

Open LETTER:

August 1994

The Issue That Will Not Go Away

By: J W Rice

Jonathan Rice is a History and Political Science student at Michigan State University.

It used to be that abortion was a personal issue. A woman, faced with the prospect of giving birth, would examine the situation and make the decision that affected her life. It used to be that abortion was a moral issue. A debate between "Christians" and "feminists" (as if the two were mutually exclusive) about the status of the soul of the fetus. But today the question of abortion is seeping its way out of families and churches, and into courtrooms, capitol buildings, and police stations around the nation.

The answer to the question "Should Abortion Be Allowed?" always comes down to an impasse. No matter what tactics are taken by "pro-life" or "pro-choice" proponents, the issue always ends at whether what is in the womb is a human being and therefore deserves the protection of the law, or if it is more like property, and can be done with as the woman chooses. A different answer is given by equally intelligent people who sort through all the available information, and genuinely disagree in their conclusions.

The answer to this question can never be anything more than opinion at this point, and may never be answered definitively. But despite this fact, the issue of abortion is one that must be addressed, and is making itself into a problem that can not and will not be ignored. The debate has worked its way into many areas traditionally unconnected to morality or choice issues; such as welfare reform, freedom of speech, state

rights, health care reform, and even murder trials.

The first area where the question of abortion has interfered is in welfare reform. Recently in the Michigan legislature, a proposal was made to limit welfare payments. Stereotypically, the Republicans favor cutting welfare and encouraging people to work to support themselves. The Republicans forged ahead in support of welfare reform, until it was opined that cutting welfare payments would lead to increased abortions for poor women. The Republicans immediately did a flip-flop, joining forces with all the Democrats who traditionally favor big government welfare programs. So the message to the people is clear: if you want to be taken care of forever at the expense of the taxpayers, become pregnant and threaten to abort it. Once you do that, no one will dare take away your free money.

Other recent developments also involve abortion and tax dollars, in a situation that also drags in the court system and the question of state sovereignty. Years ago, Michigan citizens voted to not allow tax dollars to fund an activity that is against the religious or moral convictions of many residents. But a recent court ruling intends to force citizens to surrender a portion of their income to the government, who will then use that money to pay doctors to perform abortions on women who "can not" afford to pay for them themselves. The court does not care that these citizens have legitimate objections to abortion, they are demanding people financially support what they consider to be murder. Can the federal government force a state to do what its citizens clearly do not wish to do? This story will continue, and should be

watched closely, even by people who are not philosophically opposed to terminating pregnancy. There is much more at stake than "just" that.

And along similar lines, as the Congress prepares for debates on the proposed universal health care system, it seems that the biggest objections are not being raised by companies who would be forced to pay for coverage; by doctors, who will be forced to practice medicine by government dictates; or by insurance agencies, who could be forced out of business; but by pastors and priests and average citizens who would be forced to pay for what they don't believe in. The Catholic church, and millions of other intelligent freethinkers, have not been quiet in their election-year threats against any Senator or Representative who votes for a medical system that offers abortion as a covered procedure.

Abortion is becoming one of the most important issues of our time, woven into all of the other concerns that people deal with. It is turning into a question that is impossible to ignore, made much more complicated because any answer to the question still seems to be impossible to "prove" definitively.

"The courts are demanding that people support what they consider to be murder."

:J W Rice

"Gun control is an important issue only if you deny that the pen is mightier than the sword."

:Michael Marotta

Interested Reader: Gun Control Is An Obsolete Issue

By: Michael E Marotta

Michael E Marotta is a certified roboticist, and also a certified numismatist. He can be reached at: 517/223-7752.

A government that would disarm its citizens is not to be trusted. However, the tragedy of the Branch Davidians at Waco proves that the Second Amendment is irrelevant. Those poor victims of neo-nazi justice died because they did not have access to the mass media: no computers, no satellite dishes, no cellular phones, no CB radio. They were reduced to placing a large sheet on the ground with a plea for newspaper attention. This pathetic gesture defined their hopeless cause. The government won at Waco by painting the victims as child abusers. If the Davidian children could have beamed their smiles directly into the homes of America, they might still be alive.

Last year, when the UN inspection teams were physically surrounded in Iraq, they still had their portable satellite dishes. A friend of mine drives a fastfreight cargo van. On his dashboard is a laptop computer with a built-in modem, connected to a little transceiver on the roof than puts him in contact via satellite with his dispatcher.

His computer allows full text and graphics. It works on the same technology as cellular phones.

Gun control is an important issue only if you deny that the pen is mightier than the sword. When hackers were busted by the feds in 1989 and 1990, they didn't shoot it out from their bedrooms. They took it to the internet. Mitch Kapor (Lotus 1-2-3) and Steve Wozniak (Apple) contributed several hundred thousand dollars to creating The Electronic Frontier Foundation. They hired lawyers and beat the feds in court. The prosecutor resigned in disgrace. Part of their defense was supplied to them via literature searches and computerized communication that pulled the rug out from under Southern Bell and its Federale amigos.

In the past, all internet messages were "electronic postcards." There was no privacy. Now people on the internet activate the most sophisticated encryption by simply clicking on an icon. Messages are now private. As a result, the US government is currently persecuting Phil Zimmermann for posting his Pretty Good Privacy encryption program on the internet. The feds consider codes and ciphers to be military goods. Once on the internet, PGP was "exported" without a "license." Now Zimmermann is in court. But he is alive. And that's the point. If anything happened to him, news would flash around the world from news sources that don't suck up to the feds: no CNN or NBC lapdogs will lick the hand that feeds them press releases. Instead, hackers will broadcast the truth.

Following in the footsteps of their Republican allies, the Clinton administration has tried to put government-controlled chips in all phones and computers. The industry doesn't merely object, it scoffs and scolds. Everyone knows that the government is wrong. Meanwhile, the FBI wants congress to force the phone companies to make wiretapping easier. Again, most of the telephone carriers are totally opposed.

The regime in Washington is still the only government ever to use nuclear weapons. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were chosen specifically because they

were undefended, militarily unimportant cities. The leaders of America would nuke Detroit, rather than let it secede. In that light, ownership of an automatic rifle is pitifully quixotic. No self-styled patriot has ever won a direct shootout with the feds. On the other hand, government computers are often penetrated by hackers, including those of the FBI and NSA. Most hackers are just curious. Some hackers are malicious. The IRS is among the government agencies that have been hit by computer viruses.

The LP has always been driven by ideology based on principles. At the same time, there is a strong traditionalist reverence for the federal Constitution which contradicts many of those basic principles. Among them are issues involving patents and copyrights. You cannot legally take a xerox into a bookstore and copy what's for sale. But you cannot access anything on the internet without automatically making a copy of it. Those who care about the LP and its candidates must ask where the advantage is in associating with the National Rifle Association. While we enter the 21st century, the socialists of the right engage the fascists of the left on who should control 19th century weaponry. Any energy invested in that donnybrook is not spent learning about the Electronic Frontier Foundation or the League for Programming Freedom.

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YOUR OPINIONS

Do not disturb

Every law that comes out of the Legislature these days is either preventing us from doing things we want to do, forcing us to do things we don't want to do, or taking our money to support things we don't agree with or people we don't have responsibility for.

I want to hang a big "Do Not Disturb" sign on my door and tell lawmakers not to stop me from smoking or owning a gun; not to require me to sign up for a government health plan; and not to take my wages to pay for abortions or food stamps.

MICHAEL EMHART,
Lansing

YOUR OPINIONS

Wrong about rights

People seem to misunderstand what a "right" is.

Is there a "right" to freedom of expression? Yes. Does that mean the government can force every person to stand up and share his/her opinion? No. That would be a requirement, not a right.

Does it mean they should tax all people to buy a printing press for anyone who cannot afford one? No. That would be an entitlement, not a right.

A "right" to free speech means the government cannot prevent us from expressing ourselves.

Now consider health care. Is there a "right" to medical treatment? Maybe. Maybe not.

But if there is, does that mean the government can force every person to sign up for their plan? No. That would be a requirement, not a right.

Does it mean they should tax all businesses, to buy health insurance for anyone who cannot afford it? No. That would be an entitlement, not a right.

A "right" to health care means the government cannot prevent us from seeking the best treatment we can afford for ourselves. To think it means anything else is a misunderstanding.

As Americans, we have many rights, few requirements, and no entitlements.

MICHAEL EMHART,
Lansing

By the time you read this, the August primary will be over, and we will know who we can vote for in November. Make sure EVERYONE out there knows about the choices they have! Whenever you see a TV or newspaper report that "forgets" to mention the campaign of Jon Coon, write and remind them of their obligation to speak the truth and the whole truth! A sample letter follows. Feel free to borrow from it!

Dear (REPORTER/EDITOR NAME):

I noticed an omission in your recent article, "(TITLE)," in the (NEWSPAPER) on (DATE), 1994, page (PAGE/SECTION).

You were correct in noting that Republican (NAME) and Democrat (NAME) are both in the race to fill the U.S. Senate seat in November. However, you neglected to mention the third name that will be on that ballot, Libertarian Jon Coon. Coon has been crisscrossing the state, raising money and campaigning for more than a year now, and he has been winning the support of voters everywhere, with his no-nonsense policies that stand above the empty rhetoric of the career politicians.

It is so standard to accuse the media of political bias. Please prove that idea wrong in your future reports. Next time you write about the contested U.S. Senate race, be sure to tell voters about ALL the options they will have open to them in the election; including the option to vote for a qualified candidate who is not a typical Republican or Democrat, but a principled Libertarian instead.

Your newspaper should have a media kit detailing Jon Coon's bio and stance on important issues. If you have not seen this information, or you would like follow-up quotes or an interview, you can reach his campaign headquarters at 1-800-JON-COON. I'm certain Jon will be happy to supply you with any information you need to make your future reports complete in all aspects.

Thank you for your future fairness, and I'll be reading with interest!

Sincerely,

:Michael Emhart, 0794.

"Be sure to tell voters about ALL the options they will have open to them in the election."

:Michael Emhart

The LAMM meets the second Thursday of each month. The next meeting will be:

Thursday, August 11, 1994
at Sneekers Restaurant in the Frandor Shopping Plaza, off US-127, Lansing. People begin showing up at 6:00 pm, dinner is served beginning at 6:30, and the meeting begins at 7:00.

The program at the August meeting will include the viewing of a delightfully profound, and yet satirically funny film about well-intentioned government bungling, and harm caused by the excuse of the "public good."

A Private Function stars
British actress Maggie Smith and former Monty Python actor Michael Palin. There is no admission charge, and it promises to make for an enjoyable evening!

The Libertarian Alliance of Mid-Michigan was founded in 1981 to promote ideas that support and enhance personal freedom, free market economics, and political liberty. The LAMM is not responsible to any other group that calls itself "libertarian." The LAMM is run without officers for the benefit of those who attend its meetings. For information about the LAMM, call Jon Addiss at 517/394-0122.

An Open INVITATION:

You are invited to send in your thoughts, comments, and Open LETTERS on any topic pertaining to public policy, individual liberty, personal responsibility, or free market economics. Your ideas will be printed with little or no editing, and shared with hundreds of people in the mid-Michigan area. If you are a member of a group working towards increasing liberty or shaping political policy, send in updates about what you are doing... there are many others who may like to join you.

Open LETTER is edited and laid out in the Freedom Reading Room by Michael Emhart. Printing is paid for by Liberty Coins. Postage is paid for by Jon Addiss. The views printed here are not necessarily the opinions of the editor or sponsors, although most Interested Parties probably do agree!

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SEPTEMBER 25: Mark Your Calendars Now!

The east steps of the Capitol building in Lansing will be the site of first national "Brass Roots" Second Amendment rally, on Sunday September 25th at 2pm. Special guests at this event will include hunter and rock star Ted Nugent, and soon-to-be US Senator Jon Coon. The rally organizers ask people to not bring guns, but to bring spent brass cartridges from a gun they will never give up. The cartridges will be melted down and made into a plaque inscribed with Article I, Section 6 of the Michigan Constitution, and the Second Amendment to the US Constitution, and this plaque will be presented to the Michigan Legislature. At least 50,000 people are expected to attend this event. Support your right to keep and bear arms, and make sure you're one of them!

View The Enjoyable And Satirical Movie "A Private Function"-- At The Thursday, August 11 LAMM Meeting.
(Details Inside...)

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