

Making the Most of the Shutdown



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“The Self Owner” is an original column appearing every Wednesday at Everything-Voluntary.com, by Spencer W. Morgan. Spencer is a husband and father, and has studied History and Philosophy at the University of Utah. Archived columns can be found [here](#). OVP-only RSS feed available [here](#).

We are now a couple weeks now into the supposed “government shutdown” and, of course, the horrific chaos and societal meltdown that was presumed to ensue. We are starting to see the ways this strategy has backfired.

By forcing the shutdown, both parties seem to have expected that the people would blame the other and clamor for a return of the budget and programs that they, respectively, see as essential. It is critical that proponents of liberty not align on either partisan side here, as they both have based their positions on philosophically anti-liberty presumptions. The association with the “tea party” as being a partially “libertarian” movement has already severely damaged the perception about the philosophy of liberty... and these Republicans are not acting on that philosophy.

What both parties seem to have failed to anticipate was that, by going through this supposed “shutdown” we would see that life goes on. People have witnessed the ridiculous spectacle of government agents being paid to “shut down” and prevent access to national parks, even though the park service is independently profitable and needs no tax funding. Faced with the outrage and unashamed defiance of these edicts, the agents of the state have backed down and allowed access to many of these sites. How were they going to pay people to keep people out anyway?

As an anarchist I see this as a huge opportunity, and one that should not be missed by anyone who desires to significantly reduce the operations of any level of government. Point out to people that their life is still going on. With every private or volunteer solution that steps in to fill the void of an unavailable Federal service, point out to people that the free market will accomplish those things that are important to people.

No activism, or bitter tirades are necessary. Those tend to turn people off. This is a battle for a perception, and humor is the best weapon here. Use every opportunity to expose the

absurdity of the situation, and expose the contradictions involved to ridicule it.