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Las Cruces Sun-News

If taxes aren't your cup of tea ...

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The Boston Tea Party took place in December 1773, and was one of the creative, iconic, in-your-face-King George moments of our nation's genesis.

It was an act of rebellion, a protest against England's sneaky tax on tea coming to the New World. They couldn't put it past us, and it spurred our Declaration of Independence and helped fuel the fire of revolution.

Today, many groups are using the Boston Tea Party imagery to protest taxes and other grievances.

The Libertarian and Republican parties are planning mass, nationwide tea party protests today — they pointedly picked today, April 15 — picketing what they believe to be unfair and/or unnecessary governmental taxing and spending practices. Locally, there will be a tea party today at 6 p.m. at Branigan Memorial Library.

Other groups have jumped on the boat.

Advocates for the New Mexico Voices for Children will hold a protest at the main post office in Albuquerque, using their voices to promote tax fairness and transparency. They believe other tax day tea parties are being promoted by corporations who are still getting away with loopholes King George enabled in the days of the Boston Tea Party. And they believe that's at the expense of the health and well-being of many of our state's children and families.

At the downtown post office in Las Cruces, today at 4:30 p.m., local gay and lesbian activists will protest demanding equal rights for equal taxes. They believe the government practices discrimination

with its tax policy toward same-sex couples. While they are expected to pay the same taxes, they don't believe they have access to the same governmental benefits as heterosexual married couples.

There's a bit of mixing of metaphors going on with these protests. Now that we have a representative form of government, there's — in theory, at least — a better way for protesters to direct their energies than standing on a street corner.

On the other hand, what a beautiful example of American freedom. Printed clearly in the First Amendment is the "right of the people peaceably to assemble."

In many countries, such groups might be met with tanks, rifle points or machine guns. But here in New Mexico, and across America, these groups will be met with news cameras, sympathetic car honks and, at worst, a few middle fingers.

These disparate groups are able, through this patriotic method, to raise some excellent points. While some of the protesting groups are diametrically opposed, it's no surprise they can find common ground in their dissatisfaction with our taxation system.

Anyone in love with the IRS, please raise your hand now. Just as we thought. No hands went up.

Though these events will change nothing today, they will spark ideas, further conversations, and perhaps lead to changes in the future.