

Liberty for America

Journal of the
Libertarian Political Movement

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Building a Libertarian Future Your Monthly Step

Last month, I described finding a board or office, or perhaps two of them, that you found interesting. If you are following this path you've done some reading on what the board does, attended a meeting if you could, and tried to learn what they were doing. Now you have to ask: Can you get involved in what you are seeing? Could you be effective if you got involved?

Many appointed boards have terms. If there are no vacancies waiting to be filled, and the next vacancy is well in the future, becoming an appointed member is not a possibility. If you are looking at an elected board, you need to see the election schedule. That's the full schedule, not when election day happens. There is some date at which you have to file papers, can first take out nominating petitions, or whatever, and you need to be prepared well before then.

You also need to ask yourself if you can do reasonably well by being a member of the board you are watching. If most of the topics the board treats are beyond your depth, you might be elected to the board at some future date, but you are at risk of doing a bad job, which is not good for your political future. Remember, though, most boards are composed of regular people not much different from you; if they can do well, you can, too.

Your next step, then is to decide if you have found a good board, *and* to find out how you might get onto the board. If either answer is in the negative, you need to stop and try again.

Oh, yes, in some small towns in parts of America, there are lots of minor elective posts, like Cemetery Commissioner. Some of those jobs may be vacant. Alas, it is only in small towns that these posts exist; for many Americans, this alternative route to elective office is not available.

The step you heard this month is more an introspective step than a do-something step. It's better to take this step now, rather than trying to get involved in your local government in a way that will not work, at least for you, and possibly waste months and months of your time.

Porter Considers Run For LNC Chair

Chillicothe, MO – Region 6 Alternate to the Libertarian National Committee Jake Porter announced that he is considering running for Libertarian National Committee Chair.

“I believe it is time that we unite our party around achievable goals and objectives.” Porter wrote. Porter was initially reluctant in his decision to announce he was considering running. “My arm is certainly being twisted to run. I do not want to see a repeat of the 2008 convention where no one really campaigned before the delegates arrived in Denver.” Porter said.

Jake Porter is a former At-Large Representative for the Libertarian Party of Iowa and recently served as Iowa Coordinator for Congressman Barr's Presidential campaign. Porter has an Associates Degree in Business Administration and previously worked as Business Manager for the Saint Joseph Telegraph. Today, Porter is the owner of J.D. Porter Consulting.

Porter is expected to announce his decision sometime in July For more information on Jake Porter's campaign, see the campaign website, www.jakeporter.org/chair. Or contact media@jakeporter.org

Maine, RI Libertarians Are Organizing

Good news from Maine and Rhode Island, whose Libertarian Parties have recently been inactive. Local Libertarians are organizing! To participate in the Maine effort, contact James Oaksun <james@virtualgalt.com> To show your support for a Rhode Island effort, contact Tony Jones, Jr. <tonyjones@cbgb.net>

Freedom Ballot Access

Has sent \$1200 to the LPWV Ballot Access Drive. You can help. FreedomBallotAccess.com

Libertarian Students Organize!

Standing behind the webmastering talents of Ryan Lynch, libertarian students and libertarian student groups across Massachusetts are now coming together as the Massachusetts wing of the national Students for a Free America. Their Massachusetts web site is the new FreeMass.org. FreeMass.Org aims to serve as an outlet for like minded students across the Commonwealth. Interested students should contact Ryan Lynch RD724@comcast.net. Potential coordinators in other states should contact George Phillies phillies@4liberty.net.

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Campaign season is almost here!

...Rachel Hawkrigde

If you've ever thought about running for office, it's time to start planning.

Libertarian candidates have some choices to make. There are two ways to go.

The first is to run for a small, non-partisan office. This could be anything from a water or cemetery board to a school board. These are very winnable races. Where you don't necessarily talk about your political beliefs, but you practice them. You influence policy. Make decisions, and actually govern. School boards are a great race for this. Do not expect that people will know that you are Libertarian, do not attempt to change the world overnight. Especially on a school board – this one should be handled carefully, but can be a launching point for a politician to actually get elected to higher office. Someone who has served on a school board for 4-8 years, putting in the time, the hard work, will have some reputation and network that may help to win a legislative, or city council race.

The second is to run an educational campaign. There might be a race in your district that has no opponent, or

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Liberty for America will be performing political acts, like supporting voter registration, lining up volunteers, and other activities that the Federal government calls "Federal Election Activity" and hence FEC-reportable. We must therefore funnel dues to our PAC, "Liberty for America". Dues will not be used to support candidates.

Required Federal Notices: Your Donations are not tax deductible. Federal law requires us to request the occupation and employer of donors of \$200 or more in a year. Federal law requires us to state 'your money may be used to support Federal candidates', but we promise that we won't do that with your dues.

where you just have a particular passion, but not any real hope of winning. In this type of campaign, you would run a legitimate campaign, maximizing your exposure, taking every opportunity to speak to voters and to get out the Libertarian message. All the while knowing that there is not much chance of winning. These campaigns are generally run for education and information – a way to expose people to Libertarian ideas, and talk about better government.

No matter which strategy you decide on, never enter into a race for a job that you wouldn't take, unless it is a strategy. For instance, one time Ruth Bennett ran for Lt. Governor on the platform that, if elected, she would abolish the office of Lt. Governor. Jack Tanner, and a couple of our Florida Libertarians, got elected to a board that accomplished nothing, and cost taxpayers a lot of money, and then they shut it down. All brilliant Libertarian strategists. Thank you, gentlepeople.

What do you plan to do? Need help deciding? Go to your County or Secretary of State's website, and see what offices are up for election this fall.

What sounds attractive or interesting to you? What fits with your interests, skills?

Once you have an office in mind, start doing the research.

- * What are the issues?
- * Is this office something that has been in the news recently? Corrupt? Incompetent?
- * Spending too much money?
- * Look up Voter Guide Statements for the race in past years.
- * Pay particular attention to the statement of the winner.
- * Start to write a statement that incorporates Libertarian values. Be careful that you don't include any information that, no matter how true or Libertarian, has no connection to the office. (In other words, in a City Council race, you do not mention federal or state issues. This is not where you talk about your 911 Truth beliefs, or your Birther convictions, or your desire to build ZeroG space stations.)

Then start to prepare –

- * Get a photo taken – preferably a professional shot. Dress for a professional job interview (it is!), and be cautious about any emblems, symbols, or backgrounds. You want a photo that makes you look relaxed, confident, and approachable. Susan Hogarth reviewed a lot of candidate photos last season – I found it helpful.

* Have you been in touch with your local LP affiliate to ask for endorsement, campaign help, volunteers? Do it

now. This is also a good place to start to get help from Libertarians with your Voter Guide Statement and talking points.

- * Put together a list of friends, family, business contacts and organizations that you can ask for donations and help. Even people who don't have money usually have something that they can help you with. Putting up signs. Sending out an eMail on your behalf. Phone numbers of people who do have money. Ideas.

- * Get online, and find a domain name. JoeSmithForCongress.org. Do not use JoeSmithForCongress.freewebs.com, or something like that. It should be simple, understandable, easy.

Now is the time to get online, if you haven't already. Set up eMail accounts through Google which also gives you

- * Google Calendar (Great for scheduling candidate events! The entire team can access the calendar.),

- * Google Docs (for leaving Voter Guide Statement, photos and position papers, literature for events, etc.)

Get a Facebook account for the campaign. Be sure that it is used for only campaign things. No pictures of you doing beer bongs at a frat party. Which means be careful who you friend. Maybe the campaign account is named Willis Campaign, or Willis for Congress. Or rather than a whole account, set up a Fan page and group for the campaign.

Start a blog. I prefer Wordpress.com. You can download and host Wordpress on your own domain (best), but if not, or to start, get WillisForCongress.wordpress.com. You can move the blog later, or even just link from your website. On the blog, comment on news stories or developments that are current and germane to your race. Always offer a Libertarian solution.

Here's an example of a blog entry . . .

"Pleasantville's City Council plans to raise taxes by 30% to pay for the new park and rec center (make part of that sentence a link to the news story).

Since Libertarians prefer to spend within our means, and not burden your children for recreational facilities, I would first solicit private donations (in exchange for naming), then set up a system where users of the rec center would pay fees for classes, groups would pay rental fees to use the facilities, and businesses and individuals could either provide ongoing financial support or maintenance.

In this way, I estimate that we would only have to raise

taxes 10%. Of course, my preference would be to wait until we could raise the complete cost of the facility from private sources and community fundraising before we broke ground and then support it through user fees. "

This example, while some would attack it as un-Libertarian, offers both the proposed Libertarian solution and a compromise. (Often, Libertarians in office find that they can reduce government by offering something less than the original "full meal deal". Being the lone "No" vote may make you feel good, it really doesn't accomplish anything. Making an amendment to a motion can begin some discussion in a meeting that just "No" doesn't achieve. Offering people smaller government solutions helps to wean them off the habit of taxes extracted at the point of a gun. Who knows, maybe by the time a voter has read your blog and smaller government ideas for several months, they may actually be ready to face the idea of life without the all-encompassing government control!)

Start to tweet. Sign up at twitter.com. Use one of the link shrinkers to make the link to your blog entry tiny, and tweet it each time you blog. For example – Willis offers small government solution to 30% tax increase – <http://is.gd/cBni>. #tlot #liberty Don't forget the appropriate hashtags – those #tlot and #liberty words at the end. They're a "filing" system for twitter. More info on hashtags is at <http://hashtags.org/>

Now that you're blogging, and tweeting, use the tweets as your Facebook status. This is a great way to stimulate discussion among your Facebook friends, and teach more about Libertarian philosophy. Add as many Facebook friends as you can within your voting district. Search for likely suspects, and add them.

Write letters to the editor that are basically your blog articles. You may have make some minor adjustments for format or clarity. Post them to local newspaper's forums.

Take a few minutes to go to DonorTownSquare.com, PayPal.com and then ChipIn.com. Set up accounts at all of them. Add the widgets to all of your sites.

Since all of this can be a lot of work, and you haven't even started the "real life" work of the campaign yet, consider having a trusted volunteer of family member function as your "online campaign manager". All of this can be done by a ghost-writer, even remotely. Your cousin George could be sitting in Berthoud, CO, writing your blog and conducting your online campaign for City Council in Portland, OR.

Now, starts the physical part. Doorbelling. One great candidate that I know started in early spring, walking his neighborhood, knocking on doors, introducing himself.

"Hi, I'm Willis, and I'm running for City Council this fall. I have this piece to let you know what I'm about, and I'd appreciate you taking a few minutes to take a look at it. It has contact information for me on it, and you can call or eMail me with any questions you might have. Have a great evening, and if you think my ideas sound good, I'd appreciate your vote."

He knocked on his neighbor's doors several evenings a week and some weekends, and won the election in the fall.

Always attend neighborhood events, town celebrations, etc. They are great opportunities for networking and campaigning. And do I need to say it? Always have your pocket sized campaign piece in your pocket, and a slim jim or something when appropriate.

More later – the fun stuff, like public forums, interviews, candidate ratingsRachel Hawkrigde

What Should the LNC Do?

What should an effective Libertarian National Committee do to advance the libertarian political movement?

Carrying out the substantive intent of its Bylaws might be a good start.

I remind readers of a few of the more important parts of the National Party By-Laws:

"The Party is organized to implement and give voice to the principles ... by ... moving public policy in a libertarian direction by building a political party that elects Libertarians to public office..."

"The Libertarian National Committee shall establish and oversee an organizational structure to implement the purposes of the Party."

"The Chair is the chief executive officer of the Party with full authority to direct its business and affairs, including hiring and discharging of National Committee volunteers and paid personnel, subject to express National Committee policies and directives..."

What should the National Committee be doing to put this effort into effect?

First and most important, the National Committee needs to identify what steps are needed to build an effective Party. Second, it needs to take appropriate actions to see that those steps are carried out.

How is this to be done? The Libertarian National Committee needs a subcommittee structure, each subcommittee to be composed of some National Committee members, those volunteers the National Chair is supposed to "hire", and staff to provide support especially for the most tedious aspects of the work. Between meetings of the National Committee, the subcommittees do the National Committee's work. In preparation for meetings, the Subcommittees deliver materials in a timely way, so that the full committee can arrived at its meeting site adequately briefed and ready to perform its tasks.

What are some of the obviously necessary subcommittees?

State and Local Organization. The Local Organization group keeps track of state parties, helps them to become more effective, and alerts the national committee when state affiliates cease to exist. It develops resources and materials to support state and local organizations. It helps publicize state and local parties.

Affinity Groups. The subcommittee on Affinity Groups supports libertarians in creating and developing special-interest groups that are entirely independent from the Libertarian Party and that will speak up for their particular issues from a libertarian perspective.

Elections. The Elections Subcommittee helps libertarians win elections. It recruits and trains candidates and volunteers, supports ballot access drives, assists candidates with publications, fund raising, and Get Out The Vote efforts, and collects and distributes useful information to candidates.

Political Action. The Political Action subcommittee supports substantive political activities, other than electioneering for elective office. It assists with referenda, and aids rallies, demonstrations, protests, letter writing campaigns, litigation, and peaceful petitions for redress of grievances.

Newsletter. The Newsletter subcommittee supports the Newsletter editor in assuring the regular monthly publication of an interesting National Party newsletter sent to members.

Web and Electronic Outreach. A web and electronic out-

reach subcommittee supports and maintains the party web pages and other forms of electronic outreach that may currently be significant.

Outreach. An Outreach subcommittee performs activities to help inform the public about libertarian positions on issues, including preparing press releases, pamphlets, and internet and broadcast advertising. It develops and supports publicity and advertising drives, responds to press inquiries, assists members with letter-writing drives, and produces and distributes outreach material.

Membership. The Membership subcommittee works to recruit and retain party members. It contacts new members to welcome them. It contacts inquirers and invites them to join. It encourages social events, public lectures, and other activities for prospective and current Members. It contacts persons who have ceased to be members to determine why they left.

Fund Raising. The Fund Raising subcommittee raises money. It cultivates individual donors and conducts periodic large scale fund raising campaigns. It is scrupulous in promising donors how their money will be spent, and prompt and accurate in reporting to them and to the membership on how their money was actually spent.

Budget and Finance. The Budget and Finance Subcommittee prepares the draft budget and financial plan for the National Committee. It monitors spending for deviations from the budget and financial plan, and promptly reports deviations to the National Committee.

Convention. The Convention subcommittee organizes and conducts the biennial National Convention.

Audit and Compensation. The Audit and Compensation subcommittee conducts an annual substantive audit of Party spending to determine how all money was spent, to see that money was spent in accord with the budget and other National Committee directives. It presents activity-oriented cash flow reports, so that the National Committee can confirm that money is actually being spent on activities that advance the party's purposes. It separately audits each project-based fund raising effort to ensure that money was spent as promised by the National Committee. It determines if moneys have been received and spent in accord with Bylaws, National Committee actions, legal requirements, and fundamental ethical standards. It reports to the Membership and to the National Committee on irregularities, deficiencies, and deviations, and their causes, and recommends corrective measures.

I've undoubtedly left several groups off.

Underlying this proposal is a fundamental concept, namely that we should elect National Committee members who are competent activists who are willing to spend their time working for our party, and we should recruit other party activists and real professionals to make sure that real work actually gets done.

The opposite of my proposal is the path that has been seen for the past decade and more, under the cognomen "professionalization", in which a large National Committee sets general objectives for a small group of staff members, who are left to do the work. That approach has been tried at great length. It has failed.

A Special Appeal from the Antiwar.com Webmaster

Since Antiwar.com began in December 1995, we have been through a lot with you, our readers. We've seen wars in the Middle East, the Balkans, and Africa, the damage done at home, and the destructive policies of three presidents.

Antiwar.com held a microscope to Bill Clinton's interventions in Kosovo, his official policy of regime-change in Iraq, his bombings, and his sanctions.

Our audience and influence grew during the Bush administration. Since 9/11, we have presented the most sophisticated critiques from Left and Right of U.S. foreign policy and the war on terror. We have gathered hundreds of articles on international news every day, 365 days a year. My formerly part-time activism has spawned a community of 100,000 daily readers and one of the top-ranked political sites on the Web.

We debunked the WMD lies before the bombs fell on Baghdad. We exposed the imperial machinations behind the "democratic" revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine, the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia, and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. We have reported the plight of American soldiers and the even greater suffering of foreign civilians. We have tracked the U.S. government as it ravaged international law and domestic liberties. We have scrutinized the AIPAC spy scandal at every step.

As for our new president, I wasn't thrilled about Barack Obama, but I did have a little hope. Antiwar.com did not expect an end to the Empire, but we thought Obama would show more restraint than Bush.

Despite my modest expectations, I'm disappointed.

In Iraq, Obama has equivocated repeatedly, and despite his vague promise to withdraw by 2011, we have no reason to believe he will abandon the permanent bases or his commitment to maintain 50,000 troops.

In Afghanistan, Obama has expanded the war and occupation, and now he's eyeing neighboring Pakistan. Obama has killed hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people with bombs and drone attacks since taking office.

In response to legal challenges, Obama has gone beyond the Bush doctrine of "state secrets" and been so brazen as to claim "sovereign immunity." Obama has embraced Bush's military commissions, detentions without habeas corpus at Bagram and elsewhere, warrantless mass surveillance, and executive-created law.

Obama has stopped using the phrase "war on terror," but not much else has changed.

We learn once again how entrenched the Empire is in both parties and throughout establishment opinion. The neocons, far from losing their influence, have become as potent a force on the "Left" as they are on the "Right."

With the media focusing on the economy, many liberals becoming apathetic or even hawkish on foreign policy, and conservatives absurdly whining that Obama is "soft on terror," Antiwar.com is more essential now than ever before.

And we need you more than ever before to help keep us going. We don't have a large staff, cushy offices, or the stability and peace of mind that the War Party continues to enjoy. All we have is your support and our devotion to the cause. I work 14 hours a day, six days a week. Our small staff is just as dedicated, but Antiwar.com can't survive on dedication alone.

Please help.

In Peace,

Eric Garris
Webmaster
Antiwar.com

Join the Antiwar.Com Mailing List

For more information about what you can do for peace, please contact Angela Keaton at 323-512-7095 or angela@antiwar.com

Liberty for America

Wrights Farce Continues; Ruwart Blasts Starr Memorandum

The National Committee back and forth concerning Lee Wrights alleged membership or non-membership in the National Committee continues. As reported in the previous issue, Wrights had allegedly been removed from the LNC for allowing his membership to lapse. At the moment, the LNC claims to have restored Lee Wrights' LNC membership by voting to elect him to the National Committee again.

For a more-or-less current time line, see Mike Seebeck's blog <http://muddythoughts.blogspot.com/2009/05/timeline-of-duesgate.html> This article is heavily based on Seebeck's superb work in preparing that line.

Several weeks ago, the LNC Judiciary Committee heard Lee Wrights' appeal of his removal from office. The hearing was the first time two decades that the LNC Judicial Committee had met. The hearing was public; expect a recording to be available fairly soon. As of this typing, they have not yet issued a decision.

Perhaps the most interesting single point raised in the back-and-forth was given by Mary Ruwart, acting as one of several presenters for Lee Wrights' case. Ruwart reminded the Judicial Committee of the LNC definition of a sustaining member, namely that a sustaining member is anyone who donated at least \$25 in any of the prior twelve months. Wrights had last donated in April 2008, so *not only was Wrights a member at the time that he was allegedly removed by the Secretary, but in fact he was still a member at the time of the Judicial Committee hearing.* In reading the history between where we left off last issue, and where we now are, keep this interesting detail in mind.

We now return to events immediately following Wrights' supposed removal from the LNC, where he sits as an At-Large member. On April 14, LNC Secretary Sullentrup had claimed to have removed Lee Wrights as an LNC member, with Chair Redpath approving Sullentrup's action. That action was to be endorsed the next day by LNC member James Lark. At the time, Wrights agreed — without checking the Bylaws — that his membership had lapsed. It later transpired that Wrights' ex-wife was holding for Lee all mail sent to Lee's address of record with the LNC, and Lee had *never been sent* the expected renewal notices in a manner that caused them to reach that address.

On April 17, LNC members Tony Ryan, Julie Fox,

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Rachel Hawkrige, and Mary Ruwart offered a motion drafted by LNC alternate Jake Porter. The motion read:

Because the Libertarian National Committee has passed no vote to remove Lee Wrights from his position as an At-Large Representative, that he remains an At-Large Representative, that his name shall be reinstated to the Libertarian Party Leadership webpage, and that his e-mail access to the Libertarian National Committee discussion list be restored.

The motion was promptly ruled out of order by William Redpath as Chair. Redpath claimed that the motion was out of order because the motion violated the Bylaws. Mary Ruwart promptly appealed the decision of the chair.

The vote on the appeal of the decision of the Chair took until May 2. Remember that this is a vote on whether or not it is in order to consider a motion on whether or not Wrights is an LNC member, not a vote on whether or not Wrights was an LNC member at this point. Also, note that several days earlier the Judicial Committee had apparently issued a statement that an LNC member can only be removed by consecutive absences or for cause by 2/3 vote of the, per the Bylaws, and that Wrights was in fact still a member of the LNC. This statement exactly contradicted Redpath's position in ruling the appeal out of order. Source: independentpoliticalreport.com/2009/04/statement-from-the-lp-judicial-committee-regarding-wright/

Voting with LNC member Mary Ruwart that it was in order to consider a motion were LNC members Ruwart, Ryan, Hinkle, Fox, and Hawkrige. Voting against Ruwart's appeal of the Chair's decision were LNC members Jingoian, Starr, Sullentrup, Dixon, Colley, Mattson, Sink-Burris, Flood, Lark, and Karlan. Redpath did not vote, but de facto supported his own decision, since he could have revoked it at any time and did not do so.

We now step back to April 18. Lee Wrights appealed his removal from the LNC to the Judicial Committee, without conceding that he had in fact been removed, in order to establish that a timely appeal had been made.

On April 21, Aaron Starr sent a detailed memo to the LNC claiming that in April 2008 Lee Wrights' dues had been paid by Sean Haugh, and that this payment was invalid because it was in violation of FEC Regulations. The actual memo is nine pages long, so if you want to read it, go to independentpoliticalreport.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/2009-04-21-lee-wright.pdf It is a PDF file, so you will need a PDF reader installed.

The memo appears to claim: that Sean Haugh paid Wrights' sustaining membership dues in April 2008, that FEC regulations prohibit contributions to a party on behalf of another, and that Haugh's payments of Wrights' dues was therefore not allowed under FEC regulations. Starr further published what he claimed were Wrights' dues payments, leading Starr to conclude that Wrights had not been elected as LNC Vice Chair, a post that Wrights held for two years, because he was not a member in good standing at the time of election. Wrights has vigorously challenged the accuracy of Starr's claims.

Starr's memo closes with the paragraph:

"Because we cannot legally accept a contribution in the name of another, on the advice of Paula Edwards, our FEC consultant, and with the affirmation of the Chair, I have instructed Robert Kraus to refund the \$25 to Sean Haugh. I have attached a copy of the correspondence, the original check from Sean Haugh, and our refund check."

Starr's claim that gift memberships are illegal was promptly and extensively contested. The Michigan Party referred the question to its legal counsel, resulting in a memo that was widely circulated in the libertarian community. The memo as forwarded here read

date Sat, Apr 25, 2009 at 10:59 AM
subject FEC regulations and gift memberships

Aaron,
RE: Your April 21 memo to the LNC regarding R. LEE Wrights

The Libertarian Party of Michigan Executive Committee referred your April 21 memo to me for my professional opinion.

1. FEC Regulations

FEC regulations require that a political committee accurately record and report the person who made a contribution. As long as a political committee spends contributions for lawful purposes, it doesn't matter which lawful purpose a contribution is spent for. There is nothing unlawful about gift memberships. Therefore, as long as the Party properly records and reports that Sean Haugh's contribution was made by Sean Haugh, it doesn't matter that the money was used for a gift membership.

2. Gift Memberships

I think that gift memberships should not merely be allowed, but also should be encouraged. Gift memberships for young liber-

tarians can encourage them to become active in the Party. Gift memberships for Libertarian Party activists who have fallen on hard times financially can encourage them to remain active.

*Leonard Schwartz, attorney at law
LP Michigan campaign finance law adviser since 1999 LP
Michigan Political Director since 2005 LP member since 1980*

The Starr memo also raised troubling issues about LNC spending. Recall that the Paula Edwards whose name is invoked in the Starr memo is the LNC's FEC consultant, who is paid by the LNC a substantial yearly sum for her knowledgeable advice on Federal Election Commission findings. Now we have the consultant allegedly giving advice — we have not seen an actual memo from her — whose accuracy is under challenge. LNC At-Large Representative Mary Ruwart promptly wrote LNC Chair Bill Redpath, via a memo to LNC-DISCUSS that has since reached this newsletter:

*Sent: Thursday, May 07, 2009 9:31 PM
Cc: lnc-discuss@hq.lp.org
Subject: Please forward to Paula Edwards for her response*

*Dear Ms. Edwards:
Recently, it came to the attention of the Libertarian National Committee (LNC) that one of our members (Sean Haugh) had paid membership dues for another member (R. Lee Wrights). In reporting this finding to the LNC, Mr. Aaron Starr indicated in a memo to us that:*

1) Because we cannot legally accept a contribution in the name of another, on the advice of Paula Edwards, our FEC consultant, and with the affirmation of the Chair, I have instructed Robert Kraus to refund the \$25 to Sean Haugh.

Myself and other members of the LNC find this quite troubling, as gift memberships have been accepted and even encouraged by the LP for years. In investigating this further we found that other FEC advisors had a different opinion:

Ruwart then quoted the Schwartz memo above, and continued

Indeed, one LNC member actually called the FEC and reported to us that: "After speaking to the FEC, I am here to report to you that . . .

So long as the money is reported to them accurately as to who it came from, they don't care who we give credit for money to internally. So long as we reported accurately to the FEC that Sean Haugh gave that \$25 if we were required to, that is all that matters. (You, of course, know that if Sean's combined contributions do not total \$200, no reporting is necessary.)"

Based on the phone conversation with the FEC and Mr. Schwartz's analysis, it appears that the advice that Mr. Starr ascribed to you is in error. Naturally, it is crucial to the LNC to receive accurate information about FEC requirements from their paid consultant. Can you kindly explain the discrepancy between the opinion attributed to you by Mr. Starr and the contradictory opinion of Mr. Schwartz and the FEC itself?

Thank you in advance for providing this important clarifica-

*tion.
---Mary J. Ruwart, Ph.D*

Redpath soon responded on the same list, according to our unimpeachable source, who here remains anonymous:
Mary: I have a voicemail into Paula Edwards on this, but she has not returned my call. I just received a voicemail on this issue from LNC Counsel Gary Sinawski, who said that there is not a legal problem with gift memberships. If I do not hear from Paula Edwards by tomorrow, I will call her again. Bill Redpath

Our source reports that Ruwart soon responded, characterizing Starr's statements as "fraudulent";

*Date: Wed, May 13, 2009 at 12:31 AM
Subject: Re: [Lnc-discuss] Forward to Paula Edwards
To: William Redpath <bredpath@bia.com>
Cc: lnc-discuss@hq.lp.org
Thank you for your promptness and keeping me in the loop, Mr. Chair. I concur with Mr. Karlan that we should have both Ms. Edwards and Mr. Sinawski present for our July meeting to resolve any discrepancies.*

Since, according to Ms. Hawkridge's conversation with the FEC, there does not seem to be a problem with gift memberships, it seems appropriate for Mr. Starr (or yourself in his stead) to issue a public statement explaining that there was not, contrary to statements made by Mr. Starr, an "illegal contribution" by Mr. Haugh on behalf of Mr. Wrights as claimed in Mr. Starr's April 21st memo.

Furthermore, I'd like to call your attention to the fact that Mr. Starr publicized Mr. Wrights' gifting history to the LP without his permission. Besides the violation of privacy and confidentiality that this entails, Mr. Starr did not confirm whether the data base entries were correct prior to making Mr. Wrights' confidential information public knowledge. As Mr. Wrights indicated in his talk to the TN LP, the information was largely erroneous. Based on this erroneous information, Mr. Starr made false claims that Mr. Wrights was "ineligible to be elected for the position" of Vice Chair to which he was elected in 2004.

Mr. Starr's fraudulent statements, based on a release of confidential financial information, have been highly publicized throughout the libertarian community. From the remarks I've seen on the blogs, these false representations have cast unwarranted aspersions upon Mr. Wrights' good name.

I personally find Mr. Starr's actions deplorable as he attempted to unseat Ms. Keaton for alleged breach of confidentiality and unseemly remarks. (Once again, the phrase "rules for thee, but not for me" comes to mind.) Our Treasurer's release of confidential financial information to which his position gives him unique access, especially without confirming its accuracy, and its use to unjustly harm Mr. Wrights' reputation is a serious ethical, if not legal, breach of his fiduciary responsibility to the LP. [Editor: Emphasis Added]

Don't you think that a public statement to retract Mr. Starr's false accusations, as well as a public apology, is long overdue?

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Address Corrections Requested

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