

THE COLORADO LIBERTY

Published by the
Libertarian Party
of Colorado
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Denver, CO
80237
www.LPColorado.org



***The Libertarians
are Coming!
The Libertarians
are Coming!***

**Inside: All the up to the minute de-
tails on the upcoming 2003 Con-
vention in Colorado Springs!**

FEATURE ARTICLE:

HB-1142

**Could this spell the
DEATH of the "Minor
Party" - ALL MINOR
PARTIES - at the hands
of the Republican Party
Authors?**



February 2003

Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Sat. Breakfast Group SOCO Alliance Monthly Meeting
2	3 Boulder Lunch South-Side Monthly Meeting	4 Ft. Collins Monthly Breakfast	5	6 JeffCo Monthly Meeting	7	8 Sat. Breakfast Group
9	10 Boulder Lunch	11 State Board Monthly Meeting Western Slope Bi-Weekly Meeting	12 El Paso Monthly Meeting	13 Boulder Monthly Meeting	14	15 Sat. Breakfast Group
16	17 Boulder Lunch	18 Douglas Monthly Meeting	19 Routt Monthly Meeting	20	21	22 Sat. Breakfast Group
23	24 Boulder Lunch	25 Western Slope Bi-Weekly Meeting	26	27	28	

Future Events: State Convention 2003

There is still time to get registered for the 2003 Convention. See details of the events plans and events on page:

Do you have a special or recurring event you'd like to see in this space or the calendar? Contact Jim Vance at jvance@JamesVance.com with your event information.

Libertarian Party of Colorado

<http://www.lpcolorado.org>

1660 South Albion Street; Denver, CO 80207-1319 720.941.2344. The monthly State Board Meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm

State Board (May 2002 though April 2003)

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1660 South Albion Street; Suite 309; Denver, Colorado 80231.

Submissions of news reports, editorials, calendar information, or any other relevant information for publication in the Colorado Liberty may be sent directly to Jim Vance. Microsoft Office compatible formats of documents and standard JPG, GIF, or TIFF images accepted for submission. Text Only submissions are acceptable but subject to formatting changes. Please contact Jim for instruction on physical submissions of text or images.

The Colorado Liberty is printed by Quality Press and is produced by Publication Director, Chief Editor & WebMaster: Jim Vance and the Publication Advisor: (Currently accepting applications). Additional contributions made by editorialists and other contributors.

Contacts in the LPCO

Meetings are subject to change without notice. Contact the specific chapter contact for details.
Please send any corrections or additions to Publications Director Jim Vance.

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News and Tidbits from around the State & the Board

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National Party

National Libertarian Party

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National LP Web Site: <http://www.lp.org>

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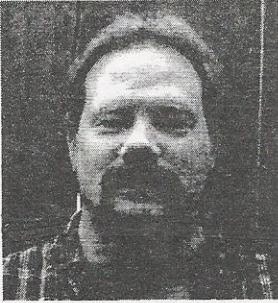
Floyd Bilderback, the state board's Legislative Director is currently seeking volunteers to assist him and the party during the 2003 legislative session.

If you are interested Floyd would like you to assist him in reading over legislative bills then issue comments on them from a Libertarian viewpoint for use in issue statements that will appear here in the Liberty, in press releases, or other Libertarian Party publications.

If you are interested in helping the party analyze what could be a potential plethora of legislative bills during the course of the next session, please contact Floyd through one of the following methods:

- Phone: 303-773-5101
- E-Mail: bilder@us.ibm.com

David Aitken is running for Denver Elections Commissioner. The election is on May 6th! If you would like or would be able to assist as a volunteer to help petition for David, help distribute flyers to your Denver neighborhood, or assist in any other way—please call David @ 303-831-4334 or e-mail him at: Daitken@tde.com



John Berntson writes his Notes from the Chair article for the Liberty monthly and is in his second year as Board Chair of the Libertarian Party of Colorado.

Notes from the Chair: *Up in the Air*

I have a vision about space. I have a hope. I do not believe there are too many major problems today that could not be solved by the willful and deliberate exploitation of space. (Yes, I said "exploitation," not "exploration") It could lead to a life so much better than the one we have right now - and not just for us

Westerners, but for all the people of the Earth.

Okay, I know what you're thinking: the chairman has slipped a cog. He is delusional. Sure, space has some good things, but it is, well, up there, above the clouds, and it cannot affect us down here in any meaningful way.

Not so fast! Look at the future I see. One normal-sized asteroid - think Pikes Peak floating in space - has mineral wealth measured in the trillions of dollars. For various reasons, it is easier to find and extract minerals from asteroids, once you have the basic space-faring infrastructure set up, than it is to do the same here on Earth, and you do not have to disrupt any environment to do so. Convey these extracts to orbital factories, each with unlimited heat, cold, vacuum, and nearly unlimited electricity, and you can replace most of the bulk manufacturing here on Earth, once again taking out a major source of pollution. In time, of course, the cost of these minerals would drop precipitously, allowing the poor to purchase manufactured goods at low prices.

History shows an ever increasing amount of energy usage per person. This energy is reflected in terms of better health, longer life spans, less backbreaking labor, greater control over one's environment, and greater independence. Space offers greatly increased energy for humanity to use, to include Helium Three, as well as various other technologies, some of which could deliver power directly to the Third World.

My vision also includes a planet called Mars, which would grow and process the food needed by those who would live and work in space. Also, I can see orbital habitats, not clunky tin cans, but wondrous places, where people would feel privileged to live.

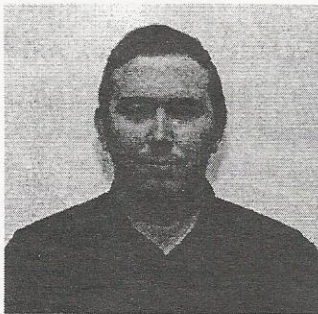
As you know, NASA suffered a bit of a tragedy recently, losing the Columbia and its crew. I will not jump on the bandwagon of sentimentality that has surrounded this event, so let me state that I believe these to be personal tragedies, not a national one. The crew were good and talented people, but they were not heroes in the traditional sense. They were doing the job they strove for, they knew the dangers, and their colleagues would jump on the next shuttle, even knowing the risk.

NASA did incredible things in the sixties, going from zero to Moon in a little over ten years. However, today, it is only a bureaucracy, more worried about keeping its staff, letting contracts, and protecting its turf, than in creating the sort of infrastructure that would allow real exploitation of the vast resources that are just waiting out there in near space. The shuttle system keeps launch costs exorbitant and mires us here on the ground. The space station still searches for a mission. Thirty years after Tranquility Base, space remains the province of government employees and nobody knows what our space program is even trying to accomplish.

It is time to auction off NASA's possessions to the highest bidder, not that I think the three remaining shuttles will bring in much. Let Canaveral be sold to somebody who thinks that a dozen launches a year is, well, a bit wimpish. Let the astronaut corps and all the technicians sell their services to employers who will use them to the point of happy exhaustion. Let NASA get back to testing airframes, or whatever it used to do, so they will no longer impede progress. They will not lead or follow, so let them get out of the way.

Our future is truly up in the air. Space can be so much more than just another government program.

— John K. Berntson



HB03-1142— A Proposition to Kill Minor Parties Off?

By Mike Seebeck; Public Information Director for the LPCO

HB 03-1142 is upon us, and the Libertarian Party is facing a threat like never before.

This bill is a mishmashed nightmare of proposals that effectively could cripple minor parties across the state. With that in mind, here's the who what where when how and why, as well as the what has happened and what will happen.

WHO: This bill is authored by Bill Crane, District 57, Arvada. Mr. Crane won re-election this past November by 1103 votes over his Democrat opponent, while Gregg Miller earned 263 votes in third. Mr. Crane is acting the role of a sore winner by proposing this legislation, even though we won by more than 4 times Gregg's vote. The bill has several cosponsors, all Republicans: Cadman, Clapp, Fairbank, Fritz, Harvey, Hefley, King, Lee, May M., Mitchell, Rhodes, Schultheis, Spence, Stafford, and White in the House, and Chlouber and Lamborn in the Senate.

WHERE: As of Feb 1, the bill has been assigned to the House State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee. The Republicans hold a 8-3 voting advantage in that committee, with 5 of the co-sponsors being on that committee. Rep Paul Weissmann was one of the original Minor Party Law authors and is on the committee and as one of the three Democrats on the committee, he adamantly opposes the bill.

WHEN: The next committee hearing on the bill will be February 6 at 2:30 PM. No action has been taken in either the full House or the Senate yet.

HOW: The Republicans have taken over the government, of course. We could call it a consequence of zombie voting or a naïve electorate, but no matter how they got there, they're there, and now we have this.

WHY: The Republicans perceive us as a threat and they want to get rid of us.

WHAT: This is the heart of the matter.

This bill would do several things:

Remove all references to major and minor parties from certain (but not all) areas of the Colorado Revised Statutes.

Gut the Minor Party Law.

Require minor parties to have caucuses, county assemblies, and taxpayer-funded primaries.

This bill also doesn't do several things:

Give minor parties equal selection footing for election judges.

Give minor parties equal selection footing for canvassing boards.

Change the blue cards to list all parties.

Lets minor parties change their bylaws after Feb 1 of an even-numbered year.

Guarantees equal access to public debates.

Here's the breakdown. The bill is available on the Colorado General Assembly web page in .pdf format. Some analysis is included in parentheses after each section.

Section 1 changes 1-1-104-23 so that a minor party has to submit a sufficient petition to nominate candidates under 1-4-1302 or 1-4-1303-1, which are amended in Sections 17 and 18. *(Follow the bouncing ball here, folks, it gets worse from here.)*

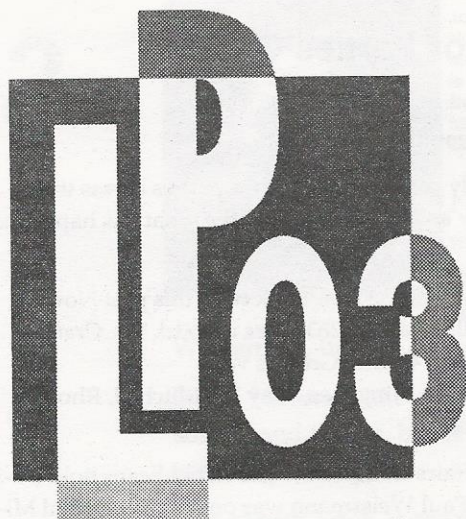
Section 2 states that an unaffiliated voter can declare any party affiliation at the polls for a primary election as provided for by 1-7-201, which is amended in Section 21. *(This comes into statutory conflict with 1-2-219, which is amended in Section 3.)*

Section 3 states that an affiliated voter must change affiliation before 30 days before any election, including primaries. *(The conflict is that according to the state, "unaffiliated" is considered an affiliation, so the sections referenced in Sections 2 and 3 contradict themselves!)*

Section 4 requires the county clerks to furnish voter cancellation lists to all county chairs. *(This isn't bad in areas where there are county affiliates, but it's downright lousy in areas where we don't have county affiliates. This is why we need to build more affiliates!)* **Section 19** is a language change to not reference a section of the CRS this bill seeks to repeal. In effect the context does not change otherwise, which is how the Secretary of State informs a minor party that they have lost their status. It also changes the date of that notice from July 1 to Feb 1.

Section 5 requires the county clerks to furnish voter registrations lists to each party. *(This one actually is good, as unlike Section 4, the lists are required to be furnished to the parties, not the county chairs, so the lists in non-affiliated counties still go to the party.)*

Section 6 requires all parties to adopt bylaws within 90 days of a Board election. Included in those bylaws are regulations for county affiliates, party assembly delegate selection procedures based on certain criteria, and prohibits amending the bylaws after February of any even-numbered year. *(This is one of the worst parts. The bylaws adoption isn't a big deal since the LPCO does that on the same day anyway. What really stinks are the county affiliates being regulated by the state, having to do assembly delegations, and freezing the bylaws. This would effectively force the LPCO to move its state business meeting to the first quarter of the calendar year, or go to twice-yearly business meetings with the bylaws done in the first quarter and the nominations done in the third quarter.)*

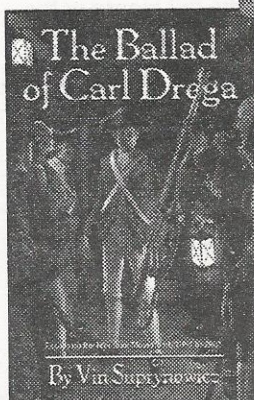


Libertarian Party of Colorado

2003 Convention

April 4-6, Ramada Inn, Colorado Springs

Speakers

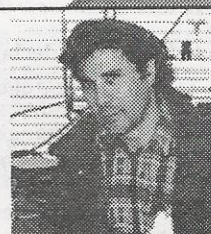


Vin Suprynowicz is a syndicated columnist and editorial writer for the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. He is the author of *The Ballad of Carl Drega* and *Send in the Waco Killers*. He also edits *Privacy Alert* at www.privacyalert.us.

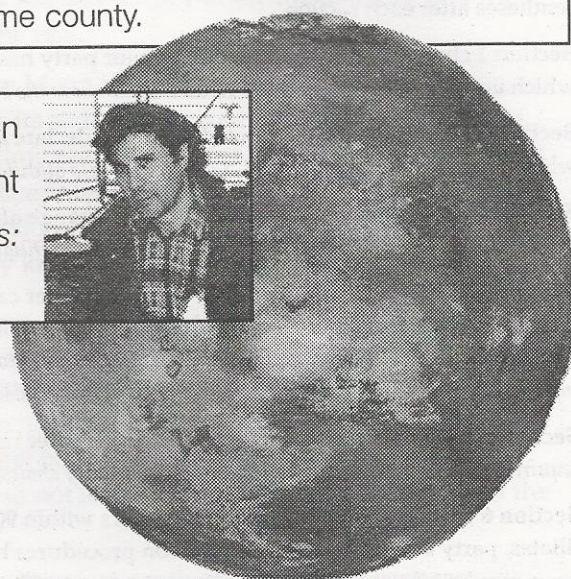


Ed Thompson was the 2002 Libertarian candidate for governor of Wisconsin (www.edthompson.com). He received 10.4% of the vote, more than any other third-party gubernatorial candidate in that state in 60 years. Thompson won in his home town of Tomah and in his home county.

Dr. Robert Zubrin writes for Direct Manned Mars Mission (<http://www.nw.net/mars/marsdirect.html>). He is the president of Pioneer Astronautics and the author of *The Case for Mars: The Plan to Settle the Red Planet and Why We Must*.



Boston T. Party is working on his first novel, *Molon Labe!* He is the author of *Boston's Gun Bible*, *You and the Police*, *Hologram of Liberty*, and other books (www.javelinpress.com).



Suzanne Shell is the founder of the American Family Advocacy Center (www.profane-justice.org). She will be speaking about the dangers of DHS and how to protect your family. **Additional speakers will be announced.**

Registration

The regular price for the complete convention package—Option #1—is \$129, which includes the Saturday night banquet, Saturday lunch buffet, and seminars for both Saturday and Sunday.

Option #2 is \$99. This package includes the Saturday lunch buffet and seminars for both Saturday and Sunday (no banquet).

Option #3 is \$49. This option is for a ticket to the Saturday night banquet only. The business meetings are free to all LPCO members.

The student rate is \$49 for all current full-time students. This price allows those with current full-time student ID's to participate in all of the above activities.

To register for the convention, please send a check or money order, payable to "Carol Geltemeyer," to Nancy Graves, 3724 E. LaSalle St. #1310, Colorado Springs, CO 80909. Visa and Mastercard are also accepted. See the form below.

Payment must be received by March 28. Refunds will be issued, minus \$25, only when requested prior to that date. Cancellations will be refunded at 50% if requested March 28 or later.

Vendor Tables

Tables will be available to vendors for \$25 each, or \$10 for LPCO dues-paying members.

Hotel Information

The Ramada Inn has reserved a block of rooms for the convention. These rooms are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Room rates are \$53-\$55 per night (at the group rate—mention you are attending the Libertarian Party Convention). These rates include coupons to the full hot breakfast buffet from 7–9am. The Ramada Inn may be reached at 719.633.5541. Its address is 3125 Sinton Rd., Colorado Springs, CO 80907.

Contact the Organizers

Nancy may be reached at 719.570.0747 or 719.310.9444, or by e-mail at lpco2003@pcisys.net.

Schedule

A more detailed schedule will be provided closer to the event. The basic schedule will be as follows.

Friday night—Social and registration.

Saturday—Seminars, Buffet lunch and Banquet in the evening.

Sunday—Seminars and wrap-up.

Times for business meetings will be announced. All members of the Libertarian Party of Colorado may attend the business meetings at no cost.

For more information about the LP03 Convention, please visit the Colorado Freedom Report web page at www.FreeColorado.com.

Please specify the number of persons and your registration preference. Lodging and other meals are not included.

____ Full Convention (Option #1): \$129

____ Full Convention, except banquet (Option #2): \$99

____ Banquet Only (Option #3): \$49

____ Full-time Student: \$49

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

E-mail _____

Phone _____

Visa Mastercard Account # _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Make checks or money orders payable to "Carol Geltemeyer" and mail with this form to Nancy Graves, 3724 E. LaSalle St. #1310, Colorado Springs, CO 80909.

House Bill 03-1142—Impending Doom for Minor Parties? (continued from page 4)

Section 7 puts minor parties in the primaries, but it also erases the 60-day rule the LPCO just put in 2002 and replaces it with the 1-year rule the LPCO used to have. It also makes voter registration the only method of party membership. *(This section is mixed. The primaries are excellent publicity, no doubt, but do we really want to be sponging off the tax rolls for this type of election that serves no real purpose? Also, the 1-year rule and the registration restrictions make it far too difficult to actually have real Libertarians run for office instead of pretender stacked-up traitors whose loyalties are with the R's.)*

Section 8 makes our nominees a plurality instead of a majority, but it also guarantees a ballot listing in the general election. *(The plurality part is bad. This ought to be changed to a majority, just to spike the D's and R's.)*

Section 9 allows for unaffiliated Congress candidates to be nominated according to 1-4-802 for Congress vacancy elections. 1-4-802 is not amended in this bill. *(This is utterly meaningless to the LPCO, as it only removes the word "major" from the section.)*

Section 10 makes the primaries the nomination vehicle for candidates, removing the convention from the equation. It also makes our gubernatorial candidate select their running mate. *(Removing the convention as the nomination vehicle is just plain wrong. The running mate change really isn't a change as that is how we do it now anyway.)*

Section 11 makes the convention move to at least 65 days before the primary and allows the convention to designate candidates for that primary. This goes with Section 10. *(The LPCO already does the convention 65 days before the primary—roughly the end of May, so the only change here is that the convention names candidates for the primary where they get nominated instead of directly nominating them. That wastes our time and tax dollars.)*

Section 12 makes it possible for candidates to be put on the primary outside the caucuses and assemblies by petitions. *(This is exactly the same as the major parties, and most likely will not be a concern on spiking the party due to the 1-year change up in Section 7)*

Section 13 assumes that nominees accept their nomination unless they tell the Secretary of State in writing within 4 days otherwise, or within 10 days if by fax. *(This section does not address the removal of candidates for cause and could be interpreted to mean that we could no longer do that. However, since it does not explicitly override any bylaws on the issue, the ability of the parties to do so should remain in place.)*

Section 14 requires that petition signers to place a candidate on the primary ballot need to be registered with the party for at least 30 days before signing the petition, and that they have not signed any other petition for the same office. *(This is the rub, as a committed group could get a sleeper into the party and then have a follow up crowd come in later and put them onto the ballot and then spike the primary, subverting the real membership's wishes.)*

Section 15 revokes our ability to replace nominees as we currently do it, and places minor parties under the same rules as the major parties. *(This again rolls back our ability to determine our own candidates and instead places that power into a bunch of regulations that we have no control over.)*

Section 16 removes all of our bylaw requirements and instead places those requirements under 1-3-103-9. *(This is in conjunction with Section 6.)*

Section 17 requires minor parties to have a petition to nominate candidates to be signed by ten thousand voters, changes the submission date from May 1 to Feb 1 of an election year to qualify for, and changes the petition requirements to a heading that the minor parties nominate candidates according to the provisions of CRS 1. *(The first parts are nothing new, but the last part is troubling to say the least. If the petition the LPCO filed back in 1998 has to be changed to reflect that we wish to nominate our candidates under the provisions of CRS 1 instead of according to our bylaws and constitution, which is supposedly the case now, then the question becomes does the no ex post facto laws of the US Constitution under Article 1 Section 9 plus Amendment XIV and the Colorado Constitution under Article 2 Section 11 protect our status, or will we have to go through getting the ten thousand signature process again with an new or amended petition? That issue is being researched.)*

Section 18 changes the nomination provision date and qualification date from May 1 to Feb 1. *(This section does not change the 1000 registered voter requirement except for the date by which the 1000 need to be registered. Since the LP has over 5000 members, this assures our ability to nominate candidates and maintain minor party status, which just might solve the conundrum of Section 17.) (There are no real changes here for the LPCO except the date.)*

Section 20 changes the way names are placed on the ballot. In the past the major parties were decided by lot, then the minor parties were decided by lot, and then the political organizations were decided by lot. With this change the first two groups are combined. The exception is that the joint candidacies of President/Vice President and Governor/Lt. Governor are arranged within each group in alphabetical order. *(This actually benefits the LPCO as we would have a real chance of getting the top line on the ballot for each office, which studies show equate to about a 5% vote jump. If we get quality candidates for President and/or Governor with names in the upper part of the alphabet, we also can get top line in those races as well. We would no longer be delegated to no higher than third on the ballot.)*

Section 21 allows for minor party affiliation at the primary polling place by unaffiliated voters, and allows minor party write-in voting. *(This comes into statutory conflict with 1-2-219, which is amended in Section 3, simply because an affiliation change must be made at least 30 days prior to any election.)*

Sections 22 and 23 change primary ballot counting to include minor parties.

Sections 24 through 26 change vacancy-filling requirements to include minor parties. *(These sections are only in the bill for completeness in the primary process and vacancy changes.)*

Section 27 repeals the definition of political party to mean a major party. *(Note that it does not redefine what a political party will be considered.)*

Section 28 repeals part of the Minor Party Law that allows minor parties to nominate candidates under their bylaws and constitution. *(This section is needed if they want to truly put our nominations into the primary/caucus process.)*

Section 29 is the usual safety clause. *(WHY IS THIS LAST SECTION NEEDED? It really isn't, but if it isn't put in, then the people can initiate a ballot referendum to repeal the legislation. Basically this section amounts to the legislature not trusting the people to decide for themselves what they feel is a good law or not. The Legislature normally put this section in to nullify on the front end any initiative attempts to overturn the laws they pass without a Constitutional Amendment, thus limiting and in most cases silencing the voice of the people.)*

OK, that's the bill, but what does it all mean?

What it means is that if this thing passes, we will be required to go to a caucus/county assembly/primary system, which we really don't have the resources to handle at this point. Admittedly the caucuses are optional, but the county assemblies aren't, and without county affiliates, we will have some major problems. Also, the primary elections, while being good publicity for minor parties, also are fraught with the possibility of spiking, and not in our favor.

There are also statutory conflicts that this bill does nothing to resolve.

The Republican sponsors of this bill claim that it is intended to be fair on all parties. Yet it does nothing to address several inequalities:

- It does not remove the exclusionary language of CRS 1-6-109 that allows only major parties to have election judges. Minor parties will still be shut out.
- It does not instruct the Secretary of State to require all parties have a box listing on voter registration cards. Minor parties will still be stuck under the "Other" box.
- It does not remove the exclusionary language of CRS 1-10-101 that allows only major parties to be on the election canvassing boards. Minor parties are still delegated to mere watchers.
- There are no guarantees for minor party inclusion in any government-sponsored or -funded candidate forums or debates. Minor parties will still be shut out.

It also does not address several system corruptions:

- It does not remove the distinction between major parties and minor parties in CRS 1-1-104. If it were truly fair, it would remove that distinction.
- It does not remove party elected officials from the county party central committee in CRS 1-3-103, which keeps the local good-ole-boy networks in place. Nor does it remove the requirement that the county chairs be on the state central committee.

So in general, while this bill has some benefits, it has far more drawbacks.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR: The bill is currently in the House State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee, where it has yet to be heard. A Fiscal Impact statement has been made, but there is serious question as to its accuracy as the Secretary of State's Office was not consulted for its input. There is no doubt that implementing this bill will increase their costs.

WHAT STILL HAS TO HAPPEN: Assuming the Fiscal Impact statement is properly amended, the bill will leave the SVMA committee and go into the House Appropriations Committee, where it has a better chance of being killed due to no funds. If for some reason it gets out of there and out of any other committees, it must be passed by the entire House. It then goes onto the Senate, where the cycle happens again. If it passes the Senate and they amend it, it goes into a joint conference committee to work out the differences, then both Houses vote on it again. If it passes all of this, it goes to the Governor for signature or veto.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: We need a constant and intense pressure campaign, both in the media and on the legislators, to kill this bill. This effort needs to be continued at every step of the process, on every legislator that votes on the bill at the time. The other minor parties are on board on this as well through the Colorado Coalition of Independent Parties (CCIP), but since we are the most organized of the minor parties, we need to not only take the lead on this but also exert the most pressure.

The Libertarian Philosophy Makes It To The Wall Street Journal!

An editorialist drives the philosophy home in excellent fashion

Reprinted from the Wall Street Journal: "Sex, Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll" By Susan Lee (Ms. Lee is a member of the Journal's editorial board)

Sometime this month, Congress will vote on whether to ban cloning, human and therapeutic. Conservatives want a total ban, liberals only want to stop human cloning. What's mostly missing from the debate, however, is the libertarian position. And that's a shame. A little bit of libertarian thought would clear the political sinuses.

Libertarianism is simplicity itself. It proceeds from a single, quite beautiful, concept of the primacy of individual liberty that, in turn, infuses notions of free markets, limited government and the importance of property rights. In terms of public policy, these notions translate into free trade, free immigration, voluntary military service and user fees instead of taxes. Sometimes these policies are argued in a totally unforgiving way so that it's not easy to separate the lunatics from the libertarians. But it's a snap to separate libertarians from conservatives.

For starters, although these two groups do clasp hands on the importance of free markets, not all their fingers touch. To conservatives, the free market takes its force only as an economic construct -- and even then, this is often reduced to an automatic complaint against high taxes. To libertarians, on the other hand, the model of a free market functions as a template for all things. Not only does the market operate as a continuous process for sorting through competing ideas as well as goods, it also allows each individual to express himself or herself. The latter is simply a consequence of the market's function in testing individual preferences. That some ideas triumph and others fail is necessary.

But perhaps the single distinguishing feature between conservatives and libertarians is that libertarians are concerned with individual rights and responsibilities over government -- or community -- rights and responsibilities. Consider how conservatives and libertarians divide over cultural issues or social policy. Libertarians are not comfortable with normative questions. They admit to one moral principle from which all preferences follow; that principle is self-ownership -- individuals have the right to control their own bodies, in action and speech, as long as they do not infringe on the same rights for others. The only role for government is to help people defend themselves from force or fraud. Libertarians do not concern themselves with questions of "best behavior" in social or cultural matters.

By contrast, conservatives are comfortable with normative issues. Conservative thought works within a hierarchical structure for behavior that has, at its top, absolute and enduring values. These values are not the result of the agnostic process of the free market; they are ontologically inherent. Because conservatives assume that there is a recognizable standard of excellence, they deal easily with notions of virtue and moral behavior. For example, they argue that the state of marriage between a man and a woman possesses great virtue. And they can go on to distinguish lesser states of virtue in other types of relationships. This process of distinguishing isn't an entirely epistemological argument, however; it is based, in part, on tradition and, in part, on sociology taken from assumptions about "best behavior."

Libertarians believe that marriage between a man and a woman is just one among other equally permissible relationships; they eschew the question of whether there is inherent virtue in each possible state. The only virtue to be inferred is a grand one -- that those involved are freely consenting and thus expressing individual preferences in a free market competition among these states. It is no wonder, then, that the cultural debate between conservatives and libertarians takes place over a great divide. Unlike debates over economic policies, there are no liminal issues. Indeed, there cannot be any because the strictness of the divide is a consequence of opposing matrices. Conservative thought proceeds from absolutes, hierarchies and exclusivity.

Libertarian thought promotes relativism and inclusiveness -- although, admittedly, this tolerance comes from indifference to moral questions, not from a greater inborn talent to live-and-let-live. Conservatives favor tradition and communitarian solutions, and resort to central authority when it serves their purpose. Libertarians value individual creativity and are invariably against central authority.

All this falls to the bottom line in obvious ways. Conservatives are against gay marriage, they are often ambivalent toward immigrants, and patronizing toward women; they view popular culture as mostly decadent and want to censor music, movies, video games, and the Internet. They crusade against medical marijuana. For their part, libertarians argue for legalizing drugs; they are in favor of abortion and against the government prohibition of sex practices among consenting adults. They abhor censorship. In the conservative caricature, libertarians believe in sex, drugs and rock and roll -- but it is not far from the truth. Unfortunately, these debates are often animated by the fact that conservatives see libertarianism only as the face of what it defends: transgendered persons adopting children, video games of violent sadism and, yes, cloning. Simply put, the shocking and repellent decline of civilization. But for libertarians, these are merely some of the many aspects of a civilization that is advancing through vast and minute experiments. The exercise of freedom trumps the discomforts of novelty.

To push my argument further, libertarian thought, with its fluid cultural matrix, offers a better response to some of the knottiest problems of society. It is, especially when contrasted with the conservative cultural matrix, a postmodern attitude. In fact, it is precisely this postmodernism that enrages conservatives who are uncomfortable with a radical acceptance that, in turn, promotes change and unfamiliarity. Yet no matter how scary (or irritating), libertarian tolerance provides a more efficient mechanism in dealing with those places where economics, politics and culture clash so intimately.

Although libertarians tend toward an annoying optimism, no reasonable observer would venture a prediction on the winner of the conservative-libertarian debate. The outcome depends crucially on where societies ultimately fix the locus of coercion between liberty and authority for politics, and between tolerance and conformity for culture. One can imagine, though, how discouraged F.A. Hayek must have felt in 1944 when he sat down to write "The Road to Serfdom." Now, few doubt that Hayek has won and that the economic argument has been settled in favor of free markets. What remains is the battle over politics and culture. One down, two to go.



The *LAST* Last Word: I'm Leaving

Jim Vance is the Publications Director of the LPCO and authors a monthly "rant" for the Liberty.

Leaving? What the heck am I talking about? Well as some of you probably have heard—as of the 2003 convention—I will NOT be seeking renewal of my current position as Publications Director. Instead, I'm taking a step back to focus on my career, my family which will be growing by one about a month and a half after the convention, and other aspects of my political activism that require personal attention.

This DOES NOT mean that I will be inactive in the quest for increased political activism and awareness of my and the next generation. Nor will it in any way infringe on my passion for the libertarian philosophy. Quite the opposite—I have a full plate already which is why this step away from the Board of Directors and a bit from direct party activities is necessary. I already have speaking engagements to both high school and college students about political activism and libertarianism as a philosophy (I'm not permitted to "promote" the

Libertarian Party under penalty of being banned as a guest speaker), and I have a major project I am going to be working on that will pave the way for my future political career as well as for any libertarian candidate that might want to utilize it.

Anyway—it was my goal to build upon the previous regime's foundation to establish a consistent, superior product in both form and function and call that the monthly Colorado Liberty. That, for reasons both internal and external, did not allow that to happen as I envisioned it. I see now that what I needed to do to achieve this goal was to scrap the old foundation and re-establish it from the ground up. Would this have been the most efficient way of doing things? Not at first—but once the foundation was established—work for the Publications Assistant (which by the way—I have finally found a wonderful RELIABLE and SKILLED individual to fill this revolving door position with the party) would be fairly easy to complete for the Liberty. It would have been a template. It would have been flawless between conception and going to press.

What I am going to do now—to whomever my replacement may be—is to recommend this to him or her: either scrap everything I've done to date and re-establish YOUR OWN foundation to work from so that there is no residual "regime" to worry about or have influencing how you get things done, or look this work over with me at the point of transition and realize that FINALLY, at the very end of my term, I have achieved the goal I had set out to achieve: the creation of a template for the production of the Liberty that YOU (whoever you may be) can use. The choice is yours when you "win" (whether that is a win or not is debatable) the post of Publications Director.

Look me up. I'll be at the business meeting, and I'll have a very relieved look on my face after the new board is elected... unless I suddenly find myself in another position on the board. That could be a bit weird. Oh Eck!

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