

LIBERTY PLEDGE

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newsletter

CALIFORNIA RECALL ELECTION ...

Cigarette entrepreneur running for governor

Saying that "smokers are the most oppressed minority in the country," a registered Libertarian who owns a nationwide chain of cigarette stores has filed as a candidate in the upcoming special gubernatorial election in California.

Ned Roscoe, 42, owns Cigarettes Cheaper, a chain of 330 stores nationwide, one third of which are in California. The privately held company had estimated sales of \$750 million and about 2,350 employees in 2001.

"Smokers feel the laws they have to live under are stupid -- where to smoke, how far from the building," he said. "There are 4 million smokers in California. If half of those people vote, and half of them vote for me, that's enough to carry the election."

His campaign motto? "No new taxes; no new laws; get the work done."

Roscoe is one of three Libertarians to have qualified to appear on the October 7 ballot, the secretary of state's office announced on August 10. The others are Jack Hickey, 69, a retired research scientist who serves on the Sequoia Healthcare District Board, and Ken Hamidi, 51, an engineer from Sacramento.

The two-part ballot will ask California voters to first decide whether Democratic Gov. Gray Davis should be recalled, and then if he is, to select his replacement.

No stranger to political activism, Roscoe was a vocal opponent of California's Proposition 10, a 50-cent-per-pack cigarette tax increase passed by referendum in 1998. Two years later Roscoe used the California LP state convention as the backdrop for kicking off the campaign to repeal the tax hike. The entrepreneur footed most of the bill for that initiative, which failed with 28 percent of the vote.

Even so, more than a million Californians voted for the repeal, and Roscoe says he is counting on their votes in the recall election.

"I want to be a candidate for governor so that smokers will get more power," he says, adding that even if he doesn't win, his effort will "send a powerful message to lawmakers."

At least 140 candidates will be on the October ballot, including 38 Democrats, 35 Republicans, 44 independents and two Greens.

BUDGET CRUNCH IN COLORADO ...

A 'fiscal fitness' plan for a bloated government

Colorado Libertarians have found an innovative way for the state government to achieve "fiscal fitness": Release nonviolent offenders from the state prison system.

With prison growth swelling by 7.9 percent per year, Colorado now has the "dubious distinction" of being one of the top three states in that category, along with Connecticut and Minnesota, according to the state LP.

"The state of Colorado is struggling with a major fiscal shortfall, yet the General Assembly and governor authorize \$103 million for a new prison that will cost \$34 million a year to operate and almost \$14 million in annual bond payments," said Colorado LP Chair Norm Olsen.

According to recent data from the Colorado Department of Corrections, half of all male inmates and three-quarters of females are serving time for nonviolent offenses.

Noting that Colorado has been cited for being one of the top states in physical fitness over the past few years, Olsen said the solution is obvious.

"The Libertarian Party of Colorado calls on the governor and state legislators to make Colorado 'fiscally fit' by changing its policy of imprisoning nonviolent criminals, changing state sentencing guidelines, and slowing the growth of jail and prison populations across the state," he said.

George Bush: Libertarian?

The "L-word" has been cropping up in the news in a number of unexpected venues recently.

One example: At an August news conference, Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley blasted George Bush as a "libertarian president" for "treating Baltimore and other major cities very shabbily" -- in other words, not giving them enough federal largesse.

Bush isn't a Republican, opined O'Malley, because Republicans stand for "fiscal responsibility."

"There's only one 'L word' to describe what happens when someone refers to this free-spending president as a libertarian: *libel*," quipped LP Communications Director George Getz.

All the scams that fit

By Michelle Malkin

WASHINGTON -- The New York Times -- unrelenting champion of the underprivileged, mighty battler against all corporate evils, and vehement opponent of Republican tax cuts for the “rich and powerful” -- lives by a far more self-serving motto: All the corporate welfare that’s fit to collect.

You won’t see it reported on the Times’ front page, so here’s the scoop: It has been revealed that the Times Co.’s development partner for a new headquarters project has asked city officials for \$400 million in federally financed “Liberty Bonds.” The federal program was meant for rebuilding in New York City’s September 11 disaster zone, not for subsidizing a private newspaper’s long-planned palatial ambitions.

The background: While small business owners near Ground Zero in lower Manhattan struggled to pick up the pieces after the terrorist attack, all the midtown Manhattan fat cats at the Times had to do was throw a tantrum to obtain public funding for a new building. After the newspaper’s executives threatened to move their workers out of town, city and state officials coughed up a vast tract of land on the edge of Times Square for a shiny, new 52-story headquarters.

One minor glitch: The land that government authorities proposed to give away -- and the 11 buildings and 30 businesses located on it -- wasn’t theirs for the taking. No matter. The corporate welfare conspirators invoked two magic words: eminent domain.

With the wave of a pen, the Empire State Development Corp., a “public-benefit corporation,” condemned the coveted private property on Eighth Avenue between 40th and 41st streets for the Times’ new digs. Opposed to special tax breaks for everyone else, the Times’ project comes lined with a handy \$26.1 million in sales tax exemptions on equipment and materials used for construction, a waiver of the mortgage-recording tax and a discount on electricity rates.

Although the Fifth Amendment bars the use of eminent domain without “just compensation,” the *Times* is only required to pay \$85.6 million for the land -- at least a 25 percent discount. Buried in the 99-year lease agreement is an option provision stating that after 29 years, the Times may buy the site in exchange for \$1.

This cozy arrangement is “legalized theft,” plain and simple, as New York **Libertarian Party** official Richard Cooper has noted from the beginning stages of what he and the party have dubbed “Time\$cam.”

It’s also an example of the Times’ sky-scraping editorial hypocrisy. The paper’s opinion pages have been filled for the past two years with liberal rants from the likes of Nicholas Kristof and Paul Krugman decrying corporate welfare schemes and accusing President Bush and Republicans of “crony capitalism.” All have been silent on their own employer’s avaricious feasting at the public trough.

Who wants to oppose “crony capitalism,” after all, when a corner office with windows in the new publicly financed headquarters may be at stake?

(Left) *Washington Times* op-ed column, Washington, DC -- July 21, 2003

(Below) *News-Tribune*, Tacoma, Washington -- July 22, 2003

Gov. Locke won’t seek third term

By Joseph Turner

It wasn’t so much a governor and first lady who made the decision that Gov. Gary Locke should not seek election to a third term. It was a mom and dad.

Gary and Mona Lee Locke, parents of Emily, 6, and Dylan, 2, said they figured it would be less disruptive to their children if he left office after his second term ends in 18 months, rather than in 2008.

“I want to devote more time to Mona, Emily and Dylan,” Locke said Monday. “As profoundly important as it is to be ... governor, it is just as important to me to be a good husband and father.”

Locke had kept political onlookers in suspense for months. Although his popularity had been falling in recent polls, Locke had amassed \$500,000 in contributions for a third campaign for governor and said he was confident he would have won again.

His announcement Monday opened the field for a raft of candidates. Already, four Democrats and three Republicans either have announced they are running or are giving it serious thought.

Paul Berendt, chairman of the state Democratic Party, said Locke will be sorely missed.

“He worked tenaciously to fight back ultra right-wing measures proposed by the Legislature ... (and) has maintained our state’s fiscal integrity through daunting times,” Berendt said. “Our state rests in good fiscal shape because of Governor Locke’s efforts.”

Leaders of the state Republican and **Libertarian** parties essentially said good riddance.

“Locke’s go-with-the-flow leadership style has done little to slow the bleeding of jobs from this state,” said state Libertarian Party Chairman Larey McLaren. “The quality of life is going down in Washington because of Locke’s failure to aggressively address runaway spending.”

Locke’s past year in office has been his most difficult. He helped persuade the Legislature to pass a gas tax to raise \$4.2 billion to fix clogged freeways. He also won legislative approval for a \$2 billion tax break for The Boeing Co.

Locke first won election to public office in 1980 as a state representative from Seattle. In 1993, he was elected King County executive. He won a crowded Democratic gubernatorial primary in 1996, and went on to easy victories that year and in 2000.

Police union backs Jordan

By Matthew Tully

The city's police union today gave its endorsement to Republican mayoral candidate Greg Jordan, and to a collection of City-County Council candidates.

Jordan said the endorsement will be a valuable tool as he wages an underdog campaign against Democratic Mayor Bart Peterson.

"It's important that people know their public officials" are supported by law enforcement, he said.

Along with Jordan, the union endorsed four Republicans for the four at-large council seats. But the union only backed candidates in 17 of 25 district races. Union political action committee co-chairman Jeffrey Parmelee said there were several districts that simply didn't have a candidate that was adequately supportive of law enforcement.

Including at-large and district races, the union is backing 15 Republican council candidates, six Democrats and **Libertarian candidate** Brad Klopfenstein. In the city's 17th District, the only district pitting two incumbents against each other, the union announced its support for both Democrat Mary Moriarty Adams and Republican Jody Tilford.

"We hope that's a once-in-a-lifetime occurrence," union official Aaron Sullivan said of the conflicting endorsements.

Five file for Council seats

By Ben Evans and Saria Canady

DURHAM -- Five people, including one incumbent, filed Thursday to fill three at-large City Council seats as the clock ticked toward today's noon filing deadline.

City Councilman Thomas Stith is seeking a third two-year term, saying the city has made progress in reducing crime and that the council took appropriate measures in handling a series of management blunders this year.

Eugene Brown is the former chairman of the now-defunct Durham Voters Alliance, who also worked to reduce the council's size to its current seven members. Brown, whose slogan is "A City Worth Fighting For," said he would focus on three areas: crime prevention, government efficiency and the budget, and land use and economic growth.

Libertarians Ray Ubinger, Michael Owen and Rachel Mills also filed their intention to run, saying they wanted to provide a full slate of Libertarians.

Ubinger said his biggest concerns are the "imposition of martial law by Demopublicans" and defending the Bill of Rights.

Michael Owen and Rachel Mills, who are husband and wife, said their main concern is Durham's finances. Owen and Mills said they figured they could share the work if they were both elected. However, if only one is elected, the other still plans to attend meetings.

Although they share a similar platform, Mills said she and her husband do differ on some things.

"It's not like he's going to copy my paper," she said.

(Left) *Indianapolis Star*,
Indianapolis, Indiana -- July 8, 2003

(Bottom left) *Herald-Sun*, Durham, North
Carolina -- July 31

(Below) *Troy Eccentric*, Troy, Michigan --
July 17, 2003

Judge tosses Libertarians' case against Pappageorge

By Jay M. Grossman

She lost the race, but won the case.

Cristina Pappageorge, who finished last in April's city council election, claimed a personal victory Monday when Troy District Judge Michael Martone dismissed a defamation lawsuit filed against her by the **Libertarian Party** of Oakland County.

The lawsuit was filed over comments Pappageorge made during closing statements at a Feb. 12 city council debate. In her remarks, Pappageorge said Libertarians want to legalize drugs such as marijuana. She also noted one of her opponents in the race, Martin Howrylak, is a member of the Libertarian Party.

"Mr. Howrylak is a Libertarian," she said at the debate. "Libertarians say it's OK to do drugs."

Her attorney, Ryan J. Deel, said the judge granted summary disposition, meaning he felt there were not enough facts in the case to hold a trial.

"Basically the judge, looking at the statement, ruled it was a political speech and that it was absolutely protected under the First Amendment," he said Tuesday. "Based on the facts, a dismissal was appropriate."

Pappageorge, whose husband, John G. Pappageorge, serves in the state House of Representatives as a Troy Republican, said she felt vindicated by the ruling.

"In my opinion it was done as a political ploy to try and tie us up. ... Unfortunately, sometimes the truth isn't nice and that's all I can tell you. We don't feel we lied once."

The lawsuit itself apparently had little bearing on the council race. Howrylak was the top vote-getter in the April election, followed by Jeanne Stine.

With a firm understanding that political speeches are protected under the First Amendment, Michigan Libertarian Party chairman Bill Gelineau nevertheless believes it was necessary to file the lawsuit.

"I think the point of our lawsuit was to say, 'That might be legal, but it isn't right.' It isn't right to mischaracterize what someone's beliefs are for your own personal gain," Gelineau said. "And I think the voters saw through it. I think Martin is a pretty darn good fit in Troy."

(Right) *Courier-Journal*, Louisville, Kentucky
-- July 2, 2003

(Below) *The Daily Sentinel*, Grand Junction,
Colorado -- July 16, 2003

Republicans, Libertarians file for fall municipal races

By Meghan Hoyer

A group of Republican candidates and a handful of **Libertarians** have filed to run for municipal elections in Clark County's cities and towns, rounding out the fall ballot.

The filings mean that 30 Republicans will be on the Nov. 4 ballots in Clark County. That's more than three times the past number of Republicans running for municipal seats in any given year, said Glenn Murphy Jr., chairman of the county's Republican Party.

"We're going to have more Republicans in office when 2003 is over," Murphy said.

State law allows a party to nominate a candidate for an office for which no candidate filed to run in that party's primary. Democrats, for years the dominant party in Clark County, already had their slate filled before the end-of-June deadline for party nominations.

In New Albany, there were no additional candidates for city offices; both major parties already had most of their slates filled in the May 6 primary.

But in Clark County, the filings changed the look of some municipal elections substantially. Among other things, there will be a Libertarian candidate in the Jeffersonville mayor's race. Teresa Fisher, an organizer of the Libertarian Party in Clark County and an unsuccessful candidate last year for the Jeffersonville Township Board, will oppose Democrat Robert Waiz and Republican Raymond "Monty" Snelling.

In the Jeffersonville City Council races, Republicans filled all their party's nominations. And in District 2, Democrat Bob Potter, a former city councilman, will face not only Republican Ed Zastawny but also Libertarian candidate Kirk Singh.

In Sellersburg, the Republicans will field a full slate of candidates for the first time ever.

Murphy said the party's dominance in that area — neighborhoods in and just outside Sellersburg are some of the most Republican-leaning areas of Clark County — was reflected in the number of candidates who wanted to run there.

In Charlestown, the Republican slate during the primary was already nearly full, and no new candidates were added to the ballot. But in Utica the party chose three people to seek Town Council seats.

Murphy said the party chose candidates to fill the slates through an interview process; in some cases, he said, more than one Republican was interested in running.

He said the sheer numbers of Republicans running this fall meant the party would likely see more success than it has in years past.

There are currently only three Republicans in elected municipal positions. "We took a lot of care with these candidates," Murphy said. "We did not place anyone in any seat that we didn't think could win."

Montrose voters nix food tax

By Aaron Porter

MONTROSE — Voters soundly rejected a ballot measure Tuesday aimed to exempt food purchased for home consumption from sales tax collected in the city of Montrose.

Voters cast 2,842 ballots against the measure, or about 71 percent, according to unofficial results. There were 1,109 votes in favor of the measure.

Mayor David Reed, visibly relieved, said the election results displayed voter support for the Montrose City Council and the city organization.

"That's a huge mandate to continue what we're doing and we're going to take the challenge and run with it," Reed said.

The controversial ballot question prompted a massive return, with about 69 percent returned from 5,866 ballots that were delivered by mail to city voters, said Mary Watt, city clerk.

The Western Slope **Libertarian Party**, a local political group, challenged a portion of the city's sales tax that it claimed was unfair to fixed income residents and the working poor. The special election ballot asked voters to rule on an ordinance exempting food for domestic home consumption from the city's sales tax.

"The old saying is, if it ain't broke, don't fix it. What little amount of tax people end up paying doesn't add up to (anything) compared to what services they're getting," said John Harris, a resident who lives on a fixed income.

The proposal would have slashed city revenue by about 17 percent, according to city officials. The exemption from sales tax would have been immediate and would have left the city without an alternative source of revenue to cover the shortfall through the next six months, said John Schneider, city manager.

The Western Slope Libertarian Party questioned the morality of charging sales tax on a vital component of people's lives.

"To me, it came down to: do you care about your neighbor or do you care about yourself? This issue pretty much brought that to the forefront and that's why we said it's a moral issue," said Mike Humbert, president of the Western Slope Libertarian Party.

Residents on fixed incomes and the working poor are paying a higher percentage of their income on grocery sales tax compared to higher income brackets, the party claimed.