



Alabama Liberty

Volume 16, Number 5

November/December 1997

Local Libertarian Activities on the Rise Across State

Odd-numbered years, being without federal elections, have often been times when the Libertarian Party entered a period of relative dormancy, but not this year. Across Alabama Libertarians are taking time from their otherwise busy schedules to hold meetings, man outreach booths, and spread the libertarian message. These activities are bearing fruit in new prospects and memberships for the party, with Alabama participating in a nationwide phenomenon of Libertarian Party growth in an off-election year.

Auburn Libertarians Set the Pace

As the Fall descended upon the loveliest village on the plains, the Lee County Libertarian Party and the Auburn University Libertarians have stepped up their pace of activities. During recent weeks, local activists have held three Operation Political Homeless (OPH) events on the Auburn University Concourse. At the OPH, members administer the World's Smallest Political Quiz (tm) to passers-by, and then graph them on a large copy of the Nolan Chart. Those who score in the Libertarian section of the graph (approx 1/5 of quiz takers) are invited to attend a meeting, and to be put on our local mailing list.

Following these events, the local groups then conducted two separate "Introduction to Libertarianism" events. The first, on October 14, featured Mark Thornton, former AU Libertarians advisor, and currently Economic Advisor to Governor Fob James. The second, on October 28, featured Scott Kjar.

More recently, the groups sponsored a talk by George Crispin, the head of the local chapter of the Alliance for the Separation of School and State. Crispin spoke about the successes and failures of government (aka, "public") education, its history, and its current trends. Interestingly, Crispin compared the current literacy rates of the United States with the literacy rates of the 1800s, and found that our current educational system, despite the huge expenditures made on it, is not providing a higher literacy rate at all!

With AU facing Final Exams and the upcoming holiday break, no more events or functions are scheduled for the remainder of 1997. However, discussions are on-going with the AU College Republicans to hold a series of issues debates during the Winter Quarter. At this time, the College Democrats have apparently opted to not participate in these

(Continued on page 2)

Sophocleus Contests Special Election

John Sophocleus, instructor of economics at Auburn University, has announced that he is seeking election to State Representative District 82, which includes Bullock County, Macon County, and portions of Lee County. The Special Election was called by Governor Fob James to fill a vacancy which occurred when Thomas Reed (D-Tuskegee) passed away after a long illness.

The Special Election cycle has three dates: Dec 9 is the primary election; Dec 30 is the primary run-off; and Jan 20 is the date of the general election. Sophocleus, as a Libertarian, does not run in the primaries, since Libertarians select their candidates in convention or mass meeting. Thus, he needs to get out his voters for the general election itself.

Of course, as all Libertarians know, Sophocleus is required to gather petitions to be put on the ballot, unlike Republicans and Democrats, who need only inform their respective state party organizations of their desire to run. By law, the Sophocleus campaign must gather valid signatures equal to or exceeding 3% of the votes cast in the Governor's race in the particular district. In this instance, that means he must gather 425 valid signatures. The term "valid" is an important one, since signatures are routinely rejected for minor problems such as the name on the petition not quite matching the name on the state's registration list (e.g. Mary Smith versus Mrs. John Smith). Thus, in order to be put on the ballot, a Libertarian really needs to gather at least twice as many signatures as the law states, just to be sure to have enough.

Complicating the issue this year is the fact that in the Proclamation announcing the Special Election, the governor listed a series of dates and deadlines which are contrary to Alabama Election Law! Under the law, third party and independent candidates are required to submit their petitions by the 6th day following the second primary election (the run-off). In this election, that would make Sophocleus's petitions due on January 5, 1998. However, in the Proclamation, Gov. James listed these petitions as being due on November 14, 1997. Thus, instead of being given two months to gather signatures, Sophocleus was only given a little more than a week.

The Sophocleus campaign, headed up by campaign manager Scott Kjar, has attempted unsuccessfully to meet the illegal deadlines imposed by the Governor and the Secretary of State's office. Thus, on November 14, the campaign

(Continued on page 3)

Local Activities on the Rise

(Continued from page 1)

debates, after expressing concern that in a debate setting, someone's feelings might get hurt. Good grief!

Libertarian Booth at Madison Street Festival

Madison resident and LP member Jim Albea arranged for the LP to be represented at the Madison Street Festival held on October 4th with an information booth and plenty of literature to hand out. The city of Madison, with its young technically-oriented population, is fertile ground for libertarian recruitment. Several local members helped Jim man the booth, which was highly successful in drawing interest from the crowd. During the one day festival, eleven people signed up to receive more information with eight of them signing up for the email list.

Montgomery Supper Club has New Location

Montgomery area libertarians have been meeting for quite a few years at the Sundown East Restaurant, with sometimes spotty attendance. Since that location did not provide the group a separate room, it was not conducive to holding an organized meeting or having a speaker. Local members have now made arrangements for a better location with a separate room, the **Morrison's in Montgomery Mall**. **The first meeting at that location is scheduled for Tuesday, December 9th, 6:30 to 8:30 pm.** This meeting will be an important starting point for planning future party-building activities in the Montgomery area. If you live in or near Montgomery please try to fit this meeting into your schedule.

John Hix reports that Liberty Forum TV show is still on the air in the Montgomery District. It is broadcast live for 1 hour with 7 hours of rerun airtime each month. The show needs additional sponsors in order to maintain and expand the airtime, and could also be duplicated in other areas, with a local access cable channel, for minimal investment. Please contact John (see page 7) if you can help.

Birmingham Supper Club Revived

Earlier this month a special mailing to the Birmingham district announced the restarting of a Birmingham area Libertarian supper club. The first of these new meetings was held November 10th at the Shoney's on 18th St S. The

About the newsletter

Alabama Liberty is the official newsletter of the Libertarian Party of Alabama. Stephen Dow serves as newsletter editor. Please send comments, articles, informational items and advertising inquiries to him at 221 Evalyn St., Madison, AL 35758 or by email to StephenDow@aol.com.

meeting went very well, with about 15 party members and folks interested in learning more about the party in attendance. Everyone got a chance to introduce themselves to the group and say a few words. There was good enthusiasm all around, with Jerry Vines and Mark Bodenhausen discussing plans to have a table at a gun show, various folks indicating a willingness to help with the ballot access petitions, and interest in keeping the meetings going. **The next meeting is scheduled for 7:00 pm Monday, December 1st** at the same location. The speaker for that meeting will be recently elected Birmingham City Councilman Bill Johnson, who is the second person on the city council with Libertarian Party roots (the first being, of course, Jimmy Blake). Johnson was active in the Missouri LP several years back and ran for US Senate there as a Libertarian. He will speak on his adventures in Central America with the Contras and in Afghanistan with the Mujahadeen.

Tuscaloosa Libertarian Committee Formed

Tuscaloosa District Rep Jerry Hart, LP member David Roberts and other libertarians in the Tuscaloosa area have been busy organizing a local group called the Tuscaloosa Libertarian Committee (TLC). The group has held several meetings, organized outreach efforts on the University of Alabama campus and set up its own web page (<http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/2043>). The TLC last met November 18th at the Shoney's on McFarland Blvd. The group expresses thanks to Charles Russell for driving up from Montgomery to meet with them and lead an interesting discussion.

LP Begins Organizing in Tallapoosa County

On Thursday, October 30, the Libertarian Party met for the very first time in Tallapoosa County, Alabama. The event, organized by Alexander City Libertarian Charles W. Parrott and Auburn-area District Representative Scott Kjar, was held at 7 pm at the Horseshoe Inn Motel & Conference Center.

The Keynote Address was given by former LP National Director Perry Willis, who spoke on the importance of local organizations, and how they fit into the on-going plans for growth at the national level.

Scott Kjar gave a brief introduction to the Libertarian Party of Alabama, and spoke in particular about our recent successes, including our victories over the Department of Public Safety's Finger Scanning Proposal and our victory over the Birmingham D.A. in his arrest of the proprietors of Bohemian Rhapsody for their sale of hemp-based products.

In addition, Sharon Harris of the Advocates for Self-Government spoke on the way that Advocates and other organizations can assist local groups. Also, Christopher Nunneley offered his plan for reducing voter fraud in Alabama.

The first meeting was primarily an informational one. A future meeting is expected to provide for the adoption of Bylaws and Election of Officers.

Still More Meetings To Report

Craig Goodrich reports that the Huntsville supper club meetings continue to attract new prospects each month. Local talk radio host Peter Thiele was the featured speaker at the October meeting. He gave a lively talk and was well received by the group as he seemed to be in quite close agreement with our principles. Because of proximity to the holidays the group will not meet on the usual last Wednesday of the month in either November or December, but will instead hold a special meeting on Wednesday, December 17th at the usual time and place (7:00 pm, Mr. Gatti's on University Dr.) on the topic of global warming.

Attendance has been limited so far, but Florence District Rep Mark Andrews is determined to build an active supper club in his area. Following the last meeting on October 30th, Mark and local member Larry Shepard headed off for the UNA campus to distribute literature.

Margi Crook reports continued good attendance and enthusiasm at the supper club meetings in the Anniston/Gadsden area. At the October meeting, Mark Bierley of Carrollton, Georgia, who is running for Commissioner of Agriculture in Georgia, was well-received as the featured speaker.

Attend Your Next Local Meeting!

The importance of all these local activities cannot be stressed too much. Simply attending a meeting can be critically important in ways you may not have considered. For example if someone in your area is thinking of running as a Libertarian candidate for office, that person's decision to run may depend on their perception of how much local support they can expect. Your presence at a meeting, even if you do not participate beyond just being there, could make the difference.

Convention Committee Begins Planning 1998 State Convention

The LP Convention Committee has been busy putting together plans for the 1998 LP State Convention. The Convention is tentatively scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, April 11-12, in Birmingham. Among the items on the agenda will be election of all State Party Officers, nomination of candidates for partisan office, updates from all district representatives, and key Libertarian speakers.

The Convention Committee includes committee chair Scott Kjar, LP Treasurer Peter Miller, Christopher Nunneley, Mark & Brenda Bodenhausen, Margi Crook, and Charles Russell. Other Libertarians are welcome to attend meetings or give suggestions or ideas to any committee member.

Watch for more Convention information in the next issue of this newsletter.

Sophocleus Contests Election

(Continued from page 1)

submitted some 300 signatures it had gathered during petitioning the previous week.

Sophocleus and Kjar also engaged in discussions with several members of the Executive Branch in an attempt to resolve the problem with the dates. At this time, it appears as though the various bureaucrats involved have accepted our claim that the Governor's Proclamation is contrary to Alabama law. However, it is not exactly clear what can be done about it. At this time, we are considering three possibilities.

First, the Governor can "amend" his proclamation to correct the date error. However, there is apparently no precedent for such an amendment, and it is not clear whether the Governor has the legal authority to do so. In any event, as Libertarians, we certainly don't favor giving more power to the Governor, even in an instance in which it directly benefits us.

Second, the Governor can "cancel" his proclamation and issue a new one. This is perfectly within the Governor's legal authority, and has substantial precedent. However, to do so would set back the entire election process, an outcome no one wants. After all, since the General Election is on January 20, but the Legislature actually goes back into session on January 13, the District will be without representation for a week. By setting back the process, the Governor would increase the time that the district is unrepresented. Our expectation is that the Democratic Party might then instigate a class-action suit on behalf of the disenfranchised people of the district, surely a situation which the Governor wishes to avoid.

The third possibility is that the Governor's Office simply does nothing, and lets us file suit. This situation has both potential gains and losses for the LP. On the one hand, since we are simply arguing in favor of enforcing the statutory law of Alabama, and the law is quite clear, we are certain that we would prevail, and thus gain an important precedent which can be used in future cases. On the other hand, going to court is costly and time-consuming, and it is possible that any decision will not be handed down until after the election is over, thus denying us justice in this case entirely.

The campaign is currently considering its options, and watching closely to see whether the Executive Branch will take action, or whether it will allow this egregious violation of our rights to go uncorrected.

Since there will not be another newsletter before this election, anyone seeking more information or progress reports should contact Campaign Manager Scott Kjar at 334-502-8650 (home); 334-502-9906 (fax), or 70402.3124@compuserve.com for more information. Volunteers and donations are welcome, too! Send your check to Committee to Elect John Sophocleus, PO Box 1863, Auburn AL 36830.

Executive Committee Meeting Results

The Executive Committee has met twice since the last newsletter, on September 28th and November 9th. Both meetings were held at the Kinko's in Hoover.

Those present at the September 28th meeting were committee members Steve Dow, Charles Russell, John Garrett, Van Blankenship, Peter Miller, Mark Bodenhausen and John Hix, and party member Mike Beasley.

At the meeting Steve Dow reported on the purchase of newsletter ads by the Future of Freedom Foundation, the approval of nonprofit status for postal rates, and the purchase of party literature. The committee discussed various options for a party telephone answering service, and agreed to pursue an "800" toll-free number forwarded to a voice-mailbox.

John Hix presented a resolution to the Executive Committee. After passing amendments making some editorial changes to the text of the resolution, the committee passed the resolution as follows:

"Be it resolved that the Libertarian Party of Alabama shall function as a political entity separate and distinct from all other political parties and movements.

Be it further resolved that a primary purpose of the Libertarian Party of Alabama, hereinafter referred to as LPA, is to nominate candidates for government elected office and submit their names to be placed on election ballots.

Be it further resolved that any attempt to prevent the LPA from performing its primary purposes should be opposed and condemned.

Be it further resolved that any attempt by any LPA officer to prevent the nomination of LPA candidates in deference to candidates of other political parties shall be grounds for such officers to be removed from office, in accordance with the LPA bylaws."

In other business, the committee voted to allow Steve to spend the full amount (\$300) budgeted for advertising, at his discretion until further action from the committee. The committee also voted to approve expenditure of an additional \$20 per month to purchase "true list server" software services, for the LPA email list. This service should prevent unwelcome messages (i.e. "spam") on the LPA email list.

Those present at the November 9th meeting were committee members Steve Dow, Charles Russell, Van Blankenship, Peter Miller, Mark Bodenhausen, Margi Crook, Craig Goodrich, Jerry Hart, John Hix, and Scott Kjar, and party members Bill Crook and Chris Nunneley.

Van Blankenship reported that the state party will soon have a toll-free telephone number for new member prospects and information inquiries, etc. Calls to this number will be

forwarded to a voice mailbox message service. Scott Kjar reported that the Convention Committee has selected April 11 & 12 (backup dates April 18 & 19) for the next convention. The committee felt that a 2 day convention is necessary to allow time for party business as well as featured speakers. Scott reported that the committee will confirm speakers, set the location and produce a complete convention proposal for the next Executive Committee meeting.

Scott Kjar nominated John Sophocleus, Economics Professor at Auburn University, as LPA Candidate for the Special Election in Alabama House District 82, which covers Macon, Bullock and part of Lee counties. As the qualification deadlines are rapidly approaching, Scott reported that he and John plan a trip to the Secretary of State's office to ascertain exactly what needs to be done in order to ensure that our candidate is included in the election. The committee agreed unanimously to accept John Sophocleus as District 82 candidate. The committee also agreed to authorize and pay \$500 to the "Committee to Elect John Sophocleus" for campaign expenses.

Chris Nunneley presented a proposal he called the Libertarian Motor Voter Law. After much discussion concerning the relative merits of the proposal, the committee voted against its adoption.

Steve Dow reported that the National LP has recently confirmed that they are, in fact, honoring the offer for free copies of "Libertarianism In One Lesson." This removed the need to consider an agenda item dealing with this issue.

John Hix presented printed copies of a proposed platform for consideration and recommendation by the Executive Committee. After much discussion, the committee decided to table this item indefinitely.

Steve Dow reported that he had submitted a ballot access petition form the Secretary of State's office, in order to determine if this form will be acceptable. (Since the meeting we received an affirmative response on this inquiry, and the petition form has been inserted into this newsletter.) Steve emphasized the need to identify candidates for 1998, to decide on petitioning for each seat individually or state-wide, and to formulate a plan for 1998 campaign, as soon as possible.

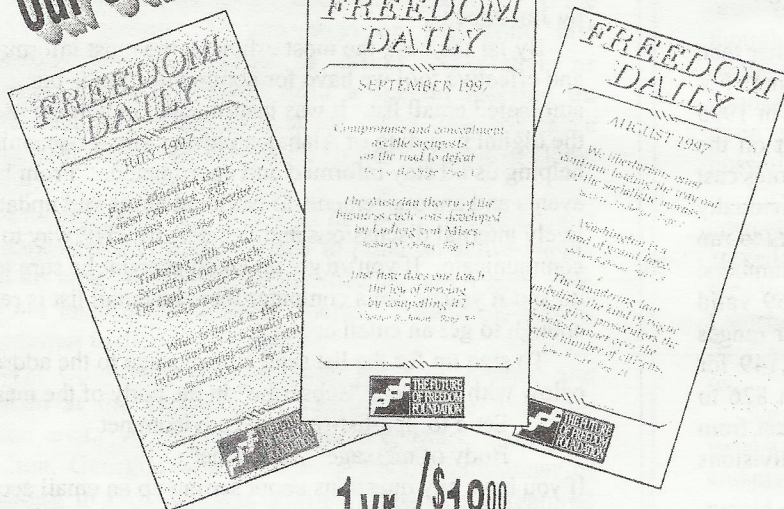
The next Executive Committee meeting will be Sunday, January 4, 1998, 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. at the same location (Kinko's on Galleria). Any member who wishes to add an item to the agenda for the next meeting should contact Steve Dow or Van Blankenship in advance of the meeting.

New Party Phone Line

The Libertarian Party of Alabama has a new statewide toll-free telephone voice mailbox. It should be up and running by the time you receive this newsletter. The number is 1-888-838-1775 and may be used to leave messages with any information, inquiries, etc. that you have for the state party.

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Party Begins to Focus on Campaign '98

It is definitely time to begin working on making sure the LPA has an impact in the November, 1998 elections. In addition to the major offices of governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, and several other statewide offices, and the seven seats in the U.S. Congress, the entire slate of seats in the state legislature (35 senate, 105 house) will be up for grabs in the 1998 elections.

The state has placed a heavy burden on anyone other than a Democrat or Republican running for office in Alabama. For those not aware of the details, the state passed a law in 1995 tripling the number of signatures required to be put on the ballot; the number is now 3% of the total number of votes cast in the last election for governor. The rule applies individually to each political subdivision for which the party seeks to run a candidate, and the state has provided a list of those numbers. Ballot status for the statewide races requires 36,059 valid signatures. For a U.S. Congressional seat the number ranges from a low of 4,587 for District 3 to a high of 6,149 for District 6. For the state senate seat they range from 826 to 1700 (most are closer to 1000) and for a state house seat from 230 to 864. Each signature counts toward all the subdivisions containing the precinct where the voter is registered.

A petition form has been included with this newsletter. We need every person receiving this newsletter to make

copies of the petition, to present it to your friends, family, and coworkers, to obtain several pages of signatures, and to mail the forms to the state party address at the top of page 7 or give them to your District Rep at your next meeting. Your participation will determine whether you have the opportunity to vote Libertarian in 1998.

Email List Effective Tool for Party

by Jim Albea

By far the best, the most efficient, the most informative and effective tool we have for communication is our automated email list. It was instrumental in helping us defeat the digital branding of Alabama citizens (finger-scanning) by helping us all stay informed and coordinated. From local events and announcements to National alerts and updates, to lively internal discussions and debates; its THE way to communicate. If you've got an email account be sure to sign up and if you've got a computer then the email list is reason enough to get an email account.

To sign up for the list send a message to the address below with the word "subscribe" in the body of the message:

Send to: lpa-list-request@advicom.net

Body of message: "subscribe"

If you have any questions about setting up an email account or signing up for the list contact Jim Albea by email: jwalbea@ingr.com or by phone: 205-461-7758.

Join the Libertarian Party Today!

The Libertarian Party of Alabama bases its membership and subscriber lists on those of the National LP. For minimum annual dues of \$25 an individual can become a member of both the National and State Party organizations and receive a subscription to both the LP NEWS and ALABAMA LIBERTY. Make your check payable to the "Libertarian Party" and send it with this form to the address below. The LPA receives a portion of dues and contributions sent by Alabamians to the National LP.

I want to join the Libertarian Party as a national member (or renew). Enclosed is my check or money order for \$ _____

I want to contribute to the Libertarian Party.

I want to subscribe to the LP News and Alabama Liberty only. (Subscription fee: \$25 for both)

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Signature _____
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Name _____ Address _____

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Washington, DC 20037
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Contributions are not tax-deductible. Federal law requires political committees to report the name, mailing address, occupation, and name of employer for each individual whose contributions aggregate in excess of \$200 in a calendar year.

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Please fill in the information below (with your name as it appears on your credit card) and send this form to the state party address at the top of this page. (If you are already a credit card pledger, you can use this form to change the amount or card information as well.)

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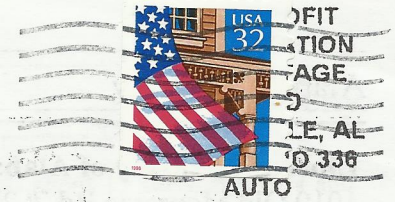


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Page 8

Alabama Liberty

Upcoming Events

Executive Committee Meeting, Sunday, Jan 4th, 2:00 - 5:00 pm, meeting room of Kinko's Copies, 3260 Galleria Circle in Hoover.

Birmingham Area Supper Club, Monday, December 1st, 7:00 pm at the Shoney's on 18th St S in Birmingham. Featured speaker for the meeting is newly elected Birmingham City Councilman Bill Johnson. Call Mark Bodenhausen (205) 936-4010 for more info.

Montgomery area libertarians now meet at 6:30 pm on the second Tuesday of the month at the Morrison's in Montgomery Mall. The first meeting on this new schedule will be December 9th. Call John Hix (334) 264-6818 or Charles Russell (334) 279-6750 for more information.

Florence area Libertarians hold their meetings at the Shoney's Restaurant, 2227 Woodward Ave. in Muscle Shoals. Call Mark Andrews (205) 766-2742 to get scheduling info for the next meeting.

Gadsden area libertarians meet at 7pm on the second Tuesday of the month at the Morrison's in the Quintard Mall in Oxford. Call Margi Crook (205) 568-5814 for more information.

Huntsville area libertarians normally meet on the last Wednesday of the month but the November and December meetings have been replaced by a single meeting on Wednesday, December 17th on the topic of global warming. The meeting will be at 7:00 pm at the Mr. Gatti's Pizza, 4315 University Dr. (near UAH). Call Craig Goodrich (205) 732-3053 for more information.

Tuscaloosa area libertarians now hold supper club meetings at the Shoney's on McFarland Blvd in Tuscaloosa. Contact Jerry Hart (205) 349-4111 regarding upcoming meeting dates.