

LIBERTY PLEDGE

Libertarian National Committee, Inc. ♦ 2600 Virginia Ave, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20037 ♦ Phone: (202) 333-0008 ♦ Fax: (202) 333-0072

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newsletter

The Rejuvenation of the Libertarian Party of West Virginia

Active state and county affiliates of the Libertarian Party are essential for our success. Libertarian Party affiliates engage voters in outreach, inspire activists, and strengthen the Libertarian community, essentially fueling the Libertarian grassroots movement. The success of a Libertarian Party affiliate is dependent upon the generous efforts of volunteers. However, volunteers often get discouraged due to the daunting tasks they face, leading affiliates to become dormant. This is what happened to the Libertarian Party of West Virginia. But thanks to the efforts of a few dedicated Libertarians, especially Kirsten Milligan, the Libertarian Party of West Virginia (LPWV) is coming back to life!

The LPWV was created in 1994 and miraculously attained ballot access in 1996. Unfortunately, the LPWV was unable to gain party ballot access in 2000 or 2004, greatly discouraging its members who had petitioned so hard. This sense of despair resulted in LPWV being inactive for over three years. Then Greg Henshall called a meeting to discuss the possibility of reactivating the LPWV. Kirsten Milligan attended this meeting with an invitation from a friend, and in the absence of any other leadership, agreed to head the movement to reactivate the LPWV. Everyone was surprised by the strength of her conviction.

Kirsten decided now was the time to contribute to the Libertarian Party. As she said: "The shock of the juvenile and irresponsible reactions of Congress and the Bush administration to 9-11 had finally condensed into a grim acceptance of what I really was seeing. That acceptance was one with the resolve to abandon the so-called comfort of hiding from the horror...I wanted to help in the fight against apathy, ignorance, disempowerment, disenfranchisement, and despair." Kirsten became

the Acting Chair of the LPWV. The group made a public call for LP members in the state to attend, and held a meeting with 21 people where they began amending the bylaws proposal Kirsten had created. Shortly afterward, with the help of Dr. Jim Lark, the bylaws were adopted, and the group moved on to member enrollment, the election of officers and the question of ballot access.

Gubernatorial ballot access in West Virginia requires 2 percent of the votes cast for governor in the previous election (14,889 valid signatures are needed for 2007). Unfortunately, West Virginia is a difficult state in which to petition, as it is very rural and has heavy snow and rain during the winter and spring. Thus the LPWV has decided to postpone gubernatorial ballot access efforts until the 2012 election. This is wise, because as Kirsten says, "it is not reasonable to expect success in such a short time, and if we tried for it and failed, I and others would likely pay for it with our motivation." The LPWV is still open to attempting 2008 Presidential ballot access and has many other goals. The LPWV wants a representative for each county to enable local action. Kirsten plans to travel around the state to encourage this. Other goals include revamping their Web site (www.lpwv.org), creating outreach literature that addresses local issues, engaging in online social networking, creating a logo, finding qualified candidates and increasing membership and appearances at events.

We are very proud of Kirsten Milligan and all who are involved in the reactivation of the LPWV. We suggest checking out their Web site, which offers a venue to share ideas and words of encouragement. The Libertarian Party appreciates the grassroots efforts of our volunteers, as they are the local conduit of the Libertarian message.

The Life of Freedom Fighter

~Aaron Russo~

Aaron Russo: entrepreneur, famed film producer, political candidate and long time activist, died Aug. 24th at age 64, after a six year battle with bladder cancer. Aaron was a phenomenal individual who fought authoritarian government with untiring conviction. The Libertarian Party admires Aaron's passion for liberty and dedication to promoting his principles. He is survived by his two children, Sam and Max Russo.

Aaron Russo was born on Feb. 14, 1943, to a modest Jewish family in Brooklyn. As a youth, Aaron worked in his family's undergarment business and promoted rock and roll shows. At only 24 years old, Aaron opened a nightclub in Chicago called the Kinetic Playground. In this position, Aaron promoted many popular bands including: Led Zeppelin, the Who, Janis Joplin, the Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane. Aaron's affinity for entrepreneurialism was a commendable and truly American trait, which led to his great success.

By age 30, Aaron was managing Bette Midler, who became famous under his management. In 1975 Aaron produced the Tony award-winning, "Clams on the Half-Shell Revue," which was the most successful 10-week Broadway revue ever. Aaron moved on to feature films, producing *The Rose*, *Trading Places*, *Teachers*, *Wise Guys* and more. His films were nominated for six Academy Awards and seven Golden Globes, three of which he won. Aaron also produced the Grammy, Tony, and Emmy award winning television series, "Ol' Red Hair is Back." Aaron managed several celebrities in addition to Bette Midler, including David Keith, Frederic Forrest and Susan Sarandon.

Aaron utilized the wealth earned from his success in the entertainment industry and his special film talent to promote his anti-big government beliefs. In 1994 Aaron created the stand up comedy

monologue called "Aaron Russo's Mad as Hell," in which he passionately ranted in favor of libertarian positions. In 2006, Aaron created and starred in the interesting documentary: *America...From Freedom to Fascism*. The documentary criticizes the Federal Reserve, warns of increasing authoritarianism in America and researches the origin and legality of the income tax. *America...From Freedom to Fascism* is available for free on Google video, where it has been viewed by more than 2 million people. Aaron exemplifies how individual Libertarians can use their specialized skills to promote Libertarianism.



Aaron first ran for public office in 1998, seeking the Republican nomination for Nevada governor. Aaron won an admirable 25.8 percent of the vote, garnering him second place in a four-way race. In 1999 Aaron left the Republican Party, publicly joining the Libertarian Party. Aaron then ran for the Libertarian presidential nomination in 2004. He won the first two rounds of voting, but got second place to Michael Badnarik in the third run-off vote. Aaron said that if elected President, "I will bring our troops home from every corner of the globe. I'll revoke the Patriot Act. I'll cut taxes, cut spending. I'll cut the size of government. I'll stop corporate welfare. I'll engage all nations in trade and commerce. I'll protect our air and water, and I'll protect our borders, but most importantly, I will protect our Constitution and Bill of Rights."

Aaron Russo dedicated his life to exposing the flaws of bad government and promoting libertarianism. He proudly defended his principles and was unwavering in his distrust of government. His efforts and contributions to the libertarian movement will not be forgotten. We hope that his legacy continues to inspire freedom fighters everywhere.

Barry Goldwater and the Origins of the Libertarian Party

Barry Goldwater once said: "I do not undertake to promote welfare, for I propose to extend freedom. My aim is not to pass laws, but to repeal them."

During his lifetime, Barry Goldwater inspired millions of liberty lovers. His promotion of small government was a breath of fresh air in the 1960s' political atmosphere, which was saturated with New Deal politicians and international communism. Goldwater's 1964 presidential campaign as the Republican candidate motivated libertarians who had already seen the light and attracted many more to the cause. Many Goldwater activists then became involved in the libertarian movement, eventually leading to the creation of the Libertarian Party in 1971. Barry Goldwater's furtherance of libertarian ideas amounts to an invaluable contribution to the Libertarian Party, for which we are very thankful.

Many Americans were introduced to libertarianism by great thinkers like Ayn Rand, Robert Heinlein, Frederic Bastiat, Lysander Spooner, Garret Garrett, John T. Flynn, Milton Friedman and more. However, in the excessively liberal environment of the late '60s, they lacked a political voice for their views. Then came the Barry Goldwater revolution! Goldwater published his 1960 book, *The Conscience of a Conservative*, which sold more than 3.5 million copies. His book resonated with millions of Americans who wanted more economic and personal freedom. Finally, the libertarian-conservative perspective was in the mass media.

Goldwater won the Republican primary and became their Presidential candidate in 1964. Rand and Heinlein both endorsed Goldwater's campaign, and Friedman was his campaign's economic advisor. Hardcore libertarian, Karl Hess, was Goldwater's speechwriter and later became editor of *LP News*. Goldwater lost the 1964 presidential race, but the libertarian movement he stimulated carried on.

Goldwater inspired a generation of libertarian activists, many of whom became active in the libertarian movement after his campaign. These libertarian Goldwaterites became involved in organizations like Young Americans for Freedom, the

John Birch Society and the Liberty Amendment Committee. This led to the founding of the Libertarian Party. As one of the founders of the Libertarian Party, David F. Nolan, said "by 1971, many of them [libertarian-Goldwaterites] had reached the conclusion that the Nixonized Republican party offered no real hope for consistent advocates of liberty, and set out to create a new party that would carry the banner of liberty proudly and without compromise. That party, of course, is the Libertarian Party."

The Libertarian National Committee Chairman, Bill Redpath, will be debating the Republican National Committee Co-Chair, JoAnn Davidson, at the October Conservative Leadership Conference in Reno, Nevada on which party better represents the Goldwater conservative. For more info, visit www.clc2007.com.

Welcome to the Liberty Pledge Club!

Angela Autrey
Carl Buchheister
Robert Bulechek
Cyril Crume
Mark Deal
Fred Fernandes
Tim Foti
C. Gladstone
Joan Grillo
Walter Luers
Francis McAlonan
Raymond McGee
Robert Power, III
Saul Rackauskas
Brandon Ross
Brent Ryan
Jim Schrader
Alexander Sharpe
Phillip Showers

Thank you for your generous support!

~Erik Viker~

Libertarian for Selinsgrove Borough Council

Running for public office is one of the most honorable contributions an individual can make to the Libertarian Party. Campaigning is a resource consuming commitment. We must appreciate the sacrifice our candidates, who usually have work and family obligations, make for the Libertarian Party. Erik Viker has made the admirable choice to campaign for Selinsgrove Borough Council in Pennsylvania.

Erik Viker was born in 1965 in Long Island. He has a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Texas at Austin and a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the University of Florida.

Erik works at the Susquehanna University with his wife Brenda. He is the Assistant Professor of Theatre, the Faculty Technical Director, and also serves on the committees for Admissions and Student Life. Erik also provides operations and technology consulting as a freelance production manager. Erik is also active in his community. He is a member of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, the Publications Committee of the United States Institute for Theatre Technology and attends the St. Pius X Catholic Church. His activities have gained him the respect of his small community. Prior to this, he worked for 13 years fighting child abuse as a family services counselor in Florida.

Erik decided to run for office because he feels a strong civic responsibility to serve his community. He understands that there are many benefits to running as a Libertarian for public office, even if one doesn't win, because it increases the LP's legitimacy as a political party and gives voters a choice. "Even if I am not elected my candidacy will remind the good people of Selinsgrove that the Democratic and Republican parties are not our only options for representation," says Erik.

Erik is a proud Libertarian. He has utilized the



affordable advertising of the internet with his Web site (<http://home.ptd.net/~eviker/>). On his Web site he makes a pledge to the citizens of Selinsgrove: "I will support government action that intends to protect the people from violence, coercion and fraud. I will not support government action for anything we can take care of ourselves as independent citizens in a free market economy." As councilman, Erik would encourage minimal government interference and allow his city to grow. As he says: "I reject spending tax dollars for anything that could be just as effectively accomplished through private enterprise." Erik believes "a practical voice advocating civil liberties and careful use of community resources will be valuable to the borough." Erik is campaigning as a Libertarian, but believes his conservative community will appreciate his genuine belief in the merits of fiscal responsibility.

Erik is confident about his chances for success. He has collected the sufficient signatures to be on the ballot. All of Erik's competitors are Republicans and there is no Democrat in the race as it is a heavily conservative district. The Democrat party has endorsed Erik's candidacy though he is openly Libertarian. There are only 900 registered voters in the Selinsgrove Borough district, so Erik has the opportunity to share his views with most voters. There are three openings on the council and four candidates, two of which are essentially guaranteed victory. However, a third candidate is a former councilman who was recently defeated for reelection. Thus, Erik may win the third spot. "If a Libertarian has any chance of getting elected in Selinsgrove, that time is now," says Erik.

Libertarian candidates make a substantial contribution to the Libertarian Party, democracy, and their fellow citizens. Our candidates represent the Libertarian Party, promote our platform and enable us to fulfill our mission of influencing politics. The Libertarian Party and our members appreciate and support our candidates. Thank you, Erik Viker, for your untiring efforts. You are a true champion of liberty.