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AL Interview

Dana Rohrabacher

Dana Rohrabacher's libertarian career goes back to the late 1960's, when he attended Robert LeFevre's Freedom School seminar and worked as a libertarian organizer within Young Americans for Freedom (YAF). In 1969 he helped capture the California YAF organization and later helped found the Libertarian Caucus within YAF, which was eventually purged at the now famous 1969 St. Louis national convention.

Later, Rohrabacher went on to travel across the country to encourage campus-based YAF chapters to become Libertarian Alliance groups, forming the nucleus of the modern libertarian movement. He also helped to organize the first five Future of Freedom Conferences (starting in 1969) held in the Los Angeles area.

He became a journalist and was asked to work in Ronald Reagan's unsuccessful 1976 GOP presidential nomination bid, where Rohrabacher served as Assistant Press Secretary. After that ended, Rohrabacher returned to journalism and also wrote screenplays.

He was asked to re-join Reagan's campaign in 1980 and became a White House speechwriter after Reagan's successful defeat of Carter.

American Libertarian editor Mike Holmes interviewed Rohrabacher at the November 1986 Future of Freedom conference in Los Angeles.

AL: What is your official title at the White House?

Rohrabacher: Presidential speechwriter.

AL: What's it like for a libertarian to be writing speeches for the most powerful man on earth?

Rohrabacher: I will have to say that some time ago, that was long before I got to the White House, I quit labeling myself as a libertarian. I think of myself as a libertarian. But I certainly cannot be an ideologue and write speeches for anybody in public office, much less the President of the United States. However, that doesn't mean that I have given up my ideals and don't seek many of the same goals that libertarians would apply.

AL: Are you a registered Republican now?

Rohrabacher: I was always a registered Republican except for a short period of time

in which I was trying to help the Libertarian Party get on the ballot. All the rest of the time I was a registered Republican anyway.

AL: Weren't you a member of the "Class of '69" in the California Libertarian Alliance back in 1968-69?

Rohrabacher: As far as I know Shawn Steele and I were the founders of the California Libertarian Alliance. We all got kicked out of YAF. Dave (Walters) and Don (Ernsberger) formed the Society for Individual Liberty and Shawn and I formed the California Libertarian Alliance, along with all the good friends and activists who were with us.

AL: How many other speechwriters do you work with?

Rohrabacher: There are five speechwriters.

AL: I read there was some turnover, that people come and go. There was a lady mentioned in *Esquire*. . .

Rohrabacher: Peggy Noonan. . .

AL: You have a longevity in that job which is pretty enviable. . .

Rohrabacher: That's correct. In the White House I am one of the "old pros". One of the long-time veterans. Most staffers last about two years. There's only two of us who've lasted the whole game. Either people quit, take better jobs or get kicked out — they get into some kind of fight — and are removed. Or their competence level just isn't as high as it should be and they're let go.

AL: Are you known as "the libertarian" speechwriter, or is that just subsumed under the professional job you try to do?

Rohrabacher: When you get into real government the differences between conservative and libertarian become very blurred. Because when most people think, they think "libertarian", not having studied the philosophers, they think far right-wing. I'm just known as someone who is extremely right-wing. Although in libertarian terms I'd probably be defined as libertarian-conservative right now.

AL: Do you work in the White House itself, the building?

Rohrabacher: I'm in the Old Executive Office building, but I'm in and out of the White House all day. The Old Executive Office building is in the White House complex.

AL: How often do you actually get an opportunity to see or talk to the President?

Rohrabacher: It varies. A few years ago we would meet with him once a week, we'd meet for 45 minutes on Friday morning. The last couple of years it's been infrequent. Now what I do most often is write drafts for him which he will see and edit. Maybe I'll see him two or three times a year.

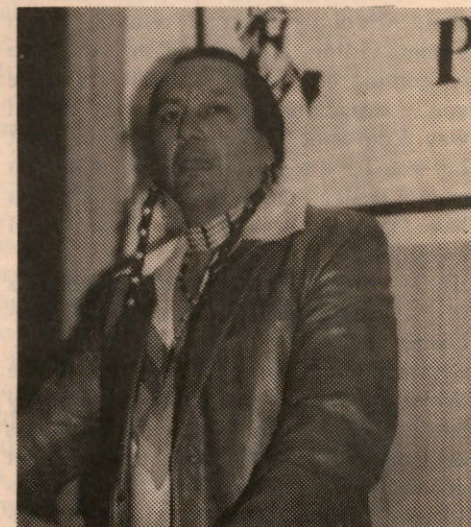
AL: Do you report to Don Regan?

Rohrabacher: Well, we don't see him a lot

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Ron Paul makes a point during intense questioning at the California LP convention, where he announced his presidential bid.



American Indian activist Russell Means said libertarian philosophy and Indian philosophy were similar during his appearance at the California LP February convention.

Means and Paul Launch Campaigns

Houston, TX/Austin, TX - LP presidential contenders Russell Means and Ron Paul both launched their campaign efforts with a bang at the February California LP convention, and former Alaska representative Andre Marrou became the first announced LP Vice Presidential candidate.

Ron Paul

Former GOP Congressman Ron Paul officially joined the Libertarian Party in front of a packed audience at the convention, and gave national LP Chair Jim Turney a one ounce gold coin in lieu of the usual \$15 in Federal Reserve Notes for dues.

In his campaign announcement, Paul said "I intend to make sure the people have a choice for freedom" and went on to stress his major themes, which include reduction of federal spending, and end to "big bank privilege and the Federal Reserve", deficits that "will cause a financial holocaust", the "run-amok IRS", government attacks on personal liberty and financial privacy, and misguided U.S. foreign policy.

The Paul effort has opened a Houston area campaign office and his campaign will center around attending various state LP conventions and other engagements. Long-time Paul political aide Nadia Hayes is guiding the effort along with Jan Kessmann (who reluctantly answers to the "campaign manager" title). Kessmann is an experienced political worker who will handle most of the actual campaign chores.

"Fundraising is going very well," Hayes recently said, "and we're planning a major LP mailing very soon." In addition to California, Paul also visited the Arizona LP convention and spoke at a financial seminar in Utah.

The recent Ron Paul Investment Letter an-

nounced his candidacy and in an article listing "Conservative CFR members" ("for decades this sinister group has insured that our foreign policy would serve Rockefeller world interests. . .") listed Earl Ravenal, among others, as a CFR member.

Asked about whether this ruled out Ravenal as a possible LP running mate, as has been suggested by some LP members, Paul aide Hayes said she "didn't know, I haven't discussed it with Ron" and made the point that Ron Paul is not going to stop anyone from running for the VP slot.

Meanwhile, Paul's controversial personal anti-abortion stance is still drawing flack from some quarters, including a recent series of mailings from LA based Carol Moore, whose newly formed Pro-Choice Libertarians group contends that Paul has failed to clearly answer questions about his anti-abortion stand outlined in a 1983 book on the subject, or his previous support for the Human Life Amendment, which would constitutionally outlaw abortion.

Libertarian economist Murray Rothbard in February entered the fray by responding to the Bill Howell letter sent out in January which attacked Paul's record on abortion as well as some of his votes while in Congress. In his reply to Howell, Rothbard says in part, "your letter fails to convince me. Basically for two reasons. First. . .because I don't agree with you that [abortion] must be the overriding issue; and second, on all your other points, because I know that Ron Paul has become increasingly radical and libertarian in his years in Congress."

Although the principal concerns over the Paul candidacy have centered on his abortion position and his voting record, the Paul

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Dana Rohrabacher

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every day either. There's a system set up and the speeches go to the President. Being a speechwriter for the President means that what you write goes to the President almost directly. Within a 24-hour period what you've written goes to the President. The top people in the government are debating what you've written as it goes to the President.

AL: Do you have any particular type of speeches or subject that you concentrate on?

Rohrabacher: No. I write for general use. I've written a lot of his diplomatic remarks, about 90% of his diplomatic remarks. When foreign visitors are coming in, you have welcoming remarks, toasts and that's where you're explaining policy in a very formal way. You want to make your policy point but you have to be oblique about it. You cannot push a pie in somebody's face. You have to make your point in an artistic way. I enjoy that.

AL: It's not a policy making position, per se, is it? It's considered more a technical type position isn't it?

Rohrabacher: No. Speechwriters in the White House are in the middle of the policy battles. We are identified as — perhaps this isn't accurate in libertarian terms — but generally we are considered the conservatives or the Reaganites within the Administration. We are a force for policy. And we use our influence to push the President

Politics apparently was fairly accurate in depicting the battle for the soul of the Presidency. Do you think that...

Rohrabacher: I haven't read it...

AL: You haven't read it. Is it considered "not kosher" in the White House to read Stockman's book?

Rohrabacher: I've been too busy.

AL: Apparently there is a lot of tension between the pragmatists and the ideologues. Do you find that to be correct?

Rohrabacher: For the first three years there that was the case. Before Don Regan that certainly was the case. There was a constant battle. Except I don't like the words "ideologues vs. pragmatists."

AL: What are the words you would use?

Rohrabacher: I use the words realists versus accommodationists. We realists are pushing for positions that we think are consistent with the President's goals. That we are pushing as hard as we can, as realistically as we can. And the accommodationists are people who seek compromise in order to develop working relationships with adversaries. There has been a lot of fighting between advocates of these two approaches.

The White House speechwriters have been right in the middle of it, I can testify to that.

AL: In terms of your personal viewpoint — using the standard Libertarian Party viewpoint as the baseline — where do you have the greatest areas of agreement and disagreement, personally?

Rohrabacher: I agree with the President about 85% of the time. Because I'm making judgments not just based on some predetermined libertarian philosophy but based on what I think we can do, what we can accomplish in reducing the size of government and defeating international communism. And those are my two goals right now.

AL: So foreign policy, you would say, that would be a major area of disagreement with what might be termed conventional libertarian non-interventionism?

Rohrabacher: Well, it seems that many libertarians suggest that there is a certain foreign policy position consistent with the libertarian philosophy. Quite frankly I don't think that's true.

Maybe a lot of libertarians agree with a non-interventionist philosophy but I don't think there's any inherent libertarian foreign policy. Libertarians are inherently anti-government, anti-state and when you come to the point where you're totally against all government, whatever policy you have the government follow, in terms of foreign policy, it is inconsistent with the idea of opposing all government.

AL: You don't think there can be a libertarian foreign policy?

Rohrabacher: I don't think there can be a full consistent libertarian foreign policy. The fact that you have a foreign policy is acknowledging the state; it is a state policy.

AL: There are degrees of policy. Obviously there is the classic definition of imperial empire building, such as the Soviet Union and other countries have done. There's sort of a "stay-at-home and mind your own business" free trade foreign policy. And there's lots of variations on each of those kinds of tendencies. Most libertarians seem to believe that the less meddling in foreign countries we do, generally the better off the American people are. And also, the less the government is going to use foreign policy objectives as an excuse to raise taxes and pass laws like the draft and so forth. You don't see any libertarian tendency in any of those choices?

Rohrabacher: If the government, your government which oversees the territory in which you are living, is involved with activities in other countries that enhance the security of freedom, then it is pro-freedom and pro-libertarian. If it is involved in ac-

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White House speechwriter Dana Rohrabacher addressing the Future of Freedom conference last fall.

and the Administration in one direction or the other. So this is not just purely a technical position.

In fact, when I was hired it was emphasized that I was hired not only because of my writing ability but also because I was expected to use my influence to move the government in the direction that the President wanted to go.

AL: How much opportunity do you feel you have to express libertarian sentiments in the material that you produce?

Rohrabacher: The President looks at the libertarian philosophy as a part of an overall philosophy of liberty and freedom. He does not view himself as someone who has to be 100% consistent. But he recognizes libertarianism as a positive segment of American political thought. He appreciates it and he is receptive when I phrase many of the arguments in libertarian terms. He's very comfortable with that. He would be doing that on his own if I wasn't involved.

AL: The Stockman book (*The Triumph of*



LP National Director Terry Mitchell accepts a party membership application from Russell Means during a mid-February Texas tour by Means. Photo by Sharon Mitchell.

Means and Paul Campaigns

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campaign says there are no current plans to specifically respond with a detailed position paper defending or explaining either subject.

"Ron will be answering questions everywhere he goes, and we will be issuing position papers about various issues, but we don't plan to respond to specific attacks," Hayes noted.

Russell Means

American Indian Movement co-founder Russell Means also began his LP state convention campaign trail in California, where the "Russell Means Freedom" effort attracted considerable interest.

Means explained that he came into full contact with Libertarians in 1983 in a meeting with Larry Dodge (currently Means' acting campaign manager), Honey Lanham (campaign treasurer), then LP Chair Paul Grant and party founder David Nolan.

He explained that "there is nothing in the LP Platform that isn't Indian" and that "all Americans, not just Indians, desperately need to regain control over their own lives. Voting Libertarian is a very important way for people of all races to say 'we've had enough. Give us back our freedom.'" Means said.

Means went immediately from California to Lansing, Michigan, where he and Richard Winger testified against proposed new restrictions on third party ballot access, and where he received considerable press attention. He later went to Denver, where he received a major newspaper write-up, and on to the Arizona LP convention, where he vowed to enlist the state's large Indian population to get the LP back on the ballot.

He intends to ask the major tribes in Arizona to register as Libertarian. If 20,000 such registrations are obtained, permanent ballot status can be secured for the Arizona LP.

The Means effort, though comparatively underfinanced and currently run by a part-time volunteer staff, has recruited several supporters, including most of the Libertarian Republican Organizing Committee founders, who re-joined the LP to help with his effort. Former LP Chair Alicia Clark has also contributed funds and is taking a more

neutral position, in hopes of encouraging a vigorous race for the nomination. And LP founder David Nolan, now based in Atlanta, formally withdrew his prior endorsement of the Ron Paul effort and says he is also moving to a neutral position. Nolan wants to meet with both candidates at the Atlanta NatCom and Georgia state convention and clarify candidate positions on the issues.

According to Honey Lanham, who is helping the Means effort, there will be material prepared on Means' colorful and sometimes controversial personal history, but that such an effort is not the highest priority. "Our two goals are to keep Russell on the road and to open up an official campaign office in Denver," Lanham said, "and a fundraiser we're sending out will help us finance these two objectives first."

Means' most prominent past activity involved the 97-day occupation at Wounded Knee, SD in 1973, where eventually two Indians were killed and one federal marshal injured. Means was not convicted for any crime at that event, though he was later convicted on a contempt of court citation.

Andre Marrou

Former Alaska LP state representative Andre Marrou is now residing in Las Vegas, NV, taking classes for a masters degree in political science and working as a commercial leasing broker. He plans to stay in Nevada for the indefinite future.

After announcing his run for the LP VP slot in his Keynote address at the California LP convention, Marrou has been working on putting a campaign organization together and is also planning to attend a number of state LP conventions.

Former LP Director Perry Willis is Marrou's campaign manager and fellow Las Vegas Michael Emerling has been assisting the Marrou effort. Like the other announced candidates, Marrou is also planning a fundraising mailer.

"I'm probably willing to run with any presidential candidate," Marrou says, "but I believe the LP is at a crossroads. We can go with experienced former officeholders on the ticket, or we can go for publicity. As a former officeholder, I think that's the route to go. To attract the bulk of American middle class voters for the first time in our history as a party." ■

CA LP Convention A Hit

San Francisco CA - The California Libertarian Party state convention held over the President's Day weekend of Feb. 14-16 proved to be an even greater success than its organizers expected.

Mark Hinkle, re-elected as State Chair, noted that "many LP members have said it was our best convention in years, and some even think it was bigger and better than the 1985 Phoenix national convention." About 200 delegates attended and several hundred non-delegates also came and went to hear one of the best LP speaker line ups in recent memory.

There were at least three convention programs going on at the same time, maybe even more. One version was the actual floor business of the California LP, which consisted of lengthy debates over proposed By-Law revisions, some platform discussion, election of officers, and selection of the over 90 delegates (the largest state delegation) to the upcoming Seattle national convention.

The second convention program, which perhaps attracted more attendance than the "business" convention, heard over two dozen speakers, panels, and workshops.

The third program centered around the national "hat into the ring" toss by both former Congressman Ron Paul and Indian activist Russell Means for the LP presidential nod, and former Alaska State Representative Andre Marrou for a VP bid.

Politics

The political program consisted of announcement speeches, press conferences, impromptu meet-the-delegate forums and several question-and-answer sessions to packed audiences about candidate positions and motives.

Ron Paul attracted the most heated questioning, since word of his announcement intentions had preceded him along with concerns over his past voting record and stand on abortion rights (see "Opposition to Paul Surfaces", Jan/Feb. 87 AL). Paul took questions on several occasions and drew a mixture of support and suspicion. Perhaps the biggest surprise and boost to his effort came on Monday, when former Republican Congressman Pete McCloskey, who challenged Richard Nixon for the GOP nomination in a bold effort during 1972 in opposition to Nixon's Vietnam war and civil liberties policies, attended Paul's press conference and endorsed his presidential bid, though he admitted he was not a member of the LP. McCloskey also promised to help line up support for Paul with Silicon Valley entrepreneurs and Bay area politicians. "When honestly advocating a real balanced budget is considered a far-out radical position in politics, it's time we looked beyond what the two major parties are offering," McCloskey observed.

Russell Means' convention appearance was a near total and exciting surprise to most delegates and attendees, and his early appearance on Friday drew a large audience of the curious. Means, who had actually announced his bid in San Antonio, TX two weeks earlier, made his official announcement on Saturday and drew a large attentive audience, most of whom had never heard him speak before.

Means also achieved a strong tactical advantage over the Paul effort, since Paul was committed to an investment seminar in Palm Springs until late Sunday afternoon of the convention. So Means and his campaign organizers, former LP Director Honey Lanham and Montana LP Chair Larry Dodge, had the whole convention to themselves during most of the weekend and made the most of it. Means' message that the fundamental Indian philosophy and

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Psychologist Nathaniel Branden entertained banquet attendees with insights about his history and therapy experience in achieving personal freedom.

Dana Rohrabacher

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tivities that decrease freedom, then it is non-libertarian and anti-freedom.

AL: If I can beg your indulgence, I'd like to mention a few foreign policy subjects (or places) and see if you say "yes" or "no", if you are for or against, or if you think they are good ideas or not:

Grenada?

Rohrabacher: That was an action I think Americans can be really proud of. The Grenadian people threw flowers at our troops and our President when he came down there.

It's an example of what some libertarians would suggest, was interventionistic and bad. And is something that I suggest is positive and that free people should be proud of.

AL: What about Beirut and the Marine incident?

Rohrabacher: I don't think it has anything to do with libertarian philosophy one way or the other. That has nothing to do with our freedom and it was a maneuver that was aimed at creating a force for stability in that area. It was something that was obviously ill-conceived because we were unable to achieve our objectives.

AL: Aid to the Contras, I would assume. . .

Rohrabacher: As you would assume I think it is a positive idea.

AL: Or favor that general type of thing.

Rohrabacher: Yes, I would say it's an extremely admirable thing that we help people who are fighting for their freedom.

AL: What about Afghanistan, do you think we are doing about right there? Apparently there's no "official" overt aid there by the U.S. government to the rebels there.

Rohrabacher: One of the things I'm proudest of is that the speechwriting department, more than any other group of people who are in government, the speechwriters can claim to have played a major role in authoring the Reagan Doctrine, the theory that America should assist people who are fighting the Soviet empire in different parts of the world. With Jack Wheeler, who was the eyes and ears of the speechwriting department in the White House, directly filtering information to the highest levels of government through us, we were able to

develop the idea into a coherent national strategy. That's something of which I've been very proud.

AL: Getting back to something for a moment which you discussed earlier, being 85% in agreement with Reagan on foreign policy and in reducing the size of government based on what you think can be attained. Given the fact that the deficits have grown so large, and the government is not appreciably smaller, probably not even to the degree Reagan envisioned when he ran, do you feel that. . .

Rohrabacher: The size of government is only smaller as compared to what it would have been, not smaller in terms of what it was and what it is now.

AL: Basically, you say that Reagan has done all that is politically possible to do, given that he works with Congress and the general sentiment for supporting government?

Rohrabacher: No. I think that we could have done more.

AL: Any particular areas?

Rohrabacher: I think we could have accomplished more in our efforts to reduce government. I think the first year we could have pushed a lot harder. However, overall I think we've gone as far as I expected we would go.

AL: What about the current big news, and of course it's also close to Nancy Reagan, the "war on drugs"? Apparently there's two aspects of that war, one being education, trying to convince people, especially children, not to get involved, and the other is the police effort. What's your thought on that?

Rohrabacher: I think we need to look at what the President says. If you take a look at the thrust of what this current offensive against drugs is all about you will find that the emphasis is to give people incentives to not get involved with drugs, and to give people who are using drugs incentives to quit.

But not to put them in jail. In the beginning of the Administration there was a big drive on enforcement. There was a huge offensive against drug sellers and importers. This current drive is aimed totally at what Ronald Reagan calls the positive approach. And he stresses every time he speaks that our program is not aimed at putting people in jail. Our program is aimed at helping them live better lives, drug free lives. This is very consistent with what Reagan has always said privately. He's always said that you cannot assault this major societal problem through law enforcement. It has to be done on a positive level trying to help individuals, rather than trying to threaten them.

AL: Do White House speechwriters have to take drug tests?

Rohrabacher: I haven't been asked to, but I would be happy to. I certainly have not been involved in using drugs.

AL: I'm not trying to suggest that you have. I know this was a big pitch for a while, for everyone in government. . .

Rohrabacher: That's not to say that I have never used drugs. Certainly, obviously years ago, in college, who knows what activity I was involved in? But the fact is that if I did, that life was left behind me many, many years ago. So it wouldn't bother me at all to take a drug test.

AL: Some libertarians, fairly hard core libertarians at least at one time, have recently organized something called the Libertarian Republican Organizing Committee and have advocated that libertarians abandon third party efforts and attempt to influence the Republican Party, creating a libertarian wing. Ed Zschau was one of their examples and Dick Randolph tried this in Alaska. Do you have any thoughts on whether this is an intelligent strategy or whether there's much potential in the Republican Party?

Rohrabacher: I think libertarians should quit beating their chests and trying to make themselves feel morally superior by claim-

ing how consistent they are, and get down to the nitty-gritty tough job of reducing the size of government. And that can not be accomplished by acting morally superior to people and being a purist. It's done by hard work, and finding political leverage points and getting involved. Standing apart from the political process, I think, is not getting the libertarians anywhere.

AL: Do you see, as some people do, a battle for the soul of the Republican Party as a fundamentalist religious right forces versus the moderates/libertarians?

Rohrabacher: No.

AL: You don't think that's a correct. . .

Rohrabacher: I think the Republican Party is a dynamic institution that is affected by many different interest groups and many different philosophies. It's a broad coalition of people. Its direction will be determined by those people who get active and actively push it by finding points of leverage, push it in this direction or the other. Libertarians can play a role in that.

AL: One former Republican, perhaps the most libertarian Republican in Congress, Ron Paul, is seriously considering and may have already decided to participate as a Libertarian Party candidate. He hasn't declared at the moment. Do you have any thoughts on that? Do you know Ron Paul?

Rohrabacher: I know Ron Paul. I respect him, I think he's a great man. He was a good Congressman. I think he would have done much better for the cause of freedom by staying in Congress and articulating his philosophy from Congress. But also staying there and working on the things that need to be done within the political system. I would respect him a lot more if he did that.

AL: It's obvious that Reagan won't be running in 1988. Of the people who are currently named, do you have any thoughts on Bush, Dole, or DuPont or any of these people?

Rohrabacher: I've met all these people and I read their material. I think that there's reason to hope that DuPont has potential. And I'm personally, along with others, examining DuPont to see if he could be someone I might want to support.

AL: Is there life after being a White House speechwriter? Obviously it's not a job that has lifetime tenure. Do you have any thoughts on what you might want to do after. . .

Rohrabacher: Yes, I've been involved in real politics now and carrying what I consider to be a burden for the things I believe in. A lot of those things are things that libertarians would agree with as well as what my conservative friends would agree with also. I don't believe I'm going to have to carry this load, giving up my personal goals much longer. I've already sacrificed enough and I hope to leave government by mid year 1987 and return to California to write.

AL: Magazine journalism or. . .

Rohrabacher: Just write. Make a living from writing. Either screenplays, journalism or something.

AL: Thanks for your time and good luck with your future career plans. ■

Notable Quotes

Remember the Libyan "Hit Squads"?

"According to key sources, there was little doubt inside (Deputy Secretary of State) William Clark's task force about who was responsible for the spate of anti-Gadhafi leaks — the CIA, with the support of the President, Haig and Clark. 'This item stuck in my craw,' one involved official recalls. 'We came out with this big terrorist threat to the U.S. government. The whole thing was a complete fabrication.'"

Symour M. Hersh, "The Plot to Kill Gadhafi", *New York Times Magazine*, Feb. 22, 1987

Libertarian Outlook

The Implosion is Over

In a now famous essay in the September-December 1984 issue of the *Libertarian Forum*, economist Murray Rothbard described the state of the libertarian movement at the time as "the Implosion", a collapsing inward, a Zag in the Zig-Zag path of the modern libertarian revolution.

Among the reasons cited for this implosion were the demise of at least eleven libertarian publications (ironically, Rothbard's *Forum* has hardly been heard from since), the withdrawal of the enormous Koch fortunes from explicit libertarian activities and last but certainly not least, the dominance of Reaganism in American politics.

Along with large empty doses of limited government rhetoric, the relative stability of the mid-80's after the nightmare of Carter induced inflation/recession lulled many sympathetic to libertarian ideas into a false sense of security. During the Reagan libertarian blackout, the Libertarian Party, along with most non-political libertarian organizations (except a few heavily subsidized think tanks) shrunk in size and in some cases, disappeared altogether.

But times have changed. As Rothbard himself said at the recent California LP Convention, "the glorious bad times have returned!" As he and others have noticed, the Teflon presidency has ended. The Gipper's White House resembles a Keystone Cop comedy, which has disillusioned the

normally tolerant public.

The engines of inflation and new taxes are once again heating up, and the George Bushes and Gary Harts are inspiring more yawns than cheers. While the Koch fortunes remain largely directed toward "respectable" semi-libertarian endeavors, the libertarian press is showing new signs of growth. The battle for the LP presidential nomination is stirring unprecedented enthusiasm among rank-and-file party members.

Intellectually, although there have been signs of complacency in the past, there is renewed debate over the soundness of accepted libertarian "conventional wisdom", ranging from foreign policy issues to the environment.

In addition to evidence of libertarian intellectual vigor, a number of libertarian activists are tackling the uncharted waters of libertarian communication and persuasion. Recognizing the need to sell libertarian ideas as well as develop them, these intellectual entrepreneurs are hosting seminars, lectures and workshops designed to employ the latest in sales and psychological techniques in the battle of ideas.

These are all clear signals that the implosion is over. Whether they portend an impending explosion remains to be seen. But at least the "big sleep" is over, and in that there is cause for optimism. ■

Future of Freedom Conference November 13-15, 1987.

Love your newspaper. Keep up the good work.

Dagny Sharon
Long Beach, CA

ACLU Update

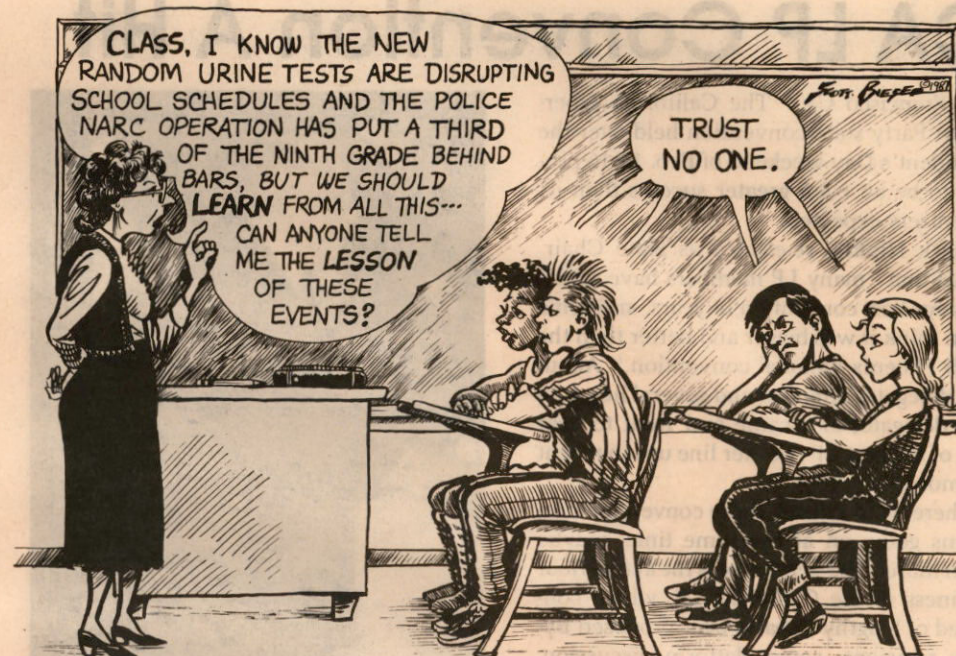
Since the publication of the *Politics of the ACLU* and the writing of my review (*AL*, Jan/Feb 1987), the National ACLU has responded by moving away from its traditional liberal-progressive political orientation.

While still refusing to mention natural rights, the Spring 1986 ACLU newsletter *Civil Liberties* states that "the libertarian principle... is that the power of even a democratic majority must be limited to insure individual rights" and that "enforcing the libertarian principle against government power... to protect these rights, to enforce these limits on government is the sole purpose of the American Civil Liberties Union."

Further, the Summer/Fall 1986 *Civil Liberties* published 4 letters defending the libertarian right to own a gun, and one letter stating the libertarian position on comparable worth. The publication of these letters is significant in that they are at variance with official ACLU policy.

In a December 1986 letter to me, ACLU President Norman Dorsen writes that the ACLU is now consciously seeking out alliances with right of center groups to broaden its influence in today's changed political climate.

While the National ACLU office seems to be moving in a libertarian direction, the Northern California ACLU continues its dogmatic leftism: After I wrote a letter questioning the ACLU's lack of formal commitment to individual autonomy, natural rights and property rights, which stirred up discussion on the subject in four subsequent



issues, this ACLU affiliate, apparently emulating their Sandinista heroes, dropped its Letters Column from its newsletter.

Randall Grindle
Lower Lake, CA

Media Watch



Outlook defunct, Forum moribund

San Francisco, CA/Las Vegas, NV - The short-lived libertarian monthly, *Libertarian Outlook*, finally bit the dust in

December when Garrison Foundation head **Colin Hunter** announced to former subscribers that it was no longer possible to publish the magazine. *Outlook* only had one issue, August 1985, and had changed editors (**Justin Raimondo** to **Jim Peron**) subsequently in an attempt to revive it. The difficult economics of libertarian publishing were cited as the reason for the publication's demise.

On a brighter note, *Outlook* subscribers were all offered discounts to *American Libertarian* subscriptions and received a sample issue.

Other libertarian publications are starting to slip behind the perceivable "event horizon", judging from recent publication schedules.

Economist **Murray Rothbard** admits that his once monthly *Libertarian Forum* is moribund, but insists that it's not defunct. The last issue was Sept.-Dec. 1984. Among the difficulties, Rothbard explains, are his numerous academic and policy institute commitments and his re-location to Las Vegas, which left subscriber information in disarray.

Edging away from the publication *Twilight Zone* recently is **Sam Konkin III's** *New Libertarian*, which has also had its previous ups and downs. Billed as 5 issues per year, its actual frequency has been about half that. But an April 1987 issue (following August 1986) gives hope that *NL* is still alive. While sometimes heavy on sci-fi and Konkin's almost cultish anti-political orientation, the *New Libertarian* nevertheless is often home to lively debates about natural rights and revisionist history. Reportedly, Konkin's involvement with his Algorist Institute has taken priority over other duties.

Troglodytes Unite!

Buffalo, NY - Veteran libertarian **Jim Stumm** is something of a one-man publishing house, specializing in survivalist, retreatist and new country publications and

books. Although sometimes considered to be on the outer fringes of libertarianism, (or of reality as we know it, some might contend), this facet of individualism still appeals to many who want to take freedom on a more personal level seriously.

Among the lore Stumm has reprinted or otherwise reproduced, are the complete works of **Vonu**, by **Rayo** (who disappeared into the wilderness in the early 70's), the *Innovator*, *Preform-Inform*, *Vonu Life* and back issues of the *Libertarian Connection*, much of which deals with physically disappearing from the clutches of statism. Also offered are books on new countries, deserted islands, and ocean living.

Stumm also publishes two journals, *Random Writings* and *Living Free*, which deal with libertarian communities and self liberation. He has also published a fairly complete and up-to-date **Directory of Libertarian Periodicals**, encompassing a genre almost too elusive for accurate compilation.

Continued page 6

Feedback



Letters Policy

Letters are accepted provided they carry the author's name and address. A phone number should be included for verification purposes only. Letters should be kept short and

are subject to editing. Send to: Feedback, *American Libertarian*, 21715 Park Brook Drive, Katy, TX 77450.

No Queen

In an otherwise wonderful article on the Future of Freedom Conference, I was grossly misquoted. Since it might create an impression that is diametrically opposite to my chosen path to a libertarian society, and how I'm seen by other libertarians, I would appreciate your printing this correction.

I never said I was crowning myself "queen" of the conference. I never said "I organized this event, I deserve it, and hey, why should the monarchists have all the fun?" There always have and always will be attempts to form a libertarian ruling class. Count me out! I have worked hard to avoid this impression. Your reporter confused two events. While wearing a tiara, I delivered a short speech on the progress that could be made against self-imposed coercive authority if each of us would declare our own personal, individual sovereignty.

While I always make an effort to produce conferences that are fun as well as informative, I was very serious about the importance of my statement. I believe that declaration of individual sovereignty is an important concept for libertarians and Libertarians to pursue in large numbers. Separation of School and State and The Road to Individual Sovereignty are the two themes I will be producing at this year's

American Libertarian

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In Review



Liberty In Comics

by Scott Bieser

Scott Bieser works full-time as a textbook illustrator in Austin, TX and as a free-lance comic-book artist/writer. His current series, *GAMBIT*, is available in most comic-book specialty shops.

Most people think of comic books as funny little magazines presenting illustrated stories wherein muscle-bound buffoons in skin-tight costumes hurl one another through brick walls and mouth inane platitudes about the struggle of good vs. evil. This is the way comics in America have been, by and large, for the past half-century.

New Directions

But the past 10 years have seen some dramatic — and controversial — changes in this oft-maligned medium.

To be sure, there are still plenty of costumed buffoons crashing through walls and mouthing platitudes, but these serials are being joined by new and usually more sophisticated varieties of entertainment. On the comics racks we now find Tolkienesque stories about elves, trolls, wizards, dragons and sorcery. Other titles delve into fairly serious science-fiction, which in its text-only form has itself only recently achieved "serious literature" status. The old detective genre, which virtually died out in the 1960s, is reviving in forms both nostalgic and new-wave.



A barbarian-turned-pope summarizes his priorities in *Cerebus*, © by David Sim.

Some of the new comic books are impossible to categorize. *Cerebus*, for example chronicles the adventures of an anthropomorphic aardvark who carries on like Conan the Barbarian but moves through a landscape resembling late medieval Europe. Readers of this serialized novel are led through a byzantine maze of political, economic and metaphysical intrigue.

The basic format of comic-book publishing is also showing signs of serious mutation. Many titles come in a "deluxe" format, with higher-quality paper which permits a much finer dot screen for colors and tones. Frequently the colors are reproduced by laser-scanning painted artwork, rather than having an engraver mechanically reproduce colors from a standard 64-color palette — the result is coloration with subtle shadings and flowing nuances rather than the familiar flat tones made of clearly-visible dot patterns.

A more pronounced format change has been the introduction of the "graphic novel." Long popular in France and Italy and currently the rage in England, these book-sized volumes with heavy, slick paper comprise volumes ranging from 48 to 96 pages at a cost of \$6 to \$15.

Another dramatic change in the industry has been the tremendous increase in the number of publishers and comics titles published. Fifteen years ago the business was dominated by two publishers, Marvel Comics Group and DC Comics, who each produced 40-50 monthly titles and another dozen or so annual specials. They, along with a handful of other smaller concerns, produced an average of 200 titles altogether.

In 1986 there were 110 different publishers (including the two majors) producing well over 800 different titles. Industry insiders regard this situation as a glut of material, and expect a shake-out in 1987 which will leave perhaps 20 or so surviving companies turning out possibly 400 titles.

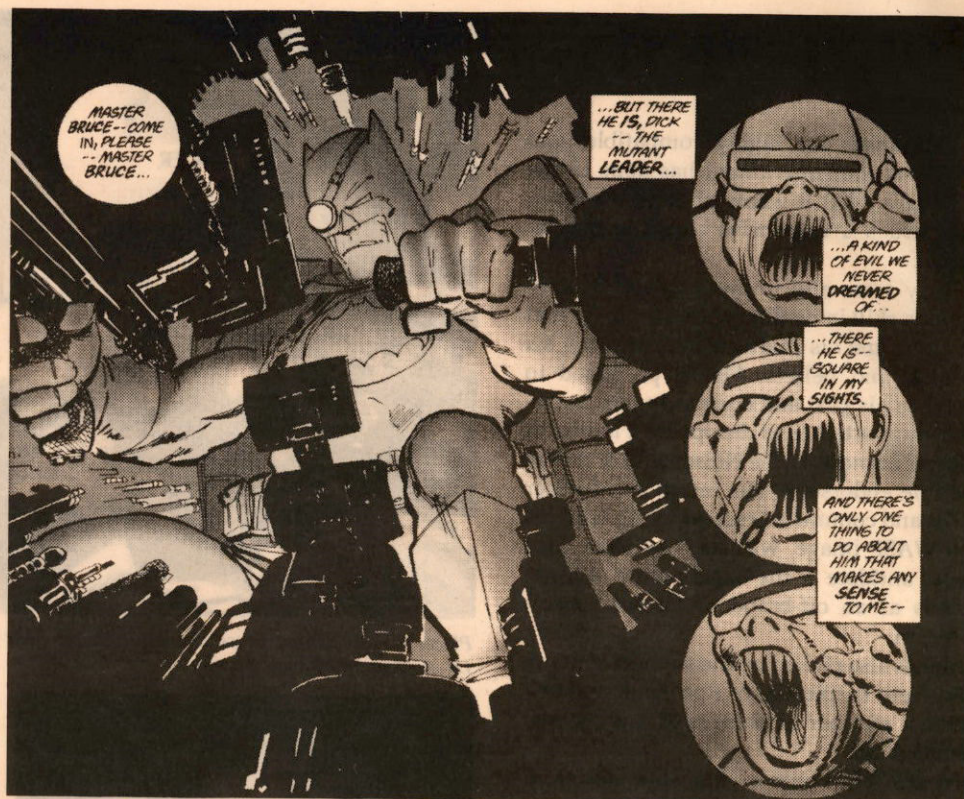
Space considerations prevent detailing the history of these changes, but the important thing is that a new class of "alternative" comics publishers has established itself, transforming the medium in the process. The "alternative" publishers are a varied lot, ranging from part-time entrepreneurs operating out of a spare bedroom to serious concerns producing from one to two dozen titles monthly, plus frequent graphic novels and other special projects. The most important of these companies go by the names of Eclipse, First, Fantagraphics/Upshop Graphics, WaRP/Apple, and Comico. Another important publisher, Aardvark-Vanaheim, relies on the strength of one legendary title, the above-mentioned *Cerebus*.

Marvel and DC, while having ten times the circulation of the "alternatives," have nevertheless been forced to adapt to the changing market. Marvel has spun off two subsidiary publishing lines, Epic and Star Comics, for older and much younger readers, respectively. They are also experimenting with a "New Universe" line of 10 regular comics titles, which attempt storytelling in worlds and situations much more realistic than in traditional comics stories.

DC Comics, having reached its 50th anniversary last year, is also making changes. With considerable public fanfare, the company has revamped its entire historical continuity, adding new characters, killing off old ones, and making major changes in four of its oldest superheroes: Superman, Wonder Woman, The Batman, and The Flash.

One character make-over which has recently gained a lot of critical acclaim is the "Dark Knight" limited series published in four volumes last year, and now available in one trade paperback volume, by DC. This series, written and drawn by ascendant comics star Frank Miller, did some really strange and wonderful things with The Batman. "Dark Knight" tells the story of the classic character at age 50, who has been in 10 years' retirement since the not-really-explained demise of Robin.

Brother, this isn't any golly-gee-whizz clown story. Forget the insipid television series. While the "Dark Knight" story remains technically consistent with the established history of the character, this is clearly a very different Batman living in a very different Gotham City. Far from being an over-grown Boy Scout who stands up for everything clean and wholesome in Whitebread America, Miller's Batman is a brooding, bitter, grim avenger. He regards the criminals he fights as "the enemy," the police as mostly well-meaning nuisances (who he has to keep reminding himself not to kill when they get in his way), and his old



The Batman of the 90's sizes up his nightmarish adversary in *The Dark Knight* by Frank Miller, published by DC Comics. ©

buddy Superman as a sellout to the corrupt forces of the military complex.

This and other works by Miller, as well as products of such writers and artists as Alan Moore, Howard Chaykin, Bill Sienkiewicz, John Totleben, Mark Evanier, and Barry Windsor-Smith, break the old bounds of the medium and create a new form of literature which is definitely intended for a sophisticated, mature taste.

And herein lies the controversy.

Attack of the Blue-Noses

Some of the words and images presented in these more sophisticated books are considered unacceptable for children by a significant number of parents, a few well-credentialed psychologists, and the usual howling pack of blue-noses. Some of these attacks evoke a sense of déjà-vu, harkening back to the great anti-comics hysteria of the late 1940s and early 1950s.

During that time, a variety of parents groups objected to the mayhem, corruption, and generally dark vision of reality presented in the old horror and crime-story genres. State legislatures exerted pressure on the comics industry to adopt a uniform code of conduct, but attempts to establish a

"voluntary" code among the dozens of comics publishers of the time were not initially successful.

The crisis peaked with the publication of *Seduction of the Innocent*, an alarmist tract by a pop psychologist Dr. Fredric Wertham, which became the "Reefer Madness" of anti-comicsdom. Wertham included the relatively innocuous western, romance and super-hero genres along with the crime and horror titles in his list of "Enemies of American Purity." This book, along with pressures from the infamous Kefauver Committee hearings in the U.S. Senate, finally resulted in the creation of the Comics Code Authority, to whom publishers were obliged to submit their comics for approval. Those who did not "volunteer" for the Code found themselves boycotted by newsstands and distributors, and went out of business.

The CCA, a nominally "private" operation created and nurtured by the threat of government action, is the main reason comics in America have remained, for the most part, juvenile pabulum, while the same medium has become considered respectable

Continued page 7

Keeping Up with the Joneses?
And the Clarks, the Tryons, the Pauls,
the Rothbards, the Berglands, The Cranes,
the Randolphs, the Jacobs, the Givots, the Dodges
the Nolans, the Konkins, the Hesses, the Marrous, the Lewises...?

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Convention

From page 3

libertarianism are highly compatible, and that what the government has done to the Indians is what it wants to do to everyone else, struck a responsive chord in the audience.

Many were also impressed with Means' obvious skill in dealing with the public and the press and his charisma in expressing his feelings and beliefs. Means promised to mobilize his past and current Indian movement supporters (and dropped the names of Marlon Brando, Willie Nelson and others as possible endorsers). His image as a former leftist and committed radical, along with his non-WASP image, was seen by some as a useful antidote to the usual notion of libertarians as an off-brand of far-out conservatism.

Means also picked up the support of many who were suspicious of Ron Paul, and collected a number of pledges of support and financial aid.

In the convention keynote address, Alaskan Andre Marrou detailed his recent campaign loss in the Homer, AK State House race and emphasized that when the major parties take Libertarian candidates seriously, they pull out all the stops in dirty campaign tactics and hardball politics. He also announced for the Vice Presidential nomination, in itself unusual this early in LP campaigns. Marrou said that he felt there were other qualified presidential candidates and he would be more comfortable as the number two candidate. Marrou, who is temporarily living in Las Vegas, NV, is believed to support Paul for the presidential nomination but did not rule out serving as VP with any candidate selected in Seattle. Former LP Director Perry Willis (subsequently elected Arizona LP State Chair) was serving as Marrou's campaign manager during the convention.

Speakers

In addition to the candidates' convention, the stellar line-up of speakers, most of them home-grown Californians, proved to be a real high point of the event.

Nobel laureate Milton Friedman, who works at the nearby Hoover Institute at Stanford, was a real coup for the Sunday evening banquet which attracted over 300 convention attendees and another 200 college students from area campuses (who were specially invited and admitted for his speech gratis). Friedman, whose entertaining talk on "The Future of the Free Market" recounted the intellectual ebb and flow of pro-market thought in America, gave full credit to the importance of libertarian ideas in the recent trend towards pro-free enterprise activities around the world. While noting that he "was not a member of the Libertarian Party" during a reply to a question, he repeatedly called himself a "small l" libertarian and advised the LP to remain the "party of principle." He at one point observed how the small Socialist Party during the 1920's was perhaps the most important intellectual political force in the U.S. during the 20th century, despite its relative political success, due to its influence with the major party political agendas. Apparently, Friedman sees the LP in a similar role today. His speech brought several standing ovations and he answered a number of questions for about a half hour after his presentation.

The other banquet speaker, Nathaniel Branden, spoke on Saturday evening, and discussed "Liberation — A Personal Scenario." He more or less focused upon his career as an exponent of Objectivism and his psychotherapy practice insights as they relate to libertarianism. He called for continued vigilance against the self-sacrifice of



Placer County dentist Bruce Daniels leads the floor fight for By-Laws revisions during the California LP convention business session.



USC philosophy professor John Hospers gave an interesting luncheon talk on difficult problems in libertarian theory and emphasized the need to be concerned with environmental destruction.

"altruism" in the Randian sense, and noted that whatever personal flaws Rand may have had, her contributions to philosophy and political thought remain valid. His highly entertaining and personal speech was also well received by a packed house.

Breakfast and luncheon speakers included Ed Clark, who spoke on the outlook for the LP in politics, Murray Rothbard, who discussed the collapse of Reagan administration credibility with evident glee, Robert Poole, Jr., who recounted the latest developments in privatization worldwide, and philosophy professor John Hospers, who gave a highly regarded presentation on problems to be resolved in libertarian philosophy and economics, as well as an impassioned plea for greater concern over environmental issues "which threaten the future of all mankind." Jeffrey Rogers Hummel also presented a luncheon talk on "Why Ideological Altruism is Necessary for Liberty" which went into great detail discussing ideological change under the formal "public choice" theory of political economy, and how most libertarian arguments concerning the "public goods" issues like national defense are insufficient. Ultimately, Hummel concluded, those who have furthered the cause of liberty throughout history have seemingly done so for altruistic motives rather than pure economic self interest.

In addition to the meal speakers, convention attendees heard from science fiction author Poul Anderson, Keith Hensen, co-founder of the L-5 Society, technology guru Eric Drexler, journalists Patrick Cox, Joanne Jacobs, Jeff Rigenbach and John Fund, LP News editor Karl Hess, Vince Miller and LP Chair Jim Turney on interna-



Joanne Jacobs of the *San Jose Mercury* and John Fund of the *Wall St. Journal* were two of five panelists discussing the impact of libertarian journalism.

tional libertarian activity, Arron Wildavsky on risk and liberty, John McCarthy on liberty and computers, think tankers Chip Mellor, Daid Theroux and Antony Fisher, economist Joe Furig and Greg Christensen, Fred Stitt and Ray Strong on new options for libertarian activism, and economist-philosopher David Friedman, who recounted his recent research on law and economics at the University of Chicago Law School.

Other activities included presentations on private education, age of consent laws, the Libertarian Republican Organizing Committee and "Green" libertarianism.

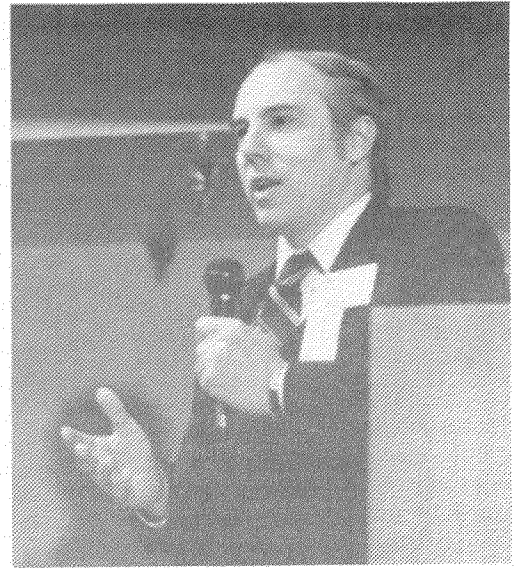
In addition to all of this, Self Government Advocates president Marshall Fritz along with Phillip Mitchell, Michael Emerling, Richard Boddie and David Bergland presented a day-long seminar on various topics involving libertarian communication, persuasion and psychology, which attracted about 50 participants.

Convention Business

Amazingly, with all of the other activity, a dedicated core of LP members spent most of the weekend in convention session debating California LP By-Laws changes proposed by Placer County activist Dr. Bruce Daniels, which would have drastically reduced the size of the State Executive Committee and re-organized the California LP administration. Requiring 2/3's approval, these proposals were discussed at great length, voted upon piecemeal and ultimately defeated.

Other business included officer elections. Along with Hinkle, other officers elected were Melinda Pillsbury-Foster as Southern Vice Chair and Tom Olson as Northern Vice Chair, Thea McLean as Treasurer, and Cullene Lange as Secretary. Bill Evers was elected to the National LP Platform Committee and Sarah Foster as his alternate. Karen Huffman was elected to the Credentials Committee.

Among the 90 plus delegates selected were decentralist Carol Moore, Colin Hunter and Eric Garriss (the latter two late of



Keith Hensen, a co-founder of the space habitation L-5 Society discussed a controversial theory of how ideas are propagated in societies and its application to libertarians.

LROC), all of whom re-joined the LP in order to support the Russell Means presidential bid in Seattle.

Other activities included the Samuel Adams Society Awards, keynoted by Ron Paul, who gave a stem-winding speech about the failure of the Reagan administration ("the emperor has no clothes"). Also featured were the Sons of Liberty award for most principled campaign (winner: Atty. General candidate Carol Newman) and the Karl J. Bray Memorial Award for activism (including a \$20 gold piece) given to Ted Brown of Los Angeles.

The convention visibly pumped up and excited those who attended, and definitely raised expectations for the upcoming Seattle national convention. For those interested, tapes were made of nearly all the speakers and panels and a list is available from **Liberty Audio, 824 West Broad St., Richmond, VA 23220.**

Media Watch

From page 4

If libertarian nostalgia, nomadism, hiding out or just plain wackiness appeals to you, contact: **Jim Stumm, Box 29, Hiler Branch, Buffalo, NY 14223** for details.

New Republic on Nozick

New York, NY - The December 22, 1986 issue of the venerable liberal magazine *New Republic* attracted the attention of a number of libertarians.

In "Anarchy, State and Rent Control", **William Tucker** takes Harvard philosophy professor **Robert Nozick** to task for zealously enforcing the local Cambridge, MA rent control ordinance, much to the sorrow of his former landlord, Harvard scholar and *Love Story* author **Eric Segal**.

In the fall of 1983, Nozick signed a one-year lease on a luxurious condominium apartment, and when the rent was bumped up a year later, apparently in violation of draconian local rent control ordinance, Nozick forced a rollback. And a year later, after much digging by Nozick, he discovered a technical violation of his original lease and successfully sued and settled out of court for \$31,000, paid in part to get rid of the libertarian philosopher/rent control expert.

As Tucker concludes, "if you're looking for someone to manipulate a rent control ordinance, find an advocate of the free market." While Nozick refused to comment for the article, recent reports have him teaching grad students a mixture of eastern mysticism and Zen in the Massachusetts countryside. Ommmmmmmm. . . .

Liberty In Comics

From page 5

entertainment in other "first world" countries.

The Code rules specifically prohibit not only nudity, vulgar language, overt sexuality and extremes of violence, but also anything which would engender disrespect for establishment authority. This is all in the name of protecting children. Thus, comics were made "suitable" for children, and children alone. Experimentation and exploration was discarded in favor of safe, acceptable formulas.

Crack in the Wall

The first crack in the Code wall occurred in the early 1970s, when the major comics publishers were trying to inject "social relevancy" in to their stories to boost sagging readership. One Marvel Comics story, in which Spiderman's best friend falls prey to drug addiction, was rejected by the CCA censors, even though the letter of Code rules was followed by the writers. Marvel published the story anyway, without the Code of Seal of Approval — and suffered no ill effects.

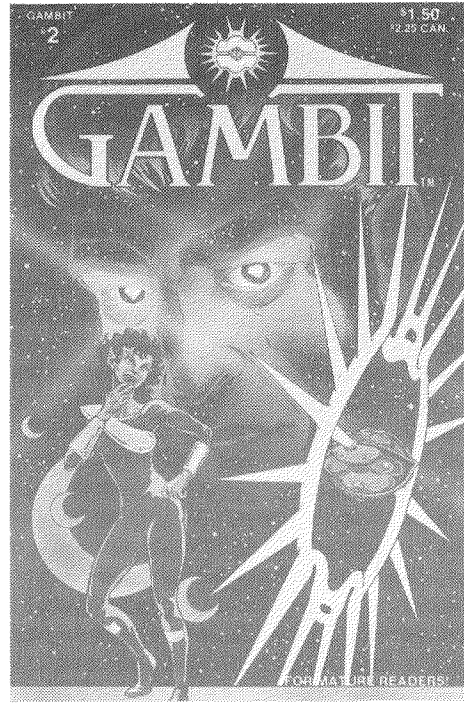
Over the next few years, the major publishers began testing the waters of River Liberty, sending out a few books here, and a few books there, without the Code approval, publishing in new formats in which the CCA did not have formal jurisdiction, and getting more and more risque in their subject matter. Distributors and newsstands generally accepted the books without trepidation.

An alternative distribution system has developed along with the alternative comics publishers. This new network consists of a score of distributors and close to 2,000 comics-specialty retail stores. The system works on a direct-sales basis, which simply means purchasers can't return unsold copies to the publishers, as opposed to conventional newsstand distribution, in which retailers can return the covers of unsold magazines, throw away the rest, and get a credit against their next order or for cash. Direct-sales retailers generally get a 40-50 percent markup to compensate for assuming the risks of over-production.

For the most part, the direct-sale marketers have taken no interest in the social, political, and even religious peculiarities of the new comics. As a result, older comics fans are enjoying an expanding number of publications geared toward their maturing sensibilities. The traditional thematic and expressionistic bounds of the medium have, by fits and starts, been pushed wider and wider. Daring experimentation, some successful and some not, has become far more commonplace, to the enrichment of everyone involved. Everyone has been happy — until recently.

As a result of the attacks from statists of several different stripes, a paranoid attitude has settled in among several important retailers and distributors. They have begun pressuring publishers to make some concessions to the current puritanical political fashion. Demands have ranged from some sort of standardized ratings system, similar to the motion pictures rating system, to a return to the suffocating standards of the CCA for all books published in the standard comic-book format.

Responding to these pressures, last December The New Batman's Frank Miller has led roughly two dozen other top writers and artists in a public denouncement of what he terms "in-house censorship" on the part of frightened distributors and publishers. At the same time, DC has announced a two-tiered "editorial guidelines" system for its



Power: how to get it, where to keep it, and what to do with it when it gets moldy — the story of GAMBIT, © by Scott Bieser.

comics, with the more juvenile books to be labeled "For Universal Readership" and the more sophisticated fare to carry a "Suggested for Mature Readers" blurb. Miller and his colleagues have criticized the new "guidelines" for several reasons, including the company's failure to consult with its regular, popular free-lance creators about guidelines before the public announcement.

During the first week of February Frank Miller, Alan Moore and Howard Chaykin publicly announced that they would not work for DC Comics or others with ratings systems for comics.

While some industry professionals are steeling themselves for a great storm, others dismiss the entire affair as a tempest in a teapot. The incidents of comics retailers facing legal trouble or parental boycotts have actually been quite rare, and the recent denunciations in the news media have been no worse than was meted out a while back to the *Dungeons & Dragons* role-playing game (said to promote satanism and suicide among adolescents), which has suffered no significant repression and remains popular.

Libertarians should find the comic-book renaissance becoming even more interesting in 1987, as more adults begin accepting the medium, and as the publishers, distributors, retailers and creators grapple with the issue of how to satisfy both an expanding market and the self-appointed defenders of children's purity.

Certain comparisons may be drawn between the alternative comics market and the alternative political scene. Two stolid concerns had long dominated the field, only to be challenged in recent years by new, upstart competitors. These competitors, while not commanding large numbers of followers or dollars, have nevertheless wrought changes in the status quo. As these newcomers establish a presence, they come under attack from guardians of the status-quo — with criticisms ranging from the thoughtful to the maniacally bombastic.

These days the comics industry provides a hauntingly familiar arena for libertarian writers and artists interested in a new way to spread their ideals. The core alternative comics market numbers in the tens of thousands and holds a promise of at least ten-fold growth in the coming decade. And the matter of whether comic-books become recognized as "legitimate" entertainment or remains in the "juvenile" ghetto will depend greatly upon the triumph of a libertarian attitude among comics publishers and sellers. ■

BAC's Fielder Draws Fire

Shepherdstown, WV - The Libertarian Party's Ballot Access Committee (BAC) has one of the toughest jobs in American politics: putting the LP on all 50 state ballots in 1988. West Virginia attorney Stephen Fielder convinced the LP National Committee last spring to sponsor his committee with \$10,000 in seed capital and to establish it as an autonomous "Self Funded Action Committee" (SFAC) with virtually free reign to accomplish its mission. Fielder may have assumed the toughest leadership task in the party.

Fielder is known to be an influential LP leader, and was narrowly edged out in the 1985 Phoenix convention balloting for LP Chair behind Randy Ver Hagen and current Chair Jim Turney, whom he endorsed after Turney edged him out in multiple elimination balloting.

But some critics point to a number of problems with the BAC operation:

—Despite assurances to the LP NatCom in Chicago last spring that the BAC could raise its own funds and handle its own paperwork free from the National LP office, recent BAC behavior indicates that it is simply unable to cope with all of these tasks.

—Based on assurances that autonomy would be successful, the BAC was freed from LP budgeting procedures or financial reporting requirements. Yet no financial plan or even the cursory financial statements required by the NatCom have yet been produced for 1986 or 1987. Despite repeated promises, no records have been submitted for routine LP audit since the BAC was established.

—Information required for FEC reporting purposes from the BAC has repeatedly been submitted late, complicating this already difficult task.

—Disputes over the use of the LP's national mailing list in 1986 added to an already confusing fundraising effort during much of 1986. Disagreements over mailing schedules created considerable friction between former LP Director Perry Willis and BAC Chair Fielder. While it is estimated that the BAC may have raised an additional \$12,000 - \$15,000 over its original seed capital, the national LP faced its worst financial crisis in years and fell considerably short of its original budget.

—While complete information is still unavailable, the BAC's funding of 1986 ballot drive efforts presents a mixed picture at best. They did bail out a floundering Nevada ballot drive effort to the tune of \$1,000, though ultimately ballot status was gained via an unrelated lawsuit sponsored by the Nevada ACLU. In what was perhaps

the most difficult 1986 petitioning effort attempted, the BAC eventually awarded \$15,000 to the Texas LP. Yet considerable resentment was created since Fielder refused to pay out any funds at all until the drive was over and all signatures were presented to election authorities. While the BAC was using the Texas effort as a fundraising pitch, Texas LP leaders had to finance actual petitioning efforts out of their own pockets until the drive was over. They resented this "after the fact funding" which was unprecedented and seemingly adopted as an ad hoc BAC "policy" to ensure that no funds would be wasted if the Texas effort proved unsuccessful. The BAC also spent several thousand dollars in Alaska in the unsuccessful attempt to overturn the disastrous Mary O'Brannon LP gubernatorial candidacy.

—Prior to the November Los Angeles NatCom meeting, a proposal surfaced suggesting that a fixed percentage of funds raised by independent SFAC's be paid to the National LP as an overhead fee for functions performed by the national office. One high ranking LP NatCom member privately complained that in an attempt to forestall this effort, Fielder threatened to withdraw a previously promised ballot drive contribution to one state LP — citing "uncertainty" over the effects of the overhead proposal — in an effort to exert pressure against the overhead fee measure, which was ultimately rejected. Fielder also lobbied against the idea in an article in the Nov-Dec. *LP News*, although it wasn't mailed out until after the LP meeting was over.

—Contrary to his original promises of a completely separate operation, Fielder complained at the LA NatCom about the rising backlog of work and offered to underwrite one-half the costs of an additional LP headquarters employee in 1987, who would also handle BAC matters. While this was authorized in principle, no action has yet been taken.

—Perhaps most surprising, Fielder called up a high ranking Ron Paul for President staffer in January and requested that Paul contribute \$5,000 per month to the BAC to assist with ballot access. This came as a surprise to the Paul campaign, which was still in the pre-announcement stages of organization, as well as a total surprise to top LP officers. While Fielder can't be faulted in his effort to raise funds, LP Chair Turney admitted that the request was "inappropriate". No funds were promised by the Paul campaign.

— And the final, most important measure

Continued page 8

DECLASSIFIEDS

Ads in the De-Classified section are \$10 per insertion for up to 20 words, with remaining words at 30¢ each, payable in advance. All ads are subject to the approval of the American Libertarian. Send copy and payment to: De-Classifieds, The American Libertarian, 21715 Park Brook Drive, Katy, TX 77450.

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Aileen Knox Grimes: World's Oldest Libertarian

by Kevin Southwick

Kevin Southwick is a Houston businessman and aspiring novelist.

Who is the oldest living Libertarian? Most likely it's Houstonian Aileen Knox Grimes, 99, who still frequently attends many Harris County LP functions (a decidedly younger crowd). Aileen's 1982 LP candidacy for Texas State Representative won her considerable local and even national attention.

Born in a snow-covered sod hut in Kansas, Aileen lived on her father's Texas farm until 1912 when she married George Grimes, who initially worked in the oil fields. Together they operated a farm near Galveston and later, in the mid 30's, settled near Austin to run a general store.

"I remember when a dollar was worth seventy-five cents," she says with a facetious laugh, recalling the twilight of honest money. "And prices never changed." Indeed she is probably one of the only Libertarians who can remember the kind of freedom this country experienced before 1913, that dim year which brought the 16th Amendment and the Federal Reserve.

"I don't like that IRS they put over the people," Aileen says with unusual forcefulness, waving her hand as if she would wave them out of existence. She recounts numerous stories about growing government interference with the general store she and her husband operated, and attributes Mr. Grimes' 1943 stroke to his worries about making inadvertent errors with rationing coupons. One of their neighboring storeclerks almost landed in jail for selling tobacco on the wrong day to a government shopper. The Grimes' had to sell their store that year.

Notwithstanding the usual Libertarian woes, Aileen remains perpetually optimistic in her daily life. Hanging prominently on one wall of her residence is a decidedly Libertarian drawing of an armadillo beneath a "Let Freedom Ring" logo, one of her most prized possessions. Using training first gained in 1905 when she took a correspondence course in cartoon drawing, she keeps an artbook handy and daily adds more colorful drawings of flowers.

Apparently she underwent no soul searching in deciding to join the Libertarian Party. "The Democrats and Republicans are ruining this country," she told a reporter when she ran for office. Every greenhorn Libertarian agrees, but the statement has a reassuring and pragmatic ring when coming from a person whose peers still worship FDR, LBJ, WPA, etc., etc. while fighting for increases in their Social Security benefits. Perhaps there's still hope for the over 65 crowd.

When asked what advice she might give to today's youth she blurts out a simple and

unqualified answer: "Join the Libertarian Party."

We should listen to our elders. One can't help but wonder what our history would be like if the LP had come along fifty years earlier and the frank and pragmatic Aileen Knox Grimes had by now become one of this nation's senior representatives. ■

Libs Run for City Council

Austin, TX - Incensed over the collectivist policies of the City Council, Austin Libertarians are fielding a full slate of opponents to the incumbents for the April 4 election.

Pledged to vigorous, no-holds-barred campaigns are Gary Johnson, Fred Ebner, and Erich Schwarz.

Johnson, 33, an investor, is the Texas LP Secretary and an at-large representative to the Libertarian National Committee. Ebner, 62, a retired textbook publisher's representative, a former college political philosophy instructor, and recent Travis County LP Chair, is a native Texan and a graduate of the University of Texas in government. Schwarz, an entrepreneur and a student at the University of Texas, is a native Texan and co-founder and president of the University Libertarian Group.

Each is committed to accept all speaking engagements, answer all questionnaires, be available to the media, and, in short, to run a serious campaign to win.

The present politics of the Austin City Council are so intrusively interventionist that Fred Ebner had dubbed it "the Council of Commissars of the People's Republic of Austin" in his numerous letters to local newspapers.

Ebner and Johnson led the opposition to the establishment of the Capital Metro mass transit fiasco and its sales tax. They spearheaded a movement to recall the entire city Council after it violated the city charter. Capitalizing on their enhanced name recognition, Ebner and Johnson plan to take full advantage of Austin's numerous radio talk shows and TV interview programs. ■

Fielder Fire

From page 7

of success, ballot access, presents an as yet inconclusive picture of BAC results. While the LP is ahead of prior results in its presidential ballot access quest, it is difficult to point to any single state in which BAC efforts have been responsible for 1988 ballot access. Its financial assistance to Texas allowed the Texas LP to finance an "insurance" lawsuit and undertake successful statewide campaigns.

The BAC has also been active in obtaining legal assistance and in investigating legal grounds for ballot access-related lawsuits. The BAC has most recently been sponsoring a low key but productive petitioning effort in Arizona, which should result in a return to ballot status for that state party by 1988.

Fielder has been no stranger to controversy through his long tenure on the LP National Committee. He and ally Paul Kunberger spent a good part of 1984 in an attempt to remove then LP Director Honey Lanham from office for allegedly engaging in partisan activity. The NatCom ultimately rejected this contention. Fielder, also a sup-



Aileen Grimes when she was younger and today (right) with a member of the newest libertarian generation. After nearly a century of experience, she remains a staunch supporter of the Libertarian Party.



COMING ATTRACTIONS

AL Interviews: Former Congressman Ron Paul; Indian activist Russell Means

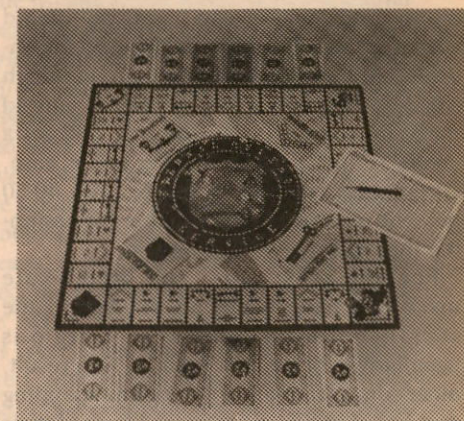
Rothbard and Thies on Buchanan's Nobel Prize

LP Delegate Poll

Big Brother in Your Wallet

Reviews: Sablatura on "Reporters and Government"; Thies on "Dismantling the State"

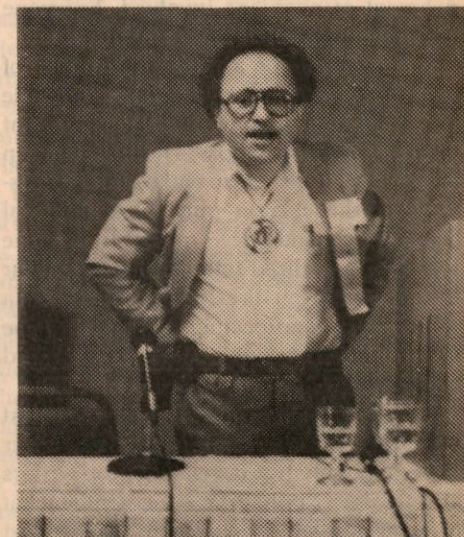
And cartoons, political notes, media watch and more...



Just in time for April 15! "Stick the IRS" board game allows players to compete to pay the least taxes while avoiding the unlucky "audit" roll of the dice. Available for \$12.95 from LibertyTree Network (1-800-852-5200, or write LibertyTree, 1142 West Indian School Road, Phoenix, AZ 85013.)



Nobel laureate Milton Friedman addressed 500 listeners on Sunday evening at the California LP Convention. He was optimistic about recent trends using the market rather than politics to solve problems. (r.) Economist David Friedman discussed his work on law and economics, indicating that freedom to contract makes the legal system more efficient.



NOTA Beats LP

Las Vegas, NV - Who says LP candidates get most of the libertarian votes in an election?

Not in Clark County, Nevada. According to post-election reports, the decidedly non-political "none of the above" pulled in 5,471 votes for Governor while LP candidate Louis Tombarello received only 2,555.

Nevada is the only state in the union where "none of the above" is included as an electoral option. ■