

Let Freedom Ring!

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Libertarian Strategy Gazette is not published this month. The Editor is buying a house.

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Draft Ruwart Campaign Issues Petition

Ruwart is a Credible Potential Candidate
Supporters of the campaign to draft Mary Ruwart as the Libertarian Party's Presidential candidate in 2008 have recently circulated an on-line petition championing their cause and asking other Libertarians to indicate their support:

To: Dr. Mary J. Ruwart
We, the undersigned, implore Dr. Mary J. Ruwart to enter the race for the Libertarian Party's presidential nomination for the 2008 election.

Sincerely,

To read the current list
of signatories

<http://www.petitiononline.com/ruwart08/petition.html>

Why Mary Ruwart?

By Tom Knapp
So your editor posed the question: People know who Mary Ruwart is. What I have not heard is why we expect her to be an effective campaigner. That is not a 'this is a bad idea' statement. That is a 'try making your case'. And I received the answer from Tom Knapp:

With the disclaimer that I am not *necessarily* supporting Dr. Ruwart for the nomination, but rather supporting the idea that she should seek it (there *is* a distinction), I rise to the point.

Dr. Ruwart would certainly be an effective campaigner *within the LP*, by virtue of:
her long association with and prominence in the party and with other libertarian organizations such as Advocates for Self-Government.

her authorship of several books (*Healing Our World*, *Short Answers to Tough Libertarian Questions*) which LP members have found engaging and/or useful.

her omnipresence on the LP "speaking circuit" over the years, and her engaging manner on

[Why Ruwart?] (Continued on page 4)

National Party Down To 15485 Members!

MA Falls to 333 Members; LNC Financial Plunge Continues—November Income is \$76220; State Delegate Allocations Are Announced.

National Party Membership has fallen markedly over the past year, with the total membership count now under 15,500. This is a substantial decline even from two years ago, and far below the 33,000 member peak in 1999 or even the 23,000 members the Libertarian Party had in 2002. In contrast to Libertarian Party performance, in these times of stresses on Civil Liberties membership and donations for the American Civil Liberties Union have soared, so that the ACLU of Massachusetts by itself is larger than the National Libertarian Party.

[National Party Challenges] (Continued on page 5)

No, we did not publish a January issue. The Editor was traveling.

25 Candidates For President In 2008

By The Girondin
Today, I offer an early assessment of 25 of the Libertarian Party's 2008 presidential prospects, in order of how likely I feel each is to be the eventual nominee. My own feelings on each, and my punditry on their candidacies, follows. (Among those omitted are ex-vice presidential candidates Richard Campagna, Jo Jorgensen, and Art Olivier, who so far have neither expressed interest in candidacy nor been mentioned much among LP activists as prospects.)

Michael Badnarik: It is hard to know what to think of Badnarik. He is a decent and sincere man, and performed well in 2004. He is a strong speaker and bases his message on strict but reasonable constitutional arguments. Still, though he was hardly the establishment candidate in 2004, he was the most radical of the three major contenders for the nomination. His refusal to file income tax returns and his opposition to driver's licenses relegates him to the fringe in the public mind. While he is a more palatable "purist" candi-

[Potential Presidential Candidates] (Continued on page 2)

Liberty for Massachusetts now live at <http://www.LibertyForMassachusetts.org>

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(Continued from page 1) [Potential Presidential Candidates]

date than some in the past like Rick Tompkins and Irwin Schiff, I am reluctant to support him for 2008.

Gary Nolan: I initially backed Nolan in 2004, despite my concerns about how tied in he was to "Browne Inc." He ran a respectable, responsible, and professional campaign, and would have represented us well if he had been the nominee. I've talked with him before, and found him able to be both forceful and respectful at the same time. It is very likely he will run again, and he is definitely a top-tier candidate, but he needs to get away from the Old Guard crowd.

Aaron Russo: I was thrilled when Russo got in the race as an independent in 2004, and I was among those who urged him to seek the LP nomination. I covered parts of his 1998 Nevada GOP gubernatorial bid in my real-life job, and I was impressed. In 2004, I chatted with him a bit via e-mail, and I was still impressed. But the candidate on paper (or on screen) is not the candidate in person. He also likes to tout Nicholson, Midler, et al as possible campaign trail draws -- but where were they when he actually ran? Though I agree with Russo on many issues, I would oppose his candidacy in 2008. He would embarrass the LP.

Mary Ruwart: For years, I have hoped Dr. Ruwart would run. Unlike many national LP figures, she is disarming and non-threatening, and she has a unique and positive outlook on Libertarianism that is rare. Her vision is one of peace and community, and she could probably win support from disaffected leftists as well as the usual Libertarian crowd. Also, though it should not be a consideration, it is: Gender can matter. The past two LP tickets have consisted of two white males each, and the LP has never nominated a woman for president. A female helming the ticket would be a draw. In college, I knew someone who voted for Lenora Fulani, then the presidential candidate of the psycho-cultic New Alliance Party, just to make a statement by voting for a black woman. Maybe women turned off by Hillary would prefer President Mary?

Jim Gray: It would be wonderful to see Gray seek the presidency. He would bring his credentials as a California Superior Court judge, and his strong resume as a decorated veteran and a Peace Corps volunteer, to the campaign. Folks like Walter Cronkite, Milton Friedman, and George Shultz have praised his original ideas on drug policy reform. And he received more than 216,000 votes as the LP's California US Senate candidate in 2004.

Barry Hess: An interesting contender. I spoke with Hess a few times during his first run in 2000, and at the time, he seemed earnest but naïve. He had many great plans for the LP, which he had apparently just joined, and genuinely believed he could win the presidency. Since then, though, he has become a more polished and realistic presence on the state-level LP scene. I do not think he is really considering another presidential run just yet, though.

Karen Kwiatkowski: She would be a compelling anti-war candidate if she ran, but it remains unclear where Kwiatkowski she stands on other Libertarian issues. I think she will ultimately opt against running for national office.

Mark Yannone: I honestly do not know much about Yannone, except that he is making a bid for the US House in Arizona and that some backers want him to pull a Badnarik and aim higher instead.

Ed Thompson: Thompson would be a fun and straight-talking candidate. I interviewed him during his gubernatorial run, and I think anyone who expects a "Billy Carter" or a "Roger Clinton" would be very disappointed -- he's smart and competent. I doubt he will run, but his brother has been suggesting he (Tommy) might make a longshot bid for the GOP nomination. Wouldn't it be something if both Brothers Thompson sought the presidency in the same year? It would certainly get press for the LP.

Lance Brown: Brown, who will be 36 on Election Day 2008, announced his 2008 run back in 1994 while attending the University of Massachusetts. He ran a fairly serious long-term online effort to win support, but basically vanished in 2004 to pursue his business career. He's back online now, and I will be following his efforts with interest.

Richard Mack: Mack is one of the higher-profile Libertarian politicians right now. The question facing him is the same as that facing other big LP players -- run for president, or run for a lower-level office that might actually be winnable?

Bob Barr: An appalling idea. While he has been a strong advocate of privacy protections and limiting the scope of the War on Terror since leaving Congress, his record in that institution should not be forgotten. He authored the Defense of Marriage Act and blocked any sort of drug policy reform for years. Despite his talk of states' rights, Barr used his power as a representative of a Georgia district to prevent the enactment of medical marijuana policies favored by the electorate of the District of Columbia. I could go on and on. And remember -- the LP helped to kick him out of Congress!

L. Neil Smith: If I am The Girondin, "El Neil" is the Louis Antoine Saint-Just of the LP, coldly excluding any non-"100%ers" from his view of what the party should be. Smith is acerbic and confrontational, and certainly would not sway undecided voters into the party. In fact, he would probably drive out some longtime LP voters. Plus, the notion of nominating a science fiction author would just underscore the "Libertarians are goofy" arguments of our foes.

Clyde Cleveland: Cleveland ran a strange but somewhat successful fusion campaign for Iowa governor as the LP/Natural Law Party candidate in 2002, winning about 13,000 votes. He had planned to run for president in 2004 but ultimately opted against it. The NLP no longer exists on a national level, and I have never been clear just how connected Cleveland is to the

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(Continued from page 2) [Potential Presidential Candidates]

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi movement that created it. But if Cleveland sought the LP nomination in 2008, he'd be an interesting candidate. His stress on the nonviolent aspects of Libertarian ideals could appeal to anti-war voters in a campaign likely to pit pro-war Sen. Hillary Clinton against a pro-war Republican. He'd also pull in some Greens.

Ron Paul: It's not gonna happen. Besides, isn't it better to have him in Congress than out of office after another presidential run?

Michael Cloud: The LP establishment's ultimate insider. It would be like the GOP running Karl Rove for president.

Carla Howell: Would be like running Karl Rove's girlfriend. Okay, that's not fair -- she had some solid success in Massachusetts. But her command of Libertarian themes and ideas is limited at best.

Neal Boortz: Potentially a future candidate, but I doubt he will give up radio so soon. Boortz has a lot of listeners outside the LP and even the libertarian movement, and he could end up being what Gene Burns was supposed to be in 1984. However, his support for Bush Administration war policy has won him some enemies within the movement.

Cindy Sheehan: I question her for the same reasons I question Kwiatkowski, but more so. Kwiatkowski has been active in libertarian circles and clearly understands our views. From what she has revealed, Sheehan seems to be fairly leftist across the board. I'm not sure she's a libertarian.

Harry Browne: It is highly unlikely Browne will run again, though before the 2004 race, there were some rumors he would make a third bid then, which he did not. Browne would be 75 by the time of the 2008 election, and he has been ailing. I was sorry to hear that, as I have had the chance to talk with Browne at length in the past, and he is intelligent and a gentleman. That said, I was never a fan of "Browne Inc." -- the force within the LP that pushed him in to the race in 1996, anointed him for 2000 long before that election, and that crossed many lines of propriety between the LNC and a nomination campaign. Browne himself seems to have been above most of this, but his staffers worked too closely with the leadership of the LP. The LNC did not assist Browne's efforts to win the nomination in 2000, despite the claims of some LNC critics that they did so. In fact, several Browne supporters within the LNC at the time have told me they were pleased by Don Gorman's entry into that race, as a competitive nomination fight is good for the party. But there's just too much bad history with Browne to support him again the future.

David Hollist: He's sort of the Harold Stassen of the LP. Hollist gets a bad rap -- he has an interesting idea. One single, very detailed, idea. But it's not necessarily a Libertarian idea.

Don Gorman: There was little indication Gorman planned to run in 2004, and even less that he is mulling a 2008 run, though his name still gets mentioned. He was a reluctant can-

didate back in 2000.

Ken Krawchuk: A smart guy, but as he has said before, he is mostly interested in building the party in Pennsylvania.

Jim Burns: Burns is best known for legally changing his name to "James Libertarian Burns" and for campaigning with a Confederate battle flag. This is his third run for the presidential nomination, and he's never been taken seriously before. No reason to change that now.

Jeffrey Diket: Oh good Lord, no. John Birch Society member Diket is best remembered for a rambling, bitter speech against abortion at the 2004 LP convention. While there is, and should be, room within the LP for those on all sides of the complex abortion debate, Diket's vicious and disrespectful comments embarrassed the party as they were broadcast across the nation on C-SPAN.

...The Girondin

Disclaimer: The Editor of *Let Freedom Ring* has been urged to offer himself as a Presidential candidate. On one hand, as some people have told me they were surprised to discover, I can be a forceful speaker. On the other hand, I am not a poor man. Contributing to my own campaign would not be a challenge. Taking a leave of absence to campaign would be an expense, not an unbearable burden. Also, I have in the past helped run other campaigns, and have taken careful notes on what needs to be done. ...George Phillies

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(Continued from page 1) [National Rejects Return to Dues]
that circuit.

Now, it could be objected, correctly, that none of this speaks to Dr. Ruwart's effectiveness as a campaigner *outside* the LP should she be the nominee. My rebuttal to that is simple:

While she might or might not be able to translate her campaign effectiveness from an LP environment to the general electoral environment, she would, by virtue of being in the nomination contest, raise the bar for other prospective nominees. A candidate who wants to be nominated versus Dr. Ruwart will either have to be better at campaigning *within* the LP, or so damn good at campaigning *outside* the LP that it carries over to the internal situation ... And probably the latter, because surpassing Dr. Ruwart's reputation *within* the LP would be damn difficult.

And, of course, there's nothing to stop Dr. Ruwart from taking her *own* campaign outside the LP, pre-nomination, and demonstrating one way or another whether she can effectively reach the 99.5%+ of voters who normally do not vote for the LP's presidential candidate.

Is a "serious campaign organization" easy to set up? Hell, no. can a "serious campaign organization" be set up? Hell, yes. Since I believe that one of Dr. Ruwart's reservations toward running is whether or not such an organization can be put together within the LP, my goal at this time is to help overcome that reservation by helping put one together. If it can't be done, then her reservations were on target. There's no point in her running if the support -- the REAL support, not just the "wouldn't it be nice" talk -- isn't there.

Obviously, a candidate has to be involved in his or her own campaign. However, that role should be determined by the candidate's strengths and weaknesses, and by the roles that the candidate can/can't **must** play. Yes, a candidate should be deeply involved in his or her organization. No, he or she shouldn't have to fill out the FEC reports. The treasurer can do that, but only the candidate can (credibly) speak on his or her own behalf at a public forum, etc.

Once again, I believe that one of Dr. Ruwart's reservations is whether or not those who want her to run can comprise an organization that allows her to do the things that a) she does well and b) a candidate must do, while relieving her of the burdens of things that c) she doesn't do well and/or d) she can't do while also doing the things the candidate must do.

I suspect that Dr. Ruwart would be more involved than many candidates in the composition and operations of her campaign.

Why do we want a Presidential candidate? I've long since stopped worrying about why "we" want a presidential candidate. I know that "we" are going to have one. I have an interest in "us" having the strongest one possible. I regard Dr. Ruwart seeking the nomination as inherently supportive of that goal, whether she is ultimately the nominee or not.

Regards,

Tom Knapp

Res Publica Delenda Est

Mountains, Moles and Movers

By Tom Knapp

Tom Knapp blogs at Kn@ppster and sometimes at hammerof truth.com .

If I had to sum up the history of the Libertarian Party — or, for that matter, the libertarian movement — in one sentence, it would read as follows:

“It’s not as simple as that.”

Apropos of the subject, several writers (Tim West here, Stephen VanDyke here and “The Girondin” here) have recently been addressing issues of ideological purity versus real-politik versus plain good manners, versus ... well, you know. It always seems to come down to a couple of hypothetical groups, which I’ll refer to (before exploding the notion that they actually exist) by the labels “The Girondin” and “Archimedes” give them in a recent thread on a Yahoo! mailing list: “The Old Guard” and “The LiberCops.”

The perception seems to exist that some visible line in the sand exists to separate the LP into two groups — “purists” versus “pragmatists,” “Old Guard” versus “LiberCops” — of homogenous composition and unanimous opinion.

It’s not as simple as that.

What’s now referred to as “The Old Guard” — a group often called to the carpet on charges of ideological impurity — began to take shape at the LP’s 1983 convention when their sometimes putative leader, David Bergland, was nominated for president ... on a “purist” ticket versus the “pragmatist” program of Earl Ravenal and “the Kochtopus” (look it up — this is a blog piece, not an encyclopedia).

Many who are now referred to as “LiberCops” have as rightful a claim as any to “Old Guard” credentials. Novelist L. Neil Smith — cited by many as the ultimate “purist” — joined the LP in the early 1970s, at or shortly after its creation, served on various committees through the 1970s, and sought election to the state legislature on the LP ticket in 1978 — 14 years before Harry Browne, lately cited as an “Old Guard” titan, joined the LP and 16 years before he represented the LP on its presidential ballot line.

And let’s look at Browne himself: Cited as an “Old Guardist” worth of emulation by those who decry the “LiberCops,” he’s been a party member since 1994 — shortly before I joined ... and he’s as “purist” as anyone could ask for. Really. I defy anyone to name a government institution, government program or law which Browne has publicly supported in concept or, other than with extreme reluctance and as an “interim measure,” in practice.

There is, of course, a divide over alleged (and, in some cases, proven or admitted) corruption and/or deceit in the discharge of party duties. So far as I can tell, there is no uniformity of ideological or political approach among those against whom such allegations have been leveled. It’s not my purpose to

address that divide here — we all know the difference between right and wrong, and we all know that defending wrong is, well, indefensible. There’s certainly a case to be made against those who continue to defend, even advocate, known wrongs long after their exposure, and possibly a case to be made against those who continue to use those known wrongs as weapons long after they’ve been hashed out. There is not, however, any way to divide those two groups along “purist” versus “pragmatist” or “Old Guard” versus “LiberCop” lines — “the honest” versus “the corrupt” is a separate conflict entirely, and one we will, like the poor, always have with us.

The ideological divides we’re discussing simply don’t exist; or, rather, they are much more complex and shifting than the terms frequently used in intra-party debate can account for. As I’ve studied these divides over the years, I’ve personally classified LP activists into three overlapping groups: The Mountain, The Moles and the Movers.

The Mountain (a nod to the vocabulary taken up by “The Girondin”) is the party/movement’s Jacobin core: Ideological purists who regard it as their mission to secure the party’s continuing adherence to its core principles.

The Moles are those who believe that the best course for the movement — and perhaps for the party itself — is to fold itself into, or change itself to more closely resemble, the “major” parties. This may take the form of infiltration, of ideological deviation, or simply of modified presentation.

The Movers are those who believe — and act on — the notion that the party and/or movement must take a realistic approach to building a political organization, electing individuals to public office, and affecting public policy.

None of these three groups are mutually exclusive. It is entirely possible to be a de facto member of all three. And, as a matter of fact, I am ... and I believe that one must be in order to accomplish anything. The LP’s problems arise when members of one of the aforementioned groups insist that their group’s central mission — and only that central mission — constitutes the Holy Grail of LP success.

Ideology isn’t negotiable. There are, of course, reasonable differences over what it means to be “libertarian” — but it must mean something, and a Libertarian Party whose platform or program ceases to correspond to that meaning ceases to be a libertarian party ... at which point, it is no more useful to libertarians than any other party, and probably less, given its assets and accomplishments.

Nor is it debatable that the LP and the libertarian movement have things to learn from the “major” parties and possibly uses to put those parties to. Last time I looked, the “major” parties had had things pretty much their way for the better part of 200 years. As per above, I don’t see ideological deviation as a productive path to follow ... but infiltration is a possibility, and learning lessons from how they present themselves is a must.

And neither of the two foregoing items are of any use — if the LP is going to function as a political party — without the will,

the wisdom and the work it takes to win elections.

The future of the LP — if it is to have one — subsists in recognizing that ideological principle, astute observation and emulation of what our opponents do that works, and the willingness to do real politics are not only not incompatible, but complementary, necessary elements of success.

Tom Knapp

(Continued from page 1) [National Party Challenges]

Actual delegate counts are reported at <http://www.lp.org/organization.shtml>. State-by-State memberships and a comparison with five years ago follow this particule.

National Party Finances have been clarified by a recent refileing of the Party's 2005 FEC reports. For the past five months, income, cash on hand, and Party debt have been

Month	Income	Net transfers	Debt
July	103	-13.6	206
August	99	17	93
September	83	-13.6	99
October	159	-6.6	88
November	76	2.7	66

The reader will note that with a single month of interruption the LNC's income has been falling over the past half-year. The latest month corresponds to a yearly income of 0.9 million per year, well below the level in the budget.

We now consider membership numbers for 2001 and 2005, state by state, namely *state—2001 members—2005 members*, namely

AL-315-176 AK-137-91 AR-133-72
 AZ-503-309 CA-4990-2537 CO-661-437
 CT-271-190 DC-78-44 DE-73-53
 FL-1445-928 GA-1574-678 HI-107-63
 IA-267-144 ID-119-66 IL-964-507
 IN-557-412 KS-255-146 KY-178-102
 LA-172-105 MA-895-333 MD-483-319
 ME-157-82 MI-1178-609 MN-376-236
 MO-438-243 MS-96-50 MT-112-45
 NC-610-383 ND-40-14 NE-107-58
 NH-288-177 NJ-667-380 NM-247-136
 NV-352-202 NY-966-541 OH-964
 OK-19097 OR-456-277 PA-1171-676
 RI-59-29 SC-313-152 SD-46-25
 TN-424-257 TX-1445-911 UT-204-89 \n
 VA-889-583 VT-104-51 WA-976-509
 WI-354-215 WV-92-57 WY-68-37

We see, for example, that Massachusetts has only retained 40% or so of its 2001 members, while other states have done better or worse.

LP of Texas Stays Active

Annual Report, for June 2004 - September 2005 notes (summary of extended report):

On July 31, 2004, the LPTX committee determined goals for the next year. The results were

GOAL: Recruit, train and support county chairs and county organization, with the goal of having trained active county chairs in 50 counties by November 1, 2005, including the ten most populous counties in the state. **RESULT:** We found that recruiting county chairs is difficult in a large state like ours. It is difficult to make contact and support future leaders with such large distances. We currently have 31 county chairs in Texas and have 7 of the 10 most populous counties organized.

GOAL: Recruit and support active candidates in 20 different races for either county level or state representative office by December 1, 2005. **RESULT:** We have 367 prospective candidates.

GOAL: Increase National Party membership in Texas by 25%. **RESULT:** There were unanticipated changes in national membership policy. The current number is 7% decrease from September 2004.

GOAL: Have one organized county in every state Senatorial District. **RESULT:** We have met this goal.

GOAL: Secure ballot access for 2004, and for all future campaign seasons through a plan due before the end of 2004. **RESULT:** With an exhaustive and expensive petition drive, we secure ballot access for 2004. By the results in 2004 we automatically qualified for 2006, so we will not require another petition drive. With the current recruiting effort of statewide candidates, we have an excellent chance to secure ballot for 2008.

Other Accomplishments

We had election victories: Patrick Dixon was elected by a 2 to 1 margin to the Lago Vista city council. Scott Davison was elected to the board of commissioners in Burkburnett.

We targeted a Republican state legislator and caused him to lose his office. He said he was a fiscal conservative. He was a big spending Republican. In 2004 we strategically placed a candidate in his race and attacked his base. Our candidate had 3 times as many votes as he lost by.

Based on this result, we persuaded other vulnerable legislators to sponsor a bill to end "primary screenout". This is an onerous ballot access law. Our bill was not passed into law. The only group to oppose the bill was the Republican Party of Texas.

We lobbied the legislature to curb eminent domain abuse. The media reported that the testimony on this matter had "an endless procession of Libertarians."

The Badnarik for President campaign yielded an inquiry list which is being used to expand our support base.

The state conference, held in Austin in September 2005, included campaign training for some candidates.

Finances

To gain ballot access in 2004, we arranged a \$25,000 no-interest loan from 5 of our members. This loan was paid back. The executive has \$1670 monthly base salary plus 20% commission on gross revenue. An assistant director has a base rate of \$417/month. The monthly recurring donation program currently has 33 donors generating \$1,057/month.