

LIBERTY PLEDGE

newsletter

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MAY 2002

CAMPAIGN 2002...

Ed Thompson visits DC for networking, media

In a whirlwind tour of Washington, DC, Wisconsin gubernatorial candidate Ed Thompson met with libertarian policy experts, was interviewed by *USA Today*, and swapped bon mots with his brother, HHS head Tommy Thompson.

Thompson visited the nation's capital April 30-May 2 to network, raise funds, and attend a media training class.

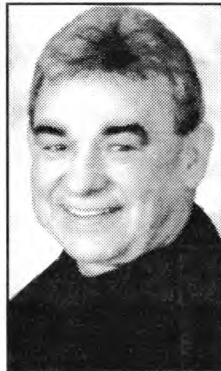
However, the comedic highlight was an exchange with his brother Tommy, the secretary of Health and Human Services.

Following a National Press Club speech by Tommy on April 30, Thompson submitted a question that was read aloud for C-SPAN viewers and NPR listeners.

"Tommy, it is true that you offered me for stem cell research?"
"No," his brother shot back. "But it's a good idea."

Thompson, who is garnering 7%-10% in polls in the Wisconsin governor's race, also spoke with reporters from the *Washington Post*, *National Review*, *Insight* magazine, and *USA Today*, and was interviewed on the syndicated Blanka Cullum radio show.

Thompson also met with representatives of NORML, visited the LP national office, conducted discussions with policy experts at the Cato Institute, and attended an Americans for Tax Reform meeting.



■ Ed Thompson:
Stem cell research?

3 states set candidate records

Three more state Libertarian Party affiliates – North Carolina, Alabama, and Missouri – have set new candidate records.

■ **North Carolina:** The state party nominated 58 candidates for office at its annual state convention held May 4-5 in Durham – but it doesn't plan to stop there. "We hope to reach our goal of 100 [candidates] by July 1," said State Chair Barbara Howe.

■ **Missouri:** The party had 52 candidates confirmed by the filing deadline on March 26, said Greg Tlapek, the party's executive director. The party's previous record was 50 candidates, set in 1996.

■ **Alabama:** At its convention on April 14, the Alabama LP nominated 61 candidates, said State Chair Mark Bodenhausen. Libertarians collected 63,000 signatures in 2000 to qualify for ballot status.

LOCAL POLITICAL ACTION...

Kentucky Libertarians help end emission tests

After a 16-year campaign, Kentucky Libertarians have helped end a "fraudulent and inefficient" vehicle emissions testing program in Jefferson County.

On April 8, Governor Paul Patton signed HB 618, which will eliminate the vehicle emissions test (VET) effective November 1, 2003.

In doing so, the governor ended a program that, instead of improving the environment, simply inconvenienced citizens and was "practically guaranteeing dirtier air," said Libertarian George Baumler, a member of the STOP THE VET group which led the fight.

"The truth [has finally become] known about the counterproductive and fraudulent nature of the program," he said.

HB 618 passed the Kentucky General Assembly on a 89-7 vote on March 12, and passed the State Senate on a 26-12 vote on March 26.

The votes – and the governor's signature on the bill – marked the conclusion of a political battle that began in 1986, just two years after the VET was implemented in Jefferson County.

The program required all privately owned cars and trucks to undergo an annual emissions test at local VET centers. For participating in the program, Jefferson County and the state of Kentucky became eligible for as much as \$1.7 billion in annual federal highway subsidies.

However, Libertarians said the VET did little to improve air quality.

"[Since 1984], air quality has continued to improve each year," said Baumler. "But this improvement in air quality came mainly from improved onboard emissions control equipment on newer cars and trucks [and] cleaner burning fuels – not from having over 4 million cars and light trucks [visit] their local VET center each year."

Since 95% of cars and trucks passed the VET, the test could not "be responsible for removing the tons of pollutants that VET proponents claimed," he said.

To combat the VET, Jefferson County Libertarians joined the fledgling STOP THE VET group.

Over the years, STOP THE VET lobbied the legislature, held forums, distributed handbills door to door, and wrote letters to the editor. Libertarians assisted with the efforts, and on March 14, the Jefferson County LP conducted a public meeting with a representative of the Jefferson County Air Pollution Control District to publicize the issue.

With Governor Patton's signature on HB 618, the group finally claimed victory. The VET will terminate in late 2003, when the state's contract with the company operating the program expires.

Shenanigans by 2 parties a boon to Libertarians

LIBERTARIANS OTHER VOICES, OTHER CHOICES

The Republicans endorse a candidate for lieutenant governor who is rejected by their candidate for governor and nominate someone for secretary of state who party officials agree is a complete joke.

The Democrats feature a candidate whose battle to get tax dollars for his gubernatorial campaign means the state may have to auction off assets — even though most believe he stands absolutely no chance of winning.

And we don't take the Libertarians seriously?

Until now, the Libertarians have been viewed pretty much the same way as the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals: organized, dedicated, well intentioned but a little, to put it politely, odd.

But this year, as the two major parties promise to continue to embarrass themselves, we in the vast media conspiracy to control the political process are running out of reasons to ignore the Libertarians.

For one thing, it doesn't appear as though Carla Howell is going away. She ran for auditor and lost. She ran for Senate and lost. Now, she is running for governor and she will, factoring in the odds that an

asteroid will end civilization as we know it and postpone the election for a couple of decades, very likely lose.

But that doesn't mean she isn't at least as credible as the Democrats or Republicans. In Massachusetts, Howell has become the Libertarian brand, building name recognition with her "Small government is beautiful" mantra.

While the GOP standard bearer is still "defining" himself and the five Democrats follow the same script with only slight variations, at least Howell has her talking points down.

Mitt Romney? "He's a big-government, high-tax Republican politician. Everybody tries to pretend they are so-called outsiders when they are virtually the same."

MCAS? "It is the government's version of Trivial Pursuit ... figures and facts used to get more money ... while ignoring real education."

Welfare? "Hideously dysfunctional."

Clean Elections public financing of campaigns? "Welfare for politicians."

The Democrats and Republicans? "Dinosaurs." Which obviously makes Howell dinosaur food, but that doesn't appear to bother her in the least.

"I'll get elected when I get elected," she says. "Our priority is not winning. We are here to do the right thing."

One clear sign that the Libertarians — buoyed by the major party follies as well as Howell's stronger than expected showing in the 2000 Senate race — now believe they are connecting with voters is that they want status.

Howell, who for so long has hounded media outlets and others for a spot on the debate stage, now ironically uses the same argument to exclude others that was used against her in past campaigns.

"If they prove themselves, fine," she says, adding that only third-party candidates who can demonstrate "getting on the ballot, raising money, being organized" should get a spot at major campaign debates.

"The Libertarians," she says, "have earned it." Some 308,000 voters cast ballots for Howell for Senate, but much of that can be attributed to anti-Ted Kennedy sentiment that is a political constant.

Their ability to get a referendum to repeal the income tax on the November ballot speaks well of their growing organization, however.

Still, the Libertarians have some significant obstacles to winning broad appeal.

They are too closely linked to the pro-gun lobby that is a turnoff to some less conservative voters.

They sometimes field laughable candidates, although at least the nudists among their ranks have nothing to hide.

Their tax-cutting, small-government approach raises questions about service cuts, especially to inner-city kids and the elderly, and their contention that charities and close-knit families can fill that void is dubious.

Nationally, their small government message sometimes reads like an anti-government message, and the cuts Libertarians support include curtailed military spending, a sensitive area given the war on terrorism.

In Massachusetts, Howell vows that, as governor, she would arm all citizens and protect the borders from "an invasion from New Hampshire." She was joking. I think.

It was big news when 11 Libertarian Party candidates opened campaign accounts to run for state House seats in South Florida this fall. If they qualify in July, their presence on the Nov. 5 ballot should be welcomed, not feared or resented. Here's why:

First, they can give all voters a broader choice of candidates, political parties, leadership styles, tax and spending priorities and public policies.

Win or lose, just by being in the race, they can raise important issues that might otherwise not be brought up for discussion. Historically, many such issues later became official policy.

They can show that all political wisdom does not necessarily rest with only Republicans or Democrats.

And they can invigorate democracy, stimulating voter turnout by awakening a "sleeping giant." That is the only expanding part of Florida's electorate, the independent and minor-party voters.

For many years, harsh, unfair and discriminatory ballot-access laws blocked "outsiders" from qualifying. But in 1998, Florida voted them equal treatment.

The outsiders' step up comes at a time when both major parties are seeing their share of Florida voters decline. Of every 100 Florida voters today, 18 are registered outside the two-party system, up from nine in 1995. Today, 43 are Democrats, down from 49. And 39 are Republicans, down from 42.

Conventional wisdom says "outsiders" can't win. Tell that to Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura, who won as a Reform Party member and is now an independent. Or tell it to independent U.S. Reps. Bernard Sanders of Vermont and Virgil Goode of Virginia.

Libertarians probably have the best chance to become a serious and effective alternative party. They have the third largest number of members, have run thousands of candidates and have many "mainstream" populist views about limited government, lower taxes, open markets and personal freedom.

Last year, 312 Libertarians ran for public office. The party lists 24 members holding public office in Florida, including a Coconut Grove village councilman and various appointees to local city and county advisory boards.

Libertarians have come a long way to move from the fringe of politics closer to the mainstream, but they still have a long way to go. Now it looks like South Floridians will get the chance to see whether the Libertarian Party label translates into qualified, competent, articulate candidates who can win local elections.



Joe SCIACCA

▲ The Boston Herald • Boston, Massachusetts • April 8, 2002
▼ The South Florida Sun-Sentinel • Ft. Lauderdale, Florida • April 15, 2002

Libertarians pick their candidates

BY STAFF WRITER
DONNA JACKEL

They oppose tough drug laws and support the legalization of marijuana. They would like to see the elimination of income tax and the proliferation of charter schools.



Jeffrey

And this weekend, they — about 60 members of the Libertarian

Party of New York — gathered at the Sheraton Four Points Hotel to nominate their candidates for statewide office.

Scott Jeffrey, a 33-year-old director of Internet radio at MTV in Manhattan, won the gubernatorial nomination. It's his third time running for public office.

He ran unsuccessfully for a seat in the U.S. Congress two years ago, and for Manhattan borough president last year.

Jeffrey said he wants to be governor to empower youth and to provide them with a voice in politics. "There are a lot of issues important to the lives of young people that aren't being addressed by politicians," he said, noting that in New York City there are more than 60,000 marijuana arrests annually.

If elected, Jeffrey said he would repeal the 21-plus drinking age and a law barring the sale of guns to those 20 and under.

Unlike some Libertarians, Jeffrey isn't calling for the privatization of all public schools. But he does believe high school students should be able to choose which public schools they attend.

And he doesn't hesitate to add

that "private education has always been shown to be superior and more cost-effective."

He also supports legally recognizing same-sex marriages.

To get on the ballot, Jeffrey must collect 25,000 signatures by the end of August.

Gubernatorial hopefuls Andrew Cuomo and H. Carl McCall are competing for the Democratic nod and will then face Republican Gov. George Pataki.

Jeffrey's running mate is Jay Greco, a Brooklyn lawyer. James Eisert, of Manhattan, a businessman, was nominated by the Libertarian Party of New York for comptroller; and Daniel Conti, a Nassau County lawyer, was nominated for state attorney general.

The weekend was "also a chance to meet Libertarians from all over the state and to elect a new slate of officers,"

said Albert Dedicke of Mt. Morris, Livingston County, the newly elected state party chairman.

Ending the Rockefeller drug laws and legalizing marijuana are key issues for the party: "We have limited law enforcement resources, and they have to be allocated more properly to chase the criminals, terrorists and rapists," said Jak Karako of Manhattan, who is the state vice chair of the party.

And Dedicke said Libertarians "believe you have the right to do whatever you want, as long as you don't interfere with the rights of other people to do what they want." They also are strong believers in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, he added.

Instead of taxes, party members would prefer user fees, where they could pay only for those services they support. □

Libertarians organize for election

COEUR D'ALENE — The Kootenai County Libertarian party is looking for a few good candidates.

Monday, Idaho Libertarians from three counties met to lay the foundations of a fully functional party chapter in Kootenai County.

"The impetus to really get

PARTY continued from C1

established started with the overturn of term limits," said Thomas Macy, a member of the ad hoc Libertarian party committee. "It very much motivated people to do something."

Though no officials have been elected for the fledgling organization, Macy said the group found "at least half a dozen" members who planned to file for county and state offices by Friday.

"We're currently looking for

someone who will run in the governor's race too," Macy said.

Macy anticipates this local party chapter will begin having monthly meetings prior to the upcoming primary elections and will be fully functional well in advance of the November elections.

"Fighting an establishment is an uphill battle," Macy said. "This might be the point in history where disenfranchised voters can get something accomplished."

Anyone interested in running for any office should contact Mark Bechtold at 676-8485.

▲ *The Rochester Democrat & Chronicle*
• Rochester, New York
• April 15, 2002

◀ *The Coeur D'Alene Press* • Coeur D'Alene, Idaho • April 3, 2002

▼ *The Wilmington Morning Star* • Wilmington, North Carolina • April 11, 2002

County Libertarian candidates nominated

By Todd Volkstorf
Staff Writer

It was democracy in action at the Wednesday night New Hanover County Libertarian Party Convention where candidates were nominated for upcoming elections and future strategies were hashed out.

Because of N.C. law, the party was forced to elect its candidates at the convention rather than through the primary system because it did not garner 10 percent of the popular vote during the 2000 presidential election.

John Evans was nominated to represent the party in the next New Hanover County Commis-

sioners' race.

Robert Smith was nominated to run in N.C. House District 15. His platform, he said, is based on "educational freedom," and "drug freedom." He said all forms of government could save loads of money by decriminalizing drugs because the money used to enforce those laws and house those convicted of drug offenses could be used more effectively elsewhere.

Stephen Shepherd was nominated to run for the N.C. House District 18. His platform, he said, is based on educational freedom.

"There should be a 30 percent reduction in all educators' pay," he said, calling the public school

Because of N.C. law, the party was forced to elect its candidates at the convention.

system a "great white elephant." He is in favor of completely privatizing education.

"The problem is the government is running a propaganda and intimidation campaign," which, he said, keeps debate about the issue suppressed.

One political strategy the party included in its discussions was the county and city plans to consolidate.

Libertarian Kip Adams said there's a movement afoot to drastically reduce the power of the sheriff. That, Mr. Adams said, would set a dangerous precedent.

He noted that a sheriff is elected by the people and therefore answers to the people, while a police chief is appointed by the City Council and technically only has to answer to it.

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High number of Libertarians will run in Idaho

\$1,000 was given by son of term limits backer

By Wayne Hoffman
The Idaho Statesman

The New York City son of U.S. Term Limits' president Howard Rich helped underwrite the Libertarian Party's entry of dozens of candidates into this year's elections.

Dan Rich, who owns a post-production recording studio in New York, said Monday he gave \$1,000 to the Libertarians, which was used in part to finance the

What are Libertarians?

Libertarians believe in a government that favors civil liberties and personal freedoms rather than government intervention. Some points of the party's platform:

► The war on drugs has done little to combat crime. It instead draws po-

lice resources away from where they are needed, allowing violent criminals to go free.

► The poor aren't being helped by government welfare programs. Government should let private charities and organizations help the needy.

► Allowing the private sector to operate without government intervention

will result in lower taxes.

► Parents should have access to a free market education system in which they can choose the best schools for their children. The party also believes in the elimination of the U.S. Department of Education.

► Medicare and Medicaid have been failures under federal control and should be privatized.

third party's 11th hour registration of state and local candidates Friday.

It's the first connection between out-of-state term limits supporters and this sea-

son's elections. Legislators complained bitterly about the involvement of out-of-state money in the Idaho term limits movement before it voted last winter to

repeal the law and to overrule Gov. Dirk Kempthorne's veto of the repeal.

Term limits groups had already promised to be a financial force as Idahoans go

to the polls, and longtime political observers suspected some kind of term limits involvement in what appears to be the biggest third party filing of candidates in the state's history. More than 40 Libertarian candidates have filed for state constitutional and legislative offices, and an unknown number of Libertarians have filed for county jobs.

There are so many Libertarian candidates, there will even be primaries in which Libertarians will compete for their party's nomination.

Dan Rich acknowledged the Legislature's repeal of the 1994 voter-approved term limits law "definitely sparked my interest" in this year's contests hundreds of miles away from his home.

"With the term limits being repealed there, it seemed that would be a good place to make a difference," said Rich, who said he leans toward the Libertarian ideology.

▲ The Idaho Statesman • Boise, Idaho • April 9, 2002

Libertarian will seek state House seat

By Ed Sealover
The Gazette

Steve Gresh, a Colorado Springs independent systems consultant, said Monday he is running as a Libertarian for Rep. Lynn Hefley's House District 20 seat.

Hefley, a Republican, is the only other candidate who has registered.

Gresh hopes to eliminate what he sees as government interference in business, education and matters of self-de-



Steve Gresh will challenge Republican State Rep. Lynn Hefley in House District 20.

fense. He proposes to do this by eliminating many agencies that regulate businesses, offering vouchers and tax credits to put children in private

schools and removing restrictions on acquiring or owning guns.

Gresh, 46, said he hopes to be more prudent with taxpayers' money than he said Hefley has been. He cited Hefley's support for expanding the earned-income tax credit and creating a state tourism office as gaffs.

"Even though Republicans claim to be for being fiscally responsible, it's clear to me that they are not," Gresh said.

"In my opinion, there's so

little difference between Lynn Hefley . . . and the Democrats, voters have little choice."

Gresh has served as media and fund-raising director for the El Paso County Libertarian Party.

He ran last year for the Academy District 20 school board, garnering 16 percent of the vote and finishing sixth out of six candidates.

He also campaigned unsuccessfully against District 20 bond initiatives in 1999 and 2001.

◀ The Gazette
• Colorado Springs, CO
• April 9, 2002

Libertarians elect Biddeford man as new chairman

● Fred Staples, a former congressional candidate, pledges to make the party a political force in Maine.

By TED COHEN
Staff Writer

SACO — The Libertarian Party of Maine elected a former congressional candidate as its new chairman Saturday.

Fred Staples of Biddeford pledged to make the party a major political force in the state.

"We have 200 members now," Staples said. "I want to have 2,000 by the end of my term in 2004."

Staples succeeds Mark Cenci of Portland, a recent unsuccessful state Senate candidate who served four years as party chairman.

The party, which is beginning a new grass-roots effort to position candidates for local offices, held its

annual convention at the Holiday Inn.

If the party in the past has focused more on finding candidates for state and federal offices, it plans in the immediate future to do more organizing on the municipal level, Staples said.

"Once we get people serving on planning boards and things like them, then we can move up, expand from there," he said.

The Libertarians aren't currently recognized as a political party in Maine. Richard Eaton of Westbrook, a former state chairman, said he believes once the party's message is better known, it will become a force.

"We want government out of your wallet and out of your bedroom," Eaton said.

The convention invited Peter Cianchette, a GOP contender for the gubernatorial nomination in the June 11 state primary, as its luncheon speaker. Another Republican at the convention was former state Rep. Steven Joyce, R-Biddeford, who is running against U.S. Rep. Tom Allen,

D-Maine, this fall.

Allen two years ago defeated Staples and Republican Jane Amero to retain his House seat.

Staples said he considered running for governor, but bowed out after deciding that Cianchette's less-government-is-better approach satisfied his yearnings.

"Though he's not a Libertarian, he doesn't favor a lot of new initiatives that cost money," Staples said.

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◀ The Portland Press Herald
• Portland, Maine • April 14, 2002