

PRO-HIBITION

By *Stu Burguiere*



It was just a normal summer day in 2003 when a small group of friends and relatives gathered in the living room of a house located in the shadow of the Rocky Mountains. But this wasn't a birthday party or a Fourth of July picnic, it was the national convention for the United States' oldest third political party, the Prohibition Party. Yes, that Prohibition Party, the one that wants alcohol to be illegal.

Eight people attended. Most of them were relatives of Earl Dodge. Earl ran for president as the Prohibition Party nominee in 1984, 1988, 1992, 1996 and 2000. He was not elected President of the United States in any of those years. However, to be fair, the final results of the 2000 election were contested.

At the Prohibition Party Convention in Living Room, Colorado, Earl Dodge was nominated to be the party's nominee for the sixth time. Some people would say going back to Earl after his 2000 performance of 208 votes nationwide (the lowest in party history) was not the wisest strategy. One of those people was the new national chair of the party, Don Webb. He wasn't invited to the convention.

Webb, wanting to "reform" a party named after a practice that generally ended in 1933, demoted Dodge and tried to give the nomination to another "reformer" Gene Admonson. Dodge didn't recognize the changes and quickly filed

the necessary paperwork to cement his sixth run.

That's when the powerhouse "Concerns of People" party stepped in and offered their presidential nomination to Admonson, setting the stage for one of the most heated, and least significant, political battles in history.

Election day came with both Prohibition-esque candidates having ballot access in Colorado, where, ironically, Pete Coors was running for senator. Admonson, whose campaign was quickly gaining traction, also picked up Louisiana.

In the end, the upstart Admonson ticket was victorious over the old school Dodge ticket by a final total of .00000158% to .00000011% (1,944 to 140 votes). Upon hearing the results, Earl Dodge immediately got plastered.

Outside of the 2084 people who voted for Dodge or Admonson, the only time anyone else ever seems to be for prohibition is on New Years Day, at about 3:18am. This is about the time you're looking into the toilet at dozens of partially digested cocktail weenies that look like an armada of boats from a mediocre Russell Crowe movie. You promise to your God and your country to fight the evils of alcohol for the rest of your existence, providing your God, your country, or your Tylenol can stop your head from pounding.

But why is prohibition such a ridiculous idea to everyone? Of all the stupid things that our government has done, prohibition is the big joke?

Alcohol is a product that assists us in such wonderful pastimes as losing jobs, getting arrested, wrecking cars, throwing up, beating wives, dancing poorly, disgracing the Japanese culture with bad karaoke, and hooking up with relatively unattractive people. Not to mention that it kills more people every year in America than Alzheimer's, pneumonia, diabetes, AIDS, scabies, and even the ever scary killer bird flu.

To be fair, alcohol may not

actually kill people itself, but it does help over 100,000 people per year kill themselves. But when has personal responsibility stopped us from lining up with torches to rip a product off the market?

So we know all the negatives, but the question is, what are the positives of alcohol? (If you're a 2.2 or below on the 1-10 beauty scale you are already well aware of the positives and can stop reading.)

YOU LOSE YOUR INHIBITIONS

Yes, but that's a positive? Most people could use more inhibitions. Have you ever walked around a mall and seen a gut hanging out of a spandex/half-shirt combination that's nine sizes too small? That's without alcohol! They should create a beverage that turns you into a Puritan after a six pack. Maybe then we wouldn't have to look at hairy European immigrant men in Speedos at the beach.

Plus, for all you people who want a solution to the amount of unwanted children, don't worry about keeping abortion legal, get rid of alcohol and watch the birth rate crash like the Chicago Bulls after Jordan left.

YOU OPEN UP

Again, this is a positive? I suppose we could all communicate better, but the type of talking that's going on after a bunch of beers is generally either irresponsible gossip, unfunny jokes, the untimely release of company secrets, or admissions of love that come way too early. Rarely is there a great work of public significance composed while the room is spinning, although someone from the ACLU told me James Madison was completely lit when he sketched up the constitution.

YOU LAUGH MORE

What you need is not more alcohol, but funnier friends.

I DRINK WINE FOR MY HEALTH

Riiiiight, and I eat cheese to help the bovine unemployment rate.

IT JUST TASTES GOOD

No, it doesn't. Anything that needs an "acquired taste" doesn't taste good. If it tasted so good, then every lunchroom vending machine in America would feature ice cold O'Douls.

So what's the problem with prohibition? Why would banning a product with Michael Moore sized problems and Mary Kate Olson sized benefits be so crazy? Why is prohibition viewed as such a failure?

The main reason is that the government couldn't enforce it. Black markets popped up, gangsters got involved, and people were dying from whiskey distilled illegally in bathtubs (Jack, Coke, and Irish Spring...Mmmm).

Since when is that the standard for getting rid of a law? Murder has been illegal since Moses was lugging around tablets, yet it's still going on. Should we just give up and make murder legal since it's "gonna happen anyway?" I'm sure a few years after slavery was outlawed there were still some plantations with profit margins that were a little too high and payrolls that were a little too low. Should we have just thrown up our hands and said "ahhh forget it, where are the chains?" Of course not.

Look, am I really for prohibition? No. I have "acquired" my taste already and enjoy adult beverages somewhat responsibly. But it's worth pointing out what a ridiculous standard we now have, which is essentially the absence of consistency.

In reality, there really are only two arguments when it comes to alcohol and drugs. The arguments presented by Libertarians and the Prohibitionists. Either we let people get wasted or we don't. What particular substance gets us plowed is immaterial. Either all of it should be legal, or none of it.

So, as you look at your newly developed New Year's photos and cringe, think about Earl Dodge and his 140 votes. Then go make a beer run.

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