

# San Mateo Libertarian

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## Meeting Notes: Rich Acuff, C. Schmidt

July's regional meeting focused on discussion of the *Libertarian Party National Convention* that took place in July. Our own County LP Chair, Kate O'Brien (photo), and Sue V. (LP member and local FIJA volunteer) attended the convention, which was held in Washington DC. *Kate* took in Saul Guzzetta's political action workshop and was also a *voting delegate*. In fact, if you caught any of the platform debate coverage on *C-SPAN*, you may have noticed that one of the camera operators had a crush on her! *Sue* and a friend gave workshops on 'e-cash' (electronic money) and on *PGP* public key encryption for achieving email privacy. They distributed 60 copies of *PGP* software to attendees. [Editor's note: My *PGP* public key and that of our database manager appear on the LPSM web page (<http://www.california.com/~lpsm/>) and fingerprints which can be used to verify those keys are printed in the masthead at the end of this newsletter.]



Kate reported that when she checked with the LP national headquarters part way through the convention, they had received *12000 inquiry calls* to the 800 number. (Owing to limited staff and funds, it may take several months to respond to all callers with information packets).

June Genis (sometime LPSM Chair and 1992 U.S. Senate candidate) dropped by our local meeting and told us that an editorial in our local *San Mateo Times* had urged inclusion of LP presidential candidate Harry Browne in the debates this fall.

The eight of us at the meeting signed a *petition* to *presidential debate* organizers (circulated by Stop the Browne-Out) to include Harry Browne. Hopefully Harry will be heard! If you haven't signed, you can help by participating on-line. -Visit the petition page at <http://www.twr.com/STBO>.

Reminder: we have a set of the [Advocates for Self Government's Liberty Communicator Course](#) audio tapes. At the meeting they were turned over to outreach speaker Mike Moloney, but if you're interested in hearing them, let us know.

Mike reported that he'll be speaking to a group of *Rotarians* this month.

After the business meeting Sue V. gave an impromptu presentation on "the *traffic issue*", which, she said, is a focus of our Patriot fellow travelers. She related the story of how California is *phasing out due process* where traffic violations are concerned, and substituting "administration" by the Lockheed corporation. Under the old system it was almost impossible to fight a ticket (no matter how inappropriately issued), but you could, at least, demand a hearing by a judge. Under the new system you will be able to submit a written request for mercy, but your guilt is presumed and your fate will be decided through the mail by an anonymous corporate clerk with no right of appeal.

Our *next meeting* will be Wednesday August 21, at the office of Amy Guthrie, D.D.S., in Palo Alto, from 7:30pm to 9:00pm. (See the [map](#) on the back page.)

## LP Convention Coverage on C-SPAN C. Schmidt

I was unable to attend the LP National Convention in DC, but, thanks to C-SPAN, I was able to watch over 18 hours of coverage (and I didn't even see it all!).

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The opening speaker, Jacob "Bumper" Hornberger, started the whole thing off with a long, well-received monologue. A sampler (all paraphrased from memory):

Contrasting the LP's call for open borders [and no income redistribution] with the other parties' calls for building a wall around America in response to the impact of immigration on government giveaway programs such as Social Security, Medicare, schools, and welfare: "Isn't it funny that it's only the 'public sector' that complains about too many customers?!"

"The Democrat politicians' worst fear is that somewhere, somebody is making money. The Republicans' greatest fear is that somebody somewhere is having fun. Maybe that's why they hate the Libertarians so much: because we believe in both!"

Hornberger deprecatingly referred to the 'welfare state poverty pimps' who populate DC. Reflecting on the phrase later I decided that nothing could be more apt: After all, they intercept our paychecks before we can spend them, take their 48% off the top, drive around in BMW's, live the good life, perpetuate poverty, and, with a straight face, justify their own enrichment by pointing out all the cool stuff they buy for us.

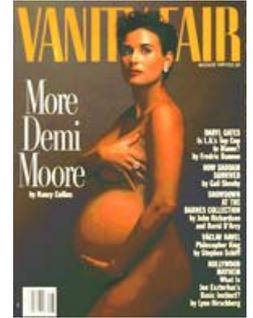
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James Bovard, author of *Lost Rights*, opened his speech with a Janet Reno quotation. Speaking to a police convention, the Attorney General asserted: "You are part of the government that has given its citizens more freedom than any other." He imagined that the signers of the Declaration of Independence must have spun in their graves; to hear that what they considered a natural right is now portioned out to the suppliant, like so many food stamps.

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Nadine Strossen, national director of the [ACLU](#), outlined each of a number of ACLU skirmishes of the past year in which Democrat and Republican politicians were united on the side of authoritarianism and the ACLU and Libertarian Party members were almost alone on the side of liberty. She gushed that it was a rare pleasure to visit with members of the one political party that understands what the Constitution and the Bill of Rights are all about.

She recounted one of the revealing moments during *ACLU v. Reno* (the case won in circuit court which stopped implementation of the Communications Decency Act): "The Clinton administration's top FBI 'computer porn authority' was on the stand. To illustrate our contention that the legislation was unconstitutionally vague, he was presented with a series of pages from actual web sites and asked which the FBI considered to be actionable. Presented with a photo of an erect penis donned with a translucent condom (from a 'safe sex' site), he judged it would be legal under the CDA. Presented with the famous Vanity Fair cover art showing a pregnant, nude Demi Moore, he judged it would be illegal under the CDA. Confused, the lawyer for the ACLU asked 'Why, in the government's opinion, would the penis be legal and the breast illegal?' The 'expert' answered, as if the distinction were obvious, that 'The penis is legal because it's educational and the breast illegal because it's for fun.'" Strossen couldn't help laughing at this point in the retelling because, she said, it illustrated so clearly the mindset of the Justice Department: "If it's fun, it must be illegal."!



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Much of the convention business broadcast concerned adoption of platform changes recommended by the platform committee. None of the changes was particularly substantial. Rather, they tended to be constructed to make the platform clearer and more consistent.

Congressional candidate Joe Dehn (District 14; southern San Mateo County) drafted an addition to the platform (adopted without opposition) affirming our support for encryption-based privacy and opposition to Bush/Clinton style "key escrow" systems [shown to be easily compromised by the Walker family spy scandal].

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Perhaps the most important parts of the proceedings were the candidates debate, the reading of presidential nominee Harry Browne's campaign platform, and the acceptance speeches of Browne and VP candidate Jo Jorgensen: rare opportunities for Libertarian candidates to speak directly to as many as 2 million C-SPAN-viewing voters.

## **Browne Criticizes Anti-terrorist Proposals**

President Bill Clinton and Congressional Republicans are using the recent attacks on TWA Flight 800 and the Olympic games to try to pass a "wish list" of unconstitutional legislation under the guise of fighting terrorism, Libertarian Party presidential candidate Harry Browne charged today.

"If we're not careful, half of the Bill of Rights will fall victim to the frantic desire of Republican and Democratic politicians to appear tough on terrorists," he warned.

Browne spoke out against a wide range of so-called "anti-terrorist" proposals from the White House and Congressional Republicans-including roving wiretaps, no-warrant wiretaps, extending RICO laws to terrorists, Internet censorship, government-mandated taggants, and efforts to weaken computer privacy.

"Each of these proposals is an attack on the rights of innocent Americans masquerading as an attack on guilty terrorists," said Browne. "Add them all together, and you have a Republican and Democratic wish list to increase the power of government at the expense of the Bill of Rights.

"But the Bill of Rights is a literal and absolute document. The First Amendment doesn't say you have a right to speak out unless the government has a 'compelling interest' in censoring the Internet. The Second Amendment doesn't say you have the right to keep and bear arms until some madman plants a bomb. The Fourth Amendment doesn't say you have a right to be secure from search and seizure unless some FBI agent thinks you fit the profile of a terrorist. The government has no right to interfere with any of these freedoms under any circumstances," said Browne.

The Libertarian candidate said the "anti-terrorist" proposals-and the bipartisan haste to pass them into law-dramatically illustrate the importance of having another choice in the 1996 presidential race.

"Clinton has gotten into a bidding war with Newt Gingrich, Bob Dole, and other Republicans to see who can repeal your rights fastest. Neither of the two older parties will defend the Bill of Rights. Only a Libertarian will speak out against this headlong rush towards a police state," he said.

Responding to the specific "anti-terrorist" proposals, Browne said he opposes:

- So-called "roving" wiretaps, which would allow police to tap multiple phones of suspected criminals. "This does nothing but make it easier for the government to spy on people not convicted of any crime," said Browne. "There is no evidence that this kind of wire-tapping power would have prevented any past terrorist action-or will prevent any future terrorist act."
- No-warrant wiretaps, which grant "emergency" wiretap authority to government agents for 48 hours without a judge's order. "This would repeal basic Fourth Amendment protections and put us all at the mercy of uncontrolled government spying," said Browne.
- Extending anti-racketeering statutes to terrorists, making them subject to property forfeiture laws. "Asset forfeiture laws are a license for legal looting by law enforcement," said Browne. "These laws must be abolished-not expanded."
- A provision which would ban the publication of bomb-making information on the Internet-while keeping it legal in printed form.

"Politicians claim the First Amendment doesn't apply to the Internet, while blithely ignoring the fact that such information remains widely available in public libraries, army manuals, and even in the Encyclopedia Britannica," said Browne.

- A long-standing White House push to allow government officials to spy on computer communications by mandating weakened encryption technology. "Free speech includes the right not to be spied on by government officials," countered Browne.

"The Bill of Rights wasn't written to protect terrorists. It was designed to protect you," said Browne. "Of course, these safeguards would protect the guilty as well as the innocent. But brushing them aside gives government employees the power to do as they wish-to harass whomever they think is guilty. If that happens, then terrorists have already won their greatest victory."

*Harry Browne for President, (202) 333-0008, <http://www.HarryBrowne96.org/>*

## **Browne Interview on KSFO C. Schmidt**

Art Bell plans to re-broadcast a show containing his multi-hour interview with Harry Browne, Libertarian presidential candidate, on Tuesday, August 13. KSFO 560 airs the Art Bell show between midnight and 4am, repeating a portion of the show from 4-6am.