

LIBERTY PLEDGE newsletter

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March 2008

Delegates Hold the Power in Denver

By Bob Sullentrop, Secretary of the Libertarian National Committee

The 2004 presidential debate broadcast on C-SPAN, which featured Michael Badnarik, Aaron Russo and Gary Nolan, was a fever-pitched event surging with a level of excitement and energy seldom witnessed at LP Conventions.

In 2008, it will be delegates like you who determine who is included in the Saturday, May 24th presidential debate, which is typically broadcast nationwide on C-SPAN. Presidential candidates who collect 'signature tokens' from 10 percent of the credentialed delegates of the May 24th morning session will be invited by Denver LPCon (the organization that is running the Convention) to the debate.

A presidential 'signature token' is a ballot you will receive as a credentialed delegate in Denver. This replaces the procedure of classic signature petitioning that the 2006 Portland Convention changed. In 2004, there had been 679 delegates registered by Saturday morning. If Denver follows suit, it would take 68 signature tokens to be included in the Saturday evening presidential debate.

'Signature tokens' also determine who gets time for presidential and vice presidential nominating and seconding speeches. Presidential speeches get 16 minutes, and vice presidential speeches get 11 minutes. It currently takes 30 such tokens for entry into these events, which will take place on Sunday at the Convention. There is also a Bylaws proposal in the hopper to change that number from 30 to 82. In your ballot packet, there will be a separate VP 'signature token' ballot, so you don't have to use your presidential 'signature token' ballot to help the VP.

In 2004, candidates completed a survey prior to the Convention that indicated their campaign's strength. Badnarik, Russo and Nolan led all others by a wide margin; however, this year, it's different.

Accordingly, your 'signature token' is a

valuable and important commodity. Make sure you spend it wisely, and are sufficiently informed beforehand. Do the requisite homework. Go to LP.org, and follow the links to the candidates. In some small way, the history of American politics depends upon it.

For complete details of convention business, go to the Delegation Chairs Manual at http://www.lp.org/archives/delegation_chairs_manual_2008.pdf.

Sign up for the 2008 Libertarian Party Presidential Nominating Convention in Denver, being held May 22-26, at <http://www.lpconvention.org/>.

If you are a member of the Libertarian Party, and not currently a delegate to the National Convention, please contact your State Chairman for information on how to become a delegate for your state.

CALLING ALL LP MONTHLY PLEDGERS

**The Libertarian National
Committee is holding a pledge
reception in honor of our monthly
pledgers at the 2008 LP National
Convention. Please come and bring
a guest.**

Friday, May 23, 2008

5:30 – 7:30 PM

(Look in your April Pledge News for more info.)

Sowing the Seeds for Future Volunteers

By Austin Petersen, Volunteer Coordinator for the Libertarian Party

It was the beginning of 2007, and my girlfriend was sitting at her desk on the verge of tears preparing her income tax return. As an actress in New York City, she commonly receives at least ten W-2 forms every year to file her taxes because of the fact that she works for so many different companies. As she sat there, completely frustrated and upset, she wondered aloud to me what exactly she was doing this for. We are middle-income, young adults struggling to make a career for ourselves, and once a year we are robbed of what little we have saved, and setback from the progress we had made. What did we get in return? More surveillance cameras, antiquated subway service, higher prices, less choices and more debt. Needless to say, I didn't have the answers to her questions.

Later that week I was flipping through Youtube when I heard the famous words that changed the course of my life: "They attack us because we've been over there [and] [w]e've been bombing Iraq for ten years," said an unassuming, grey, old man who I did not recognize. This statement was followed up by an ignorant retort from the infamous Mayor of 9/11, which only served to quicken my thought process. Immediately, I set out to learn as much as possible about the Texas libertarian who seemed to have answers to questions I was posing about how my money was being spent and if it was really in my best interests, or, perhaps I should be able to keep my money and maybe it was time to speak up about it? Maybe, I should actually get off my Myspace (add me) blogging soapbox and get out into the street and do something about it.

The question was: What should I do, or what could I do that would actually make a difference? Several videos on the Net pointed me in the direction of Meetup.com and I joined the closest activist group. A member of the Ron Paul NYC Meetup, Nick Spanos, graciously donated a fantastic unused nightclub situated in Chelsea to be used for organizing activities, parties, and a general rallying point for whatever operation we cooked up. You can see our work setting it up, planning engagements, partying, rallying, and volunteering, at Youtube.com/auggyp.

The NYC Meetup was successful for several reasons. They sponsored events that I was actually

interested in, instead of just petitioning and voter registration drives. They were fun, and were easily accessible for people who are new to politics and volunteering. Having a fully stocked bar at HQ didn't hurt things either. Avery Knapp, our lead organizer at the time, was instrumental in recruiting volunteers, planning events and keeping volunteers engaged through events that fit our interests. These people became my friends and I enjoyed working with them very much.

We had so many events to choose from that my particular economic interests for joining the group were met through events that Avery scheduled. At first, I worked the events that were fun and I was interested in, and skipped those that I wasn't. Incidentally, the ones that weren't fun were the ones that required the real work to get done. Eventually, I began to feel guilty that my friends were doing what I myself wouldn't do and I began to participate.

Meetup organizers should be aware that new recruits would most likely be hesitant to participate in petitioning as a first step. Knowing this, and having an active, fun and engaging Meetup group, will help sow the seeds for future volunteers whose trust you have earned. Volunteers who come to events for the fun of it at first will be drawn in by the message and your friendship, and will ultimately be willing to work for you on harder projects like petitioning.

Recently I visited the Marine Corps Museum at Quantico in Virginia. There I listened to the stories of the Marines who bravely stormed the beaches and caves of Iwo Jima. One soldier recounted that after all of the training and propaganda, the real reason that they fought so hard was not for the officers, or politicians, or even "the cause." It was for their brothers who fought next to them because they would be the ones to make sure you got home safe.

Make your volunteers your friends. Plan fun, interesting activities for them that cater to their interests. Earn their trust, and when the time comes for the real fight then they will work their hearts out. They won't do it for the Libertarian Party. They won't do it for "the cause," and they won't do it because of force. They will do it because they can't bear to let their friends down.

Libertarian Dylan McDonnell Vies for Utah House Seat

By Andrew Davis, National Media Coordinator for the Libertarian Party

In a Utah House district that covers part of Salt Lake City, where no Republican has won in more than two decades, 28 year-old Libertarian Dylan McDonnell is putting together his campaign to challenge the Democratic establishment in this district. McDonnell, a seven-year resident of Salt Lake City and a graduate of the University of Utah, explains that the recent change in the political climate, both locally and nationally, inspired him to run for office in an attempt to bridge the gap between what he calls the “us vs. them” philosophy of politics.

“I remember when I was younger, my father and I used to sit around and discuss various issues of politics,” says McDonnell. “He would always challenge me to think outside the box and to try to give back to the community in which I live.” McDonnell believes running for office as a Libertarian accomplishes both.

There are certainly many challenges facing McDonnell as he begins his campaign that go beyond being young and Libertarian in a country that favors the old establishment; however, McDonnell already has many goals should he be elected, which include increasing the efficiency of his local and state governments by opening up government services to competition and cooperation. “I am running this campaign, not only in the hope of being elected to the Utah State Legislature, but to inform those residents of District 24 and greater Utah that there is a viable option other than the Democratic and Republican Parties,” says McDonnell.

“My campaign, while in the beginning stages, has taken off with a boom,” McDonnell says. “We are meeting with many organizations and individuals to help them to better understand the vital role that libertarianism plays within the political system.” In addition to his campaign reaching out to the community to help spread the message of Libertarianism, McDonnell says they are also working on a Web site, taking donations and working with the media to arrange interviews.

McDonnell will face opponents from both parties in the general election, including a Democrat incumbent who he says has the most support from the constituents. Despite the opposition, McDonnell believes there is a lot of hope for Libertarianism in Utah. “Utah is quite a unique place where there is

great potential for Libertarianism to grow,” says McDonnell. “Utah has been a strong advocate of individual rights and many organizations throughout the state have taken on programs that some state agencies may have done in the past.”

Even though this is his first campaign for office, McDonnell has advice for other Libertarians looking to run for office. “The most basic advice I can give for everyone, whether running for office or not, is to know the party platform, study Libertarianism, know the Non-Aggression Principle, know property ownership, and any time you get into a discussion about politics, when appropriate, begin your sentence with ‘as a Libertarian I believe...’,” states McDonnell. “This will teach every person you come in contact with the principles of Libertarianism.” He also suggests recruiting everyone willing to help with your campaign, and collecting a diverse mix of volunteers for brainstorming opportunities that will increase your knowledge of issues the community may have. “I remember something my dad once told me in our long discussions,” says McDonnell. “‘People are not looking for that individual to tell them how to act, rather, they are looking for the person who will inspire them to act independently of coercion.’ That is the person I have always attempted to be.”

If you are interested in more information about McDonnell’s campaign for office, or have any other comments or suggestions for him, you can contact him at Dylan_mcd@hotmail.com.

Welcome to the Liberty Pledge Club!

Randolph Aguero	Micah Millet
Scott Boso	J. Joseph Ory
Richard Chapel	Paul Osborn
Wayne Confer	Stephen Sallee
Joseph Dimatteo Jr.	James Sam
Dan Hagen	Jim Scott
Linda Hallenbeck	Phillip Smith
Mark Hatheway	Robert Stephens
Evan Isaac	Joshua Trapp
Matthew Lenz	William Wolper

Thank you for your generous contributions.

This Month in the Media

By Andrew Davis, National Media Coordinator for the Libertarian Party

The following are issues on which the Libertarian Party responded to in the media. For copies of the actual press releases, please visit www.LP.org or contact media@lp.org.

SCOTUS hears D.C. gun case

March 18 - This month, the Supreme Court of the United States heard the case *District of Columbia v. Heller*, which will essentially determine the future of gun rights in the United States for decades to come. Dick Heller, a private security guard who lives in D.C., is suing the District of Columbia for denying him the right to properly defend himself with the cities complete ban on handguns. Attorneys for Heller claim that the cities ban on handguns and further regulations on long-guns, such as requiring trigger locks, violates the individual right to keep and bear arms; however, D.C. claims that the Second Amendment is a collective right, and that they have the legal right to regulate firearms in the manner that fits the best interests of city.

"We hope that the justices will remember that the individual right to keep and bear arms is essential for the protection of life, liberty and property," says Shane Cory, executive director of the Libertarian Party. "Without the ability for an individual to keep and bear arms, free from undue government regulation such as the District of Columbia's outright ban on handguns, citizens are left vulnerable to the violence of criminals."

The Libertarian Party filed a friend-of-the-court brief in support of Heller. In the amicus brief, the LP argued that the same level of scrutiny should be used for laws regulating firearms as those regulating free speech -- that level being strict scrutiny. The U.S. solicitor general, who represents the Bush administration on this matter, argued that while there is an individual right to bear arms, cities do have the Constitutional right to regulate those firearms, essentially gutting the whole idea of a "right."

A copy of the Libertarian Party's brief can be found at http://www.scotusblog.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2008/02/07-290_amicus_inc.pdf.

Five years of forever war...

March 19 - March 19 marked the five-year anniversary of the beginning of the U.S. adventure in Iraq.

In honor of the nearly 4,000 lives lost since March 2003, the Libertarian Party released the following statement by Shane Cory, executive director of the Libertarian Party:

"It is with a heavy heart that I woke up on March 19, 2008, in a country still at war in Iraq, now five years after it first began. It is also with great disappointment that neither Republicans nor Democrats have provided a plan to end what is shaping up to be a 'forever war.' On this five-year anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, the Libertarian Party renews our call to bring American troops home without undue delay. May the courage and sacrifice of the 3,990 soldiers who have died in Iraq while serving their country never be forgotten."

Last month in Las Vegas during the Libertarian National Committee's quarterly board meeting, the LNC passed a resolution calling for a withdrawal of troops from Iraq "without undue delay."

Government is not the panacea for the economy

March 20 - In response to what has been a terrifying surge of government interference in the U.S. economy in the wake of the housing market bust and worrisome signs from the financial sector, the Libertarian Party issued a warning to those who are increasingly turning to the government for solutions to economic woes. Basing its warning on the LP's platform of "separation of economy and state," the Party called for real economic fixes like deregulation, tax cuts and a reduction in federal spending, while noting increases in regulation may worsen economic problems.

"It is almost as if Congress and the President set out to do something half-baked and cheesy in response to this nation's economic problems," says LP National Chairman William Redpath. "If the government really wanted to fix the economy, they would start by getting rid of the junky hodge-podge of deductions and credits, lowering tax rates to stimulate entrepreneurial activity and risk taking, and addressing the trillions of dollars of unfunded entitlements in Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid."

The Libertarian Party's platform states, "The only proper role of existing governments in the economic realm is to protect property rights, adjudicate disputes, and provide a legal framework in which voluntary trade is protected."