

LIBERTY PLEDGE

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newsletter

Actor Kurt Russell: "I'm a libertarian"

Another famous movie star says he's a libertarian. Kurt Russell, star of such motion picture blockbusters as *Escape from New York*, *Stargate*, and *Executive Decision*, used the Cato Institute's recent 20th anniversary celebration in Washington, DC, as an opportunity to go public with his support for libertarianism.

"I'm a libertarian," Russell announced in a May 2nd *Washington Post* article about the Cato bash.

Surrounded by 2,000 libertarian-leaning Cato supporters, Russell continued, "It's fun to be in a room of people who think like you do. I think a lot of people are libertarians and are afraid to admit it — or don't know."



■ Kurt Russell

But support for libertarianism doesn't stop with Kurt Russell — it's also spread to the next generation of the Russell family, according to Harry Browne, who attended the Cato event.

Browne, the 1996 LP candidate for president, said he was introduced to Kurt Russell — but got an especially warm reception from Russell's 17-year-old son, Boston.

"He said that he'd seen me on television and liked what I said," reported Browne. "He was very complimentary."

KURT RUSSELL'S COMMENTS — which follow similar pro-libertarian statements from Clint Eastwood, TV star John Larroquette, and *20/20* correspondent Hugh Downs — were greeted with delight by the Libertarian Party.

"Increasingly, the road to liberty seems to lead through Hollywood," said the party's national director, Perry Willis. "The more celebrities who voice support for libertarianism, the easier our job becomes. Yes, libertarian ideas are popular — but more celebrity endorsements sure can't hurt."

Russell, 46, has been an actor for 35 years. After becoming a child star in such Disney classics as *The Computer Wore Tennis Shoes*, he grew up to star in a wide range of action classics, dramas, and comedies. Highlights of his career include *Silkwood* (with Meryl Streep), *Tango and Cash* (with Sylvester Stallone), and *Backdraft* (with Robert DiNiro).

Russell's three biggest motion picture hits — *Tombstone*, *Stargate*, and *Executive Decision* — grossed a total of \$200 million in the United States. And his latest movie, *Breakdown*, opened at the top of the box office chart in May.

Ohio Libertarians play major role in beating stadium tax measure

Libertarians in Ohio helped save taxpayers \$192 million this month — thanks to their starring role in a battle against a new stadium tax.

On May 6th, voters in Franklin County rejected a proposed one-half percent sales tax increase — a vote which was hailed by Libertarians as a victory against "corporate welfare" and as a symbol of the LP's growing clout.

"Had it not been for the Libertarian Party, big-government politicians would have met with little opposition," said LP member Dena Bruedigam.

Supporters of the new tax — which would have boosted the county sales tax to 6.25% and raised \$192 million over three years — wanted the revenue to build a 20,000-seat arena and a 30,000-seat stadium in Columbus, Ohio.

But they hadn't counted on opposition from Libertarians, who helped form a group called Voters Against Stadium Taxes (VAST), which posted yard signs, gave speeches, and distributed literature against the stadium tax.

Franklin County voters apparently paid attention — despite an extensive and expensive pro-tax lobbying campaign by local politicians, media, and sports teams — and voted 56% to 44% against the tax increase.

Florida Libertarian wins \$25,000 in Orlando free speech lawsuit

A Libertarian Party member has won a \$25,000 settlement against the city of Orlando, Florida, for violating his First Amendment rights.

Hal Noyes accepted the settlement on May 1st — two months after filing a lawsuit against the city, in which he charged that his arrest in 1995 for distributing Libertarian leaflets in a public park was unconstitutional.

"This is one small triumph for the First Amendment," said Florida LP Chairman Nick Dunbar. "This should be a lesson to authorities who try to violate individuals' rights."

Noyes' ordeal began in September 1995 when he was peacefully handing out "Operation Safe Streets" literature in Orlando's Lake Eola Park. To his surprise, he was charged with trespassing, handcuffed, and taken to the Orange County Jail after a policeman told him that the public park was "private property owned by the city of Orlando."

In March 1997, Noyes filed a lawsuit federal court — a move which was applauded by the *Orlando Sentinel*, which wrote: "[Noyes] wants to send the city a clear message. The message should be this: Read the U.S. Constitution."

Libertarians aim to boost influence

By Steven Graham
Special to The Denver Post

Colorado Libertarians, meeting in Estes Park this weekend, elected a board of directors and discussed ways to run more candidates for offices in the state.

The Libertarian Party, founded in Colorado 25 years ago, is the nation's largest "third party," but its membership pales in comparison to the Democratic and Republican parties.

Colorado has only 2,600 registered Libertarians, said party spokesman Larry Hoffenberg.

The party platform calls for removal of most government programs in favor of letting individ-

Nation's 'third party' elects board of directors, puts together strategy

uals and the free market provide services for the people.

Sandra Johnson of Fort Garland was re-elected Sunday morning to a second one-year term as state party chairwoman.

"The convention was a huge success," Johnson said in a press release after the convention.

"We're looking forward to taking a much more visible role in Colorado politics."

Johnson handily beat out Ron Bain of Boulder, who publishes the state party's monthly news-

letter, Colorado Liberty.

A third unsuccessful candidate, Nathan Schooner, a 21-year-old student at the University of Colorado at Boulder, has been shaking up Boulder politics by challenging the age requirement of 25 for election to city council.

Schooner was disappointed he received only 4 percent of the vote, but said the convention was successful.

"We decided to work together and work out our own differences before we form a united front,"

Schooner said.

Other state party directors elected at the meeting included Doug Anderson of Denver, in his third year as campaigns director; Dan Cochran of Loveland as publications director; and former congressional candidate W. Earl Allen as publications director.

The party also raised \$5,000 donated by the 69 members at the convention.

This money will be used in a new effort to attract more membership and hire petitioners to place more candidates on local and state ballots.

Libertarians to protest with fake millions

By Cheryl Dore
Staff Writer

DOYLESTOWN - Members of the Bucks County Libertarian Committee will be handing out million dollar bills Tuesday night.

Unfortunately, it's not the kind of money you can take to the bank.

As hundreds of last-minute tax filers rush to the Doylestown post office to mail their returns before

the midnight deadline, committee members will stage their annual protest against the income tax, scheduled between 7 and 9 p.m.

They'll be handing out fake money as a reminder of all that the government takes and spends.

"The main reason we do it," said Richard J. Piotrowski, "is just to create awareness... (inform people) just how much money the federal government really is spending."

"In the time it takes us to hand someone a million dollars, the federal government spends a million," he said.

The federal income tax funds about one-third of the government's \$1.7 trillion budget, a budget that he and fellow Libertarians believe is too high.

It's an example, he said, of how big the federal government has gotten over the years.

And reducing the size of the federal government by at least one-third is a goal of the Libertarian party.

"Every way you look at it, the federal government is too big," said Piotrowski. "When people talk about the balanced budget, you could create a balanced budget by just going back to the budget we had about five years ago... Just from the increases we've had every

single year, it just keeps going up and up..."

Arlan Diefenderfer, chairman of the Bucks County Libertarian Committee, calls the income tax "intrusive."

"It's one thing that's dear to our platform," he said. "We feel special interest groups should have no access to our private property."

▲ (TOP) *The Denver Post*, Denver, Colorado, April 21, 1997

▲ (BOTTOM) *The Intelligencer*, Doylestown, Pennsylvania, April 11, 1997

▼ *The Birmingham News*, Birmingham, Alabama, April 16, 1997

Libertarian says nation shackled by laws



Harry Browne
Says government is too complex

By Tom Gordon
News staff writer

Government has made such a mess of things that people need more and more lawyers to straighten it out.

That's the perspective of Harry Browne, the investment adviser and 1996 Libertarian Party presidential candidate, who spoke Tuesday at the Federalist Forum at Samford University's Cumberland School of Law.

His topic was "Are There Too Many Laws or Too Many Lawyers?" His answer was that thanks to government, there are too many of the former, so people need a lot more of the latter.

"We probably don't have enough lawyers to deal with all the complexities that government has created," said the 63-year-old Browne, who was born in New York, grew up in Los Angeles and now lives in the Nashville area.

In Browne's view, the law governing society should revolve around two basic principles: "Do whatever you agree to do," and "don't intrude on someone's person or

property without permission."

When government attempts to go beyond those basics, it only worsens the problems it is seeking to address, Browne said.

The federal war on drugs, which broke out in the 1960s, has been "unwinnable" from the start, just like prohibition was in the 1920s, he said.

The anti-drug effort has had some of the same, insidious side effects as Prohibition, like gang turf wars and drive-by shootings of innocents. At the same time, he said, such an effort diverts resources needed to combat real crimes such as mugging, theft and fraud and thus diminishes respect for the law.

In its attempts to regulate drug use, gambling or other "victimless crimes," government is trying to impose a moral code "on people that people are not willing to accept and they will do everything in their power to circumvent it," Browne said.

"Any war being waged against victimless crimes is bound to be unsuccessful and bound to produce unintended consequences."

Libertarians seek more central role in political game

By Coleman Cornelius
Special to The Denver Post

Colorado's Libertarians want to move their party out of its role as gadfly and into a position to more actively shape both state and national politics.

That means boosting the ranks of the Libertarian Party in the state in which it was founded 25 years ago, and running more candidates for elected office in Colorado.

How to accomplish those goals will be the focus of the state's Libertarian Party convention today through Sunday at the Stanley Hotel in Estes Park. Party members also will vote on statewide officers.

"It's great to get together to talk about philosophy and economics and political theory, but you have to get real to change how things are done," said Sandra Johnson of Fort Garland, chairwoman of the state party.

Johnson, who hopes to be re-elected to her post at this weekend's gathering, is among many Libertarians who think attracting new members is a key to influencing public policy. With numbers and money comes the power to make change, she said.

A tenth of 1 percent

The Libertarian Party is the country's largest third party, though its voting bloc pales next to the Democratic and Republican parties. In Colorado, Libertarians make up only about a tenth of 1 percent of registered voters, said Larry Hoffenberg, the party's state public information director.

There are about 163,000 registered Libertarians in the United States, 2,600 of them in Colorado, Hoffenberg said.

Even so, Libertarians believe their party is growing and that their motto of "limited government, individual liberty and personal responsibility" appeals to an increasing number of voters.

David Nolan, a former Westminister resident who now lives in California, founded the Libertarian Party 25 years ago.

The party's basic tenet is to do away with most governmental programs and to let individuals and the free market provide for the nation and its citizens.

Asked how Libertarians differ from Republicans and Democrats philosophically, Johnson explained: "The Democrats want to take your money, but let you run your own life. The Republicans would like to let you keep some of your money, but tell you how to run your life."

"The Libertarians want you to keep your money and let you live your life the way you choose."

The latter philosophy has resulted in a political platform they acknowledge may seem extreme to hard-liners in the other parties — yet Libertarians said their political beliefs have influenced public debate.

Tenets are focus of debate

For instance, the Libertarian Party long has pushed for abolishing the Internal Revenue Service and legalized use of marijuana for medical purposes. Both ideas have been the focus of recent political debate, and measures legalizing marijuana passed in Arizona and California.

Party officials defined Libertarian positions on other major issues:

■ Libertarians believe definitions of crime should be limited only to those acts that harm others. Drug use and prostitution, which Libertarians call "victimless crimes," would be legalized.

■ Public education would be abolished. Libertarians believe education would be better and cheaper and offer more choice if privatized.

■ Welfare, too, would be abolished. Libertarians believe U.S. entitlement programs have spawned more welfare dependents who would be better off if forced to provide for themselves.

The Democratic and Republican parties haven't fully embraced such beliefs, but shades of the Libertarian platform marked 1996 elections on the state and national levels, Hoffenberg said.

Pa. Libertarians told health care system is in ruins

■ Don't let government take over the industry, Dr. Lois Copeland says at convention in Allentown.

By BOB WITTMAN
Of The Morning Call

America's health care system is falling apart. People are losing their freedom of choice in selecting doctors and hospitals. Costs are up. Access is down. A growing number of people are reaching the conclusion that the system no longer works.

But Dr. Lois Copeland said Americans must resist letting the government take over the health care industry.

A member of the board of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons, Copeland believes it is government intrusion that, step by step, has turned the nation's health care from the best in the world to one that has strayed far from its roots.

"No longer is the good of the patient central to the health care system," said Copeland.

Copeland's message was one of the topics members of the Pennsylvania Libertarian Party considered during their annual state convention at the Allentown Hilton this weekend.

Other speakers included Candace Allen, a grants writer for the University of Southern Colorado at Pueblo, who talked about the need to separate school and state, and Jacob "Bumper" Hornberger, the keynote speaker last July at the Libertarian Party's 1996 presidential nominating convention in Washington, D.C.

About 120 people attended the three-day event, which will conclude after a breakfast speech this

morning by Doug Bandow, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, whose talk, "The Politics of Envy" is taken from his book with the same title.

Tim Moir, a computer programmer from Philadelphia and the party's state secretary, was elected state chairman during the convention. Moir succeeds Ken Sturzenacker of North Catasauqua.

John Famularo of Philadelphia was re-elected state treasurer, and Tony Shepps of Collegeville was elected state secretary. Howard Bloom of Drexel Hill, Delaware County, was elected vice chairman for eastern Pennsylvania, and Chuck Gilch Jr. of Wexford, Allegheny County, was elected vice chairman for the western part of the state.

Copeland, a private practice physician from Hillsdale, N.J., whom Sturzenacker described as one of the nation's most outspoken opponents of socialized medicine, outlined the history of government involvement in health care beginning with the wage controls of World War II.

But as the employer-financed third-party payer system developed, it left out the elderly and the poor, according to Copeland. Lyndon Johnson tried to address those voids after he became president, creating Medicare and Medicaid.

But the expense of health care entitlements caused costs to be shifted to the private sector, Copeland said. Employers found their health insurance bills growing out of control and turned to managed care programs to save money.

Discontent with managed care is so widespread, however, the nation is in danger of embracing the total government takeover of the health care industry, Copeland said.

Libertarians poke fun at tax system

By Lee Colony
Wyoming Tribune-Eagle

Some people wait until the last minute to file their taxes.

Some people file early and wait for their returns.

Local Libertarians just wait for the tax hog.

Tax hog?

That's right, the tax hog, which is to taxes what the groundhog is to spring. Libertarians call the tax hog a harbinger — if it had cast no shadow Tuesday the federal govern-

ment would have seen four years of nondeficit spending.

But, despite its promise to harbingering, the tax hog never showed at Holliday Park Tuesday, the last day for filing federal income tax returns.

It did, however, send Libertarians \$1 million in fake money, an IOU for a Social Security check and some pork for Cheyenne that turned out to be a can of beans.

"In all seriousness, though, government has grown too large and is well beyond what the founders ever thought it would be," says Libertarian Party member Kevin Burt. "Our taxes are put into a million special interests that cost a great deal of money. The average citizen is now taxed about 40 percent to feed the tax hog."

▲ (ABOVE) *The Denver Post*, Denver, Colorado, April 18, 1997

▲ (RIGHT) *The Morning Call*, Allentown, Pennsylvania, April 6, 1997

▶ *The Wyoming Tribune-Eagle*, Cheyenne, Wyoming, April 16, 1997

Libertarian Party appoints Casperite new state chairman

By Lee Colony
Wyoming Tribune-Eagle

Libertarians voted in Steve Richardson of Casper as the chairman of their party on Saturday.

Richardson, a Casper business executive, replaces Dennis Brossman of Lander as chairman. Brossman, presented with the party's first Thomas Paine award for his service to the party, did not seek another term.

Libertarians also voted Rod Heil of Laramie as vice-chairman, Rhonda McCune of Cheyenne as

treasurer and Kevin Burt of Cheyenne as secretary.

"Liberty is what makes Wyoming worth living - without it, we may as well be sheep," Richardson said in his acceptance speech. "...I hope our vigilance will help the people who make this state so great remember that government is force."

Richardson's election marks the 16th year Libertarians have voted in a state chairman.

Burt said the contested election - the first contested election for many years - marks renewed in-

terest in Libertarian Party ideals.

"The election being contested shows a sign of vitality," said Burt, "and we have different viewpoints in the party. We contend we truly are the big tent of political parties, we have a wide variety of viewpoints."

The Libertarian Party fielded candidates in several state and federal offices last year but did not obtain any of those posts. Most notable locally was Craig McCune's unsuccessful bid to unseat Rep. John Hanes, R-42/Cheyenne.

Libertarian wants education in private sector

By Lee Colony
Wyoming Tribune-Eagle

The state should remove itself from its obligation to provide for uniform education and allow the free market to provide education, a state Libertarian official says.

Steve Richardson, chairman of the Wyoming Libertarian Party, calls the entire debate on education reform "misguided" and says the answer lies in changing the state's constitution.

Richardson suggests that lawmakers "overstepped" their authority by making it the state's business to provide for a complete and uniform system of public instruction.

As a result, the debate being waged over education reform and a Wyoming Supreme Court decision that drives it could have been avoided.

"I'm not arguing with the Supreme Court decision, the problem is that legislators are all too willing to increase taxes and blame it on the Supreme Court bench," says Richardson. "All the (justices) did was to point out the inconsistencies between the constitution and what we are doing, but, as usual, legislators are opting for big government and more centralized power, bringing more to Cheyenne."

Richardson says changing the

state's constitution and allowing the private market to provide schooling presents a better option for lawmakers.

Government programs have fallen far short of expectations, he adds, so why not allow the private sector - which has proven its efficiency - educate children?

"The government has not succeeded in anything it has provided," says Richardson. "The free market is capable of taking care of this demand."

"What literacy we have today has been achieved in spite of our government's interference with learning."

Richardson says public educa-

tion is one the least efficient area of government expenditures.

He also notes that education is an area government should remain clear of.

"We agree that education should remain a top priority for all Americans," says Richardson. "In fact, we value education so much that we do not dare entrust it to politicians. We believe separation of school and state is at least as important as separation of church and state."

Richardson challenged Wyoming legislators to amend the constitution or wipe out all reference to public education or public instruction.

▲ (TOP) *The Wyoming Tribune-Eagle*
Cheyenne, Wyoming
March 18, 1997

▲ (BOTTOM) *The Wyoming Tribune-Eagle*
Cheyenne, Wyoming
April 11, 1997

► *The Evansville Courier*
Evansville, Indiana
April 16, 1997

Libertarians protest tax policy

By ALAN JULIAN
Courier staff writer

Members of the local Libertarian Party used the April 15 federal income tax deadline to tee off on one of their favorite issues - high taxes.

Libertarians showed up at the county assessor's office Tuesday to complain about a new crackdown on property tax exemptions for Vanderburgh County's churches and nonprofit organizations.

They also hung out at the Downtown Post Office to talk to last-minute income tax filers.

"Part of our goal is to reduce taxes and simplify tax laws," said Dean Hodgkins, a spokesman for the Libertarians.

The assessor's office is required to review property tax exemptions for churches and all other nonprofits every four years, and Assessor Cheryl Mus-

grave has been doing that with a little too much enthusiasm this year, as far as Libertarians are concerned.

Ms. Musgrave and other members of the County Board of Review have voted to deny tax exemptions for several church properties that are being used for purposes other than those that qualify for exemptions under state law.

For example, parking lots at a church and temple were denied tax exemptions because they were being leased out to a third party.

The board also has denied exemptions for those organizations that failed to meet the May 15 deadline for filing for an exemption.

Actually, Ms. Musgrave said those who missed the deadline were given until June 15 to file, and some still missed the deadline.

The Libertarian Party, which has ballot status in most states including In-

diana, lists unfair taxation as one of its biggest issues.

"It is amazing that the county government would choose to attack churches, especially considering the pathetically small amount of revenue they expect to extract," said Sara Cotham, chairwoman of the local Libertarian Party.

Ms. Cotham said the action could force some religious organizations out of business. She and Hodgkins delivered petitions with more than 100 signatures asking Ms. Musgrave to extend the filing deadline for those nonprofits who missed it.

Ms. Musgrave says she has empathy for the nonprofit organizations, but she said state law is very clear about the filing deadline and other qualifications for exemptions.

"They (Libertarians) are asking me to break the law, and I can't do that," Ms. Musgrave said.