



Karl Hess

FOF INTERVIEW

KARL HESS: SURVIVAL TODAY

Karl Hess is best known as the former speech writer for Senator Barry Goldwater during the 1964 presidential campaign. During that campaign he coined the phrase "Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice." A speechwriter for both President Nixon and Ford, Hess turned radical libertarian in the late 1960's and began to advocate decentralism and individualist anarchism.

Hess was denounced by William F. Buckley and others for his infamous statement, "I love the country. I loathe the nation."

A former *Newsweek* editor, Hess' most popular work is a short, award-winning *Playboy* article (1969) entitled "The Death of Politics" (1969). Hess has also published a book entitled *Dear America* and writes for a survivalist journal (*Survival Tomorrow*).

The following interview with Hess took place recently over telephone to West Virginia.

Q. "I see that you will be speaking about survivalism and liberty at the next FOF conference. Do you consider yourself a survivalist?"

A. "God, I hope so. You see, I consider survivalism as intelligence. The level of stupidity in the world has become epidemic. Most people can't do anything. People don't know how to survive. If there were a big disaster, they would simply die because they would not know what it takes to maintain life. It seems to me that survivalism is just common sense."

Q. "Where did survivalism start?"

A. "I believe that the first modern survivalists were those who prepared for nuclear war in the 1960's and built bomb shelters and stored food. But things have changed. Now people fear their own government and breakdown of society more than Russian bombs.

"Today's survivalists are interested in skills and practical application to the world. I would also say that many survivalists are from the counter-culture of the 1960's. But they are less ideological. They follow common sense."

Q. "These survivalists are less ideological?"

A. "Oh, yes. The heyday of ideology is over. I hope so anyway. It is not practical, especially for survivalists in the countryside. They cannot eat ideology. They cannot make money with ideology. It is the knowledge of skills, tools and small-scale technology that is important. This is what is in demand, not talk of ideology and politics."

Q. "Do you think computers will play an important part in the survivalist movement?"

A. "They will be very important. I have a friend down the road who works two days a week in a rented office nearby where he does his computer work. His family lives in a tent and they are beginning to build a house. Computer technology allows him to work nearby and still make good money. More and more people are doing this type of thing."

Q. "You have said that you are a welder. Do you do other things too?"

A. "Well, I am still homesteading. As for income, I am now mainly in the furniture repair business. I sell furniture, which is old, but not quite antique, at a weekly open-air market in Washington D.C."

Q. "Is it part of the underground economy?"

A. "Well, most of the vendors ignore the government. And the government does not interfere with the sellers. It's a nice arrangement."

Q. "Do most of your rural neighbors get involved in the underground economy?"

A. "Oh, yes. Almost everyone swaps goods and skills. Remember, these are practical people. They know when they are getting a bargain. And paper money is no bargain."

Q. "You have not been out here in California for several years. What have you been doing?"

A. "I have taken up Aikido."

Q. "Is that some type of self-defense martial art?"

A. "I would not call it so much self-defense as self-control. It is very different and interesting.

"I am working on two new books. One is called *The Policy of Place*, and the other one, which I am just starting, is called *The Plague of Dumb*.

"And, oh yes, there was one other thing. I almost died."

Q. "You almost died!"

A. "I nearly died from congestive heart failure. This weakened my condition so much that I soon contracted pneumonia. I was laid up for two months."

Q. "You were in the hospital for two months?"

A. "Hospital, what hospital? I stayed home. Hospitals are expensive. I read a few books and took digitalis, which is an ancient drug for heart problems. I should mention that congestive heart failure is one of the more minor heart ailments. But the sickness made me more determined to stay healthy. So I now work out and try to take better care myself."

Interviewer: "Thank you for your time."



Barbara Branden



Thomas Hazlett

BARBARA BRANDEN is the author of the forthcoming biography *The Passion of Ayn Rand*, to be published in 1984. She was a long-time associate of Ayn Rand and is the former Managing Editor of *The Objectivist*. Branden has degrees in philosophy from UCLA and New York University. She has spoken frequently at recent libertarian gatherings, including last year's Future of Freedom Conference.

THOMAS HAZLETT teaches economics at Cal State University, Fullerton and is Senior Editor of the *Manhattan Report on Economic Policy*. He has written for such publications as *Reader's Digest*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Reason*, *Inquiry* and *Across the Board*. His article, "The Supply Side's

Weak Side: An Austrian's Critique" appeared in *Supply Side Economics: A Critical Appraisal*, published in 1982.



Henry Mark Holzer



John Hospers

HENRY MARK HOLZER is a constitutional lawyer whose writings in the field include three books: *The Gold Clause*, *Government's Money Monopoly*, and *Sweet Land of Liberty? The Supreme Court and Individual Rights*. Professor Holzer has been a lawyer for nearly twenty-five years, and teaches at Brooklyn Law School. He represented the late author Ayn Rand, and currently represents teen-aged Walter Polovchak, seeking to prevent his forcible return to the Soviet Union.

JOHN HOSPERS is among the most influential and widely read libertarians. He is currently a USC professor of philosophy.

SCHEDULE:

FRIDAY, OCT. 21

Long Beach City College, Liberal Arts Campus
Building E (College Center), Gokstad Room (downstairs)

8:00 pm—10:00 pm

Freedom Film Festival, *The Fountainhead*.

SATURDAY, OCT. 22

Long Beach City College, Liberal Arts Campus, Building E (College Center)

9:30 am—10:00 am

George Smith, *Keynote Speech*.

10:00 am—11:00 am

Lee and Joyce Shulman, *Adventure in Freedom*.

11:00 am—12 Noon

Robert Poole, *A New Approach to National Defense*.

12:00—1:00 pm

Lunch

1:00 pm—2:00 pm

Karl Hess, *Survivalism and Liberty*.

2:00 pm—3:30 pm

PANEL: Murray Rothbard, Robert LeFevre and John Hospers, *The Nature of Justice*.

3:30 pm—4:00 pm

Break

4:00 pm—5:00 pm

Henry Mark Holzer, *The Walter Polovchak Case and Constitutional Law*.

5:00 pm—6:00 pm

Butler D. Shaffer, *The Institutional Causes of Conflict*.

SATURDAY NIGHT BANQUET

Long Beach Holiday Inn, Grand Banquet Hall

7:00 pm—8:00 pm

No-Host Bar

8:00 pm—9:00 pm

Dinner

9:00 pm—11:30 pm

Mencken Awards and Tribute to Murray Rothbard.

SUNDAY, OCT. 23

Long Beach City College, Liberal Arts Campus, Building E (College Center)

10:00 am—11:00 am

Thomas Hazlett, *Supply Side Economics: A Critical Appraisal*.

11:00 am—12:00 Noon

Ben Sasway, *The Draft: Why I Did Not Register*.

12:00 Noon—1:00 pm

Lunch

1:00 pm—2:00 pm

Barbara Branden, *Ayn Rand: The Charisma of Reason*.

2:00 pm—3:30 pm

Irwin Schiff, *The Untax Movement*.

3:30 pm—4:00 pm

Break

4:00 pm—5:00 pm

Lowell Ponte, *Science and Socialism: Government Funding on New Frontier Ideas*.

5:00 pm—6:00 pm

Wendy McElroy, *War vs. Libertarianism*.