

LIBERTY PLEDGE

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newsletter

CYBER-POLITICS . . .

Indiana LP website wins "Site of the Month" honors

The Libertarian Party of Indiana has won a rare honor: Its website has been named "Site of the Month" by *Campaigns & Elections* — the "bible" of the campaign industry.

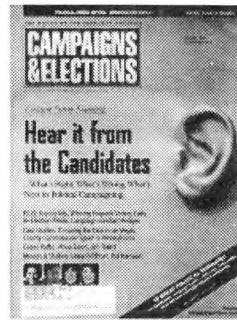
In its August 1999 issue, the Washington, DC-based publication praised www.lpin.org for doing an "excellent job of providing information for both citizen surfers and those running for office."

The comprehensive Indiana website features lists of LP candidates, links to candidates' websites, resource links for potential candidates and activists, a list of Indiana newspapers, a cleverly structured calendar of events, a chat line, and

voter registration information, noted *Campaigns & Elections*.

It's the first time a state Libertarian Party site has won the magazine's "Site of the Month" honor — and the recognition has delighted state party leaders.

"We are thrilled," said **Sara Cotham**, Indiana LP Executive Director. "I was shocked when [State Chair] Joe Hauptmann called me and shared the good news. Overall, we've had so much success in Indiana in the past year that this is icing on an already very satisfying cake. We are really pleased to



represent the LP in such a positive and prominent way."

The Indiana LP website was selected by *Campaigns & Elections*, speculated Cotham, because of its clean interface and wealth of information.

"Our site is a tool box," she said. "[It] is well-organized and attractive, so the process of accessing the wealth of information within is simple and pleasant — as well as rewarding.

"When you compare our state site to those of any other political party in Indiana, ours is clearly the most comprehensive."

County LP settles school board lawsuit

The LP of Santa Barbara County (CA) has won an out-of-court settlement against a local school board that illegally used taxpayer money to influence the outcome of a bond issue vote.

In July, county Libertarians won \$16,500 in lawyers' fees in a settlement with the Santa Barbara City School Board.

"We are happy with the resolution," said county LP chairman Colin Hayward. "Although it does not set a legal precedent, it does send a chilling message that the Libertarian Party is watching."

Mass. Libertarian fights silly laws

Should someone go to jail for buying a pet rabbit? For taking the Lord's name in vain? For selling a condom to an unmarried woman?

Libertarian candidate **Doug Krick** doesn't think so—which is why he has started a one-man campaign to remove such antiquated laws from the books in Massachusetts.

"There is some kind of stuff [on the books] that is kind of ridiculous, and the fact that it is enforced is rather scary," said Krick, who is running for State Representative. "What I'm trying to do as a candidate is to get these laws off the books."

Currently, Massachusetts has laws that prohibit premarital sex,

purchasing a rabbit as a family pet, going to a bar for the purpose of seeking sex, spitting on the sidewalk, and committing blasphemy (against a Christian God only).

There are so many obscure laws that one Massachusetts lawyer estimated that most citizens commit at least three felonies every day.

Krick said he is concerned that such laws might encourage selective enforcement by police — and are just plain anti-liberty.

"The average Democrat or Republican would not pursue this because it is not a hot issue," he said. "[But] each of these laws chip away at individual freedoms bit by bit."

Group forms county Libertarian Party

LAKEPORT — With Northern California Libertarian Party Chair Rodney Austin looking on, a group of Lake County residents joined Marin, Sonoma, Napa, Shasta and Siskiyou counties in organizing a county chapter of the Libertarian party.

Connel Murray was elected chair of the fledgling group, with Mark Lockhart as secretary-treasurer and David Robinson as first vice-chair.

Formalizing the official status of the Chapter means that, among other benefits offered by the state and national headquarters, Lake County will be entitled to get back a portion of the annual dues paid by local Libertarians.

Austin, who makes his home in Fresno, congratulated Lake County Libertarians for taking the step to put themselves on a par with other Redwood empire counties.

"With the Libertrian party growing at about twice the rate of any other political party, it's good to see Lake County getting in on the ground floor," he said.

A spirited discussion followed the election of officers, with one concensus being that land use and property rights promise to be a major

challenge in the years ahead.

Concerns were also expressed over the failure of state and federal governments to sharply reduce taxes even though huge budget surpluses are being projected.

Austin also reported on the success of the Libertarian and other third parties to block SB365, a bill which would have made it difficult if not impossible for any but the traditional parties to win a place on California's ballot, but he warned that keeping the bill in committee was not the same as killing it.

"It will be back" he said, "and we need to be ready for it."

Two petitions were circulated at the meeting, both endorsed by the state organization. The first is in support of AB 1776, which would repeal the state's vehicle license fee, which in actuality is nothing more than a personal property tax on cars.

The other petition supports an initiative to repeal Prop. 10, the measure which provided a surcharge on tobacco sales in California. The Libertarian party opposed Prop. 10 the first time around, according to Austin, on the basis that it was an infringement by government on individual rights and

a misuse of public funds.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the local chapter would postpone its next meeting until 7 p.m., Sept. 1 at the Lake County agricultural center community meeting room. The ag center is located adjacent to the animal shelter just off Highway 29 and Lakeport Boulevard.

Those wishing to learn more about the Libertarian party may call 263-8346 or e-mail Dave@great-promotions.com

Just Ask

Question: Just out of curiosity, what does the Libertarian Party stand for? What is its party platform?

Answer: In the words of Bill Winter, Libertarian Party director of communications, "The party platform calls for vigorous defense of the Bill of Rights, free enterprise, civil liberties, free trade, no meddling overseas, and private charity." For more information, you may write to the party headquarters: 2600 Virginia Ave. NW, Suite 100, Washington DC 20037. □

▲ *The Lake County Record-Bee*, Lakeport, California, July 3, 1999

▶ *The Rochester Democrat & Chronicle*, Rochester, New York, July 8, 1999

▼ *The San Angelo Standard-Times*, San Angelo, Texas, July 9, 1999

Libertarian Party hoping to revive local interest in its politics

By MELISSA WILLIAMS
Staff Writer

The Libertarian Party is hoping to become more active in Tom Green County politics with a new organization at the county level.

Robert Restivo, a newcomer to Tom Green County, wanted to get the party back onto an active status, after being involved in the party in California.

"I just moved here and started getting the newsletter, where I realized there was nothing going on with the party here," he said.

After two meetings, the party has 50

members on its mailing list and roughly 10 active members.

"When I started, my primary fear was that no one was going to show up," said Restivo, who was recently elected to chair the group. "We were fortunate to have five people at the first meeting, and then seven at the second."

Through the meetings, the party has established goals that include voter outreach and voter education.

"You're going to start seeing us a lot more," Restivo said.

The party plans on having booths at major community events including the Gun and Knife Show at the end of the

month, the San Angelo Stock Show and Rodeo, and Fiesta Del Concho.

"We're also going to get a program started to get all members to start writing letters and recognizing themselves as Libertarians," Restivo said.

Other activities the party has planned is honoring Bill of Rights day on December 15 and protesting taxes on April 15.

Long-term, Restivo hopes to identify and run Libertarian candidates for local offices, perhaps as early as the November 2000 county commissioner races.

"We want to have someone running for commissioner in each precinct," Restivo said.

Although municipal and school-board races are not party affiliated, Restivo hopes Libertarian candidates will run for seats on those boards as well.

The party is even trying to restart the Campus Libertarian organization at Angelo State University.

"The youth are the future," Restivo said. "It's just a good target area."

The ASU organization has been inactive since 1995, but the party plans on changing that come September.

"We can't run it for them," Restivo said. "They have to start it, but we will support it."

During the last meeting, members elect-

ed party officers, which Restivo called a "critical need," Restivo said.

"I now know that these people aren't just along for the ride," he said. "We've got a lot of interested members participating."

The officers elected were Restivo, James Robinson, vice chairman; James Turner, secretary and Michael Benton, treasurer.

The party's next meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. Aug. 3 at Cheddar's on the patio.

The agenda will include formal adoption of the bylaws and planning for local outreach activities. The meeting is open to individuals interested in the Libertarian Party.

Reining in prosecutors

It's not very often you'll find the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Rifle Association, the American Bar Association, the Republican, Democratic and Libertarian parties, U.S. Rep. John Tierney, U.S. Rep. Henry Hyde, and 373 other members of the U.S. House of Representatives, on the same side of an issue.

Yet all have told the law enforcement community in general and prosecutors in particular: Enough is enough.

The result was the Civil Asset Forfeiture Reform Act of 1999, which the House approved on a 375-48 vote last week, thus sharply curtailing the ability of police and prosecutors to seize private property on the mere suspicion it had been used in the commission of a crime or was purchased with money

raised through criminal activity.

EDITORIAL

Tales of prosecutorial abuse have become a

staple in newspapers and magazines throughout the country. According to Libertarian Party national director Steve Dasbach, "Bank robbers stole \$28 million in cash in 1994 ... but that same year federal agents confiscated \$2.1 billion in houses, cars, boats, cash and other assets."

Their interpretation: "The government is now officially stealing more money than bank robbers."

Among actual cases cited by Dasbach:

"In Georgia, FBI agents seized three autos from a woman whose husband used a car phone to place illegal sports bets; in Houston, federal agents confiscated the Red Carpet Motel because the owners refused to raise their room rates to 'discourage' drug dealers from staying there; in Texas, customs agents seized a \$138,000 Lear jet from a man after he made a typographical error on paperwork submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration."

Under this bill, law enforcement agencies would have to produce "clear and convincing" evidence that property they proposed to seize was somehow involved in or the result of a criminal enterprise. It thus puts the burden of proof on the prosecution, where it belongs, not on the accused who, even if acquitted, now have a hard time getting their property returned.

▲ *The Gloucester Daily Times*, Gloucester, Massachusetts, July 6, 1999

▶ *The Southbridge Evening News*, Southbridge, Massachusetts, July 8, 1999

Editorial

No flag amendment

Here we go again.

For the third consecutive Congress, legislation that would make desecration of the American flag a crime is up for a vote in the U.S. Senate.

Do these guys ever give up?

Some time this summer the Senate will vote on a Constitutional amendment to give Congress the power to prohibit the "physical desecration" of the U.S. flag. The House approved the bill 305-214 last month. In 1995 the House achieved a two-thirds margin with 312 votes. In 1997 backers managed 310.

It takes two-thirds majority votes in the House and Senate and ratification by three-fourths of the states to amend the Constitution. Including the 10 provisions of the Bill of Rights, the Constitution has been amended 27 times.

Rep. Randy Cunningham, R-Calif., chief sponsor of the amendment, said its purpose is not to limit free speech but to give Congress the authority to write legislation banning the physical desecration of the flag.

The punishment for "desecration" has yet to be decided, but could range from one year's imprisonment (as is mandated in Cuba for flag desecration there), to 10 years in jail (as in Iran), to a life sentence at hard labor (as in Haiti).

The White House, in a statement, said it was committed to protecting the flag but "efforts to limit the First Amendment to make a narrow exception for flag desecration are misguided. The Congress should be deeply reluctant to tamper with the First Amendment."

The Libertarian Party came out strongly against the amendment in a recent press release, echoing the White House's sentiments: "To Libertarians, a flag is more than a colored cloth design; it's an idea and a vision of principles we believe in. You can't destroy an idea by burning a piece of cloth. Flags can always be replaced; principles can't."

Just by proposing the amendment, legislators have already glorified the few obnoxious jerks who do burn the flag, making them seem far more important than they are.

It's not as if there's an epidemic of flag burning in the streets of America. Even if there was, it's not clear how that materially harms anything but our sensibilities. Flag burning is unpopular, as national surveys and The News's own recent People Poll showed, but only unpopular speech needs protection under the Constitution. If we are not willing to protect speech and actions that are unpopular, then our constitutional guarantees of free speech aren't worth much. Singing the National Anthem in public doesn't require legal protection, for example.

Flag burning fever on the part of lawmakers goes back to 1989, when the Supreme Court struck down state laws that barred defacement of the flag. A year later the Court acted again, ruling out a congressional statute on the same subject. The reasoning they used still applies: We can best protect the flag by protecting the freedom it represents.

Hopefully the Senate will make sure the flag burning amendment goes up in smoke again.

Libertarian party seeks 200 to run in 2000

SACRAMENTO — With the goal of giving voters "Libertarian alternatives up and down the ballot," the Libertarian Party of California announced today that it seeks to run 200 candidates in California for federal, state, and local office next year.

"The time has come for our party to take the next step in the astounding growth we've been experiencing over the last few years: run more candidates than ever before," announced Libertarian state chair Mark Hinkle.

In 1998, 106 Libertarians ran for office in California: 95 candidates for partisan office and 11 candidates for local nonpartisan office, far more than any other qualified third party.

By comparison, the Green and Reform Parties ran 11 and 14 candidates for partisan office, respectively.

To reach their goal of 200 candidates, Libertarians will be focusing on nonpartisan local offices more than ever before. Currently, 31 California Libertarians hold elected or appointed office.

► ONE SHELL OF AN IDEA

In the heady world of public policy, if Libertarians didn't exist, they would have to be invented. Guided by their the-less-government-the-better credo, they throw a refreshing splash of cold water on ponderous pronouncements from the Beltway. While the major parties dance a curious *pas de deux* of face-saving courtesy, Libertarians delight in pointing out naked emperors. And they can't resist a bad pun.

So the federal Food and Drug Administration's latest announcement on food safety was raw meat for the Libertarian Party. The FDA wants to put cigarette-style health warnings on egg cartons — "For your protection: Keep eggs refrigerated; cook eggs until yolks are firm; and cook foods containing eggs thoroughly." Duh.

If the label does appear, most Americans won't notice or care. But to Libertarians, it's one more example of bureaucrats telling people what to do. "The eggheads in Washington, D.C. have gone too far," a party statement cracked, "and that's no yolk."

Said Bill Winter, director of communications: "This new regulation — which assumes that Americans can't cook breakfast without instructions from the FDA — shows what happens when bureaucrats' judgment has been fried, scrambled and poached by too much power . . . The regulation has laid an egg." Whew.

The proposed label does seem silly. As Mr. Winter points out, food-caused salmonella illnesses have plunged by 44

percent in the past two years. And food eggsperts (sorry) say that eggs are quite safe; chances are the average consumer will encounter just one poultry bad egg in 42 years.

Indeed, too many products these days come with "safety" warnings meant more to protect against liability suits than to prevent illness or injury.

So the egg warning is overkill — another example of the Nanny State assuming that Americans are too dumb to know what's good for them. To prove

that, Libertarians suggest a few more FDA labels:

► **WARNING:** Remove egg from shell before eating.

► **WARNING:** Just say "no" to over easy.

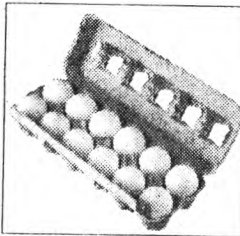
► **WARNING:** The Surgeon General has determined that you can't make an omelet without breaking a few eggs.

► **WARNING:** Don't throw eggs at the bureaucrats and politicians who think Americans are too dumb to fry an egg.

But what happens if you remove the eggs from the carton and pop them into the refrigerator tray without reading the label? The FDA ought to insist that the warning be pasted or stamped on the shell of each egg. Better yet, chickens could be further enhanced genetically so they'd lay "pre-warned" eggs.

Just don't tell the FDA that there's another suspect food many Americans eat with their eggs: bacon . . .

— Ray Cooklis



▲ *The Daily Independent*, Ridgecrest, California, July 20, 1999

▲ (RIGHT) *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, Cincinnati, Ohio, July 9, 1999

► *Asbury Park Press*, Neptune, New Jersey, July 19, 1999

Libertarian Assembly candidate looks to make dent in election

By JOHN A. HARNES
COASTAL MONMOUTH BUREAU

BARBARA A. JONES, who is running as the Libertarian Party candidate for Assembly in the 11th District, has a message she wants politicians in Trenton to hear: "It's time to reverse the trend of ever-growing government and increased taxes."

"Every year the size of state government has grown," said Jones, of West Long Branch. "But there has been no corresponding improvement in our quality of life here in the Garden State. There has, however, been an increase in taxes."

As a mother of four, and a grandmother of five, Jones said she is "painfully aware of how

crushing this tax burden can be on working families."

"Voters opted for Whitman over tax-happy Florio but nothing really changed," she said. "Voters must send a message to the politicians in Trenton: We want real change."

Jones, executive director of Literacy Volunteers of Monmouth County, said she is realistic about her independent campaign, which emphasizes less government, less taxes and an end to restrictive laws.

"Can I win?" Jones asked. "If we can get a significant number of voters to send this message to Trenton, that will be a victory. We could end the millennium on the right note."

In the 11th District race this

year, Republican incumbents Steven J. Corodemus of Atlantic Highlands and Thomas S. Smith, Asbury Park, are running for their fifth consecutive Assembly terms.

They are being challenged by Democrats Michael Beson, who also serves as Neptune mayor, and Dwayne M. Harris, a councilman in Atlantic Highlands. Independents in the race are Jones, Conservative Party candidates Leonard P. Marshall and Wayne E. May, both Neptune, and Jonathan Moschberger, Fair Haven.

The 11th Legislative District includes 22 towns in Monmouth County.

□ John A. Harnes: (732) 922-6000, ext. 4316