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The Libertarian Party of Virginia

Virginia Liberty

Volume 7, Issue 1

Bimonthly Newsletter of the Libertarian Party of Virginia

January/February 2002

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● [State Fair Booth Project Report](#) - The State Fair Booth Committee is pleased to report that its project was a success. Committee Chair Marc Montoni said it was a huge undertaking, but believed the effort was worth the cost.

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Virginia Liberty is published for the members of the Libertarian Party of Virginia (LPVA), Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent those of the Libertarian Party or the editors unless so stated. Libertarians favor returning government to its proper and limited role of protecting individual rights and ceasing all other activities inconsistent with that goal.

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Deadline for submissions for the Mar/Apr issue of **Virginia Liberty** is February 1, 2002.

Editors: E.T. and Marc Montoni, 703-715-6230.

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Progress: Steady, Modest

By Chuck Eby

WOODSTOCK - By some very important milestones and measures, the Libertarian Party of Virginia (LPVA) is ending the year 2001 on a note of continued growth and progress.

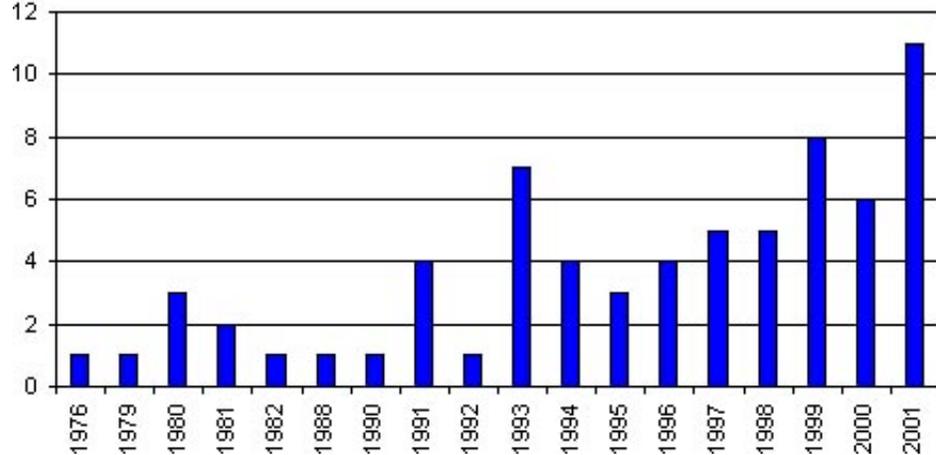
In June, Bill Redpath, and Gary Reams each submitted over 19,000 petition signatures to the Virginia State Board of Elections for their runs for Governor and Lieutenant Governor respectively.

For the first time this year, voters were offered the Libertarian choice for two statewide offices.

In July, LPVA teamed with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in a successful federal lawsuit that allowed Libertarians to be identified on the ballot with their party affiliation.

"We Libertarians are proud of our political point of view and want to establish our own 'brand' awareness with voters," said Gary Reams. "The older parties should not be afraid to compete with our new brand. We want the voters to make an informed decision in every election."

Number of Candidates



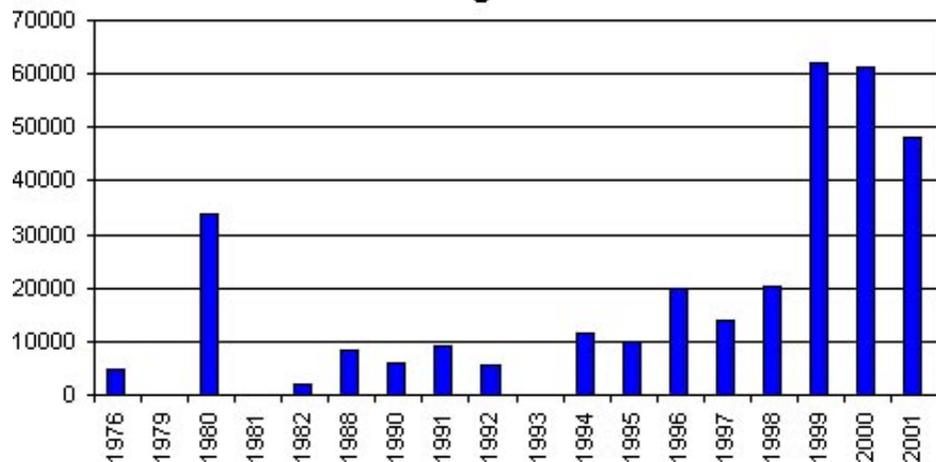
Election day, November 6th, found three Libertarian victories in the state - a record number for a single year. Bill Wood, Marc Montoni, and Matt Medeiros each won spots as Lord Fairfax Soil and Water Conservation District directors. All three had run write-in campaigns.

The year 2001 closes with seven Libertarians holding office in Virginia - another record; more than any other third party in the state.

Counting the write-in victories, the Libertarian Party of Virginia fielded a record eleven candidates this year. This continues an upward trend that has grown steeper in recent years. [Note that data is missing for 1979, 1981, and 1993.]

Although the number of votes won by Virginia Libertarian candidates dropped slightly in 2001 from their record levels, the numbers still represent decent growth from earlier years. More and more Virginians are casting votes for Libertarians.

Votes Cast for Virginia Libertarians



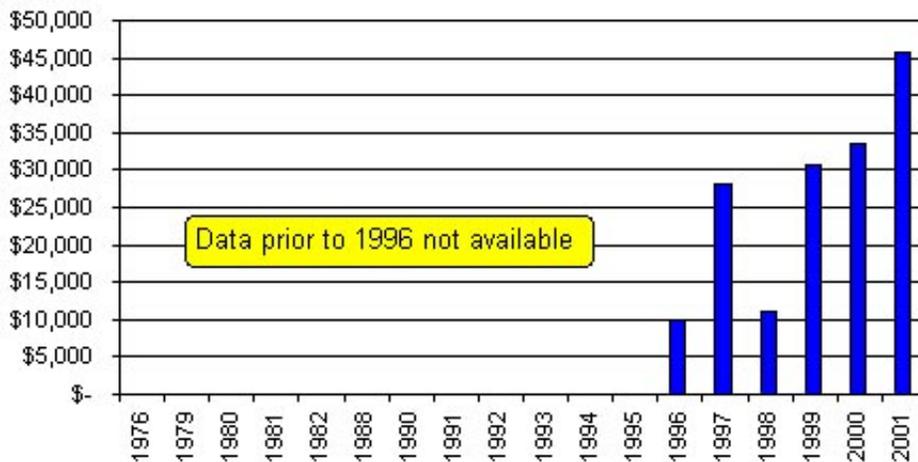
Campaign funding continued a trend of strong growth, outpacing inflation by a wide margin. Leading the way was William Redpath, the Libertarian candidate for Governor, with \$27,096.00, followed by fellow Libertarian Gary Reams, who sought the Lt. Governor's seat, with \$15,414.00. These are preliminary numbers and are bound to rise even higher when the candidates file their end-of-year reports.

2001 was a year for the record books. "As good as the past year was, the coming year is shaping up to be even better," said Montoni.

"Many localities will be holding local elections, and that is where Libertarians have historically done best."

A number of people within the LPVA leadership are planning to start a candidate recruitment effort in the next few weeks, to recruit Libertarians to run in those local elections.

Funds Raised by Virginia Libertarian Candidates



"Make no mistake, we have a lot of work to do. Let's use 2002 to build our donor base and to build larger and stronger city and county committees," said Montoni. "The socialists took two hundred years to almost completely ruin this country; so there's no reason to believe that the job of repairing their destruction will be any easier. We might as well just step up to the plate and keep swinging. The alternative is to leave the field to the other guys."

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Seven of Nine

By Chris Azzaro



Chris Azzaro

That's not just the name of a character on "Star Trek Voyager." It's also the success ratio of Libertarian Victory Fund (LVF) targeted campaigns in the November 6 elections!

"We had a 78% win rate in the November elections," said LVF Executive Director Chris Azzaro. "As far as I know, that means we're producing the best results of any project or organization in the Libertarian Party today."

"We're very proud of the progress that is being made."

LVF targeted campaigns posted an impressive seven victories out of nine targeted races. All of these wins were to significant policy making offices -- six city councilmen and one mayor. "These were big-time victories," Azzaro said.

Libertarian Party national headquarters noted the unusual number of "significant" victories this year. But those wins were not just some unexplainable windfall for the party, according to Chris Azzaro. He said the big wins were largely the result of months of planning and pouring more than \$18,000 of LVF money into these races.

These victories are even more impressive because of the fact that six of them were challengers achieving their very first wins!

"These were some very difficult races. But the LVF was determined to push these hardworking candidates over the top."

The LVF supported winners include:

- Bob Bromley, elected Mayor of Sumas, Washington -- with 60% of the vote. A major Libertarian Victory!
- In a ten-way race, Libertarian Mark Owen attained victory and now sits on the Owosso, Michigan, City Council. This follows his successful ballot initiative, in a David vs. Goliath battle, to repeal a city ordinance that robbed homeowners of their right to upgrade their property.
- After a very tough battle, Bob DeBrosse retained his seat on the Piqua City Commission in Ohio.
- The spirit of Thomas Jefferson, ponytail and all, must have smiled when he saw that fellow libertarian Andy LeCureaux won election to the Hazel Park, Michigan, City Council.
- With 58% of the vote, Ray Huff captured a seat on the Granite Falls, Washington, City Council.
- With a strong showing of 57% of the vote, John McAlister won a seat on the Gahanna, Ohio, City Council. McAlister was the Ohio LP candidate for US Senate in 2000.
- Libertarian Bruce White battled his way to a big win in Kent, Washington, (a city of more than 80,000!) when he defeated a two term incumbent, taking a seat on the City Council.

The Libertarian Victory Fund, a PAC launched in March of 2001, is designed to target, train, and support quality Libertarian candidates running in winnable local-level races. In addition to the seven recent targeted wins, the LVF also supported two other winning campaigns earlier this year in Michigan and Massachusetts.

"This has been a real success story. And we have every reason to believe that things will continue to get better."

The LVF has also provided six Libertarian activists with all-expenses-paid scholarships to political training

schools this year. Additionally, the LVF has distributed over 400 copies of its free campaign training manual.

"Our goal, to upgrade the overall professionalism of local Libertarian campaigns throughout the county, now seems well within reach."

The LVF plans to enhance both the training and candidate support programs in 2002.

Said Azzaro: "We're working very hard right now to reach out to Libertarians across the country to let them know what we're doing, and the successes that we've already had.

"This is just the beginning. Once we expand our donor base, we will be able to do so much more.

"If you're looking for real progress, real results, and actual Libertarian victories, the LVF clearly offers the best bang-for-the-buck.

"The LVF is building a Libertarian election-winning machine to defeat the statist."

As Seven of Nine would tell them: Resistance is futile!

For more information on the LVF, or to contribute, write to: Libertarian Victory Fund, 1306 West Craig Rd #158, North Las Vegas, NV 89032. Or, visit <http://www.LibertarianVictoryFund.com>

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Election: Message Lost, Not "Rejected"

RICHMOND - Despite being out-spent by candidates who support bigger and more intrusive government by over \$ 1,740 to \$1.00, Virginia Libertarians have reason to be proud of the accomplishments of their fellow members in the races that concluded on November 7.

Was Libertarianism rejected by the voters last November? Maybe, maybe not. What is clear is that it was heavily out-advertised.

"Look at it this way: for every ad we could buy, the big-government candidates bought 1,740," LPVA chairman Marc Montoni said. "For every sign we could buy, the big-government candidates bought 1,740. For every call we could make to our supporters to make sure they got to the polls, the big-government candidates made 1,740.

Many Libertarians feel the media interprets the fund-raising ability of the big-government candidates as the only indicator of credibility, and therefore mentions only the big-government candidates thousands of times for every time it mentions Libertarian candidates.

Denial of equal treatment because a candidate doesn't have a special-interest-loaded campaign war chest becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, according to Montoni.

"I would stake every dime I have on a bet: that if our ideas and candidates were splashed in front of the voters at the same rates as the other guys, that twenty to thirty percent of the population would switch to our camp," Montoni said.

"Whenever our ideas are given a fair hearing, we win. That's why Democrats and Republicans never allow Libertarians into debates - they know that on the day that our philosophy of limited government is allowed to see the light of day, that is the day they will begin to lose their grip on the American voter -- and with it, their grip on the media."

The daunting odds won't deter Libertarians, though. "I can make some guarantees," said Montoni. "There are a lot more Libertarians now than five years ago. In another five years we will be even bigger. The big-government parties will eventually have to deal with us. And when they do, they will lose. We will continue to recruit more of their supporters to our 'less government' side. The contributors and voters they depend on are going to continue abandoning them to join us," he said.

"In the last century, all of the ancient ideas for governing societies with huge, bloated, bossy, expensive governments have been tried. They have all failed," Montoni said. "Big governments don't protect their own people very well; nor can big governments be trusted to mind their own business. In the last century, governments were the biggest killer of people -- with about 200 million deaths to their credit, and most of those their own citizens."

"It's time to turn away from big government. Time has proven that only a frugal, limited government does what its supposed to do -- and only Libertarians are working to implement that principle again," Montoni concluded.

"I believe Libertarians took a giant step forward this year", said David Horne, an LP member from Arlington. "We ran candidates for state office for the first time ever. We ran candidates in six HoD races. We received more media coverage than ever before. All of our candidates were great candidates and were identified by party. We took a step. Some would say it was a giant step and some would belittle it. Did we keep up with the big guys? No."

"Did we fall? I don't think so -- but if we did, so what? We get up and take another step. And we keep on taking bigger steps until we are able to walk without falling and then we keep on walking until we get to where we can start running. Then we continue to run and take bigger strides until we are able to outrun the big guys," Horne said.

"The important thing is that we have to keep up the momentum and moving forward. There ain't no shortcuts," said Horne.

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Walking For Capitalism

ARLINGTON - On December 2, hundreds of Libertarian volunteers across America joined other supporters of property rights and free trade, on a "Walk for Capitalism". Libertarians marched, displayed signs, chanted pro-capitalism slogans, fended off protesters, and gave out awards to selected entrepreneurs to honor their contributions to economic freedom.

Organized in more than 100 cities, the Walk for Capitalism was a global event celebrating the free market economy. The project was created by PRODOS, an Australian radio personality.

Libertarians participated in the March for Capitalism in at least a half-dozen cities around the USA -- and afterward said it was a good opportunity to "stand up" for free enterprise. "Capitalism is frequently portrayed as the epitome of evil in popular culture and in the media," said North Carolina LP State Chair Barbara Howe, who walked in Raleigh. "It was time that an event celebrated the contributions that capitalism has made to the world."

Noelle Stettner, a Libertarian radio announcer who walked with the rally in Arlington (see photo), said she hopes the Walk for Capitalism becomes an annual event. "It was great to see many people reading our pro-capitalism signs, then honking their horns and giving us the thumbs up," she said. "I didn't see even one person react negatively."

To avoid the "bureaucratic hurdles" of getting a permit in the District of Columbia, Libertarians marched just across the Potomac River, in Arlington, Virginia. More than 100 participants attended the walk, carrying signs and chanting, "Hey Hey, Ho Ho, Socialism has got to go!"

The march concluded at a restaurant/pub, where a lawyer for the libertarian Institute for Justice gave a speech, and presented an award to a client who had successfully fought a law prohibiting individuals from shining shoes on the streets of Washington, DC.

Stettner said she attended the march to highlight the relationship between capitalism and Libertarianism. "Capitalism and Libertarianism are about choice: the choice of how to spend, invest, and save one's money," she said.

Organizing has begun for 2002. See <http://www.walkforcapitalism.org>

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OPINION: Big Brother Moves In

By Donny Ferguson

VIRGINIA BEACH - On November 13, the city council here approved the installation of "facial recognition" surveillance cameras on the city's Oceanfront boardwalk. The technology captures the images of pedestrians, records 80 "landmarks" such as cheekbones and tip of the nose and then searches a database to match and identify the faces. While companies selling the technology present facial recognition as a tool for law enforcement, it comes rife with technical, legal and constitutional flaws.

Mayor Meyera Oberndorf originally opposed the plan. "I think it's totally inappropriate for a city that holds itself to be the safest city of its size," Oberndorf told The Virginian-Pilot on July 10. "I don't think we need to put everybody through this trauma. This is a question of invading the public's privacy."

However, Oberndorf now claims the threat of terrorist attacks, and reports some of the terrorists may have passed through southern Virginia at one time, make the intrusion necessary. "It may be a false sense of security -- many people have stepped forward and said they want to give police an extra tool," now Oberndorf tells the Pilot.

While new threats of terrorism certainly call for more vigilance by law enforcement, they do not change the fact Virginia Beach, which is not a base for terrorism, is still "a city that holds itself to be the safest city of its size" and a spy camera "is a question of invading the public's privacy." Simply put, these Fourth Amendment-busting spy cameras do nothing to aid in anti-terrorist and crime fighting efforts.

Will recording the movements of law-abiding Virginians capture Osama bin Laden while he vacations on the Oceanfront? Hardly. There is no database of quality photos of terrorists. Al-Qaida isn't one to have a group office photo. Will flip-flopping on constitutional rights win Oberndorf the votes of the "many people (who) have stepped forward and said they want to give police an extra tool"?

Much more likely.

Newham, England experimented with the cameras; and they were introduced in Tampa, Florida this year -- though city leaders are considering ending their use. The INS experimented with them, but ditched the cameras after repeated failures. While the companies that profit from the technology claim it is effective in catching criminals, a suspect can cheat the facial scan by smiling or wearing sunglasses or a hat.

According to the American Civil Liberties Union, a study by the government's National Institute of Standards and Technology found facial recognition technology failed to match subjects with perfect database photos taken only months earlier in 43 percent of test cases. Photos used in the Virginia Beach database would be far from perfect, since criminals rarely pose for studio photos.

The study also found that standing 45 degrees from the camera angle rendered the expensive technology useless. Even when test subjects took their photos staring directly into a camera in perfect light, and then repeated that for the facial recognition camera, a Defense Department survey still found high error rates.

If the technology fails to match perfect photos with their identical face in a controlled setting, it is highly unlikely Virginia Beach's cameras will nab a single wanted suspect. Publicized images taken from a Tampa camera did succeed in [mistakenly] fingering a Dallas man for unpaid child support payments. Unfortunately, he wasn't the man police were looking for, and the innocent bystander suffered through a harrowing legal process to clear his name. Though he had absolutely nothing to do with the deadbeat dad - and had never even been to Tampa - having similar features was enough for facial recognition technology to label him a criminal fugitive.

Even having a face completely free of incriminating features isn't enough to spare innocent citizens from

abuse of the technology. The Detroit Free Press reported on the "extracurricular" use of the Law Enforcement Information Network by Michigan police officers to track the movements of ex-wives, girlfriends and attractive female motorists. Despite widespread complaints of stalking and harassment of innocent citizens - even violent attacks - the system is still in use. One can only imagine what abuse would develop from a system that captures and records your face and tells where you are located and what times you are there.

The computers can also be programmed to key in on certain facial features like nose width or lip thickness, raising the possibility of high-tech racial profiling. Cameras in Great Britain were found to have focused disproportionately on racial minorities and the mostly male operators frequently homed in on and watched attractive females.

The entire notion of recording and searching the faces of law-abiding citizens in public places runs counter to the Fourth Amendment's protections against unreasonable searches. No reasonable interpretation of the Constitution justifies law enforcement officials, acting without reasonable cause to believe someone in the crowd is a wanted criminal or terrorist, seizing images of citizens and searching them for nodal points matching those in a database.

Without cause to believe there is a certain wanted criminal in the crowd, using this technology is tantamount to randomly searching every home in the city, hoping to arrest zoning violators and owners of illegal cable hookups. Unless law enforcement officials have reasonable cause believe a specific person has committed a specific criminal act, they cannot legally search them. The Supreme Court recently ruled less-invasive thermal imaging surveillance of homes unconstitutional without a warrant. One can only hope they will continue to uphold the Fourth Amendment if facial recognition cameras are challenged in the Court.

Despite what Oberndorf may think, Virginia Beach is the same city today it was on Sept. 11. Osama bin Laden hasn't bought a winter home there, and al-Qaida didn't open a local chapter. Her decision smacks of political opportunism, trampling the rights of innocent citizens in an effort to look "tough on crime" to voters.

If bin Laden decides to spend his Ramadan shopping in Virginia Beach without sunglasses or a hat, Mayor Oberndorf may have made the correct decision.

Unfortunately for the thousands of citizens and tourists who will have their privacy invaded, be placed in legal jeopardy and be subjected to the threat of abuse and harassment, Oberndorf made a politically expedient and constitutionally abhorrent mistake.

[Editor's Note: Donny Ferguson is Editorial Chairman of the Libertarian Party of Virginia and a columnist for www.politicalusa.com, and resides in the city of Falls Church.]

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The Free State Project

An Introduction

By Jason Sorens

How much is liberty worth to you? Try to quantify it: what would you give up in order to secure real liberty, the kind we Libertarians have imagined everyone would enjoy in an ideal society? Would you move to another part of the U.S. if it meant you could enjoy that kind of liberty, and participate in building it? If so, the Free State Project may well be for you.

The Free State Project (FSP) is a plan whereby 20,000 libertarians, classical liberals, and other advocates of strictly limited government will move to a single state of the U.S. to set up a free society. We will do this by working within the electoral system, starting by eliminating unjust state and local laws and practices, like asset forfeiture, zoning, state drug and gun laws, socialized schooling, and so on. We could also end state police cooperation with federal agencies in enforcing unjust federal laws. Then we would bargain directly with the federal government over achieving sufficient autonomy in other areas; in Canada, for example, the provinces have won the right to opt out of different federal programs in exchange for a tax rebate. We will continue to pursue decentralization until we have created an essentially free society.

The way it works is that the FSP will collect 20,000 signatures from people willing to move. Once 5,000 participants have signed up, the whole membership will vote on the state to which we will move, following extensive research on the candidate states. Our preliminary research indicates that 11 states are theoretically small enough for 20,000 activists to win most state-level elections: Wyoming, Alaska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, Delaware, Hawaii, Montana, Rhode Island, Idaho, and New Hampshire. Don't want to move to, say, Alaska or Wyoming? No problem: when you sign the Statement of Intent, you may indicate which states you reserve the right not to move to. The move only begins after 20,000 people have signed up.

What will make the FSP succeed where similar projects have failed is that: 1) we are researching the best place to go, rather than picking some arbitrary location; 2) we are relying on the decision of the membership, not one person's fancy; 3) we are collecting signatures before the move.

The last is important because it means that there is no risk to signing up. If we don't reach 20,000 signers, the move never happens. But if we do reach 20,000 participants, we will be on the brink of an achievement of historical significance.

To see if the FSP might be right for you, take a look at our website at <http://www.freestateproject.com> - and let us know what you think!

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Jason P Sorens <jason.sorens@yale.edu> is a former Virginia LP member, now at the Department of Political Science, Yale University, Connecticut.]

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State Fair Booth Project Report

RICHMOND - The State Fair Booth Committee is pleased to report that its project was a success.

Committee Chair Marc Montoni said it was a huge undertaking, but believed the effort was worth the cost.

Montoni reports about \$3,000 was raised for the project.

"The funds were used for this project and this project only," according to Montoni.

"We used it to pay for booth expenses such as rent, insurance, electric power, and other incidentals. It also paid for the staffer hired to cover the hours for which no volunteers could be found; a huge mailing announcing the project and requesting project funding and volunteer help, and even email, mail & phone followup.

"LPVA members came through in a big way," Montoni said. "To all of you who made the donations that made the project happen at all - THANK YOU. To all of the two dozen volunteers who helped cover the booth - THANK YOU. This simply would not have happened without all of you!"

Montoni said that about 2,500 fair-goers took the World's Smallest Political Quiz, and several hundred people asked to be added to the mailing list. Those folks have been sent additional information by mail, and have been contacted by phone by the booth coordinator, Rance Edwards. Additional follow-up will be done in the coming months, as it frequently takes more than one follow-up before a person takes the leap into membership.

One person joined at the fair, which is unusual.

For a complete copy of the Booth Committee report, send a STAMPED and addressed envelope to: SFBC Report, c/o M Montoni, PO box 118, Edinburg VA 22824-0118. If you can open an Excel file on your computer, you may send a request via email.

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The Libertarian Party of Virginia

Virginia Liberty

Volume 7, Issue 1 Bimonthly Newsletter of the Libertarian Party of Virginia January/February 2002

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Member Profile: Rance Edwards, Jr

[Editor's Note: Each issue, the staff of Virginia Liberty will try to introduce you to an active Libertarian. This month's interview is with the Chair's Assistant, Rance Edwards. We are seeking interviews for the next issue -- if you would like us to profile you and your LP activities, please call 703-715-6230, and we will respond with the list of questions.]

VL: Tell us a little bit about yourself.

RE: I am 26, and live in Blacksburg, Virginia. I enjoy brewing beer and caving, and besides working for the LPVA, I manage a historic theatre and tutor kids in math.

VL: How did you come to the LPVA?

RE: I first learned about the Libertarian Party from a political discussion with my friend, Ben Albee, over a few beers. We were trying to decide exactly what I was, and he listened as I described my beliefs, and said I was a libertarian just like him. My first reaction was "A Libertarian Who?" But the more I learned about the party, the more I began to feel at home. In March, Ben and I attended the state convention in Richmond, where we both joined.

VL: What activities are you involved in with the Libertarian Party?

RE: I started by working petitions for Redpath and Reams, and met Marc Montoni. Since then, I have worked on several projects for the LPVA, including organizing and staffing the State Fair booth a few months ago. I look forward to continued involvement in the party, and frankly, I am excited to see where it will lead.

VL: What do you do as the Chair's Assistant?

RE: I am responsible for many of the administrative and clerical duties within the LPVA. Examples include submitting address corrections, creating and mailing fundraisers, processing pledges, taking on special projects such as the State Fair booth, following up on inquiries and preparing deposits.

VL: What issues are most important to you and what would you like to see happen in the future of the Libertarian Party?

RE: Right now, I am very interested in studying Libertarianism at a local level and am thinking about running for my town council within a couple of years. As for the LPVA, I would like to see our membership double within a year or two. For the LP in general, I think we still need to concentrate on outreach. There are still so many people who have never heard of us, or have no idea what we are really about.

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Sound Off!

Letters to the Editor

LIBERTARIAN PARTY TIME

Editor,

Well, we have another election to look back on. 'Well done' to all who participated!

Some of the participants made it to Brittany's and thanks to Jim Simpson's [Jim ran as the Libertarian candidate for his House of Delegates seat this year. -- Ed.] generosity we had a buffet all night long, the wait service was good and the Guinness was sweet.

One of the R's who is a leader in the anti-tax movement in Prince William stopped by early on. I expect he was headed to R-territory and probably wished he had stayed with us. We have more fun even when we lose.

Reams said he would 'connect' to other coalitions. Clearly he did and his total demonstrated what a comprehensive campaign plan and a heavy hitting Campaign Manager can do.

I had a great time handing out lit and requesting that people 'Vote for James Simpson for Delegate'. The turn out was high for an off year election so all the poll workers were busy.

We poll workers (D's, R's and L) had a 'party'. We started off so cold... One of the D's went home to warm up and she brought back a big thermos of fresh coffee and Styrofoam cups too. What a sweetie! The main R didn't share his cookies or anything.

I converted one of the R workers to vote for Simpson. As we chatted, I scoped him out as a 'gun guy' and laid a heavy message on him about the back channel deal that Jim's anti gun R incumbent must have struck with the NRA to get their last minute endorsement. When he came back from voting he told me he voted his conscience - for Simpson! From then on when I handed out Simpson lit he would follow on saying something like "and here are some R's you can vote for after you vote for Simpson". Pretty cool.

Would I do it again? Of course. I really want to work on a campaign that gets started now for 2003 and start walking the Precincts with my candidate starting in the spring. We have a lot of education to do.

If you live in Prince William County or wish you did, then the county LP meetings should be on your calendar. Meet us at Uno's at 8 PM, on the second Monday of each month.

For the Liberation!

- Bill Lawry
PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY
11th CD Rep, LPVA state committee

TESTED RELATIONSHIPS BECOME STRONGER

Editor,

I have been participating in Virginia libertarian discussion groups online for a while. One of the recent debates centered on whether candidates for public office should retain our endorsement when they advocate ideas that are in substantial disagreement with official LP positions. In response to this debate, one person said: "When all the purity testing came up, I wondered if I (and many others) should just quit the Party."

Several members offered reasons why the Libertarian Party of Virginia should withdraw support from the Redpath campaign.

I contacted the most well known supporter of that position who, even though I supported a different view

than he did, encouraged me to share my point of view with all Libertarian Party of Virginia members.

I did so and was glad we could both voice our perspectives on what option would be best for the party and let those who represent us decide. When the vote was taken at the state LP committee meeting in August, party leaders declined to consider removing the endorsement from the Redpath campaign.

This seems to me to be a good reason to join the Libertarian Party of Virginia rather than a reason to leave it. Two ardent self-defense advocates had different views of the Redpath campaign and respectfully disagreed in public. Had any of this been carried in the press it would have given no cause to be ashamed of party affiliation.

Had we been Virginia Republicans, we would have argued our position, waited for a vote, then found ways to make each other look bad in public after the vote.

In Virginia, the Democrats tend to avoid public infighting, but do get emotional on occasion.

I, for one, am glad the Libertarian Party of Virginia has at least one example of mature disagreement I can be proud of.

Eventually all relationships are tested by differing points of view. How opposing opinions are discussed and resolved defines the strength of the relationship.

So far, the Libertarian Party of Virginia looks rather healthy to me.

- Abel Ashbridge
FAIRFAX COUNTY

USA PATRIOT ACT: DANGEROUS FOR AMERICANS

Editor,

RICHMOND -- The passage of the "USA Patriot Act" will do more to harm American citizens than it will do to curb real terrorism.

This is not a good time for radical libertarians, tax protesters, etc., to protest United States policy by declaring non-citizenship. The inherently suspicious side of me says that some of the incursions by the Bush administration into individual rights could also become directed at libertarian patriots who defend against big government in their personal lives and activism.

This analysis refers to numerous tax protestors and others who assert their sovereignty by giving up the trappings of being "American citizens" -- such as refusing to be identified by their social security number, or announcing that they are not citizens of the United States and therefore not subject to income taxation and other government operations.

The CIA and other fed agencies sometimes uses something called gaslighting -- essentially psych warfare -- to pursue their goals of control. One scenario to beware of is efforts geared towards encouraging radicals for liberty into giving up United States citizenship, thus opening them to removal to military tribunals for conduct that has nothing to do with committing acts of violence or "terrorism" in any reasonable sense of the word.

On November 20, President Bush signed an executive order allowing terror suspects to be taken to a remote location (perhaps on a ship in international waters) and "tried" before a military tribunal that is not required to follow rules of evidence. The suspect would not be allowed to confront evidence/witnesses, and there is no guarantee the suspect could choose his attorney. At the moment, it would only apply to non-citizens.

Under Section 802 of the USA PATRIOT Act, a person commits the crime of domestic terrorism if within the U.S. they engage in activity that is considered dangerous to human life, violates a law, and appears to be

intended: (1) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (2) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion, OR (3) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination or kidnapping.

"Dangerous to human life is ambiguous, and what doesn't violate a law these days?

One of the other possible criteria, intimidation of a civilian population, is also quite vague. Civil disobedience that does NOT result in property damage or place people in danger could be "terrorism" if deemed to "intimidate".

Just some thoughts from the edge.

This so-called war on the so-called Osama bin Laden is highly disturbing. As a result of the military tribunals, Americans who disassociate from U.S. citizenship place themselves at risk of being arrested and taken away to some military tribunal. No more noisy Wacos or Ruby Ridges.

nce a person is driven to declare that he is not a U.S. citizen, he can be taken into military custody and subject to who knows what kind of abuse. And under the new definitions of terrorism, all kinds of things that traditionally are protected (or, at least, are mere civil disobedience or low-level crimes) may be "terrorist." Under no circumstance should libertarians protest by declaring that they are not U.S. citizens!

David Garland
RICHMOND

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