

The Midwest Peace and Liberty Festival III: A Liberating Experience

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Introduction

My path began when I was 20 years old, and ever since then, I have felt isolated. I have felt like I am one of the only ones who see the world like I do, share the same philosophical principles that I do, and hate the State with the same vehement passion that I do.

That seems to be the mindset of most [voluntaryists](#) (that is, propertarian anarchists). Here in the Communist State of Illinois, the best I have been able to find is the anti-libertarian Libertarian Party, which I despise, as I have written about before when I attended that one local LP chapter meeting as an installment of my [Adventures in Illinois Law](#) series.

I've been mostly alone when it comes to like-minded people, at least until I found my co-host Matt, and our colleague, Kyle Rearden from [The Last Bastille blog](#). I love working with them and we make good discoveries, but I still have a burning passion to find that same quality of people here in Bloomington-Normal, where I live.

I realized that if there is going to be any group that I would want to be a part of, I will have to be the one to put the wheels into motion. Considering the fact that I'm not ready to launch Liberate Blo/No yet, the next best thing I can do is find others in the Midwest to collaborate with and learn from.

That is exactly what I did when I decided to attend the Midwest Peace and Liberty Fest in Delton, Michigan, this past weekend, from August 8th to August 9th.

The Midwest Peace and Liberty Fest: Saturday

After about 7 hours in a hotel in Kalamazoo, my friend, Katie and I arrived at the Circle Pines Center around 9am on Saturday morning.

Confused about where to park and where to pay, we chose a spot and were then approached by Shannon, one of the organizers, as well as one other gentleman. We paid our extremely affordable entry fee and then started unloading the car. About that time, Lou, from [Freedom Feens Radio](#), approached us and introduced himself.

We finished unloading and put up the tent and headed to the pavilion for the first event, which was about polyamory. The path to the pavilion was about ¼ of a mile away, through beautiful scenery ("country" in Michigan is uniquely different than in Illinois). Unfortunately, the presenters' car broke down on the way, so me and four others just discussed the subject.

As far as for my position, it is certainly within the realm of personal choice. I haven't tangled with romance for going on three years now, so for me to even approach this as a decision in my life is unrealistic, but it is an option for some people, and having options is a great thing. It is surely an interesting topic and one that I intend on exploring at some point when I have time, and the interest, in potentially starting a family.

Next was yoga with [Stephanie Murphy](#). I intended on participating, but from the drive and the early wake-up alarms, I chose to relax instead. I sat around the campfire and conversed with some folks and then headed to [Lousander Spooner's Assault Kitchen](#) to see what was going on over there: discussions on Bitcoin and Austrian economics. At that point, I knew this is where I was meant to be.

After listening into the discussion at the Assault Kitchen, I returned to my seat around the fire until the yoga session ended. At that point, Katie and I headed back to the pavilion for the next event, which was deceptively titled, *Freedom Farming*. From looking at the schedule, I imagined it to be literally about farming, but the true purpose was showing others how to plant the seed of freedom in people's minds.

The panel's focus was on methods and strategies they have used to spread this peacefully consensual philosophy to others. The more options we have to spread the only true message of freedom, the better off we are. The indoctrination and demonizing by the mainstream of those with philosophies that everyone at this festival shared is surely something that needs to be overcome, and I think more discussions on how to reach those mainstream folks are useful and necessary.

At that speaking engagement, I realized that other people were drinking alcohol, so I chose to imbibe. I took the five minute journey back to the tent, grabbed some beers, and headed back to catch Kati Testa's presentation on *Non-Violent Compassionate Communication*.

I had some reservations towards non-violent communication previously, as it's hard to imagine communication being violent, minus personal threats and the invoking of violence, as per Hans Herman Hoppe's argumentation ethics. The addition of "compassionate" into the method made it a lot more plausible, if only somewhat redundant.

I only caught about the last half of Kati's presentation, but I do see it as a potentially useful tool in promoting peaceful interactions within our families and communities. She provided an example of this method with one of the audience members. The scenario was a messy bathroom and instead of the hypothetical wife just outright complaining to the husband, the wife explained to the husband how she is feeling about the situation and how it affects her. In this scenario, they came to an agreement and decided to schedule a day or two a week to clean—it seems like a way to defuse a situation and solve problems without anger and violence.

Luckily, I brought enough beer for the next one. This was the one that I learned the most from and was most excited for: the Bitcoin Round Table. On the panel, were two folks that I interviewed live from this festival, Ben Lopez and Marc Wood, and a couple of additional

knowledgeable folks. I have been dying to get some questions answered in regards to Bitcoin, and this was the perfect place to ask.

One of my first questions was regarding the anonymity of bitcoin. I know for a fact that bitcoin is not anonymous. I have looked into too many bitcoin wallets, not because I have the intention of broaching one's privacy, but rather, just out of curiosity in order to test it: you go to blockchain.info, paste the someone's wallet address and then you have all of the incoming and outgoing transactions within the wallet, as well as the amount withdrawn and the remaining balance.

That question led into an inquiry about Dark Wallet. From the panel's response, and also my own observations, it is currently in Alpha stage 8 and hasn't been worked on in quite some time. Unfortunately, it appears that Dark Wallet has hit some sort of a roadblock, whatever it may be, and there's no explanation as to what it is. This gaping lack of knowledge just irritates me and I intend to get to the bottom of it.

Next, I asked a question in regards to purchasing bitcoin without a bank account. The best answer I got was from one of our interviewees. He told me that as far as complete anonymity goes, maybe look for alternatives (he was subtly referring to agorism).

To conclude that event, I learned quite a bit about bitcoin. More specifically, how it actually works, which I've never quite understood.

Following the Bitcoin Round Table, was the group photo. Not everyone is in it, but there were certainly a lot of people at the festival. Obviously, I stick out like a sore thumb on the far right hand side, wearing an LUA voluntaryist tank top.



Following the group photo, there was a little time to burn before the next speaking engagement. Obviously, I went back and grabbed a couple more beers for the *Polyculture Farming* segment, hosted by Jamin and Karen Biconik.

It was fascinating to see what this family was able to accomplish on a small amount of land. Me being a previous biology major, it was amazing to see what they did, outside of what is taught in most biology classrooms today. They showed the audience a few of their creations and also how easy they were to put together: from custom chicken coops, to unique gardening set-ups, all the way to a self-sustaining, one-of-a-kind greenhouse.

I left a little early for that one to make a pit stop back at the campsite so I could be prepared for Kal Molinet's *Spreading Anarchy Workshop* at 5pm.

When I returned to the campsite, I got involved in a great discussion with Ben Lopez, in regards to bitcoin, and also purchased some from him. That discussion lasted until 5:01pm, when I realized that I was missing the beginning of Kal's speaking engagement.

I rushed out and found Kal on the way back from the pavilion. He told me that he was going to grab his pamphlets before he began. I offered to help him and he accepted and we made our way back.

I took a seat at the front and Kal began speaking.



A lot of it was what I already have heard, from our [discussions and interviews](#) with him on [Liberty Under Attack radio](#), but there were definitely some bonus features. It was amazing to meet Kal and talk to him in person, but even better that he had a live audience to question him on his outreach techniques and how they can utilize it in their community.

I think it's worth mentioning that Kal expressed LRVA's success in defeating the [syndicalists](#) in their outreach.

After Kal's event, people gathered around the table in the back to grab some pamphlets, and then the next event began.

It was on 9/11. I am about burnt out on 9/11, so I didn't attend that one. Additionally, I wanted to converse with Kal and others, so to attend or not attend, was almost a no-brainer. I'm sure Mr. Woon had some great points, but I think that ship has sailed and holding the State "accountable" for the actions of those suspicious events on that day is quite minor in comparison to the daily genocide and democide that is committed by this violent, monopolistic institution, known as the State.

Me, Kal, and plenty of other folks, had discussions outside of the pavilion for quite some time and then headed back to camp. The last scheduled presentation was at 7:00pm, which was titled, *"Add freedom to your life today with mental discipline"*.

When we arrived back at camp, the "party" continued. We partook in the festivities and then went to the other side of the campground to meet with some folks that Kal wanted to chat with. We wandered around for a bit and then headed back to the fire-pit.

Later on, around 8pm, we went back to the pavilion to see what was going on. One of the gentleman that worked there, was discussing how capitalism was a bad thing, and Lou from the Freedom Feens, went up there to have a friendly debate.

It was quite easy to tell that Lou won the argument from the multiple, "I agree" statements from the opposition and the pure intellectuality coming from the logical and rational side; otherwise known as Lou.

After that interesting debate, we again headed back to the fire-pit to mingle with the rest of the attendees.

It was a late night (or early morning) that consisted of alcoholic beverages and wandering around both sides of the campground chatting with some people. We met up with Stephanie Murphy and Katie Testa, among others.

At about 4am, Adam Kokesh showed up and some people went to greet him.

The rest of the night/morning was a blur, quite frankly, albeit a rather pleasant one with the woods as tranquil backdrop.

The Midwest Peace and Liberty Fest: Sunday

Sunday was quite a relatively relaxing day, compared to the non-stop action from yesterday.

The only event I went to that day was Adam Kokesh's speaking engagement.

I woke up and showered and then sat around the fire until I decided to head to the pavilion. On the way there, I crossed paths with Adam, introduced myself, and said, "Mr. Kokesh, it's nice to finally meet you", and I shook his hand. He responded with, "Nice to meet you as well, thanks for coming." It's too bad he was unable to meet his obligation for that interview I had already scheduled with his fiancé, but who knows? Perhaps his parole officer gave him some grief about speaking on the radio.

That was about the extent of interaction I had with Mr. Kokesh. I continued my journey down to the pavilion and not long after, the \$35,000+ Chevy Suburban/Tahoe (I guess it was), pulled up trailing the "Freedom" camper behind it.

Adam was introduced and began his speech.



He is certainly an excellent speaker, and to my surprise, it does vary quite a bit from destination, to destination. It is the perfect mix of seriousness, freedom, and comedy, to make for an enjoyable experience.

There are a couple of qualms I have with Adam though. First off, his book is not very useful for those who already recognize the State for what it is. It could potentially be useful for those who are being introduced to reformist libertarianism, but for those of us who understand the non-aggression principle and self-ownership, not so helpful. The libertarian echo chamber reverberates quite a bit as it is, and the rest of us could actually benefit from individuals who suggest practical ways to exercise our natural liberty with the least amount of risk as possible, as several of the other speakers really did attempt to do.

Additionally, I read his book because Adam was supposed to be on [Liberty Under Attack radio on May 10th](#), but for some reason, without any contact (before or after), Mr. Kokesh did not show up. If we are going to live in a voluntary, consensual, and **contractual** society, it would certainly be useful if we can rely on verbal or written contracts; with Adam though, his appearance was scheduled through email with his fiancé, which as far as I know, is a form of verbal contract.

Lastly, any consistent anarchist with integrity (that is, one that holds the aforementioned twin libertarian principles as seriously as a heart attack), realizes that the economic means are the only ones available for use that have been proven effective over time. Adam's attempt at running for President in 2020, on the platform of abolishing the federal government over 4 years, is certainly naïve, since he is blatantly running for public office in order to "infiltrate the State" as part of some scheme to turn it against itself; if he believes this is possible, he should first join the KKK and then turn it 180 degrees around into the NAACP. The fact that he calls this strategy of his "localization" only puts the icing on the cake as to the failure of reformism, in all of its purported glory, really is.

Kokesh has some good things to offer, but the fact that he calls himself an "[entertainer](#)", only strengthens the already standing argument that he is a [celebritarian](#).

I was going to get an interview with Kokesh, as that would certainly bump up the LUA YouTube channel statistics, but I decided not to. I didn't even get in the short line for a picture with him. I do my best to provide quality content for my audience, but I'm not sure how much quality content is truly available from Mr. Kokesh, other than getting arrested and setting up [activist legal defense funds](#).

I headed back to the tent again to get out my iPad to start preparing for that night's show that was set to start at 7pm. There were some open presentation spots between Kokesh and LUA radio, and I was deeply considering doing one, but I feel like one more year of public speaking preparation would do me good.

About halfway through preparation, I was told that the MPLC Wrap-Up event was happening, where people provided feedback for next year's event. I made my way back down there one final time and stuck around for about 30 minutes, until I had to head back to camp to set-up for the live broadcast.

I got all of the equipment prepared and got the interviewees in order, who were Kal Molinet, Ben Lopez, and Marc Wood.

Broadcasting live from the festival for Liberty Under Attack radio went swimmingly well, and I did what I do every Sunday: provide quality material and potential solutions for our listeners to use in their daily lives. This week, it was bitcoin and digital encryption. Who knows? Perhaps next week will be about how to [build a nuclear fusion reactor in your garage](#).

Conclusion

I am extremely happy that Kal mentioned this event to me on July 2nd, on a VoIP call from our property in Southern Illinois.

I owe Kyle Rearden quite a bit, as he was the one who pointed me in the direction of Kal's [Spreading Anarchy](#) YouTube series. I've been committed to my goal of true freedom for 3 years now and it finally seems that progress is actually happening for me.

Without the incremental steps of certain events, I wouldn't be where I am today and I sure as hell wouldn't have attended the Midwest Peace and Liberty Festival this year.

It's extremely overwhelming to see how far things have progressed for LUA in just a short 9 months.

The Midwest Peace and Liberty Fest was one of the greatest weekends of my life, bar none. Being around the kindest, most generous people was truly amazing; but being around people who understand and live by the non-aggression principle and the axiom of self-ownership is a feeling I will never forget.

There was no fear, no nervousness, and no worry. Being around intellectual, philosophically consistent people, who used the economic means rather than the political ones, is another huge positive from this festival. Considering that I recently completed my circuit of political field-trips, I'm sure you can understand the significance of the festival is to me in a deeply personal way.

I didn't think there were any others like me in my area, or in the Midwest, but boy, was I wrong. There are people in Michigan doing a lot. From the Michigan Bitcoiners, to the Detroit agorists, all the way to the various activities of the Michigan Peace and Liberty Coalition.

There is a lot of hope for the Midwest and I am extremely excited to be a part of it.

I would like to end with [a quote](#) from Larken Rose:

“If you personally advocate that I be caged if I don't pay for whatever "government" things YOU want, please don't pretend to be tolerant, or non-violent, or enlightened, or compassionate. Don't pretend you believe in "live and let live," and don't pretend you want peace, freedom or harmony. It's a simple truism that the only people in the world who are willing to "live and let live" are voluntaryists. So you can either PRETEND to care about and respect your fellow man while continuing to advocate widespread authoritarian violence, or you can embrace the concepts of self-ownership and peaceful coexistence, and become an anarchist.”

So what's it going to be? Are you going to advocate for institutionalized coercion, or for free market solutions? If you are unsure, make sure to attend Midwest Peace and Liberty Fest IV and I promise that you will be on the journey in finding the answers that you are looking for in your own life.