

## ISSUE 84 SUMMER 2012

### News Update

ALF has a new YouTube channel! You can find it at <http://tinyurl.com/7umbnyg>. The playlist includes videos by the late Joan Kennedy Taylor, past National Co-ordinator of ALF, and two on libertarian feminism by Sharon Presley, plus “favorited” videos of other libertarian women. Please let us know of any other videos that would be appropriate for our playlist.



Joan Kennedy Taylor

The libertarian feminist anthology project is moving along. Ross Kenyon became the new co-editor after Jan Stover had to step down for health reasons. The anthology, which focuses on current social and policy issues, will include such libertarian luminaries as economists Deirdre McCloskey, Veronique de Rugy, and Steve Horwitz, as well as writers Jim Peron, Michael Tanner, Charles W. Johnson, Sharon Presley, and others. ALF will be raising money for this project so it can “officially” be a sponsor of the book. If you want to help us get this important book in print, please watch for the donation page announcement or see the “Donate” button on our website.

We also urge you to contribute to one or more of the women’s charities at the Half the Sky website [www.halfthesky.org](http://www.halfthesky.org) (see review of the book *Half the Sky* on p. 5). As Sharon’s editorial on p. 4 asserts, we need to put our money where our mouths are. If we say that in a free market, most people would be willing to help others in need, then we need to start with ourselves. Oppressed women around the world need our help because their governments don’t do very much, if anything, for them and large-scale NGOs are not much better, according to the authors of *Half the Sky*.

In anticipation of ALF becoming a nonprofit organization and because ALF now has an international membership, the Board decided to change the names of the titles of the officers. National Coordinator no longer seemed appropriate so the new executive officer is now called the Executive Director and the Coordinating

### Free Markets Are a Woman’s Best Friend

#### The overlooked source of liberation

BY STEVEN HORWITZ

Capitalism is frequently blamed for many things it isn’t responsible for. This is simply a reality we defenders of free markets have learned to live with.

Among the accusations made against capitalism is that it is bad for women. A couple of weeks ago I discussed the gender wage gap [<http://www.thefreemanonline.org/headline/equal-pay-day-some-thoughts/>], which is often claimed as an example of how capitalism causes discrimination against women. We hear other arguments about how it supports “patriarchy” and otherwise leads to women being treated as second-class citizens. In fact capitalism has done far more good for women than bad.

One of the best examples is the way capitalism has made possible women’s economic advancement, particularly their increased presence in the labor force. The steady increase in women’s labor force participation is perhaps the most important demographic fact of the last 100 years. By giving women their own source of income, capitalism has empowered them in a number of ways; for example, the changing dynamics of marriage has



THE WASHING MACHINE:  
Capitalism’s Gift to Women

enabled women to get out of relationships they previously could not have left. Women’s economic independence has transformed the family in other ways as well.

We can look at women’s increased labor force participation from two sides, as we often do in economics. Capitalism both demanded more female labor and supplied the conditions that made it easier for women to provide it.

#### Rising Demand

The demand side is perhaps more obvious. The economic growth that capitalism generated after the Industrial Revolution and into the early twentieth century had two consequences. First, it increased the demand for labor in general. As wages rose and workers (mostly men) grew wealthier, they began to buy more than before. That rising demand for final goods increased the demand for all the inputs that went into them.

## ALF Officers

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## Communications

**Mail:** 1155-C Arnold Dr. #418  
Martinez, CA 94553

**Phone:** 925-228-0565

**Fax:** 925-891-3515

**Email:** alf1973@alf.org

**Web:** www.alf.org

**Visit us on Facebook**

## History

ALF was founded by Tonie Nathan in 1973. The national group was created in 1975 in New York City. Nathan was the first woman in history to receive an electoral vote as the Libertarian Party VP candidate in 1972.

## 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.

ALF NEWS is published by  
The Association of Libertarian Feminists  
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Editor: Sharon Presley

**No. 84 Summer 2012**

Of course one of those inputs is labor.

This increased demand for labor meant that firms had to find workers somewhere. One option was to try to bid men away from other jobs, but the only way to do that was to pay higher wages. The other option was to hire more women in jobs that had previously been restricted to men. In fact this is what many firms started to do early last century. The result was that women who had not worked outside the home before began to get jobs. The growth driven by capitalism and industrialization made this possible.

Growth had a second effect on the demand for female labor. As industrialization progressed and the scale of operations grew, the number of ancillary jobs such as secretaries and clerks grew. In addition, part of the increase in consumer demand noted above was for services rather than goods. Instead of buying a chicken and butchering it themselves, people were willing to pay more for chicken parts. Eating out became more common, and the demand for personal services such as barbers and hair stylists grew. Women could compete against men for many of these clerical and service jobs more effectively than they could for harder physical labor. The result was more job opportunities for women. By the 1940's the demand for female labor was intense enough that firms started to offer the option of part-time work to meet married women's need for flexibility.

### Domestic Labor-Saving Devices

Capitalism also supplied the conditions that made it easier for women to supply this labor. The biggest problem married women, especially with kids, faced if they wanted to work was caring for the household. With the technology available at the turn of the last century, keeping a home clean was a fulltime job. The interwar era, however, saw the development of all kinds of new household appliances that significantly reduced the time required to clean and cook. Doing the laundry went from a three-day, multi-person job to just a matter of hours. These inventions liberated women from much of the drudgery of housework and made it at least

thinkable to work outside of the home. (This point is powerfully presented in this Hans Rosling video. [[http://www.ted.com/talks/hans\\_rosling\\_and\\_the\\_magic\\_washing\\_machine.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/hans_rosling_and_the_magic_washing_machine.html)])

Women were also becoming increasingly educated, both at the high school and college level. Here too the wealth created by capitalism made it possible for families to afford to educate their children longer, including their daughters. This wealth was also sufficient to make children's income unnecessary for survival. The more-educated and more-productive potential female workforce meant that it was more likely women would get hired.

Although it rarely gets the credit, capitalism *liberated* women from centuries of second-class citizenship.



Steven Horwitz is Charles A. Dana Professor of Economics at St. Lawrence University in Canton, NY and an Affiliated Senior Scholar at the Mercatus Center in Arlington, VA. This article has been reprinted from thefreemanonline.org with permission. It first appeared May 3, 2012.

### News continued from p. 1

Committee is now the Board of Directors. Continuing members include Lee Nason, Andrea Millen Rich, Fred Moulton and Natasha Shebeko. Two new board members have been added. ArLyne Diamond is the CEO of Diamond Associates, a business management consulting firm. Dr. Diamond, whose PhD is in Clinical Psychology, is also running for California State Assembly District #25. Ross Kenyon, who recently graduated with a BA in history from Arizona State, is also a co-editor of and contributor to the forthcoming ALLiance of the Libertarian Left anthology on libertarian approaches to class theory and analysis. He also serves on the Executive Board of Alumni for Liberty. Due to personal reasons, Rebecca Hurst has resigned.

Sharon Presley continues as Executive Director; the new treasurer is Laura Twombly Trinies, a longtime libertarian. Penny Burbank, our new secretary, is also Women's Studies & Social Media Curriculum Coordinator at the Free Minds Institute.

*Continued on p.6*

# The Oppression of Women in Developing Countries: Education and Microfinancing as Private Solutions

BY AMANDA DAVIS

Most of the people reading this newsletter are from the developed Western World—the so-called ‘First World’. As such, we are lucky enough to live in relative comfort, surrounded by the support of friends and family; the safety of a stable society, good food, and great medicine. Despite all those comforts, we still have problems. We, as women, still have glass ceilings to shatter, work force jobs as yet denied us, and stereotypes to smash. It is frustrating and saddening, but not daunting. We understand the opportunity awaiting us and continue ever onward, reaching for that brass ring with both hands, knowing it to be reachable one day.

However, there are so many women out there, women of developing nations, who don’t have such security and comfort. Just their mere daily problems and concerns would seem insurmountable to most of us in the Western world. They suffer privations of food, water, shelter, and safety for themselves and their children. They also mostly come from countries where women’s rights are secondary (if they exist at all), just as the women are seen as secondary (or worse). Some of them are treated as slaves. Some are kidnapped or sold by their families into the sex industry. Some of them must wear certain clothing to cover their bodies or suffer horrible physical punishment. Perhaps they are unlucky enough to live in one of the countries that is a horrific war zone, where the threat of rape, torture and death are daily worries. Making matters worse, if they were raped or their virtue called into question, they would not receive compassion - only condemnation.

These women live their lives one footstep at a time. Their lives hang in heartbeats—a heartbeat when they are not abused, a heartbeat when they escape an abuser, a heartbeat when they escape death, a heartbeat where they find just enough food for themselves and their children. What

would such incredible and brave women imagine for themselves and their families if only they were given a tenth of the opportunities granted us here?

Microfinancing is the answer to that question. Those dispensing micro loans have an ‘in’ as to what a community’s women most need. They cannot only fund a woman’s needs, but point her towards further resources to help her satisfy them. Microloans allow each woman to attend to her immediate needs while allowing her the flexibility to repay the loan within a timeframe and amount per time that is feasible for her circumstances—a luxury denied to them by large banks and corporate entities. As these women meet their basic necessities, they then borrow more to push beyond. They can borrow for training, schooling or schooling for their children. They can start businesses that they will be able to grow on their own. They gain respect for themselves and show communities, who normally see women as second class citizens, that they are both productive and capable.

In many of these countries, women are so highly restricted that they become non-entities. Their concerns are not noted. The men who run such societies would no more ask about women’s issues than they would ask a dog if it minded fleas. However, empowering women by stabilizing the household economy gives them the influence and the stance within the community to determine their own destinies. CGAP, the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor, states the following regarding the influence of microfinancing for women:

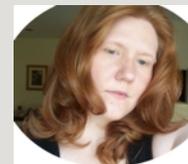
*“Microfinance programs have generally targeted poor women. By providing access to financial services only through women—making women responsible for loans, ensuring repayment through women, maintaining savings accounts for women, providing insurance coverage through women—microfinance programs send a strong message to households as well as to communities.*

*“Many qualitative and quantitative studies have docu-*

*mented how access to financial services has improved the status of women within the family and the community. Women have become more assertive and confident. In regions where women’s mobility is strictly regulated, women have become more visible and are better able to negotiate the public sphere. Women own assets, including land and housing, and play a stronger role in decision-making.”*

By owning assets and taking part in community elements that typically have only concerned males, women are more visible. Their concerns become the concerns of the community; their voice, the community’s voice. It gives external legitimacy to their needs and allows them to be more confident in demanding security and economic independence.

Microloans are by no means the solution to all problems for women in the developing world. However, they are a very important and growing step in the right direction—that step is the step towards empowering women. By empowering women’s goals of independence and safety, they will, in turn, gift their communities, their towns, their cities, and their countries, with the wisdom of their experience—that a better life and a more developed nation awaits them all if only they reach with both hands for the brass ring of progress.



Amanda Davis is an EMT who has done volunteer work for several women’s groups, including Planned Parenthood and Sister Care. She has a double BS in psychology and criminal justice.

## YOU CAN HELP!

See how you can help support poor women in developing counties. Go to [halfthesky.com](http://halfthesky.com); its website has a list of private organizations that help women. Also see book review p. 5. Another related resource is <http://pinterest.com/halfsky/> You can find books, videos, photos, and other inspiring and useful information there.

## EDITORIAL Walking the Walk: Private Libertarian Social Service Alternatives

BY SHARON PRESLEY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ALF

Many libertarians have talked and written about how in theory a truly free society would provide for the public works and social services any civilized society needs: police, defense, settlement of disputes, etc. But theory is not enough. The average person is not convinced by theory; people are far more likely to be convinced by practice, that is, actual examples of working solutions. Years of dependency on the State have shriveled most people's imaginations. They can't imagine how private alternatives could possibly provide enough of the needed services. The problem of defense, police protection, and providing for the poor and needy just seem too overwhelming. They can only imagine a strong central authority solving such problems.

Libertarian author Michael Shermer has argued in several of his books that humans evolved in simpler times when there were relatively simple solutions to community living. Our brains, he asserts, are just not wired to understand the complexities, let alone the efficacy, of what libertarians and economists call the "invisible hand." That is, many individuals, working cooperatively and noncoercively, peacefully trading for mutual benefit, helping others and finding solutions to social issues on the community level. That such complexity on a micro level not only happens but actually works is hard for many people to mentally grasp. They can only understand some god-like central authority that can allegedly make it all work and keep people in line so they don't run roughshod over others. Libertarians know this god-like authority called government does in fact have severe limits at best. But if we are ever to have a free society, our task is to convince others that freedom will work, and not just through talk of libertarian pie-in-the-sky by-and-by.

Unfortunately, libertarian discussions of private solutions have been somewhat spotty, particularly in the area of social service solutions for the

poor and needy and in other areas that women care about. Many libertarians have criticized the inadequacies of existing structures, including police, military and social services. That's a good start. Some have pointed to a few already existing examples of current private services (e.g., garbage, fire departments, schools). A few have written about successful social services in the past, most notably David Beito and others in *The Voluntary City*. Such services have included private courts and police, mutual aid societies, roads, and medical care. The anarcho-syndicalist CNT/FAI kept the water, electricity and mail delivery working in Catalonian Spain while fighting the fascists from 1936 to 1939. Such examples are helpful. But it's still not enough.

If we are to convince the unconvinced that a truly free society would work without the stupendous bureaucracy, astronomical costs, and books full of laws and regulations for our "protection" that currently characterizes government, we have to do at least two things. One is more discussion and promotion of the efficacy of private alternatives with actual working examples that exist right now. The other is to put our metaphorical money where our proverbial mouth is, that is, walk the walk, not just talk the talk.

Back in the 1970's John Muller and I sold a book at Laissez Faire Books titled *Uplift: What People Themselves Can Do*. It was full of wonderful stories about how individuals working through small community groups and nonprofits, many of them without any government help, provided needed social services, including employment services, housing, education, and health services. Some of the articles discussed how much more efficient and cheaper their community services were than comparable government agencies. In the introduction, the authors said: "It is imperative that the self-help movement be neither organized nor wholly serviced by government or any outside organization. Self-groups are not—and cannot be—a rigid network of identical programs imposed on or handed to the people. The worth of the projects rests in their individuality and independence and natural growth within their local communities." That is as true in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as it was in the 1970's.

Some of those organizations are still around. In fact there many such organizations operating today, but only occasionally are they ever publicly noted beyond their communities. Instead we hear cries for more and more government answers. But the real answers are in the communities. These voices need to be heard and encouraged, both philosophically and financially. For starters, an updated book along the lines of *Uplift* is needed. The Cato Institute has some good material along these lines but it's not enough. How many nonlibertarians read Cato books? But if libertarians are to be taken seriously and not erroneously characterized as heartless monsters who only care about themselves, we need to do more than just talk, we need to walk the walk. There are dozens of libertarian think tanks and magazines but where are the libertarian self-help organizations? The think tanks and magazines are needed, no argument there, but so are the self-help organizations.

Libertarians need to be more actively involved in creating, supporting, encouraging of, and participation in private alternative solutions. Some are helping already through volunteer work or charitable contributions. A few do it have done it through their own organizations, e.g., the Mothers Institute, which gave out scholarships for home schooling parents. The Morefield Storey Institute gives out micro-loans to needy women who want to start businesses. The new Seasteading Institute is trying to provide a complete model community. Some of the left libertarians and anarchists are starting small mutual aid organizations such as SMART (Sovereign Mutual Aid Response Teams) ; some of the activities of these groups are commented upon in Gonzo Times and other blogs such as [www.justlive.us](http://www.justlive.us) and the Alliance of the Libertarian Left. We need many more such activities.

If we want to convince others that a libertarian free society can work, we have to be able to point to practical existing alternatives to government "solutions." We also have to model it in our deeds, not just our words. The pen may be mightier than the sword but actions speak even louder.

Sharon is also the co-founder of Laissez Faire Books



## Book Reviews: Books worth reading

### FORGOTTEN WOMEN IN AMERICAN HISTORY; OPPRESSED WOMEN ELSEWHERE



#### **Ladies for Liberty: Women Who Made a Difference in American History**

by John Blundell

Reviewed by Sharon Presley

What women do is often ignored or overlooked, even when what they do has had significant historical impact. Who's surprised? Not me. Angelina and Sarah Grimke, key figures who wrote many influential essays for the abolitionist movement, for example, were not even mentioned in texts about abolitionism till the 1960's! I could list hundreds of women who have been equally neglected and in fact will do so in my book in progress on American women resisters to authority in the 19th century. So when *Ladies for Liberty* came along, I was delighted.

John Blundell, a Distinguished Senior Fellow of the Institute for Economic Affairs (IEA) and author of *Margaret Thatcher: A Portrait of the Iron Lady*, felt that same lack so he decided to do something about it. This volume describes 20 women who have had an impact on American society. Some of them you have all heard of—Ayn Rand, Harriet Tubman and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, for example. Others may be known to history buffs—Mercy Otis Warren, Abigail Adams, and the Grimke sisters among them. Libertarians will recognize names like Isabel Paterson, Laura Ingalls Wilder and Rose Wilder Lane. But I'm betting not too many of you have heard of Bina West Miller, Lila Acheson Wallace, or Dorian Fisher. The mix is his own idiosyncratic blend and many worthy women are left out but those who *are* included are fascinating. It would take an encyclopedia to include them all and you would still miss some so I won't carp over who isn't in this book.

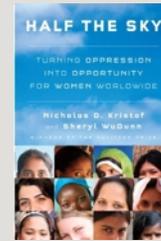
Blundell not only tells us some of the usual biographical details but why these women were important and

what their contributions were. Some stood up and made their voices heard publicly and even popularly like Stanton, Rand and Sojourner Truth. Others made their actions known by the courage of their deeds like Tubman and tax resister Vivian Kellems. Others wrote and spoke publicly, if not always popularly, such as the Grimke sisters and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Some made more subtle but significant contributions behind the scenes like Martha Washington; Abigail Adams, wife of John Adams; and Lila Acheson Wallace, publisher of *Reader's Digest* and philanthropist, who published Hayek and Henry Hazlitt; or Dorian Fisher, the philanthropist who left her fortune to the Atlas Economic Foundation and three free market think tanks, including London's IEA and the Pacific Research Institute. Those who work behind the scenes are even more under-appreciated than the women who are out in front. Highlighting this latter ignored group may be the most useful part of a very useful book.

Besides all the women mentioned above, Blundell also writes about a few you may have vaguely heard of but didn't know how important they were to classical liberal, libertarian, and/or free market thought—Jane Jacobs, Clare Boothe Luce, and Rose Director Friedman (her more famous husband Milton got all the glory). Blundell includes two women who made an impact on the business world—Madam C J Walker, the first black woman millionaire, and Bina West Miller, who in the 19th century, brought insurance to previously “uninsurable” women. One of the groups she organized, the Women's Life Insurance Society, is still operating today, with 263 chapters, as of 2009. And lastly, let me mention the most controversial choice, the novelist Taylor Caldwell, who embedded in her novels conservative, free market, and anti-communist ideas. Leftist intellectuals hated her.

If you are interested in the history of women in the US and tired of the neglect of all but a few tokens, this is

a must read. You won't find all of them in the standard histories so all the more reason to read it. Don't ever let any benighted pseudo-libertarian misogynist get away with saying “What have women ever done for liberty?” American women have had and will continue to have a significant role to play in contributing to the betterment of women and of humankind as well as upholding the banner of freedom.



#### **Half the Sky: Turning Oppression Into Opportunity for Women Worldwide** by Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn

Reviewed by Sharon Presley

Want to be saddened about the unspeakably horrible plight of women in the less industrialized countries in the world? Want to be inspired by what some of these very same women have done on their own with very little or no help from NGOS, let alone government? This book does both. I can't praise it too highly and think that every libertarian woman and man who cares about what is happening to women around the world should read this book. Though the authors are not, to my knowledge, libertarians nor is their book partisan in any way, their research highlights some of the possible non-governmental solutions to the oppression of women.

These are individual women asserting their right to their lives, their freedom, and their right to make decisions about their lives. There's Mahabouga, crippled in giving birth by neglect and lack of proper medical care, whose life was saved by the dedicated people at the little-known Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital. Or Saima in Lahore, Pakistan who had almost nothing until she got a microloan from a small private Pakistani foundation. Now she has a successful business and a remodeled home. And Neth, a former prostitute in Cambodia, who got a new start in life, albeit with some bumps along the way, because of Kristof's personal generosity. These and many more inspiring stories are told. *Continued on p. 6*



**ALF Blog featuring all sorts of things...**

The new ALF Blog Online will be available soon. Watch for our announcement on the ALF website and on the ALF Facebook page.

Watch for *The Lady*, the new film about Nobel Peace Prize winner Ang San Suu Kyi. Michelle Yeoh is the perfect pick for the leading role.

For those of you who are into anarchist and libertarian feminist history, see Shawn Wilbur's new blog Red and Black Feminist History:  
<http://blackandredfeminist.blogspot.com/>

Sharon Presley will be speaking twice at Libertopia 2012 in San Diego. One talk will be "Government Is Women's Enemy, Pt. 2" The other will be "Walking the Walk: Living and Doing Liberty, Not Just Talking About It." See [www.libertopia.org](http://www.libertopia.org) for more info.

*"The man who is entirely dependent for his livelihood upon the will of an employer is an industrial slave, and the man who may be drafted into an army and made to fight and perhaps die for a cause in which he can have no possible interest is the slave of the State; yet one can not say that this proves Aristotle's assumption that there are free natures and slave natures, any more than the subjection of women proves that they want to be subjected. What the slavery of men, as of women, implies is the existence of an economic and social order that is inimical to their interests as human beings; and it implies nothing more than this."*

—Suzanne LaFollette, *Concerning Women*, 1926

**News** continued from p. 2

On June 24th, the birthdate of Suzanne LaFollette, Sharon Presley's new article about her will be posted at the blog of the National Women's History Project. You can find it at [www.nwhp.org/blog](http://www.nwhp.org/blog). NWHP puts out a calendar of important dates every month. Go to its website to get on the e-mailing list. Also see its Facebook page.

Jeff Riggenbach's biography of Joan Kennedy Taylor is now finished. We'll let you know when it is published. We've had a sneak peek and are very excited about it.

**Join ALF Now!**  
Memberships are \$12  
for two years.  
[www.alf.org](http://www.alf.org)

*Half the Sky continued from p. 5*

But the authors don't just relate these stories, they also tell us what can be done to help, in specific detail. They talk about grassroots efforts to fight poverty, lack of education, and genital cutting. They talk about what you and I can do, including writing, advocating, and donating to charities that help women, as well as other activities. Their website [www.halfthesky.org](http://www.halfthesky.org) shows many ways that individuals can take action. If we libertarians believe that the best way to help others is through private efforts, then let's not just talk about it, let's do it! I urge you to contribute to the organization of your choice at this website or, if you can, volunteer through one of the organizations listed. We'll help make the world a better place for women and support our principles too.

**ALF**  
**1155-C Arnold Dr. #418**  
**Martinez, CA 94553**

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