

Teaching Liberty to Democrats Libertarian Democrat Eric Fine

by Thomas M. Sipos

Longtime LP member Eric Fine—who's held numerous LP officer titles—has a new plan for spreading libertarianism—he joined the Democratic Party!

"I'm still a libertarian," said Fine. "Only now I spread liberty through the Democratic Party rather than the Libertarian Party."

Fine explained his logic at Los Angeles's libertarian Karl Hess Club on May 19, 2008. Armed with a Power Point presentation of recent local election results, Fine observed that most electoral districts—congressional, assembly, or whatever—are safely Democratic or Republican. The real contest is the primary election preceding the general.

Fine advises libertarians who want to win elective office to join the dominant party in their area, and work from within. In most of Los Angeles, that means the Democrats. So in 1999, Fine began re-registering "back and forth" from

Libertarian to Democratic.

"I ran for State Assembly in the 42nd District as a Libertarian in 1994 and 1996, and in the 47th District in 1998," said Fine. His highest vote percentage was in 1994, at 5% (5,441 votes). He got fewer votes in 1996 due to a Natural Law candidate on the ballot. In 1998, he only got 2.72% (2,596 votes), despite an endorsement from the Gun Owners of California.

In 2006, Fine ran for State Assembly in the Democratic primary and got 6% of the primary votes (2,317 votes).

For his ballot job title, Fine put Marijuana Legalization Coordinator. "I wrote a 250-word ballot statement on why marijuana should be legalized. I finished third out of five candidates." Marijuana legalization is Fine's main issue whenever campaigning among Democrats. This issue causes many Democrats to listen, and open their minds to other liber-

tarian positions.

Fine not only runs Democratic, he's active in the party. He joined the Culver City Democratic Club in 2005. They elected him treasurer—unanimously!

"They know I'm a libertarian," said Fine. "They don't care."

Indeed, Culver City Democrats were so pleased with Fine's work as treasurer, they gave him an award—and begged him to stay when he suggested he'd like to quit.

Fine had previously served as LPC treasurer from 1997 to 1999. A resident of Beverly Hills, he's also variously served as the L.A./Westside LP Chair and Vice Chair. He joined the LP in 1984, and was tasked with finding speakers for the L.A./Westside LP as early as 1985.

Fine's email is: DOCFINER@aol.com. Details on the Karl Hess Club at: www.khc.org.

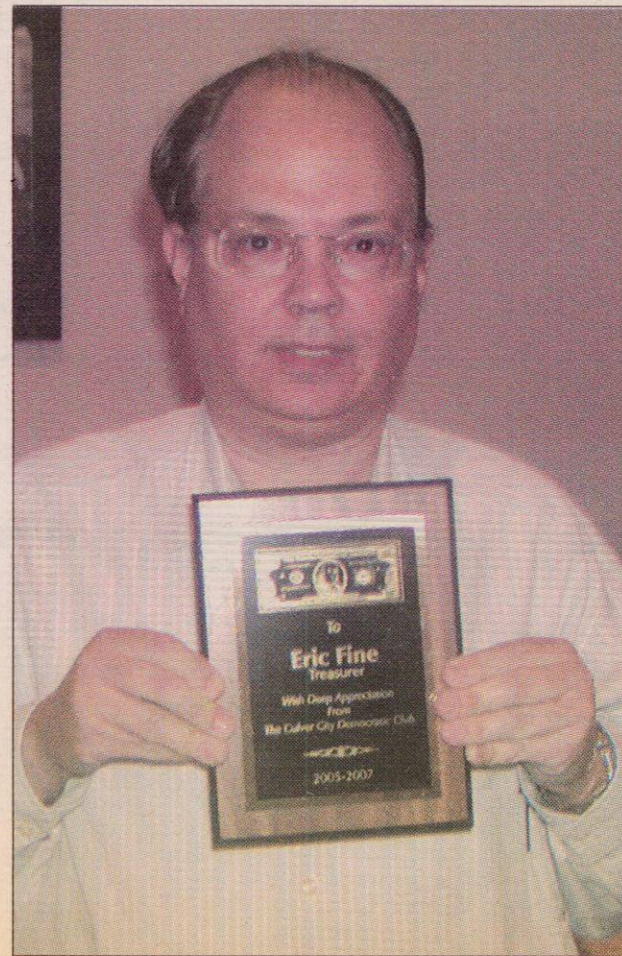


Photo: Thomas M. Sipos

Culver City Democrats honored libertarian Eric Fine with this plaque

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Photo: Jason Seagraves

Is Starchild a Pirate or Patriot?
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California Freedom

July 2008

The official publication of the Libertarian Party of California

National Convention Report

Decisions in Denver

by David F. Nolan



Photo: Thomas M. Sipos

Bob Barr (center) addresses the California delegation prior to Sunday's vote. LPC Northern Vice Chair Richard Newell to Barr's right

I was surprised that the 2008 LP nominating convention was smaller than the 2004 convention in Atlanta. Despite claims of growth by the national party organization and predictions of a massive turnout by various factions within the party, the attendance was down by about 20% compared to four years ago, and 30% vs. eight years ago.

Debate over the party's platform was both brief and civil. While a sizable minority (perhaps 40%) of the delegates supported a reversion to the 2004 platform as a starting point for our 2008 platform, a clear majority favored the platform committee's majority report. Once this became evident, the backers of the minority report withdrew their proposed planks, and debate over the majority report's proposals proceeded quickly.

Both sides agree that the resulting document is far better than the truncated version that came out of the poorly-attended 2006 convention.

The contest for the presidential nomination was spirited, but for the most part civil. The night before the presidential balloting, there was a candidates' forum [broadcast on C-SPAN] featuring the seven candidates who had qualified for inclusion: Bob Barr, Mike Gravel, George Phillies, Mike Jingoian, Mary Ruwart, Steve Kubby, and Wayne Allyn Root. All performed creditably, but judging from audience reaction, Kubby and Root were the standouts.

Voting began on Sunday morning, May 25th. The seven candidates from the previous night's forum, plus Christine Smith, were nominated from the floor and the first ballot commenced. The results: Barr 153 votes, Ruwart 152, Root 123, Gravel 71, Phillies 49,

Kubby 41, Jingoian 23 and Smith 6.

As anticipated, the race was between Barr, Ruwart, and Root.

As the lowest-running candidates were eliminated on subsequent ballots, Barr and Ruwart pulled away from the pack. By the fifth ballot, the tally was Ruwart 229, Barr 223, and Root 165.

Then Root endorsed Barr, and the fight was over. Barr won by 324 to 276 on the sixth ballot, with 26 votes for other candidates or "none of the above."

As a Kubby supporter, I was naturally disappointed that Steve fared so poorly. In my discussions with delegates prior to Sunday's balloting, I found that the most common objection to a Kubby candidacy was his perceived health problems, and not his being tagged as a "one-issue candidate." It appeared that while Kubby is widely admired, many people doubted his stamina.

Kubby's popularity became evident in the Vice-Presidential balloting. Despite a ringing endorsement from Barr, Root was unable to muster a majority on the first ballot, with Kubby running a close second. Root triumphed on the second ballot, whereupon close to 100 delegates left the convention

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Los Angeles Convention Report

Gathering in Glendale

by Thomas M. Sipos

Twenty-nine people attended the Libertarian Party of Los Angeles County (LPLAC) annual convention on June 7th, at Shakers Restaurant in Glendale, including many from outside the county. Events included an impromptu debate on the Iraq War, followed by the election of new and returning officers.

Bob Weber moderated the Iraq War debate, which also touched on possible war with Iran, and America's growing police state. Sandor Woren took what he termed the "pro-defense" position, while Alan Pyeatt argued against the war.

Admitting that his was the unpopular position among libertarians, Woren justified preemptive war, saying that it was a dangerous world, and that America's enemies "in that part of the world" only understood strength and force.



Photo: Thomas M. Sipos

Bruce Dovner addresses the LPLAC convention

Pyeatt countered that America's belligerent foreign policy created enemies, and thus made us less safe. He condemned the massive civilian casualties resulting from the U.S. invasion of Iraq, and America's decreasing liberties at the borders and at airports.

Woren said he too wanted the U.S. government to stop harassing its own citizens—and instead focus on "the real enemy" overseas.

Elections were held after the debate. LPLAC Chair Murray Levy declined to run for an-

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From the Editor Mending the Cracks

by Thomas M. Sipos

"I hope they have ambulances parked outside," joked one reform delegate at the 2008 LP national convention. I knew what he meant. Many of us were expecting long and acrimonious floor fights. Instead, the convention turned out to be surprisingly civil, despite some angry moments.

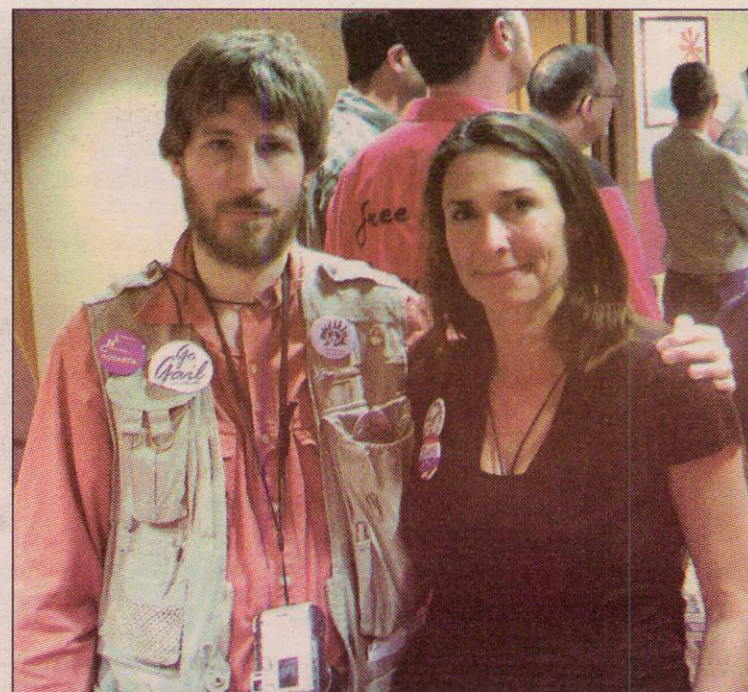
Like when those Barr delegates held an impromptu placard parade, marching past the C-SPAN cameras in the middle of Bill Redpath's speech. Anti-Barr delegates hissed and booed. Barr campaign higher-ups later blamed the parade on over-zealous delegates, acting on their own.

Presidential contender Christine Smith returned the favor during her "concession speech," lashing out at Barr. Now it was the Barr delegates' turn to hiss and boo.

At least C-SPAN viewers weren't bored.

Smith also thanked her supporters. All five of them. She'd gotten six votes on the first ballot, one presumably her own.

Rumors abounded. Some said that Barr would bus in bogus delegates. A similar



Thomas M. Sipos with Senator Mike Gravel's daughter, Lynne Mosier

rumor reportedly circulated about Kubby. Neither rumor materialized into fact.

It seems Mary Ruwart suffered a last-minute dirty trick. I'd asked Senator Mike Gravel's daughter, Lynne Mosier, to vote for Ruwart after Gravel fell from the ballot. Lynne agreed, since I'd assisted the Gravel campaign. But Lynne confided an unsettling rumor she'd heard on the floor: the *Washington Post* was about to break a story on the LP nominating "child pornographer" Ruwart.

That false smear was old news, based on an out-of-context quote from Ruwart's book.

Both Wayne Allyn Root and Christine Smith had pounced on Ruwart months earlier, de-

port this ticket in November?

Radical is a broad term (not all of us are purists), encompassing several factions, mostly supportive of each other, but with different priorities. Mine, as everyone knows, is antiwar.

I spoke with Barr before the voting. I said I'd heard that he supported war with Iran. He denied this. He said he'd lived in Iran, he knew the Iranian people, and he did not believe war was necessary.

That was good to hear.

Even better, weeks after the nomination, Barr continues to speak publicly against war with Iran. He's called for negotiations. So far, so good.

Outright Libertarians caucused after Barr/Root's victory. These gay libertarians were less than happy. While in Congress, Barr authored the Defense of Marriage Act (a position he recanted during Saturday's C-SPAN debate). Likewise, Root opposed gay marriage before he supported it.

"How can I ask my non-Libertarian gay friends to vote for Barr/Root?" lamented one OL member.

Nevertheless, OL Chair Rob Power proposed a motion to invite Barr and Root to "personally attend" future OL events. Gay libertarians are ready to support Barr/Root, provided that support is publicly reciprocated.

Still less happy are LP pagans. While in Congress, Barr

continued on next page...

From the LP Women's Caucus One Nation, Under God

by Barbara "Joy" Waymire

I made the following observations during the business meetings at the LP national convention in Denver, and likewise at the LPC convention business meetings. It is now time to share my observations.

We Libertarians believe in our Founding Fathers' vision for this nation, which was "One Nation, Under God." Yet we seem to continually focus on, and specifically spell out, conflicting statements in our principles.

We Libertarians stand united in our fight to uphold our Constitutional rights; that all men are created equal. Yet we divide everyone into categories, instead of focusing on individual rights and freedoms: that all individuals have the right to make their own choices, as long as it does not interfere, infringe, or cause harm to other



individuals.

Government has no right to dictate, nor require, a marriage license between two individuals. Families used to control their own birth and death records. But today, by requiring a paper trail of families, the government has justification, or so it thinks, to insert controls for income tax and other misappropriations, that only benefit the government and not the people.

Our LP bylaws should be straightforward. Black and white. Respectful of individual choices and freedoms, rather than labeling and dividing the people of this nation by their sexual preference, creed, or color.

We all descended from one, so we are all the same. Why do we divide individuals, rather than support all individuals' freedom of choice? Any wording in our bylaws or principles that divide individuals into specific categories, rather than treating them as a whole people, will alienate many from becoming Libertarians.

We have lost sight and direction from where we began, by catering to individual groups rather than focusing on our rights as a people.

Remember, a divided nation will never stand. And a division within our party will keep us from succeeding in an election—which should be our main goal.

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The LP Women's Caucus has a website: lp.org/mailman/listinfo/lpwomen_lp.org. Barbara "Joy" Waymire is Secretary of the Gold County LP and a member of the National Guild of Piano Teachers. Her email: joys_lpcnews@yahoo.com.

Gathering in Glendale

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other term, allowing Vice Chair Bruce Dovner to assume the post of Chair. Mark Selzer replaced Dovner as Vice Chair. David Bowers and David Wire were re-elected to Secretary and Treasurer, respectively. David Larkin and Ted Brown were re-elected to the Judicial Committee. Jill Stone replaced the out-going Sarah Foster on the JC.

As last year, all elections were uncontested, save for

"None of the Above."

Dovner said that, as Chair, he hoped to help LPLAC attract more media attention, more votes, and more youth. "I want to see more young people at our events," he said.

Discussing the LP national convention, Dovner said that, between Barr and Ruwart, he'd wanted to vote for EOTA—"Either of the Above"—because either was a good pick. He voted for Ruwart, but added that Libertarians must now unite behind, and assist,

all LP candidates that appear on the November ballot.

As the convention wound down, the LPLAC board presented outgoing Chair Levy with a plaque in appreciation of his past year of service.

"I have a dream," said Levy, explaining that he hoped Barr would either win, or spoil it for McCain. That the GOP would then be so crippled that it would merge with the LP, forming the Libertarian-Republican Party. That libertarians would transform the LRP into the new LP—one of the two major parties.

Levy analogized to the 1850s Republican takeover of the Whig Party to demonstrate that such dreams were possible.

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Denver Convention

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hall.

There was widespread feeling that Barr had missed a golden opportunity to unify the party by selecting Kubby as his running mate, or at least remaining neutral in the VP selection.

Kubby went into the hallway to calm irate delegates who were bitterly disappointed in the outcome, and persuaded most of them to stay in the LP at least long enough to see how Barr and Root perform over the next few weeks and months.

I felt that Barr made a very poor decision in picking Root as his running mate. Unlike many of the "radical" or "purist" delegates, I was not virulently anti-Barr, but really wanted to see a Barr-Kubby ticket as a symbolic gesture of unity within the party. I also thought that this would be our most media-worthy ticket -- the former Drug Warrior and the Drug War POW joining for liberty!

Alas, it was not to be.

The celebratory banquet on Sunday night was both small and subdued: about 250 people. Kubby was the only defeated Presidential contender to participate (at least as far as I could observe). The mood was cautiously optimistic. About \$64,000 was raised, most of it from a handful of large contributors.

On Monday, Bill Redpath was re-elected as National Chair on the second ballot. Mike Jingozian was elected Vice Chair, in a surprise victory over incumbent Chuck Moulton. Bob Sullentrop was unopposed for re-election as

National Secretary. Aaron Starr easily defeated Carol McMahan for Treasurer.

While not everyone in the LP is thrilled with our national ticket, most people seem inclined to give our candidates a "clean slate," as Brian Holtz put it. Nobody knows how many votes Barr and Root will receive in November, but hopes are high that they will surpass the record of 1.06% set by Ed Clark in 1980. Talk of 2%, 3%, and even 5% is in the air.

I think a 5% showing is unlikely, but consider 2% within the realm of possibility. Whether the vote for Barr will affect the outcome of the general election is another matter. Typically, the Libertarian vote is highest in the Rocky Mountain states, which usually go heavily Republican. Possibly, Barr could "make the difference" in states like Nevada and New Hampshire, but even that is iffy.

The most important question is "will this campaign help build the Libertarian Party for the long run?" What message will Barr and Root take to the American people, and how many of them will switch their allegiance to the LP as a result?

Only time will tell.

David F. Nolan is the founder of the Libertarian Party. His email: dfn@alum.mit.edu.

Fighting to Win Office



Photo: Lawrence K. Samuels

It's not *all* about the national convention. The LPC continues its election battles to win local offices.

On April 29th, Libertarian Mark Hinkle participated in a candidates panel for the 27th Assembly District, at the Monterey Institute of International Studies.

LP Supports Troops, Condemns War

by Thomas M. Sipos

On Monday, May 26th, Memorial Day, the entire LP national delegation stood for one minute of silence in honor of U.S. troops.

Shortly thereafter, the delegation passed, by the required two thirds majority, the following antiwar resolution:

"Whereas the War in Iraq was sold to the American people based upon lies, exaggerations and half-truths, Whereas the War in Iraq was prosecuted for the private interests of the Administration and its cronies and was not, and is not, in the national security interests of the United States,

We call for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq as quickly as can be safely accomplished."

The resolution was authored by Los Angeles County Vice Chair Bruce Dovner.

Twelve days later, on June 7th, Dovner was elevated from Vice Chair to Chair at the Los Angeles County LP convention. [See *Gathering in Glendale*, page 1.]

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Letters to the Editor



Purists Scare Voters

Purists have a place in the libertarian movement. However, what purists must not do is prevent the party from growing into an effective political force. This is the goal of the party. To get Libertarian candidates elected so we may effect real political change.

We need to have the libertarian movement separate from the LP. The movement should contain all purists and involve education. The party should contain people who can communicate to non-libertarians. We call these people *candidates*, and they do this best with their toes hanging over the libertarian/centrist line on the Nolan chart, or as close southward to that line as they dare venture.

A purist will never go there and thus will never get elected. Purists often terrify non-libertarians and send them fleeing. While the purist is 100% correct, it is just too much for a non-libertarian to handle all at once. Candidates understand this. Purists often do not.

Candidates must attract voters who are south of that line. Successful candidates will not use purist language. They will use the language of non-libertarians. This language confuses purists.

Only after a candidate has convinced a voter to cross the line should a purist begin any advanced education courses upon these newly converted libertarians.

While purists keep the membership of our party of principle solidly directed toward a philosophical ideal, it is candidates who grow our party. Purists speak of ideals, goals, and philosophical dreams. Candidates speak of actual, achievable actions to incrementally move society in that direction.

These two entities are mutually exclusive. Yet in past practice, they have *not* been mutually exclusive. We have had purists running for office. This is why we have so few office holders.

Purists and candidates must be separated for each to be effective in accomplishing their respective roles. This is what we are currently witnessing in our party. We will be larger, stronger, and more powerful when it is complete. I am excited to watch it finally beginning to happen.

— Norm "Firecracker" Westwell
Huntington Beach, CA

A Race We Can Win

Mike Benoit is running for congress in California's 52nd District. Duncan Hunter is retiring so the seat is up for grabs. This gives us a real chance to claim victory, but we need all the help we can get from the party.

We have a fulltime campaign staff of nine people from all political backgrounds [yet] most of our support has come from outside

the LP. I hope we can change this. Without an incumbent and a politically seasoned opponent, we have a great chance of winning the first Libertarian congressional seat in history.

We are running off the momentum of the Libertarian infused "Ron Paul Revolution," but we need the same excitement and commitment from the LP if we are to win. Help us secure the 52nd District in the name of liberty, responsibility, and small government.

To help: jhill@benoit2008.com, phone: (858) 248-1726, www.MichaelBenoit.org.

— Joey Hill
campaign manager,
Mike Benoit for Congress

Eminent Domain Update

All five Seaside council members voted to reinstate eminent domain powers on June 5th. There is a move afoot to organize a recall campaign.

However, only two council members can be recalled, because the other three will run for re-election in November 2008. We might call the campaign either *Recall/Replace the Gang of Five* or *Recall/Replace the Seaside Five*.

— Lawrence K. Samuels
Monterey, CA



Photo: Elizabeth C. Briery

The Barr placard parade, which drew hisses and boos, marches past the LPC delegation

continued from previous page

urged the Pentagon to deny recognition to Wiccans. I saw several pagan delegates wearing anti-Barr buttons.

Pagans remain upset weeks after the convention. A longtime LPC Wiccan told me he may not vote LP, explaining, "I'd contacted Barr's campaign several times since the convention, asking for his current views on religious freedom. No one's responded."

While Barr/Root have offered partial loaves to peaceniks and gays, pagans remain unfed. As for the open immigration and anti-drug war radicals, from what I've seen, they consider Barr/Root less than "pure," but will mostly give the ticket a chance.

To paraphrase one radical blogger: "The reformers got everything they wanted. The president. The vice president. The platform. If the LP doesn't get votes, reformers can't blame radicals for holding them back. If the LP fails, it will be the reformers' strategy that failed."

Newly re-elected LNC rep Angela Keaton dishes "inside scoops" about the LNC at: www.AngelaKeaton.com.

Finally, if you've enjoyed my editorials and want more, please visit me at: <http://libertarianpeacenik.blogspot.com>.

Some troubling news: An LNC member wants the 2010

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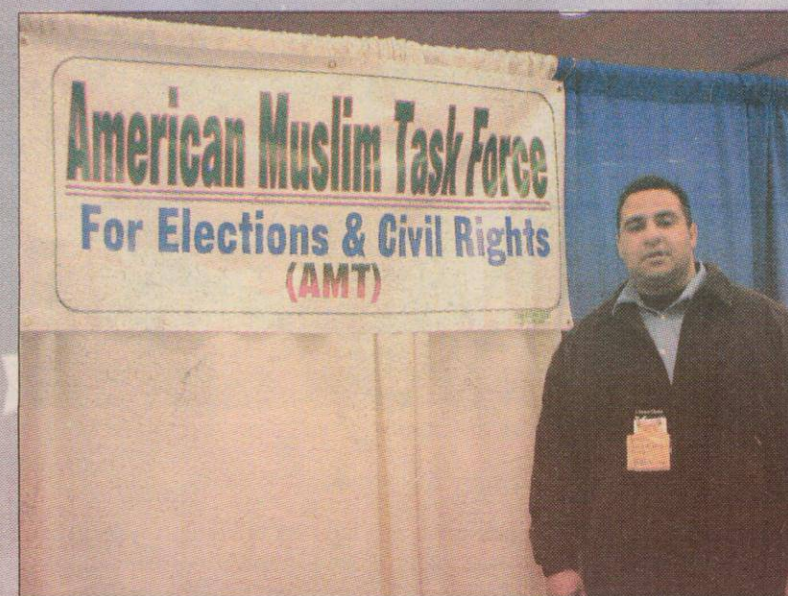


Photo: Thomas M. Spies

Hazim Kira described the American Muslim Task Force as "an umbrella organization of all Muslim organizations in this country, focused on civil rights and elections." Their booth at the LP convention had two goals. "To create a dialog between the Libertarian and Muslim communities. And to get Muslims to become part of the Libertarian Party."

Stressing that Muslims are not monolithic, Kira said that different planks of the LP platform appeal to different Muslims, including economic freedom, foreign policy, less government, separation of church and state, and "especially civil rights."

Do some Muslims agree with the entire LP platform? "Absolutely, yes," said Kira.

One California Muslim, Maad Abu-Ghazaleh, ran for Congress on the Libertarian ticket in 2002 against Democrat Tom Lantos. Abu-Ghazaleh got 7% of the vote. The Republican got 25%.

The AMTF is non-partisan and encourages Muslims to participate in the political process, whether as a Republican, Democrat, Green, Libertarian, or whatever party best represents an individual Muslim's principles.

Kira added, "There is a verse in the tradition of The Prophet that says, 'Follow the law of the country that you are in.' We want Muslims to be part of every party. [This booth] is our attempt to get them to know what the LP stands for."

M for Mary

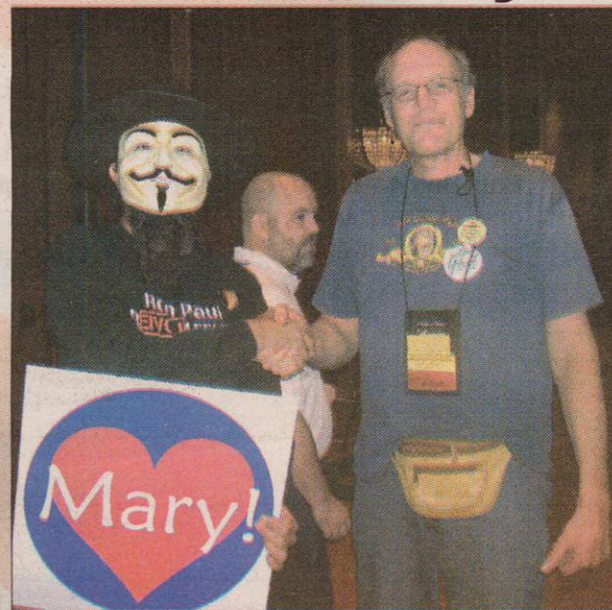


Photo: Bob Weber

Although busy fighting statist tyranny in his native Britain, Guy Fawkes still found time to campaign for purist Mary Ruwart. And to pose with Los Angeles County LP officer Bob Weber.

Even so, Fawkes was heard to grouse, "If I had a dollar for every time someone at this convention asked to take my picture..."

Gay Outreach

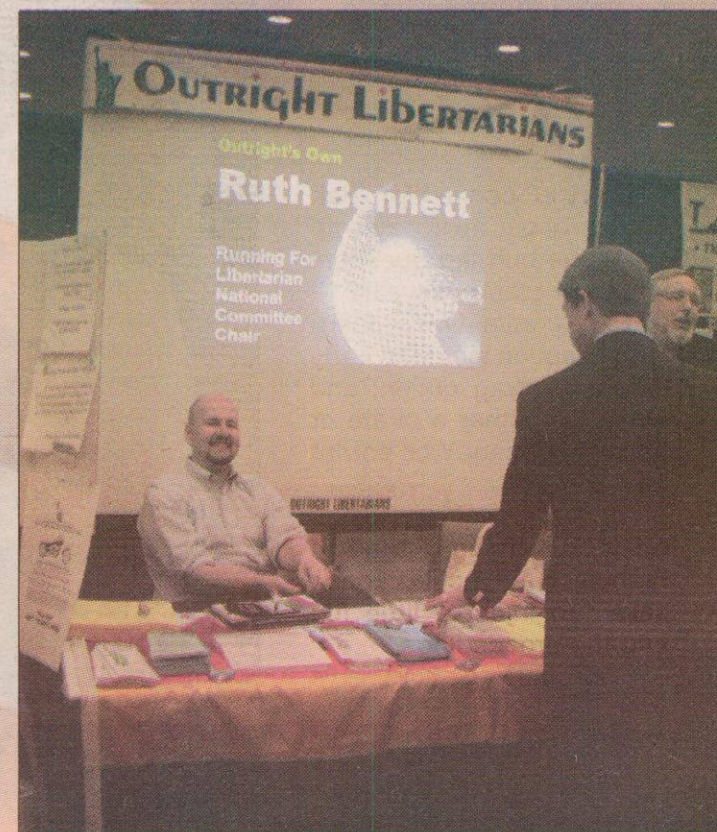


Photo: Thomas M. Spies

One of the fun things at any convention is checking out the vendor booths. What's on sale? What's being promoted?

Outright Libertarians had a booth because, as Brian Miller explained, "It lets our membership know that we're continuing our lobbying and advocacy work within the Libertarian Party. It also allows the LP to know that we're here as a resource to better understand outreach to LGBT voters."

About the convention, Miller said, "It's been a very raucous ride. This is my second convention. It's certainly been my busiest and most controversial. The Outright team is working hard to make sure the outcome is good for the LGBT community and for the LP in the election, and in our party's day to day business."

California Dreamin'



Photo: Thomas M. Spies

California delegates received a special treat at the convention this year—a goodie bag containing these La La Land shades, courtesy of Audrey Carlen.

The package also contained "California Delegate" nametag ribbons (no other state had their own ribbons) and California liberty

buttons.

Why? To show those other states that we're special!

Just imagine what those non-California delegates thought upon seeing Los Angeles County LP officer José Castañeda in his shades.

So cool! So cool!

Obligatory Starchild Photo

Every LP convention, delegates begin their day with the same burning question: what will Starchild wear?

This convention's fashion collection included Lady Liberty, a drag queen, and what was either a pirate or a Revolutionary War patriot [see page 8].

"I like to lighten things up at conventions," the San Francisco LP activist once said. "To inject a little fun into the proceedings."

Upon seeing Starchild's regalia, one delegate mused, "I wonder how he explains all that stuff to airport security?"

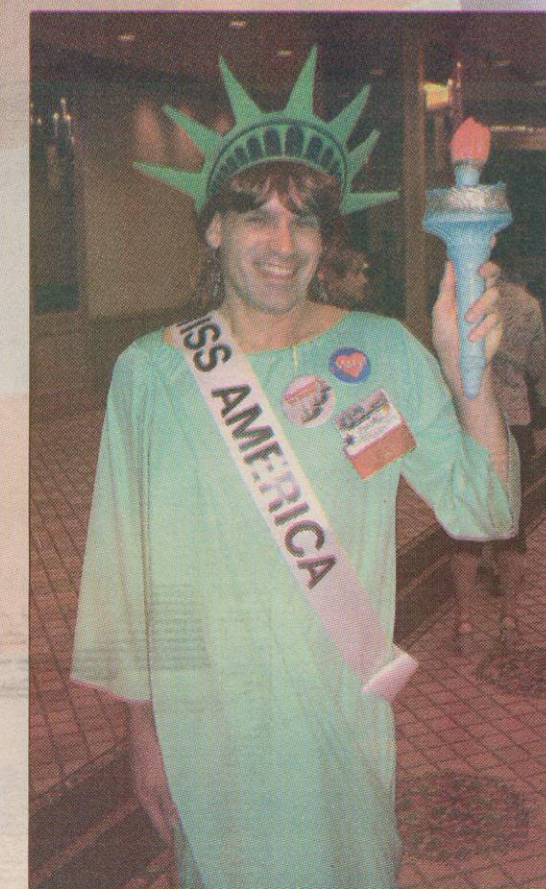


Photo: Bob Weber

Root Rests

Even his critics agree that LP Vice Presidential candidate Wayne Allyn Root has energy.

"I'm a prize fighter," Root reportedly told folks at his convention hospitality suite. "I can't sit still for two hours. I need to be in a ring."

This may be the only photo in existence of Root with his eyes shut. It was taken on Friday, May 23rd, at the second "All Inclusive Debate." Candidates Christine Smith and Steve Kubby to Root's left.



Photo: Thomas M. Spies

Welcome Democrats

The LP isn't the only political party convening in Denver this year. The Democrats are arriving in August—followed by thousands of protesters and much of the national media.

This truck cruised the Mile High City during the LP convention, and a party official was collecting funds to keep it truckin' during the Democrats' event, so that millions of eyes throughout the world will see these blacklit LP billboards!

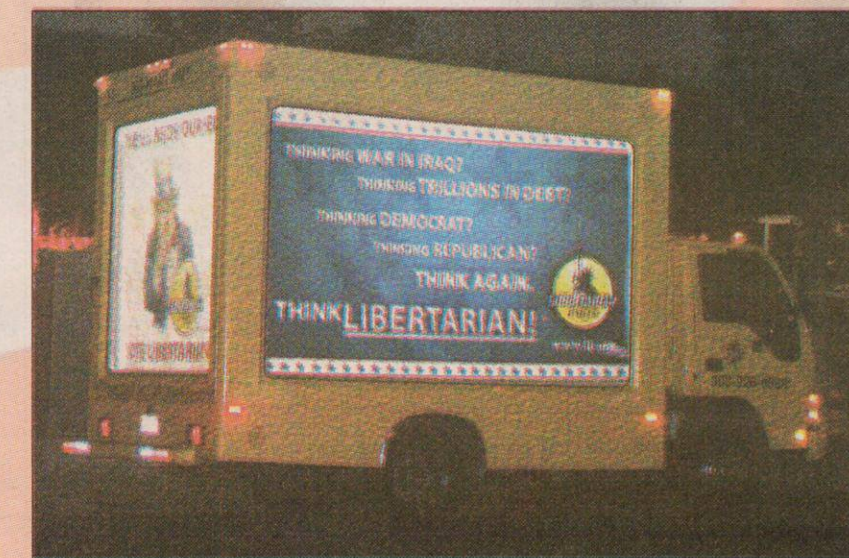


Photo: Thomas M. Spies

Barr Body Artist

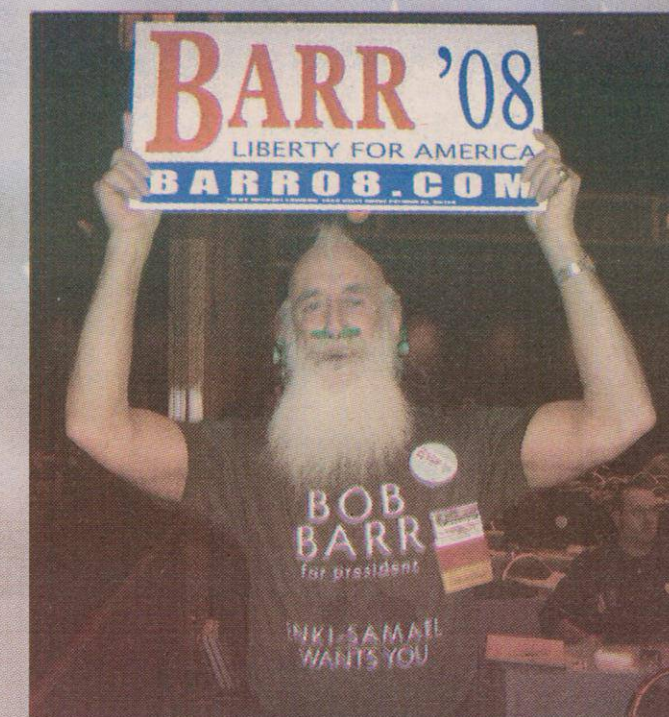


Photo: Thomas M. Spies

Most Bob Barr delegates were identifiable from their dark suits and cowboy hats. At least, that's how it seemed to non-Barr delegates.

One notable exception was Sherman Ball, who is perhaps unique in being the only delegate at any LP convention ever to sport a more colorful appearance than Starchild.

"I was wondering who he was," said Ball to this author.

Ball was discharged from the U.S. Air Force with the rank of captain in 1972. He was active in the early years of the LPC, then left. He only recently rejoined, inspired by Ron Paul and Bob Barr.

Explaining his support for Barr, Ball said, "I want to do some damage to the Republican or the Democrat party. The one-party system we got now is basically statist. We have a chance with Bob Barr to bloody at least one of the parties, and get ourselves established as a

real party. He has national name recognition. He's been a member of the Libertarian National Committee for a couple of years.

"Almost everything is haywire in this country. The increasing regulations. The phony climate change thing, which mankind has nothing to do with. It does it by itself. The sun is responsible. The orbit of the Earth. We have no control over it. McCain has proposed an agenda to control every aspect of our lives in the name of this mythical, man-caused global warming."

Ball wears a Sumerian Libertarian t-shirt because, he says, "all of our Western civilization came out of Sumeria," making it the birthplace of liberty.

Regarding his piercings and tattoos, does he prefer to be called a body artist, or a member of the body alteration community, or what?

Ball laughs. "I'm just who I am. I don't have any group."