

libertarian bulletin

Newsletter
of the Ontario
Libertarian Party

Ontario Libertarian Party
7-91 Rylander Blvd., Box 121
Scarborough, ON M1B 5M5
416-283-7589

www.libertarian.on.ca

Bulletin Vol. 29 No. 2

Winter 2008

Doug Burn, Editor

Leadership Convention—November 8, 2008

The November 8, 2008, Ontario Libertarian Party leadership convention was like many in the past. Once again, the venue was a suburban Toronto hotel. Once again the speakers were old party stalwarts, who of course spoke for free: Professor Glenn Fox of Guelph and retired Professor Jan Narveson of Waterloo. Of course both were well worth hearing again. Fox is arguably Canada's top expert in the admittedly small field of free-market environmentalism. Narveson is a world-famous libertarian philosopher, best-known as the author of *The Libertarian Idea* (though this year he was promoting his newest book, *You and the State* [Rowan & Littlefield, 2008]).

After lunch, the Marilee Haylock Award was presented. The Haylock, the party's most prestigious trophy, is given for "long-term commitment to the Ontario Libertarian Party and the cause of freedom" every three years, at each convention. This time it was awarded posthumously to party co-founder, and International Society for Individual Liberty (ISIL) founder, Vince Miller.

The next two hours had been set aside for the most contentious item of business: the party's Statement of Principles (SoP). It had been adopted back in 1974 when the party was founded by members of the Objectivist group Radicals for Capitalism, and reflects that origin; while there have been a few amendments since, it still reads as if cribbed from Ayn Rand's non-fiction works:

Chairman Dance had been tasked in 2006 by the party Executive Committee with proposing amendments for this Convention, and had done a rewrite that omitted most of the Randian rhetoric while leaving the principles. However, he knew that the Randian framers had made the SoP well-nigh unamendable: 7/8 of all delegates (including proxies) were needed to pass any change.

Your new Executive Committee

Leader - Sam Apfelbaum
Deputy Leader - Jean-Serge Brisson
Chairman - Heath Thomas
Vice-Chair - Paolo Fabrizio
Secretary - Philip Bender
Recording Secretary - Peter Radzio
Treasurer - Jim McIntosh 416-283-7589
Campaign Director - Craig Hodgins
Members at Large - Rob Alexander and Anthony Giles
Ethics Committee - Alwyn Weiss, Alan Mercer, John Shaw, Jan Narveson

Libertarian Events

January 14, 7:00 PM - **Toronto Pub Night**, Fionn Mac-Cools, (at the back of the restaurant) 21 St. Clair Ave. W., 416-925-7827. For more information phone Jim McIntosh at 416-283-7589. (2nd Wednesday of each month)

January 19, 7:00 PM - **Hamilton Pub Night**, Pheasant Plucker, 20 Augusta St. (905) 529-9000. For more information call Anthony Giles at 905-691-0818. (3rd Monday of each month)

January 20, 6:30 PM - **Barrie Pub Night**, Molly's Restaurant, 4171 Innisfil Beach Rd, Thornton, 705-458-2932. For more information call Paolo Fabrizio at 647-300-8555. (3rd Tuesday of each month)

March 7, 3:00 PM - **Ottawa Pub Afternoon** - South Side Bar and Grill, 1670 Heron Road, (Heron Gate Mall) Phone 613-526-2192. For more information contact Andrew Phillips (613-733-8948). (1st Saturday of every 2nd month.)

So Dance pursued a second track, amending the party membership oath (which required all members to sign, "I support the principles of the Ontario Libertarian Party"), which would need only a two-thirds floor vote to pass. Dance decided to replace the oath with something non-binding but meaningful, and finally settled on the phrase, "I'm for individual liberty."

Dance announced the proposed changes in the summer 2008 party newsletter, and in the follow up fall issue explained the rationale behind them: [George Dance, Chairman's Report, *Libertarian Bulletin*, 29:1 (Fall, 2008)]

This shameless attempt to boost attendance by inciting party purists to storm the convention to save their principles didn't work, alas. It did, though spark the anticipated backlash. Purists wrote Dance comments such as:

"When we became members, we signed the Statement of Principles. We were proud to do so. We firmly believe in these principles and are glad to be members of the only party which has them. To remove the Membership Oath is ill-advised."

"What is the point of our party without these principles? We will simply become more and more like all of the others."

Because of the controversy, at the convention Dance tabled the membership oath amendment rather than lead with it. Instead, he began by introducing the new Execu-

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THE PARTY OF CHOICE – Our Vision is communities of freedom, harmony and abundance.

The Mission of the Party is to enable endless possibilities through recognition of, respect for and protection of individual liberty.

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tive Committee and Ethics Committee oath of office ("I support and promise to uphold the Ontario Libertarian Party SoP") and the new candidates' pledge ("I will not advocate anything inconsistent with the Ontario Libertarian Party SoP"), both of which were speedily passed by large margins. That left 90 minutes for the delegates to chew over the amendments to the SoP itself.

Finally a hand vote and then a ballot vote was taken on adopting Dance's amendments as one package, with 19 votes in favour and five against -- meaning that it failed by two votes.

A dramatic moment, to be sure, but what followed was even more so: the leadership vote. Twelve-year Leader Sam Apelbaum was being challenged for his job by Jean-Serge Brisson, who stepped down in May after ten years as Leader of the Libertarian Party of Canada. The two men had sharp differences; the five minutes each was allowed before the vote for speeches and questions turned into a spontaneous 30-minute debate.

On the first ballot, Brisson had 13 votes, Apelbaum 12, None of the Above 3. As no candidate had a majority, a second ballot was required. Dance ruled that Apelbaum be dropped from the ballot.

Supporters of both candidates urged Dance to have None of the Above dropped instead. Dance re-affirmed his original ruling and asked the members to overrule him by a two-thirds vote, which they did. Apelbaum then won on the second ballot, with a one-vote majority.

The balance of the elections were anticlimactic. Brisson was elected Deputy Leader by a large margin. Visit our web site, www.libertarian.on.ca for details of the vote.

Then it was back to the battle of the membership oath. For another half-hour, familiar arguments were thrashed out. Finally Dance was given a last minute to respond and seized the opportunity:

"This year I, like many of you here today, was tremendously impressed with the Ron Paul rEVOLution. Never have I seen so many people working so hard, so passionately, for the message and the cause of liberty. Never have I seen that message gain such a response, in votes, funds, and endorsements. As I observed it, and tried to help it in my own small way, the thought kept coming back to me: this is exactly what our party needs.

"Yet another thought kept nagging at me: would the rEVOLution be welcome in our party? Would Ron Paul himself be welcome? For as much as I admired Paul, honesty made me admit the inconsistencies between his message of liberty, and that allowed by our Statement of Principles. I had to seriously ask myself: would our party allow a man like Ron Paul to join us and run for us? Could such a man even consider joining us? Not without some serious mental gymnastics.

"If we can't allow Ron Paul into our party, how could we ever hope to attract the rEVOLution?

"Not just Ron Paul's rEVOLution, either. How about the millions who voted for Mike Harris and his "Common Sense Revolution"? Do we want any of them to vote for us? Do we want any of them to donate for us? Do we

want them to volunteer for us? Well, why would they do that, if we would not let them join us?

"It is not just quasi-libertarians or part-way libertarians that the Statement of Principles excludes, either. It also keeps out consistent, 100% libertarians: the anarchists. Reread Principle 4: "Government is morally required." How can an anarcho-capitalist sign that he believes that, without his or her own serious mental gymnastics?

"The present Statement of Principles is not a Statement of Libertarian Principles. It is a Statement of Objectivist Principles. And I do not want to be part of an Objectivist Party. I want to be part of a Libertarian party."

Be that as it may, Dance's appeal to the radicals and Ron Paul supporters in the room appeared to be sufficient, and the purist opposition was overwhelmed. As of today, anyone who has signed the statement, "I'm for individual liberty" (and has paid current membership dues) may be a member of the party.

Later, too late, Dance thought of the perfect ending: "I am not criticizing Objectivism. I have nothing against Objectivism. But I'm not for Objectivism. I'm for individual liberty."

Commenting wryly, "This is my legacy," Dance called for a motion to adjourn, which was quickly moved, seconded, and carried. And twenty friends of liberty lingered to chat, enjoying each other's company for a while more before wending their way into the early Ontario dark.

This article was excerpted from the column "Libertarian Politics in Ontario, Canada" by George Dance (with his permission) on Nolan Chart (<http://www.nolanchart.com/article5442.html>)

Start Small – by Larry Stevens

A recurring theme I heard during my association with the Ontario Libertarian Party was the need to educate people. Another was that the most important objective was to privatize the education system.

Given that education is so important, why not deal with it directly? Why take on the whole Ontario Government? Why not just take on the educational community and effect change there?

How? The most direct route would be to attend school-board meetings in your region. Use the skills you are going to use once you're elected to the legislature, to persuade the board members to introduce a course on libertarianism in local high schools. After all school boards do have sufficient leeway within Ministry guidelines to offer one optional course.

This approach has several advantages: (1) It can be implemented immediately. (2) It should be much easier to convince a few dozen school board members to implement a course than it would be to convince over a hundred fellow MPPs (to say nothing of tens of thousands of special-interest-group members and government bureaucrats) to change the direction of government. (3) It will enable you to hone your skills so you will be even more effective once you are elected to the legislature.

If you have no success convincing the school board as an outsider, become a trustee. Then you can be much

more effective as you will be working from the inside. In addition, being an elected trustee will increase your credibility the next time you run at the provincial level.

The advantages of having a course offered in your local high schools include: (1) You'll reach far more people than you presently do during an election campaign. (2) You'll get far more ideas across in a course than you now do in a press release or speech. (3) You'll swell libertarian ranks with a whole new generation of libertarians. (4) Libertarian ideas may be more credible if they're taught within the current education system.

The same approach could be implemented at the college or university level by joining their board of directors, or by befriending one or more of the current board members and converting them to libertarianism.

If you happen to be a teacher, you can join the executive of the teachers' union. Educate the other executive members – again a few dozen people rather than tens of thousands. In particular, convince them of the virtues of privatizing the schools. Even if you're not a teacher, you can still use this approach effectively. Simply befriend one or more teachers' union executives. Educate them and convert them to the libertarian cause. Have them educate the rest of the union executive and convince them of the virtues of privatization. Once the teachers' union has been convinced, have them go to the Ministry and convince the top Ministry official of the desirability of privatizing the school system.

The idea for this article came from a podcast by Stefan Molyneux on freedomradio.com.

26 Libertarians in Federal Election – by Jim McIntosh

Congratulations to the 26 Libertarians who ran for the Libertarian Party of Canada during the Federal Election campaign from September 8 to October 14. Probably the two biggest challenges for them were the \$1,000 deposit and the 100 signatures required to get their names on the ballot. I advanced the deposit for several of our candidates. As their Official Agent, I knew I would get it back when I filed their Campaign Returns.

Collecting 100 signatures proved too much for several potential candidates. One of our more experienced candidates was at the Returning Office at the deadline with about 110 signatures, of which 97 were valid. He had another four valid signatures coming to the office, but the Returning Officer couldn't accept them since they arrived minutes after the 2 PM deadline.

Philip Bender was our candidate in the Guelph By-election on September 8. It was cancelled on September 7 when the Prime Minister pulled the plug on Parliament so Phil had to go through the nomination procedure again, and I had to prepare Campaign Returns for both elections. Phil found that collecting signatures at a gas bar was quite effective; someone filling up his or her car is a captive audience! Since the Guelph riding is the city of Guelph, it was easy to determine if the person lived in the riding.

Chester Brown, a cartoonist and new member, had a full page comic strip in the National Post on September 30 explaining to his anarchist friend why he was running in Trinity-Spadina. On October 19 The Toronto Star devoted over half a page to his comic strip about the campaign. What a great way to spread our ideas! We couldn't buy this much advertising space!

Anthony Giles joined the Party during the provincial election last October and ran in Hamilton-Centre. He started collecting signatures early and had well over the required 100 on September 16. He received 528 votes (1.3%), the most of any of our candidates. He reports that all he did was attend the All Candidates Meetings. He is organizing the Hamilton Pub Nights. The first one was held on November 17 and seven people showed up. The next ones are December 15 and January 19 at the Pheasant Plucker, 20 Augusta Street. Phone Anthony at 905-691-0818.

RIDING	CANDIDATE	VOTES	%
Alberta			
Calgary Centre-North	McNeil, Jason	345	0.7
Calgary Southwest	Young, Dennis	304	0.6
Peace River	Simard, Melanie	315	0.7
Wild Rose	Zoobkoff, Krista	248	0.5
British Columbia			
Burnaby--New Westminster	Yetisen, Ismet	186	0.4
New Westminster--Coquitlam	Dahlby, Lewis	345	0.7
North Vancouver	Audain, Tunya	166	0.3
Pitt Meadows--Maple Ridge--Mission	Monds, Jeff	320	0.6
Port Moody--Westwood--Port Coquitlam	Gillespie, Rob	321	0.7
Saanich--Gulf Islands	Leier, Dale	246	0.4
Surrey North	Joehl, Alex	347	1.0
Vancouver Centre	Clarke, John	340	0.6
Vancouver Kingsway	Kadioglu, Matt	309	0.7
Vancouver Quadra	Barens, Norris	332	0.6
Ontario			
Ajax-Pickering	Wilson, Stephanie	167	0.4
Barrie	Fabrizio, Paolo	260	0.5
Guelph	Bender, Philip	159	0.3
Hamilton-Centre	Giles, Anthony	528	1.3
Kitchener-Waterloo	Cousineau, Jason	337	0.6
Markham-Unionville	Small, Allen	229	0.5
Ottawa South	Brisson, Jean-Serge	244	0.4
Scarborough-Rouge River	Mercer, Alan	331	0.8
Simcoe-Grey	McKibbin, Caley	143	0.3
St. Paul's	Kittredge, John	313	0.6
Trinity-Spadina	Brown, Chester	490	0.8
Saskatchewan			
Saskatoon--Rosetown--Biggar	Stricker, Kevin	74	0.3
Total		7,399	

The Spirit of Liberty – by George Dance

At this time of year, we hear a lot about 'spirit.' So much has been written about the traditional Spirit of Christmas – the spirit of love, caring, and generosity that prevails at this time of year – that little need be said about it here. Turned into today's more politically correct 'holiday spirit,' exploited by so many with a cause or a product to peddle, still it is real and known.

The holiday spirit exists, as a set of ideas and ideals that inspire people to act in ways that enrich their own lives and the lives of those around them. There are many such spirits in our lives. The one I would like you to think about just now is the spirit of liberty.

Think back to that moment when you first realized that you were a libertarian: that you were a sovereign moral agent, in control of your own life, and with full responsibility for it; that you control your own destiny; that you can decide what is good and right, and have both the right and the obligation to live by what you decide. That was the spirit of liberty entering into and becoming a part of your life.

Remember how you felt then – how wonderful you felt – and how that feeling has stayed with you through your lifetime. The fire may have died down, but it's still burning inside you.

I hope that one of your New Year's resolutions will be to rediscover and live that spirit of liberty more often in the coming year. I hope you resolve to live the spirit of liberty every day.

Think, too, of the satisfaction of putting that spirit into another person's life. Little is as gratifying as knowing that you were that important, that you made that much of a difference, in another human being's life.

Imagine what the world would be like if everyone were a libertarian – if everyone lived the spirit of liberty, every day. What's stopping that from happening? It's not that libertarian ideals are being rejected. The fact is that the majority of people simply do not know what those libertarian ideals are. Few know much of anything about it; even fewer have understood it, much less felt it. The spirit of liberty has never been brought into their lives.

I hope that bringing that spirit into at least one other person's life this coming year will also be one of your resolutions.

There are many ways to bring libertarianism to another person. Many libertarians have worked, and are working, tremendously hard to do just that. Some – a lucky few – even manage to do so on a full-time basis. But for most of us, that sort of commitment of time and effort is just not possible. Work, family, and so many other personal commitments and responsibilities keep us from doing all that we would like to do.

Which is why we organize. The advantage of an organization like the Ontario Libertarian Party is how it can increase our own effectiveness. The division of labour can multiply our results: each volunteer is able to concentrate on the areas in which he or she is strong, and be sup-

ported by other volunteers where they need help. Those with the same interests and talents can accomplish more by working together; those with different interests can define and work out their own projects within the party framework.

Those too involved with family and work commitments for an active role can still contribute. Financial support is needed for us to accomplish anything of note. Our volunteers can do little without the proper resources, which we can get only by the help of our membership's voluntary donations of both money and goods.

All of our volunteer effort, all of our resources, must be concentrated on putting the spirit of liberty into the lives of others. That is my vision for the Ontario Libertarian Party.

I urge you to get more involved in communicating that spirit during the New Year. Libertarianism is a powerful body of knowledge, true and important enough to make the world an incomparably better place. All of this knowledge is a gift that you were given, and that you can give freely to those around you. During the coming year, make it a goal to talk to the people in your life – family, friends and business acquaintances – about the ideas of liberty. Share your knowledge and insight with them, and watch it change their lives.

Don't forget the organization. The Ontario Libertarian Party is an organization with one purpose: to put the spirit and ideas of liberty into other people's lives. We have a great need for volunteers; too many things we would like to do remain unfinished, or even unstarted, for lack of help. Can you commit to one day a year of volunteer service to the Libertarian Party?

If you can't volunteer for that much time, you can support those who do. Financial support is essential in giving our volunteers the tools and resources they need to succeed. Can you commit to donating one day's pay to the Libertarian Party? That kind of financial commitment is just as valuable, and equally important to what we achieve next year.

Giving money is a relatively easy, effortless way of promoting liberty. For those with higher incomes, Ontario's generous tax credit system makes it even easier: The first \$200 you donate to a registered provincial party, for example, gives you a tax credit of \$150. Giving a day's pay a year is a minimal commitment.

Supporting the Ontario Libertarian Party financially in a meaningful way is a worthwhile project, and a needed help in putting the spirit of liberty into the lives of those around us. Remember, though, that it is not a complete substitute for personal action.

There is no action you can take in this coming year more valuable than personally putting the spirit of liberty into the lives of those around you, those you care about. Nothing is as crucial to the success of our beliefs. And little is as personally satisfying.

I wish you the best of luck in being and doing the best you can be and do in the New Year.