

# The Liberty Quill

A Publication by the Libertarian Party of Santa Clara County

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## Thinking About 2021

### *A message from Joe Dehn, County Chair:*

This year, 2020, has certainly been a strange one. It was an election year, of course - but that part wasn't especially strange, from a Libertarian perspective. The two big parties continue to compete on who can give away goodies at taxpayer expense, while trying to regulate every aspect of our lives, showing us that they are not the answer if what we really want is "a world set free in our lifetime".



But the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically altered all of our lives, and pointed out that our liberties can be at risk in ways that we had not seriously considered before. It also significantly affected the ways we operated as a

party. Like many organizations, we were able to adapt many of our procedures making use of electronic technology. But we were forced to almost totally curtail many of our traditional activities that involved person-to-person contact with voters and prospective members.

So we have a dual challenge in 2021. We must watch for opportunities to rebuild our outreach activities as the possibilities, hopefully, open up again. As parades, fairs, and other community events start to be held again, we need to be there to bring our brand and our ideas to the people. In addition to helping get our message out, those activities are fun! I look forward to seeing many of you at such events some time in 2021.

At the same time we must continue to be vigilant as government continues to use the pandemic as an excuse to increase control of our lives. As long as the virus remains a significant threat - and in spite of the rollout of vaccines some experts are saying the case rate and death rate could still get worse before they get better - politicians and bureaucrats will keep coming up with new ideas for control, in an attempt to reassure us that they are "doing something", even if the measures themselves have little or no real effect.

And we can't assume that measures adopted during this time will automatically go away as the threat from the virus recedes. We must be ready to push for repeals of various measures that have been adopted, before they become seen as "the new normal" and, better yet, advocate for principles that will limit the damage that government can do when the next crisis comes along.

And so I extend my wishes to you all, for a more free and generally happier New Year!

**Joe Dehn**  
*County Chair*  
[chair@scclp.org](mailto:chair@scclp.org)

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## Thinking About Getting More Active in the LP?

Many of you reading this newsletter are already registered to vote as Libertarians. Some of you have taken the step of becoming a dues-paying member or regular financial contributor. Some of you have been involved for many years as a volunteer, perhaps even as a candidate for public office. Whatever your level of involvement, you may be thinking of ways you can get more involved in the coming year.

Our county annual meeting, scheduled for [Saturday, 23 January](#), is a good reason to be thinking about that. This is the meeting when we elect the people who will be running our county organization for the year (see "Annual Elections" below). As with other recent central committee meetings, this meeting will be held online, via Zoom. So attending this year's meeting may be more convenient for many of you than in

previous years. But to be able to vote during this meeting you must be a voting member!

We use the term "central committee member" for voting member status. The term comes from California election law, where statutory provisions regulate in detail the way that the older parties operate. But under our bylaws, being a "central committee member" just requires three qualifications: (1) agreeing to our membership statement saying that you oppose the initiation of force to achieve political or social goals, (2) paying annual dues of \$25 or more, and (3) being registered to vote Libertarian or not affiliated (i.e., *not* being registered with some other party).

It's easy to join. **You can do it online!** Just go to this page on our web site to get started:

[scclp.org/join](https://scclp.org/join)

**If you are already a member** and you would like to work on building our organization, **please consider getting involved in one of our standing committees.**

We will be electing the chairs of these committees during our annual meeting, but you don't need to be elected to work on these aspects of the LP's work. All the members of these committees are volunteers. Do you have experience with media or public relations? Do you have skills or contacts that would be helpful for fundraising? Do you like to write? Are you good at organizing events? One or more of our committees may be the perfect fit for you!

Or perhaps you are more interested in working on **projects and issues in your own city** or other district.

There are lots of things that can be done more effectively at the local level. Perhaps your city or school district is considering a policy that really could use some "libertarian input". We can help put you in touch with other Libertarians in your city or district so you can get better organized to have your voices heard - let us know at [info@scclp.org](mailto:info@scclp.org).

Or perhaps you are thinking you might want to run for one of those offices yourself someday. There won't be elections until 2022, but almost everyone who is successful as a candidate for local office *started by getting involved some other way* -- by attending board meetings, volunteering to serve in an appointed committee position, or starting to speak out on local issues through local media. We can help you get started - write to us at [campaigns@scclp.org](mailto:campaigns@scclp.org) for more information.



# Annual Elections

The Libertarian Party of Santa Clara County is managed by an Executive Committee that includes ten officer positions. In addition to the traditional ones that most organizations have, the chairs of our standing committees are considered "officers". They each have their own particular responsibilities, but at the same time serve as voting members of the Executive Committee.



Following are the positions that will be up for election at our annual meeting:

- Chair
- Vice-Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Activities Chair
- Campaigns Chair
- Fundraising Chair
- Membership Chair
- Newsletter Chair
- Publicity Chair

We also will be electing our

- **Judicial Committee** (three members)

For details about the responsibilities of these offices, see our [Bylaws](#).

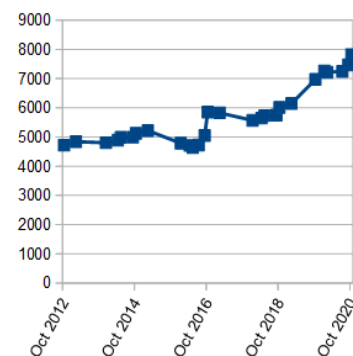
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## Libertarian Registration Up 34%

Voter registration counts are constantly changing. Naturally they go up just before a big election. But comparing similar points in the four-year cycle, the trend for Libertarian registration is definitely upward!

As of the Secretary of State's late October report, the last one before the presidential election, Libertarian voter registration in Santa Clara County was up 34% compared with the corresponding report in late October 2016. (The increase was even greater statewide - 40%.)

And that's not only because there were more voters overall. Statewide Libertarian registration grew faster during the four year period than the Democrats (16%), the Republicans (6%), and every other recognized political party.



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## Should Libertarians Support Approval Voting?

*Although both the national and California LP platforms mention election reform, neither endorses a specific alternate voting system. Some individual Libertarians have, however, been working to support adoption of specific systems. In the last issue we discussed Ranked-Choice Voting. This month we provide some information about Approval Voting. If you are interested in working on this, or just want to find out more, you may want to discuss it with other LP activists at a meeting or through a Facebook group or other online forum.*

Approval voting is a system which allows each voter to vote for more than one candidate for an office, without ranking them. Your vote simply means that the candidate in question would be acceptable to you. Then the candidate who was "approved" by the largest number of voters is elected.

You can still vote for just one candidate, if you prefer. But you have the option of voting for two or more, if you consider them equally attractive overall, even though they may differ in some important ways. Or, if what you are mainly interested in is voting *against* a particular candidate, you can just not cast a vote for that one and vote for all the rest.

Advocates of approval voting say that it allows people to better express their preferences (compared to the traditional one-vote approach) without introducing a new ballot format (as required for ranked choice voting). It greatly reduces the "spoiler" effect, because you can always cast a vote for the candidate you really prefer, whether or not you believe that person can win. And even if those candidates don't win, the results will give them a better measure of their true support, because their supporters won't have been forced to pick "the lesser of two evils" among the top contenders.

Critics say that there are still a number of ways to "game" the system, and that unless voters are careful about making their choices the same "popular" choices will just end up winning as with the current system.

Approval voting has been adopted for municipal elections in St. Louis, Missouri and Fargo, North Dakota. It has also been used during the Libertarian Party national convention for election of members of the National Committee and Judicial Committee.

*For more information or to get in touch with others who support adoption of this voting method, visit [electionscience.org](http://electionscience.org)*

*Opinions from around the web - not necessarily official positions of the LP of Santa Clara County unless so noted.*

[2020 - An Awful Year With a Legacy We Won't Soon Escape \(reason.com\)](#)

[One Giant Step Trump Can Take to Make America Great Again \(targetliberty.com\)](#)

[Who Will Pay for California's Unemployment Fraud? \(sanjoseinside.com\)](#)

[The First Amendment Fight Against the WeChat Ban \(aclu.org\)](#)

[In Memoriam: Walter E. Williams \(aier.org\)](#)

[Biden's Preposterous Plans for Education Policy \(independent.org\)](#)

[How Socialists Tried to Breed Out the Desire for Freedom \(fee.org\)](#)

[The Human Freedom Index 2020 \(cato.org\)](#)

[New Laws Going Into Effect in 2021 \(kbsw.com\)](#)

[Policy Implications of COVID-19 \(hoover.org\)](#)

[Donald Trump, Flag Burning, and the First Amendment \(fff.org\)](#)

[2020 Was Not the Worst Year Ever, Not Even Close \(aier.org\)](#)

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## Video Selections

*Also not necessarily official positions of the LP of Santa Clara County unless so noted.*

[Candidates Corner with Marshall Burt and Apollo Pazell \(lp.org\)](#)

[Thomas Clarkson: The First Abolitionist \(fee.org\)](#)

[Market Reforms Can Save America's Failing Safety Net \(independent.org\)](#)

[LNC Quarterly Meeting - 5 December 2020 \(lp.org\)](#)

[Glitterbomb 3.0 - Private Property Defended \(missliberty.com\)](#)

[How Do Libertarians Advance Liberty? \(fff.org\)](#)

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## Calendar Summary

Important note: Due to the COVID-19 situation, many events that would normally be held in upcoming weeks and months have been cancelled. Also it is possible that

there will be other changes relating to events listed here, depending on how the situation evolves. Check our web site for updates.

- 16 January - [Third Saturday Coffee Meetup \(online\)](#).
- 23 January - [LP SCC Annual Meeting \(online\)](#).
- 14-16 May 2021 - [LPC State Convention \(Visalia\)](#).
- 26-30 May 2022 - [National Convention \(Reno\)](#).
- 7 June 2022 - [Primary Election](#)
- 8 November 2022 - [General Election](#)

**Do you have ideas for activities that don't require in-person contact?** Contact our [Activities Chair](#), Bob Goodwyn, with your suggestions.

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