California LP runs 291 candidates

The California LP has concluded the most successful candidate recruitment effort in Libertarian Party history — signing up almost 300 candidates for this November’s ballot.

“We have achieved a new milestone in LP history!” said state Executive Director Juan Ros. “I can’t express how excited I am to be running so many candidates.”

The candidate recruitment project — dubbed “Operation Breakthrough” — convinced 178 Libertarians to run for non-partisan office this November.

Added to the 113 candidates already committed to running for partisan office, a total of 291 LP candidates will be on the ballot this fall in California.

“That’s the most for any Libertarian state party ever” — and almost 50% “over the LPC’s stated goal of 200 candidates for the year,” said Ros.

In Operation Breakthrough, the California LP matched a list of every non-partisan office up for grabs in the state against a database of the state’s 87,000 registered Libertarians. LP activists called those voters, and asked them to run for office.

Reaching out

“By reaching out to registered Libertarians, we have energized and grown the party and have established a farm team of Libertarians who want to make a positive difference,” said Ros. “Clearly, this is something we as a party needed to do.”

As the list of candidates grew, another benefit of Operation Breakthrough emerged, he said: Guaranteed victories in November.

“At least six Libertarian candidates [have] already won their elections by default due to not enough candidates contesting the election,” said Ros.

LP Political Director Ron Cackenberger praised Operation Breakthrough as “one of the most important programs” in party history.

“This was the most innovative candidate recruitment effort I have seen, and a model for every other state party to emulate,” he said.

LP national director appears on 20/20

The national director of the Libertarian Party appeared on ABC’s 20/20 news program — and used the opportunity to blast the Republicans and Democrats for taking taxpayer money to fund their lavish national conventions.

Steve Dasbach, who heads the party’s office in Washington, DC, was interviewed on the August 18 edition of John Stossel’s “Give Me A Break” segment on the popular news program.

“It was a great opportunity for Libertarians to point out that we didn’t take taxpayer money to finance our convention — unlike Republicans and Democrats, who each took $12 million to pay for drinks, balloons, and hors d’oeuvres,” said Dasbach.

The segment focused on the millions of dollars taxpayers shell out for the Republican, Democratic, and Reform party’s national conventions — a little-known fact that caused Stossel to utter his exasperated signature line, “Give me a break!”

Stossel pointed out that “no public money” went to fund the Libertarian Party convention — and then cut to Dasbach, who said, “George Bush, Al Gore, and Pat Buchanan are, frankly, political welfare queens.”

Stossel noted that the LP thinks no government money should go to conventions.

CAMPAIGN 2000

Browne speaks at big Arkansas gun rights rally

Libertarian Party presidential candidate Harry Browne stressed his support for Second Amendment rights at a forum in Arkansas, where he appeared with the state’s governor and the head of the NRA before an audience of more than 1,000 people.

On August 8, Browne was one of the featured speakers at a Second Amendment rally sponsored by the Dixie Southern Shooting Association at the Hot Springs Convention Center.

Browne appeared with Arkansas’s Republican governor, Mike Huckabee, and the executive director of the NRA, Wayne LaPierre. In his remarks, Browne disagreed with Republican speakers who said the government “should be enforcing existing gun laws, rather than proposing new ones.”

“I say that the Second Amendment doesn’t allow for exceptions — or else it would have read that the right ‘to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed, unless Congress chooses otherwise,’” he said.
Jesus: No Republican or Democrat

If Jesus were alive today, would he be a Republican or Democrat? Would he establish a police state in order to eradicate all social ills? Or would Jesus be a libertarian? He never put a gun to anyone’s head and said, “follow me!” Instead, he said, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hears my voice, and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me.” Thus, Jesus enters by invitation only, through persuasion rather than force. A libertarian.

I learned 43 years ago from my wife, Ruth, that you can’t force someone to love you. All you can do is stalk them and hope they panic and give in. The trouble with life is, you’re halfway through it before you realize it’s a do-it-yourself thing. It’s a delicate balancing act between family, friends, community and self, and I don’t need any fat government thumbs tipping the scales.

Contrast Jesus’ methods with those of government. The common denominator in all government activity is the use of force: government either forces you to do things or forces you not to do things. For example, the income tax has been the most devastating thing ever to happen to our society because it has forced moms to work.

If Jesus seldom used force to accomplish his ends, then who are people (including Christians) to initiate force in the name of God? Jesus understood that power corrupts. (Politicians go further, saying power corrupts, and absolute power is kind of neat.)

There is no biblical promise of some utopian society without poverty, racism, drugs, illiteracy, or other social ills; much less that secular government can bring about such a society. And yet, every day, politicians ask for greater taxes and spending to cure these ills. It is especially discouraging when church leaders do the same. How do they get the idea that government can accomplish what God himself never promised?

They could learn from the story about the man who dies and goes to a wonderful place where every desire is met immediately. After a short time, he becomes miserable and asks, please, could he go to hell instead. He’s told, “But that’s where you are.”

When Jesus says to give to the poor, he doesn’t mandate a welfare department and expanded powers for the tax police. In fact, he repeats the Old Testament commandment against theft, thus putting his stamp of approval on private property. The New Testament also states that, “If a man shall not work, he shall not eat” and that “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” God asks for a voluntary contribution of 10 percent of our earnings, whereas Caesar puts a gun to our heads for half of our earnings. Jesus would be astounded at the idea that the politicians should run our lives or the country.

Am I just cherry picking from the philosophy of Jesus to find support for my libertarian views? No. Libertarianism is unique among political institutions in that it consistently says that government cannot solve problems, and that we shouldn’t count on it to do so. Jesus, likewise, never suggested that we look to Caesar to solve our problems. How much better it would be if laws were simpler — if people were allowed to do anything that’s peaceful. Or as St. Augustine put it, “Love, and do as you will.”

This doesn’t mean that Christians shouldn’t act on their real concerns about these social problems. Jesus never suggested, however, that we could rebuild society through politics. His kingdom was not of this earth. The works Jesus exhorts us to do involve taking care of individual needs voluntarily. As a voluntarist, Jesus was truly a libertarian.

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Brown and Olivier at Top of Ticket for November

Libertarian Party Holds National Convention in Anaheim

The Libertarian Party held its National Convention in Anaheim, Calif., June 29 to July 3. The five-day event was marked by excitement and enthusiasm as the party prepared for election 2000 with high hopes for a better showing than last time around.

To no one’s surprise, Harry Browne, a well-known author and investment advisor, won the party’s presidential nomination on the first ballot by collecting 493 (56%) of the delegate votes, easily outdistancing Don Gorman, the runnerup, who got 19%. Rounding out the five-member field were Jacob Hornberger, with 13%, Barry Hess, with 6%, and Dave Hollist, 1%.

Browne, who was also the party’s presidential nominee in 1996, looks to build on the “strongest political message in the world” by making more voters aware of the Libertarian option.

“We need to make all Americans aware that there’s a party that wants to set them free, to reduce government to its constitutional limits, to free them from the income tax, to let them out of Social Security, to end the insane War on Drugs, and to stop the dangerous foreign policy of the past 60 years.”

Despite Hornberger’s concerns over Browne’s publicly stated intention to defy Federal Election Commission (FEC) reporting and contribution limit regulations and what Hornberger called Browne’s “suspicious” fundrais-
The Other Conservatives
Libertarians Are In It for the Long Haul

IF they were better known, this would be the year of the Libertarians in Oklahoma. After all, three of the five candidates who filed for an Oklahoma Corporation Commission seat are members of the Libertarian Party.

This sets the stage for what’s believed to be the first Libertarian primary in state history. And the three Libertarian Corporation Commission candidates aren’t alone. There will be a Libertarian candidate on the ballot in each of the six congressional districts this year as well as in six legislative races. The Tulsa World reported that there are only 360 registered Libertarians in the entire state. This means that with 15 candidates the party will have more than 4 percent of its registered members on the ballot this year.

Who are these people? "Libertarianism is the heart and soul of conservatism," Oklahoma Libertarian Chairman Robert T. Murphy told the World. The national party's Web site says Libertarians are committed to a free-market economy of "abundance and prosperity," individual liberty and personal responsibility and a foreign policy of nonintervention, peace and free trade.

Perhaps you missed news of the party’s national convention earlier this month. Harry Browne was nominated for the presidency, as he was in 1996. The choice for vice president is Art Olivier, a former mayor of a Los Angeles suburb who boasts that he helped privatize tree-trimming in that city. The convention was held near Disneyland, leading one pundit to suggest that Goofy would be an appropriate choice as the party’s vice presidential nominee.

Libertarianism is no laughing matter to the party’s leaders.

Browne ties Buchanan

The Libertarian Party is riding a national survey by Rasmussen Research showing that their presidential candidate, Harry Browne, is now tied with Reform Party candidate Pat Buchanan.

The men each had 1.6 percent in the Rasmussen three-day rolling average of 2,250 voters. Green Party candidate Ralph Nader garnered 4 percent.

"Harry Browne has caught up with Pat Buchanan, whose campaign is leaking air like a punctured Zeppelin," said Steve Dabasch, the Libertarians’ national director. "And Ralph Nader better start looking into the rearview mirror of his puttering Corvair — because Harry Browne is aiming to pass him next!"

Abington Libertarian passed over for shot at vice presidential bid

By Evelyn Short

Elkins Park resident Ken Krawchuk was defeated in his bid for the Libertarian Party’s vice presidential nomination.

"I lost, but I didn’t lose on the first ballot," Krawchuk said. "It was an interesting time.

In the Libertarian Party, the presidential candidate does not appoint a running mate for vice president. The Libertarian Party nominated its candidates for president and vice president at its national convention last week in Anaheim, Calif.

There were four of us who were running and on the first ballot, the woman who was in fourth place, she lost," Krawchuk said.

That candidate was dropped off the ballot leaving two other candidates and Krawchuk, who was in third place.

"What I did was I endorsed one of the two other people and he went on ahead and won," Krawchuk said. "It seems I tilted the vice presidential selection. Who would’ve thought it, strange days indeed."

This spring, Krawchuk campaigned at several Libertarian conventions in neighboring states.

In June, he packed up his entire family and took a train to Denver, where they rented a vehicle, camped out and campaigned until they reached the national convention.

Krawchuk was on the ballot as the Libertarian candidate for governor of Pennsylvania in 1998. He has already committed to run for governor in 2002.

He also hopes the increased name recognition will help him become the next commissioner of Ward 4 in Abington Township in 2001.

At the Liberty Bell, justice can be elusive

It was the Fourth of July. Libertarian John Featherman was standing mere paces from the Liberty Bell on Independence Mall.

It wasn’t the kind of place he expected to get booted from for engaging in political activity.

Featherman, who is exploring a run for the U.S. Senate, says he was outside the Liberty Bell pavilion gathering signatures to qualify him for the ballot on Tuesday when a park guard shook him away, saying that Featherman was not standing in an official "free-speech" zone. He left. But, Featherman claims, someone from his campaign later saw Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Ron Klink, who is a U.S. representative, campaigning in the same spot.

According to a letter written to Independence National Historic Park officials by Featherman’s lawyer, Samuel C. Stretton, a park guard told Featherman’s campaign manager that “Klink was allowed to be there because he was an ‘elected official,’ and Mr. Featherman was not.”

Phil Sheridan, spokesman for the park, said Featherman was told he could stand in a free-speech zone only north of the pavilion, and was not ejected from the entire park. He said that any rules applying to Featherman would have applied to Klink as well, elected official or not.

"Whether you’re a candidate from party X, Y, or Z," Sheridan said, "we wish to treat you equitably and fairly."

— Clea Benson
After years in political exile, Browne is Libertarians’ man

By Teresa Joerger
THE WASHINGTON TIMES
Washington, DC • August 9, 2000

Harry Browne distanced himself from politics in the 1960s, feeling disenchanted with America's two-party system. Over 30 years later, he is the Libertarian Party's candidate for president for the second time.

It all began with a suggestion made in 1992 by his wife, Pamela. “One night we were having dinner and watching TV. There was a politician on, and Harry was disagreeing with everything they were saying with a little bit of a raised voice, so later that evening I just suggested that he should run,” she said.

Mr. Browne said that at first he did not take her suggestion seriously, but after thinking it over and discussing it for a few years, he thought he might be able to make a difference.

“I realized that public opinion had changed so dramatically from the 1960s, when I quit voting, that it was quite possible that we could stop the growth of government, that we could do something to turn this around and head it in the other direction,” he said.

The investment author and consultant is running on a platform of reducing the scope of the federal government, leaving more issues in the hands of individual Americans.

“The most important message of the campaign is very simple: We want you to be free to live your life as you want to live it, and your grandchildren would never have to face the burden of taxation that you have had to put up with.”

His platform also includes repealing the 15 percent Social Security tax, allowing people to plan for their retirement however they wish; eliminating the federal debt by auctioning off unnecessary federal assets; bringing home American troops and ensuring that foreign policy issues are directly related to national security; and ending the war on drugs and its prohibition-like consequences.

“We want to reduce the government to its constitutional size, which means getting it out of education, health care, law enforcement, welfare, all these areas that it's made such a mess of during the 20th century,” he said.

Art Olivier, the party's vice-presidential candidate, succeeded in implementing Libertarian policies while serving as mayor, of Bellflower, Calif., reducing the size of government and eliminating the drug war.

In the past four years, the Libertarian Party membership has grown substantially, and the party anticipates spending $8.5 million on the 2000 campaign, which is more than double the amount spent in 1996. One hundred sixty-six libertarians currently hold office, more than all the other third parties combined.

One recent recruit is Jim Babka, a disgruntled Republican who was drawn to the Libertarian Party after seeing Mr. Browne on television in 1996. He is now the press secretary for the Browne campaign.

Mr. Babka feels Mr. Browne is an excellent candidate for the party because he is "very presidential and a very good spokesman for our party."

"He articulates our message well and is committed to seeing this happen," he said.

The Libertarian Party plans to be on the ballot in all 50 states, becoming the first third party in American history to achieve this in three consecutive presidential elections. The party also will run up to 2,000 candidates in 2000 for local, state and federal office, including over 200 candidates for the House of Representatives.

Mr. Browne said that he will be able to use his campaign experience from 1996 to his advantage in 2000. For example, this time around he will not fail to focus on the groups that already believe in the Libertarian platform, including people who have been personally hurt by the drug war, people who would like to see gun laws repealed, and the people who would like to abandon the 15 percent Social Security tax.

Mr. Browne is aware that his chances of victory are slim, but he wants to make sure Americans know that there is an alternative to the two mainstream parties.

"What I want more than anything else is for my campaign to be so visible that at the end of it everyone will know that the Libertarians are the ones who want to get government out of their lives. If that's the case, then we are going to bring a lot of people off the sidelines who are not voting, who will become more active and will help us — help us with votes, help us with money, help us by joining the party and pave the way for much more significant gains in 2002," he said.

“We want you to be free to live your life as you want to live it.”

Harry Browne