



Libertarian Penn

The newsletter of the Libertarian Party of Pennsylvania

Spring 2012

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LPPA State Convention to be in Wilkes-Barre

The Libertarian Party of Pennsylvania state convention will run from Friday April 20 through Sunday April 22 at the Kirby Center for Performing Arts and the Best Western Genetti Hotel and Convention Center in Wilkes-Barre, PA. Convention activities begin with a Friday night meet-and-greet with LP presidential candidate and former New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson, continuing with a banquet on Saturday night and leading up to a breakfast buffet with presidential LPPA candidates and other dignitaries and the LPPA business meeting on Sunday. You may register for the convention at www.LPPAnews.com

The full convention package costs for only \$75 and various

pick-and-choose event options are available. There is **NO CHARGE** to attend the business meeting portions of the convention on Sunday. The hotel has set aside a limited number of discounted rooms for convention attendees at \$94.99 per night. Call 570-825-6477 to reserve lodging.

The Keynote Speaker at the Saturday April 21 LPPA convention Banquet is Rupert Boneham, star of the popular television show "Survivor," philanthropist and Libertarian Candidate for Governor of Indiana. Saturday's convention events will be held in conjunction with the "Restoring Freedoms Celebration" that is also being held at the

Kirby Center venue. The opportunity to connect the LPPA convention with the Restoring Freedoms Celebration means the LPPA did not incur costs for convention programming. A nonpartisan celebration of freedom, the day will include music, workshops and speakers addressing citizen liberty and limited government. Presenters from all political stripes are scheduled to attend, with the shared theme of returning back to the principles upon which the U.S.A. was founded. Workshops and informational tables from many different groups and organizations will also be available to the public.

Victimless Crimes by Erik Viker



The law and the government should protect citizens from violence, coercion and fraud. The law should not prohibit responsible citizens from doing what they choose to do in private, if their choices don't harm anybody else. The government has a responsibility to uphold community standards based on community consensus, but should also protect personal liberty.

Victimless crimes include construction on private residential property without government permits, driving without wearing a seatbelt (or operating a motorcycle without a helmet in some states), alcohol consumption by citizens over 18 years of age, use and distribution of marijuana and cocaine by and for adults, prostitution involving consenting adults, possession or distribution of pornography exclusively featuring adults by adults, and gambling.

Enforce the laws intended to prevent fraud, but don't tell us what we can and cannot do to our private property. If the contractor who repairs your house gets a reputation for shoddy craftsmanship, he or she won't get work, will endure civil lawsuits and will go out of business. The free market can take care of the public without

shaking us down to fund government inspectors and paperwork. We know we can't run a hog farm in a residential neighborhood, but if what you do around your home doesn't affect anyone else, government should stay out of your private business.

Driving without wearing a seatbelt (or operating a motorcycle without a helmet in some states) only poses a threat to the adult making the decision, like skydiving, which is legal. The risk to the surviving family in the event of a related injury or death involves only the family and the insurance companies the family chooses to do business with.

Why do we make adult citizens wait until 21 years of age to drink alcohol but allow them to vote for President, die for their country and marry without parental permission at 18 years old? Although the Constitution is silent on the specifics of "adulthood," the Constitutional voting age is a legitimate signifier of adult citizenship. I suspect most Supreme Court Justices would err on the side of caution favoring the rights of the individual (the voting adult) rather than favoring the right of a state to deny a voting adult any established manifestation of adulthood. Those who

claim younger people are somehow not mature enough for alcohol haven't paid attention to the many forty-year-olds who behave like fools when they have a few drinks in them. Nations without restrictive underage drinking laws have substantially fewer problems with youthful binge drinking because alcohol can become a natural, gradual part of growing older without the forbidden fruit experiences of many college freshmen.

Alcohol is my drug of choice, but millions of people smoke marijuana or use powder cocaine and never commit any other crime related to their smoking. It doesn't matter why a criminal breaks into my house. I don't care if he wants to steal my stuff to buy weed or buy a hat. I'm going to reach for my pistol either way, and if I don't take him out I want him prosecuted for burglary, not for whatever he was hoping to spend the money on. Smoking weed doesn't result in a victim, but assault and burglary do.

The "war on drugs" is a dismal failure. We spend over \$20 billion a year to combat drug use and you can still buy pot or cocaine within two miles of any traffic light in America.

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Victimless Crimes (continued)

Every low-level drug dealer or user sitting in prison costs us over \$40,000 per year per person to house and feed, plus the costs of legal services for court proceedings along the way. Decriminalizing marijuana and powder cocaine and allowing tobacco companies to cultivate and sell marijuana will hamstring many of the illegal industries resulting from the "war on drugs," drastically reduce related crimes and increase tax revenues. Most people would buy a pack of pot from the convenience store rather than go through the hassle of home cultivation. The "gateway drug" defense assumes we should be denied certain freedoms because other people cannot handle those freedoms. We might as well outlaw bicycles because they often lead to the use of automobiles, and we know how dangerous THEY are to Americans. Let's use the debilitating effects of alcohol as the guide. Any substance that is no more dangerous to use than alcohol is should be legal under the same rules we apply to alcohol. Alcohol is addictive, adversely affects physical abilities (including driving skills), and can cause long-term health problems. And it's legal. By comparison, the health and temporary impairment effects of

marijuana and powder cocaine are no worse than those caused by alcohol.

Prostitution and adult pornography are more complicated issues because of the visceral distaste many people have for these activities, but a dispassionate analysis calls some objections into question. Why does the law prohibit certain physical activities between consenting adults, just because an exchange of currency is also involved? These same activities happen millions of times every day between consenting adults with no overt financial arrangements made and no harm done. We already have laws that protect citizens, especially children, from unwanted participation in sexual activity, including laws prohibiting kidnapping, exploitation, harassment and child endangerment. Like it or not, prostitution is just another potentially taxable public service. I don't care if you're getting a therapeutic massage, a pedicure, or a more intimate professional service, just don't do it on the sidewalk. If it's kept away from the public eye, it isn't anyone else's business.

Pornography may be distasteful to some (and in poor taste, which is a different issue entirely) but if nobody's forcing any adults to participate, why

should it be a government issue?

Gambling is just another expensive hobby and nobody is coerced into doing it. I know people who are at least as obsessive about their golf game as some gamblers are about horse races and slot machines. If gambling is "addictive" for some, regulate it the same way we regulate adult alcohol consumption.

The citizens these laws allegedly protect are mostly victims of questionable adult judgment and failure to make good health choices. No laws will significantly affect adult citizens' poor decisions. Would you propose mandatory condom use, psychological testing before marriage, or mandatory health screenings for liver failure? Of course not. How would we police THOSE initiatives? Violence, coercion and fraud. Anything else is simply not the government's problem.

Erik Viker is a member of Selinsgrove Borough Council and the Media Relations chair for the LPPA.

"We might as well outlaw bicycles because they often lead to the use of automobiles, and we know how dangerous THEY are to Americans"

Platform Change Proposals

As of March 12, 2012 several changes to the state platform have been proposed by LPPA members for state delegate consideration.

Erik Viker has proposed the following modification to the LPPA platform:

Current platform:
"9. Public policy should always seek to minimize aggression and maximize individual liberty."
Proposed adjustment:
"9. Public policy should always seek to abolish aggression and maximize individual liberty."

Mike Slye has proposed the following additions to and one modification to the LPPA platform:

Proposed Plank Additions

Free Markets

A. Libertarians want all members of society to have abundant opportunities to achieve economic success. A free and competitive market allocates resources in the most efficient manner. Each person has the right to offer goods and services to others on the free market. The only proper role of government in the economic realm is to protect property rights, adjudicate disputes, and provide a legal framework in which voluntary trade is protected.

B. Property rights are entitled to the same protection as all other human rights. The owners of property have the full right to control, use, dispose of, or in any manner enjoy their property without interference, until and unless the exercise of their control infringes the

valid rights of others. We oppose all controls on wages, prices, rents, profits, production, and interest rates. Free and Open Government

C. We support electoral systems that are more representative of the electorate at the federal, state and local levels. As private voluntary groups, political parties should be allowed to establish their own rules for nomination procedures, primaries and conventions. We oppose publicly funded primaries and laws that effectively exclude alternative candidates and parties, deny ballot access, gerrymander districts, or deny the voters their right to consider all legitimate alternatives.

Free Society

D. Individuals should be free to make choices for themselves and to accept responsibility for the consequences of the choices they make. No individual, group, or government may initiate force against any other individual, group, or government. Our support of an individual's right to make choices in life does not mean that we necessarily approve or disapprove of those choices.

E. We support full freedom of expression and oppose government censorship, regulation or control of communications media and technology. We favor the freedom to engage in or abstain from any religious activities that

do not violate the rights of others. We oppose government actions which either aid or attack any religion.

F. Libertarians support the right to be secure in our persons, homes, and property. Protection from unreasonable search and seizure should include records held by third parties, such as email, medical, and library records. Only actions that infringe on the rights of others can properly be termed crimes. We favor the repeal of all laws creating "crimes" without victims.

G. Criminal laws should be limited to violation of the rights of others through force or fraud, or deliberate actions that place others involuntarily at significant risk of harm. We support restitution of the victim to the fullest degree possible at the expense of the criminal or the negligent wrongdoer. The rights of due process, a speedy trial, legal counsel, trial by jury, and the legal presumption of innocence until proven guilty, must not be denied. We assert the common-law right of juries to judge not only the facts but also the justice of the law.

H. The only legitimate use of force is in defense of individual rights — life, liberty, and justly acquired property — against aggression. This right inheres in the individual, who may agree to be aided by any other individual or group.

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Platform Change Proposals (continued)

We affirm the individual right recognized by the Second Amendment to keep and bear arms, and oppose the prosecution of individuals for exercising their rights of self-defense.

I. Education, like any other service, is best provided by the free market, achieving greater quality and efficiency with more diversity of choice. Schools should be managed locally to achieve greater accountability and parental involvement. We support the right of parents to home school their children.

J. We condemn bigotry as irrational and repugnant. Government should not deny or abridge any individual's rights based

on sex, wealth, race, color, creed, age, national origin, personal habits, political preference or sexual orientation. Parents, or other guardians, have the right to raise their children according to their own standards and beliefs.

Proposed Plank Modification

The Party of Principle 10. Libertarian Party candidates are free to interpret and develop their own policies with respect to this Platform, in keeping with the Statement of Principles.



Getting Appointed: How Libertarians can impact state and local government without running for office

by Marakay Rogers

The Libertarian Party is, first and foremost, a political organization. This means getting candidates elected to office. The LPPA has a great track record of this, and has more elected officials to its credit than almost any other state can claim – this, however, is partly because Pennsylvania has more municipal subdivisions and small elected offices than any other state.

There's another way to get Libertarians into political office, though, and one we don't often take advantage of. There are literally

hundreds of state and local political appointments in every state, from state crime commissions to township parks commissions. Almost every one of these could use a Libertarian (or several) on board to check on excessive spending, waste, and the political foibles of the other appointees. And in various states, Libertarians have been appointed to those positions. As an alternate delegate to the Libertarian National Committee, I've had the opportunity to see that many active Libertarians take part in these boards

and committees whenever they can be appointed.

I currently serve on the Fire Civil Service Board in the City of York, to which I was recently appointed by the City Council. This board's members are selected and voted on by the Council. The City's website lists the existing boards and agencies, their members, and vacancies on them, as well as whether the members are selected by the mayor or by council – and the same is true for many other municipalities.

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“Libertarians have opportunities to make themselves known and to put Libertarian principles into practice in these government administrative slots as well as in running for office”

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Getting Appointed (continued)

As an appointee, your appointment is based much more on your credentials than on popularity – you don't have to reach sufficient numbers of voters, you have to be convincing to a small group of people who make the decision. Since there are many specialized boards and commissions, your own job or hobby skills and knowledge may be exactly what is needed to serve as a board member or commissioner. In my own case, because I had reviewed the city's website, I knew which agencies had vacancies. I frequently attend city council meetings and am known to the council members. When they mentioned at an open

council meeting that was televised that they needed applicants for the Fire Civil Service Board, I sent my application information to them immediately. It probably didn't hurt that I'm a volunteer with a community/city police liaison group, or that I'd started out to run for city council last year (I had announced, but had to withdraw over the summer due to some health issues, since corrected). If I hadn't been known to them already, the application process insured that I would have spoken with at least a few of them in order to explain my credentials. The LP nationally may appear to push elected Libertarians, and it's our job to do so as a party, but the LNC encourages any Libertarians who can to seek and to obtain appointments to these

government boards and agencies. Many communities are desperate for more volunteers to fill these seats. Libertarians have opportunities to make themselves known and to put Libertarian principles into practice in these government administrative slots as well as in running for office. This is one more way for us to put Libertarians into government and to have an impact on our state and on our communities. We absolutely should not overlook these opportunities.

Marakay Rogers is an attorney from York, PA. She ran for Attorney General in 2008 on the Libertarian ticket and currently serves on the LPPA Judicial Committee.

Join the LPPA or Renew your Membership! The Libertarian Party is the largest and best alternative for people who want to promote citizen liberty and limited government in Pennsylvania and the United States. Founded in 1971, the Libertarian Party is the third largest political party in the United States. The LP supports fiscal conservatism and positions on social issues promoting citizen liberty. More than 200,000 people across the country are registered Libertarians, and Libertarians serve in hundreds of elected offices. Please visit www.LPPA.org to join or for more information.

National Libertarian Party 2012 Convention

Red Rock Resort Las Vegas, Nevada May 2 – 6

For more information or to register for the convention visit
www.libertywillwin.com