

# LIBERTY PLEDGE

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MAY 1998

## newsletter

## Two Libertarians become mayors

**T**he Libertarian Party has two new mayors — one in California and one in Georgia.

On the west coast, Art Olivier was elected to the top spot in the city of Bellflower (population 63,000) on March 9th by a unanimous vote of the city council.

And on the east coast, Dewayne Metheny became mayor in Auburn (population 3,700) on May 12th when residents voted to recall the former mayor.

"It's a proud day for the Libertarian Party. Our elected officials are moving up through the ranks, becoming more influential, and more respected in their communities," said LP National Director Ron Crickenberger. "This proves once again that lower office is a stepping stone to higher office."

In Bellflower, Olivier, a four-year member of the city council, won the support of the other four council members to earn the mayor's job. His election was described in local papers as a victory for the "Libertarian" officeholder.

"It's exciting that Art Olivier has garnered so much respect that he's been elected mayor," said Juan Ros, California LP Executive Director. "We're all proud of him."

In Auburn, Metheny became mayor after a raucous recall election dumped the former mayor, moving the Libertarian Mayor Pro-Tem into the town's highest office.

First elected to the city council in 1995, "the job has proven anything but dull," said Metheny.

## Libertarians defeat Ohio tax hike

**I**n Toledo, Ohio, Libertarians got PIST at another proposed tax hike to pay for a professional sports stadium — and used their colorfully named lobbying group to convince voters to rebuff it at the polls.

On May 5th, resident in Lucas County rejected a proposed \$35.4 million sales tax increase to build a stadium for the Toledo Mud Hens, a minor league baseball team, by a margin of 59% to 41%.

The primary reason for the anti-tax vote: The People Incensed by the Stadium Tax (PIST) — an organization formed and staffed by Libertarians — which was the major voice against the plan.

"The only opposition to the tax came from PIST, an organization put together by Libertarians," said Ralph Mullinger, a local LP member. "It was one hell of a thrill to see the stadium tax go down to a flaming defeat."

## LP meets with European anti-prohibition party

**T**he Libertarian Party met with members of an international political party — including a member of the European Parliament — to discuss ways the two groups could work together to end Drug Prohibition.

Four members of the European Transnational Radical Party [TRP] visited the LP's national headquarters on May 11th to "explore the possibility to carry out joint activities [including] working on the campaign against the United Nations' prohibitionist convention," a multi-nation anti-drug summit that will take place in New York City in June.

LP National Director Ron Crickenberger met with Giafranco Dell'Alba, a TRP official and member of the European Parliament, and three other TRP members, to discuss strategy and find ways to work together on common goals.

"One area of strong agreement was in ending drug prohibition," said Crickenberger. "Since many aspects of the drug war now have international treaties complicating potential legalization, this seemed a good area in which to forge some degree of alliance. We will be working with them on a joint anti-prohibitionist statement to deliver to the UN, as a first step."

The TRP is a "transnational" party with members in more than a dozen European countries. It describes its politics as "nonviolent, libertarian, Gandhian, anti-prohibitionist, [and] anti-bureaucratic."

"I take it as another point in our professionalization that foreign political groups are asking to meet with us to exchange ideas on effective action," said Crickenberger.

## Talk show giant Art Bell joins LP

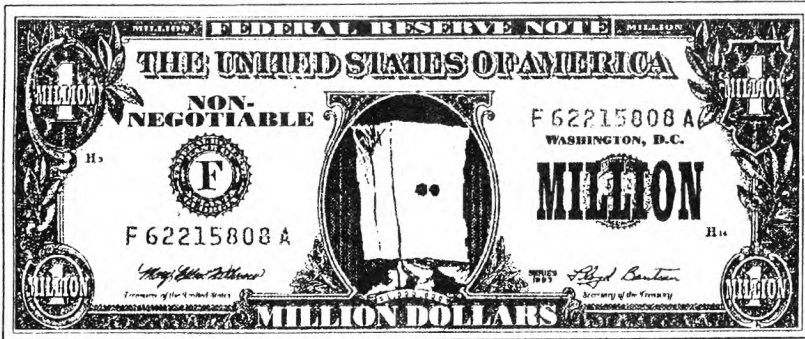
**H**e's got 10 million listeners — and now he's a Libertarian Party member.

On May 5th, Art Bell, the fourth highest-rated talk show host in the USA, told his on-air guest Harry Browne that he had become a dues-paying member of the LP because "liberty and freedom, it's slowly slipping away."

Bell's announcement — made over his coast-to-coast network of 389 stations — generated almost 3,000 phone calls to the party's 800# service, the largest burst of information requests since the 1996 national convention.

Bell has been called "the hottest talk show host in America" and, in total weekly listening audience, ranks behind only talk-show giants Dr. Laura Schlessinger, Howard Stern, and Rush Limbaugh, according to *Talkers* magazine.

# Thanks a million, say late-night taxpayers



**T.J. Moraco**  
The Chronicle-Telegram

ELYRIA — Garry Seman had a little gift for last-minute tax-filers Wednesday morning at the Elyria Post Office — a one million dollar bill.

Of course, the money wasn't real, but it did serve to make a point.

"In the time it took me to hand you that, the federal government spent \$1 million," said Seman, 38, of Grafton. "The federal government spends \$1 million every five seconds."

Seman, who was representing the Libertarian Party of Northeast Ohio, also held a sign that read, "Repeal the Income Tax."

His political party staunchly opposes the federal income tax system and big government in general.

"We are of the opinion that the income tax does not really help anyone," Seman said. "They distribute a lot of money around but not efficiently."

He proposes replacing the federal income tax with excise taxes, so people only have to pay if they use a certain service or purchase a particular item.

Seman stood in front of the post office on East Bridge Street from 11 a.m. to noon and handed the "funny money" to motorists as they stopped to mail their tax returns. Wednesday was the deadline for filing.

While most drivers just gave Seman a quizzical look as he passed out the bogus bills, some people struck up quick conversations.

"How much do you charge to repeal the tax?" asked Ken Gerding, 46, of Elyria, who had just finished mailing his return.

When asked if he owed the federal government any money, Gerding quipped, "I lent them my money for free."

Phillip Whitworth, 46, of Hemlock Drive, Elyria, also took a moment to chat.

"Don't worry about taxes," he said. "I'm going to win the Publisher's Clearing House Sweepstakes."

Whitworth then deposited his sweepstakes entry form in one of the mailboxes before driving off.

This was the first time Seman has protested on the tax-filing deadline, but he said it has been a Libertarian Party tradition for years.

The national Libertarian Party devised the \$1 million bills that Seman distributed.

The bills were oversized and printed on white paper in the design of a dollar bill. As if that wasn't enough of a hint that they were phony, George Washington had a paper bag over his head.

"He's ashamed of what we have done to the tax system," Seman said. "He doesn't want to be a part of it."

## THE BIG PICTURE

### UNSAFE AT ANY SPEED

According to a press release from the Libertarian Party, NHTSA (National Highway Transportation Safety Administration) has adopted seat belt laws for golf carts (we're not making this up). The new law, known as Standard No. 100, will cover golf carts that can attain top speeds of 25 mph, and that are ridden on public roads.

Steve Dasbach, chairman of the Libertarian Party, expressed his sentiments when he asked, "Are crash dummies writing these regulations now?" According to the law, NHTSA will reclassify many golf carts as "low-speed vehicles," in the process mandating the following safety items for their use: seat belts, windshields, turn signals, and rearview mirrors.

NHTSA agreed that golf carts don't pose a hazard on the road, but passed the statute anyway.

"Let's face it," said Dasbach, "there is no national crisis caused by senior citizens hot-rodding around at 20 miles per hour in golf carts." Dasbach added that the Libertarian Party had planned to speak out against the regulation before the NHTSA finalized it last year. The party failed to react because, as Dasbach pointed out, "We were afraid people would think we were making this up."

▲ *American Rodder*  
(National magazine), May 1998

◀ *The Chronicle-Telegram*  
Elyria, Ohio, April 16, 1998

# Libertarians celebrate new growth, success

By ERICA GARCIA  
Correspondent

FRANKLIN (Somerset) — New Jersey Libertarian Party members applauded their progress, but vowed to press on Sunday at the group's annual convention.

Murray Sabrin, the party's candidate in last year's gubernatorial race who attended the convention, said that since receiving less than 5 percent of the vote, party recognition has increased and Libertarian ideas are becoming part of the mainstream.

"We have made the term 'Libertarian' a digestible term," he told party members and officials.

Sabrin said the numbers have been "gratifying," and urged colleagues to push on.

"We have to organize and build this coalition to create the society we all want," he said.

He spoke of a moral and philosophical vacuum that needs to be filled by Libertarians in upcoming years.

Sabrin said the party was based on the Ten Commandments.

**'We have made the term "Libertarian" a digestible term.'**

— Murray Sabrin,  
former gubernatorial  
candidate

He also said he was thinking of writing an essay titled, "Is God a Libertarian?"

"She is," Janice Presser answered quickly.

Presser will be running for a seat in the third congressional district and is state chair of the New Jersey Libertarian Party.

"We've become a real party in New Jersey," said Michael Buoncristiano, a congressional candidate in Hudson County.

Buoncristiano said that although he doesn't have a chance to win, he is "showing people there is a choice."

The Libertarians have candidates in each of New Jersey's 13 congressional districts.

□ See LIBERTARIAN on Page B-3

## LIBERTARIAN: Party grows

□ Continued from Page B-1

Much of the party's success may be attributed to concentration at the local and grassroots levels, from precincts to townships, said Timothy Moir, a regional representative from Pennsylvania.

"I think that's the direction in New Jersey as well," he said.

Party optimism was not limited to the local and state level.

New Jersey has a "good slate of candidates," said Ron Crickenberger,

national director of the Libertarian Party. "I see continued growth."

National membership stands at about 25,000 he said, a figure that doubled from a few years ago. Elected officials now total about 250, he said.

Keynote speaker David Boaz, an executive vice president at the Cato Institute, believes Libertarian ideas have a healthy future.

"I have no doubt we will live in a more Libertarian society," Boaz said before his speech.

## Just desserts

In the wake of the dismissal of Paula Jones' sexual harassment suit against President Clinton, the national Libertarian Party is calling on Congress to throw out the sexual-harassment laws. Women don't really need them, says the party.

"Women aren't workplace weaklings," says the party's national director, Ron Crickenberger. "...Women have many time-tested strategies for dealing with crude come-ons from boorish men — ranging from a polite rejection, to a withering retort to a slap in the face."

He adds: "Just imagine if, in response to Bill Clinton's lewd conduct, Jones had told him that he was a jerk and kneed him in the groin. She could have walked out of that hotel room in proud control of her own destiny, rather than becoming a powerless pawn in an endless political and legal battle ... and Bill Clinton would have gotten exactly what he deserved, when he deserved it, and where he deserved it."

Ouch.

## From the gallery...

The Libertarian Party of Colorado will soon become the state's first fully qualified minor political party.

Taking advantage of **House Bill 1110**, signed into law by Gov. Roy Romer April 13, the party will hold its 1998 convention April 24-26 at the Sheraton Denver West Hotel in Lakewood.

The bill redefined requirements for minor party status and liberalized the nomination process for candidates of those parties.

At the convention, party members will approve several minor changes to the party constitution and bylaws that will enable the party to meet new requirements.

Sandra Johnson, state chair of the Libertarian Party, said in a news release that the elimination of the petitioning requirements for third-party candidates allows the Libertarians to spend their limited resources on winning races rather than just "getting our candidates onto the ballot."

▲ *The Courier-News*, Bridgewater, New Jersey, March 16, 1998

┆ (TOP) *The Gainesville Sun*, Gainesville, Florida, April 16, 1998

┆ (BOTTOM) *The Denver Business Journal*, Denver, Colorado, April 30, 1998

# Libertarian nominee for governor: Tax opponent Tobin

By J. PHILIP BLOOMER  
News-Gazette Staff Writer

CHICAGO — Jim Tobin, the anti-tax iconoclast of state politics, has been nominated for governor on the Libertarian Party slate.

Tobin leads a slate that was officially adopted by the party Monday, and is easily the best known of state Libertarian Party candidates to surface in its relatively brief history.

Tobin, a 52-year-old teacher at Elmhurst College, founded the National Taxpayers United of Illinois in 1976. The organization claims 10,000 members. Tobin, an economist by training, has claimed credit for defeating Gov. Jim Edgar's education re-

form plan last year, which he dubbed "Son of Netsch."

It was a reference to a similar plan that Edgar had criticized when it was promoted by his 1994 opponent for governor, Dawn Clark Netsch.

The anti-tax group said it contacted over 200,000 taxpayers via direct mail, including 130,000 last April, to lobby against the Edgar plan.

Tobin garnered extensive publicity last May for hanging a banner in the capitol rotunda that said "Son of Netsch." The banner was removed after two days amid cries of censorship by Tobin.

Before the primary, National

Taxpayers United had endorsed Republican candidate Chad Koppie for governor.

Libertarian Party Treasurer Steve Givot said prominent Republicans had contacted the party to complain that Tobin's presence in the campaign would cost Republican candidate George Ryan.

Givot replied that, "If you guys would keep your promises, you'd keep your jobs."

The organization has been highly critical of Ryan and Republicans in general despite its conservative leanings. Tobin complained that it was Ryan's office that took down his banner, after the group had gone through all the necessary red

tape to get it hung.

National Taxpayers United's latest legislator ratings, released in February, show the average Republican scores in both the House and Senate were significantly lower than the average Democratic scores. The ratings have been conducted for the last 15 years and are typically labeled as suspect by their targets.

Tobin, known for his biting, in-your-face remarks, has taken aim at "tax-and-spend Republicans," and the tax increases enacted by Republicans after taking control of the General Assembly in 1994.

He blamed those increases for costing Republicans control

of the House in 1996.

In central Illinois, he has criticized state Rep. Bill Black, R-Danville, as a taxpayer "enemy" while giving Rick Winkel, R-Champaign, a special award for fighting Gov. Edgar's plan to raise income taxes by 25 percent to pay for schools.

The group in 1994 rated then-state Rep. Laurel Prussing, D-Urbana, among the taxpayers' best friends for voting down tax increases.

One of Tobin's primary passions in recent years has been in promoting the Tax Accountability Amendment, which would require a two-thirds majority in both houses to enact any state revenue increase.

▲ *The News-Gazette*

Champaign, Illinois, April 21, 1998

▶ *The Bay City Times*

Bay City, Michigan, April 16, 1998

▼ *The Portland Press Herald*

Portland, Maine, April 13, 1998



Dick Van Nostrand ■ Times Photo

▲ Libertarian Party 97th District state House candidate Allen A. Bauer hands campaign literature to Bay City resident Sue Kosecki outside the U.S. Post Office in downtown Bay City Wednesday — the deadline for tax returns. The literature claims tax money is wasted. Libertarians later had a 'tea party' at the Saginaw River.

## MODERN REVOLUTIONARIES

# Libertarians still prefer to take their individualism straight

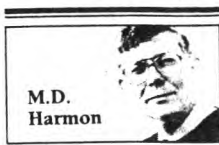
● It may be a minor party, but it raises major issues.

As a conservative in a state currently misgoverned by liberals (er, sorry, "progressives"), I have a certain sympathy for underdogs. That's probably why I enjoyed last weekend's annual convention of the Maine Libertarian Party in South Portland.

My opinion of Libertarians (local office: 780-1776) used to be that they were neither fish nor fowl, agreeing with Democrats on some issues and Republicans on others. But since the major parties covered the full range of issues, who needed another party?

Now, although I'm not rushing to enroll as a Libertarian, I think a bit differently about that. Here's why:

At the convention, I found a group of congenial folks who were dedicated to an ideal that Americans as a whole seem to have



M.D. Harmon

neglected recently: the ability of free people to work out their destinies themselves. If any idea smacks of collectivism, these folks are against it, in a James Madison-Thomas Jefferson tradition that goes right back to the Revolution.

Indeed, the themes of the American Revolution were much in evidence at the convention, where Second Amendment rights, freedom of speech, school choice and continuing resistance to government encroachment were constantly reinforced. I certainly expected to find peo-

ple such as Mary Adams there. She got the best reception of the day with a stirring populist assault on Augusta as the successor to Imperial Britain, with our governor cast as King Angus III. The Redcoats may not be coming, Adams said, but what we've got now is almost worse: Tax-raising, regulation-writing busybodies who have no idea that the Founders intended that government be limited.

I didn't expect to see Sally Sutton of the Maine Civil Liberties Union, but she was there too, taking voters to task for passing the Clean Elections referendum because it unconstitutionally restricted the speech (in the form of money to support candidates) of ordinary citizens.

I found her arguments on this issue persuasive — however much it pains me to agree with the MCLU on any issue — but there's something even more embarrassing. Sutton handed out brochures boosting the MCLU that contained an

insert reproducing various newspaper stories and editorials that illustrated the group supported.

One of them was an editorial I had written backing greater confidentiality for medical records. Somehow, I had never imagined anything I wrote ever being passed around favorably by this very liberal lobby, but there it was.

One of the major differences I have had with the Libertarian Party is its insistence on the legalization of some certain currently illegal substances, a move that even other conservatives are beginning to support. I still don't — because more kids will fall victim to legal drugs than illegal ones — and nothing I heard at the convention dissuaded me of that.

Even worse, the party has historically supported abortion, along the lines, as one brochure put it, that "Each individual has the right to control his or her own body ... Government's only role is to

help individuals defend themselves from force or fraud."

So I was especially happy to see a table with a big sign labeled "Libertarians for Life," holding material pointing out that the first liberty was the one to draw a breath, without which no other liberties mean anything at all.

The mood at the convention was upbeat, as the party's national chairman, Steve Dasbach, flew in from Washington to report the party had the largest budget, biggest paid staff and most state and local elected officials in its history.

It's still tiny compared to the major parties, but that's not the point. Minor parties exist to raise issues that the major parties, for whatever reasons, are ignoring.

Right now, with the Republicans more concerned about budget-busting highway projects than spending restraint, and the Democrats pushing their own anti-free-trade agenda, Libertarians enjoy

what the military calls a "target-rich environment."

And you never know. Once in our history, there were two major parties, the Democrats and the Whigs. Then a minor party grabbed an issue — halting the expansion of slavery — and took off with it. Soon there were no more Whigs, and the Republicans elected a president named Abraham Lincoln.

So, which major party might be most vulnerable to that right now? Could it be the one that swept into control of Congress in 1994 and promptly forgot nearly everything it promised voters it would do?

Hey, stranger things have happened — and could happen again, especially to those who are arrogant enough to think that Americans forget. They don't.

— M.D. Harmon (e-mail: mozie122@aol.com) is an editorial page writer and editor for *The Portland Newspapers*.