

FLORIDA LIBERTY

The Newsletter of the Libertarian Party of Florida

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Nick Dunbar Re-Elected Florida LP Chairman

ORLANDO, May 24-26 - At the Florida Libertarian Party Convention, Nick Dunbar of Hillsborough County was re-elected State Chairman in a race against Broward County Chairman Mike Shubert. Mr. Shubert campaigned on the theme that we should concentrate on local political races, which are more accessible and winnable than state offices. Vice Chair Dianne Pilcher of Broward County and Treasurer Wayne Harley of Brevard County were re-elected to their posts. Tom Regnier of Broward was chosen as the new Secretary, succeeding Sue DeBusk, who stepped down after five years of dedicated service. Jim Alsis and Don Fenton, both of Palm Beach County, were chosen for At Large Directorships on the State Executive Committee, as was Sandy Koplowitz of Broward County. For the names of new Regional Directors, see the Executive Committee list below.

Cause For Celebration: Ballot Access Virtually Assured!

Over 90,000 signatures have been collected toward getting the LP's Presidential candidate on the ballot in Florida, reported Chairman Nick Dunbar at the State Convention in Orlando. As 65,596 certified petitions are required for ballot access, the LP's goal is to collect about 100,000 to be sure we have enough. So far, a high percentage of the collected petitions are turning out to be valid - 81% in Broward County, for example. It isn't official until petition number 65,596 is validated by the Board of Elections, but with a deadline of July 15, Florida seems almost certain to have a Libertarian Presidential candidate on the ballot.

Party's National Leaders Speak to Florida LP

The Libertarian Party's National Director Perry Willis and National Chairman Steve Dasbach were in Orlando at the Libertarian Party of Florida's annual convention to describe their visions of the Party's future. National Chairman Steve Dasbach, who was described by National Committeeman Gary Ilardi as "the best friend the Florida LP has outside of Florida," said that C-SPAN will provide gavel-to-gavel coverage of the Libertarian Party Convention (July 3 - 7), and the National LP is gearing up to receive 100,000 phone calls or more due to the publicity. The LP could double its membership to 30,000 in the next six months. Mr. Dasbach quoted The Hill, which he described as the political newspaper in D.C., as stating, "The Libertarian Party provides a case study in how a grassroots organization works to establish itself as a third voice for a frustrated electorate." [May 1, 1996] Mr. Dasbach is running for re-election as National Chairman.

Perry Willis, who has been National Director since 1993, said that historians will look back on the LP's growth as a historic event. He noted that when Ross Perot began his new party, his advisors warned him that it could take ten to twenty years. The LP is now the fastest-growing party in terms of voter registration. Mr. Willis described its current strategy as "relentless incrementalism" - getting a little better every day. He said that once the National LP membership (presently about 15,000) reaches 30,000, memberships will pay for operating costs and ballot access, and the LP can concentrate on raising money for things that will give us greater visibility.

Convention Highlights

Host Ralph Swanson arranged an impressive lineup of speakers for the Orlando convention. The following capsule review can only give a taste of the excitement these speakers generated among attendees: * Michael Emerling Cloud, a speechwriter and political consultant for the Harry Browne for President campaign, spoke brilliantly on "The Art of Political Persuasion." He recommended the use of story, metaphor, and parable, rather than argument, for changing people's minds. "Stories," he said, "go where reason dare not tread" and engage us in a way that facts don't. He emphasized that asking questions can be the most effective way to control a conversation. In his banquet speech, entitled "No Excuses Libertarianism," Mr. Cloud stressed that we cause our own results. If we treat every difference of opinion as a matter of principle, he said, we will get the same kind of treatment from others. By spreading positive libertarianism we will attract positive people.

Jo Jorgensen of South Carolina, who is running for the Libertarian Party's Vice Presidential nomination, treated the crowd to her now-classic explanation of why Republican politics is like 900 number phone sex: "When we hang up from the 1-900 Republican Tax Cut Fantasy Line, we realize three things: they cost us a lot of money, the real thing is a lot more satisfying, and they're never going to come across." Ms. Jorgensen recently received the endorsement of Libertarian Party founder David Nolan.

Irwin Schiff, Libertarian Presidential candidate and tax protester, was on hand to explain his strategy of weakening the federal government by exposing its, in his view, fraudulent and unlawful collection of income taxes. In a short but feisty speech, he proclaimed that he is also running for Sheriff of Las Vegas, from which office, he said, he can prevent IRS agents from seizing property in his county.

Jim Alsis, in a speech called "Grassroots Gardening," described how he brought about the flowering of the LP of Palm Beach County. He emphasized presenting a mainstream image and seeking out middle-class, moderate members. If we keep gaining in membership, he said, money and media will follow. The Libertarian Party has better ideas than the major parties, he pointed out; all we need is to learn how to market them.

Paul Gonzalez, a nationally syndicated radio talk show host who described himself as "very close to almost being a card-carrying Libertarian," advised callers to talk shows to "come out of the box right away with strong issues." He then led a highly entertaining mock talk show in which Perry Willis and Jo Jorgensen were the guests and convention attendees were the callers. The audience did not "call in" as Libertarians, however, but took various pro-government positions in their questions. Mr. Willis and Ms. Jorgensen responded with intelligence and humor, and Mr. Gonzalez guided the proceedings with jovial ease. Mr. Gonzalez' show can be heard nationally on the People's Radio Network, Monday to Friday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. (Eastern) on most stations, and can be heard on the Internet at <http://www.audionet.com>.

Charles Champion, Libertarian computer aficionado and entrepreneur, gave a fascinating talk on how the advent of barter credits transmitted in the form of encrypted E-mail could make government money obsolete. "If we simply stopped using Federal Reserve money," he observed, "it would just become irrelevant."

Alsis and Pilcher Take Top Honors at State Convention

Palm Beach County Chairman Jim Alsis was named Florida Libertarian of the Year, and Florida Vice Chair Dianne Pilcher received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Saturday night banquet at the State Party Convention. Mr. Alsis has spent three years turning the LP of Palm Beach County into one of the most active affiliates in the state, and surely the best organized. Ms. Pilcher has worked devotedly for the Libertarian Party in Florida and in other states for many years, and has raised over \$4,000 toward ballot access in the last year alone. To show his appreciation for her contributions, Chairman Nick Dunbar bought Ms. Pilcher a Life Membership in the Florida LP. Other awards presented at the banquet went to Lisa Bullion as the outstanding organizer of "Operation Politically Homeless" booths and to Jay Tynan as the leading OPH booth worker.

State and National Membership Unified

When you join the National Libertarian Party, are you also joining the State Party? For years, many members have had confusion about the separate memberships. Now this is all swept away with the adoption by the National LP of "Unified Membership." Effective July 1, when a Florida resident joins the National LP at \$25 or more per year, he is automatically a member of the Florida LP without paying any further dues. To all of you who have been National Party members but not State Party members, welcome to the Libertarian Party of Florida. You will receive Florida Liberty as long as you are a member.

News from Around the State

Leon County: Chris Akins, who at age 19 was the youngest Republican county chairman in Florida history, has moved to Tallahassee and is now a card-carrying Libertarian at age 21. . . . The Libertarian-dominated Ochlockonee River Soil and Water Conservation Board sent a proposed Memorandum of Agreement to the State of Florida and the USDA asking them, among other things, to respect the Fifth Amendment and individual property rights. No reply as yet to this unprecedented suggestion.

Orange County: Stephen Boyd, Libertarian candidate for County Commissioner, spoke briefly to the Florida LP Convention. Anyone wishing to help with his campaign should call (407) 277-VOTE.

Broward County: The Broward LP ran an "Operation Politically Homeless" booth at a gun show at the Broward Convention Center on May 18-19. Over 47% of those who visited the booth asked for more information on the LP.

Pinellas County: Lisa Bullion and Jay Tynan were pictured at their OPH booth in the Spring issue of The Liberator, published by the Advocates for Self-Government. Nick Dunbar and Lisa were quoted extensively in an article on OPH booths. . . Harry Reid will be throwing a "Freedom Frolic" party on July 4 at 4 p.m. in Safety Harbor. All welcome. Call (813) 725-2777 for details.

Manatee County: County LP Chairman Chris Carman was unanimously elected 3rd Vice Chairperson of the Manatee County Historic Preservation Board. He has served on the Board since October 1995.

Sarasota County: Libertarian attorney Andrew Spark is representing the LPF in a dispute resolution process under the Florida Election Code against election officials who have discouraged voters from registering as independents or with minor parties by telling them they "won't be able to vote in primaries."

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