

Association of Libertarian Feminists

Communications



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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of ALF is to

- **encourage** women to become economically self-sufficient and psychologically independent
- **publicize** and promote realistic attitudes toward female competence, achievement, and potential
- **oppose** the abridgement of individual rights by any government on account of sex
- **work toward** changing sexist attitudes and behavior exhibited by individuals
- **provide** a libertarian alternative to those aspects of the women's movement that tend to discourage independence and individuality.

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In Memoriam

Jeff Rigenbach

Joan Kennedy Taylor died on Saturday, October 29, 2005 in New York City. Taylor was born on Manhattan island 21 December 1926, the daughter of composer, music critic, and radio personality Deems Taylor and Mary Kennedy, an actress and poet. Unsurprisingly, Taylor conceived an early interest in spending her own life in the theatre – and leading the footloose, bohemian lifestyle that often entailed. This desire was only intensified when, in 1939, at the age of 12, she spent two weeks in Hollywood with her father, who was there to film his scenes as the tuxedoed master of ceremonies and narrator of Walt Disney's *Fantasia*.

She completed her first eight grades of school on eight different campuses -- in settings as diverse as New York City; Ellsworth, Maine; Paris; and Peking. For high school, she settled down at St. Timothy's, a strict boarding school in suburban Baltimore. While a student at Barnard College in the 1940s, she worked part time as an actress in radio dramas. Later, in the 1950s, she did similar work in various live television series of the day, including *Mama*. Still, by the time of her 30th birthday, late in 1956, she had begun to wonder whether acting was her true calling. Like her mother, she had a talent not only for acting, but also for writing. And beginning in the late 1950s with a job in the publicity department of Alfred A. Knopf, she turned her attention increasingly to the world of writing and publishing.



Joan Kennedy Taylor
1926 - 2005

She had also begun paying more attention to the world of politics. During the presidential campaign of 1964, in which she favored the Republican candidate, Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona, she helped to found the Metropolitan Young Republican Club of New York and served as editor of the group's newsletter. The following year, she introduced various radical changes to the newsletter and transformed it into the independent libertarian political magazine *Persuasion*, which she published on a monthly basis for the next three years.

When she closed *Persuasion* in 1968, it was not because her interest in writing about political ideas and issues had waned in the slightest, but rather because she wanted to devote more time to her newest passion: the writing of musical plays. Working with the composer George Broderick, she created a musical version of the Oscar Wilde short story "The Canterville Ghost," as well as another musical based on the underground railroad that transported escaped slaves to freedom during the years before the U.S. Civil War. Neither of these musicals has been produced to date.

In 1977, she returned to political writing, taking a position as an associate editor

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on another monthly, *The Libertarian Review*. Over the next few years, she would follow this publication, and its eccentric, gifted editor-in-chief, Roy A. Childs, Jr., across the country and back, from New York to San Francisco and from San Francisco to Washington, D.C. When *The Libertarian Review* ceased publication at the end of 1981, she embarked on a career as an editor and freelance writer which occupied her for the rest of her life.

As publications director at the Manhattan Institute in the early 1980s, she shepherded a new book on welfare policy by a virtually unknown writer she had discovered named Charles Murray – a book called *Losing Ground* – from manuscript to national bestseller. At the Foundation for Economic Education in the mid-1980s, she served as editorial director of the book publishing program and as an editor of its venerable monthly magazine, *The Freeman*. Throughout the 1980s, she was heard, along with such luminaries as Nat Hentoff, Nicholas Von Hoffman, Michael Kinsley, Julian Bond, and Senator William Proxmire, as a regular commentator on current issues and events on the nationally syndicated daily radio program *Byline*.

And all along, she was writing – for the *Wall Street Journal*, for the *Washington Times*, for *Reason* and *Inquiry* and *Success* and *American Enterprise*, and for scholarly publications like the *Stanford Law & Policy Review*, the *CommLaw Conspectus: Journal of Communications Law and Policy*, and the *Journal of Information Ethics*. She wrote monographs on feminist issues for the Cato Institute and the Hoover Institution. She contributed essays to a number of scholarly books.

And she wrote her own books, too. *Reclaiming the Mainstream: Individualist Feminism Rediscovered* (1992) elaborated her theory that the true origins of American feminism lay in the mid-19th century, when men and women of the “classical liberal” persuasion, many of them also involved in the abolitionist movement, began calling for an end to government policies that held women back. Today, she argued, feminists should return to their classical liberal roots, for they will find that opportunity and equality for women are best maximized through reliance on individual rights and the free market, rather than reliance on laws and government programs.

Her last book, *What to Do When You Don't Want to Call the Cops: A Non-Adversarial Approach to Sexual Harassment*, was published by New York University Press in 1999.

During the last fifteen years of her life, in addition to her writing and lecturing, Joan Kennedy Taylor devoted much of her time to volunteer work for feminist organizations. From 1989 to 2005 she was National Coordinator of the Association of Libertarian Feminists, and throughout the 1990s she served as a vice president and member of the board of directors of Feminists for Free Expression.

Taylor is survived by her son, Michael Cook of Manhattan. We will all miss her very much.



In Other ALF News

National Coordinator Sharon Presley has started a new anthology project on American women resisters to authority. She has spoken on this topic several times this year. The first talk on April 6, 2005 was for the Smith Center for Private Enterprises Studies, which is affiliated with California State University East Bay (formerly CSU Hayward) where Sharon teaches. She also spoke on this topic for the New Hampshire Freedom Summit on June 26, 2005 and for the Civil Society Institute of Santa Clara University on Oct. 5, 2005. For further information about this talk and the women resisters she discussed, see Sharon's web site: www.voltairine.org/essays.html.

You can also find information at this web site about *Exquisite Rebel*, the SUNY Press book published in 2005 on Voltairine de Cleyre that Sharon co-edited with Crispin Sartwell. Sharon spoke about “Voltairine's Relevance for Today” at the LA Karl Hess Club on May 16, 2005. Sharon also spoke on Voltairine de Cleyre for an anarchist conference on April 14, 2006 at Pitzer College in Southern California.

Sharon and Fred Foldvary are working on a conference that is co-sponsored by the Association of Libertarian Feminists, the Civil Society Institute, and Resources for Independent Thinking. The title is “Authority and Autonomy in the Family” and the general theme is exploration of nonauthoritarian alternatives to the traditional family. The conference is set for August 19, 2006 at Santa Clara University. See accompanying Conference article.

Conference on Nonauthoritarian Family Alternatives

A one-day conference on August 19, 2006 is being planned by Sharon Presley and Fred Foldvary. It is co-sponsored by the Association of Libertarian Feminists, the Civil Society Institute, and Resources for Independent Thinking. Below is a description of the conference:

In the last several decades there has been much talk of women's liberation and even men's liberation--freeing women and men from traditional gender roles that limit their choices and psychological freedom to be individuals. Less discussed is the concept of family liberation—freeing the family and members of the family from traditional authoritarian roles and structures that limit the choices and potentials of every person in the family. Though psychologists have researched and discussed nonauthoritarian child rearing methods and feminists have discussed more egalitarian relationships between husbands and wives, many questions and issues are yet to be answered and explored. The purpose of this conference is to examine some of these issues.

The political is the personal. If we want our children to grow up to be independent and critical thinkers, if we want to be independent and critical thinkers ourselves, if we want our adult relationships to be egalitarian, we need to start at home, in the family.

The two featured speakers are:

Dr. Peter Breggin (via live video hookup) on "Critical Intelligence in Children"

Dr. Nathaniel Branden on "Encouraging Self-Esteem in Children"

The conference will have the following four panels:

1. **Liberating Child Rearing Methods:** Issues to be explored: nonauthoritarian childrearing methods, encouraging critical intelligence and independent thinking, communicating noncoercive moral values.

This panel includes Sarah Fitz-Claridge of Taking Children Seriously; and Jane Shaffer and Butler Shaffer who have successfully raised 3 freedom-loving daughters.

2. **Liberating Education:** Topics include educating children in ways that encourage their creativity and natural desire to learn instead of forcing them to conform, avoiding the limitations of typical public schooling, exploring alternatives such as home schooling or more creative public schooling.

The speakers include Marshall Fritz on nonstate schooling, Diane Flynn Keith on home schooling, and Barbara and Rachel Phillips, mother and daughter on Montessori.

3. **Encouraging Critical Thinking in Young People:** A seminar/workshop by Enoch Hale of the Foundation for Critical Thinking.

4. **Equalitarian Marriages:** Topics include problems of equitable distribution of responsibilities and decision-making, enough private time for all in family, structuring the family to benefit each member of the family.

So far this panel includes Sharon Presley and Susan Love Brown.

As most people reading this newsletter know, few libertarians have been interested in discussing such issues. If the Association of Libertarian Feminists (and its allies) doesn't do it, who will?! We hope you will support our efforts. See url below.

• **Check out the ALF website:**

www.alf.org

• **Please Send us your E-mail address. We will send you ALF news updates if you send us your E-mail address**

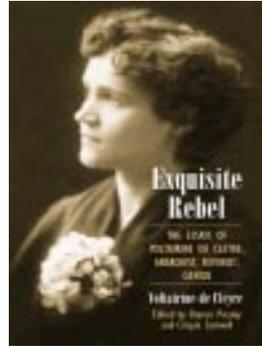
**attention
members**

Give an ALF subscription \$10/4 issues —to yourself or to a friend .

**Autonomy and
Authority in
the
Family**

August 19, 2006

See our web site
www.autonomyinthefamily.org



EXQUISITE REBEL:

**Essays of Voltairine de Cleyre
Anarchist, Feminist, Genius**

by Voltairine de Cleyre

Edited with commentaries

by Sharon Presley
and Crispin Sartwell

Preface by Candace Falk

SUNY Press

\$22.95 pb: \$68.50 hd: 224pp.

"The most gifted and brilliant anarchist woman America ever produced... The American soil sometimes does bring forth exquisite plants."

--Emma Goldman

"[Exquisite Rebel] provides a wonderful window into the life and work of one of the most extraordinary feminists and radicals in American history"

--Margaret Marsh, author of *Anarchist Women 1870-1920*

For more information, go to www.voltairine.org

(To be reviewed in the next ALF News)

Vera Drake

Directed and written by

Mike Leigh (2004)

Film Review by

Natasha Shebeko



This is a powerful tale of a woman, Vera Drake, whose passion for compassion leads to devastating her life when an abortion she performs goes seriously wrong. The film gives a glimpse of the abortion issue from a new fresh angle-- that of the abortionist. Director Mike Leigh carefully sets the atmosphere for the tragedy that is to unfold. Set in post-World War II Britain and filmed in black and white, the grim, sad, depressing atmosphere is palatable.

The story is simple and plainly told . It is the elegance of the plainness that so powerfully charges the scenes. Leigh sets the canvas and his crafts--people, actors mostly unknown outside Britain, and headed by Imelda Staunton in the title role of Vera Drake, bring it to life. These magicians create a world that we can perceive not only with our senses, but also with our souls. Staunton give the performance of the century.

No matter which side of the abortion issue you are on, or whether you have seen the film or not, a first time viewing or a revisit is a must.

A longer review of the film is available on ALF's web site.

Conference Speakers:

Authority and Autonomy in the Family

A One Day Conference

August 19, 2006

8:00 A.M. - 10:00 P.M.

**Santa Clara University
Santa Clara, CA**

Sponsored by
Association of Libertarian Feminists
Civil Society Institute
Resources for Independent Thinking

For more information and reservations:
Call: (925) 228-0565 or visit our web site:
www.autonomyinthefamily.org



Nathaniel Branden, Ph.D.
"Encouraging Self-Esteem in
Children"



Peter Breggin, M.D.
"Critical Intelligence in
Children"



Susan Love Brown, Ph.D.
Egalitarian Marriage Panel



Marshall Fritz
Liberating Education Panel



Sharon Presley, Ph.D.
Egalitarian Marriage Panel
Conference Organizer

Other speakers include:

Sarah Fitz-Claridge "Taking Children Seriously"

Diane Flynn Keith "Homefires: Home Schooling"

Jane and Butler Shaffer

