyday prescription drugs to soar; and caused drug companies to stop developing new drugs because they knew they could never recoup their development costs.

Asked for her personal comment for this article Dr. Ruwart offered the following assessment:

“Whether we are regulators, doctors, drug company executives, or patients, we have all lost 5-10 years of our lives to the 1962 Amendments to the Food & Drug Act. We all have a stake in rolling back these regulations and living longer, healthier lives!”

In addition to that one can ask virtually any American war veteran what kind of “decent health care” he or she gets from the “public healthcare” VA hospitals.
Reed’s Rule: Anything that becomes politicized ceases to be about that thing and becomes all about the politics.

The other side of the government versus people equation is brilliantly laid out in David T. Beito’s From Mutual Aid to the Welfare State that documents how people voluntarily working together in the private sector actually gave us “access to decent healthcare” in the past until Big Gov, Big Med and Big Insurance co-opted, monetized and politicized it all to benefit their own greed for power, money and personal egos.

Remember then that it’s not the labeling that matters so much as what we do with those labels.

Libertarianism is an individualist philosophy designed for individuals. There is only one thing required for a person to be a libertarian. As Matt Kibbe so succinctly put it in his own book’s title: Don’t Hurt People and Don’t Steal Their Stuff.

Collectivist philosophies require their adherents to believe, think, act, interact and live based on certain dictated rules as demanded by the people who inevitably control them and their societies, whether through faux “democratic voting,” absolute dictatorship, or any variation in between, and suffer negative consequences if they don’t obey.

But let’s be very clear here: All too often libertarians are just as guilty of labeling people and then treating them as labels rather than as individuals. It’s an all too easy trap.

If we want to rescue those from the grip of coercive collectivist ideologies who are truly resuable we must always remember to engage them in a respectful person-to-person manner, not in a mindless label-to-label way.

Everyone is an individual until they absolutely insist that they are not.

References And Links

Four Long-Festering Reasons to Reject Individual Freedom
The full 2012 Tony Greco article in which he attacks a falsely-labeled stereotype version of libertarianism that few libertarians fall for but many collectivists swallow whole.

A Free Society Requires a Post-Statist Consciousness Where “government” is not a monopoly, is voluntarily funded and is based on rights protection rather than law enforcement, the latter meaning no so-called “victimless crimes.”

Mutual Aid vs. The Welfare State “Single-Payer Healthcare” is just a label for “anonymous government bureaucratic medicine” that creates paternalistic dependency and kills people on long waiting lists. People have lost control of their own wellbeing.

Don’t Hurt People and Don’t Take Their Stuff
Libertarianism is simply the adult version of the lessons that every responsible parent ever taught their children: Don’t hit, don’t bully, don’t lie.

Video View: Your Libertarian Opinionizer’s Pick “I Am Not A Label!”

Editor’s note: Re-published from the Libertarian Opinionizer with permission from the author. Editor’s comment: This article was among the half-dozen very good choices from Garry’s regular assortment of blog submissions. Check out his blog; you’ll become a fan!

Want to write about libertarianism, but aren't ready for major publications? Want to test your articles first among friends? Submit your articles bimonthly to the LPDC newsletter! It's painless, I promise!

Upcoming Meetings

•  **General Meeting**
  ◦ June 12th, 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Libertarian Party of Dallas County, Texas

California Pizza Kitchen
8411 Preston Rd, Dallas, TX

- **Trivia night at Trinity Hall**
  - April 1st, 7:30 PM
  - Trinity Hall Irish Pub & Restaurant
    5321 E Mockingbird Ln, Dallas, TX

- **General Meeting**
  - July 10th, 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
  - California Pizza Kitchen
    8411 Preston Rd, Dallas, TX

- **TCLP Presents: Dr. Mary Ruwart**
  - August 4th, 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM
  - Tarrant County Libertarian Office
    5751 Kroger Drive, Fort Worth, TX

Up-to-date meeting announcements and details can always be found on meetup.com or Facebook.

Libertarian References

- **Books**
  - *Good to be King*, Michael Badnarik
  - *Why Government Doesn't Work*, Harry Browne
  - *Atlas Shrugged*, Ayn Rand
  - *The Libertarian Mind*, David Boaz
  - *Economics in One Lesson*, Henry Hazlitt
  - *The Law*, Claude-Frédéric Bastiat
  - *Healing Our World*, Dr. Mary Ruwart

- **Videos**
  - *Neitzsche and the Nazis*, Stephen Hicks
  - *Bullsh*t!* , Penn & Teller
  - *Free to Choose*, Milton Friedman
  - *America: Freedom to Fascism*, Aaron Russo

- **Websites**
  - The Libertarian Party of Dallas County
  - The Libertarian Party of Texas
  - The National Libertarian Party
  - Students for Liberty
  - Free Talk Live
  - The Cato Institute
  - Molinari Institute
  - Objectivism In-Brief

LPDC Officer List

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<tr>
<th>Role</th>
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<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
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<td>Vice-Chair</td>
<td>Eddie Allen</td>
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LPDC At-Large Directors

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<tr>
<td>Marshall Beerwinkle</td>
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<td>Barry Smith</td>
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Working Committee Leaders

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<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
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Other Volunteers

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<td>Newsletter Editor</td>
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The LPDC is a local branch of the Libertarian Party based in Dallas County, Texas. Find out more about the LPDC at http://lpdallas.org. The Libertarian Party is the third largest political party in the United States, and was established in 1971 to promote more freedom and less intrusive government in all aspects of life. Find out more about the LP at http://www.lp.org.
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