

# Liberty Union Candidate For Governor Is Interviewed



SPS Photo: Jim Morse

by Barbara Frankel

Bernard Sanders, Liberty Union candidate for Governor, was interviewed by this reporter on October 23. The following are excerpts from the interview.

**Q.** What do you think the role of a third party is in Vermont politics?

**A.** Let me start out by saying that there is no question in my mind that we're going to do much better than we've ever done before. The feedback that we've been getting back lately is incredible. If people vote their consciences, instead of constantly compromising and saying, as they do to me, "I agree with what you're saying but I'm going to vote for Salmon"; if people stand with their principles, we're going to do extraordinarily well. At this point I would not say that it's likely that I can win, but I think it's not even impossible.

It's a three-way race, so 35% to win. I'm not saying we are going to win, but we're running very hard. We're in it to win. What's made us strong and what's made us good is that what we say is the function of politicians should not be just to get elected. Somebody has got to stand up and say what they believe, irregardless of how the votes go. The reason why less than 30% of the people participated in the primary, as they did here in Vermont, is that they have a contempt for politicians now. We say, you may not agree with everything we say, but this is what we believe.

**Q.** What do you think the real difference between Tom Salmon and Fred Hackett is?

**A.** Well, I would say that Fred is a typical Vermont conservative, running in the tradition of Deane Davis, with strong ties to the business establishment, very conservative about the issues. I should also say that I think Fred is a good man and an honest man.

Tom is a liberal, who's having a very tough time of it. He wants to go get some of the conservative Republicans, who are disenchanted with

Hackett... and on the other hand he's afraid that he's going to lose votes to us. Tom is better, certainly more liberal, than Fred Hackett on many issues.

**Q.** What do you think, then, the real difference is between Nixon and McGovern?

**A.** I despise Nixon. I think Nixon is a dangerous man who shouldn't be President of the United States. We are supporting Dr. Spock 100% for President. I say the same thing as Spock, I think McGovern is a pretty decent person, I think in terms of humanity and common decency he's far superior than Nixon is, but we are not supporting McGovern at all. It's time for something new and you've got to break from the Democratic party and the Republican party. You need a new party and that's what we're all about.

**Q.** If you are elected governor, you will automatically be a member of the Board of Trustees of UVM, ex officio. What position would your administration take toward UVM, in general, and as far as appropriations from the legislature are concerned?

**A.** Well, I'll give you an answer that might surprise you...My own feeling, by and large, is that education in America is about played out. I don't think the University is a particularly relevant place right now. I think most people go to universities because they need a piece of paper called a degree, so they can go out and get a higher-paying job. I think there are people who are academically oriented, who are interested and that's fine.

A proposal that I've made is that, if elected governor, I would like to see the college degree requirement for state employment waived. I would like to see people get jobs if they can do the work, not if they have pieces of paper.

On the other hand, there are many Vermonters, kids who want to go to college and they could be entitled. I don't mean to condemn you, but I don't think anymore that the

University is a Mecca to the good life...We would like to see changes in getting to what education is really about and deemphasism on pieces of paper, college degrees.

**Q.** One of the main issues of this campaign and, specifically, of the Liberty Union Party, is that of land reform and the problem of large corporation buying property in Vermont. Could you comment on this.

**A.** This is a very serious problem in this state. In the last ten years, the price of land has skyrocketed. What's happened primarily is that big money has come in and bought up huge tracts of land and started development. As a result of that, land values go up, prices go up and so forth. And Vermonters, people that have lived here all their lives, can't afford to buy land—the prices are too high. We've said that we are 100% opposed to real estate speculation. If somebody wants to buy a piece of land in this state to live on it, then that's fine. But we don't think that the land in this state should be used for profit...I think the problem is complex and I have a simple solution, that I will do all I can to stop the use of land for a quick buck.

**Q.** What would you recommend as basic changes in Vermont's tax structure?

**A.** I think the state of Vermont, like any state, has basic economic problems...Over a third of the people of Vermont live below the Federal Department of Labor's statistic's definition of poverty...Things need to be done. Where are we going to get the money to do that? We have said, (and I have campaigned on this and the other candidates have not) is that the state of Vermont cannot follow the economic program of any other state. These things will have to be solved on a national level...Every single day, the military in this country spends two hundred million dollars to support a military dictatorship in Viet Nam. We don't need a military budget like that...It seems to me that a governor of Vermont, or any other state, should say, "Hey, you can't spend two hundred million dollars a day on the military when we need money back home." That's Vermonters' tax money and that money should come right back home.

In the state of Vermont, we have a regressive tax system, that is, working people pay far too much taxes than they should...We need to reverse that whole trend and begin to tax corporations. We've got to revise the property tax absolutely because it hits much too much of the working people.

**Q.** Would you advocate any changes in the welfare system?

**A.** Sure would, welfare is a bad deal all around. It doesn't provide enough for the people on welfare, it keeps them in poverty. It antagonizes the working people, who work very hard.

We say, what you've got to do in this country, and this is the basic economic tenet of Liberty Union, is to provide a decent standard of living for

everybody in America. We don't need poverty. Liberty Union is not for helping the poor, but for abolishing poverty.

**Q.** Would you favor any changes by the legislature on the issues of abortion and drugs?

**A.** We feel it is not the function of government to legislate morality. We think the government gets much, too much involved in people's individual lives, and we've got to get them out of that.

Abortion is a very sensitive issue. There are many people who feel that it is murder. I happen to respect their point of view. I don't think, however, that they have the right to impose that point of view on others. What we say is that...that decision is up to a woman and her physician. We're not for a liberal abortion bill; we're not for a conservative abortion bill.

Drugs fall into the same category. By and large, the evidence seems to be that marijuana smoking is less dangerous than cigarette smoking. Whether it is or it isn't, it is not the function of the government to regulate it...Personal morality is not the business of the government.

**Q.** If you are elected, how much of this do you think would be feasible?

**A.** Liberty Union is running fifteen candidates for state legislature...but there is no question, that if I got elected the legislature would be hostile. I admit that, but, at least, you've got to start at the beginning. You've got to stand up and fight. In the long run, what we need is an entirely new legislature. The legislature of Vermont is not representative of the people. The average age, for example, of the Vermont legislator is close to sixty...We're for opening up the process to women, to young people and to working people. We offer a proposal by which the state of Vermont will guarantee a person's job after he has served his three months' in the legislature. We can fight, we can open up the process to the people, but there is a limit to what we can do until the legislature is changed.

## Harpo, Chic

The Marx Brothers Films are being shown three times a week end. Two showings in Cook Hall at 7:30 and 9:30 pm on Friday nights and 2:00 pm Sunday afternoons in Life Science hall.

Tickets for all showings are available at the Information Desk in Billings Center from Monday on. Students with SA Membership have first call on seats from Monday to Wednesday at noon. From Noon on the tickets are available to faculty and staff as well. Tickets are also available at the door. There is no charge for tickets, they are required to make sure that the audience is only as large as the hall's size will permit.