

LIBERTY PLEDGE

newsletter

Libertarian National Committee, Inc. ♦ 2600 Virginia Ave, NW, Suite 100
Washington DC 20037 ♦ Phone: (202) 333-0008 ♦ Fax: (202) 333-0072

JUNE 2005

Missouri Libertarian quietly pursuing liberty in everyday life

Eric J. Owens fights the 'Republicrats' by pledging monthly to the LP

Often, those who get the most recognition in the Libertarian Party (or any organization, for that matter) are the highly visible activists, the longtime leaders, the figureheads.

However, the real backbone of the Libertarian Party (and the future of our success) rests with people like Eric J. Owens -- humble, hardworking citizens who care about freedom and want to quietly support the cause without a thought for accolades and tributes.

Owens, 35, is a network design engineer in Wentzville, Missouri. He said that working in telecommunications has given him a unique perspective on libertarian philosophy.

"The telecommunications industry is an excellent example of just how tainted our elected representatives are when it comes to special interests," he said. "It is proof positive that they are incapable of making decisions better than a free market can. Although the majority of the telecommunications industry falls in the category of interstate commerce, and therefore is held hostage under the Congress, it is the best example of a responsibility Congress constitutionally owns yet has made a mess of by their interference."

Owens is "joyously married with three children," and has been a member of the LP since 2002, when he became disgusted with the dealings of the "Republicrat Party" -- his term for both the Democrats and Republicans.

He said, "I feel I have always been Libertarian at heart, but was not exposed to the idea that there was an alternative to the Republicrat party. Essentially, it just took a while to find my way 'home.'"

Spring cleaning for the Liberty Pledge Program!

It been quite a while since we used this space to give our 1600+ credit card pledgers a friendly nudge to check their cards.

Last September, we had over 300 pledgers who had expired cards, which are declined each month in our system if they are not updated.

We successfully have updated most of those cards, but every month 30-50 more expire. Despite our best efforts to collect those new dates, we still need your cooperation.

You can help us by checking the expiration date on your card and contacting the pledge program coordinator, Jessica Neno Wilson, to update it. You can contact her by calling (202) 333-0008 ext. 235 or by e-mailing her at pledge@lp.org.

Finding his way home involved reading some basic primary texts -- like the Constitution of the United States of America and many of the writings of Thomas Jefferson. After absorbing the founding documents, Owens realized that the incumbents were no longer willing to uphold their oaths of office -- they were no longer defending the Constitution.

"It is obvious to me that the [incumbents] do not have the Constitution -- and therefore this country's best interests -- at heart, only their own re-election," he noted.

Owens has not participated in any official LP activism or events.

"Like most people with a home and family, I spend time doing family activities -- yard work, children, etc. There is plenty to do," he said.

Instead he prefers to quietly support the efforts of the LP through the Liberty Pledge Program, which he joined in October 2004. Owens made his decision to join for practical reasons. He supports the LP's goals and wants to see more money spent in achieving the mission rather than on repeated renewal notices.

Like many pledgers, Owens also feels that healthy contributions to the LP are an alternative to state-imposed philanthropy in the form of taxes.

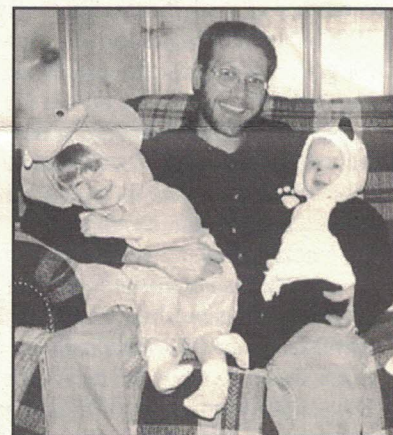
"Taxes force my money -- all taxpayers' money -- to be used for ends I do not care for, do not believe in, and otherwise would not donate to," he said. "Taxation also prevents me from using that money to support causes I do believe in, which personal philanthropy does."

Owens also supports several Catholic charities and donates for multiple sclerosis research.

Owens feels the LP should be making our mark on the national debate by driving up our numbers. When asked what the highest priority for the LP should be, he replied, "Membership, membership, membership!"

This recruitment, in Owens' opinion, should focus on young voters, who would be likely to identify with the libertarian viewpoints due to their new-found freedom and responsibility as young adults. He mused that if we just reach out concordedly to young people we would have "instant Libertarians!"

"In essence, the party needs to take the gloves off," he said.



Eric Owens, with his two "Libertarians-in-training"

NY mayoral race: Silk's not blowing smoke

By Dennis Duggan

Retired cop Audrey Silk puffed on a Parliament in her Cape Cod-style home in Marine Park and said she is running for mayor because Michael Bloomberg is a "Puritan who has taken the gusto out of New York City."

"How many of those do you smoke every day?" I ask.

"I hate that question," she said in a mind-your-own-business voice.

Silk knows she's the longest of long shots as the candidate of the **Libertarian Party**, which was burned in 1994 when it chose radio talk show host Howard Stern to run for governor against George Pataki. Stern left party officials high and dry by quitting before the election.

"He was only running for the publicity it gave to a book he had just published," said Jim Lesczynski, who is the Libertarian candidate for public advocate. Lesczynski said he is not a smoker, but has become a "political smoker" to protest the smoking ban.

But Silk says she is in the race to stay. For her, the smoking ban is personal and so is the mayor, whose voice drives her nuts - "It's like nails in my head." She has a poster in her living room of the mayor that shows him with his pants at his ankles and the line "Bloomberg Butt Out!!"

Silk, a cop for two decades in the 67th Precinct, was a community activist long before she went into politics - this is her first run at any elective office and she says the Libertarians sought her out.

"I don't come with any baggage," she said, "and it helps that I am a former police officer."

Silk is the founder of NYC Citizens Lobbying Against Smoker Harassment or NYC CLASH. It isn't just the smoking ban that began in March 2003 that angers her. It's all those increased traffic fines and the higher taxes, including the one on cigarettes that made her decide to try to oust Bloomberg from office.

Silk, who has a no-nonsense manner about her, wears a miniature diamond-topped replica of her police badge around her neck - a gift from her diamond-cutter father when she graduated from the Police Academy in 1984.

In the 67th Precinct, Silk was the election officer, meaning she ran police postings at the 14 voting places in her precinct.

Until a few weeks ago, when she was chosen as the party's mayoral candidate at its convention in Bohemian Hall

in Astoria, her only other brush with politics was voting.

"I will speak forcefully on the issues important to us and will never say I believe something that I don't," she told the convention. She admitted she was inexperienced, but said "one thing I do know is that there are a lot more libertarian-minded people out there than we are led to believe."

One of them is Sidney Zion, an author, columnist and former federal prosecutor, who leaves a trail of crushed cigars wherever he goes. Another is smoker Lewis Lapham, editor of Harper's Magazine, and a social critic of renown.

Both attended a "Bye, Bye Bloomberg" party that NYC CLASH held on the first day of the smoking ban at Frankie & Johnnie's bar and restaurant in Hoboken.

I asked Zion if he planned to vote for Silk in the fall election.

"Yeah, I'll vote for her. Even if she loses, she's raising an issue everyone else is afraid to raise," said Zion, who added that the "ban has gone too far" and is "the stuff of dictators."

Silk said she is appalled at how easily New Yorkers have submitted to having their behavior enforced by law.

"I don't like busybodies like this mayor or his health commissioner [Thomas Frieden] telling me what to do," she said. "I like the idea of smaller government."

In a year when the media are panning the four drab Democrats running for mayor, Silk seems about right when she calls herself "the real deal."

California school district voters reject parcel tax

By Nicole Neroulias

A silent majority struck down the Redwood City School District's parcel tax Tuesday, leaving dumbfounded school officials with a \$3.3 million deficit.

With most of the ballots counted, only 61 percent of voters had approved Measure V — falling short of the two-thirds majority required to pass the tax.

The Yes on Measure V campaign, which had no organized opposition, drew hundreds of volunteers and nearly \$140,000 in contributions.

"I'm disappointed in the community that doesn't want to support the kids," said Dennis McBride, school district trustee and campaign chairman. "At the same time, I think the volunteers did a wonderful job."

The quiet group of Measure V opponents, led by county **Libertarian Party** chairman Jack Hickey, contended the district has too many teachers and that residents could not afford a new tax. The opponents proposed cutting costs by raising class sizes and creating part-time programs for younger students.

(Above) *Newsday.com*, New York, New York — May 3, 2005

(Right) *San Mateo County Times*, Pleasanton, California — May 4, 2005

Reform the Patriot Act to ensure civil liberties

By Anita Ramasastry

On December 31, sixteen portions of the U.S.A. Patriot Act are set to expire — or, in legal parlance, “sunset.” Congress is holding hearings on the act and considering, among other issues, whether to amend it to curb the broad surveillance powers it bestowed on the federal government.

For example, under the act the government can monitor an individual’s Web surfing records. It can use roving wiretaps to monitor phone calls made by individuals “proximate” to the primary person being tapped. It can access Internet service provider records. And it can even monitor the private records of people involved in legitimate protests.

After September 11, 2001, when the act was passed, the executive argued that these broader powers would be used to put terrorists behind bars. In fact, several of the act’s provisions can be used to gain information about Americans in the context of investigations with no demonstrated link to terrorism.

A more effective solution has been proposed by a new coalition of liberal, conservative, and libertarian groups called the Patriots to Restore Checks and Balances (PRCB). The coalition’s members include the ACLU, the American Conservative Union, Gun Owners of America, and the **Libertarian Party**. Its aim is to preserve civil liberties while at the same time preserving America’s power to combat terrorism.

PRCB supports a bipartisan piece of legislation — the Security and Freedom Enhancement (SAFE) Act. The SAFE Act would amend the Patriot Act to add key checks and balances. For instance, under SAFE, the government could not access Americans’ sensitive, personal information without justification — even if third parties held these records. SAFE would thus address the “chilling effect” of making such information broadly accessible.

In addition, the pre-Patriot Act FISA “probable cause” requirement should be restored by allowing Section 218 to expire.

Recall that this isn’t “probable cause” to believe a crime is being committed (as in the case of domestic law enforcement); it’s the requirement that a warrant cannot be issued unless there exist specific and articulable facts giving reason to believe that the party whose records are sought is a foreign power or an agent of a foreign power, such as a spy or an international terrorist. Since FISA is meant to target only espionage and terrorism, that is an appropriate limitation.

Unless a solution like SAFE’s is adopted, the U.S.A. Patriot Act will continue to curtail civil liberties even where terrorism is not involved. That is unacceptable, and should worry every American who cares about the First or Fourth Amendments.

(Left) *CNN.com*, Atlanta, Georgia – April 20, 2005 (Findlaw opinion piece)

(Below) *Central Michigan Life*, Mount Pleasant, Michigan – April 25, 2005

Libertarians address strategies for success

By Melissa McGuire

Michigan **Libertarians** were given a hopeful message about their party’s advancement at the party’s state convention Saturday.

Keynote speaker Joseph Bast, president of the Heartland Institute in Illinois, discussed “Strategies for Success,” during the convention at the Holiday Inn, 5665 E. Pickard Rd.

Bast, a Libertarian himself, outlined 10 strategies Libertarians need to look for in the future as they continue to grow as a party.

He also predicted that by 2008, the Democratic Party will divide into progressive and conventional wings.

The progressive Democrats will cause a third party to be formed, and in turn allow Republicans to remain in power, Bast said.

He said by 2012, the Republican Party also will split, losing moderates who will become conservative Libertarians.

These splits, Bast said, will create a four-way race.

“By 2016, I predict the Libertarians will win, because only the Libertarian party will be addressing the underlying issues that unify the interest groups,” Bast said.

The strategies for success that Bast outlined include; targeting certain groups, sending new messages to people about the party and handling the media differently.

“We need to get people back to wanting to be involved in the government,” Bast said. “People just don’t want to vote anymore because they don’t like any party — we need to change that so people get involved.”

Hazel Park City Councilman Andy LeCureaux said he agreed with Bast’s assertion that Libertarians need to fight back against the two-party system.

“I am really excited about his position on our party’s advancement,” LeCureaux said. “I would like to see the Libertarian Party move up and win in 2016, and I would like to be the one who moves through the system in the next 12 years to become a candidate for that presidency.”

St. Clair Shores City Councilwoman Erin Stahl said she was pleased with the outcome and message of Bast’s speech.

“He gave us a good outlook for the future of our party,” Stahl said. “He gave a really reasonable prediction of what will happen.”

Smoking ban ads top \$80,000, funded by state

By John Fritze

Government agencies and nonprofits have spent more than \$80,000 on advertising to woo support for the proposed Indianapolis smoking ban that will be voted on today.

The campaign, which is being funded by tobacco settlement money, includes billboard, radio and print ads on the health effects of secondhand smoke and has been the most prominent effort to sway opinion on the issue.

City-County Council members are expected to vote on the smoking ban at a meeting tonight, ending a three-month debate. As they weigh what has arguably been one of the city's most controversial issues in years, the outcome of the final vote remains uncertain.

Supporters said the advertisements — coordinated by the Marion County Health Department and a coalition of nonprofits, Smoke Free Indy — have been effective.

"They're asking the public to get involved," said Greg Bowes, a Democratic City-County Councilman who is sponsoring the smoking ban. "And I've seen the public get involved."

At least one opponent — Brad Klopfenstein, executive director of the state **Libertarian Party** — questioned why government is spending thousands on an advertising campaign.

"I personally find it offensive that this money belongs to the state of Indiana," Klopfenstein said. "Suddenly, you have the state of Indiana lobbying other agencies to pass an ordinance."

Klopfenstein said he spent less than \$100 opposing the proposed ban.

On Thursday, a City-County Council committee approved the measure, which has been amended several times. Most workplaces, from offices to restaurants, would be covered under the ban, which would take effect Oct. 1.

Council members exempted bars that do not serve patrons younger than 21. Plans to ban smoking in parks, private clubs and outdoor sports venues also were dropped.

Most advertisements feature bartenders, waiters and other restaurant workers. One ad, for instance, includes a woman standing with a clipboard. Customers are smoking in the background.

"As a hostess, I have one of the world's most dangerous jobs," the ad reads. "Secondhand smoke kills!"

In recent weeks, the usually sleepy City-County Council has been the focus of high-profile lobbying campaigns. Last month, the council received thousands of e-mails as it considered a proposal to extend anti-discrimination protections to gays.

That measure died 18-11.

Smoke Free Indy, meanwhile, mobilized dozens of supporters to turn out at public hearings on the ban over the past several weeks — in some cases significantly increasing the percentage of supporters who testified.

Advertisements in favor of the ban have been funded by Indiana Tobacco Prevention and Cessation — an agency created by the General Assembly to manage a portion of the state's settlement with tobacco companies.

To date, Mayor Bart Peterson has not taken a position on the ban — even as the Health Department has run commercials in support. Deputy Mayor Steve Campbell said he didn't believe there was a conflict of policies.

"It's entirely their role to advocate on issues of public health," he said. "(The mayor) certainly cares about the health issues, but he has to balance the bigger issue of the effect on businesses and the effect on commerce."

(Left) *Indianapolis Star*, Indianapolis, Indiana – May 9, 2005

(Below) *Montrose Daily Press*, Montrose, Colorado – May 5, 2005

Libertarians bring third party views to Montrose

By Matt Hildner

The political party with Front Range roots will be looking for fertile ground in Montrose this weekend.

The state **Libertarian Party**, whose national organization was founded in Colorado Springs in 1971, will host its state convention in Montrose this weekend.

"It's terrific. We were lucky to be able to host it," said Western Slope Libertarian Party member and Montrose business owner Tim Jacobs. "We're looking forward to having the members from around the state come to Montrose and enjoy the Western Slope."

State Party Chairman Norm Olsen said the convention will be a great chance for many of its members to become more acquainted with their Western Slope counterparts.

The convention will also be a chance for the party to expose newcomers to a philosophy that places strong emphasis on individual liberty, individual property rights, the free market, and minimal government intrusion.

Come evening, the convention goers will let their hair down, with the Liberty Jam, a concert featuring five bands.

WSLP chair Lane Mills said the concert is a way to attract a growing segment of the party's base.

"One of the successes we're having is that we do find that we're attracting young people," he said. "It's exactly the kind of entertainment we want to provide for local kids."