

ALABAMA LIBERTY

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Alabama Libertarian Party

Party leaders see bold vision for years ahead

By **Steve Smith**
Alabama Liberty

Libertarians in the Alabama legislature. Five hundred to 1,000 party members. Media respectability. And no more "kook" image.

Alabama Libertarian Party leaders made these predictions when asked about the progress they think the party will make in the next five years. As they looked ahead to 1992, most expressed optimism about the future.

"I think we'll have a thousand members," said party Chairman John Sebastian. "We should have some Libertarian state legislators. We'll have numerous municipal officeholders. We should also do pretty well in at least one Congressional race. The voters will be so disgusted with the Democrats and Republicans by then that either this will happen, or there'll only be 10 percent of the electorate showing up at the polls."

Sebastian said he also thinks that Libertarians will be taken more seriously by the media.

"When an issue comes up, the newspapers will be calling someone in the LP to ask what our position is. That'll be nice," he said.

Bob Chapuis, 6th District representative on the executive committee, said he thinks the state party membership will include more than 500 members -- and possibly a state legislator -- in five years.

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Briefly

Exec committee to meet monthly

The executive committee of the state party has begun holding monthly meetings to discuss party strategy and news. Next month's meeting will be Dec. 3 at the party office in Birmingham. The meetings are open and any interested individual may attend. For more information or directions, call 933-1776.

Convention set for February

Tentative plans have been made for the state party convention to be held in Birmingham Feb. 2-3. Preliminary discussion has included the possibility of a two-day convention featuring a well-known guest speaker. Some members have expressed an interest in inviting Walter Williams, a syndicated newspaper columnist, to speak to the group. Convention details will be finalized at a later date and members are encouraged to call or write if they have any suggestions for those planning the convention.

Party office gets part-time staffer

The state party office now has a part-time administrative assistant. Lisa Starnes began working with the party last month and is doing her best to keep the party office organized and running smoothly. If you have any questions about the party or any of the party's activities, you can reach Lisa at 933-1776.

Membership has doubled since Spring

Even though total membership in the Alabama Libertarian Party has only reached 52, this is a tremendous accomplishment since total paid membership last Spring was around 20. Part of the increase has been because of a membership mailing during the summer, but part of it is just because of work on the part of members. As of October, the treasuries of the state party and the Strategic Planning Committee were merged. The combined total in the bank as of November is \$1,605.37.

Some willing to listen, ask questions

I took a risk last month, and it paid off. After my speech to a Birmingham Rotary Club luncheon, I had more than 10 percent of the crowd give me their business cards wanting more information about the libertarian movement. The same thing happened at an Ozark Rotary Club to Mark Thornton, an economics professor at Auburn University, but I will get to his story later.

When asked to give the speech, I hesitated. It had only been 2 1/2 years since I declared my libertarianism, so wasn't it a bit presumptuous for me to be a spokesperson for the movement? Yes and no. I knew enough to present the positions, but more importantly, I still remembered what it was like to be one of the unconverted or politically homeless.

My speech had three sections. First, I exploded the myths many people have about us. When I surveyed the audience, the most common misconception was that libertarians are a bunch of kooks. Almost the entire audience felt this way, so we definitely have an image problem.

Anticipating this myth, I stuffed my introduction (always write your own) with establishment-sounding stuff—MBA from a top-five business school, quoted in the Wall Street Journal three times, and clients with more than \$75 million in investment assets. I also dressed in my most conventional financial planner attire.

Next, I presented my list of non-kook libertarians: Milton Friedman and two other Nobel laureates in economics; Louis



CHARLIE HAINES

Rukeyser, the moderator of PBS's Wall Street Week; two 1989 Nobel peace prize nominees; and David Letterman, to name a few. The crowd was then softened up to hear my message.

The second segment was brief and dedicated to what we were for and what the benefits of our philosophy are. Dale Carnegie said salespeople too often sell the features of a product and not the benefits. I was not about to make that mistake with our terrific product.

Last, the group took the world's smallest political quiz. I had prepared 30-second answers which were carefully designed. Each one started with a statement of a goal with which nobody could disagree. Then, I gave emotional description of our logical means to achieve the goal.

Next, I took questions, and there were plenty. The subjects ranged from defense to cancer research to the budget deficit. I was worried about this part because I did not know how to prepare. "Reason" magazine, other readings, and the libertarian philosophy served me well, or so the host told me.

I closed with an offer to send anyone seeking more information a copy of "The Freeman." If you do not receive it now, call Lisa Starnes at party headquarters (933-1776).

"Libertarianism can sell; we only need the opportunity."

In Ozark, Mark Thornton got a better response than I did in Birmingham. He used the same basic format. As an Auburn professor, he has had much practice speaking, plus he had instant credibility. He "reached" the editor of the local newspaper, which produced a favorable editorial in the paper. Several other listeners wanted more information.

If you are a member of a group and need a speaker, Mark and I will be happy to help. Write or call the party headquarters in Birmingham, and our administrator, Lisa, will relay the message. Libertarianism can sell; we only need the opportunity.

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Alabama Libertarian Party

P.O. Box 11514, Birmingham, Ala. 35202
205-933-1776

Strategic Planning Committee

Jimmy Blake, Charlie Haines
Co-chairmen

**Harry Bressler, Bob Chapuis,
S.D. Yana Davis, Steve Smith**

State party officers

John Sebastian
Chairman

Steve Smith
Secretary

Alan Barksdale
Treasurer

Statement of Principles of the Libertarian Party

"We, the members of the Libertarian Party, challenge the cult of the omnipotent state and defend the rights of the individual.

"We hold that all individuals have the right to exercise sole dominion over their own lives, and have the right to live in whatever manner they choose, so long as they do not forcibly interfere with the equal right of others to live in whatever manner they choose.

"Governments throughout history have regularly operated on the opposite principle, that the State has the right to dispose of the lives of individuals and the fruits of their labor. Even within the United States, all political parties other than our own grant to government the right to regulate the lives of individuals and seize the fruits of their labor without their consent.

"We, on the contrary, deny the right of any government to do these things, and hold that where governments exist, they must not violate the rights of any individual, namely: (1) the right to life—accordingly we support prohibition of the initiation of physical force against others; (2) the right to liberty of speech and action—accordingly we oppose all attempts by government to abridge the freedom of speech and press, as well as government censorship in any form; and (3) the right to property—accordingly we oppose all government interference with private property, such as confiscation, nationalization, and eminent domain, and support the prohibition of robbery, trespass, fraud, and misrepresentation.

"Since governments, when instituted, must not violate individual rights, we oppose all interference by government in the areas of voluntary and contractual relations among individuals. People should not be forced to sacrifice their lives and property for the benefit of others. They should be left free by government to deal with one another as free traders; and the resultant economic system, the only one compatible with the protection of individual rights, is the free market."

It's an outrage

■ **Nobody's said yet** just what the cost is, but the city of Birmingham has just paid for a couple of consultants to come up with a new name for what was formerly known as the Birmingham Municipal Airport.

It seems that the local airport authority believed that the name -- particularly the word "municipal" -- gave the city's airport the sound of a small-time airport.

After all the work and study, what image-building name did the consultants agree on? The Birmingham Airport.

Funny, that's the name normal people have been calling it all along.

■ **Since U.S. Rep. Ronnie Flippo**, D. Ala., is working so hard to get himself elected to higher office next year, he decided to send some campaign literature disguised as a survey to state news outlets. The mailing, stamped "Official Business," has only the business of getting him free publicity, and it's publicity that taxpayers paid to mail.

His office did some kind of survey, the results of which may or may not be accurate (the release didn't say how the information was gathered). But the results -- if they are anywhere near accurate -- are scary.

According to the survey, 61 percent of people in Alabama answered "yes" to the question, "Should every American have access to basic health care?"

Even more frightening is that 69 percent of respondents believe the cost should be borne by employers and the government, 20 percent said the federal government should pay for the health care through new taxes and 11 percent said businesses should bear the cost.

A staggering 66 percent of the people said Medicare should provide long-term nursing home care, and 56 percent said the cost of long-term care should be provided from the federal government's general revenues.

Yet in the same survey, 50 percent of respondents said the proper way to cut the federal budget deficit is "cuts in federal programs." It's no wonder congressmen promise to increase programs and cut taxes at the same time: the people believe that's possible and will elect politicians who promise to do it.

■ **As Birmingham Mayor Richard Arrington and Co.** fought to get a \$75 million bond issue passed for the city of Birmingham a few days ago, the pro-bond people found a new angle: Pass the bond issue, they said, or we'll raise your taxes.

It seems that the man who has spent the last few years crying that the city needed more money has been finding plenty of interesting ways to spend the money he already had entrusted to him.

According to city records, the city has paid Arrington crony Donald

Watkins nearly \$2 million over the last two years for legal services for the city. This is in addition to the staff of 15 attorneys the city has working full-time with an annual budget of almost \$3 million.

For the last three months, the figure paid to Watkins has been \$318,386.73. In September alone, the bill from Watkins was \$138,232.59. For the months of 1989 thus far, the total paid to Watkins has been \$958,561.38. According to one analysis, Watkins has been paid nearly \$200,000 more than all the rest of the city's outside attorneys combined.

The analysis concludes that the \$233,224.69 paid to Watkins for August and September adds up to \$159.30 for every single hour of every single day of the two-month period.

What's scary is that the bond issue was endorsed not only by the Arrington political machine, but by the Birmingham Area Chamber of Commerce and other local business interests. Not only that, but city voters approved the parts of the bond issue by a wide margin.

■ **With even communist nations** starting to realize that socialism just doesn't work, it's interesting to find that one of the last bastions of belief in the planned economic model is the American campus.

A recent survey by National Review of textbooks used in economics survey courses by many U.S. college students

found that the authors of the textbooks still don't "get it."

One example:

Bradley R. Schiller, a professor of economics at the American University in Washington, D.C., is author of "The Economy Today," a popular textbook. At the end of his chapter on "Socialist Planning," Schiller asks the question, "Which (capitalism or socialism) is better?"

He answers his own question:

"What we end up with is a mixed bag of wins and losses. The Soviet and Chinese economies rank higher in terms of economic growth, the distribution of income and economic stability."

At the end, he refuses to take a position:

"For those who place a higher value on equality and stability than on economic freedom and individualism, the planned socialist economies must look superior. On the other hand, those who value individualism and consumer sovereignty will prefer the capitalist market system. Thus the answer to the question of which system is better depends largely on the values we embrace, and no clear, objective response can be offered."

Well, Professor, here's something pretty objective. Live under each system for a few years and then vote with your feet. And ask yourself, "Which system has to build a wall to keep people in?"

Party to release papers on issues

In the past the state Libertarian Party has suffered from an image and communication problem -- which often made media coverage sporadic or non-existent.

But efforts are underway to combat that problem by releasing "position papers" to the press each month.

The way it will work is this: at each month's executive committee meeting a specific topic -- on which the Libertarian Party has a clear opinion -- will be chosen for the following month's release. Someone will then be assigned the job of researching and writing the paper, which will clearly outline the party's opinion and reasoning on the subject. After it is finished, copies will be sent to state newspapers, television stations and radio stations.

It is hoped that the papers will be used by the media in some fashion. For instance, a smaller newspaper may choose to run the entire contents, while a larger one quotes only a small portion of it in a related new story.

The committee plans to publish position papers on ballot access and

freedom of choice in education in the next few months. Other suggested topics include agricultural subsidies and day care.

The first paper, one stating the principles behind the Libertarian Party and movement, has been written and should be going out to news media soon. Although most of the papers will state the party's opinion on a specific topic, it was determined that the first one should explain the party's principles.

Anyone with a topic suggestion is welcome to call the state office at 933-1776 or mail the suggestion to P.O. Box 11514, Birmingham, Ala. 35202.

Ballot drive to feature local races

Due to a lack of adequate resources, the state party will not be attempting a statewide ballot access drive.

Party leaders had originally intended to work toward collecting the 18,000 petition signatures necessary to have Libertarian Party candidates listed on the statewide ballot, but at the November executive committee meeting the idea was altered.

Instead of concentrating on the statewide

ballot, individual county groups will be working to get candidates on local ballots.

One of the main problems in collecting the necessary number of signatures to be on the state ballot was the party's limited amount of manpower and funds. It was determined that the resources could be better spent getting out the Libertarian message in other ways -- such as position papers, a letters-to-editors drive and Seminar 1 classes.

Anyone interested in finding out more about ballot access may call the state office at 933-1776.

Party to launch effort to use media

At its November executive committee meeting, the party decided to embark on a "media amplification program."

The main thrust of the program will be to get the Libertarian Party message out in front of newspaper readers, radio listeners and television audiences.

There will be three prongs to the program: position papers (which were discussed at length above), individual letters to newspaper editors and party letters to newspaper editors.

The party office now

has a database with names and addresses of media all across the state.

Anyone who has written a letter to a newspaper is welcome to send it to the party office. The letters will be collected and some will be sent to media all across the state. Members are encouraged to speak out on issues using their local and state media.

Another idea that has been suggested is that the party send out short "bites" of information to radio stations.

Anyone having more suggestions on how to get out the libertarian message is welcome to call the party office or drop a letter outlining the suggestions in the mail.

Recruiting kits received for state use

The state Libertarian Party has received its "Operation Political Homeless" kit from Advocates for Self-Government.

The kit, which will help identify potential party members, has been on order for several weeks. It consists of a booth-type exhibit suitable for use at a fair or street festival. People who express an interest in the booth are given the "World's Smallest Polit-

ical Quiz" to find out where they stand in the political spectrum.

Volunteers working the booth then place a dot showing on a diamond-shaped poster showing the people's political orientation.

By identifying people's political ideas, libertarians may find potential party members and place them on a mailing list.

Party officials are eager to use the kit and are asking for event suggestions. If you have an event where you think

the kit may be useful, call the office at 933-1776.

Burford resigns as vice chair

Lonnie Burford of Birmingham has resigned as vice chair of the state party. A replacement will not be chosen until the state convention, which is tentatively set for Feb. 2-3. It will be held in Birmingham.

Future

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Chapuis said he thinks the Alabama party's success will be part of a bright nationwide picture.

"Nationally, Libertarians could have a congressman and maybe a dozen state legislators. That would certainly give us more credibility. The reason I'm optimistic is that the party seems to be as active or more active than it was before the 1988 election. Usually there's a big letdown after a presidential race and we sort of go into hibernation. That didn't happen this time."

Charlie Haines and Jimmy Blake -- co-chairmen of the party's Strategic Planning Committee -- tempered their sunny predictions with some cautions.

"I think in five years we'll be a creditable information source for the media. We'll be where Cato (Institute) is now and the Mises Institute nearly is," Haines said. "But this will only happen through a plodding process of small successes and not biting off more than we can chew. We must pay particular attention to marketing, which has been our greatest weakness.

"We've got the product, we just need to learn how to sell it," he said.

Haines said he sees the possibility that, by 1994, both Democrats and Republicans will see Libertarians as a real threat.

"I hope so. To be viewed as threatening will be the greatest compliment that can be paid to us," he said.

Blake was also optimistic about reaching that point in five years, but said that excitement among membership and a strong desire to spread the word about Libertarianism are the keys to succeeding.

"We must have a dedicated cadre of people who are not just intellectually curious, but are interested in spreading the message of libertarianism in an efficacious manner," he said.

He also listed a strong Seminar 1 program, continuous growth in contributions and names and a well-organized letter writing campaign as important components of a five-year prescription for success.

"You don't turn a supertanker quickly," Blake said. "You turn it little by little in the direction you want to go. That's how we must steer our party."

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Libertarians Have Interesting Philosophy

National news magazines recently explored a topic, "Government Unable to Govern," the paralyzed status of the national government burdened with debt, deficit spending, and facing problems that seem beyond the realm of solving.

When you hear that our national debt is something like three trillion dollars, and you see Congressional inaction on reducing deficit spending, you wonder when the giant collapse is going to take place.

We didn't get to this point overnight, but it has snow balled in recent years. Neither the leaders of the Democratic or Republican parties seem to have any workable solutions in leading this nation toward a more stable economy.

This week a professor of economics from Auburn University, Mark Thornton, spoke to the Ozark Rotary Club and outlined some of the basic philosophies of the Libertarian Party.

It is unlikely that there will be a groundswell of support for the Libertarian Party, but some of the principles that this party stands for could be solutions to the problems that are dragging this country down.

Essentially the Libertarian Party stands for privatization of many functions such as the Post Office, pointing out that postage rates have gone up 600 percent in the last 25 years.

The Libertarian Party would appeal for abolishment of the Internal Revenue Service, lowering taxes; privatization of social security with individualized retirement plans; making Western Europe and Japan pay for their own defense; drastically reducing our national defense commitment abroad; legalizing drugs and thereby taking the money making aspect out of the hands of the criminal element, by repealing drug laws.

These are just a few of the stands of the Libertarian Party, most of which would be deemed drastic or radical in many circles.

However, we may need drastic or radical approaches to turn the course of this nation around.

Traditional approaches don't seem to be working in any way but adding to the mounting debt and deficit spending picture.

Perhaps the Libertarian Party can plant enough thought seeds that one or the other of the parties in power will adopt some of their views, not all, but enough to put our ship of state back on a more secure course.

Alabama Libertarian Party

Membership and pledge card

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

* Occupation _____ * Name of employer _____

* Federal Election Commission requires we ask this.

Phone: Day _____ Night _____

"I hereby certify that I do not believe in or advocate the initiation of force as a means of achieving political or social goals."

Signature _____

☐ I want to join the Alabama Libertarian Party. Enclosed is my \$25 check for 1990 dues.

☐ I want to join. Please use the first \$25 of the pledge I've indicated below as my dues for 1990.

☐ I want to make a monthly pledge of _____. Bill my credit

☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa account number _____

Exp. date _____ Signature _____

We need you!

The Alabama Libertarian Party needs your support. There's a lot to be done in Alabama as we work to spread the message of liberty. But it's work that takes people and money. That's where you come in. With your support, and that of thousands of others like you, we can make a difference in Alabama.

Alabama Libertarian Party

P.O. Box 11514
Birmingham, Alabama 35202
205/933-1776

Address correction requested

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Inside

Some people
still willing to
listen, ask
questions.