

The Voice of Freedom

The Libertarian Party of Tennessee
Ray Ledford, Chairman (Chair@lptn.net)
Trevor Southerland, Editor (vof_editor@lptn.net)

September 2003
www.lptn.net
The Party of Principle

VOF Returns to Production

Under the leadership of LPTN Chairman Ray Ledford and newly appointed Editor Trevor Southerland of Hamilton County, the Voice of Freedom is back in business.

The VOF is planned to be published every three months, and will be published on the lptn.net as well as in a hard copy.

If you are interested in supporting the production of the VOF or advertising in it please contact:

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Letters to the Editor

The Voice of Freedom will be happy to accept letters to the Editor. To submit letters to the editor, simply use the contact information listed above. If by e-mail, list your subject as letter to the editor. Due to the limited space in the newsletter, the publication of your letter depends on how many are received and their length.

We are Libertarian, so your letters will not be censored. However, if your letter is strictly bashing someone, or a written assault, it will not be published by this editor. Criticism is good and will be pushed, but not slander.

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From the Chair

RAY LEDFORD

Much has happened since the last issue of the *Voice of Freedom*, and I'll start with the VOF itself. It now has a new look and a new editor. Our previous editor, Terry Thornhill, resigned in May. Our new editor is **Trevor Southerland** of the **Hamilton County LP**, and an experienced newsletter editor and newspaper columnist.

Although the VOF is scheduled to be published **quarterly**, our sole issue in 2002 didn't come out until November, and even though the pre-convention issue had been written and sent to our previous editor in early March, it was never sent in to be published, and I ask that you accept my apology for that. However, I'm confident that the VOF will be completed and printed by our scheduled deadlines with Trevor at the helm.

With the elections of 2002 behind us, allow me to share with you what this party has learned. We had many quality candidates, and they ran campaigns that were the equal of any professionally run campaign. However, the best percentages our candidates got were in **local races**, and I believe that is where we need to focus our campaign strategy for the next four to six years.

Besides quality candidates, something else we experienced was increased attention from various news media outlets. Our candidates were also invited to a variety of candidate mixers, and more than once I was pulled aside and told that our Libertarian candidates were **a breath of fresh air**. We often impressed our hosts at these events, who would later say that we were well-dressed, very polite, and the very opposite of flaky. "

We are definitely making progress in Tennessee politics. We were instrumental in defeating the proposed Tennessee income tax for three years, and our candidates are being treated with respect. We can go further, and it will take a lot of hard work and commitment from all of

(Continued Page 3)

Webmaster's Commentary

JONATHAN WRIGHT

Well, it's been up for a while now and many of you have already seen it, but in the time since the last Voice of Freedom, our website has undergone a major overhaul.

The new website, now located at <http://www.lptn.net> is built around a dynamic content engine and database system custom designed for the LPTN. Some of the new features include:

- "The Toolbox", a repository of links and downloadable files, to help you find the tools you need for libertarian activism

- Up to the minute news on state & county party events and happenings, candidate news, and commentary; plus the ability to add your comments and feedback to each article

- A bulletin board, with categories for action items, letters to the editor, and more -- so you can help keep us all informed about your goings on; the board also features a general discussion category which is fully integrated with our tnlp@yahoo.com discussion list.

And much much more! If you haven't dropped by yet, come on over soon! And while you're there, be sure to stop over at <http://www.lptn.net/listmanager> and join our new announcements email lists. You can choose from up to four different categories -- Action Alerts, General Business, Press Releases, and Web Updates -- to get just the content you want, without having to sort through the general debates and rants on the discussion list.

And remember - we can't post it if we don't know about it! Be sure to send all your news and updates to the webmaster@lptn.net, so we can let the world know what all of Tennessee's fine activists are up to.

Libertarian Web Site of the Quarter

www.draftresistance.org

Dedicated to exposing the many myths surrounding draft registration. Somewhat different than traditional draft counseling where all options are studied but none are endorsed, we seek to find enough young people willing to resist to prevent the draft from coming back. "

-Scott Kohlhaas, LP Alaska State Chair

(Do you have a suggestion for a web site of the quarter,
e-mail the Editor at vof_editor@lptn.net)

Breaking News

POSSIBLE SUPER REGION ON LNC

(Staff) A proposal has been made that may result in the formation of a super region with two regional representatives on the Libertarian National Committee.

The proposal is not a new one, but has been introduced twice before at national conventions. It failed in the past because enough notice had not been given for the planning and support it needed.

Sean Haugh, the Executive Director of the Libertarian Party of North Carolina, recently contacted the state chairs, E.D.s, and regional representatives of the states that would make up the proposed super region. The super region would likely consist of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Tennessee, and Virginia.

The Voice Of Freedom will bring you updates to the proposal as the news develops.

LPTN FORMS PAC STEERING COMMITTEE

(Staff) After consulting the Tennessee Registry of Election Finance, State Chair Ray Ledford formed a steering committee whose mission is to create the LPTN Political Action Committee, to define how the PAC will operate within state law, and what criteria the LPTN candidates will need to meet in order to qualify for PAC disbursements. Ledford states that the PAC will be self-sustaining.

Ledford named Dr. Joe Dumas (Signal Mountain), a leading proponent of the LPTN PAC, as the steering committee's chair. Completing the committee are Tayloe Nickey (Memphis) and Steve Trinward (Nashville).

www.badnarik.org

Michael Badnarik

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(From the Chair, continued from Page One)

us but it isn't impossible. In fact, if we continue to progress in this state, we can stand poised to become a **major player** in Tennessee politics, because I firmly believe that one of the two major parties is on the verge of seeing its support evaporate in the near future, and I want us to be there to collect the new politically homeless.

In December of 2002, we learned a hard lesson in trust when our former web host allowed our domain registration to expire, even though he had been instructed to renew it months earlier. Until we can repurchase the domain, the website can be visited at www.lptn.net, thanks to a very gracious donation from **Jonathan Wright**.

In February 2003, I traveled down to Houston to participate in the **LP State Chairs Conference**. I was pleasantly surprised to find that we actually accomplished a lot in terms of sharing information and experiences. We also voted to form a Libertarian State Leaders Alliance, and I became a part of its steering committee.

We had our State Convention on April 12, and although attendance was low, we still had a productive time. We re-elected an excellent corps of officers: **Heather Scott**, **Alicia Mattson**, and **Joey King** were returned as Vice Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary. I was elected to Chair, having finished out 2001-2003 term for my dear friend, **Richard Pearl**.

Also at our 2003 convention, we had four guest speakers. **Kay Brooks**, a prominent home school activist, briefed us on home schooling in Tennessee. I recommend her website at www.tnhomeed.com. **Tom Knapp**, editor of the Rational Review (<http://rationalreview.com>), made the case for the LP to use an anti-war stance as a rallying point for recruiting and attracting new activists. **Michael Badnarik**, a contender for the LP presidential nomination, gave a rousing campaign speech (campaign website: www.badnarik.org). And **Geoffrey Neale**, the LP Chair, showed the need to reach out with real-life examples of libertarian solutions instead of philosophy.

We also established a **steering committee** to continue building the LPTN infrastructure, so as to improve the delivery of our message, to track and create legislation, and to provide better support and training for our candidates. A **convention committee** was also constituted to help select future locations for upcoming conventions.

A series of awards were created, the **Richard E. Pearl, Sr. Liberty Awards**, and are designed to recognize and encourage the same level of activism that was

demonstrated consistently by the man the awards memorialize. **Henry Coffey** and **Sam Reid** were this year's recipients of the **Keeper of Liberty Pearls**. You can visit the tribute page for Richard at www.lptn.net/richard.

Also at the convention, **Steve Trinward** stepped down as **Webmaster**, and **Jonathan Wright**, designer of our current site, accepted the job.

Ballot access is currently shelved. There are no plans to launch a ballot drive until 2005 if necessary, and the bill for which we have a sponsor will have to wait until 2004.

The LPTN and its affiliates have been in the **LP News** several times this year, and it doesn't seem to be ending. I'm excited to see our people be recognized, particularly on the home page of the LP website! GO TEAM!

The **LPTN website** continues to grow and evolve, and I hope everyone will personally thank **Jonathan Wright** for his diligent and talented work. The website has even been a **featured news item** on the LP's home page!

The **war in Iraq** may be "over", but we still have U.S. military personnel over there, so I hope you will continue to keep them -- especially the folks mentioned on our troop support page -- in your thoughts and prayers. As I write this, 148 U.S. military personnel have perished in the war, the same number of fatalities as in the Gulf War. Obviously, U.S. troops are still in danger. You can visit the page on our website by going to www.lptn.net/troops. Meanwhile, we can all work at bringing all of our troops home where they belong.

The May 20, 2003 resignation of James Chesser as the **Libertarian Party of Davidson County** chairman left the LPDC without any officers. The resignation came just over a month after his bid for the chairmanship of the Libertarian Party of Tennessee.

Many of the past leaders of the LPDC are too busy in their professional lives to become more involved in leading it, but the LPDC has a fresh, new face who has accepted the appointment as interim chair -- **Jonathan Wright**.

Our new editor, Trevor, calls this the Chair's ego piece. "But this column isn't about me -- it's about all of the fine work being done by a group of wonderful people who call themselves the **Libertarian Party of Tennessee**."

Pro libertate,
Ray Ledford

Earn \$50 By Procuring Ballot Bill Co-Sponsors

A ballot access reform bill filed by Congressman Ron Paul (R-TX) is so important, says Ballot Access News publisher Richard Winger, that he's willing to give \$50 to anyone who convinces other U.S. Representatives to co-sponsor it.

The bill, HR 1941, "has no chance of passing unless it obtains many co-sponsors," said Winger. "The current Supreme Court will not provide voting protection in U.S. House elections for voters who wish to vote for someone other than the Democratic and Republican nominees. Congress itself must act."

To bolster HR 1941's chances, Winger said Ballot Access News (B.A.N.) will give \$50 to any Libertarian who gets his or her Congressional representative to sign on as a co-sponsor.

To qualify, write to your Congressional representative asking them to co-sponsor HR 1941. If they send a letter promising to sponsor the bill, forward a copy of that letter to Ballot Access News, along with a copy of your original letter to the representative.

"If your member of Congress becomes a co-sponsor of HR 1941, B.A.N. will pay you \$50," said Winger.

If multiple Libertarians contact the same Congressperson who agrees to co-sponsor HR 1941, the \$50 will be given to the person with the earliest-dated response from the Congressperson. The deadline is December 31, 2003.

Any Libertarian who gets a new co-sponsor for HR 1941 will also get a free three-month subscription to Ballot Access News, or a three-month extension if they are already a subscriber, said Winger.

HR 1941 (The Voter Protection Act of 2003), which was filed by Paul on May 1, would make it easier for third-party and independent candidates to qualify for the ballot in federal races.

HR 1941 stipulates that any candidate who gathers 1,000 valid signatures of registered voters in a district -- or from 1,000 eligible voters in districts without partisan registration -- must appear on the ballot with a party designation.

The bill is needed because numerous states have passed restrictive ballot access laws, said Winger.

"Unfortunately, some state legislatures have passed laws that make it impossible for anyone but the Democratic and

Republican nominees to get on the ballot for the U.S. House," he said.

If signed into law, the bill would ease the U.S. House ballot access requirements for roughly two-thirds of the states, said Winger.

When he filed HR 1941, Paul said it was a "true campaign reform bill" that would expand "the exchange of political ideas" and enhance liberty.

"The [bill] accomplishes this goal by lowering and standardizing the requirements for, and the time required to get, signatures to qualify a federal candidate for the ballot," he said. "Many states have unfair rules and regulations that make it virtually impossible for minor-party and independent candidates to get on the ballot."

Paul said the bill is Constitutional because "Article I, section 4, explicitly authorizes the U.S. Congress to, 'At any time by law make or alter such regulations regarding the manner of holding elections.'

"The Voter Protection Act is a Constitutional way to reform campaign laws to increase voter participation by making the election process fairer and open to new candidates and ideas," he said.

To contact Winger about his \$50 offer, e-mail: ban@richardwinger.com. Or write: B.A.N., P.O. Box 470296, San Francisco, CA 94147.

Or visit: www.ballot-access.org/2003/0601.html#4.

Voice of Freedom Banner Contest

(Staff) The *Voice of Freedom* is looking for a new masthead, and the search will be conducted through a contest that is open to all LPTN members and their families. Submissions will be accepted immediately through *December 31, 2003*. Digital submissions can be emailed to *VOF* Editor Trevor Southerland (vof_editor@lptn.net). You can also mail submissions to Trevor M. Southerland, 848 McCallie Avenue, Apt. 4, Chattanooga, Tennessee 37403-2625.

The winner of the contest will receive a Liberty Penguin enamel pin and a signed copy of *Frogg Pond*, by Steve Cason, courtesy of the Libertarian Party of Tennessee.

Thank you for your participation to help us make this publication the best of its kind.

From The Mountain Region

TONY WALL

A bit of time has passed since our last issue and many things have transpired locally and globally that affect the Libertarian movement. The instability of the world has lock-step Americans lining up to sacrifice every freedom we have left in the name of security and this has certainly made promoting Liberty much more difficult in our small part of the world.

I attend two East Tennessee State University Political Life classes each quarter where I represent the Libertarian Party and present our platform. The class instructor, Dr. Corso, has created a forum in which a Libertarian, a Republican, a Democrat, and a Green Party representative present each party's platform and positions and then engage the class in a discussion. It provides an excellent opportunity to expose the real differences between the Libertarians and Greens and the true similarities of the Republicans and Democrats. Recently, while attending a music festival, I encountered an ETSU student who had been present at the Political Life class in which I had spoken in the spring. When I met this young man, I was somewhat surprised that this was the first student I had met outside of the classroom and I was very curious to have my presentation critiqued by a student. After the forum, each class meets for another hour to discuss our political parties and platforms. His response to my query was that most of the students agree that the LP is right on target but they felt that our platform would be difficult or impossible to implement in "the real world". I was left with great encouragement from our discussion. Half of the battle is won. They believe we have the right ideas about Liberty and Freedom! These kids are 18 year-old college freshmen who have just registered to vote or may have only voted once. Most have never even heard of the LP and believe the old cliches' about the Democrats and Republicans. We need to recruit the youth because they are tomorrow's leaders. That may sound scary but our parents and grandparents felt the same way about us.

Locally, most of our county governments have created new budgets without tax increases. Some Sullivan County commissioners are now proposing a wheel tax referendum for the county highway department. On one hand, I'd like to see a tax referendum on the ballot but only if it is presented during the same year as the commissioners race. In Northeast Tennessee, every tax referendum on any ballot has failed miserably, even one in Unicoi County that was earmarked specifically for the "children." The fact is that people do not want tax increases and when given the opportunity will vote against them. When it comes to money, most people want to keep what they earn and if

they don't, I always tell them that there's a real nice commune down in Central Tennessee that will take good care of them.

In closing, I'd like to thank Glen Moody for his service to the community as a Kingsport City School board member for the last four years. Glen was defeated in May and his dedication to the School System will be missed by all involved. Glen was elected in part by helping to defeat the construction of a new school outside of town. He encouraged and fought for the renovation of existing neighborhood schools and the completion of these renovations has helped make Kingsport a nicer place to live and raise a family. It is largely due to the hard work and dedication of people like Glen that the LP is having an impact on our local and national government and it will be our youth, tomorrow's leaders, who we will need to carry on this endeavor.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

- Margaret Mead

LNC NEWS - Dues Increase Discussion

(Staff) At the Libertarian National Committee's last meeting, the most important action taken was a mammoth discussion on dues increases, including the results of a survey of basic members, the purpose of dues, and changes to the amount of dues. Although the LNC members did not come to a consensus on the purpose of dues, many ideas were thrown around, including that they should cover the core expenses, and they indicate a minimum level of commitment to the party to grant membership status.

A motion postponed from the last meeting came up. It was to raise the dues from \$25 to \$50, dues paid by a non-UMP (Unified Membership Plan) state from \$10 to \$40, and raise Life Memberships from \$1000 to \$2500. (This will be abbreviated as dues of \$50/\$40/\$2500.) The LNC first voted to set the effective date to Jan 1, 2004, which passed. Then Bill Redpath moved to set the dues to \$35/\$25/\$2500. This motion failed. A motion to set the dues to \$40/\$25/\$2500 passed. Mark Nelson was not in favor of raising dues unless there is also a raise in the UMP payments to the state parties. The motion was amended to also increase UMP payments from \$1 to \$1.50, Alternative UMP payments from \$0.50 to \$1 for the first twelve months and from \$1.50 to \$2 for subsequent months, and to adjust the initial membership

retainer under the Alternative UMP from \$18 to \$24 and from \$500 to \$1500 for Life Members.

George Squires presented a tiered membership plan. This motion would set the dues to \$40 for a Subscribing Membership that is the same as the current membership, Life Memberships to \$2500, and add a \$10 Basic Membership. The Basic Membership would not get the LP News, but would require an e-mail address since correspondence to them will be electronic.

Because the different plans began to get complicated, the dues issue was postponed until the September meeting. Steve Givot asked the Executive Director to report financial ramification to changing the dues at the next meeting.

Future LNC meetings are:
September 13 & 14 at Denver
December 13 & 14 at St. Louis
February 21 & 22 at Austin

The Voice Of Freedom will bring you updates to the dues increase proposal as the news develops.

Below are comments from National Chair Neale in his recent article in LP NEWS about the possibilities.

We have not rushed into a decision on this issue. I wouldn't even say the National Committee is leaning one way or the other. We're gathering more information in order to not rush into a decision, and to calmly weigh the benefits and costs of a change to our membership dues.

We know that if we raise membership dues by a certain amount, we'll see a net reduction in members of a certain percentage. From this we can determine if there is a financial net benefit in making such a change.

THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF TENNESSEE

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However, the decision is really not just an equation. If we were a business, we could raise our prices to increase our gross, while losing part of our customer base. That would be a simple decision. But we're not a business -- we're a political party. The cost to us of a decrease in membership has ramifications far beyond the bottom line.

Likewise, a large increase in members at a reduced membership price would certainly enhance our membership numbers, but could have a very negative effect upon our bottom line. To lose money on every member can hardly be made up by an increase in volume.

We also have to consider the cost of changing all of our literature to whatever new price would be established. This cost would include not only changing the literature, but also using up old literature, and possibly even destroying excess inventory that carried the old membership amount. Even with the best planning, we're likely to have many pieces of literature out there that carry the old price. Do we honor that price in the future or not? And let's not forget that every affiliate carries this same price on all of its literature.

There are many more factors that we're considering, and we will not rush into any change.

I think it's totally appropriate for the National Committee to consider membership dues changes -- that's what market-driven organizations do. I think it's our job. How we will decide is still up in the air.

What is not up in the air is this: we're striving to further reduce our costs at the national level, and to maximize the value that each and every member receives for their membership. That is a move that I hope no one objects to.

The full uncut article can be found at

<http://www.lp.org/lpnews/0308/fromthechair.html>.

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