

LIBERTY PLEDGE

newsletter

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NOVEMBER 2002

INITIATIVE NEWS...

Measure to ax income tax in Bay State nearly wins

Although the initiative to eliminate the income tax in Massachusetts barely fell short in the November 5 election, Libertarians were jubilant about its showing at the polls.

With 99.9% of precincts reporting, a whopping 45.4% of Massachusetts voters cast votes in favor of the initiative, with the remaining 54.6% opposing it.

The showing made the initiative "the biggest demonstration of support for a bold libertarian proposal in party history," said Carla Howell, whose Committee for Small Government (CSG) spearheaded the measure.

"In spite of every obstacle thrown at us, we [nearly] prevailed," she said. "We're electrified with our results, progress, and support."

The Boston Globe, the most widely circulated newspaper in the state, said the strong support for the initiative sent a "strong signal to Beacon Hill about distaste for future tax increases as a way to solve the budget crisis."

Had the initiative passed, the repeal would have saved the average state taxpayer \$3,000 per year, and created an estimated 300,000 to 500,000 jobs in the state.

During the 17-month campaign, Libertarians aggressively defended the initiative on radio shows and on television.

Although the initiative was defeated, Howell said the revolution that it has launched has just begun.

"Libertarian activists from other states are asking us how to organize an End the Income Tax initiative in their states," said Howell. "We have launched a nationwide trend that just may be the key to making government small."

Ed Thompson gets 10.4%

Ed Thompson, the Libertarian candidate for governor in Wisconsin, garnered 10.4% of the vote (183,252 votes) in the November 5 election.

Thompson's showing in the eight-way race was the second-best showing for a Libertarian candidate for governor in LP history.

"We didn't win, and that's really what I was hoping for," said Thompson. "But I'm grateful for all the support I did get from people across the state – 183,000 votes is a lot of votes."

Thompson won 55.9% of the vote in his home town of Tomah in Monroe County.

ELECTION 2002...

Final tally: 25 Libertarians victorious in 2002 elections

Over two dozen Libertarians were elected to local office in 2002, with victories occurring in five states across the USA.

In California, eight candidates were elected in contested races for non-partisan offices: Vern Dahl (Oceano Community Services District); Eric Lund (Cordova Recreation and Park Board, Sacramento County); Ron Gabbart (Ready Springs Union School District); Melise Manfre (Orangevale Recreation and Park Board, Sacramento County); Jim Gardner (San Geronio Memorial Health Care District); Larry Torres (Los Alamos Community Services District); Francis Trowbridge (Rubidoux Community Services District); and Jack Hickey (Sequoia Healthcare District, San Mateo County).

Also in California, six Libertarians were elected to non-partisan office in uncontested races: Marshall Schwartz (Eden Township Hospital District, Alameda County); Lance Rosmaier (Southwest Healthcare District, Short Term, Kern County); Jerry A. Mercier (Independence Ranch Community Services District, San Luis Obispo County); William J. Alley (Shandon Joint Unified School District, San Luis Obispo County); Carle Hylkema (Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District, Santa Clara County); and Michael Wharton (Oxnard Harbor District, Ventura County).

Finally, incumbent Bonnie Flickinger was re-elected to the Moreno Valley City Council (District 4), and Lois Engel was re-elected to the Ophir Hill Fire District.

In Colorado, Bill Masters was re-elected as San Miguel County sheriff, and Bob Dempsey was re-elected as San Miguel County coroner.

In North Carolina, there were six winners: Dave Gable (Mecklenberg County Soil and Water Conservation Supervisor); John Hairr (Harnett County Surveyor); Bob Ritchie (Cabarrus County Soil & Water District Supervisor); Jeff Goforth (Cabarrus County Soil & Water District Supervisor); Renee Montague (Chatham County Soil & Water District Supervisor); and Robert Rosenthal (Durham County Soil & Water District Supervisor).

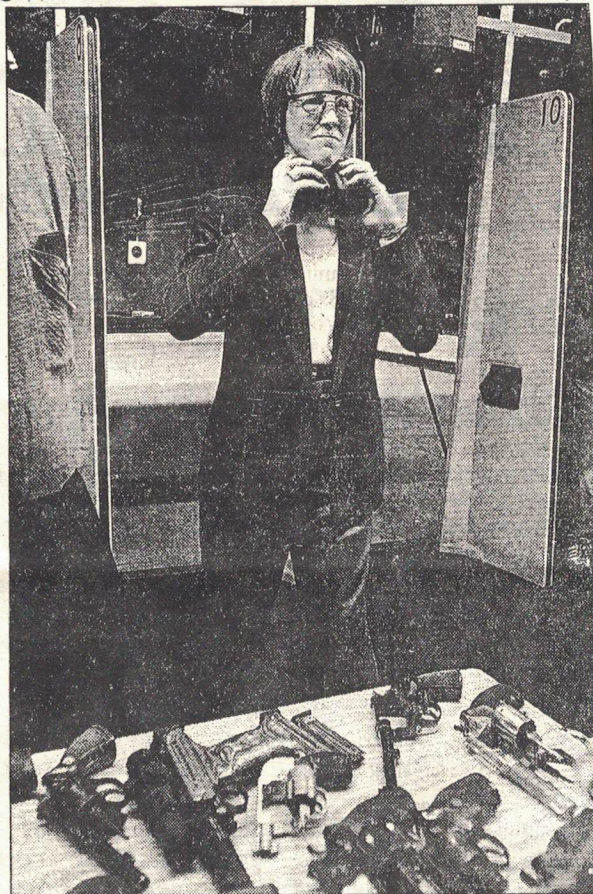
In Vermont, Hardy Macia was elected as a Justice of the Peace in Grand Isle.

In Indiana, Ed Dilts won an unopposed race for a seat on the Needham Township Board (Johnson County).

"A hearty congratulations to all our Libertarian winners!" said LP Political Director Ron Crickenberger. "I have no doubt that these individuals will make the party proud."

Ed Thompson: A tough Libertarian

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Associated Press

Taking aim

Massachusetts Libertarian gubernatorial candidate Carla Howell prepares for shooting practice at the Braintree Rifle and Pistol Club on Saturday. Howell appeared at the club to discuss pro-gun legislation at a shooting event sponsored by the Second Amendment Sisters.

Libertarians newsworthy

While I applaud Chuck Sweeney for having the backbone to tell the public why he and the Rockford Register Star left Libertarian gubernatorial candidate Cal Skinner out of the debate and why the paper rarely discusses the Libertarian Party in general, I cannot help but conclude that your paper has replaced "Freedom of the Press" with "Freedom of Who Owns or Runs the Paper."

Your Web site lists the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and your newspaper's Statement of Principles, which include "serving the public interest," "exercising fair play" and "acting with integrity." I suggest you and your staff go back and read what you claim to support and then face yourselves in the mirror. Can you honestly tell yourselves you are indeed upholding those beliefs and values?

— Austin L. Hough,
chairman, Libertarian
Party of Illinois

(Top Left) – *The Patriot Ledger* – Quincy, Massachusetts – October 14, 2002

(Right) – *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* – Milwaukee, Wisconsin – October 20, 2002

(Left) – *Rockford Register Star* – Rockford, Illinois – October 28, 2002

By DENNIS CHAPTMAN

In a party room at the back of Kelsey's Class Act bar, Ed Thompson slumps on a stool, takes a gulp of Diet Pepsi and heaves a sigh.

"I knew it would be tough, but I didn't know it would be this tough," he says, tired from another day of pushing his underfunded Libertarian campaign around Wisconsin and attempting to pry his way into debates in the governor's race.

He's trying to rev up for a \$10-a-head fund-raiser before a hometown crowd.

Close friend Jim Meckstroth, his manager and corner man during more than 15 years of Toughman boxing competitions, frets about Thompson.

"This is as down as I've seen him in this campaign. The polls are showing him at 6%. The polls are bogus," said Meckstroth, a retired cattle farmer.

Minutes later, Thompson has the rapt attention of 80 people jammed into the room, starting slowly and picking up steam as he runs with his common-man evangelism.

"I get so damn mad!" Thompson fumes. "We drove 100,000 miles. We walked the streets. We knocked on doors. We did it the right way. We were campaign reform. We've got something to offer. We've got honesty. We've got the truth."

On a roll, Thompson feeds off the applause, and seems to shed the frustration.

"Get into this fight. Roll up your sleeves. It's not about Ed Thompson, believe me. It just landed on me. This isn't a three-way race. It's a two way race — with common people against career politicians," he boomed with a preacher's fervor.

After the speech, and a standing ovation, a small businessman worked his way from the back of the room and reached into his pocket. He pulled out a wadded \$100 bill and handed it to Thompson.

The campaign rolls on.

A varied career

Thompson's life has been a checkboard of success, failure and uphill climbing. It has included an abbreviated stay at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a stint in the Navy and a job as a welder on the line at the General Motors plant in Janesville.

But he missed the small town life of Elroy, where on Christmas Day in 1944 he was born into a grocer's family that included former Gov. Tommy G. Thompson. So, he returned to take a job



PROFILE

ED THOMPSON

Libertarian

AGE: 57

EDUCATION: Attended University of Wisconsin-Madison.

EXPERIENCE:

- Owner, Tee Pee Supper Club, Tomah.
- Mayor, City of Tomah, 2000-2002.
- Federal prison guard.
- Tavern owner, Elroy.
- Auto worker, Janesville.

FAMILY: Divorced, four children.

Source: Thompson, Thompson campaign.

plowing snow for the county. He bought his first bar in 1968 in Elroy, and worked selling securities and real estate, and did two stints in the 1980s at the federal prison in Oxford, as a guard and cook. He owned a butcher shop in Kendall.

"I sold real estate mostly because Tommy said, 'That's a real hard test, and you can't pass it,'" Thompson said.

He also fought in Toughman competitions until he was 40 years old, matches in which opponents often whaled furiously on each other.

"He was a wild man," Meckstroth recalled. "He would take two or three punches to get in one good one. He quit after one fight in Superior, when he came back to the corner and I asked him how many fingers I was holding up. He said, 'What fingers?'"

and opened government to the public through cable TV access and question-and-answer sessions at council meetings.

Ventura meeting was key

Thompson's first steps to the governor's race came in a meeting with Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura, arranged by state Libertarian Party leader Bob Collison in April 2001.

"I talked to him for about an hour, and he put his big arm around me and said, 'You run and win,'" Thompson said. "I thought, 'He did it. He didn't have any experience.' But I was naive. I didn't realize how much money controls it all."

As of late August, Thompson had raised \$213,000 in 2002. That compares with \$2.3 million for Republican Gov. Scott McCallum and \$1.1 million for Democrat Jim Doyle.

Thompson won 2% of the total vote for governor in an uncontested primary, short of the 6% that would have guaranteed him a \$200,000 state campaign grant and a seat at the first televised

Thompson and his ex-wife Kathy, his high school sweetheart, had four kids. After 18 years, the two divorced in 1984. The split, a bad economy, a run-in with the law — he was charged with obstruction of justice in 1987 after he had a disagreement with an officer who found him sleeping in the back seat of a woman's car — all contributed to a bout of depression in 1989.

"I was down in the dirt," Thompson said. "I was disgusted with the divorce, the way things were going and thoughts of ending it had definitely entered my mind. I went into the depth of my being and thought, 'I want to end it. I want it over with.'"

That's when Thompson had an epiphany that changed his life.

"I had this religious experience," Thompson said, describing a meditation-like state he had one night. "I entered into this wall of darkness. . . In that darkness, I saw a pinhole of light."

"I said, 'I don't want to be alone,' so I moved into that light," Thompson said. "It was like I was in a room of light. . . I said, 'If I could put this light inside me, I would never be alone again, no matter what happens.'"

Thompson, who had been a drinker, gave up the bottle and his four pack-a-day smoking habit and studied Scripture. He bought, then sold Tomah's Tee Pee Supper Club. When the restaurant went belly up under the new owners, Thompson wheeled an \$80,000 bank loan, paid off \$78,000 in tax liens and bills and used the remaining \$2,000 to open the place again in 1993.

At first, he was the cook, waiter, bartender and janitor.

"I bought a bunch of hamburger and T-bone steaks and a big bottle of dressing at the grocery store, and that was the first meal," Thompson recalled. "One of the first customers asked, 'What kind of dressing do you have?' and I said, 'French.'"

Last year, Thompson said sales hit \$902,000. He employs about 35 people, including manager Tina Turner, his fiancée. Turner said she's not worried about the emotional rigors the campaign presents.

"He's got a heart of gold," Turner said. "That's what sets him apart. He's one of us. I wish they'd let him in more debates. If they're not, how are people supposed to get to know him?"

Gambling raid spurred interest

Tee Pee patrons get a good dose of politics. There are bumper stickers below the TV and on the keg cooler. Many employees wear his campaign T-shirts.

gubernatorial campaign.

Since then, he's been scraping for exposure and sometimes succeeding. When Tommy G. Thompson came to Milwaukee to endorse McCallum in a highly choreographed rally, Ed Thompson stole McCallum's thunder by announcing that his brother made a contribution to his campaign and told him he would vote for him.

Polls show Thompson well behind each of his major-party opponents. The Badger Poll of 539 registered voters in late September showed him getting 6% of the vote, to 43% for Doyle and 35% for McCallum.

Those numbers don't convince Leroy Kelsey, owner of the bar where the fund-raiser was held. "Baloney," he said. "He has a chance. Doyle and McCallum are killing each other with all this mudslinging. While they're doing that, Ed's above it all, with some common-sense ideas."

Dennis Chaptman is a reporter in the Journal Sentinel's Madison bureau. He can be reached at dchaptman@journalsentinel.com

Continued from above.

Thompson's front door to politics was opened when the Tee Pee was raided in 1997 by police who confiscated illegal video gambling machines. The charges against Thompson were later dropped after the prosecutors could not find enough unbiased jurors to hear the case.

Thompson won the presidency of the county Tavern League and targeted District Attorney John Matousek in the next election.

"We went to every bar, and every house and got him voted out," said Thompson, who then went to work in a successful bid to have video gambling machines decriminalized in 1999.

Then, Thompson set his sights on becoming Tomah's mayor in 2000 — and without ever having attended a City Council meeting, he upset two-term incumbent Bud Johnson with a large turnout of previously unregistered voters.

"They said I should be a councilman first, and I agreed with them, but they liked me," said Thompson, who worked to hold down spending, cut bureaucracy

Libertarian getting closer eye

Some see Coffee as alternative to warring Democrats in Chatham

BY ANNE BLYTHE
STAFF WRITER

PITTSBORO – Michael P. Coffee, the Libertarian seeking a Chatham County commissioners seat, has been fielding numerous invitations of late to coffee klatches, teas and meet-and-greet affairs.

In a county where only 78 of the 32,818 registered voters are Libertarians, the electronics technician always planned to run a serious campaign but never expected the level of interest in his candidacy that has emerged in recent weeks.

"It's getting very interesting all of a sudden," said Coffee, 42.

The recent intrigue comes in part because the two Republicans in the commissioners race dropped out in late September, in time to keep their names off the Nov. 5 ballot. The withdrawal means that two of the three commissioner races are uncontested.

Coffee, who moved to Chatham nearly a year and a half ago from Buncombe County, provides voters a choice in District 4, where the Democratic primary contest has been described as one of the most caustic in recent history.

"One of the positives about my campaign is [that] I'm getting support from across the spectrum, because, you know, I've got something for everybody," Coffee said.

Many Chatham residents continue to analyze the heated primary match between Bunkey Morgan, the Republican-turned-Democrat, and Gary Phillips, the commissioners chairman



Coffee sees new interest in his campaign.

who lost his bid for re-election by a mere 320 votes. Questions linger about whether Morgan actually lives in the district where he is running for office. The Chatham County Board of Elections is set to hear a second complaint today, several months after reviewing the first challenge and finding it had no merit.

Some Phillips supporters describe the Morgan victory as a carefully planned coup by the Republicans, but Morgan and his supporters describe the conjecture as ill-conceived.

There has been growing discontent, they say, in southwestern Chatham, where many agricultural and blue-collar workers live. Morgan tried to capitalize on that sentiment.

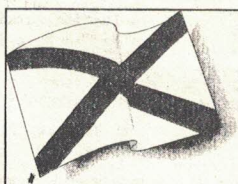
Staff writer Anne Blythe can be reached at 932-8741 or ablythe@newsobserver.com.

(Left) – *The News & Observer* – Raleigh, North Carolina – October 15, 2002

(Bottom) – *Montgomery Advertiser* – Montgomery, Alabama – October 20, 2002

What Sophocleus would have said in APT

The Libertarian Party candidate for governor was excluded from this evening's televised gubernatorial debate because polls did not show him with at least 5 percent support. The Advertiser, a debate co-sponsor, invited the candidate to share what he would have said if he had been part of the 8 p.m. debate on Alabama Public Television. APT also will televise debates between U.S. Senate candidates Susan Parker and Jeff Sessions at 6 p.m. and between lieutenant governor candidates Bill Armistead and Lucy Baxley at 7 p.m.



Alabama Voices

governing as something different from dancing to the tune of the AEA, Alfa, Bobby Lowder, and other entrenched special interest pipers. I refuse PAC money and individual contributions in excess of \$1,000.

Here are my positions on important issues:

- **Education:** Virtually all of the discussion of education assumes that whatever "problems" we have here in Alabama can only be "fixed" by increasing spending and government control. This means raising taxes, which I strongly oppose.

If education is going to be treated as a state-provided entitlement, the state should provide an education that is uniform for all

children, and designed to teach students how to speak, read, write, understand rudimentary arithmetic and think well. There is no reason to include art, athletics, music, etc. as part of education.

Parents and/or private scholarships should be paying for these extras on their own. Many aspects of public education should be privatized. The cost savings would amount to many millions of dollars per year that could be redirected towards meeting genuine educational needs. Furthermore, privatization eliminates the inefficiencies caused by employing bad teachers who double as coaches.

Throwing more money at public schools does not result in better-educated children; it results in administrators, teachers and lobbyists getting richer. What will improve our children's education is competition. I advocate non-revenue fixes to promote competition in the provision of education.

- **Constitutional reform:** I am the only candi-

date on the ballot that is against the rewrite. Constitutional rewrite is a vehicle for raising taxes and increasing government intrusion in our lives.

I disagree that the source of political problems in Alabama is the state Constitution. The problem is erosion of representation in the legislature, as the fixed number of legislators "represents" an ever-increasing number of citizens. Alabama can not afford all the litigation cost that will result from a rewrite — it is the "Full Employment Act for Politically Connected Attorneys."

If history is any guide, many citizens will lose (and then have to fight to regain) their civil rights following a rewrite. I applaud the Black Caucus' stand against the rewrite. Both my opponents have a terrible history of not respecting the civil rights of property owners. The first attempts by Jack Venable's committee to rewrite the Constitution verify fears that citizens' rights will be lost.

- **Competitive contract-**

ing: Recently passed bills like HB 23, introduced by Riley crony Mike Hubbard, ensure that contracts are bid less-than-competitively. So any governor's hands are tied on this one.

Riley runs expensive ads (paid for with special interest money) saying "no sweetheart deals under my watch," knowing most Alabamians are unaware the old boy network has already been institutionalized in Montgomery. For Riley to deliver on this campaign promise, he must repeal his own buddy's legislation to do so.

Think he'll even try? I will.

- **Tax reform:** Moving toward a low uniform tax will increase revenue and end the practice of politicians using the tax code to pick winners and losers in our state. This will allow our economy to flourish, by diversifying toward our comparative advantages, mitigating the impact of downturns in the business cycle.

John Sophocleus, a university professor and economist, is the Libertarian Party candidate for governor. His website is / www.votesoph.com.

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VALLEY VIEWS: JULIE FOX

Stop giving away your liberty

On Sept. 15, my niece attended an exotic pet show at Lee Watson's Crosswinds Farm in Streamwood. It was raided by federal agents, who locked down the event and held each and every person there.

No one was allowed out of the building in which the show was held until their belongings were searched. Local police searched cars for everything from exotic pets to drugs to improper child seating.

The intent was allegedly to crack down on infractions of laws pertaining to the exotic pet trade.

Instead of coming into the facility and checking that vendors were in compliance with the law, local and federal agents of the government terrorized individuals, innocent spectators as well as vendors, and bastardized their constitutional rights in the process.

Where does it end? Do we still retain any constitutional rights in this country? I was shocked and appalled to hear about this. We're referring to a pet show, not terrorist activity. Do these people deserve to be treated this way simply because they attended a pet show?

When will we come to our senses? Ever since the terrorist attacks that occurred on Sept. 11 of last year, we have given free rein to government to strip away our freedoms

in the name of security, and been completely blind to the effects it will have on us.

Please think long and hard about the words Benjamin Franklin, one of our founding fathers and a man whom many consider to be one of great wisdom, spoke: "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

Think about it. Ponder it long and hard. One can't take it too seriously. We forget how important it is until it affects us. Unfortunately, when it affects you, it may be way too late for anyone to do anything about it, because you didn't heed the words of warning the first time, or the second time, or the third or 10th time they were uttered.

You chose to ignore the importance of liberty. When you do that, it will come back to bite you. It may not be today, or tomorrow, but it will happen someday, I guarantee you, and then it will be too late. All your allies will already be snatched up by the arm of the "law" as you have chosen to let it be.

I have chosen to spend my time defending these rights, and working for the only party that truly believes in them, the Libertarian Party.

Although individuals may differ, at the core there is no difference be-

tween Democrats and Republicans anymore. No one truly cares about your freedom other than the Libertarian Party.

Quit kidding yourself. Look long and hard at how these parties have defended your freedoms. These are the parties that have allowed police raids on such things as exotic pet shows. These are the parties that give police the right to stop you in your car and search it when you have done nothing wrong. These are the parties that have allowed the erosion of your freedoms.

The only party that truly cares about your freedom is the Libertarian Party. That is why I give so much of my time and effort to support the Libertarian Party, and you should, too.

On Nov. 5, don't choose to ignore the ballot box because you are disgusted with the system. This time, make a move to change it.

If you're tired of the same old thing from government, make a move to change it.

Vote for a change on Nov. 5. Vote Libertarian. Let's end the madness and put freedom back into our lives again.

Fox, of West Dundee, is treasurer of the Libertarian Party of Illinois and the Libertarian candidate for state comptroller.