

## ISSUE 86 SUMMER 2014

### News Update

We are excited to announce the new ALF blog administered by Caroline Devine. Caroline is a self-employed photographer and web designer. Our first feature will be a list of "Libertarian Women Trailblazers." This is partly in response to a tasteless "20 of the Hottest Libertarian Women" list done by Austin Petersen. We want to appreciate libertarian women for their accomplishments, not their appearances. Our list will be the first in a series of lists of libertarian women, including "Our Libertarian Foremothers," as well as a list of women of accomplishment who are newer to libertarianism. You can find the first list at <http://www.alf.org/board/wordpress/>. The lists are being put together by Christy Horpedahl and Sharon Presley, with many suggestions from other libertarian feminists. Christy is an adjunct professor at Buena Vista College in Iowa and one of the movers behind Libertaria [see Issue # 85]

In addition to Caroline, we also have a new newsletter editor on board: Sloane Shearman. Sloane works for the Institute for Humane Studies.

ALF now has a new Twitter account @ALFLiberty administered by Harriet Jespers. Harriet comes to us from Australia where she is a successful businesswoman.

Sharon Presley spoke on libertarian feminism for an intercession seminar at Wellesley College on Jan. 22, 2014.

Sharon on the book *Freedom Feminism* by Christina Hoff Sommers: Sommers thinks libertarians should join with her. Sharon says: No way. Any alliance that includes Phyllis Schlafly and the anti-choice wing of the conservative movement is not one she or any libertarian feminist should want to be part of. See her review at <http://reason.com/archives/2014/01/12/can-christina-hoff-sommers-save-feminism>.

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### IN MEMORIAM:

### Tonie Nathan

### 1923-2014

by Sharon Presley

Antonina (Tonie) Nathan made history by being the first woman in America to receive a vote from the Electoral College in 1972 and the first Jewish person to receive one as well. Because she was the vice-presidential candidate of the then-fledgling Libertarian Party (its first time in a national election), much of the media, including the feminist media tried to ignore it. But there it is. She did it and no one else, though others briefly tried to steal her fame because they didn't research properly. The maverick electoral vote from Republican Elector Roger MacBride made him a hero among libertarians.

We also know her as the woman who founded the Association of Libertarian Feminists. First started in her home town of Eugene Oregon in 1973, it went national at the Libertarian Party Convention in New York City in 1975.

At that first national meeting, Tonie was designated President of ALF while Sharon Presley became the first National Coordinator.

When Tonie first started ALF, she said: "The Association of Libertarian Feminists (ALF) was founded on Ayn Rand's birth-



day, February 2nd, 1973 in my home in Eugene, Oregon. The first members included men, as well as women. I felt an organization was needed to offer an alternative to other women's groups. It seemed to me that many women who felt unjustly treated by many of our present inequitable laws were being used by leftists and socialists for political purposes. It seemed important to counter this outside the Libertarian Party."

In *Reason*, Brian Doherty wrote: "Nathan stayed active in the L.P. the rest of her life, running for many elective offices and holding Party offices, and announced Gary Johnson as the Party's presidential nominee from the convention floor in 2012."

Tonie was dedicated to libertarianism and worked tirelessly in that cause. She will be remembered as a trailblazer as well as the founder of an organization still going strong after 41 years.

## ALF Officers

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## 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.

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## The Business of Birth: How The State Squashed Midwifery

by Julie Mastrine

When we think of women's reproductive freedom, we tend to think of access to birth control, abortion, and creating a sex-positive culture. But another important piece of reproductive freedom many overlook is the right to choice in *how* women give birth.

In the last century, women's liberty to make choices regarding childbirth has been wrenched from their hands by the authorities of the medical lobby and the state. Many don't realize it, but our image of the birth experience has been warped by the interests of big business, oppressive legislation, and propaganda.

Midwifery is among the world's most ancient professions—it's been identified in every known culture. In most developed nations, it is still the primary means by which women have babies—and these nations enjoy both a lower maternal mortality rate and lower healthcare costs.

Midwifery encompasses the process of birth as nature intended—no arms stuck with IVs. No strangers wielding surgical tools. No invasive C-sections, scheduled for the doctor's convenience. But home birth numbers have been on the decline for decades.

In 1900, nearly all U.S. births took place outside a hospital—most in the home. By 1940, this number fell to 44%. By 1969, it was just 1%, where it has remained.

Today, less than 1% of all U.S. births—just 25,000<sup>1</sup> occur at home.

Childbirth is now the number one most common reason for hospitalization in the U.S. The U.S. spends more money per capita on birth than any other country in the entire world<sup>2</sup>—one out of every seven dollars spent in the U.S. goes to healthcare, with maternity care comprising 20% of those dollars. Forty percent of hospital births are paid for by Medicaid.

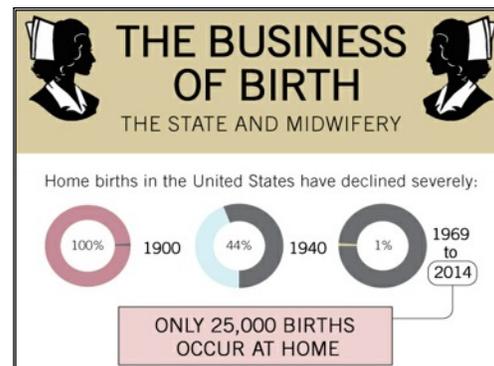
In modern times, our image of birth as a hospital experience has largely been influenced by popular culture—TV and movies show birth as an action adventure.<sup>3</sup> We see women

in a state of utter emergency, rushing to the hospital, screaming in pain, crying out for drugs. We see accidents, sick babies, and death. (Scenes from movies like *Juno* and *Knocked Up* come to mind.)

The reality is that nearly every woman is naturally equipped to handle birth without catastrophe, and in most cases, without any modern medical intervention at all.

So how did we get to this point? The answer is an amalgam of state intervention, big hospital business and PR campaigns.

In the early 20th century, physicians saw it to their advantage to use lobbying and legislation to ban and control midwifery and thus, snuff out economic competition. In a calculated move, the organized medical lobby blocked access to licensure and training for midwives between the 1900s and the 1960s.



Propaganda campaigns painted midwives as unintelligent, dirty, old-fashioned, and inferior. The hospital, by contrast, was portrayed as clean, safe, and high-tech.

Oppressive midwifery laws vary from state to state. Twelve states<sup>3</sup> have outlawed midwifery entirely. In Delaware, laws restrict access<sup>4</sup> to so-called "legal" home births. As midwife Jennifer explains,<sup>5</sup> midwives in Delaware must get licensed, but can't. For the past 10 years, legislation has required non-nurse midwives to obtain a written agreement with a doctor who has hospital privileges, which would require the midwife to be covered under the doctor's malpractice insurance. Insurance companies refuse to work with non-nurse midwives, and so, licensure is impossible.

The result? In the last ten years, only one non-nurse midwife has been licensed in the state of Delaware. The two practicing

*Midwives continued on p. 3*

# Why I Am a Libertarian Feminist

By Caroline Gorman

Lew Rockwell recently published an article “On What Libertarianism Is, and Isn’t.” I prefer not to give page views to [lewrockwell.com](http://lewrockwell.com) so I’ve provided a summary below:

- Whoa!!! Libertarianism has become popular and I am no longer the Big Fish in a Small Pond that I was once. I don’t like that.
- All of the ways of being a True Libertarian have already been done.
- I make fun of people who create their own “peculiar version” of libertarianism and claim that it “alone is the real thing” while doing precisely that.
- blah blah blah trying to speak to people on their terms in outrageous and wrong blah blah blah
- My own website is extremely eclectic, as long as your definition of eclectic includes only paleo-conservatives, which is actually a pretty narrow slice of the population.

And then we get to the heart of the matter: Mr. Rockwell does not like “thought-controllers,” “feminism” and “discussions of privilege.” These things are NOT Libertarian and are therefore Not Allowed.

Mr. Rockwell states that libertarianism “logically builds upon the principle of self-ownership” and further that “Human beings ought to interact with each other on the basis of reason – their distinguishing characteristic – rather than with hangmen and guns.”

I agree wholeheartedly with this definition of libertarianism. But I think that is something to strive for, rather than something that is true. And in order to create this libertarian world, we have to frankly recognize our own prejudices and limitations.

Human beings are not rational. We are prone to making certain kinds of logical flaws. We have inherited traditions that may or may not fit the current times. All our experiences from birth influence our perceptions and behaviors, whether or not we want it to. The human mind is prone to see conspiracy where none exists, to see intention where none exists and to see groups instead of individuals. None of this is particularly logical.

We can become more rational but it takes effort. It takes education and analysis of things like privilege and sexism. And feminism provides this.

I am a libertarian feminist because I want to eradicate prejudice. I want to treat others as individuals, not as the sum of the prejudices I carry around in my head. The world would be a better place if we were all treated as individuals, and empowered to act as individuals.

A quick caveat. I’m not talking about eradicating prejudice because it hurts my feelings, or because it’s ‘not nice.’ Prejudice daily and directly contributes to the power of the powerful, and not only by directly pushing down certain groups. Politicians also use prejudice to distract people (any culture war issue, ever) and to push laws whose real aim is their own enrichment (the war on terror, for example).

Furthermore, those “guns and hangmen” Mr. Rockwell seems so worried about disproportionately affect women, and an understanding of rape culture has contributed to a less violent society. Prejudice not only smooths the way for more violence (demonizing one group of people as “less than human” is a common technique for governments winding up for massive displays of violence) but additionally prejudice often becomes institutionalized, becoming part and parcel of the massive state you have so much disdain for. Fighting prejudice is absolutely necessary to weaken the power of the state.

And feminism has pioneered a way of examining and fighting prejudice.

Since third-wave feminism, feminism has been about understanding how prejudice affects all disempowered groups. Today, you can find plenty of feminist men and women working to understand the way in which gender prejudice harms men, for example in custody cases or in seeking paternal leave from work. I can think of nothing more libertarian than an examination of power and prejudice with the goal of actually returning power to the individual.

To me, feminism started and continued the questioning of received wisdom. Feminism admits that we are irrational, social animals but believes we can overcome that. Only with feminism can we have a world where people “interact with each other on

the basis of reason.”

So, yes, Mr. Rockwell, I am a libertarian and also a feminist – and those beliefs reinforce and strengthen one another. And I am going to continue calling myself a libertarian feminist. Or a feminist libertarian. I haven’t worked out which one I like best.

Caroline Gorman has been involved in the liberty movement for three years via the Libertarian Party, serving for



two years as the Travis County Chair and as a member of the Texas State Libertarian Executive Committee. Currently she blogs for

ThoughtsonLiberty.com as well as for her own blog, [theladylibertarian.com](http://theladylibertarian.com).

*Midwives continued from p. 2*

“underground” midwives in the state were given cease and desist orders.

“Now state investigators are showing up at the doors of our families to ask if a midwife was present at their home for their healthy, uneventful births,” Jennifer says.

Like nearly all other aspects of our lives, not even birth is free from the authority of the U.S. Police State.

Delaware is just one example. Removal of the word “midwife” from birth certificate law has disallowed midwives from filing birth certificates. This greatly tipped the pool of data available for establishing the safety of midwife-attended births in physicians’ favor.

Today, many feminists are adamantly pro-choice. They strive for a world in which women can decide at what point in their lives they would like to have a child, if at all. What’s been lost in this dichotomous discussion is interest in *how* women will give birth.

The war on midwives was successful, but there is still hope to reverse the trend. The elimination of the midwife, itself rooted in misogyny, is just a piece of the patriarchal pie that has allowed the state to maintain its authority over women’s bodies and

*Midwives continued on p.5*

# Contraception and The Case For Free-Market Feminism

By Laurie Rice

For a while, YouTube aired a commercial for Plan B, and it inspired me whenever I saw it. “No one is going to get in my way,” one actress says decisively—“No one,” “No one,” “No one,” comes the chorus of women, each one more emphatic. At first, it might seem overly righteous for a subtext which basically suggests, “the condom broke.” But the commercial is actually the market’s bold stance against a long history of regulation surrounding contraception. The women in the commercial are voices are ringing out above one of the world’s loudest shouting matches, speaking to issues of sexuality, women’s reproductive freedom, healthcare, personal responsibility, and capitalism. Both the right and the left are harmful to women’s reproductive freedom, but most harmful is government power, itself. Liberal feminists still haven’t figured out the problem or its solution, free-market capitalism.

Plan B,<sup>1</sup> or “the morning-after pill,” is a drug that can prevent pregnancy if taken within 3 days (72 hours) of a high-risk sexual encounter. It’s produced and marketed by Teva Pharmaceutical Industries and it was approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use with a prescription in 1999. But since then,<sup>2</sup> it’s been embroiled in government regulation. In 2006, Plan B became available over-the-counter, but not to young women under 18. In 2009, the FDA approved a new variety of Plan B called “One Step,” which condensed the drug into one pill rather than the two-pill process used previously. Also in 2009, the FDA approved “Next Choice,” a generic form of Plan B, which became available over-the-counter to women 17 or older, and with a prescription for anyone younger. 2011 was a setback year, with secretary of health and human services Kathleen Sebelius rejecting<sup>3</sup> Plan B’s application for full over-the-counter status, without age restrictions.

In 2013, Plan B became available over-the-counter to women of all ages. But the FDA’s approval in

2013 included a deal with Teva Pharmaceuticals for the FDA to suppress competition from products like Next Choice by continuing to enforce age restrictions on the generic drugs. Just a few weeks ago, March 2, marked a new milestone in accessible contraception when the FDA reconsidered this deal and wrote a letter to Plan B’s generic competitors, finally allowing them to sell their product over-the-counter and without age restrictions, competing fully in the market alongside name-brand Plan B.

As Cathy Reizenwicz points out at *Sex and The State*,<sup>4</sup> “the war against reason and young women regarding access to reproductive healthcare has been perpetrated, counterintuitively, by both the left and the right.” Conservative opposition to Plan B was predictable—that it’s an abortion pill (no),<sup>5</sup> that it promotes promiscuity (no),<sup>6</sup> that it strips away the moral fabric of our country (?),<sup>7</sup> etc. But the democratic opposition was more unexpected. Democrat Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius opposed open access to Plan B in 2011, and her decision was backed by Barack Obama. Obama cited<sup>8</sup> parental concern for the safety of his daughters and the *unknown* risks the drug *might* have for young women’s bodies. (This is glaringly omitting the *known* risks pregnancy *definitely* has for young women’s bodies. Also omitted: that it’s immoral for anyone to use the force of government to control other people’s sexual health decisions.)

Liberal feminists still aren’t identifying the actual problem: government power. Beyond left and right, though, the good guys and bad guys in the contraception battle are all mixed up. Liberal feminists with the best intentions for women’s reproductive freedoms still aren’t identifying the actual problem: government power. There isn’t enough criticism of the government’s authority, *as such*, to control the market and thus control women’s access to the products that can improve their lives. Left feminists laud<sup>9</sup> each successive FDA decision as carrying out justice, forgetting that the FDA created the injustice in the first place. For its latest change-of-heart, allowing Next Choice to com

cococopete fully on the market, Jessica Arons, president of the advocacy group Reproductive Health Technologies Project, “commend[s]”<sup>10</sup> the FDA... everyone deserves a second chance to get it right, including the FDA,” Arons said.

The FDA isn’t to be commended—it did nothing to add value, at any point. Teva Pharmaceuticals created a valuable product; a product that provides women with relief, control over their own reproduction, and a lifestyle with more possibilities and happiness than the experience of an unwanted pregnancy. The FDA obstructed women from this product for 15 years. That’s a window of time big enough to include two generations of unwanted teen pregnancies: scared young women who did not get their Plan B—their second chance—at a brighter, less fearful, less stressful adolescence. At a life unmarked by either the massive commitment of having a child or the difficult decision of abortion.

The FDA doesn’t need a second chance; it needs to be undermined, disobeyed, and abolished.

There also isn’t enough advocacy by feminists for a free-market, or enough understanding by feminists of the differences between corporatism and capitalism. The power of the government to regulate business provides opportunities for companies like Teva Pharmaceuticals to exert control over women’s choices, even while they otherwise provide women with valuable products. When the government’s ability to control the market *exists*, large companies like Teva Pharmaceuticals are incentivized to use the government to suppress their competitors. This is the structure of corporatism,<sup>11</sup> the context of every “sweetheart deal,”<sup>12</sup> as it was called by Maya Dusenberry, executive editor at *Feministing*. The competition in this case was the generic drug Next Choice. In a free market, instead of wasting millions of dollars in negotiations and lawsuits with the government, Teva could have spent its money and time honing the Plan B product to beat the competition, with consumers as the ultimate winners of a much lower cost morning-after pill.

Meanwhile, the Center For

*Contraception continued on p. 5*

Reproductive Rights,<sup>13</sup> the legal organization that petitioned the FDA on behalf of Teva Pharmaceuticals' Plan B, has moved onto new projects. Namely, a twitter campaign called #NotMyBossBusiness to raise awareness about the upcoming Supreme Court hearing on whether ideological businesses can deny women insurance coverage for birth control. Should a business prevent its female employees from using birth control on its insurance plan? Morally speaking, no. But a legal decision just further enmeshes the government with the private sector. In a fully free market, health insurance companies would be able to do business directly with their customers, instead of through employers. The current system is cobbled together through decades of mandates, subsidies, and regulation.

Liberal feminists and groups like the Center For Reproductive Rights are still missing the larger picture: that government involvement in the market is the reason why so many women have to get insurance through their employer in the first place. That government involvement in women's health means today's contraception victory is tomorrow's political bargaining chip, to be traded by people like Kathleen Sebelius. That state power is more inescapable, more inflexible, and more insidious to women's freedoms than any Hobby Lobby conservative craft store could ever be. Feminists need to embrace free-market capitalism. They should take a cue from the Plan B commercials: that no one should stand between women and their freedom to earn money and spend it on the products they choose. Not the right. Not the left. Not the government itself. No one. No one. No one.

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*Laurie Rice is a writer and research assistant for The Atlas Society and the editor of David Kelley's logic and critical thinking textbook, The Art of Reasoning. She received degrees in English, philosophy, and psychology from Cornell College.*

*Midwives continued from p. 3*

liberty. So much so that the one of the most liberating experiences of all—the creation of new life—has been squashed under the State's heel.

Midwives advocate for an arrangement between physicians and midwives in which each body of knowledge guides and informs the other. It's time for a reimagining of birth on both an individual and national level. And above all, it's time to finally put care and compassion for mothers and babies first.

## References

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### Links for Julie's bio:

Care2 = <http://www.care2.com>  
 Stop Street Harassment = <http://www.stopstreetharassment.org>

Twitter = <http://www.twitter.com/@juliemastrine>

E-book = <http://thoughtcatalog.com/book/make-your-own-sandwich/>

*Julie Mastrine is a writer and feminist. She is the Activism Marketing and Social Media Manager at Care2 and is a social media volunteer for Stop Street Harassment. Follow Julie on Twitter and check out her e-book. (link above)*



## ALF PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

*Libertarianism and Feminism: Individualist Perspectives on Women, Men, and the Family*  
 Edited by Sharon Presley and Ross Kenyon

An anthology of theoretical, political, and social issues.  
 Suzanne LaFollette reprint edited by Sharon Presley  
 ALF Blog administered by Caroline Devine

First blog = *Libertarian Women Trailblazers*

ALF Video Channel edited by Elizabeth Nolan Brown; appearing on ALF YouTube and on C4SS network

*If you like what we are doing, please consider joining and/or donating at alf.org*

## ENDORSEMENTS FOR ALF

*"The Association of Libertarian Feminists provides lots of fascinating information, analysis, and critical thought to fight against both state power and sexism."*  
 – Nathan Goodman

*"Libertarians who only focus on state oppression and not social oppression are not consistent nor are they helping to move the ball forward. I love this organization."* – Antonio Buehler



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

**NEW ALF SOCIAL MEDIA**

A real *ALF blog* is at <http://www.alf.org/board/wordpress/>.  
**Twitter:** @ALFLiberty  
**Facebook:**  
<https://www.facebook.com/AssociationofLibertarianFeminists>

**YouTube:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmzLWx5ZPRJDnDf2WVEG6PQ/videos?view=1>

**News** continued from p. 1

Hoff Sommers, not at all pleased, replies: <http://reason.com/archives/2014/01/18/saving-feminism>. But Sharon gets the last (best) word: <http://reason.com/archives/2014/01/30/last-word-freedom-feminism-isnt>

**Other Criticisms of Hoff Sommers**

Sharon is not the only one who thinks Hoff Sommers's research is sloppy and selective. See <http://familyinequality.wordpress.com/2014/05/01/factual-feminist/>

The Libertaria Society [see #85] conference was held June 6th to June 8th Washington in D.C. The participants discussed Rose Wilder Lane's "Credo," Voltairine De Cleyre's "Anarchism," and Isabel Paterson's "God of the Machine" as well as what brought the women there to liberty, and who and what they believe the future of liberty will be. Sarah Skwire delivered a lecture on government's (negative) effects on women. Rachel Davison and Christy Horpedahl also spoke.

"Do you see these 10 everyday sexism?" An excellent list of what psychologists call "benevolent sexism." Things some people don't even recognize as sexism. <http://tinyurl.com/n3y3klb>  
**Cathy Reisenwitz interviews Angela Keaton** of Anti-War.com on YouTube at <http://tinyurl.com/ldek9t8>

**RECENT AND RECOMMENDED:**

*THE NEW SOFT WAR ON WOMEN*  
*How the Myth of Female Ascendance Is Hurting Women, Men—and Our Economy*  
by Caryl Rivers, Rosalind C. Barnett

**Join ALF Now!**

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*"Nothing could be more grotesquely unjust than a code of morals, reinforced by laws, which relieves men from responsibility for irregular sexual acts, and for the same acts drives women to abortion, infanticide, prostitution, and self-destruction."*  
-Suzanne LaFollette

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