

## The Voice Of Freedom Is Back

**By Tony Wall**  
*Vice Chair, LPTN*

The Voice of Freedom is officially back. It has a new look, a new format, and has been given new life by the Libertarian Party of Tennessee.

The Voice of Freedom will be published quarterly and will serve as an instrument to unify Libertarian activists and activities from Bristol to Memphis. It is important to remember that Tennessee is a very large state and political activities that are occurring in Sullivan County may be different than those in Shelby County but our goal of limiting government and maximizing freedom is the same.

We will also be periodically including articles of interest from issue oriented groups whose purposes also promote liberty. If your local LP affiliate wishes to submit an article for inclusion in a future issue, please send it to [vof\\_editor@lptn.org](mailto:vof_editor@lptn.org).

## New Courthouse Plaque

*Libertarian Makes a Difference in Sullivan County*

**By Kelly Wall**  
*Mountain Region Coordinator, LPTN*

It took six years of planning and preparation but the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom is now on display in the Sullivan County Courthouse. Gary Melvin, a Libertarian who resides in Bluff City, TN, began his efforts to have the historical document displayed in early 2000 after the County Commission approved an application process for citizens to display plaques on the courthouse walls.



Sullivan County Mayor Venable joined Melvin to officially unveil the display



Ten members of the Shelby County LP ran an Operation Politically Homeless booth at the Germantown Festival, September 9-10<sup>th</sup>, giving the World's Smallest Political Quiz to 200 people.

## Opportunity Knocks

*FROM THE CHAIR*

**By Alicia Mattson**

Even when opportunity knocks, a Libertarian still has to get up off his/her couch and open the door. Standing on our party's doorstep we see multiple issues important to liberty, and we need to open the door and do something about them.

Are you tired of seeing Libertarian candidates in TN listed as "Independents" on the ballot? The 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals (covering Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Tennessee) made a ruling on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006 that may put the LPTN in a very good position to force a change of ballot access law in TN. The court struck down an Ohio ballot access law that is even less stringent than our TN law, declaring that the law imposed a severe burden on the LP of Ohio and violated the Constitution. What action we can take will depend on the outcome of any

Controversy over a privately funded "American Heritage Documents" plaque that the commission approved for display a year earlier - containing the Ten Commandments, along with the Declaration of Independence and Bill of Rights - fueled this application process approval.

Melvin was one of the first people to submit an application after the County Commission approved this process. "I chose the Statute for Religious Freedom because Jefferson considered it one of his most important achievements," Melvin said at the time. "He thought religious freedom was one of the cornerstones of republican government." Melvin also said that writing the Statute was one of the things for which Jefferson wanted to be remembered most.

Jefferson wrote the Statute for Religious Freedom in 1786 in an attempt to separate government and religion by prohibiting state sponsorship or repression of religious observation or beliefs.

Jefferson's Statute prohibited the requirement of citizens to observe or support any church or religion and protected citizens' freedom to maintain their respective opinions on matters of religion.

The copy now on display in the lobby of the Sullivan County Courthouse was drawn by Gary Melvin's mother. So a hand-drawn calligraphy copy of the Statute has now joined the other historical documents displayed at the courthouse. Congratulations to Gary Melvin for his dedication to liberty and to his mother for her artistic skills.

**Opportunity Knocks – continued from page 1**

further appeal process in that case. While we're waiting for that, this ruling can be used to pressure our legislature to fix the TN laws.

Earlier this year the Tennessee General Assembly passed some new eminent domain legislation in the wake of the Kelo v. New London ruling. It did strengthen protections against eminent domain abuse for farm property, but it opened the door wide open for everyone else's property. Among other things, the bill specifically sanctions the use of eminent domain to take property for anything that a lawyer might define as an "industrial park". That term is vague enough that basically any commercial enterprise would qualify. The Democrats and Republicans did not protect your property, and it's going to be up to Libertarians to hold their feet to the fire in the next legislative session to get real protections enacted.

We can't forget that the onerous Streamlined Sales Tax laws will go into effect on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007 unless we again apply public pressure for a repeal or postponement. We did it once, and we can do it again.

By the government's own reporting, there was a \$411.2 million state government surplus last year. The state collected \$410.3 million in sales tax on groceries. The state could easily eliminate the 6% sales tax on groceries. No other state has a higher sales tax on groceries. Most states don't tax groceries at all.

So how can you help us work these opportunities/threats? Stay in touch with the state party so that you know how and when you can help. Make sure we have your email address so that we can quickly let you know when it's time to apply public pressure. Watch our website for news and action items. Make sure your legislators hear from you on these and other important issues – emails are one thing, but live phone calls are more effective. Organize with fellow-libertarians in your area so that your legislators hear from as many people as possible. Make sure your non-libertarian friends and civic/social groups know about these situations, and enlist their help. Let your LPTN officers know about other opportunities you see for the LPTN to influence public policy.

Ok, sometimes what you find at the door is more of a threat than an opportunity, but if you don't go to the door to deal with it, the threats will break in, and the opportunities will leave. ❖

**Notable Quotes**

**Dedicated to Milton Friedman**  
American Economist 1912-2006

"The preservation of freedom is the protective reason for limiting and decentralizing governmental power. But there is also a constructive reason. The great advances of civilization, whether in architecture or painting, in science or in literature, in industry or agriculture, have never come from centralized government."

"Underlying most arguments against the free market is a lack of belief in freedom itself."

"Nothing is so permanent as a temporary government program."

"I am in favor of cutting taxes under any circumstances and for any excuse, for any reason, whenever it's possible."

"Governments never learn. Only people learn."

"Many people want the government to protect the consumer. A much more urgent problem is to protect the consumer from the government."

"If you look at the drug war from a purely economic point of view, the role of the government is to protect the drug cartel."

**Welcome Home**

*The LPTN welcomes the newest Libertarian Party members:*

- Louis Brown ..... Memphis
- Jeff Carneal ..... Franklin
- William Torres ..... Knoxville
- Russell Cornwall ..... Franklin
- Rachel Enfield ..... Kingsport
- M. Wayne Haley ..... Smyrna
- Robert Horn ..... Cornersville
- Jeremy Johnson ..... Kingsport
- Belinda Lindroos ..... Jamestown
- Greg Lull ..... Knoxville
- Jeremy Matthews ..... Memphis
- Brandon Niblock ..... Martin
- Alan Owings ..... Rockwood
- William Robbins ..... LaVergne
- Marshall Summar ..... Brentwood
- Mark Sutton ..... Nashville
- Kelly Thompson ..... Greeneville❖

**LPTN: Now With 50% More Elected Officials**

*Candidate News*

**By Alicia Mattson**

*Chair, LPTN*

The longest journey starts with but one step. The good news is that the first step is already behind us. In fact we're several steps down the road. The month of August brought local elections to the LPTN. We went into August with two Libertarians serving in elected office in Tennessee, and we finished the month with three.

LP member Heather Scott won re-election to another term in the District 22 seat of the Wilson County Commission. And in East Tennessee, LP member Mike Sexton won election to his first term on the 6<sup>th</sup> District seat of the Union County Commission. Collegedale City Commissioner Harry Hodgdon was not facing re-election this year, so he remains in office. The LPTN commends the victors on their commitment to walk the walk, not just talk the talk. Serving in public office takes time and effort.

Our other candidates who did not win election this round were no less committed than those who won their elections. Joe Dumas earned 30.56% of the vote in his race for the District 2 seat on the Hamilton County Commission. Two LP members attempted a different strategy - running for the nominations of one of the major parties. Larry Henson earned 32.12% of the vote in his race for the Democrat nomination for the District 89 seat of the TN House of Representatives. Daniel Burgner ran for the Republican nomination for the Greene County Commission, District 4 seat. Our candidates deserve our thanks, our support, and our appreciation.

Though we've seen some progress, the journey ahead of us is still long. There are things you can do to help us front more LP candidates and win more elections. Maybe you could be a candidate in the next election cycle. Get involved in your local government. Attend your city council and county commission meetings, learn the current issues, contribute to public discussion when possible, get involved in civic groups to get to know more people in your community, and then run for office. Or you can help others run by contributing to the LPTN's PAC which provides financial assistance to our local and state-level candidates. Visit the Tennessee Liberty Fund on the web at [www.tnlibertyfund.org](http://www.tnlibertyfund.org) and contribute today! ❖

# Why Work More?

Analyzing the Income Tax

By Roger M. Clites

Retired economics professor, Johnson City, TN

Practically all governments have enacted a tax on incomes that is generally termed the "progressive income tax." I prefer to call it the "stair-step tax." The tax is structured so that each additional increment of income is taxed at a higher percentage than were the previous ones.

Usually opponents of such a tax discuss the harm it does in terms of how it reduces capital investments and thus retards economic growth. When I was a young university instructor in the 1950s, however, I came across what may be a more easily understandable example of the damage done by this stair-step tax.

A man I knew was by far the best salesman at his company. By hard work and his ability to educate potential customers about how his firm's products met their needs, he sold more than three times as much as any other salesman. In fact, while he worked he sold enough to keep 30 production employees busy.

Note the phrase, "while he worked". In the 1950's our stair-step income tax reached a far higher percentage than it does today. The top rate was over 90 percent. That's right, if your income was already high enough and you earned another dime, you didn't get to keep a whole cent!

The salesman was paid on commission, and he decided that it wasn't worth his while to continue working when the additional dollars he earned were taxed at a rate of 50 percent or more. He would rather take an extended vacation.

Therefore, about two-thirds of the way through each year, generally in late August or early September, he would ask his supervisor for a leave of absence until the following January. The company didn't like to do without its best salesman for the last third of the year, but felt that giving him a leave of absence was better than taking the chance of losing him.

The consequences of the salesman's reaction to the "soak the rich" tax structure are interesting. The salesman himself wasn't seriously hurt. He would, as he put it, spend much of the remainder of the year at Miami Beach "watching the scenery walk by."

Those most hurt were the 10 people who weren't employed by the company because of his decision to not work during the last third of the year. Since he sold enough products to provide work for 30 production workers but restricted his selling time to about two-thirds of the year, he brought in only enough orders to keep 20 production workers busy. Consequently, 10 fewer people were employed.

Thus, the tax collector's greed backfired in several ways. Since the salesman didn't work for a third of the year, he probably paid less in total taxes than he would have had he been taxed at a lower rate but on an income that would have been about 50 percent higher.

The 10 people who weren't employed may have wound up with little or no income to tax. In fact, they may have become a drain on the tax revenues that other people paid.


Thus, the tax collector's greed caused a loss of revenues from two sources, and it likely added a drain on the public treasure. But, remember, those most hurt by the "soak the rich" policy were not "the rich." They were the 10 people who weren't employed. ❖



# Monthly Pledgers

Not everyone can take a public role in the LP by serving as an officer or running for elected office, but the support roles played by people like our monthly pledgers are just as important as the public roles. What we do just wouldn't be possible without your help, and we thank you!!

- |                |                      |                  |
|----------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Joe Dumas      | Taylor Nickey        | Kelly Wall       |
| JR Enfield     | Helen Rebmann        | Christian Wilson |
| Peggy Garner   | Kirk Schermerhorn    | Angie Willis     |
| William Joyner | Heather Scott        | Bill Willis      |
| Vernie Kuglin  | Richard M. Shaw, Jr. | Sarah Willis     |
| Michael Maness | Chris Snyder         | Joseph Nagy      |
| Alicia Mattson | Stephen Trinward     |                  |
| Glenn Moody    | Tony Wall            |                  |



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# Funding Changes

By Alicia Mattson

Chair, LPTN

In the past two years the LPTN has seen significant changes in its revenues and revenue sources. This state party has previously depended heavily on the Unified Membership Plan, a revenue sharing system in which the state party received a portion of the dues that were paid to the national party from members in Tennessee. In recent fiscal years 71% - 93% of our revenues came from the UMP program.

When the national party eliminated membership dues last year, the UMP program was also eliminated. So the LPTN is completely responsible for its own fundraising now, which is not a bad thing, but it is a challenge for us to change operation modes.

The LPTN has created a monthly pledge program to address this challenge, and we are working to build it so that the party has a predictable cash flow base. Currently our pledge program is generating approximately 50% of the cash flow that we used to receive through the Unified Membership Plan, but we hope you will help us change this soon.

We need you to become a donor to the LPTN. Visit our website today at [www.lptn.net](http://www.lptn.net), click on the "Contribute \$" link, and you will find several options for donating to the LPTN. Monthly pledges can be automatically drafted from your bank account, or you can use Click & Pledge to put your monthly pledge on a credit card. Or if you can't do a monthly pledge, maybe you can make a one-time donation. Become a donor today to help us continue the fight for liberty in Tennessee.

Please note that even though dues are no longer required to be a member of the national LP, the national party still needs donors to continue its important work. Your donations to the national party are important to the LPTN as well, because only members who donate \$25/year to the national LP will be included in calculations for the LPTN's delegate apportionment or LNC representation numbers. ❖

# Portland: LP Turns Over a New Leaf

2006 National Convention Report

By Alicia Mattson  
Chair, LPTN

Eight delegates from the LPTN attended the Libertarian Party's 2006 National Convention in Portland, Oregon. Over 300 delegates attended the two-day event on July 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> to tend to business like the election of national officers, selection of LNC representatives, and making revisions to the national platform and national bylaws. LPTN member Joe Dumas (Signal Mountain, TN) was elected to serve on the LP's Judicial Committee.

Our delegates got to meet with guest speakers like former Georgia Congressman Bob Barr, Christopher J. Farrell of Judicial Watch, SkyTV founding chairman Andrew Neil, Krist Novoselic of the legendary rock band Nirvana, and many more.

The LP announced an exciting project called Ballot Base. Ballot Base is a web-based software tool that the LP has developed to help us better compete with Democrats and Republicans at the ballot box. Ballot Base will help state affiliates manage their membership data, but the most exciting aspect of it for 2006 was the Get Out The Vote features. Ballot Base was used in the 2006 election to allow LP activists across the nation to volunteer to make telephone calls to assist with LP campaigns in other areas of the country. This year 851 volunteers used Ballot Base to make thousands of Get Out The Vote calls for LP candidates.

Successful bylaw changes included such things as putting the bylaw changes on the agenda for every national convention (not just every four years in off-presidential years), requiring roll call voting on substantive LNC votes, and creating a membership category called "Sustaining Member" which requires a \$25/year donation to be eligible for national officer positions or to be included in delegate apportionment and LNC representation calculations. Efforts to modify the national membership pledge were not successful, so it remains unchanged.

Platform changes were approved to consolidate some planks and revise others, but the biggest news from Portland is how many platform planks were deleted. In the history of the LP, no convention had ever removed a plank from the party platform. Yet in Portland, after 17 of the Atlanta platform planks were consolidated into 9 planks, the delegates voted to remove 38 of the remaining 44 planks. The statement of principles remains unchanged, and Libertarians are still libertarians who call for less government and more freedom. We're just trying a new approach.

The general reasoning for the changes is that the platform had over time grown into an oversized philosophical novel rather than a simple statement of what our candidates would want to do in the next four years if elected. Often the way-down-the-road details in our platform are used to put local LP candidates on the defensive on the campaign trail, and it keeps them from focusing their campaign image on current issues where so many voters already agree with the LP.

National Executive Director Shane Cory explained it as, "We've reduced our own party bureaucracy to allow candidates to express their own viewpoints while holding true to our statement of principles." Mr. Cory also said, "Now we can get down to the business of moving public policy in a libertarian direction by building a political party that elects Libertarians to public office." ❖



LPTN delegates pose with Tonie Nathan, 1972 LP Vice-Presidential candidate



LPTN delegate Deryl Martin nominates Geoff Neale for LP Treasurer

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