Self-government advocate spreads message here

By Priscilla Daves
of The Times

People function better when left to govern themselves — unfettered by rules, regulations and taxes.

That's a message Marshall Fritz, founder and chairman of the Advocates for Self-Government, spread in Gainesville Tuesday. He spreads the same message wherever he speaks.

It's a philosophy Gainesville businessman Barry Conner believes in so strongly he spent $6,000 to bring Fritz here.

"I believe in what he has to say," Connor said.

Conner said he plans to begin study groups from people interested in Fritz's message.

Fritz of Fresco, Calif., spoke to a group of about 200 people at Holiday Hall who came to hear his message and get a copy of Robert Ringer's book, "Restoring the American Dream." The book outlines the Libertarians' philosophy that the economic and social pattern works best with the least interference in the free market.

Fritz said that for people to thrive they need:

- New ideas, new tools in order to live better, more productive lives.
- Human energy that comes in the presence of individual choice.
- A spirit of cooperation.

"All these happen in an atmosphere of individual choice," he said. "The easiest way to see this is to take a look at the United States and the Soviet Union. Ask yourself how many things you have touched in your life that were invented in a Communist society?"

And later he said, "Ask yourself how many people in rubber rafts are rowing toward Cuba tonight. People migrate toward freedom."

Fritz, in an interview earlier in the day, said he once defined himself as a liberal. During years of reading and study, he gradually came to the conclusion that he fit into neither the liberal nor conservative camps.

People try to fit political beliefs on a flat scale with the left representing liberals and the right representing conservatives, he said.

John Kennedy fits just left of center, Barry Goldwater fits right of center.

But the simplistic graph breaks down, he said, because it does not take into account totalitarianism and libertarians — which would be respectively below or above the graph line.

A conservative believes that the market should be unhampered by rules and regulations. The social or civil liberties should be strictly controlled, Fritz said.

A liberal, he said, would believe that civil liberties should be unhampered, but the market must be controlled.

A totalitarian is a person who thinks he knows what is best for himself and for others, he said.

A libertarian, on the other hand, thinks civil liberties and the marketplace should have few restrictions.

"What we love about America is its tradition of self-government," he said.

"What disturbs many of us is that we seem to be walking away from self-government and toward the vein that government owns us. We are walking away from our heritage."

Fritz said people have been told that certain services must be supplied by the government, among them utilities, streets and fire protection.

St. Louis has sold its streets to the adjacent property owners and revitalized neighborhoods, he said.

Lubbock, Texas, has competing power companies. "And if you want to switch, the new company will call the old company for you," Fritz said.

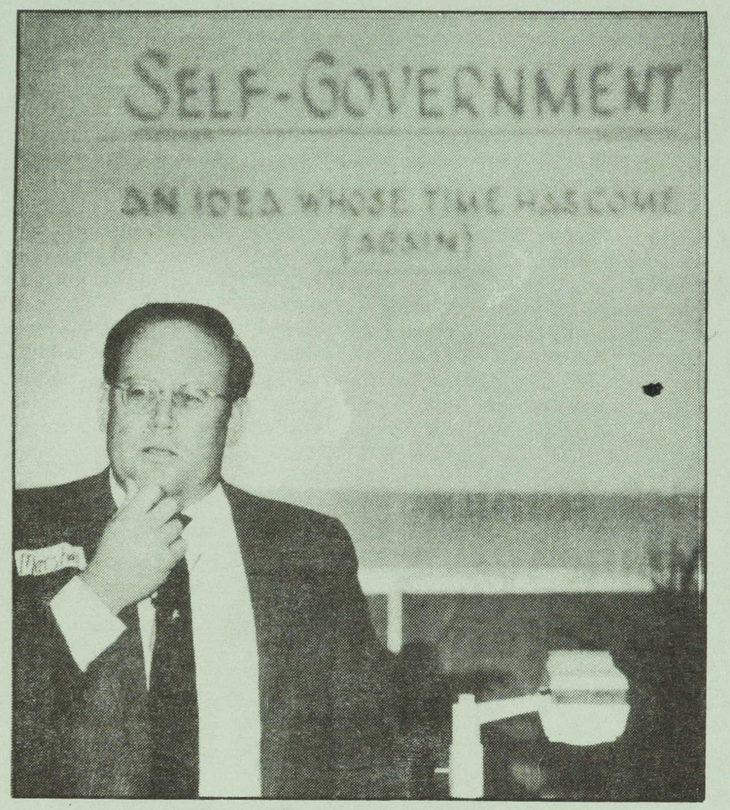
Hall County has an example: It has a fire department that works under a private company for profit.

A system that allows only the government to provide a service is wrong, Fritz said. In a private service, the individual incentive is betterment of the person and his or her family, though providing the best possible service. Otherwise, someone else will provide the service.

In public service, the incentive is to build a bigger department in order to better a person or his or her family.

"Pubic servants are the best people in the world, but the motivation they have is wrong," Fritz said.

"You people brought Coca-Cola Co. to its knees and they brought back the old formula you liked," Fritz said. "Can you imagine what would have happened if that had been the post office?"



The Times/Johnny Bailey

Fritz: "People migrate toward freedom."

J.S. Mill said new ideas go through three phases: Ridicule, Argument and Adoption. Using five phases, it would be: Criminal, Absurd, Bold, Chic and Self-Evident. Just a few years ago most media treated our ideas as absurd.

During this decade we are moving to "bold." Witness the excellent tone of last weeks' Newsweek article on Ed Crane, David Boaz and Cato Foundation (9/1). And we're not doing so badly ourselves. Next we move from Bold to Chic. Stay tuned!

THE INDIANAPOLIS NEWS Tuesday, July 22, 1986

U.S. self-government seen 'slipping through our fingers'

The Indianapolis News

"Self government in America is slipping between our fingers, and we're losing it faster than the erosion of topsoil"

That's the opinion of Marshall Fritz, founder of the Advocates for Self-Government.

The 43-year-old resident of Fresno, Calif., will speak at 7 tonight at the Holiday Inn North by the Pyramids, 3850 DePauw Boulevard.

His topic will be "Introduction to Libertarianism."

He defines Advocates for Self-Government as a non-partisan educational organization specializing in inventing better ways for liberty-minded people to communicate their ideas.

In an interview today Fritz said Indianapolis is the next-to-last stop on a 26-day tour he is making of the eastern United States and Canada. He usually makes three tours a year plugging for liberty.

A past executive director of the Libertarian Party in California, Fritz said the party is just one of 51 organizations committed to the Libertarian movement.

"My speech is not for the political party, but for the entire libertarian movement. My focal point is to get key opinion leaders to encounter our ideas, evaluate

Marshall Fritz

them and where appropriate, embrace them," he explained.

Before becoming involved in the Libertarian philosophy, Fritz was in computer sales for IBM for 15 years.

"What I do at these sessions is teach communication. Many Libertarians are very bright, but they are not very good communicators. My purpose is to make these people more effective in communicating their own ideas," Fritz added.

"We are attempting to introduce our ideas to members of the public. It is a presentation of an idea whose time has come. 'Again we can make America a special place' is the message.

"We used to have much more self-government 100 years ago. What makes America such a good place is that we can apply self-government 60 to 65 percent of the time. And Americans are relatively unaffected by political coercion," he pointed out.

"This certainly is not true in the Soviet Union or South Africa and in some countries in South America. Even in Sweden, people are enjoying self-government only 40 percent of the time.

"We have two aims in Libertarianism. First is the person who is governing himself and lives a well behaved life.

"The other part is to get a person to refrain from trying to dominate other people and coerce them into accepting this individual's values. Hitler is a greatest example of this in the 20th Century. He didn't leave anything up to self-government at all," Fritz concluded.

"No one should be allowed to force his standards of right and wrong on anybody."

Journal and Courier, Sunday, July 27, 1986

Ex-salesman now sells non-government

LAFAYETTE, INDIANA

By Margaret Sizemore
Journal and Courier

Political power is something Marshall Fritz wants to live without.

Fritz, 43, used to be a computer salesman for IBM and was active in the Libertarian party.

Fritz

He started the Fresno, Calif.-based Advocates for Self-Government 1½ years ago. He was in Lafayette this past week, one of many places he has visited in his quest to educate Americans about self-government.

The idea of self-government is one that's been around for a while, he said. Perhaps it started when Thomas Jefferson and Samuel Adams began questioning the merit of the British monarchy back in the 1700s. It was plainly evident when American sentiment about slavery did an about-face in one generation during the Abolitionist movement of the 1800s, he said.

"We're looking toward a replacement of coercion of political government by persuasion of self-government," Fritz said. "How it's going to be done, I don't know."

Fritz defines the self-government idea he expounds this way: It's each person governing himself or herself responsibly, rather than trying to govern others through domination by force.

"I think power, particularly political power, is a corrupting influence on the human spirit," he said.

"Adolf Hitler is certainly one of the more repugnant examples," he said. "The Inquisition is certainly something that started with the best intention of helping people save their souls. But because they tried to employ force, it turned out to be a big mess."

Would things be different if the Libertarians became a major political party in America?

"I think things wouldn't change much, that they would start a new government bureau called the bureau of government dismantlization," Fritz said. "That department would grow faster than all the others would shrink. I don't urge them to really take and hold political power, because of its corrupting influence."

Fritz said he sees the self-government group growing in the years to come way beyond the 200,000 people it now has as subscribers. He said he hopes it'll grow to 5 million people — doctors, lawyers, priests and teachers — those who lead American opinion. The idea will travel through testimony, he said.

"We're teensy weensy. We're looking forward to being small and then large," he said. "Right now it's more important that we understand what the destination is than what will be the journey. If you want that destination enough, you'll get there."