

# LIBERTY PLEDGE

## newsletter

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

DECEMBER 2004

## Gay Libertarian returns home to party Libertarians must fight conservative perception, Brandt says

In 1993, Elinor Brandt dropped her longtime membership in the Libertarian Party in order to keep the peace in her family. After being married for many years, Brandt came out as a lesbian in the late 1980s, and her new partner insisted that she support the Democratic Party because it was the only party that openly supported the gay community.

This one-time Libertarian Party dropout is a small-animal veterinarian from Los Angeles, Calif., who later returned to the Party and is now a monthly pledger.

"For a while, I stifled who I was. I did it against my better judgment, and several years later corrected my mistake by re-registering Libertarian and re-joining the Libertarian Party," Brandt noted.

Finally, in 1997, she insisted on returning to the party and has been a pledger ever since. Brandt prefers to support her beliefs with both action and money, but lacked the time to do so, so the convenient and consistent support of pledging seemed to be a good fit for her.

Brandt has been a libertarian ever since the 1960s, when she read Ayn Rand and got involved in the Objectivist movement and even worked with Nathaniel Branden, Rand's protégé, for a while. Then one day she read about the Libertarian Party in Reason magazine, and joined immediately.

Despite this lengthy involvement, she credits her father as the most influential libertarian in her life. "He was a Libertarian before the movement existed," she said.

Most of Brandt's activism takes the form of trying to convince others in the gay community that the Libertarian Party is "pro-choice on everything, including lifestyle."

Brandt sees resistance from the gay community as an additional obstacle for the LP to overcome, because it is hard to change gays' perception that Libertarians are more conservative than Re-

publicans. Brandt has made some headway, at least on the home front. "I've made progress in convincing [my partner] that Libertarians are not anti-gay; the party's position on gay marriage has helped," Brandt says.

"The Libertarian Party is potentially the most accepting of the gay lifestyle but most gays are unwilling to consider that. Most gays, like most straights, want the government to give them things at the

expense of others, instead of wanting true equality for everyone."

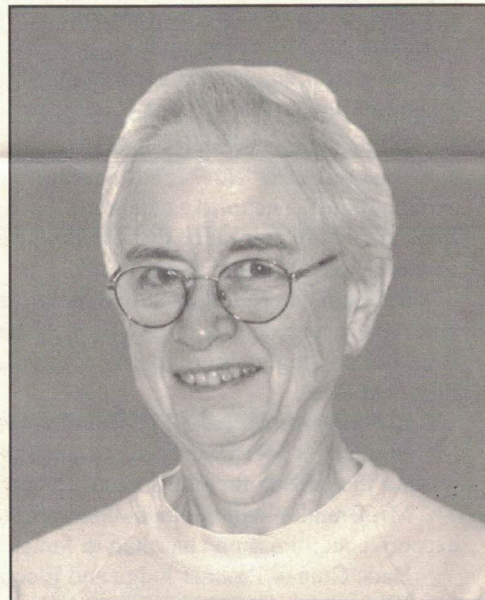
Brandt sees many areas where the Libertarian Party could go further to reach out to the gay population. She finds that other than the LP's recent take on the gay marriage issue, there is little about gays in the party literature and little effort to organize gays within the Libertarian Party.

Brandt feels that the efforts of LP candidates like Ruth Bennett, a lesbian who ran for governor in Washington state this year, will help the party reach out to groups on the left of the political spectrum. (An article about Bennett appeared in the November Liberty Pledge News.)

This is not the only issue on which Brandt has a unique perspective. As a veterinarian, she feels that groups like PETA go too far with animal rights, treating animals as if they are people. Brandt views caring for domesticated animals as a personal responsibility issue, noting, "When we domesticate animals, we should assume responsibility for their physical, psychological and emotional well-being."

Brandt believes that it is important to stay active, politically and philanthropically. She supports a Christian ministry that is dedicated to helping gays undo the psychological harm they have encountered in conventional religious groups. She also enjoys digital photography, home improvement projects and traveling.

Brandt is one example of the diversity within the Libertarian community, and in her opinion, that should be the focus for the party in 2005 — to embrace and advertise that diversity by reaching out to the gay community and other underrepresented groups.



Elinor Brandt

### Thank you to all our pledgers!

Every once in a while it is good to simply state your gratitude. On behalf of the Libertarian National Committee and the staff at national headquarters — thank you for your monthly contribution.

Every pledge, in any amount, is vitally important to our success. You are quite literally helping to keep the lights on for liberty!

There are staffers available to handle your needs. Please feel free to contact either of the Development Associates (Kelly or Margaret) or Jessica Wilson by e-mailing [pledge@lp.org](mailto:pledge@lp.org). Again, please accept our sincere thanks!



# Libertarian beats Republican for commission seat

By Matthew S.L. Cate

TRENTON, Ga. — In what local officials declare a first for a third-party candidate, Dade County voters picked a **Libertarian** businessman over a Republican county commissioner to lead the county's new form of government.

With all but any provisional ballots counted Tuesday night, unofficial results gave Libertarian candidate Ben Brandon 66 percent of the vote in a runoff race landslide for the county executive chairman position.

"It's surprising," said Mr. Brandon, of Rising Fawn. "I thought I'd win, but I didn't expect to win that big."

Mr. Brandon defeated the GOP's Allan Bradford, who won the most votes Nov. 2, but not the 45 percent necessary to avoid a runoff. The third candidate, whose supporters were courted by both men since that election, was Democrat and former county manager Jason Ford.

Mr. Brandon said the marked turnaround from the Nov. 2 vote, where he received about a third of the vote, was that Mr. Bradford no longer was riding the Republican coattails of President Bush.

In the unofficial tally, Mr. Brandon took 1,614 votes to Mr. Bradford's 845. Twenty-six percent of registered voters went to the polls in the rare general election runoff.

Mr. Brandon will begin his four-year term as county executive /commission chairman in January.

Dade County Probate Judge and Election Superintendent Jan Ellison said she believes Mr. Brandon is the first local candidate ever to run as a Libertarian, much less win. "That's the first time in history of Dade County," she said, adding the local runoff was the only reason most Dade County voters hit the polls Tuesday, even though a statewide runoff for a spot on the state Court of Appeals was on the ballot.

A one-time failed Republican candidate for both the county school board and county commission, Mr. Brandon often describes himself an "anti-tax guru," and campaigned on a promise to remove county residents 65 and older off the school board's tax rolls.

Mr. Brandon has been an outspoken critic of what he called Schools Superintendent Judy Bean's wasteful spending, once calling for her ouster at a public hearing on the school board's millage rate.

Ms. Bean earlier this year announced her resignation effective at the end of the school year, when she'll move to take a job in South Georgia.

Mr. Brandon, a Georgia Tech graduate and fourth-degree karate black belt, said he's ready to begin work to deliver his promises, including "cleaning up the huge mess I've uncovered in the tax digest down here."

Mr. Bradford said he also wanted to reduce taxes for the county's elderly and promised to reduce wasteful spending in county government.

In 2002 Dade County voters approved a referendum to change their form of government from a county manager and county commission to a county commission led by a full-time, at-large commission chairman.

The chairman also serves as the de facto county manager or executive, taking care of day-to-day county business and finances.

Joining Mr. Brandon in January on the new County Commission are Democrats Lamar Lowery, Scottie Pittman and Sarah Moore, and Republican David Young.

Mr. Lowery and Mr. Pittman are on the current County Commission, and to ensure staggered four-year terms their seats will be up for election in 2006, Judge Ellison said.

## LP joins coalition for Oklahoma ballot access

By Ray Carter

A coalition of small political parties hopes to push a reform of Oklahoma's ballot access laws in the 2005 legislative session. The members of the Oklahomans for Ballot Access Reform include representatives of the **Libertarian**, Green and Constitution parties.

Officials with the group say Oklahoma is widely recognized as the worst state in the United States with regard to ballot access laws because its requirements are among the most stringent.

In 48 states, people could vote for Libertarian Party nominee Michael Badnarik, in 29 states they could cast a vote for Green Party nominee David Cobb, and in 35 states they could vote for Constitution Party nominee Michael Peroutka. The only third-party candidate that got any press attention was former Green nominee, Reform/Independent candidate Ralph Nader, who was on the ballot in 34 states.

The Oklahoma Libertarian Party did a ballot access petition to gain access, but didn't meet the requirement of 51,781 signatures. This was the first time since the 1980s that the Libertarians weren't on the ballot in Oklahoma.

Oklahomans for Ballot Access Reform, which persuaded a state legislator to submit a reform bill in the 2003 session, is trying to find a legislator who will be willing to submit a bill for the 2005 session. The group decided to use a bill similar to the last one submitted. They have also hired a lobbyist who will follow the bill when it is introduced.

(Above) *Chattanooga Times Free Press*,  
Chattanooga, Tennessee — November 24, 2004

(Right) *K-FOR TV*, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma —  
November 26, 2004



# Libertarian Party shifts post-election focus to growth

By Bree Hocking

Heading into Election Day, the **Libertarian Party** had high hopes that its presidential nominee, Texas computer programmer Michael Badnarik, might prove the decisive factor in a handful of key battleground states.

“At one point we seemed to believe that was going to happen,” said Libertarian Party Executive Director Joe Seehusen.

Instead, President Bush defeated Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) by more than 3 million votes while Republicans expanded their majorities in the House and Senate. Nationwide, Badnarik netted less than 400,000 votes, despite making the ballot in 48 states and the District, and none of the party’s Congressional candidates came close to winning.

But rather than representing a stunning defeat, Libertarian officials say the Republican victory may prove a blessing in disguise for the nation’s most prominent third party.

According to Seehusen, the GOP’s election trifecta represents an opening for his party to make inroads with fiscal conservatives, and social progressives opposed to the Patriot Act and GOP efforts to ban gay marriage.

“They have no one to restrain them,” he said of Republicans. “If you are a real fiscal conservative ... there is no way you can conclude that is happening under a Bush presidency and a Republican Congress.”

Enter the Libertarian Party.

“We are a party that represents much of what America thinks,” Seehusen asserted.

With that in mind, Seehusen says the party is set to launch “an aggressive growth plan,” which includes roughly \$300,000 allocated for party building and outreach efforts. That’s a pittance to Democrats and Republicans, of course, but a respectable amount of money to a third party.

The initiative will focus on both forging and strengthening relationships with “a wide range of groups we think are aligned with our thinking,” Seehusen says.

As an example, he cites the conservative Citizens for a Sound Economy, civil libertarian groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union and even Sierra Club “free market environmentalists.”

“I have no reason to think we can’t reach out to African American voters who have not fared particularly well under government programs,” adds Seehusen, “pointing to the war on drugs and the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program as two federal efforts often described as failures that could attract black voters to the Libertarian Party.

Former Republican Rep. Bob Barr (Ga.), who voted for Badnarik and now considers himself an Independent due to his disagreements with the GOP over civil liberties, believes the political environment is ripe for the Libertarian Party to gain ground by providing a voice for those unhappy with the Bush administration’s record.

Badnarik, the defeated Libertarian presidential candidate whose official campaign biography boasts of his one-time status as a “big man on campus” during his college days at

Indiana University, says he has no plans to work “with a corrupt Congress that is growing the size of the federal government.”

Nor is he particularly disappointed with the results of the election given that he “doesn’t trust the accuracy of the result” from paperless electronic voting machines.

Nevertheless, Badnarik, who developed an eight-hour class on the Constitution that he travels around the country teaching, says he will run for president again in 2008 and is putting together an advisory committee to weigh his options for a bid for elective office in Texas next cycle.

Ultimately, Badnarik predicts, Libertarians will be elected to numerous federal offices because neither Republicans nor Democrats can be trusted to uphold the Constitution.

(Left) *Roll Call*, Washington, D.C. – November 17, 2004

(Below) *The Macon Telegraph*, Macon, Georgia – December 7, 2004

## Georgia Libertarian qualifies for council race

By Gray Beverley

On the first day of qualifying, two candidates entered the race for the City Council seat formerly held by the late Jim Lee.

David Corr and Al Tillman qualified Monday for the special nonpartisan election to be held March 15.

Lee, who served Ward 2 on the council for about 25 years, died in September at age 81. He had more than three years left on his current term; the seat has been vacant since his death.

Corr, 50, has been chairman of the Bibb County **Libertarian Party** since its inception in October 2000, according to Corr’s Web site. Twice, Corr had his name thrown off ballots for state legislative offices because he had failed to obtain the minimum number of verified signatures to be eligible.

Corr received 5 percent of the vote in a write-in candidacy for Macon mayor last year and was vocal in a campaign that successfully defeated a Bibb County sales tax initiative in March. Bibb County elections supervisor Elaine Carr said there were 8,088 registered and active voters in that ward as of Dec. 1.



## High-profile LP member, radio host dies

Associated Press

BOSTON – David Brudnoy, the most recognized voice of Boston talk radio for more than a quarter of a century, died last night at Massachusetts General Hospital, his radio station, WBZ-AM, reported. He was 64.

Brudnoy, whose soothing voice could be heard every weeknight in 38 states and in Canada on WBZ since 1986, announced on air in September 2003 that he was suffering from merkel cell carcinoma, a form of rare but treatable skin cancer.

He already had lived with AIDS for more than a decade, beating a viral infection that nearly took his life in 1994.

He left his show in November of last year to fight the cancer, recovered and returned in March, interviewing Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry, Gov. Mitt Romney and former Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura in his first night back. His voice was noticeably more hoarse.

“We’re guaranteed nothing in life except life itself, and what we get is an adventure, not always a happy one but always a learning experience as well as, like now, a time of fear and maybe even (I hope temporary) despair,” he said at the time.

But Brudnoy was hospitalized again this month, and his condition deteriorated quickly.

Brudnoy’s radio show touched on almost any topic, from politics, to current events, to the arts.

He was known for his intellectual thoughtfulness, his sense of humor and his easygoing manner with callers, who came from all walks of life.

His loyal listeners revolted in the early 1990s when he was taken off the air in favor of cheaper syndicated talk programming. Listeners boycotted the station and advertisers and Brudnoy was back on the air within weeks.

Though best known for his broadcasting career that started in 1971 at WGBH-TV in Boston, he also wrote movie reviews for suburban newspapers and lectured at a number of area colleges, most recently at Boston University.

His articles have been published in *The New York Times*, *National Review*, *TV Guide*, *New Republic* and many more.

He started his talk radio career at WHDH-AM in 1976, then moved to WRKO-AM in 1981.

His memoirs, published in 1997, “Life is Not a Rehearsal,” chronicled his battle with HIV.

Brudnoy was a Republican until 1998 when he officially switched to the **Libertarian Party**.

Brudnoy, born in Minneapolis, received a bachelor’s degree in Japanese studies from Yale, a master’s in Far Eastern studies from Harvard, a master’s in the history of American civilization and a doctorate in history, both from Brandeis University.

(Left) *The Standard-Times*, New Bedford, Massachusetts – December 10, 2004

(Below) *The State News*, East Lansing, Michigan – November 15, 2004

## Libertarians suffered same loss as Kerry

By Jun Yang

Behind the limelight, third party candidates fought the same fight and suffered the same loss as Kerry, and among them was Michael Badnarik of the **Libertarian Party**.

“We are the new refounding fathers and mothers and we will restore liberty,” Badnarik said during a speech given to about 50 Libertarians gathered at the Hampton Inn & Suites in Okemos. “We are making incredible progress.

“We will use this as the spring board for future success.”

The party raised \$1 million and drew 400,000 votes in the election, which was cost-efficient compared to the major parties that poured hundreds of millions of dollars into their campaigns, Badnarik said during the speech.

“The campaign was a huge success,” Badnarik said. “We have several million Americans who have now heard about the Libertarian Party that never knew we existed.

“Thirty-two percent of people in the United States know my name, which is an amazing improvement since half of the members of the Libertarian Party didn’t know who I was.”

Badnarik said the ideas of the party – the adherence to the constitution, individual rights and private property – can’t be challenged by any Americans.

For third parties, the most eminent goal for the election was to increase the public awareness of their presence and ideas. And the party representatives said the goal was met to some degree.

Still, some third party members and representatives said the results of the election were disappointing but not surprising, because third party candidates were locked out of due process to make an impact.

For the most part, a common third party message during the election was that the parties are viable options for people tired of American politics.

“People are sick of it, and don’t think there’s anything they can do about it, but the Libertarians think there is something that we can do and we are doing that,” said Will Tyler White, who ran for the 8th District U.S House and lost to U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Brighton.