

Libertarian Party fest lacks one element: mainstream

By: McClatchy
Huston Chronicle
May 24th, 2008

DENVER — It's the strippers who give it away, the not-very-well-kept secret that the Libertarian Party Convention is a little different.

At the average mainstream major party convention, such things as adult entertainment are off campus, left to delegates to find themselves. At the Libertarian fest in the basement ballroom of a Denver hotel, the strip club has its own booth.

And why not? Libertarians detest the idea of the government regulating morality.

Shotgun Willies occupies prime turf in an exhibit hall booth outside the convention meeting room.

The club shares a divider with the campaign booth of presidential hopeful Bob Barr, a former congressman from Georgia who gained fame by helping press the impeachment of President Bill Clinton for lying under oath to conceal an affair.

It's just around the corner from the Marijuana Policy Project, which fights to make marijuana legal for medical use — and for nonmedical use.

And Shotgun Willies sits across from the Liberty Dollars booth, where Joby Weeks of Denver sells a nongovernment form of money that boasts, "in just eight years, the Liberty Dollar has become America's second most popular currency."

Before you can ask why it took eight years — was there another No. 2 currency ahead of it? — consider Weeks' pitch about how silver retains its value while the government's money has lost its value. (Libertarians hate the Federal Reserve.)

"An ounce of silver bought five gallons of gas in 1950, it bought five gallons of gas in 1970, and it buys five gallons of gas in 2008," says Weeks. "The price of gas hasn't gone up. The purchasing power of a dollar has gone down."

But the best reason? "The strippers take silver," he offers.