
Historical Preservation Committee Report

Report Date: 25 March 2023 (*for EC meeting of 1 April 2023*)

Committee Appointed by: Executive Committee

Chair: Joe Dehn

Secretary: Kat McElroy

Other Members: Graham Brown, 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

Note: These reports usually focus on what has been done since our previous report (which in this case was in December). However, because it is being presented after the convention, to an Executive Committee with several new members, this report also includes some recap of certain activities over the past year to provide context.

Meetings

The HPC has been meeting approximately monthly, via Zoom, since April. We have held five meetings since our last report:

- ◆ 18 December 2022
- ◆ 22 January 2023
- ◆ 12 February 2023
- ◆ 26 February 2023
- ◆ 19 March 2023

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

Biographical Research Projects

People are as central to the history of the LP as to its current activities, so it should be no surprise that a very large fraction of the material on LPedia is organized that way, in the form of articles about specific individuals. Unfortunately, there are many past activists about whom LPedia still contains very little information, and this is true even for some people who have played a very significant role in our history, such as state chairs and candidates for statewide office.

While much information can be, and is, found and organized on an ongoing basis from various existing sources, the HPC started two projects this past year intended to gather such information in more direct ways – through interviews and through online surveys.

Interviews

The idea of this project is to have a conversation with a specific individual, asking questions about his/her past activities connected with the LP. The initial product in each case is an edited transcript, documenting the person's answers, which itself is made available through LPedia. But those answers can then be used as the basis for upgrading other articles – the biographical article about that person, articles about campaigns, projects, or other activities in which he/she was involved, and any other article for which the interviewee might have provided additional information.

We started this process last summer, and have so far done interviews with four people. One person was interviewed since our last report, Eric Garris (joined LP in 1973, activist in San Francisco in the 1980s, served as Northern Vice Chair, ran for office several times, co-founder of Antiwar.com).

A list of who we have interviewed so far can be found under the heading "Interviews" in the article about our committee, along with both a list of general priority categories of people who would be useful to interview and a separate list of individual prospects. If anybody has suggestions for specific people who would be good sources of historical information through an interview process, especially if they don't fall into one of the priority categories that we have already identified, please let us know – along with whatever information you may have about how to reach the person (e-mail and/or phone).

Surveys

The goal of the survey project is to gather a more limited amount of information from a much larger set of people. The approach we have been exploring is to send, by e-mail, a questionnaire with a limited number of questions, customized for a particular group of people, e.g., county chairs or past candidates. Depending how (starting with "if") each individual responds, we can then follow up with more questions, or even perhaps if the responses are interesting enough a full interview. We are intentionally starting small, to test out the idea and see how people react before trying to apply the idea to larger groups. However, reaching larger groups will depend on having access to e-mail addresses for such people, which we don't necessarily currently have, and for which in some cases we could use some help getting.

Official Documents

A very important aspect of historical preservation is locating and uploading copies of past "official" documents. Some of these can be found in their original hardcopy form in collections of papers that various past activists have kept. Some that were previously scanned, or which were originally published online, can be found in archived copies of past web sites. Documents for some time periods are surprisingly difficult to find, so we are constantly looking to fill various gaps. Of course current documents soon become "historical" documents, so this activity includes making sure that those documents get incorporated into LPedia as they are produced. Following are some notes on progress we have made over the past year and since our last report specifically.

EC Minutes

Since our last report, minutes of about 40 meetings from the 1970s through the early 1990s were uploaded. There is still more work to be done on this, and there are still some gaps where we can't be sure exactly how many meetings took place, but at this point the collection of these minutes available on LPedia probably represents about 70% of the EC meetings that have been held since the beginning.

Minutes
Libertarian Party of California
Executive Committee Meeting
8/10/86

1. Chair's Report:
 - A. Chair wants to increase the visibility of the 800 phone number. He will have an answering service set-up in San Francisco.
 - B. Report on the Fuhrig Campaign: Mr. Fuhrig wants to do an intro to Lib. as a part of his campaign. They are also having difficulty raising funds.
 - C. Chair congratulated Ted Brown on his placement of a ballot argument.
2. Secretary's Report:
 - A. Membership is up to 1,285, which is a gain of 72 since the last meeting.
3. Treasurer's Report:
 - A. Current bank balance stands at \$9,388 with outstanding bills of \$4,756.
 - B. The 540 donations will be \$3,408.
4. Northern Vice Chair's Report:
 - A. Report on county Supervisor Erik Henrikson: NVC gave him a "C+" for his overall work. Told of the furor over Supervisors voting themselves a pay raise.
 - B. This led to his recommending that any and all future candidates be thoroughly investigated as, after all, some will win their election.
5. Fundraising/Membership Committee:
 - A. No fundraising action took place in the last quarter.
 - B. Bill Evers and Mark Hinkle agreed to write a fundraising letter to go out during the next period.
 - C. Jack Dean volunteered to be the new Chair of the F/M committee.

Resolution: Change the wording of a membership from "basic" to "sustaining". PASSED

Resolution: LPC should offer a life membership. FAILED
6. Contract Services Management Committee:
 - A. David Bergland offered to supervise the writing of the contracts for the three contract service employees. These are Sally Foster for the newsletter, Pat Wright for the pledge program and Linda Torno for administrative assistance.
7. Long Active:

Bylaws

During the past year we have expanded LPedia's collection of past bylaws to include most of the versions from the period 2000 through 2004. A list of all past versions uploaded so far can be found at:

https://lpedia.org/wiki/Index_of_Libertarian_Party_of_California_Bylaws

Operating Procedures Manual

During the past year we significantly expanded this collection, with six past versions of the OPM itself now posted, along with two versions of its predecessor, the collected resolutions:

https://lpedia.org/wiki/Libertarian_Party_of_California_Operating_Procedures_Manual

Newsletters

We began the year with a pretty good collection of California state newsletters – which have been published under quite a few different names over the past five decades.

We did make a bit of progress over the past year in uploading local newsletters, including some issues of Santa Clara Libertarian from the early 1980s (scanned from hardcopy), many issues of Libertarian Lifeline (Alameda and Contra Costa Counties) from the late 1990s (retrieved from an old web site), and many issues of San Mateo Libertarian from the late 1990s through the early 2000s (retrieved from an old web site). Unfortunately, we have still not been able to find a source for any significant number of issues of local newsletters published in the southern part of the state.

The most recent addition to our collection is a single issue of one titled "Time for Liberty" published in Fresno County back in 1985. We have this as a result of a scanning project done by the national HPC, which included a set of miscellaneous publications that somehow had made their way to the national office at some time in the past. But now that we know this newsletter existed, and was apparently published for at least four years, we have a better chance of being able to find somebody who may have kept additional issues.

Most newsletters that still exist are only being published electronically, so a topic to which we gave some attention over the past year is how best to preserve and present those. Ones that were originally published as PDFs can be handled basically the same way as ones that were originally published in hardcopy form, but ones sent by e-mail raise various issues, especially when they make extensive reference to material located elsewhere online (e.g., on a party web site). As best as we have been able to determine, there are only two county organizations still regularly distributing by e-mail something resembling a "newsletter", packaging together material on different topics on a periodic basis.

Election Results

Election results for the Libertarians who were on the ballot in the June and November 2022 elections have all been posted to the Election Results page:

https://lpedia.org/wiki/Libertarian_Party_of_California_Historical_Election_Results

Very basic, placeholder LPedia articles were also created for each candidate who ran for office in 2022 (and who didn't already have one), but in most cases there is at least a photo. Most of this work was done prior to our last report, but since then updates were made to the page to reflect the final certified results for the November 2022 election, and listings were added for all the candidates who ran for local office in the fall of 2020.



Gathering Information from Documents

Both newsletters and certain kinds of official documents, most notably minutes, can be a very helpful source of information about activities of the party and the people who were involved with them. For many kinds of information, they are often the only record that exists.

For this reason, this past year we started on a set of projects to methodically review past issues of newsletters, making notes on information that they contain about meetings, party officials, candidates, Libertarians in public office, and so on. Each member of the committee started doing this on a particular newsletter series for which we already have a significant number of issues uploaded. This is pretty time-consuming, so we haven't completed work on any of these series yet. Hopefully we will be able to continue this work in the upcoming year. Of course to the degree that we are able to expand our collection of newsletters, the work of this type to be done will also expand.

Similarly, going through old minutes can help us fill in gaps in our knowledge about various aspects of our history. Some information we were able to gather in this way since our last report:

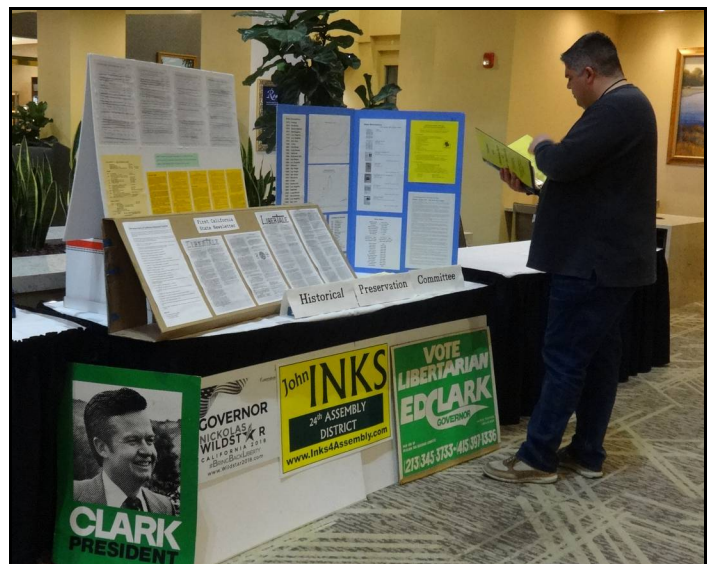
- ◆ the specific years when several state chairs served in the 1970s (this resulted in an update to the list that we have been including in the display at the convention)
- ◆ several counts of state membership from the 1970s and early 1980s, a period for which we did not previously have any such numbers

Convention-Related Activities

Each year starting in 2019, the HPC has put on a display at the state convention. This year's display was similar to last year's, with some updates to the lists and graphs and a few additional campaign signs.

Several of the items created for display at our table were also brought to the national convention in Sparks to be part of the national HPC's exhibit there.

A one-page flyer explaining the work of the HPC and inviting people to help us by becoming LPedia contributors, or by contributing information or material some other way, was distributed to the delegates; a copy of that flyer is attached to this report.



The 2023 state convention itself is of course now part of "history". Extensive notes on what took place were added to the LPedia article about this convention, and updates were made to other pages to reflect the results of the elections.

Special Project – Archiving Party Business Facebook Group

At the post-convention meeting, the EC gave us something new to work on when the decision was made to shut down the "Libertarian Party of California (party business)" group on Facebook but to allow us 60 days to save what we might consider valuable from it. It turns out that it is far from straightforward to save everything from such a group – and Facebook has no incentive to make it easy. Since the convention, we have pursued two approaches in parallel.

One is to evaluate software that claims to be able to be able to download everything. We have identified at least one such system that seems promising. If we are able to make this approach work, we should be able to apply it to other party-related Facebook groups as well.

Meanwhile, we have by a variety of means saved some portions of the material:

- ◆ All of the videos associated with the group have been downloaded.
- ◆ The photos in the albums associated with the group have all been downloaded. (These were all photos from the 2018 state convention.)
- ◆ The individual images associated with the group make up a pretty motley collection, ranging from some photos of activists and events that would make good additions to LPedia, to many that are just copies of things that were also posted elsewhere, and many "meme" style images that contain little more than (and in some cases nothing more than) text. Some but not all of these have been downloaded.
- ◆ Facebook does provide a limited capability for users to download all of their own posts from a group, and one member of the committee has done so for his own posts. Other users could do the same, but it wouldn't give us a very representative collection unless a lot of people did it. Also, this feature does not automatically include comments on those posts, nor does it provide copies of comments that the user has made on other people's posts.
- ◆ Facebook also provides, as part of its "engagement" analysis package, a way to download posts and at least some of the comments made by all users of the group, but only going back about a month. We have done this, but of course that represents only a small fraction of the material that was contributed to this group over the years.

We expect to make more progress on this, one way or another, before the group is deleted, but we don't know yet whether we will be able to save everything.

Libertarian Party of California Historical Preservation Committee

Joe Dehn (chair), Graham Brown, Kat McElroy, Patrick Nicholson, Reinita Susman

*Collecting, organizing, and preserving information and materials
relating to the history of the Libertarian Party in California.*

Topics of Interest:

- activists – names, positions, other biographical information
- state Executive Committee – members/terms, meetings/minutes
- other state-level committees
- counties/regions/affiliates
- membership statistics
- campaigns – federal, state, local
- election results
- Libertarians in public office
- conventions
- platforms
- bylaws and rules
- newsletters – state, local
- outreach materials – press releases, flyers/brochures, buttons/signs



About LPedia:

- LPedia is a web site for information about the Libertarian Party and its history.
- It runs using the same software as Wikipedia.
- It is managed by the national LP's Historical Preservation Committee.
- Our committee and other activists across the country are contributing material.
- It already has lots of information about the LP in California – check it out!

How You Can Help:

- Volunteer to collect/organize information about your county:
Who were the leaders of your county/region organization?
What projects did your local organization do?
Who ran for local offices? Who won? What did they do in office?
- If you have newsletters, minutes, photos, videos, etc. – tell us what you have!
- Let past officers and candidates in your area know we are looking for their help.
- Put us in touch with past activists who might be willing to be interviewed.
- Become a contributor to LPedia yourself – help write articles on subjects you know.

Contact Us

Joe Dehn, LPC HPC Chair
jwd3@dehnbase.org
408-774-1570

Explore LPedia

<https://lpedia.org>