

— This is from the LP/10 Convention Booklet, and gives the basic facts about the development of the LP from 1971 thru 1980.

—DFN

The First Ten Years

Highlights from LP History

1971

Dismayed by **Richard Nixon's** attacks on civil liberties and economic freedom, five Colorado libertarians led by **Dave Nolan** debate the idea of forming a new, pro-freedom party. After an inconclusive meeting in July, they agree to reconvene a month later. Their next meeting falls on August 15, the day Nixon announces wage-price controls and demonetization of the dollar; this goads them into action.

Throughout the fall, they contact other libertarians and draft a tentative platform. On December 11, at a meeting in Colorado Springs, the original group plus three additional members votes formally to found the Libertarian Party. Membership passes 100.

1972

A survey of the fledgling party's members shows **Murray Rothbard** to be their first choice for a presidential nominee; second is **Alan Greenspan**. The party's first press conference, held in Denver on January 31, receives international news coverage, including a lengthy piece in the *New York Times*.

At a June nominating convention in Denver — held, ironically, the same weekend as the Watergate break-in — 89 of the new party's 800 members adopt a Statement of Principles written by **John Hospers** and name him as their first Presidential candidate; **Tonie Nathan** of Oregon is chosen for the VP slot. **Susan Nolan** is elected Party Chair; **Ed Clark** becomes Vice Chair.

On the ballot in only two states — Colorado and Washington — the Hospers-Nathan ticket draws about 5,000 votes on Election Day. Six weeks later, on December 18, **Roger MacBride** of Virginia casts an Electoral Vote for the LP slate, making **Tonie Nathan** the first woman in history to receive an Electoral Vote. MacBride's act triples public awareness of the LP overnight.

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1973

The LP's second convention, held June 8-10 on the outskirts of Cleveland, Ohio, draws 175 participants. Combined state and national membership passes 3,000. New York Mayoral candidate **Fran Youngstein** receives 8,800 votes, running fifth in a field of nine and almost outpolling four leftist splinter candidates combined. **Gary Greenberg**, running for District Attorney in Manhattan, receives 8,300 votes — nearly 3.7% of the total vote cast.

1974

Utah becomes first state where LP attains ballot status.

Hal Jindrich receives over 200,000 votes for Superintendent of Education in California; his record stands until 1978.

Third annual convention in Dallas draws 300. **Ed Crane** defeats **Scott Royce** for National Chair by 4-to-1 margin; **Andrea Millen** is unopposed for Vice Chair. Business conventions are moved to odd-numbered years. Party HQ moves from Denver to San Francisco.

Party fields 32 candidates in November elections. **Kay Harroff** receives 79,400 votes (nearly 3%) in the U.S. Senate race in Ohio; **Jerry Tuccille** polls only 10,200 in New York Governor's race. His poor showing is attributed to "stunts". **Hospers** is a write-in for Governor in California; **David Bergland** runs for California Attorney General. Congressional contenders include **Sandy Cohen** and **Ken Kalcheim** (New York), **Bob Steiner** (New Jersey), **Karl Bray** (Utah) and **Jerry Millett** (Louisiana). None fares especially well.

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1975

Presidential nominating convention in New York City draws 500 libertarians. **Roger MacBride** wins top spot in an easy first ballot victory over **Kay Harroff** and **Guy Riggs**, but controversy erupts over VP nomination. MacBride vetoes self-proclaimed "tax resister and smuggler" **Jim Trotter**, who is leading after first VP ballot. Second ballot deadlocks. **David Bergland**, who flies in from California overnight, is chosen the next day. Despite problems most LP members leave with enthusiasm, and news coverage is excellent. Crane and Millen are re-elected to lead party; HQ is moved from San Francisco to Washington, DC.

LP candidates enter local races in fall; most ambitious mayoral campaigns are those of **Ray Cunningham** (San Francisco) and **Dave Long** (Boston).

1976

Inspired by tireless campaigners **MacBride** and **Bergland**, over 250 other Libertarians run for office; Michigan tops the list with 86. Media coverage accelerates. U.S. Senate candidate **Steve Trotter**, running in Utah, is endorsed by that state's former Governor. "Pep Rally" convention in Washington, DC, draws 600. MacBride and Bergland are listed on ballot in 31 states and DC.

On Election Day, the LP ticket polls 172,000 votes; only one-fourth as many as Independent candidate **Eugene McCarthy**, but narrowly edging out **Lester Maddox** to lead the minor-party pack. Best showing: 6% in Alaska. Many state and local candidates top this mark; **Larry Fullmer** receives 30% in a State Senate race (two-way) in Idaho.

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1977

Sixth annual convention, San Francisco, July. Speakers range from **Timothy Leary** and **Robert Anton Wilson** to **Roger MacBride** and **Eugene McCarthy**; the latter both speak at a banquet of over 1,000 people. **David Bergland** is elected Chair without opposition; **Mary Louise Hanson** is chosen Vice Chair, also unopposed.

Elaine Lindsey is elected to the City Council in Circleville, Ohio. **David McNeill** receives over 27,000 votes (29%) in a six-way City Council race in Phoenix.

1978

Ann Hammond places second in a three-way City Council race, scoring 32%, in Garland, Texas. **Barbara Hutchinson** polls 118,000 votes running for Assessor in San Diego County — less than 1,000 votes behind the incumbent. Libertarians are active and visible in California's Proposition 13 battle.

A Labor Day Weekend convention in Boston draws only 400, but more than 150 Libertarians run for public office around the country; Arizona has 42, Nevada 23. Combined total vote is 1.3 million. Biggest news: **Dick Randolph** wins state legislature seat in Alaska, becomes first Libertarian legislator. **Ed Clark** polls 380,000 votes (5.5%) for Governor in California — the best showing by a third-party candidate since 1946. **Gary Greenberg** receives 19,000 votes for Governor in New York.

1979

Ed Clark and **Bill Hunscher** engage in spirited contest for LP presidential nomination; 1,500 turn out for nominating convention in Los Angeles, September 6-9. Clark wins handily; VP slot goes to **David Koch** of New York, who defeats "None Of The Above" on first ballot. Bergland and Hanson re-elected as party Chair and Vice Chair without opposition.

California party activists register more than 80,000 voters as Libertarians by December 31, thereby giving the LP ballot status in that state.

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1980

Murray Feldstein wins City Council seat in Flagstaff, Arizona; runs third in a field of six, receiving 2,000 votes. Drive to repeal Alaska state income tax, led by **Dick Randolph**, is successful. **Bill White** receives 18,539 votes (12%) in a three-way race for California State Senate. **Robert Murphy** polls 0% in Tulsa mayoral contest.

Nearly 500 candidates run on LP label. Clark-Koch ticket achieves ballot status in all 50 states plus DC, a feat never before accomplished. Campaign generates feature articles in many publications, disappointingly little national news coverage. **Clark** and **Koch** garner 921,000 votes — slightly over 1% of the national total — thus outpolling **Eugene McCarthy** four years earlier, but getting only one-sixth the vote of Independent entry **John Anderson**.

Dick Randolph is re-elected in Alaska by a huge margin; a second Libertarian, **Ken Fanning**, is also elected to the Alaska legislature and **Stan Thompson** becomes Mayor of Kenai Borough. In California, **David Bergland** receives 203,000 votes for U.S. Senate, while **Dan Mahaffey** polls 8.1% in a three-way race for Congress; Mahaffey's raw vote total exceeds that of 22 Republican Congressional contenders. Total vote for all Libertarian candidates tops four million.

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