

# LIBERTY PLEDGE

## newsletter

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### LOCAL POLITICAL ACTION...

## NC Libertarians mobilize against USA/Patriot Act

Libertarians in North Carolina are organizing a town-by-town campaign to show opposition to the USA/Patriot Act.

On January 6, Mecklenburg County LP activist Mike Tuggle presented to the Charlotte City Council a resolution that instructed the state's Congressional delegation to "monitor" the bill, which had passed in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks.

If the state's U.S. House members found that the USA/Patriot Act violated "fundamental rights and liberties guaranteed by the United States and North Carolina Constitutions," said the resolution, then they should "actively work" to repeal it.

The resolution was patterned after a similar measure which was passed unanimously by aldermen in the town of Carrboro, North Carolina in June 2002.

The Carrboro resolution also asked local law enforcement officers to protect town residents from any USA/Patriot Act-inspired efforts by the federal government to infringe on their Constitutional rights.

"After reading that other municipalities had passed resolutions, I knew I had to do something," said Tuggle.

Unfortunately for Tuggle, the Charlotte City Council did not follow in Carrboro's footsteps.

Instead of voting on the resolution, a councilman made a motion to have the city attorney evaluate it. The motion failed 7-2, effectively scuttling the measure.

Although his effort failed, Tuggle said he won't give up, and will work with members of the Green Party to circulate a petition among town residents to demonstrate support for the resolution.

"Frankly, it got farther than I thought possible," he said. "The battle has just begun. Hopefully, we've started something that will get people talking."

The USA/Patriot Act gives the U.S. attorney general the power to install the carnivore e-mail snooping system without a court warrant; expands the legal definition of a "terrorist;" and makes it easier for the government to tap multiple phones as part of a "roving wiretap."

The bill was signed into law by President George W. Bush on October 26, 2001.

## Tax win lifts Oregon LP

Oregon Libertarians are using their victory over an attempted \$725 million income tax hike as an opportunity to present the public with a list of common-sense budget cuts.

When Measure 28 was defeated by a 55-45% margin on Jan. 28, the state immediately threatened to lay off hundreds of state troopers, quit processing misdemeanor crimes like shoplifting, and slash medical benefits to elderly and disabled residents.

So the LP is rolling out its counterproposal, including laying off 2,000 mid-level bureaucrats, reforming the state pension system and abolishing the state liquor control commission.

### SPRING ELECTION PREVIEW...

## Wisconsin sees 2 victories

Spring elections are still several months away, but the Wisconsin Libertarian Party apparently has two victories already in the bag.

That's because Cornell municipal judge candidate Glenford Logan is unopposed in the April 1 election, while Cornell city council candidate Lawrence Beaulieu faces only a token write-in opponent, said Wisconsin LP Executive Director Jeremy Keil.

"We are concentrating on the races we can win," he explained. "In Wisconsin, 55% of local races go uncontested. This means that we have the opportunity to win elections just for showing up. Also, by contesting these elections, we [can be] the de facto 'second party' in over half of the state."

If Logan wins election as expected, he would become the first elected Libertarian judge in Wisconsin.

Even though Logan and Beaulieu face no competition on the ballot, two more election victories will help build the credibility of the Libertarian Party, said Keil.

"These wins show what the Libertarian Party can do at the local level, especially with the momentum we have in Wisconsin," he said. "There is no more fertile ground for the Libertarian Party than in Wisconsin."

"When Libertarians are elected to office by the dozens or hundreds in our towns and counties, people will respect us and [be more willing to] vote for us at the state and federal level."

In addition to Logan and Beaulieu, 12 other LP candidates are seeking office in the April elections, said Keil.

(Right) The Associated Press – January 28, 2003

(Below) *The Battalion*, Texas A&M University – February 7, 2003

## Students debate merit of war with Iraq

By Melissa Fowler

The possible war with Iraq is sparking controversy around the world and around campus as students speak out through protests and a recent debate sponsored by the Texas A&M Objectivism Club.

The Objectivism Club, founded on the philosophies of Ayn Rand, held a forum for speakers on both sides of the war issue to voice their opinions Thursday night in Rudder Tower.

At the heart of the debate was whether United States involvement in Iraq by force is justified.

David Veksler, senior political science and economics major and president of the Objectivism Club, feels the United States has a duty to protect itself and that governments that violate the civil rights of their own have no right to rule.

"If you violate your citizens' rights you are a criminal and don't deserve to be in power," Veksler said. "No government has the right to exist that uses force against its citizens."

Still, some believe the United States is not entitled to police the world or enforce punishment on governments that do not adhere to the standards we accept on American soil.

"I believe our system is the best in the world. I believe strongly in freedom," said Brazos County Libertarian Party member Clyde Garland. "I do not believe we have the right to tell other countries in the world how they should live their lives."

Young Conservatives member Mark McCaig said Saddam Hussein has lied to Americans by saying that oil is not the issue.

"Hussein has violated numerous U.N. mandates," McCaig, a sophomore finance major said. "We've given peace a chance, now it's time to take action."

Another key idea under debate was the use of tax dollars to fund a war that a percentage of the tax-paying population does not support. Silas Barta, a mechanical engineering graduate student, said the U.S. government is not justified in using tax dollars to go to war with Iraq.

This use of national funds is significant to Garland who would support a voluntary war effort by individuals using their own money and offering their own lives without government mandates.

"To enlist someone against their will to go to war is enslaving them," Garland said.

## Oregon voters reject hike in income tax

By Brad Kain  
Associated Press

Oregon voters defeated a proposed three-year income tax hike Tuesday that was designed to forestall more than \$310 million in cuts to schools, public safety and social services programs.

Polls had shown voters closely divided over Measure 28, but with 70 percent of the votes tallied, the measure was failing by a decisive margin of 56 percent to 44 percent.

It was a stinging defeat for boosters of education and social services programs who had tried to persuade voters that the budget cuts would make life even harder for the needy, the elderly and other vulnerable people.

Under spending cuts legislators had already agreed to if Measure 28 failed, medical benefits will be eliminated for 8,000 elderly and disabled people with incomes too high to qualify for Medicaid or the state Health Plan, as will benefits for 4,100 disabled people getting care at their homes or in assisted-living facilities.

The legislators' plans also call for laying off 129 state troopers. Schools will lose \$95 million in funding, forcing them to either shorten the school year or lay off staff.

In wake of the voters' rejection of Measure 28, some lawmakers on Tuesday night raised the possibility that they would rework the cuts list to soften the impact on the most vulnerable people.

"Oregonians have spoken, but I don't think they voted tonight to put seniors out on the streets," said House Majority Leader Tim Knopp, R-Bend.

An opponent of the tax, Richard Burke of the Libertarian Party of Oregon, accused lawmakers of aiming the cuts at schools and other popular programs to force voters to approve the tax hike.

"Our message to voters was, 'These people are using scare tactics to extort money from you,'" Burke said Tuesday night.

The Legislature placed Measure 28 on the ballot last September during its fifth special session as lawmakers struggled to find ways to deal with the state's worsening revenue problems.

Lawmakers specified \$310 million in budget cuts to be made by June 30, with the idea that those cuts would be restored if the measure passed.

Lawmakers planned to meet Wednesday with Gov. Ted Kulongoski to discuss whether to let the cuts take effect as planned or to revise the list.

At the outset, the tax hike appeared to have little chance of passing, with polls last fall showing that fewer than 40 percent of voters supported the measure.

(Right) The Associated Press – January 16, 2003

(Below) *Green-Bay News-Chronicle* – Green Bay, Wisconsin, February 10, 2003

## Executive candidates lay out positions

By Christopher Clough  
News-Chronicle

HOWARD - Brown County Executive candidate Carol Kelso summed up why she and her fellow office seekers are hoping to succeed Nancy Nusbaum.

"Everyone up here has said they're running for the same reason," Kelso said. "They want to make a difference."

But the approaches the three candidates are taking vary, as the two dozen people who braved Monday night's snowstorm to attend the first of three county executive candidate forums this week found out. This forum was sponsored by Howard-based advocacy group Citizens for Responsible Government.

Kelso said her six years in the State Assembly helped prepare her for the challenges facing Brown County. She said taxes and shared metropolitan services are two of the biggest issues she expects to face if elected.

"The 7 percent increase in the county budget (for 2003) is incomprehensible," she said. "Government has to be prepared to react to what happens in the real world."

Candidate Roy Leyendecker, vice chairman of the Northeast Wisconsin Libertarian Party, said he would ask all county departments to cut their budgets by at least 10 percent to try to reduce the tax burden on residents. He said he would limit future tax increases to the rate of inflation.

"For some, just trying not to lose their homes to property taxes is becoming a burden," Leyendecker said. "If (departments) are unwilling to cut 10 percent, then I'll do it with the county board's help."

He said he would look at selling Brown County Golf Course and selling the Mental Health Center to its employees, then contracting with them for services. He also said he wants to put Huber work-release inmates on a home monitoring system so the jail doesn't bear the cost of housing them.

Len Teresinski, Hobart village president, pointed to his business experiences, years in Hobart government and time as a Catholic priest as helping him "bring a spirit of cooperation to the table."

"We have to unify, get everyone moving in the same direction," Teresinski said.

He said county budgeting should be done throughout the year instead of getting hammered out in one month and finalized in one board meeting.

## Group challenges notion that gays, guns don't mix

By MaryClaire Dale  
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA -- Lisa Miner had just let her dogs out one afternoon when she noticed a stranger inside her enclosed front porch.

"I'm not afraid of you. I'm going to hurt you," she said the young man told her.

She grabbed her handgun from a nearby television, loaded it and told him to leave. When he didn't, she shot him, she said.

The alleged intruder survived the neck wound last March and was charged with breaking and entering. Miner said she doesn't know if she was targeted because she lives openly with her girlfriend in the Boston suburb of Arlington, Mass.

But like other members of a burgeoning group called the Pink Pistols, she's challenging the notion that gays and guns don't mix.

"My gun rights are more important than my gay rights," said Miner. "They're both important, but people shouldn't assume that just because I'm gay, I should buy into a certain political party, like the Democrats."

Doug Krick, a bisexual Internet engineer from Boston who once ran for office as a Libertarian, started the Pink Pistols in July 2000.

The club has no dues or registration rolls, but about 35 chapters have sprung up across the country, with a few thousand members who gather to target shoot and have dinner. Krick, an avid sportsman, envisioned the group as a social club, but it's taken on a political agenda.

Members have lobbied against gun-control laws and even attacked an openly gay Massachusetts legislator who, like many gay civil rights groups, supports gun control. Others have vocally opposed hate-crime legislation, in keeping with their less-is-more philosophy of government.

"It once again speaks to the great and wonderful diversity in the gay community, but it's not something to build public policy around," said Clarence Patton, executive director of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, a coalition of gay, transgender and other groups that supports gun-control.

"We just generally don't believe that more people carrying more guns is going to create more safety," Patton said.

About a third of Pink Pistol members are heterosexual, including Brian Hepler, who took over the Northern Virginia chapter when a bisexual friend stepped down. He likes the idea that the club tweaks several stereotypes - that gun owners are mostly Christian right-wingers and that gays are victims.

"The idea is to try to show both stereotypes are wrong," said Hepler, who lives in Fairfax.

"It's kind of funny," he said. "We have one or two gay members who haven't come out to their gay friends that they are gun owners yet."

## Libertarians launch 'Guns for Tots' campaign

By Katherine Mangu-Ward  
The Weekly Standard

This week, the Manhattan Libertarian Party launched its "Guns for Tots" campaign to protest a bill that would make toy guns illegal in New York City.

Worried about the loss of "one of the most cherished rites of childhood," Jim Lesczynski, spokesman for the Manhattan Libertarian Party, says the party plans to distribute toy guns, including cap guns and water pistols, to New York children whose favorite playthings may soon be contraband.

The bill, sponsored by city council members David Welprin (D-Queens) and Albert Vann (D-Brooklyn), would make it illegal to own or sell any toy that could "reasonably be perceived to be an actual firearm."

Jacob Rieper, the legislative director of the New York State Rifle & Pistol Association (the state affiliate of the NRA), succinctly explains the reasoning behind the anti-toy gun bill. "Every now and then, some idiot buys a toy gun, paints it black, and tries to scare someone with it. And every now and then, that idiot gets shot. So now, no one will be allowed to have a water gun fight. Great."

Reportedly, during a press conference to announce the introduction of the new bill, Councilman Vann botched a cute stunt. He planned to threaten those in attendance with a water gun hidden in the waist of his pants, but the gun got stuck at the crucial moment and Vann was forced to conduct the rest of the press conference with an embarrassing water mark on the front of his trousers.

It looks like Vann won't be so inept at getting the bill passed, however, since he has rounded up 33 co-sponsors on the 51 member council.

Says Rieper: "This bill is pretty much a sure thing." But it has to get out of committee first.

The council's Consumer Affairs committee has scheduled a hearing on the bill for February 6, which will be the final collection day for the Libertarians' drive. After the hearing, Lesczynski says he and other Libertarian Party members will head uptown to distribute the guns outside P.S. 72 in Harlem. Describing the venture as "philanthropic," Lesczynski said he wanted to "bring a little joy into the lives of New York's youth --while such joy is still legal."

For those who aren't up for sitting through a council meeting, but would still like to help out, there will be a "Guns for Tots" collection party this Saturday night. New Yorkers should show up, Supersoakers or wallets in hand, at O'Flanagan's on 2nd Avenue between 82nd and 83rd St.

And remember, be generous. It's for the children.

*Katherine Mangu-Ward is an editorial assistant at The Weekly Standard.*

(Left) *The Weekly Standard*, Washington, DC, January 31, 2003

(Below) Associated Press, January 16, 2003

## FEC to let parties sell mailing lists

(AP) Washington – Election officials agreed Thursday to let national political party committees sell their mailing lists to any buyers, including businesses and labor unions.

The move would open up a new source of income for parties looking to compensate for the loss of millions of dollars in corporate and union soft money banned by the nation's new campaign finance law.

A majority of the six-member Federal Election Commission expressed support for the policy. The FEC stopped short of a final vote, however, instead directing its lawyers to develop a document reflecting the policy. That will be circulated among the commissioners for their votes over the next few days.

The commission is taking the action in response to a request by the Libertarian National Committee. The party asked the FEC for permission to continue several business activities despite the new campaign finance law's ban on corporate and labor contributions to national party committees, donations known as soft money.

Among its moneymaking ventures, the Libertarian National Committee rents out its mailing list, sells advertising space in its monthly newsletter and licenses Libertarian Party trademarks to T-shirt vendors and others who make political memorabilia.

In discussions Thursday, the commission stopped short of authorizing the continued sale of advertising space and party trademarks. Several commissioners said it would be too difficult to determine the fair market value of such transactions and judge whether they were legitimate business deals or sham transactions aimed at eluding the soft money ban.

Commissioner David Mason, who proposed allowing the Libertarians and other national party committees to rent or sell their mailing lists, said it would be much easier for the commission to determine whether list transactions were legitimate.

An industry has developed around the sales of mailing lists, so it wouldn't be difficult to determine a party list's fair market value, Mason said. In addition to paying fair market value, the purchaser of a party list would have to use it to sell subscriptions, products or services. And, the party would have to show sales were a fraction of its use of the mailing list.