

# Let Freedom Ring!

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## My Side of the Story

...Craig Mathias

There has been enough mention of my name, in venues such as this, and I've received enough phone calls, that I would very much now like to go public with my side of the story. First of all, what you've heard is true; I have resigned from the LPMA State Committee and changed my party registration to unenrolled and I will not renew my membership in the LPMA or the national Party when these memberships lapse. I now consider myself a "small-l" libertarian, and, while my political beliefs have not changed, I no longer believe that the Libertarian Party is the right vehicle to reach the goals we all share (well, mostly; see below). Party of my thinking here revolves around the various scandals that have damaged our reputation, and part of it comes from the rather rigid orthodoxy of those who lead the (especially Massachusetts) party at the moment. I spent many years as a party activist, and as a Libertarian serving in both appointed and elected office. I held what is arguably the highest elected office in the Town of Ashland (Chairman of the Board of Selectmen), and worked very hard for limited government, lower taxes, and greater personal liberty and individual responsibility. I spoke out against government encroachment on the private sector, and I won many (but of course not all) battles. I paid a personal price in all of this, but that comes with the territory; I am very proud of what I was able to accomplish. While not all of my personal beliefs are hard-core Libertarian, I remain committed to the cause of freedom. So why leave the Party?

Well, I have a number of reasons. One is that, after many years of heavy political involvement, I need a break. I need time to think, and to recharge my batteries. I want to focus on other ventures that got backburnered due to those many late nights at Town meetings and Party functions. I expect I'll be back in politics at some point, but I have no plans right now. I will shortly wind down my appointed positions in Town, and become simply a private citizen.

But my primary reasons for leaving the Party

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Wilcox, McMahon on Ballot

PVLA Members Al Wilcox and Carol McMahon have collected the requisite signatures, and will be on the ballot this Fall. Wilcox is running for State Representative. McMahon is running for State Senate. This is a wonderful achievement! Getting them both on the ballot required tripling signature collection efforts relative to 2000. Petitioning will now begin for libertarian Public Policy questions.

Ilana Freedman's campaign has another week to collect signatures, and is going for an extra 1000 signatures as a safety margin. We'll have a full report next issue.

## Here Comes the Tent

The PVLA Tent made its annual pilgrimage to the Extravaganja on the Amherst Common. It really paid off; there was a cloudburst. We ran OPH outreach, talked about the PVLA, and collected a few candidate signatures.

Practical lesson for OPH: Clipboards, with board, pen, one World's Smallest Political Quiz, and handout for reader to keep. After people took the quiz and got their dot (dots were kept in pockets of the operators), they were asked if they wanted to be a volunteer for an action (e.g., pro-relegal-ization) regardless of their political orientation. We got three dozen potential volunteers. Recharged clipboards with fresh OPH sheets were very efficient for keeping things going.

## Got Candidate?

Charles Wilhoit of Tennessee, who in 2000 ran for National Vice Chair, has qualified for the ballot and will be running for Governor of Tennessee. The Idaho Libertarian Party is running more than

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Announcing LSG Supplement

I had some extra articles. They will never reach Libertarian Strategy Gazette, the paper edition. However, space limitations on the electronic edition at [www.cmlc.org/cmlc/pubs.htm](http://www.cmlc.org/cmlc/pubs.htm) are much weaker, so the supplement will occasionally have articles, perhaps long, on it. This month: An extensive list of web pages on campaign and mailing list aids. Real Campus Activism. The New Jersey Plan.

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[**Craig Mathias Speaks**] derive from a number of experiences during my recent run for State Representative. And that leads me to Carla Howell.

Now, Carla and I have always had what I considered to be a good relationship. I think we knew each other well, and certainly respected one another, and we both supported the Party and its goals. I spent my time in office, putting the theory into practice, and she was our flagship candidate, getting the high visibility we needed (and still need). The party needs lots of people, with a variety of skills, in many, many roles. We must tolerate our individual differences on issues if the Party is to grow, and look towards the day of a Libertarian majority in elected office. Sadly, I concluded that the LPMA is not a big tent, it is not about the business of broadening membership, and it is not a growing, vibrant political force. It is a club, and perhaps even a cult - without, of course, the kool-aid, but with the same cliquish behavior that typifies that of many a third-grade playground.

At the state convention last year, Carla and I spoke of getting together for dinner sometime, with our respective significant others, and to building on the momentum of our respective activities. Imagine my surprise, when, just a few months later, she refused to provide an endorsement to my campaign that I assumed would be no problem whatsoever. She stated that she felt I wasn't being "bold" enough in my campaign, especially with respect to the issue of guns. She said too many Libertarians serving in local office were simply "wimpy", and I guess that included me.

I was stunned, to say the least; "shocked" is a more appropriate term indeed. I was further surprised that the Howell campaign would not provide my campaign with a list of locations within my district that previously sported Howell lawn signs (during her run for US Senate). I was told this information was "proprietary" to the campaign. This, mind you, was a campaign that I had wholeheartedly supported and to which I had donated a not insignificant amount of money. Stunned really wasn't the word for it.

I started to think about what was really going on here, and came to two conclusions. First, I believe Carla saw me (legitimately, I might add) as a potential competitor for higher office. I had talked about running for Governor, and also for Treasurer and possibly Secretary of State. But I believe I would make an excellent Governor, given my political and business experience, and my long history of involvement on Beacon Hill. Why not have a primary battle? I think it would be healthy for the Party to really hash out issues, and to have more than one highly-visible candidate. Of course, no one can blame Carla for fearing this possibility, and no one should expect her to support a potential competitor. Except - this isn't about Carla, or Craig; it's about the Party. Wouldn't her campaign for Governor be even more legitimate, visible, and even viable with a Libertarian in the House of Representatives? The LP needs to win partisan races in order to be legitimate, and I had a very

good shot. The lack of support from Carla, and the LPMA in general, was at the very least disheartening. This is not in any way meant as a slight to the individual Libertarians who worked very hard on my campaign. But the LPMA really didn't seem to see this as the opportunity that it was, and I believe Carla was more than a little influential here.

The other conclusion had more serious repercussions. As I noted, I am not a rigid Libertarian. I also believe in gradualism, building the future we all want a little at a time. Judging from Carla's literature, she expects to be elected and then become not governor, but in fact queen, simply "shredding" every law in sight that isn't 100% in compliance with her vision of Libertarian orthodoxy. Earth to Carla - this is a democracy, and it doesn't work that way. Democracy is, in fact, based on compromise, which is essential to the process and our overall stability as a society. The people need to be convinced, not simply told they are wrong and ignored.

I came to call Carla and her followers the "Taliban" wing of the LPMA. They would put us all in a burka of their vision of what liberty is, and stone anyone who disagrees in the slightest. That's small-tent thinking, and the LPMA (and the LP in general) will never become a force in Massachusetts or American politics with such an approach at the forefront. And those who have yet to come around to our way of thinking are simply going to be turned off by the message. Example: what's with Carla's huge emphasis on gun laws? Doesn't she know that only 3% of people in the entire Commonwealth of Massachusetts own guns? And while this number may be at least skewed a little by our (albeit absurd) gun laws, most citizens will simply see Carla's stand on this issue as mindlessly rigid and therefore as an excuse not to vote for her at all. This is why I focused on taxes, an issue that will attract the voters we need, not turn them off. There's already momentum here.

Rigid orthodoxy is the wrong approach, and the wrong vision for the LPMA. It won't work. We could replace Carla Howell with a piece of software that, given an issue as input, would simply spit out the party platform, followed, of course, by "no exceptions, no excuses". That's not an acceptable, viable, or even vaguely functional approach to growing the Party and getting the laws we need repealed or passed, as the case may be. All-or-nothing positions (and this includes the Small Government Act) are doomed to failure, and failure is something the LPMA has had quite enough of. The Party will only be judged by its success in electing candidates, and there is little hope on this front at the moment.

I'm going to predict here that Carla will be utterly humiliated in the Governor's race. She did well against a weak Republican in the Senate contest (and, as weak as he was, he still beat her), and against strong Democratic and Republican candidates this year, she will get creamed. She'd like to run for President in 2004, but, then, there's that Gary Johnson guy. I believe he won't run, since he knows he can't win as a Libertarian (there is no point in running if you know you're going to lose), so Carla's fairly safe here. Good for her.

But bad for the Party. So, given the dominance of the Party by thinking that cannot succeed, I decided it would be a much better use of my time to turn my attention to other matters. I am not at this point going to say the LPMA is cooked and will not survive, but there is that possibility. This is in no way to unfairly criticize those who have worked so hard to build the Party - I was, after all, one of them. I truly believe they have done the best they can, and I am proud of my association with them. But, as they say, the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. It's time for a new tack, in my humble opinion, starting with candidates that think, reason, excite, recruit, and avoid becoming what are essentially fascist dictators. And fortunately there are a few of those thinking candidates, most notably Ilana Freedman.

I hope this serves to clarify my position. I realize that there are many who will be displeased with what I've just written; so be it. While I would be happy to clarify any of the points I've made here, as we say in the UNIX world, please send your flames to /dev/null. I have no interest in participating in extended debates or pissing contests. Please take or leave what I've said above as you see fit. But I truly hope that Party leadership will realize that the current path is not going to lead to success, and time really is of the essence.  
...Craig Mathias

## Outreach to the Sympathetic

On alternative approaches to raising Libertarian issues, Bonnie Scott <rabbit@cownow.com> writes: "Just this weekend at an upstate-downstate organizing meeting for the "Drop the Rock" group (DTR), we talked about the strategy of lobbying for restoring voting rights to felons currently in prison, or out on parole. NY doesn't take their franchise away forever, just until they've finished the sentence and parole. Many of the people in the DTR movement are inter-faith prison outreach organizers, and it's important to them.

(The Rock=Rockefeller Drug laws, or mandatory sentencing, which is often used to also refer to our mandatory minimum laws, which many drug prisoners fall under.)"

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(Continued from page 1) [Got Candidates?]

40 candidates for legislature this year. They also have candidates for every statewide office except attorney general. Libertarians of Kootenai County are contesting every open position including the county coroner. They are hoping to join Libertarian Richard Linville, who is the elected Prosecutor of Gem County (4,280 votes in the November 2000 election, running unopposed). Idaho is much like Massachusetts, a one-party state in which the opposition party (in Idaho, the Democrats) is a ghost.

The Indiana Libertarian Party is running 200 candidates this year, including 45 in Marion County alone. This is slightly more than the 185 the LP of Texas has placed on the ballot to date. To keep major party status, this year the Indiana Party's candidate for Secretary of State must get 2% of the vote.

The LP of Alabama has placed a record-breaking 61 candidates on the election ballot for this November for partisan races. Nomination was by petition based on receiving over 20% of the vote for a statewide race in 2000.

Libertarian David Eisenbacher was elected to the Troy, Michigan, City Council. Libertarian Martin Howrylak is already on the Troy City Council. Eisenbacher was substantially supported by the Libertarian Victory Fund, Chris Azarro, Executive Director (1306 West Craig Rd. #158, North Las Vegas, NV 89032).

Long-time Libertarian activist Gene Cisewski was elected to the Iron County Board of Supervisors. He captured more than 60% of the vote in defeating 4-term incumbent Leon Baron. Cisewski, a former member of the Libertarian National Committee, was twice candidate for National Chair.

Looking at prior elections, Mike Hihn reports "There is growing evidence--now further confirmed in Washington--of two factors for Libertarian ballot success:

1. Visible local candidates and/or parties, as shown by the "reverse coattails" effect seen nationwide since 1996.
2. Rural counties have significantly higher libertarian leanings, by any and all measurements, in Washington state and likely elsewhere." Details including spreadsheet analyses are on Hihn's grassrootsliberty website.

## Where Your Money Went

Federal Spending by the Libertarian Party of Massachusetts for the first quarter of the year included \$10000 deposit for the state convention, \$2617 for printing and mailing including \$962 for a convention mailer, \$1500 of convention web site maintenance, \$150 of other web site maintenance, \$1401 of 'charges by business manager', \$228 of badges and pins for the state convention, \$524 for stationery, \$254 in bank charges, and \$1175 of payments to the LNC as 'National Membership Program'.

## NatCon Speakers

Reports in LP News indicate that former National Chair David Bergland and former Presidential candidate Harry Browne will be speakers at the 2002 National Convention. Many who are familiar with Browne's Presidential Campaign are said to be concerned over the situation.

## Cloud Endorses Israel

Writing to his Small Government News e-newsletter, Michael Cloud has endorsed Eli Israel for National Chair. We quote excerpts from his letter to his readers:

“Eli Israel is the only candidate for Libertarian National Chair who has the vision, values, and ability to give us the Libertarian Party we've always dreamed of. A Libertarian Party too big to exclude, too big to ignore. A Libertarian Party that attracts and keeps effective activists. A Libertarian Party that advances and supports bold and principled Libertarian candidates. A Libertarian Party that honors and respects productive and cooperative members.

“Eli Israel is committed to achieving the following goals by Election Day, 2004:

1. Double the Libertarian Party membership nationally and in each state.
2. Double the tools, training, and funding of the national party and every state affiliate.
3. Work to ensure that the national party and affiliates at all levels actively support Libertarian campaigns - both high-profile, party-building races and electable Libertarians in winnable races.
4. Actively promote a Libertarian Party culture of productivity, teamwork, and action.
5. Work together with the local, state, and national parties to double the number of elected Libertarians.”

“I believe Eli Israel. He is the only candidate for Libertarian National Chair who can and will take the Libertarian Party forward.

“I've known Eli Israel for 7 years. He is a Libertarian donor and activist. He has served as Executive Director of the Libertarian Party of Massachusetts. He is the Libertarian State Chair of Massachusetts. He is also a member-at-large of the Libertarian National Committee, the governing board of the Libertarian Party.

“Mr. Israel has recruited dozens of Libertarian candidates and he was the Libertarian candidate for Lt. Governor in Massachusetts in 1998.

Eli Israel has fundraised over \$200,000 for the Libertarian Party of Massachusetts and other state Libertarian Parties.

Eli Israel has worked with Libertarians he agrees with. But he has also successfully worked with Libertarians he disagreed with. And he's done it well.

“Eli Israel is both a leader and a team player. Most of all, he's committed to Libertarian success. Eli Israel is the Founder and President of Promanage, a management consulting practice for the software industry. He and his wife Eve Maler are both active Libertarians.”

Cloud, who is running for U.S. Senate in Massachusetts, has been endorsed by Harry Browne.

## Editorial Aside

I have been asked — it's a fair question — about the size of LAMA mailings in late 1996, when I was Executive Director of LAMA, by appointment of John Brickner. In early 1996, publication of **Mass Liberty** became irregular, and despite my Senate campaign (we missed ballot status) I also briefly took over as Editor of **Mass Liberty**. It was I (through one of my book dealers) who identified our current printing/ mailing house as people who could handle getting **Mass Liberty** out the door in a regular way. As a result, every month it was I who drove to remote south Worcester with the masters, two checks, and the computer disk with the addresses. Thus, I undoubtedly have an exact count of how many names were on our mailing list.

In 1996, LAMA had two groups of members. There were the people whose LAMA dues were current — there were about 150 of those, perhaps a few less. Then there were the members—people who had adhered to the Noninitiation of Force statement—but whose dues were not current. There were around 1100 of these. Some of them may have been paid up with LPUS, while others were not [if they were a random sample, about 550 were paid up, and 550 or so were not], but as defined in the Party By-Laws they were all members. For the Presidential election campaign, we actually mailed a half-dozen issues to all of them. Massachusetts presently has over 1800 “Basic Members”.

## Letter

Editor: I have been in touch with people on Howell's Small Government is Beautiful List. Some of them are one issue advocates, not Libertarians. The other day, with a single issue group I mentioned knowing a Libertarian Candidate in their area—Carol McMahan. They did not know about her, and were surprised news of her campaign was not on the Libertarian email List. I asked them which list they meant. They answered ‘the main Libertarian List’, Small Government is Beautiful List.

I politely explained that this list is Howell's, not the Party's, she does not share it with others. They in return gave me their names and addresses, because they thought the list was for all Libertarians. I have their word that their list of names and places for signs and volunteers will be shared with all Libertarians in their part of Massachusetts.

The amazing thing is that I did not know about these people, even though I am County Chair, even though I regularly asked for this information. I am glad that I spend my time working with other groups instead of pandering to elitists in our Party. My job is much easier because others out there are willing to make up their own minds rather than dealing with those who think they know what is best for you.

These advocates do a lot of ballot work and petition work in Western and Central Mass. These are the people that Craig Mathias could not get information on; they were happy to work with other activists (as Craig said) rather than staying hidden. ...Rich Watras