
Historical Preservation Committee Report

Report Date: 12 June 2022 (for EC meeting of 18 June 2022)

Committee Appointed by: Executive Committee

Chair: Joe Dehn

Secretary: Kat McElroy

Other Members: Patrick Nicholson, Reinita Susman

Executive Overview

The mission of the Historical Preservation Committee is to preserve, organize, and make available material relating to the history of the Libertarian Party in California.

Information about HPC projects is recorded and made available to members and the general public via our article (page) on LPedia:

https://lpedia.org/wiki/Libertarian_Party_of_California_Historical_Preservation_Committee

Members

The current members of the HPC were elected by the state Executive Committee at its meeting of 19 March 2022. One additional member, Robert Parks, was elected at that time, but he informed the rest of the members that he did not want to serve. There is, therefore, one vacancy on this committee which could potentially be filled by action of the EC.

Meetings

The HPC has held three meetings, all via Zoom, since our last report:

- ◆ 24 April 2022 (organizational meeting, elected chair and secretary)
- ◆ 15 May 2022
- ◆ 12 June 2022

Minutes of these meetings are posted to our LPedia page (link above) when approved.

We are planning to hold our next meeting on 17 July.



Candidate / Election Results Data

We are working to expand the lists of Libertarian candidates who have run for public office in California that are posted in the article "Libertarian Party of California Historical Election Results". We have for some time had a pretty complete record of candidates who ran in partisan races. Getting that information was relatively easy because the Secretary of State keeps records of all such candidates.

Although campaigns for local non-partisan races are also very much a part of our history and interesting in various ways (including the fact that some such candidates have actually been elected), it's much more difficult to find information about those races. For one thing there is no single "official" source of such information, because the official records are kept by each county rather than at the state level, and for many counties accessing such records for the earlier years is likely to require a visit to the physical office of that county's Registrar of Voters. (Many counties now post election reports online, but only a few counties so far have gone back and posted reports for as far back as we need.)

But the more basic problem is that since such candidates run without a party label there is no way to even start looking in such records for any information about races involving "Libertarians" without somehow already knowing who they were – which as a practical matter means we must begin the process with some kind of records kept by somebody somehow associated with the LP.

Interest in local elections has varied over the course of the LP's history, and while there are some years for which the state party issued what appear to be complete lists of who ran, there are not such lists for most years and in some cases they may not actually be complete. For the earliest years, through the mid-1980s, Richard Winger included information about such candidates in his files. He also included some notes about local candidates through the mid-1990s but these notes are not as complete as the earlier ones. The most plausible approach we have identified for filling in the gaps since then is a review of newsletters – national, state, and local. (*See "Gathering Information from Newsletter Archives" below.*)

Once we have the basic information about each candidate – name, office, and election date – it should then be possible to add more details about the election itself from the official county records.

Biographical Research Projects

Most of the historical information about the LP relates directly or indirectly to activists – people who served as candidates, officers, committee members, and in many other roles in our organization and projects – and so biographical articles are a major category within LPedia. The amount of information in such articles about even some of our most important and well-known activists, however, varies across a wide range, from extensive down to almost nothing. Some attempt has been made in the past to evaluate the quality and completeness of these articles, to be in a better position to prioritize further work, but mostly the result has been to tell us what we already knew – that there is a lot of work to be done!

The HPC is currently discussing approaches to gathering more information about both past and current activists. We have developed a detailed outline of the kinds of information that we might potentially be interested in having. To some extent what we actually gather about any given person will depend both on his/her role in the party and how much he/she wants to share. But we expect that having a general outline will be useful both in the information gathering processes and in organizing presentation of the information.

With respect to gathering such information, we are currently working on two specific approaches: surveys and interviews. A number of different kinds of surveys would likely be useful, for different purposes, such as: (1) getting very basic information from all people we already know who fall into a particular category (e.g., past candidates, current county officers), (2) eliciting more in-depth responses from individuals who have agreed to participate in this way. Kat is taking the lead on this approach.

Interviews may be done in-person, by phone (audio only), or by video link (e.g., Zoom). Patrick and Reinita have taken a particular interest in this, and have already done one interview (via Zoom). We have identified some general categories of people to whom we probably want to give priority for future interviews, but there may also be some people who would be especially valuable to interview independent of whether they fall into one of those categories – anyone who has suggestions about this should feel free to let us know.

With respect to presentation, all of the information gathered (with the exception of limited sorts of "contact information" that would be used only internally as part of the process) would become part of the LPedia articles about the people in question (or sub-articles about specific campaigns or other projects with which the person was involved). Certain kinds of information would also be used to fill in tables (e.g., of officers or candidates). For some people there might be interest in other forms of presentation, such as a documentary video.

Gathering Information from Newsletter Archives

Newsletters have proven to be an invaluable source of information about the LP's history, as they often contain information about people and activities not documented elsewhere, at least not in a form to which we have ready access. Significant work has been done over the past several years to gather, scan, and post copies of past state newsletters, so at this point we have available most issues since the mid-1980s. We have had much less success in doing the same with local/county/region newsletters, and this remains an ongoing effort.

In order to make more effective use of newsletters as a source of information, we plan to start a systematic review of the issues that are currently available to us. Kat will be starting with the state newsletters. Patrick will be starting with LP News (of which essentially all issues are now available online), looking for mentions of California people and activities. Joe will be starting with the newsletters from



Santa Clara County, which is the county for which we have the most complete set. As more local newsletters become available, we will do the same with those. Reinita will be working specifically on trying to locate people who might have kept newsletters from Los Angeles County, published at the county level or by the various regions within it.

We have created a "checklist" of the types of information (topics/facts) for which we will be looking as we do this. The current version of this list can be found at:

https://lpedia.org/wiki/Libertarian_Party_of_California_Historical_Preservation_Committee#Newsletters_as_an_Information_Source

National Convention Activities

All of the current members of this committee attended and served as delegates at the 2022 LP National Convention held over the Memorial Day weekend in Sparks, Nevada. As a way to promote interest in our work, we wore buttons with the message "ASK ME ABOUT LPEDIA."

Several items that had been on display at our table at the state convention were brought to this convention for display at the national HPC table.



Not relating to California specifically but to historical preservation more generally, Joe updated the LPedia article on the convention continually during the event, made and posted a recording of the final minutes of the business session¹ (after the a/v contractor shut their recording down), made and posted a recording of the post-convention LNC meeting², and took many photos of the business sessions³.

1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TjDmXoVdqSU>

2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvpLRmSDfWI>

3 <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10102909723068448&type=3>