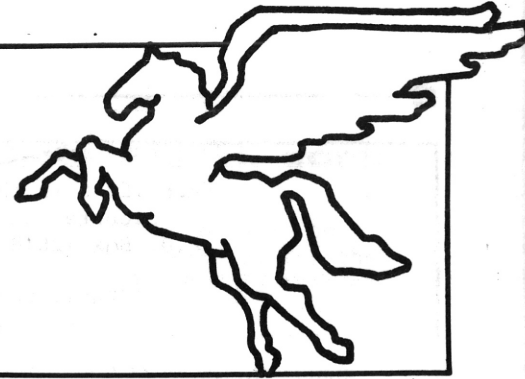


FREE TEXAS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF TEXAS



VOLUME 1 NUMBER 1 FALL 1976

CURRENT PROJECTS

The LPT has taken the first steps in a lobbying effort in the legislature for more reasonable ballot requirements for small parties. Contacts are being made with other groups who might help us in this effort. Dallas County LP Chair Margaret Bosse introduced a resolution at the recent state convention of the Texas Women's Political Caucus calling for an end to the discriminatory aspects

of the Election Code. The resolution passed, meaning that this will be one of the issues that the TWPC's lobbyists in Austin will be concentrating on next year.

A leaflet prepared by LPT Chair Bill Howell which helped to sway the TWPC's decision, has now been expanded and will be mailed this month to all candidates for the state legislature, each of whom will then be contacted by the LPT about his stand on the Election Code revision. Those who prove sympathetic will be asked to sponsor or support legislation (presently being drafted by the LPT)

which would eliminate the restrictive provisions of the present law. If the Code, as revised by the legislature, still proves unacceptable, the LPT plans to initiate a court challenge at the end of the session, in plenty of time for the 1978 ballot drive.

Despite lack of ballot status, LP candidates are off and running this fall. In Dallas, Rob Harrison is mounting a serious write-in campaign as the only opponent to the Democratic incumbent State Representative in District 33-F. In Houston, a similar effort is being organized in behalf of Jeff

CONTINUED PAGE 3

As FREE TEXAS goes to press, the LPT has learned of the court decision against independent Presidential candidate Eugene McCarthy's suit for ballot status in Texas. The court declared unconstitutional the election code's prohibition of independent candidates for President, but stated that the challenge came too late in the election year for McCarthy's name to be placed on the ballot this November. This decision may be appealed, and LPT attorneys are watching the situation closely as a possible precedent for court action to have Roger MacBride's name listed on the ballot as an independent this year.

The Libertarian Party of Texas will not be on the ballot this year. The petition drive to which LPT members gave so much time, effort, and money failed to produce the 16,500 valid signatures called for in the Election Code.

Though there is still a small chance that legal action might allow the party's candidates on the ballot, it is almost certain that any votes cast for the MacBride/Bergland ticket in Texas will have to be write-ins.

The LPT Ballot Drive was organized in May by Mike Stephens and National MacBride Committee Chairman Bob Meier. The first

week's efforts were nullified when the State of Texas withdrew its earlier approval of the LP's petition forms. We were also informed that only Notaries Public would legally be able to circulate petitions. To give the State its due, the LP was allowed to use special expedited procedures in making its members Notaries.

The LPT's volunteer workers turned in a remarkable effort, every day, every week going out in public to gather signatures. It was a difficult job, physically and emotionally draining, and one for which most libertarians are not well suited, either

CONTINUED PAGE 2

BALLOT DRIVE

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BALLOT, cont.

in temperament or experience; still they did it, and well.

These volunteers were to be the core around which a large body of paid, full-time petitioners was to be formed. According to the plan, which had worked well in other states, the hired petitioners would ultimately collect 80-90% of the final total.

Rates of payment for petitioning were based on experience in other states' ballot drives. However, workers, paid by the signature, were unable to make reasonable amounts of money per hour, and most soon quit. Though the LPT raised the rates, it was not enough to lure and keep new petition workers. In addition, each new petitioner had to become a Notary, an additional large expense. The hiring concept proved unworkable.

Thus, practically the entire burden was thrown on the LPT volunteers, and, well as they did, there were simply not enough of them. More than two weeks before the deadline, it became obvious that the LP would not reach the needed number of signatures. Groups of volunteers met to decide whether to quit at that point or to press on regardless. They voted to keep working.

On July 12, Chairman Bill Howell, David Helber, and John Griffin submitted 7,127 signatures, which had been collected in Dallas, Graham, Harris, Palo Pinto, Tarrant, Travis and Young Counties, to the office of the Secretary of State in Austin. Approximately 1,000 signatures

were not turned in, 800 because of improper notarization, and 200 because they did not reach Austin in time.

Though the ballot drive failed in its primary purpose, it has provided the party with a legal "leg to stand on" if court suits by the LPT or other minor parties are successful in altering the ballot requirements; if not, it has given us the experience necessary to mount a successful petition effort in 1978, when the lack of a presidential primary will make the job easier. The drive also put the name of the party in front of more people than ever before--thousands of small LP information cards were handed out during petitioning, and new contacts were made.

But more important, the ballot drive marked the watershed between the Libertarian Party of Texas as an idealist discussion group, and the Libertarian Party of Texas as a functioning political organization. For the first time, Texas Libertarians planned, funded, and executed a large-scale political project. We learned and used techniques for contacting the public, for raising funds, for coordinating far-flung counties into one statewide effort, for generating action out of apathy.

Since 1972, I had become more and more discouraged about the LPT's prospects for ever getting past the eight-people-in-a-room-discussing-economics stage. Now I have seen talkers become doers, and introverted intellectuals stare complete strangers in the eye and ask for signatures; I have seen people with little money make large contributions and busy professionals give valuable time to a cause they believe in. I have seen people with leadership ability finally coming to the fore across the state; and I have seen the membership of the LP grow from a small group of alienated theoreticians to a large, well-integrated organization filled with energy and initiative.

We now have had a taste of real politics. For a few of us, it may have been too strong a taste, too disappointing after all the effort of the last few months; but for most Texas Libertarians, those who were always aware that the major parties play this game for keeps and make no allowances for beginners, the ballot drive will be the base of experience that we will use to build a fully functioning and realistic alternative political party for Texas.

-David Helber



The Libertarian Party of Texas would like to extend its deepest and most sincere thanks to everyone who contributed time, money, or ideas to the 1976 Ballot Drive.

CONVENTION REPORT

The Libertarian Party of Texas held its 1976 State Convention on June 12 and 13 at the Fairmont Hotel in Dallas. Some 75 party members and interested persons attended.

Saturday morning State Chair Mike Stephens opened the day's session, which was devoted to amending the party's Rules and Platform, with spirited debate on some planks. Bill Howell was elected Convention Chair and Kitty Caruthers Convention Secretary.

The report of the Rules Committee, chaired by Bill Howell, was adopted without change. Most of its amendments were technical ones in language to reflect that the LPT is now an officially recognized party. The two substantive changes allowed voting for "None of the Above" in contests for party office and altered sexist language in the Rules.

Most of the Platform Committees's report consisted of deletions of planks from the state platform that had been adopted by last year's national convention. Committee Chair Harry Robinson also reported out several revisions of existing planks to make them clearer. Only seven wholly new planks were adopted. Besides opposing passage of Senate Bill 1 and government building of a Trinity River Canal or deep-water supertanker ports, calling for the abolition of the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission, and urging repeal of unreasonable ballot status requirements for new parties, others opposed laws requiring a person to flee his home or property rather than offer resistance, opposed government sanctions against nations not hostile to the U.S., and opposed any government plan to issue ID cards to citizens or resident aliens.

At that evening's banquet LP Presidential candidate Roger MacBride was welcomed to Dallas by city councilman Dick Smith, who gave him a key to the city. MacBride then spoke about the national campaign and the response to libertarianism around the country. David Helber followed with a plea for help with the ballot drive that got several pledges of either money or numbers of signatures to be collected.

Sunday began with the election of state officers. In the only contested race, Bill Howell defeated Terry Parker for State Chair; Parker was then elected Vice-Chair. Ann Hammond was elected Secretary. Mike Holmes continues as Treasurer. The new members of the State Executive Committee are Charles Graham, James Hammond, Denver Dolman, Carol Galloway, Dave Hutzelman, and Jeff Calvert.

The party then nominated candidates for state office: Bill Howell for Railroad Commissioner, Harry Robinson for U.S. Senate, and MacBride and Bergland for President and Vice-President. Brief acceptances were made by the candidates, and MacBride answered questions from the delegates.

The Convention received very good coverage by the press, including two TV spots and articles in both Dallas newspapers.

PROJECTS, cont.

Calvert, also the sole opponent of a Democrat for the State House. A full list of LPT candidates and write-in instructions will appear in the next issue of FREE TEXAS.

Efforts are underway to set up local organizations in several new counties, and to revive local parties in a few counties which once had been organized but have since become inactive. A planned statewide speaker's bureau is expected to bolster efforts in these areas.

At least two counties are considering running candidates in next year's City Council and School Board elections. Others are encouraged to do so, as nothing is as effective in strengthening local organizations and spreading libertarian ideas as articulate local candidates.

In general, the party's goals for the next two years are to increase public awareness of the party and its ideas, to become better organized on the local level, to increase membership, to recruit candidates, and to begin preparing for the 1978 ballot drive. There is no shortage of things to do and the party has no intention of waiting until the next presidential election to do them. If you would like to help, contact the LPT or your local party at the addresses given on page 4.

LETITIA



COUNTY REPORTS

Bexar County

Chair:
Carol Galloway
100 Lorenz #202
San Antonio TX 78209
(512) 828-5204

Dallas County

P.O. Box 12618
Dallas TX 75225

Chair:
Margaret Bosse
(214) 827-7325 (w) 748-2043

Next meeting: Sept. 15, 7:30
P.M. at the club room of the
River Oaks Apts., 4837 Cedar
Springs, Dallas



Harris County

Chair:
Dave Hutzelman
12415 Woodthorpe
Houston TX 77024
(713) 464-6603

Palo Pinto County

Chair:
Woody Stroud
712 S.E. 18th St.
Mineral Wells TX 76067

Tarrant County

Chair:
Mrs. E. R. Mauldin
2428 Annglen
Ft. Worth TX
(817) 536-0127

Travis County

Chair:
Terry Parker
4501 Guadalupe, Suite 105
Austin TX 78751
(512) 458-3311

Next meeting: Sept. 11, 2:00
P.M. at 4501 Guadalupe, Suite
105, Austin. Elections of new
county officers will be held
at this meeting. County Chair
Terry Parker is not eligible
to succeed himself under coun-
ty rules and advises members
to be considering candidates.

Young County

Chair:
Charles Graham
Box 155
Graham TX 76046
(817) 549-3530 (w) 664-3021

**LIBERTARIAN
PARTY
OF TEXAS**

PO BOX 12618 DALLAS TX 75225

