



Gulf Coast Liberty

Defending liberty in southeast Texas in the Spirit of San Jacinto

December 2003

Garcia on Channel 8's *The Connection*

Harris County LP Chair Anthony Garcia appeared on "The Connection" a half-hour public affairs program on the local PBS affiliate, channel 8. The episode aired 10 p.m. Tuesday November 18 and repeated on Sunday, November 23 at 5 p.m.

Anthony appeared in a moderated round table with the chairs of the Democratic and Green parties and the political director of the Republican party. The topic was "voter apathy."

Given that the United States ranks 139 out of 172 countries in voter turnout and that "an average of only 48% of eligible voters have cast a ballot in all general elections since 1945, according to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance—Host Ernie Manouse posed the question "Is our democracy in trouble?"

"I believe that there are a lot of people out there who are eligible voters who are not voting because they feel their vote doesn't count—that it doesn't matter, that politics as usual is going to go on no matter who they vote for," Anthony said. "They look at the candidates being offered by the Democratic and Republican parties and they see no difference between a big government Democrat and a big government Republican."

Republican spokesperson Ryan Patrick argued that democracy was in no danger "because we have a good transition of power" and that the "system works." "When people don't vote they feel basically that everything is okay," said Patrick. The Democrat and Green both admitted to problems, but agreed that democracy was safe.

Anthony's response prompted

the host to ask if the two-party system was a good thing or not.

"The biggest problem that we have as alternative parties is first we can't even get on the ballot without having to jump some huge hurdles," Anthony said.

He went on to explain the ballot access process and mention the estimated \$150,000 and 75,000 raw signatures we would need. He pointed out that this effort meant that we had less time and money to get our message out and that the major parties don't have to do this.

"Obviously, my counterpart on the democratic side and myself are going to say that's better for us," Patrick said. However, he said that third parties at least on the statewide and national scene do end up effecting the debate and they usually have "one or two core issues that end up being incorporated" into one of the major party's platforms. Democratic Party Chair Gerry Birnberg pointed out that the "Bill of Rights affords an opportunity to minority parties to gain ballot access more easily than they presently can." However, he felt that the two parties helped discourage voter apathy by crystallizing complex issues into an A or B choice that voters can better understand.

And when talk turned to solutions to apathy caused by campaign finance issues Anthony was first with

a solution. "One of the big reasons I think why people with money are so interested in influencing the political process is because they have so much to lose either through taxes, or they have so much to gain through subsi-



HCLP Chair Anthony Garcia, Vice Chair Jeff Daiell and Secretary Kristin Thompson at the November meeting.

dies and pork, that it becomes very much in their interest to get the ear of politicians," Anthony said. "The Libertarian solution would be to drastically reduce the amount of power that government has—the amount of money that they are spending—to make that much less interesting to the people that have the money that want to influence politicians."

All the party spokespeople agreed that scheduling Saturday elections was a good idea. All also agreed that individual votes can count. "Folks don't realize how important those individual votes are, because of everything we've done to dissuade them of the notion that their votes are important," said Birnberg. "If you keep people from voting those in power retain their power," said Patrick.

Anthony had the last word and was able to reiterate that ballot access would solve voter apathy.

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In Memory of Dan Weiner

Daniel Conan Weiner, 53, died October 29, 2003. Dan was a longtime libertarian activist. He was the co-founder and president of the Houston Chapter of Pink Pistols, an organization devoted to promoting the Second Amendment to the GLBT community. He was also a member of The Free State Project, the Liberty Round Table, and had been named editor of *The Libertarian Enterprise*, an online journal of libertarian opinion and essays, in May 2003. Dan had also recently been an active representative for the ad-hoc committee to draft science fiction novelist L. Neil Smith as the Libertarian Presidential candidate.

Dan was born January 7, 1950 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. A Vietnam Veteran, Dan was in the U.S. Army from 1968 to 1973. He was honorably discharged. After moving to Houston in the 1980s Dan came out as a bisexual and became active in the Q-Patrol, a neighborhood watch organization that patrols the gay bar district in Montrose. He served on their board for seven years. Dan was a copier repair technician by trade.

Dan died from inoperable lung cancer, which was diagnosed in July. He spent his last months at home with his housemates Harlan and Marti Bennett, who became his caregivers.

Preceding Dan in death

were his mother Ruhama, who died earlier this year; and two sisters, who also died from cancer. He is survived



by his father Albert Weiner, 89, of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

"Although he is no longer

with us, his legacy will continue," writes Marie Angell, friend and fellow activist, "Dan's wit, energy and devotion will be missed."

"I seldom attempt to speak of the staff of the Rational Review, but this time I feel qualified to do so," writes Tom Knapp of www.rationalreview.com, "We all loved Dan. We'll all miss him. And we'll all strive to follow his example of a life well lived—a life dedicated to human liberty."

A memorial Pink Pistols Shoot was held in Dan's honor November 15, 2003 at American Shooters Range. An "Irish" wake followed at the Bennett's home. Those wishing to remember Dan may send a memorial to one of the many libertarian organizations that Dan supported.



Some of the crowd at November's Second Saturday Libertarian Lunch.

Candidates Needed Now for Nov. 2004

Unopposed, unopposed, unopposed—without Libertarians filing for office this month that is what we will see in 2004. With the passage of the recent Constitutional Amendment "authorizing the legislature to permit a person to take office **without an election** if the person is the only candidate to qualify in an election for that office"—we may not even see that.

In the last presidential election cycle in 2000, half the State Senate positions in Harris County were unopposed, 15 of the 25 State Representative positions were unopposed, 4 of the 8 Justice of the Peace spots were unopposed, 6 of 8 Constable offices were unopposed, 3 of 4 Harris County School Trustees were unopposed. The County Attorney was unopposed, the Sheriff was unopposed, and the County Commissioner for Precinct One was unopposed.

And many races—for U.S. Representative District 8, for County Commissioner Precinct Three and all of the opposed Justice of the Peace races—were only contested because a Libertarian volunteered to run for the office.

While our candidates will probably not win higher offices—running for office as a Libertarian gives you the opportunity to inject issues that concern you into the debate. Being a candidate helps build the party—it puts the word Libertarian on the ballot, in the papers, and in the voting guides letting people see that there is an alternative party. The more candidates we have and any growth we can show from previous elections—increases our vote as people decide that their votes for Libertarians will count. Finally, the more candidates we have the easier the petition drive will be.

If you are a lawyer the party especially needs you to run for office. There are very few statewide races on the 2004 ballot that can earn our ballot access status. Most of those positions are only available to lawyers—with-

out the participation of every libertarian lawyer—or some changes to the election law—we may have to petition onto the ballot again for the next election cycle.

You do not need to be a "party member" to file for office. You do not need to submit any signatures or pay any filing fees. All that you need to do is choose an office and send in a notarized application form before the January 2, 2004 deadline. Only individuals who have applications filed will be able to seek the Libertarian nomination for office at our County Conventions in March 2004 or the State Convention in June 2004.

Libertarian candidates can not then vote in the primary elections. Also, County Chairs can not be candidates for office unless they will not be seeking the Chair in 2004.

Individuals agreeing to run for office should be willing to keep in touch with the local and state party officers—providing current addresses and phone numbers that may be listed on the website and in newsletters. Potential candidates should be willing and able to respond to questionnaires for at least two voter's guides (or more for statewide offices) and be available to provide basic information to the media if they are contacted. Most candidates for office are also required to file a personal financial form with the Texas Ethics Commission, the Federal Elections Commission or the County Clerk, depending on the office.

Candidates that run active campaigns and solicit donations or make expenditures (even from their own pockets) must file campaign finance reports. Campaigns that solicit funds must appoint a treasurer, although the treasurer may be the candidate or a family member. Funds must be kept in a separate account from personal finances.

HCLP officers are available to help candidates with all aspects of the campaign. We can assist with filling

out forms, we can provide suggested answers for questionnaires, we can sometimes provide volunteers to speak at events on the candidates behalf, etc. We will also attempt to match volunteers with candidates wishing to have active campaigns.

Future issues of GCL will describe campaign finance regulations and filing schedules and provide other support. Candidates filing also are encouraged to submit biographies or opinion articles for inclusion in our newsletter.

A list of statewide and local offices up for election in 2004 is on page 4 of this newsletter. The Secretary of State's office also has a list online at www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/2004primary.shtml. The qualifications for office—mostly related to the age of the candidate and residency in the district—are online at www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/candidates/2002canguide/qualifications.html

To find your district to determine what position to apply for you can consult your voter's registration card. (Not a registered voter? You can still run for almost all the offices—although you should probably go ahead and register as soon as possible.) An online source for finding your district for Harris County is also available from the League of Women's Voters at www.lwv.houstonorg/VotersKey/. The local County Clerk's office will also provide this information by phone or at their website.

The actual application form is available online at www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/forms/nomin.pdf. To print it you will need legal size paper. Each county party should also have copies of this form available—most counties will have these available at meetings this month or you can contact the Chair to receive one by mail.

Completed forms should be sent to the County Chair for local offices and to the State Chair for statewide offices. Addresses on page 4.

Offices on the 2004 Election

Filing for Office

President

announced candidates:

Michael Badnarik, Jeffrey Diket, Nazirite Perez, David Hollist, Gary Nolan

Vice President

announced candidates:

Richard Campagna, Tamara Millay, Eric Dondero

U.S. House of Representatives:

All districts, not required to be a resident of the district. Must be at least 25 years old.

Railroad Commissioner:

Statewide office; Must be at least 25 years old; and have no railroad interests.

Texas Supreme Court:

Three places (9, 3 & 5); statewide office; must be at least 35 years old; must be a lawyer with 10 years practice.

Texas Court of Criminal Appeals:

Three places (5, 6 & 2); statewide office, must be at least 35 years old; must be a lawyer with 10 years practice.

State Senate:

(Districts 4, 6, 9, 10, 11, 16, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31)

Must be at least 26 years old; Must be a resident of Texas for past 5 years and of the district for past 12 months.

State Representative:

All districts. Must be at least 21 years old; a Texas resident for past 2 years and the district for 12 months.

State Board of Education:

(Districts 2, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14)

Must be at least 26 years old; a Texas and district resident for 12 months.

Court of Appeals, District Judges,

District Attorneys: (various offices, check with your county clerk) Age varies from 18 to at least 25; must be a

lawyer, for most must have 4 years of practice.

County Sheriff:

Must be at least 21 years old; must hold a high school diploma or GED; must not have been convicted of a felony. I've been told that the elected Sheriff must be a peace officer. I find nothing in the Texas Constitution, the local government code or the occupation code to support this requirement. The code says a person elected Sheriff must meet eligibility requirements for being a peace officer codes 1701.309 (age) and 1701.312 (no felony convictions). I did find several pertinent court decisions as well.

County Attorney:

Must be a licensed to practice law; must be at least 18 years old; must live in county for at least 6 months.

County Tax Assessor-Collector:

Can not locate requirements for this office.

County Commissioner:

Two precincts (1 & 3)
Must be at least 18 years old and reside in district for at least 6 months.

Justice of the Peace:

All place 1 offices—8 in Harris County) Must be at least 18 years old; must live in Texas 12 months and the district for 6 months. Need not be a lawyer.

County Constables:

All precincts (8 in Harris County)
Must be eligible to be licensed as a Texas Peace Officer and must complete police academy coursework within 270 days of taking office.

Harris County School Trustee:

Three spots (pos. 1 pct. 2; pos. 2, pct. 4; pos. 4, pct. 3) Must not be official or employee of school district; must be a resident for at least 6 months.

Texas Statewide & District Races

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Spring, TX 77380
281-363-9211
ronhard45@msn.com

Orange County

Needs Temporary Chair, volunteer contact Laura@Libertyworks.org.

Please support your local Libertarian Party!

Here is my best donation: _____ \$15 _____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ Other
(Make checks payable to Harris County Libertarian Party)

Occupation _____ Employer _____ Email _____

Phone _____ County _____ Precinct # _____

Federal law requires political committees to report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of employer for each individual whose contributions aggregate in excess of \$200 in a calendar year. Texas Ethics Commission requires political committees to report this information for donations of at least \$50.

Website adds Boards

The State Party website now has discussion forums. The forums can be found at www.lptexas.org/phpBB2.

"Currently, there are only two areas—a general discussion forum and a forum for the members of the El Paso Party," reports website maintainer Bob Smither. However, Bob is willing to set a forum up for any county. He can be contacted at bob@smither.net.

Anthony Garcia, HCLP Chair, is also working on the state party website to update content and contact lists. Recent fixes have included online PDFs for Lone Star Liberty and enabling donations via Paypal. If you know of changes that need to be made please email Anthony at agarcia@starbaseunix.org.

Freedom of Information

Are you or someone you know interested in an intense study of the First Amendment? If so, you might be interested in the First Amendment Institute Class of 2004. The group offers a concentrated study made up of a four part program of one and one-half day sessions held in different cities during the calendar year.

Tuition is \$1,500 per person and is approved for three graduate level credit hours. Those wishing to apply must do so before December 15. More information and applications are available online at www.foift.org or call 214-977-5558.

CLUH Meetings Change

The College Libertarians at UH have announced that their weekly meetings for the Spring Semester will vary so that they meet on a different days every week. "Hopefully, this will allow some students to become involved who weren't able to get involved this semester," says CLUH president Monica Granger.

Check the website at www.uhcollegelibertarians.org in 2004 for the new schedule.

Notaries Needed

The HCLP Executive Committee needs Notaries for the upcoming ballot drive. The expense in fees for someone to notarize both volunteer and paid circulators petition sheets next spring could be huge if volunteers willing to waive the fee are not found.

To help in this effort three HCLP officers will file applications to become notaries. The local party has agreed to pay \$79 each to cover their costs. If you are a notary or would like to become one please contact the party.

Party Membership

Get your National LP membership online. Join at www.lp.org/action.join.html. Renew at www.lp.org/members. Yearly dues is \$25 and includes LP News subscription.

Reminder

Texas delegates to the LP National Convention will be chosen by the State Libertarian Executive Committee (SLEC) at the February 21, 2004 meeting. Those interested in being delegates should plan to attend.

Thanks Donors!

The Harris County Libertarian Party would like to thank the following recent donors:

Betty Bradley
Jeremy Davis
Jeff Daiell
James Chudleigh
Thomas Granchi
Michael House
Guy McLendon
John Willis

Robert F. Lockhart

Certified Public Accountant

P.O. Box 1398 Pasadena, Texas 77501

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Candidate applications due this month!

Upcoming Local Libertarian Activities

Dec. 6 (Sat.) Run-off Election for Houston Mayor, City Council, and HISD board.

Top China Buffet, 3630 Spencer Hwy. in Pasadena. Contact Bob Lockhart at 713-475-0092.

Dec. 6 (Sat.) 1-4:30 p.m. SLEC meeting in Austin. Cepeda Branch Library, 651 N. Pleasant Valley Road. For information contact State Chair David DeLamar at think@door.net.

Dec. 18 (Thur.) 7 p.m. Montgomery County Meeting at the South County Community Center, 2235 Lake Robbins Drive, The Woodlands. Contact Ron Hard at ronhard54@msn.com or 281-363-9211.

Dec. 7 (Sun.) 11:30 a.m. Harris County Meeting at 9614 Oregano Circle (off Corporate Drive.) For information contact John Kormylo at elfsoft@mindspring or 713-271-1776.

Jan. 2 (Fri.) 5 p.m. Deadline for Filing Application for the Libertarian Party Nomination for offices up for election in the 2004 November General Election.

Dec. 9 (Tues.) 7 p.m. Brazoria County Meeting at Golden Corral, Hwy 388 Business, Angleton. Contact George Harper at Gharper@sat.net or 979-964-3693.

Jan. 4 (Sun.) 11:30 a.m. Harris County Meeting at 9614 Oregano Circle. See Dec. 7 for details.

Dec. 13 (Sat.) 1 p.m. Second Saturday Libertarian Lunch at Star Pizza in the Heights. Contact Laura at Laura@Libertyworks.org or 281-997-8141.

Jan. 15 (Thur.) Filing deadline for Texas Ethics Commission. LP candidates who have appointed a treasurer must report on donations and expenditures up to this date. County Executive Committees with more than \$5,000 in donations or expenditures in 2003 must file.

Dec. 15 (Mon.) Bill of Rights Day; see www.jpfo.org/jpfobor.htm for sample op-eds and suggested activities to celebrate.

Feb. 9 (Mon.) Last Day to Register to Vote to qualify for the precinct conventions or primary.

Dec. 16 (Tues.) 6:30 p.m. Jefferson County Meeting at the LogonC@fe, 3805 Calder Ave., in Beaumont. Contact Dean Tucker at revdeantucker@aol.com or 409-838-2901.

Feb. 11 (Wed.) Candidate's Personal Financial Statements due to Texas Ethics Commission. Required of most statewide and district offices even if the campaign does not accept donations or make expenditures.

Dec. 18 (Thur.) 7 p.m. San Jacinto Supper Club at

Feb. 21 (Sat.) SLEC meeting in Austin. National Convention Delegates will be selected at this meeting.