

LIBERTY PLEDGE

newsletter

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Libertarian Leadership School set to debut in January 2006

Comprehensive training program will impact the success of Libertarian candidates

For many years, various circles within the Libertarian Party have been debating and brainstorming ways to move candidates and the party onto the national stage. They complain that candidates do not have the skills, training, or backing to be as successful as they could be—and moving the party forward requires a strong performance and presence in local and state elections.

Beginning January 1, 2006, the Libertarian Leadership School (LLS) seeks to provide answers for this perpetual problem by supporting candidates and their staff in ways that have never been done before.

The Libertarian Leadership School is an online course program in the later stages of development. It is set to debut just after the new year, and classes will begin January 30th. The school is comprised of thirteen classes, twelve of which will be ready in time for the course registration period. The school's classes can accommodate up to 2,100 people per year.

Each class runs for a period of six weeks, and registration is limited to 25 students. Participants in the class will need to complete weekly reading and writing assignments as well as timed quizzes that assess what they have learned. The courses are designed to be challenging so that candidates take away not only a wealth of information, but also the understanding and confidence to apply it. To provide more access to the instructor, class size will be limited to twenty-five students.

The coursework is broken down into three sub-groups: Affiliate Training, Candidate and Campaign Training, and Electives.

The instructors who have signed on to the Libertarian Leadership School are experts in their fields. Courses will be taught by fundraising experts, a FEC

consultant, and a wide range of media and other professionals who have a desire to impact the party's success.

The Libertarian Leadership School understands that not all participants in the program are equally computer saavy. With this in mind, the school is using Moodle—easy-to-use software that provides capabilities for class forums, live chat, journals, etc.

Comprehensive in its training and approach, the school will give participants the knowledge and confidence to either take the first step and run for office or improve their existing campaigns. The numbers of viable candidates will rise, and so will party presence.

Courses will cost fifty dollars per student per class, and a fundraising letter has been sent out. Additionally, interested individuals can go to LP.org to make a donation.

To view the progress of the Libertarian Leadership School, visit <http://www.lp.org/lls>.

The Libertarian Leadership school has the potential to train 2,100 students in 2006.

Fall Cleanup for the Pledge Program!

The party needs your help in making the most of each and every donation! The Pledge Program currently has approximately 350 lapsed credit card and bill-by-mail pledgers. Each month, staff time must be spent preparing mailings and making phone calls in an effort to reach these individuals.

While the process will always be ongoing, pledgers can do their part by checking their monthly statements and alerting the staff to any changes that may need to be made with regard to account information.

To update your information, contact Kelly Kohut to update your pledge. You can contact her by calling (202) 333-0008 ext. 221 or by e-mailing her at pledge@lp.org.

Fed up? Join the Libertarians

By **Bret Clevenger**, *The Northern Star*

Tom Delay and Lewis Libby, two high-ranking Republican officials, have been indicted.

Bill Frist and Karl Rove, two more high-ranking Republicans, are under investigation for serious crimes. According to a joint NBC/Wall Street Journal survey, President Bush's approval rating has reached an all-time low of 38 percent and only 33 percent of those surveyed believed the president was being honest with the American public.

On Wednesday, the Republican Party lost both gubernatorial races in which they competed. The Republican Party seems to be in disarray.

Not only is the party filled with strife, but it also seems to no longer stand for the ideals of many conservatives. Many people who once aligned themselves with the Republican Party are now finding it more and more difficult to do so.

Newt Gingrich was quoted in the Oct. 24 Boston Globe as saying, "To a real degree, the Republican Party has become a party of governance, not of reform."

Americans are starting to agree with Gingrich, and this is leaving them with a difficult question of where to turn.

Many conservatives, finding themselves alienated by the Republican leadership, have turned to third parties. In particular, many have turned to the Libertarian Party.

While still small, the Libertarian Party is slowly gaining speed. According to its official Web site, the Libertarian Party grew in membership by 7 percent from March 2004 to March 2005.

This may not seem like a lot, but when one considers the Libertarians had lost membership for the previous four years, it's clear to see the tide is turning.

Other third parties are gaining popularity as well. The Constitutional Party garnered 33 percent more votes in the 2004 Presidential election than in 2000.

So why is it important these third parties are gaining power? The answer is simple. A viable third party would force the two major parties to change.

As Brian Miller, secretary/treasurer of the Libertarians at Virginia Tech University, states: "In general, an active and viable third party of any kind would force the Republicans and Democrats to take firm positions as parties. It would also force them to focus on the American people rather than in-fighting and petty partisan bickering. Because instead of being the lesser of two evils then the populace would have a viable third option to turn to."

Miller went on to say: "specifically with the Libertarian Party, I can imagine the two major parties would be held to task primarily in regards to the Constitution. Both Democrats and Republicans have no problems with disregarding parts of the Constitution as it suits them, and a prominent Libertarian Party would force them to address these violations or it may change the course of their actions in the first place."

Maybe it's just me, but it seems like this is exactly what our country needs right now - a group with enough of a voice

to rattle the cages of the two major parties. A group that, while not the majority, has enough power that it must be acknowledged. The idea of a third party gaining this type of power may seem unreal to most Americans, but it isn't as abstract as one would think.

If a third party were to garner just 5 percent of the popular vote in the 2008 presidential election it would become eligible for partial public funding of its general election campaigns.

They don't have to win the presidency, or even win a single state, just 5 percent of the popular vote. That type of showing in the next presidential election would not only garner additional funds for future elections, but it would also get the Libertarian Party significant recognition.

We cannot expect the Libertarian Party, or any third party, to simply jump into the 2008 elections and garner that type of support.

The time to start working toward this goal is now - with mid-term elections approaching, and plenty of time left to start a grass-roots effort. There are plenty of reasons why the American government could use a viable third party, and there's plenty of Americans out there searching for a party that fits them better than the Republicans or Democrats.

For many, that party is the Libertarians. That may not be the answer for you, but now is the time to learn about these third parties.

Don't automatically align yourself with the Republicans or Democrats. Find a party that suits you, learn more about it, support it in the '06 mid-term elections and watch the snowball grow into significant change in '08.

Libertarian Victories in the 2005 elections

On Tuesday, November 8, the Libertarian Party scored important electoral victories in Iowa, Georgia, and Oregon.

In Davenport, Iowa, Libertarian Bill Lynn easily won a second term to the 5th Ward seat on the city council. Lynn made crime an important issue in his campaign. He stated that residents and businesses will continue to leave the city unless the city starts putting more police officers on the streets. He also advocates ways to reform city government such as implementing zero-based budgeting and creating a strategic budget plan.

Libertarian Jeff Edgens won a seat on the Irwinton City Council. His winning campaign strategy, that included door-to-door campaigning, targeted outreach to early voters and a well executed GOTV plan.

Libertarians in Oregon scored a victory against a government monopoly. Three elected Libertarian water commissioners: Richard Burke, Marc Delphine, and Charles Radley, were instrumental in getting a ballot measure passed that allows the city of Sherwood to disaffiliate with the Portland city government. The city of Sherwood will now get its water from a treatment plant on the Willamette River and no longer be subjected to the Portland water monopoly.

Third Party Watch interviews LP Chief of Staff Shane Cory

TPW: What first inspired you to become a Libertarian?

SC: I have always considered myself a political independent. I support candidates that best represent my views and, more importantly to me personally, stay true to their own beliefs.

The ongoing failure of the two-party system is due in part to Republicans and Democrats showing blind loyalty to their party first—in order to gain personal power or to maintain the power of their respective parties. I have found that Libertarians are loyal to their nation first. They make common sense decisions and take reasoned approaches to issues. They do not toe any particular party line in order to “fit in” or to not rock the boat. They are able to address each issue on its own merit while ignoring partisan groupthink.

There are many complex reasons why I chose to support the Libertarian Party. What drove me take a significant cut in income in order to work for this organization and what drives me to give generously each month to this organization is simple . . . our nation needs the LP. It is obvious that the two-party system is taking our nation down the wrong path. And, in recent years, we have seen the disastrous effects of one-party rule. Our country must have a viable third party in order to get back on a path to economic and individual prosperity. That party is the Libertarian Party.

TPW: Are you pleased with the Libertarian Party’s performance during the recent off-year elections?

SC: You ask an honest question and I’ll give you an honest answer. No, I’m not. There are a few stand-out candidates that did achieve victory and I congratulate them; however at this pace the LP will have a long road ahead. It’s up to the LNC and state parties to increase the pace and that’s what we are going to do by staying on mission.

We are not a think tank, debate society or book club—we are the nation’s third largest political party. Our main purpose is to provide Libertarian candidates with the tools they need to win.

The LNC has shown their commitment to this mission by passing the zero dues resolution. It’s up to the LNC staff to follow-through by developing the structure and programs that will give our candidates an advantage over their competitors. The Libertarian Leadership School, which I will address below, is one of many programs to come.

TPW: With the Green Party making strong gains in recent years (electing numerous and notable local officials, a state representative), do you feel that the Libertarian Party can still call itself the third largest party in America?

SC: Sorry, although I do own a Prius, I don’t follow the Green Party. I’ll stand by my statement above and we’ll prove it in the years to come.

TPW: Politically, what do you feel is the LP’s biggest accomplishment of the last year?

SC: We’ve had many great candidates rise up over the last year. Pat Dixon in Texas is a good example. The Oregon LP continues to take on and win ballot initiatives while the Indiana LP is becoming a strong political force in their state.

Our biggest overall success that will return political results in the future was the passing of zero dues. As I noted above, we will now be able to focus strongly on making gains in the political arena, instead of dedicating our time to increasing our membership numbers.

TPW: Are there any plans in the works to upgrade the LP’s website before the 2006 elections?

SC: Yes. We have already begun working on a redesign and the refocusing of LP.org. For 2006, we plan to dedicate a majority of the content to campaigns and candidates.

TPW: Finally, it seems that the party has been facing some serious financial difficulties recently... spending too much and raising too little. What actions have been taken to bring the numbers back into balance?

SC: Rumors of our demise have been greatly exaggerated. There are certain circles within the libertarian movement that take joy in hearing negative news about the party. Instead of getting the true story, they sometimes choose to assume the worst. Here are the facts:

Over the course of 2005, we have had only four months in which we were in the black. In March, we raised approximately \$185k from our annual report, but two of these months were mere break-evens.

In August, we began assessing our development department and making significant improvements to our calling, direct mail, and pledge programs. We also kept spending to an absolute minimum, trimming any fat (I even had the water cooler removed from the office to save the expense . . . and the staff reminds me of that decision daily). With our preliminary efforts, August was in the black but still a break-even month (one of the four for the year).

September was a very bad month for us as donations were down due to Katrina. Many non-profit organizations not directly involved in relief efforts took a hit. When the hurricane struck in late August, LNC staff went into crisis mode. We knew that this would affect donations and, additionally, we felt that the national LP should take a lead in providing ways for Libertarians to provide direct aid to evacuees. We worked long hours and weekends to accomplish both of our objectives. Although we did fall short of our average monthly income, the damage could have been much more severe. Also, with the help of Libertarians across the nation, we were able to help at least one community in Louisiana with direct assistance.

In October our efforts began to show and it was the second best month of the year. Total income was approximately \$159,000, about \$43k above our monthly average for the year. Our development department was directly responsible for raising about \$125k for the month while much of the rest was the result of unsolicited donations.

For November we are on par for another good month. We are slightly off October’s pace by \$2,000 but still plan to exceed our fundraising goal. If we continue to make improvements in our development department and continue to keep spending down, I may bring back the water cooler in time for the 2008 presidential elections.

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Bloggers arrested for exposing public corruption

Dr. Elsebeth Baumgartner and Bryan DuBois run a blog called **Erie Voices** that focuses on local issues in northern Ohio, especially those that are underreported by local newspapers. Many of their posts deal with judicial and governmental corruption in northern Ohio.

The bloggers were arrested in July on charges of intimidation, retaliation, and possession of criminal tools (a computer). Their trial began yesterday. The charges originated from a complaint made by retired visiting Judge Richard Markus, who alleges that Baumgartner and DuBois intimidated and threatened him in 2004 prior to a civil trial in which Baumgartner was the defendant, as reported by the North County Gazette.

The bloggers believe the indictments against them were for "publishing about judicial corruption." Daniel Kasaris, the Cuyahoga County assistant prosecutor who filed the charges against Baumgartner and DuBois, had been the subject of criticism on the Erie Voices blog. Baumgartner and DuBois accused Kasaris of submitting a forged indictment the day before a pre-trial hearing. More specifically, the bloggers claim on their site, Erie Voices, that the grand foreman's signature was forged, contains numerous misspellings and does not resemble other Cuyahoga County indictments.

Baumgartner was sent to Cuyahoga County jail, where she spent 10 days in solitary confinement until the presiding judge in the case, Judge Shirley Saffold reduced her bond from \$360,000 to \$25,000, as reported in the North County Gazette. The request for solitary confinement and the large bail bond was made by Daniel Kasaris. DuBois's bail was originally set at \$150,000 at the request of Kasaris but was later reduced. This unusually high bond amount was especially outrageous considering DuBois's lack of a criminal record and served in the Marines for eight years.

The Ohio Libertarian Party is helping defend Baumgartner and DuBois. Robert Butler, the Executive Director of the Ohio Libertarian Party, stated, "We are very concerned about the plight of Internet activists." Butler is looking to draw more attention to their case, noting the importance of protecting bloggers' rights. He added, "Where would we be without society's muckrakers? The Internet is a leveler. A single person can challenge a corrupt system if they have the freedom to speak online."

Libertarian Party national headquarters attempted to contact Daniel Kasaris' office for comment but are still waiting for a response.

Article appeared on LP.org on November 16, 2005

Welcome to the Liberty Pledge Club!

Albert E. Rackett	David Ameringer	Jeffrey Sansone	Rodney Threadgill
Aram Craanen	David G. Towell	Jessica Pater	Sam Holloman
Benjamin Puckett	David Smith	Jo Coleman	Samuel D. Spangler
Beryl Furner	David Waldvogel	John Gremban	Scott E. Henderson
Bob Brewer	Dennis Emigh	John Lamb	Scott Smith
Bolieslau Soloven	Don Cowles	John M. Kennel	Sean Hardesty
Brent R. Bemis	Don Dixon	Luis Chalmeta	Sergio G. D'Auria
Brian Schnell	Donald Miller	Mary E. Wright	Stephen Breault
Byron Nichols	Franz Halaschek-Wiener	Patrick Foy	Steve Marting
Carl I. Johnson	George Clary	Paul Davis	Terrence Kenny
Charles Bolanger	Grant O. Hansen	Paul Wendling	Theodore Boosalis
Charles W. Wilson	Greg K. Callaway	R W. Baruth	Tim Lowe
Chris Hayhurst	Guy Shurley	Robert G. Boyd	Timothy Doubledee
Christopher Serrone	James Rongstad	Robert Kampia	Walt Augustinowicz
Christopher McMahon	Jason Kamalie	Robert Moore	William D. Mitchell
Daniel Underkofler	Jay Dugger	Robert Rose	William Humphreys
Darrell Goldman	Jeffrey Pittel	Robert Weber	

Thank you for your generous support of the Libertarian Party!
You help make the work that we do possible!