

# Libertarian Penn

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## libertas '77

LIBERTAS '77, regional libertarian conference and annual convention of the Libertarian Party of Pennsylvania was held on May 21, 1977 at the Holiday Inn in downtown Philadelphia. The following speakers addressed the conference:

### DON ERNSBERGER

Don Ernsberger, founder of the Society for Individual Liberty, opened the conference with an account of three previous libertarian movements in American history. He defined a libertarian movement as one with pro-liberty positions on both economic and social issues. Thus the abolitionists, who took no free-market economic stands, and the Liberty League in the 1930's, who did not defend civil liberties, do not qualify.

Conventional historians portray the adoption of the Constitution as the culmination of the American Revolution. On the contrary, most of the signers of the Declaration of Independence opposed the forming of a strong central government with extensive taxing power and a sizable standing army. Therefore they saw the Constitution as the beginning of the betrayal of their revolution. The Anti-Federalists tried but failed to prevent the establishment of such a government; they had defeated King George III, but not his ideas. Also, they were mostly negative, rarely proposing alternatives. Most importantly, they accepted the rules the Federalists had devised for adopting the Constitution, through rigged elections for special 'conventions' rather than the state legislatures which were less disposed to turn over power to a centralized government. They accepted the results and either waited until the next election to revive the issue of personal liberty versus Federal power, or retired completely to private life.

The Working Man's Party began in the 1830's as an entrepreneurial spinoff from the Jacksonian movement. They advocated laissez-faire economics and opposed both the central banking system and

## REGIONAL LIBERTARIAN CONFERENCE AND CONVENTION OF THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF PENNSYLVANIA

state and local Blue Laws. By 1850 this party had died out; its organization would come into being only around election time and then disband, they generally opposed without offering alternatives, and they also played by state-defined rules. One of the most interesting persons to come out of this movement was Lysander Spooner who, among other things ran a private post office until it was shut down by the government.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the Mugwumps split from the Republican Party, opposing the party's hand-in-glove alliance with Big Business. They advocated free trade and opposed compulsory public education, welfarism, and restrictions on freedom of speech. Their single greatest failure was that they did not articulate a utopian dream; the socialists and "progressives" did so, and thereby captured the imagination of the intellectuals of the day. One of their most prominent advocates was Edward Atkinson, who wrote to American soldiers in a colonialist war in the Philippines, urging them to lay down their guns and come home. Atkinson and others from the movement founded the Anti-Imperialist League.

After recounting the history of these three parties, Don then briefly outlined the to-date history of our own movement, a history with which many of us are directly familiar. His concluding point was: we have historical precedents, but ultimately they were failures, and they succumbed to pitfalls which we must avoid.

### EUGENE WELSAND

Prof. Eugene Welsand, acting Chairman of the Psychology Department at St. Joseph's College, spoke on individual responsibility and social reform. The term "social contract" has been given various meanings; he defined it as a covenant into which the members of a society freely enter in their joint self-interest. When this happens, social authority and personal autonomy complement each other. The individual must be the designer, originator, executor, and beneficiary of social reform.

#### BOB STEINER

Bob Steiner, National Chairman of LibSig, the Libertarian Special Interest Group within MENSEA, gave an effective presentation on, and a practical demonstration of, Effective Public Speaking. First, he had two volunteers from the audience give an impromptu talk on a designated subject; one was Del. State Chair Bill Morris, who discussed a Congressional study of the sweat of Australian aborigine---from the point of view of the aborigine.

Bob discussed several speaking techniques: reading from a text, where every word must be weighed; memorizing a text, which is never appropriate; and handwritten notes, which may be useful, but may also be a self-defeating crutch. The technique he recommends is mnemonic devices; these are mental notes that can key successive parts of a talk. He suggested forming workshops of libertarians taking turns speaking on different topics. As the above example indicates, these topics can be far-fetched. Among the things to watch for and develop in these talks are internal logical consistency, audience contact, variance of tone, and ending of sentences.

Incidentally, Bob Steiner is the author of Essential Government Economic Controls, Regulations, and Guidelines. The book is a thorough and exhaustive work on the subject; it contains only blank pages. If he had chosen that subject for his conference address, it would have served as a moment of silent meditation.

#### WILLIAM BURT

William Burt, President of the Association for Rational Environmental Alternatives, gave us some advice concerning the problem of presenting libertarian ideas to professional groups. Professionals generally share a mixture of rational and irrational traits. On the plus side, their work demands that they develop competence and a healthy respect for facts. On the other hand, they have often become accustomed to the State acting as their godfather. Many technicians have become turned-off to philosophy, but if you can show that an alternative philosophy is coherent, based on facts, and with its implications followed through, they will be favorably impressed to the extent that they will take your ideas seriously. One of his central points was: do not hedge your arguments or try piecemeal reforms, because a consistent and rational free-market alternative will have a better chance of being considered on its merits than a half-way measure. It is essential to present these free-market programs when voicing opposition to government imposed programs. Opponents of zoning can point to successful proprietary communities, or to the city of Houston, as practical demonstrations of the fact that zoning restrictions are unnecessary. Another example concerns public versus private resource management; whereas government either allows resources to lie idle or overexploits and thereby exhausts them, property rights motivate private developers to make economic use of resources.

#### HAL CUNDARI

Hal Cundari, the 1976 Libertarian candidate for U.S. Senator from New Jersey, talked about his activities as a gadfly in Bergenfield, NJ. He called himself "the most hated man in Bergenfield," due to his relentless exposure of wasteful use of taxpayers' money. For example: a proposal to modernize the City Hall heating system for \$90,000 is introduced; then Cundari gets an independent estimate of \$30,000---and the modernization project dies. Another example: Cundari goes to Atlantic City to check out expense accounts submitted by the Chief of Police and others, and learns that they have no substantiation. Hal has been fighting City Hall for many years and, in many cases, winning.

#### BOB MEIER

After the conference banquet, National Director Robert H. Meier spoke about past accomplishments of, present plans for, and problems facing the Libertarian Party. After five years of existence, our party last year became the third largest political party in the country. This was done without any pre-existing cadre or ready-made constituency. However, our campaign literature is in need of revision, since few people read it now. The Position Papers are being phased out; they will be replaced by one-page, easier to read fact sheets for large scale distribution, and by issue booklets for more in-depth study.

Issue booklets will be supplied dealing with community issues, the environment, and pollution, defense and intelligence agencies, the economy, and energy. Packaged campaign kits will enable our candidates to become articulate, informed, effective campaigners in their spare time while still earning an honest living. The emphasis now is on moving from general ideas and principles, which are retained, to specific issues.

Several problems face the party. Administratively, there is a need at the lower level for more systematic membership recruiting and fund raising. We must capture the label of "humanitarian" and show that much of human suffering is caused by governments. Also, we must shed our image as impractical dreamers and be responsive and sensitive to specific issues. Finally, there is a great deal of psychological defeatism and doomsaying prevalent among libertarians. As Bob points out, it is difficult to inspire others to strive for more liberty while accumulating a twenty-five years supply of raisins in your basement.

Bob Meier specifically exhorted us to begin now to form coalitions opposing Jimmy Carter's energy program. That "moral equivalent of war" package is an incredible hodgepodge that contains something which should make everyone mad---but only if they know about it.

## OTHER CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

The Pennsylvania Libertarian Party held its annual business meeting at the conference, and new officers were elected:

Tony West	State Chair
Josh Zissman*	Eastern Vice-Chair
Bill Lewis	Western Vice-Chair
Jim Nolan	Secretary
Fred Hoffstadt	Treasurer

Jim Nolan, Tony West, Dan Speicher, Jo Chernow, and Joe Sabatina were elected as Pennsylvania delegates to the National Convention.

At the end of the day's program, two films were shown: "We Won't Be Fooled Again", which was produced by the Society for Individual Liberty, and "The Incredible Bread Machine."

Credit goes to Jo Chernow and Tony West, among others, for putting together a well-run conference.

---Paul G. Thompson  
Editor  
Freedom's Voice

\*Josh Zissman has resigned as Eastern Vice-Chair. Joseph Sabatina was nominated and selected by unanimous vote of the remaining State officers to fill the position.

## From the Chair

Greetings to all Pennsylvania LP'ers. My name is Tony West, and I'm your new State Chair. My address, and the new headquarters of the LPP, is 4609 Cedar Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19143. My home phone is (215) SA7-6463, and my business phone is IV3-0735. I promise to work for you diligently during the coming year.

I am on duty whenever you can reach me. If you have a bright idea at 3:00 A.M., call me up and share it with me. If you'd like a referral to an objectivist dentist in Altoona, drop me a line and I'll try to help you. LP'ers who are passing thru Philadelphia are welcome to use my abode as a cheap, if at times untidy, place to stay. I'll always be glad to see you.

My chief function is to help the members of the party fulfill the ambitions they have for it. But I'm no mind-reader; the members have to let me know what they want. If you don't, you are taking the risk that the LPP will cease to represent YOU. You will not have my sympathy on that day. We cannot found a free society by beaming libertarian thought-waves at our fellow citizens. Get in the habit of SPEAKING OUT! and start with me.

I owe special thanks to the previous Chair, Jo Chernow, who has made extraordinary efforts to ease the transfer of responsibility. My thanks also go out to Bill Lewis, Jim Nolan, Joe Sabatina, and Fred Hoffstadt, who are working with me for the LPP this year.

Here are a few proposals of mine.

### PENNSYLVANIA IS WEAK (BUT GETTING STRONGER)

Within the libertarian movement we are weak. Our membership of 104 compares favorably with that in other states, but we lack dynamism and action. Smaller states have done better with fewer resources than we have (Delaware is a good example).

I see no need for guilt or despair. Communities of libertarian activists are still so small that random population drifts have a big impact on the level of activism. People move around, old leaders get weary; new leaders and superstars are not evenly distributed by chance, so that one one state party will boom while another dawdles. Pennsylvania was an early center of radical capitalism, but it's been our turn to dawdle recently. Now it's time we got on the move again.

My chief aim in office is to see a lot more action in Pennsylvania when I leave office than I see now.

The MacBride campaign gave libertarians a whopping boost nationwide. Pennsylvania shared in the goodies. We have hundreds of new contacts, a dozen fresh activists, and three or four nascent projects---but all these will wither and die if we don't get CRACKING!

### OUR JOB IS POLITICAL ACTION

Have you ever asked yourself why you are in the LPP? The Party is not the whole movement, after all; there are many other ways you can be a libertarian without joining a political party. I have asked myself that question, and here's my answer.

The function of any political party is to have immediate political impact on society. In other words, action. Let's not settle for anything less.

I recommend that you start to define yourselves, you LPP members, as radical capitalist activists. This year I will work to spread practical political skills thruout the state. Do YOU want to WORK to bring about libertarian social change in America? Could that be an exciting, worthwhile way for you to use some spare time and effort? I'm not asking that you sacrifice your whole lives to the Cause (even John Galt didn't!). I'm simply pointing out that there ain't nobody else here to DO it but us chickens. If you give one hour a month to liberty, we will move forward. An individualist revolution IS possible, the skills ARE teachable. Activism can be effective, and fun too---if you get involved.

I am here to help you get involved.



What we need now are people. People to address the local Rotary Club, get on talk shows, contact potential allies in the community, raise money for ads and literature, arrange lobbying trips to Washington...If you're interested in keeping Carter's thumb off the national jugular, contact Bill Lewis (412-384-8582) in Western PA or Jim Nolan (215-NE2-0566) in the East.

#### SINGLE-ISSUE COALITIONS

The Energy Coalition is one example of a kind of grass-roots political action that will increasingly characterize the LP as we develop a winning politics of freedom. It's called single-issue coalition. Modern statism is an accretion of single-issue coalitions of non-ideological special interests, gently guided by astute ideologists in certain policy directions.

The idea is simple: pick an issue, any concrete libertarian issue. Think of local special interests who share our position on that issue only, join with them and WORK.

In this way you let some of your politically minded neighbors know that LIBERTARIANS EXIST AND TAKE ACTION. If you work hard, they will be grateful and impressed. Some will be curious. A few will be convinced.

How do you pick an issue to coalish over? Ask yourself what issues you yourself care deeply about. Imagine for a moment that you aren't a libertarian. What statist crime would you still feel passionately about?

Perhaps as a woman the attempt by the Right-to-Life people to use you as breeding stock outrages you in a way that transcends ideology. Maybe you should represent the LPP on CHOICE, a coalition formed to fight for the right for abortion.

Perhaps you just lost out on a business opportunity because you couldn't afford to manipulate all the OSHA redtape. Why don't you form a coalition with other injured businessmen to fight OSHA?

Perhaps you just found you can afford to pay either your tax bill this year, or your kids' tuition, but not both. Should you join the National Tax-payers Union? or organize a committee to promote the tuition voucher system in Pennsylvania?

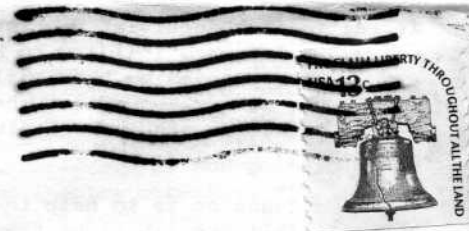
Whatever your livelihood, you probably have a self-appointed "representative" in some professional association; the chances are that association is conspiring right now to throttle competition and gyp the consumer thru some license or regulatory scheme. Is there anyone else in your trade who might also oppose the villains, for any reason? Perhaps you can get together with them and form a committee.

Don't hesitate to give leadership if leadership is needed, but don't insist on running the show. Work for the common cause---but make it clear that you are a libertarian, and that's why you're working.

"Laissez-faire" is French for "let it work." Market theory shows that ordinary people formulate good social and economic policy, when they can see and choose what WORKS best for their own ends. In the same way, grassroots interests will move toward libertarianism when they see libertarians working for them.

---Tony West  
(continued next issue)

**Declare your independence**



**LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF PENNSYLVANIA**

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