

ALABAMA LIBERTY

Official Newsletter of the Alabama Libertarian Party



May, 1989

Convention Report

Alabama Libertarians met in convention April 1 and re-elected John Sebastian to chair the state party into 1990. Sebastian was unopposed at the Huntsville gathering, as were virtually all the individuals who stood for election to party posts.

Some positions, such as the 1st District chairmanship, were filled for the first time in years, giving the party a nearly full complement of active officers. A recruitment effort will be made to fill remaining vacancies.

Officers for 1989-90 are: *Chair: John Sebastian* (re-elected; unopposed) *Vice-Chair: Lonnie Burford* (re-elected; unopposed) *Secretary: Steve Smith* (re-elected; unopposed) *Treasurer: Alan Barksdale* (re-elected; unopposed) *Finance Chair: Mark Thornton* (re-elected; unopposed) *Membership Chair* (unfilled; there was one nomination for this spot but the nominee declined) *District 1 Chair: Roy Keeley* (unopposed) *District 2 Chair: John Hix* (unopposed) *District 3 Chair:* (unfilled) *District 4 Chair: Susan Sebastian* (Mike Carson was also nominated; both nominees being absent, it was agreed that Carson would be offered the post if Sebastian declined) *District 5 Chair: Brooke King* (unopposed) *District 6 Chair: Bob Chapuis* (unopposed) *District 7 Chair:* (unfilled; there was one nomination for this spot but the nominee declined)

Convention goers discussed a range of issues, including whether or not to change the party emblem from the Statue of Liberty to something else. Suggestions included the "Don't Tread on Me" rattlesnake emblem made famous in the American Revolution, a porcupine and a duck. The matter was shelved for lack of a specific motion from the floor.

After much discussion over wording, the convention adopted a resolution opposing attempts to restrict gun ownership in any way. Delegates also passed a resolution expressing sympathy with the millions of people who

Please turn to Page 2

May 24th

Marshall Fritz to Speak in Birmingham

Dynamic freedom salesman Marshall Fritz will speak in Birmingham on Wednesday, May 24. Topic: "Increasing Libertarian Numbers in Alabama."

Fritz is founder and president of Advocates for Self-Government, a libertarian educational organization. Birmingham will be one stop in a month-long speaking tour that began in New England and will finish in Orlando, Fla.

Fritz's presentation is being hosted by the Alabama LP and will be at James Blake's home, 2845 Stratford Rd., beginning at 6:15 p.m. Stratford Road is on the crest of Red Mountain on Birmingham's southside, just north of the Mountain Brook city limits. Food will be provided, so it is important to RSVP by calling Steve Smith at 853-9307 (Birmingham) as soon as possible. Steve can also help with directions to the Blake house.

Fritz's appearance in Birmingham has been organized by James Blake and

Charles Haines. The party's new strategic plan calls for using Advocates' materials and training for LP outreach in Alabama.

The purpose of the Advocates is "to present the freedom philosophy honestly and persuasively to opinion leaders so that they can encounter, evaluate, and when ready, embrace the ideals of self-government."

Fritz is the former executive director of the California Libertarian Party. He founded the Advocates in 1985 to teach libertarians how to better communicate their ideas to others. The principal Advocates project is Seminar 1, a study group which turns non-libertarians into libertarians in just five weeks. The Advocates also developed Operation Political Homeless, a booth-type project for getting names of libertarian prospects.

Supper Club News

The Libertarian spirit award goes this month to Bob Chapuis and Ross Lowe for their initiative in reviving supper club activity in their areas.

Actually, Ross has taken it upon himself to make a two-hour round-trip drive to Tuscaloosa once a month, from his home near Birmingham, to start a supper club in that college town. There once was a strong group of activists in Tuscaloosa and it will be great when regular events are happening there again.

Bob Chapuis picked up the Birmingham supper club ball, which was dropped when the old meeting place closed. He organized an April meeting at Spats Restaurant in Homewood and plans to continue meetings on the fourth Wednesday evening of each month. The May meeting will be skipped due to Marshall Fritz's visit to Birmingham on club night. (If you're planning on attending the next Birmingham supper club meeting in June, check with Bob first to make sure of the location and other details.)

Huntsville supper clubbers continue to hold their well-attended meetings on the final Wednesday of every month. And in Montgomery, John Hix is hosting

a monthly get-together, sometimes at his home and sometimes at his office. Give him a call if you're interested.

Know of other meetings that should be included in our calendar (see p. 3)? Drop us a note with the details.

Esther Muncaster

We take somewhat belated notice of the death (in January) of Esther Muncaster, 62, of Montgomery.

Though perhaps not libertarians, Mrs. Muncaster and her husband Robert were at least fellow travelers who often found themselves on our side of the fence. They occasionally attended Alabama LP conventions.

The Muncasters fought many personal battles for what they called "Christian constitutional government." Robert served time in prison for income tax evasion and for advising his son not to register for the Vietnam-era draft.

Mrs. Muncaster sued the State of Alabama in 1974 for refusing to pay her tax refund in gold and silver coins.

Convention speaker themes: "Stand Up" and "Be Armed"

"Power concedes nothing without a demand."

With those words Paul Jacob urged Alabama Libertarians to be bold in standing up for freedom. He said whether it's simply putting a "Vote Libertarian" bumper sticker on your car, or making the decision to go to jail for your beliefs, the important thing is to take a stand.

Jacob, a draft resister and the former national director of the Libertarian Party, was the main speaker at Alabama's state convention.

He recounted the story of his fight against draft registration, which resulted in his spending several months in federal prison. Following the reinstatement of registration under Jimmy Carter, Jacob was one of a handful of young men singled out for prosecution. Although the government denied it, the facts of the case make it obvious that he was targeted only because he spoke out publicly.

Jacob said draft registration is running very low at present and the government has backed off drawing attention to the issue because it is afraid to make the situation even worse.

He also talked about his current work as director of the LP's nationwide ballot access effort. The goal, he said, is to gain access in some of the tough states (such as North Carolina) as early as possible, so the 1992 presidential campaign will not have to spend great amounts of energy and money just getting on the ballot. Stressing his "take a stand" theme, Jacob closed his talk with a quote from Goethe: "Boldness has magic in it."

ALP Chair John Sebastian also addressed the convention. His topic was guns and specifically assault rifles.

"Assault rifles are not suitable for home defense, or hunting or target shooting," he said. "They are intended for use against mobs — organized or disorganized." He said they should properly be viewed as the ultimate check against government, and "the ultimate means for restoring our freedoms."

Sebastian declared that "A population that does not keep and bear arms either has need of them or soon will." He lamented what he sees as "a certain squeamishness on this subject among some libertarians."

Warning that "we've entered the era of 'compelling state interest,'" he said 1989 so far has been disastrous for liberty. He pointed out that the Supreme Court recently has ruled that helicopters hovering over one's roof does not constitute an invasion of privacy, and that defendants in misdemeanor cases have no right to a trial by jury. He said the court's OK of random drug testing opens the door for testing on a more massive scale.

The sometimes-emotional speech drew cheers and applause. Steve Smith offered to publish it for use as a position paper on the gun issue.

Help! #1

Jimmy Blake is putting in many hours creating an ultrasophisticated database of our members. If you still have one of the raw name lists that were farmed out for clean-up purposes, please get them back to Jimmy. Also, give him a call if you'd like to find out more about what he's doing. Evenings, 933-0033.

Convention Report ... continued from Page 1

will lose their jobs if the minimum wage is raised; the resolution further asks "why Democrats and Republicans hate poor people so much."

Lonnie Burford was elected to chair Alabama's delegation to the national LP convention in Philadelphia this summer. Alabama is allocated five slots in all.

At the 1987 Seattle convention, there were more Alabama LP members in attendance than there were delegate slots. Delegation chair Frank Monachelli made the decision to split Alabama's votes so as to give everyone a chance to participate in official business (ten attendees thus having half a vote each).

It was agreed to leave it to Burford to decide whether and how to split Alabama's votes should the situation arise in Philadelphia.

Charlie Haines outlined a strategic plan for the Alabama LP. This plan — which has still to be fully fleshed out — emerged from a series of focus meetings held earlier in the year. The plan has a number of components, but its major thrust is to target small business owners with the party's message. The plan also calls for relying on the materials and training of the Advocates for Self-Government for the party's outreach and educational projects.

Alabama Libertarian Party

P.O. Box 11514
Birmingham AL 35202

Chair

John Sebastian, Grant
728-4255

Vice-Chair

Lonnie Burford, Birmingham
849-5943

Secretary

Steve Smith, Birmingham
853-9307

Treasurer

Alan Barksdale, Huntsville
870-6601

District 1 Chair

Roy Keeley, Mobile
973-2516

District 2 Chair

John Hix, Montgomery
264-6818

District 3 Chair (Vacant)

District 4 Chair

Susan Sebastian, Grant
728-4255

District 5 Chair

Brooke King, Huntsville
895-0824

District 6 Chair

Bob Chapuis, Birmingham
930-0196

District 7 Chair (Vacant)

Finance Chair

Mark Thornton, Auburn
821-1404

Other Contacts:

James Blake, Birmingham: 933-0033
Yana Davis, Birmingham: 595-1682
Charles Haines, B'ham: 323-2404
Ross Lowe, Birmingham: 426-8726
John Palmer, Madison: 461-7634

Let us know if you can be a contact
for your area.

Unit Rule Is the Culprit Time to Question 'Winner Take All' System

By Stephen Larson, Huntsville

Article II, Section 1, subsection 2, second paragraph of the Constitution of the United States of America provides for the election of the President by the electoral college. Paragraph 1 of subsection 2 provides each state the option of apportioning its own delegation as it sees fit. All states have responded by writing some sort of unit rule for choosing its delegation.

One way of viewing the unit rule is that it provides that the delegation shall go as a unit to the presidential candidate who receives the largest vote total in the state. Another way of viewing the unit rule, is that it is an agreement between the Republicans and Democrats whereby

each party agrees that they will sacrifice their share of the electoral college delegation to the opposition party, if the opposition party can come up with a plurality of the presidential votes in the state.

This raises the question of why either party would be willing to sacrifice its share of the electoral college delegation to anyone else. Could it be because elected officials are more important with the unit rule that they would be without it? Surely, elected officials would not seek to divert your vote from your candidate just for their personal gain — would they?

So what can you do? First, keep in mind that unless you are a swing voter

under the unit rule, your vote is not going to affect the outcome anyway. Therefore you may as well vote your convictions and let the politicians know how you feel. Secondly, considering that 85% of your neighbors can also look forward to having their presidential vote tampered with in the future, urge them to take it up with their state representatives.

1. Alabama's peculiarly worded unit rule appears in the Alabama Code of 1975 in article 17-19-5: Within 15 days after the time for making the returns, the governor, in the presence of the secretary of state and attorney general, or either of them in the absence of the other, must estimate the returns, ascertain which electors are elected and notify them by proclamation.

Bill Wingo Attends

Southeastern LP

Leadership Meeting

Bill Wingo represented the Alabama Libertarian Party at a recent Southeastern Leadership meeting in Atlanta, held in conjunction with the Georgia LP's state convention.

Bill met Libertarians from other southern states and exchanged ideas with them. He said most of them expressed an interest in Alabama's strategic plan and asked to be sent further information about it.

Incidentally, Bill has just completed a Master's degree in public health from UAB. Congratulations, Bill! There's a downside to this, unfortunately: Bill probably will be leaving us soon and moving to Cleveland, Ohio. His talents will be sorely missed among Alabama Libertarians.

Bill ran for U.S. Congress from the 6th District last year. One of his accomplishments in that race was production of a nicely bound set of position papers on a number of hot issues. He gave copies not only to the press, but also to his incumbent opponent. (No one is irredeemable, is Bill's thinking.)

ALABAMA LIBERTY is edited by Steve Smith. Send mail to Box 11514, Birmingham AL 35202. (This job is so much fun, please don't anybody try to take it away from me by calling me at 853-9307 today.)

CALENDAR

Wednesday, May 24

Birmingham: "Increasing Libertarian Numbers in Alabama;" Marshall Fritz. Home of Jimmy Blake, 2845 Stratford Rd. 6:15 p.m. RSVP to 853-9307.

Huntsville: Huntsville Supper Club meeting. Bonanza Restaurant, South Parkway. Start: 7 p.m. Call Alan Barksdale (870-6601, Huntsville) or John Sebastian (728-4355, Grant) for information.

Tuscaloosa: Tuscaloosa Supper Club meeting. "The Challenge to Roe v. Wade." Martha Morgan of the University of Alabama School of Law is guest speaker. Bonanza Steak House, 3728 McFarland Blvd.. Evening. Call Ross Lowe (426-8726, Birmingham) for further information.

Sunday, June 4

Montgomery: Libertarian meeting. Home or office of John Hix. 1 p.m. Call John (264-6818, Montgomery) for details.

Wednesday, June 28

Birmingham: Birmingham Supper Club meeting. Spats Restaurant, Green Springs Hwy. near Oxmoor Road. 7 p.m. Call Bob Chapuis (930-0196, Birmingham) for information.

Huntsville: Huntsville Supper Club meeting. See place & time details above.

Tuscaloosa: Tuscaloosa Supper Club meeting. See place & time details above.

Thursday, August 31 — Sunday, September 3

Philadelphia, PA: Libertarian Party national convention. Speakers, debates, setting of party agenda, more. Alabama still needs to fill its delegation! (Call Lonnie Burford if you're interested in serving.) See latest issue of the LP News, or write: Proclaim Liberty, PO Box 338, Warminster, PA 18974.

Tax Protests Held in Birmingham, Huntsville

Alabama Libertarians took to the streets again this year to protest our most vicious tax: the income tax.

Libertarians from the Huntsville area descended on one post office they had been told would be open all evening on the 17th — this year's tax filing deadline — only to learn that wasn't so. Nonetheless, they managed to hand out flyers and get interviewed on live TV before the P.O. closed.

A reduced number of protesters then headed to Huntsville's general mail facility. There, ALP Chair John Sebastian found himself having to explain the Constitution to somebody who didn't want the Libertarians on "government

3rd District Ballot Challenge Stops Short

If ever a political race needed a Libertarian in it, Alabama's recent 3rd District election was it.

The ALP had a candidate — Jerome Shockley — and was ready to go with a lawsuit challenging the party's exclusion from the race. But party officers decided not to press suit upon the advice of the attorney who drew up the papers (as well as from national ballot access consultant Richard Winger) that it would be unwise to go into court without having collected a substantial number of petition signatures to show a "good faith" effort.

The eventual contest between the Demopublican candidates was noted for hitting a new depth of trivia and mudslinging.

property." Despite the hassles, Huntsville organizer Brooke King was pleased with the evening's outcome, which included a good story in the morning Huntsville newspaper as well as the TV coverage.

Birmingham's tax protest drew a smaller turnout, but it provoked the same

friendly horn-honking as past events. Organizer Lonnie Burford said he and his helpers passed out a large number of the popular "simplified-1040" flyers.

The Libertarians had company this year. Another group near the downtown post office was urging that taxes be spent on "housing, not bombs." Why not cut out the (thuggish and incompetent) middleman, Uncle Sam, and let people *keep* their taxes to spend on what *they* choose?

Help! #2

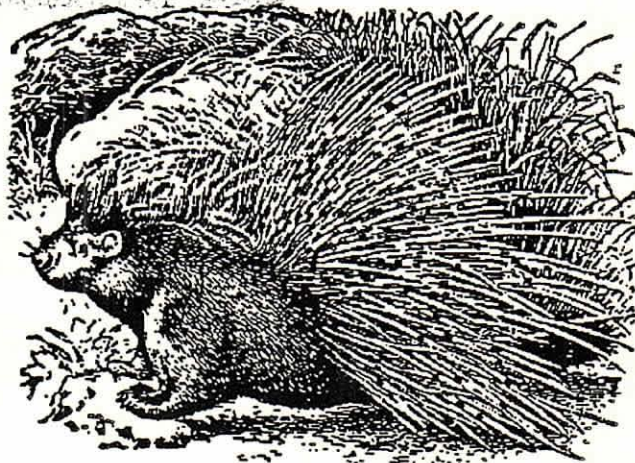
We're starting work now to get on the ballot for 1990. It's a big job. One way you can help is by taking a few petitions and getting your friends and voting-age family members to sign them. Then, just return them to the party P.O. box.

If you'd like to help in a big way, make a few hundred copies of the petition and go out in your community and start collecting names. Remember, we'll need around 13,000 names to be able to run candidates next year.

Help! #3

We have a step-by-step plan for increasing the size of the ALP tremendously *plus* putting regular paid spots on TV. To take the first step, though, we need money — preferably on a regular basis.

Call Jimmy Blake or Charlie Haines to find out more about this plan. And please, join your fellow party members who are already supporting this project. Make your pledge today!



New image for the Alabama LP? See "Convention Report," Page 1

ALABAMA LIBERTY
Alabama Libertarian Party
PO Box 11514
Birmingham AL 35202

ACTION ITEM!

Readers are urged to write letters to the editor opposing the war on 1) drug-using Americans; 2) gun-owning Americans.

Marshall Fritz coming to Birmingham ... Ballot and pledge drives get under way