



Written by [Gary Benoit](#) on September 17, 2008

Birch Society Rallies for Republic

"Ron Paul Goes Birch — John Birch" proclaimed *ABC News* on its Political Radar blog. The story, written by *ABC News*' Z. Byron Wolf, applied ABC's spin to the John Birch Society's significant presence at Congressman Paul's "Rally for the Republic" at the Target Center in Minneapolis on September 2. (For an overview of this event, see ["Ron Paul's 'Rally for the Republic' "](#) by Brian Farmer.)



Wolf noted that the agenda for the rally included a slot for a "Special Guest" whose identity had not been revealed to the media or rally attendees in advance. Who would the special guest be? Wolf recalled what he and others in the media were speculating at the time: "Would it be Bob Barr, wondered some in the media? Perhaps a mainstream Republican to mend fences between Paul's supporters and the people across the river in St. Paul at the GOP convention."

"Nope," Wolf continued. "Out strolled John McManus. Who? John Birch Society board member — the group also has a booth here — and a former John Birch Society president, McManus announced that Paul would be speaking at their 50th anniversary celebration in Wisconsin this year."

In the interest of accuracy, it should be noted that John F. McManus is actually the John Birch Society's *current* and longtime president.

But if Wolf found McManus' appearance a bit odd, the crowd did not, judging by their very positive and enthusiastic response to McManus' speech as well as to the hi-tech John Birch Society booth.

McManus' speech was repeatedly interrupted with applause. At one point the energized audience repeatedly shouted "End the Fed! ... End the Fed! ..." when McManus brought up the Federal Reserve and called for its abolition.

The JBS booth was the most popular one at the rally, as evidenced by the large number of people who gathered around and visited it throughout the day. The Birchers offered rally attendees, without charge, a DVD narrated by McManus entitled *Overview of America*. By the end of the day, the 4,000 available copies of the DVD had been distributed, as well as other materials.

But unlike the rally attendees, the media were not much interested in the Birch presence, judging by the scant publicity the Birch Society received. Nor did the major media even display that much interest in covering Ron Paul, who received relatively little publicity for a grand event attended by 12,000 enthusiastic supporters. In what coverage there was, Ron Paul was often portrayed as a bit of an oddity himself, and the few mentions of the Birch Society were often intended to reinforce that tone.



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Yet Ron Paul's message in support of the Constitution, limited government at home, and minding our own business abroad is not odd at all. What's odd is the Republican Party's treatment of his positions, and the major media's complicity, even as they defend or rationalize our country's almost \$10 trillion debt, endless war, lack of border enforcement, debasing the currency, and a host of other problems slowly ruining our nation.

The *Los Angeles Times* characterized JBS President John McManus as a leader of "the ultra-right-wing group," and summarized his speech as one "that railed against illegal immigration." In fact, McManus made one small reference to 20,000,000 illegal immigrants as an example of how Congress fails to uphold its constitutional responsibilities. The rest of his speech covered a number of constitutional principles, peppered with humor and enthusiasm.

Another person who apparently felt very uncomfortable with the Birch Society's presence was MSNBC's Tucker Carlson, who served as the rally's MC and introduced the speakers. But Carlson would not introduce McManus — "just as a matter of principle" according to an article by Matt Labash in *The Weekly Standard*. The principled Carlson was apparently scandalized at the prospect of introducing the John Birch Society president. Ironically, this is the same Tucker Carlson who last fall invited a Nevada brothel owner, who also is a friend of his, to attend a Ron Paul press conference in Reno. The brothel owner, two of his prostitutes, and Carlson arrived at the press conference together, blindsiding the Paul campaign and giving the media an opportunity to "report" that a brothel owner had endorsed Ron Paul.

At the Rally for the Republic, Carlson's snub, which denied John McManus a proper introduction, did not dampen the audience's enthusiasm for McManus' speech one bit. But Carlson's own enthusiasm for the rally apparently waned. He introduced other speakers after McManus but was not on hand in the evening when Barry Goldwater, Jr. and Ron Paul spoke. He had enough of Ron Paul's supporters and left early without even telling Paul, according to Labash's *Weekly Standard* account.



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