

Let Freedom Ring!

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Your Editor on Real Issues
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Let Freedom Ring! and Libertarian Strategy Gazette are edited and published by George Phillies, 48 Hancock Hill Drive, Worcester MA 01602, who is solely responsible for the contents, for the Pioneer Valley Libertarian Association (www.pvla.net) and Liberty for Massachusetts (www.LibertyForMassachusetts.org) Subscriptions are available from the PVLA, c/o Carol McMahon, 221 Bumstead Road, Monson MA for \$15/year to Activists, \$20/year to others. Checks payable "PVLA".

National Committee Meets

March 11-12, 2006, Charlotte NC

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- 1) Finances and Budget

The Treasurer's Report began with the statement, "2005 – We Survived!" That was a bit disconcerting. The financial reports reveal that the party is on a relatively stable footing but at a very low level. The summary balance sheet shows donations of \$1,487,896.34 in 2005 and expenses of

[LNC Meets] (Continued on page 2)

Underwood on Petitioning

On some streets incumbent Democrat Sean Curran appears to be unpopular, but I do not know that he will be the ultimate nominee. Supposed pro-gun groups, pro-marijuana groups, and progay groups continue to sit out the nomination process. (NRA GOAL MASSCANN MassEquality NORML). They did this the last time, so we have anti-gay, anti-gun, and pro-war on drugs Democrat Sean Curran for State Representative. I am beginning to think the main enemy of these groups is themselves.

After my first month I have about 100 signatures for my State Representative Campaign. They unusual part is that while "minorities" are said to not vote, Puerto Ricans continue to make up the vast majority of my signatures. Very rarely does one refuse to sign.

Every time I do this it seems to get a little easier. I think it is important to run consistently. We should be running someone all the time. I am getting some amount of positive name recognition. Not being a major party is making it easier. Robert Joseph Underwood Springfield, MA

No State Convention Yet

May 1, 2006 As of this writing the Libertarian Party of Massachusetts has yet to schedule its annual convention, which historically has usually been held near the April 15 Income Tax Day weekend. The notification and other rules in the bylaws require a three month lead time to hold a convention.

Efforts to hold a state convention encountered a range of difficulties, leading State Chair Tom LaRoche to indicate to the state committee that the state convention would be postponed at least three and a half months from mid-April, i.e., the state convention will not take place before August.

The Party State Committee last met in October 2005. The former newsletter editor has resigned, so there has not been an LPMA newsletter recently. To the best of our knowledge, the only Libertarians currently running for office are Steve Epstein for Selectman and Bob Underwood for State Representative. The LPMA appears to have no candidates for statewide office and no candidates for Federal office.

Only You Can Save the LPMA

Many of you who are receiving this are Massachusetts libertarians. You may be an activist, you may have largely dropped out and faded away, but at one time you may have cared at least a bit about the Libertarian Party in Massachusetts.

Would you like our state party to do something? Anything? We need change. Only you can bring that change. Lobby the elected state committee to do its job or get out of the way. Write them today:

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Chris DeLeo, 110 John Scott Blvd Norton, MA02766
Bob French, 1597 Washington St, Boston, MA02218
Carla Howell, 6 Goodman Ln. Wayland, MA01778
Ron Jepson, 26 Henry St. Saugus, MA 01906
Peter Kuntz, PO Box 2826 Orleans, MA 02653
Tom LaRoche 20 Cook St. Boylston, MA 01505
Carolyn McMahon, 221 Bumstead Rd. Monson, MA 01057
George Phillies, 48 Hancock Hill Drive, Worcester MA 01609

And if you have given up on the Libertarian Party and would rather not hear more about it, write or email phillies@4liberty.net to get off my list.

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\$1,447,582.09, so we made slightly over \$40,000 on the year. The balance sheet as of 12/31/05 listed assets and liabilities balancing at \$23,623.99, easily the lowest figure I have seen in four years. The numbers for January 2006 balanced at \$48,413.98, which is an improvement but still very low.

The accounts receivable as of January 2006 appear to be well under control, totaling only \$7,317.86. This included \$2,800 owed by the Advocates for Self-Government. Region 5E Representative Jim Lark, who also serves on the board of the Advocates, took care of whatever balance remained at the meeting.

Accounts payable as of 1/31/06 however rose to \$151,258.80. Beyond continued UMP payments to the states, the most significant expense was \$31,175 owed to our FEC consultant Paula Edwards, which at the time was between 1-30 days past due.

Chief of Staff Shane Cory reported that staff has been consumed with raising enough money to keep the doors open. He cautioned that this year's Annual Report may not perform as well as in the past due to a lack of a membership card. Cory stated that they are taking a break from other direct mail and will aggressively resume that program in June.

At a conference call held on 12/31/05, the LNC approved the budget for 2006. Not including any line items for the convention or special projects, the budget projects income of \$1,154,000 and expenses of \$1,086,544, for a profit of \$67,446. Nelson continues to express deep concerns about the profitability of the upcoming national convention in Portland and prepared the budget cushion with this in mind. He reported that there were no major changes to internal accounting in 2005 and that staff continues to reduce overhead to positive effect.

Treasurer Mark Nelson concluded his report with a pitch for our members to become monthly pledgers now that we are operating under a zero dues model. "The sustaining support of pledgers," he wrote, "is essential to our success to advance your political agenda."

In his report, Chief of Staff Shane Cory stated that monthly pledge income for January was \$27,262, which is the highest it's been since March 2005. He stated his next goal as getting this figure back to over \$30,000 a month, which we enjoyed before we installed our new database software. From the perspective of his report, our finances have reached their low point and are now expected to rebound. "Barring a catastrophic event that affects national giving," Cory wrote, "we should be able to significantly pay down our A/P [accounts payable] and possibly develop a cash reserve this year."

At the end of the meeting, Nelson distributed a report showing the donor history of all LNC members. I decline to share its contents out of respect for the financial privacy of our donors. If you really want to know who gives money to the party, the FEC requires us to make that publicly available through their reports. However, by taking this position I do not wish to dismiss Nelson's point, which is that members of any board of directors have a duty to the fundraising as well as the administrative needs of the organization. I simply prefer to privately appeal to the conscience of each LNC member to acknowledge and carry out this responsibility.

2) Staff

At large Representative Michael Colley, Chair of the Employment Policy and Compensation Committee (EPCC), reported that the search for an Executive Director (ED) had been suspended due to lack of funds to pay one. Colley had great praise for our staff for their hard work without an ED. Region 2 Representative M Carling (California) made a motion of appreciation for our staff during this time, which passed unanimously by voice vote.

Colley reported that the move to the 2nd floor of the Watergate has been completed. Since we began the move, the management company changed and the new landlord has been difficult to work with. However we were able to work out the new issues at little extra cost. The electrical upgrades we required for the new space was the only significant new cost. Cory noted that the move went smoothly thanks mostly to the work of Director of Operations Robert Kraus. A housewarming event will be held at some future date.

After an executive session, Nelson moved that the Chair negotiate a contract with Shane Cory to become ED, with the Executive Committee setting the parameters. Carling moved for a vote by ballot, considering that this is a personnel matter. This was seconded by At large Representative Mark Rutherford, but failed on a voice vote.

A roll call was requested, which passed 13-0 and went as follows: YES to offering Cory a contract as ED: Colley, Region 6 Alternate Tim Hagan (Nevada), Region 1W Representative Ed Hoch (Alaska), Region 1E Representative Dan Karlan (New Jersey), Lark, Region 2 Alternate Scott Lieberman (California), Nelson, At large Representative Bill Redpath, Rutherford, At large Representative BetteRose Ryan, Region 5W Alternate Tony Ryan, Secretary Bob Sullentrop and Vice Chair Lee Wrights. NO: none. Not Voting: Chair Michael Dixon.

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Not Present: At large Representative Rick McGinnis, Region 3 (Dena Bruedigam), Region 4 (Michael Gilson de Lemos).

Carling left the room for the vote, apparently simply out of protest that the vote was conducted openly and not to show any lack of support for Cory.

Note that the motion only called for a contract to be negotiated. For Cory to actually become ED, the contract needs to be acceptable to both sides and approved by the Executive Committee, if not the full LNC.

My personal take is that this is an excellent hire. Cory has been essentially doing the job and showing leadership in the office since Joe Seehusen left months ago. At one time I myself was interested in applying for the position, but decided against it because I feel Cory would do a better job than I could. I am glad to see him get the title befitting the work he has already been doing, and I hope we can keep him.

The recreation of the position of Political Director was discussed. This has not been filled since Ron Crickenberger left it. Cory reported that a job description for the position has been created, and strongly advocated for the need for someone on staff who can take responsibility for candidate support and the recent staff initiatives of the Libertarian Leadership School and the Voter ID database. However applications for the job will not be solicited until there is money available to pay for it.

Chris Thorman has taken the position of Development Coordinator. Sam New, Director of Communications, will be leaving in May to attend graduate school, and a search is already underway for his replacement.

At the meeting, LP News Editor Daniel Cloud announced that he will be leaving that position after the convention.

3) Membership

Cory reported that beyond the reduction of membership renewal solicitations to one letter only, the transition to the zero dues model has consisted simply of a change in terminology. If dues are reinstated at some later date, this will allow for a smooth transition back to the membership model.

Lark asked how many members we currently have under the new definition, which is simply those who have signed the certification of the non-initiation of force with a known current address. Cory replied that the number was approximately 98,000, with the process of confirming contact information through the National Change of Address (NCOA) program still in progress. He also noted that this figure does not include subscribers or non-member donors.

Nelson moved that the staff and Sullentrup provide a state by state membership count under the new definition, including a projected convention delegate count, as of 12/31/05, to

be completed by 4/1/06. Sullentrup requested that this report be based on the numbers as of 2/28/06, which was accepted as a friendly amendment. However several LNC members objected, as only the year end date provides a direct comparison to past numbers, so the amendment was withdrawn. The original motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Cory said that the staff focus is now on finding new donors who give more than \$25 a year. That number is increasing, but it is too early to tell if the elimination of dues is hurting us financially. He claimed that we have survived the hardest part of the transition and should be fine by the end of April, when payments to half the state parties under the Unified Membership Program (UMP) are completed.

4) FEC

The cost for our Federal Election Commission (FEC) consultant Paul Edwards has greatly exceeded the possible fines we have avoided by using her services. Nelson reported however that she has provided us with changes to our filing procedures which will make future filings much easier and more accurate, thus avoiding much of the fear of future punitive action from the FEC.

Following the executive session, Region 5W Alternate Tony Ryan (South Dakota) moved that Cory and Nelson create a manual for FEC policy and procedures and for internal financial recording. This passed by a unanimous voice vote.

5) Convention

Dixon reported that preregistration has been slower than in the past, which could be due to a lack of big name speakers announced so far. Since that time, Bob Barr and Michael Badnarik have been named as speakers. Exhibitor space has been selling strongly though, thanks to our meeting planner Terry Quick.

Dixon noted he has received some complaints from prospective vendors claiming they have been shut out. This is part of Quick's job, and Dixon gave his impression that this is actually not the case. Dixon also said he has received some complaints about the limited time allotted for platform and bylaws business.

One area for which responsibility is still not fully defined is marketing the convention. There has been no mailing for it yet.

Cory said staff is sending a letter with convention information in response to a checkbox included in the reply card of the Annual Report and also to those who request them online. Moulton sug-

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gested a mailing only to past convention delegates. Cory responded that this had been considered but there is no money available to cover the cost. Carling suggested a floor fee be charged to all convention delegates.

Thanks to negotiations by Quick, our room block guarantee has been reduced from 1370 room nights to 920, and we only need to fill 75% of that to avoid any extra charges for meeting space. This number was reduced because this year's convention is a day shorter than usual.

Nelson moved that staff issue a report on convention registrations, revenues and expenses by the 10th of each month. This passed by a unanimous voice vote.

6) Ballot Access

Redpath reported that the Ballot Access fund is now positive by just under \$2000. While that means the LNC may start spending money again on ballot access, it is such a small amount of money that it will hardly have any effect.

Redpath also reported on the ballot access status in several states:

New Mexico: We fell short on signatures due to a purge of the voter rolls which took place after we began petitioning. However we do have the opportunity to gather more signatures to make up the difference. We are also trying to challenge the validity check on those already processed. More paid signatures may be needed to complete this drive.

North Dakota: Scott Kohlhaas is conducting an independent effort there and is still recruiting paid petitioners.

North Carolina: The job is too huge for the LNC to have an effective role, with about 67,000 signatures still needed. Redpath said he wants to send out an email fundraiser for this drive. LPNC Chair Phil Jacobson was in attendance to pitch for funding for North Carolina, noting that the recent direct mail piece for ballot access mentioned NC's needs as part of the solicitation.

Ohio: Redpath said there was a lack of communication with the Ohio party regarding their need for 10,000 signatures by 5/1/06 to place the gubernatorial candidate on the ballot. As of his report, only 2,000 signatures had been collected for that petition.

Pennsylvania: Region 5E Alternate Chuck Moulton reported that due to a quirk in state law, we would need 100,000 signatures to get on the ballot there in 2006.

In response to the continued debate between Nelson and Redpath regarding the status and conduct of the Ballot Access project, Carling moved the formation of a committee to determine the rights and responsibilities of a project manager, with a report due by 5/1/06. This was approved. Named to the commit-

tee were Nelson, Redpath and BetteRose Ryan.

7) Strategic Plan (SPT)

Karlan moved to eliminate Strategy 21 ("Track the performance of core and critical activities in the national party and implement a plan to remediate performance shortfalls."), and incorporate that language into Strategy 4 ("Track the performance of core and critical activities in state and local Libertarian Party organizations; encourage and support these organizations in creating and executing plans to improve performance."). He argued this makes sense since the two seemed somewhat redundant. The motion passed 8-3 by a show of hands. Carling and Wrights abstained.

Karlan then moved to add language to the Policy Manual calling for an annual review of the SPT. Carling objected, recalling that a motion to affirm SPT failed at the previous convention, indicating that the plan failed to have support of the membership. (This is a view with which I strongly agree.) Dixon ruled that SPT is valid because it is part of the board itself and not the convention or the party as a whole. (This interpretation seems odd to me considering that much is devoted in SPT to the roles played by state, local and campus affiliates.)

Nelson moved to change the vote requirement in Karlan's motion to amend SPT from 2/3rds to 3/5ths and to delete the details of how changes would be approved and recorded. The amendment passed by a non-unanimous voice vote.

Carling then moved an addition to Karlan's motion that a Strategy can be deleted by the LNC a 1/3rd vote. This amendment passed by a show of hands 7-5. The amended motion then passed 7-4 by a show of hands.

Later in the meeting, an actual if brief SPT review took place. Karlan pointed out the success of Strategy 3 ("Redevelop the Libertarian Party Platform, presenting both direction and destination, with an eye toward electoral success without compromising core beliefs."). This is the one bright spot of all the 20 strategies.

Some noted that SPT is far too diffuse and suffers from a lack of prioritization. Lark, who served on the SPT committee, said many of the strategies were included for political reasons to reach out to various constituencies within the party. He offered that the purpose of the LNC is to set strategy and stick to those items within the control of the board.

BetteRose Ryan suggested that SPT and our strategy in general need to have greater connection to our mission of changing public policy towards liberty by electing Libertarians to office. Nelson and Wrights both touted the value of concrete metrics and questioned the value of any items without a way to accurately measure their success.

8) Affiliate Services Agreement

Now that UMP is ending, there is a rise of initiative coming up from the state parties to establish a formal affiliate services

agreement. This was one of the strategies coming out of SPT, but until recently the states saw little incentive in pursuing it.

The main point the LNC wants in such an agreement is that the party's Presidential candidate will be placed on the ballot. Karlan pointed out that the LNC recently added a provision to the Policy Manual that state parties also have policies against harassment and discrimination. The need for strong anti-takeover provisions in state bylaws was noted. This would have to be designed and sold as of benefit to the states to be successfully included in any such agreement.

Nelson, who attended the recent State Chairs conference in Phoenix, said that from the view of the states database issues are primary, although many of these have been resolved. The main concern is that states have quick access to national inquiries. Dixon noted that national also desires quick access to inquiries generated by the states, and that some privacy concerns must be addressed in any data sharing agreement. Many at the state level want a greater level of detail in this information, particularly donor history. This is a sensitive issue from the national perspective, raising not only privacy concerns but also fears of competition for fundraising.

Other major issues reported to be of concern to the states are FEC compliance, web connectivity, branding, activist and candidate training, and continued tracking and reporting of best practices and core and critical activities.

Carling stated that the points covered by any affiliate services agreement need to be limited to reduce controversy. A straw poll was conducted by show of hands to gauge the importance of each proposed point from the LNC perspective. The promise to list the Presidential nominee on the ballot received 10 votes. Anti-takeover provisions registered nine votes. Tied at eight were database and branding issues. Tied at seven were FEC compliance, tracking of core and critical activities, training, and privacy of data. Web issues received zero support. Member expulsion policies were not considered because it is considered an issue for the Bylaws Committee, while the anti-harassment policy was not included because the LNC had already put that in the Policy Manual.

9) Miscellaneous

Program: The draft of the new Program, written by Bruce Dvovner, was well received. The LNC requested a final draft by 4/30/06 so that it may be considered for approval before the convention.

Audit: Only one bid was submitted for an independent audit, although six firms were asked to bid on the project. That bid was not accepted.

Libertarian National Congressional Committee (LNCC): Carling reported that all paperwork to establish the LNCC has been completed and it is now open for business with \$1,600 in the bank. The group is dedicated to identifying state legislative races which we can win and is looking for campaigns to

support in 2006. Carling currently serves as the Chair of the LNCC, and listed the other officers. Colley serves as Vice Chair, Lark as Secretary, and Redpath as Treasurer. They will be meeting and electing new officers at the Portland convention.

It is my personal opinion that the value of this organization cannot be overstated. Electing Libertarians to office is our particular mission. We have long needed a counterpart to similar committees run by our competition. I wish it every success and encourage all our donors to support it.

Database: Cory reported that the demand for state parties to manually make their own corrections to our database has been so low that it is more cost effective to have staff make the changes themselves. This is in part to the cost of the Raiser's Edge module required to support direct state party access. Webforms for state database coordinators to submit updates are being created and maintained. The regular use of NCOA has greatly reduced errors and the need for manual updates.

Other actions: Moulton had prepared two motions. The first would add language to the Policy Manual dictating that the agenda for LNC meetings be posted on the website at least seven days in advance of the meeting. The second mandates that the minutes of all LNC meetings and conference calls be given to staff for posting on the website within 14 days of approval. Both passed by non-unanimous voice votes.

Karlan moved to replace language in the Policy Manual mandating that any special agreement between national and any state party require LNC approval. This was part of the section pertaining to membership which was deleted when the zero dues model was passed. This motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

A resolution was proposed to express our sadness over the passing of Harry Browne and to offer condolences to his wife Pamela and their family. This passed unanimously by voice vote.

10) Retirement

This will be my last LNC Meeting Report. I am discontinuing the practice for a few of reasons. One is the cost. While it is true that this service could not be possible if not for donations made by many generous party members, these donations covered about half the expenses. I am currently seeking a new job which would give me more disposable income, but there is no assurance that I will be free to take the time to drive to each meeting in the future. I deliberately did not solicit donations for this meeting because I suspected I would reach this decision. However, any donations in gratitude for past services would be warmly accepted. ;-)

A larger reason is that I am rethinking how I personally want to be involved with the party. I feel I have been focused far too much on the internal workings of the party and am no longer where the real action is. The true work of the party does not

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take place in boardrooms. It happens on the campaign trail, in the halls of legislatures, in court rooms, at outreach events, on the internet – in short, anywhere that voters and opinion makers are gathered. After some time away from most everything political, I am looking to expend my efforts in places where I feel I can most affect public policy. I'm sure I'll be writing about this more in the near future.

I've been filing these reports for four years now, two while serving on the LNC and two as a reporter. To some degree I feel I have taken my turn. It was a great pleasure to see the excellent report on the State Chairs' Conference written by my good friend and colleague George Phillies. It lifts my spirit to know that if this is indeed a valuable service to our members, then others will rise up to fill any void I might create.

This has been a wonderful experience and I leave it with no regrets. The greatest joy by far of these trips has been driving all over the country with our Vice Chair, my editor and dear friend Lee Wrights. I very strongly recommend that everyone drive across this beautiful country at least once in a lifetime. We have shared the most awesome vistas that can be offered from America's highways in most every state and the bonds of deep friendship that only such an experience can give us. We have seen the power and glory of Creation from many perspectives and praised God together for truly being the greatest artist. We have received the kindness of so many wonderful people along the way, friends and strangers alike, and met so many great folks who make this party real at the grassroots.

The ending of this phase in my life only means I'll have to create more excuses to continue these travels with him. I don't know if I could have done this with anyone else.

While this experience has sharpened several of my concerns and criticisms about how we run our party, I have also seen just how hard people work to make this keep this dream of a strong Libertarian Party alive and growing. The members of the LNC take on these responsibilities at great personal expense of both time and money, their only compensation being the joy of service. Peoples' voting records may be criticized but from what I have seen their dedication to our cause is beyond question. Our staff is compensated, but by no means at the level they have merited. Only people who are equally dedicated to the cause of Liberty could joyfully put up with the special, and especially aggravating, requirements of political party work. It has been an honor to rub shoulders with these excellent individuals at least once a quarter, and an even greater one to know that my work has been of value to our members. I look forward to what future opportunities are awaiting me to help restore our Liberty.

To all those who have supported this project with donations, kind words, or just buying me a beer at the bar, I thank you all.

...Sean Haugh

Our LNC Spends Our Money

Month	Income	Net	Cash	Debt
July	103	-5	3	105
August	99	-10	-7	92
September	83	-7	-14	99
October	159	+31	17	88
November	76	-35	-17	66
December	81	3	-14	110
January	93	25	11	140
February	97	-3	8	138
March	150	-9	4	128

The above table reports LNC spending through the end of March 2006. The columns list the party's income, its net cash flow for the month, its cash on hand, and the party's total debt. March is the first month of the Annual Report season, so there is some slight hope that the Annual Report will eventually turn in the returns to which the party has long been accustomed.

Sean Haugh has been our correspondent at LNC meeting and LNC meeting for some years now. While he does give a detailed description of events, he is also very open to questions. I have therefore put to him with some frequency a simple question, asking if the LNC appears to be concerned about their income streams and the diminution in their fundraising. A simple 'no' appears to capture the depth of the response.

Our Editor Spends His Own Money

One of the great advantages Libertarians had, once upon a time, was lpus-misc@dehnbase.org, the libertarian email list run by Joe Dehn. That list went away, and there is no replacement at hand.

One of the great advantages held by progressive Democrats is the most powerful electronic discussion group on the internet, Daily Kos, <http://www.dailykos.com>.

It's time for libertarians to catch up with progressive Democrats.

Phillies 2008, <http://www.phillies2008.com>, has committed up to \$1500 of hard Federal funds to buy campaign advertising on a new web site, the 'Libertarian Daily Kos' (which, by the way, will *not* be site's name). The campaign retained Seth Cohn, coder of the new committee-designed Free State Project and other great sites, to design and create the site, which should launch this month.