

LIBERTY PLEDGE

newsletter

Libertarian National Committee, Inc. ♦ 2600 Virginia Ave, NW, Suite 100
Washington DC 20037 ♦ Phone: (202) 333-0008 ♦ Fax: (202) 333-0072

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Speculation grows about possible Gov. Gary Johnson presidential bid

The buzz continues to grow about the possibility that Republican New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson may decide to seek the Libertarian Party's 2004 presidential nomination.

Johnson, who has gained national prominence for his outspoken opposition to the War on Drugs, is scheduled to speak at two state LP conventions, won an unscientific LP presidential straw poll, and has begun to generate news coverage about a possible run for the nation's highest office.

However, Johnson's office merely says the two-term governor finds the speculation "very flattering."

"The people who embrace the freedoms our country bestows on all of us appreciate what [Johnson has] had to say for the last seven years," said a spokeswoman.



■ **New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson: Interested in a run?**

But there are a number of clues about the growing interest in a Johnson for President run:

■ Johnson is confirmed as a speaker at the Massachusetts LP state convention on April 6 and at the Wisconsin LP convention on April 13.

■ Johnson came in first place in a January online presidential preference straw poll

hosted by the Cass County LP in Missouri, with 17.3% of the vote.

■ The *Santa Fe New Mexican* printed a story on February 7 about the growing speculation entitled "President Gary Johnson?" And the Associated Press called the LP national office in early March to discuss the possibility.

■ Libertarian James Perry created a online petition to draft Johnson to run: www.onlinepetition.com/gar4prez.

However, some New Mexico Libertarians who tried to convince Johnson to run for president in 2000 now say they are less excited about the possibility.

"I supported the draft movement two years ago, but I wouldn't be as easy to convince now," said LP State Chair Joseph Knight. "He's moved in the wrong direction, and he signed legislation making things tougher for third parties."

Vroman wins re-election in CA primary

The USA's only Libertarian district attorney has been returned to office in the California primary, while an LP city council member hoping to make the jump to county supervisor was defeated in a razor-tight race.

In the March 5 election, District Attorney Norm Vroman in Mendocino County retained his seat with 51.93% of the vote in a three-way contest. Since he earned more

than 50% of the vote, Vroman wins outright.

"The county's voters have spoken in a very positive and dramatic way," said Vroman.

Meanwhile, Moreno Valley City Councilwoman Bonnie Flickinger fell short in her bid to get elected as county supervisor.

Flickinger came in fourth in a five-way race, with the top two finishers moving on to the general election in

November. However, the LP officeholder trailed the second-place finisher by only 175 votes out of more than 26,800 votes cast.

"Considering the fact that she was outspent by a large margin, these results are an impressive statement on her reputation and service to her community," said Chris Azzaro, head of the Libertarian Victory Fund, which supported Flickinger's campaign.

news blurbs

■ The influential *Cato Institute* celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. The Washington, DC-based libertarian think tank will host a gala celebration on May 9, 2002 to mark the occasion.

■ Libertarian Party Political Director **Ron Crickenberger** joined **Ralph Nader** and **Pat Buchanan** at a press conference in Washington, DC on February 18 to call for a "non-partisan citizen's commission" to schedule presidential debates. Such a reform would make the televised debates more open and inclusive, he said.

■ According to year-end figures, the *Iowa LP* was the fastest growing LP affiliate in 2001 — growing by an impressive 21.9%. Most state parties lost members last year.

■ In an apparent first for the LP, U.S. House candidate **Maad Abu-Ghazalah** was endorsed by the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA) in San Francisco on February 21. "This is huge," said Abu-Ghazalah, who is of Palestinian descent.

■ A trio of expert communicators are confirmed to speak at the July 3-7, 2002 Libertarian National Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana: **Sharon Harris** (Advocates president), **Mary Ruwart** (author, *Healing Our World*), and **Michael Cloud** (creator, *The Art of Political Persuasion*). Also set: 1984 LP presidential candidate **David Bergland**.

Libertarian Party wants easier access to Oklahoma ballots

Minority political parties in Oklahoma have united in support of a legislative bill that will offer voters a wider selection at the polls.

Statewide frustration with unfair election laws led to the formation of a unified task force, Oklahomans for Ballot Access Reform (OBAR) uniting the Libertarian Party, Green, Southern and Reform Parties in support of revised standards for admission onto the Oklahoma ballot.

Sue Tibbs, Republican, District 22 introduced Fair Ballot Access Bill 2654 into the Oklahoma State legislature.

The Fair Ballot Access Bill lowers the number of signatures required for political parties to attain state recognition. It also reduces requirements for an alternative presidential candidate to get on the ballot and eases requirements to maintain party status from year to year.

This will make it easier for alternative parties to get on and stay on the Oklahoma ballot.

The Fair Ballot Access Bill will bring Oklahoma election laws into line with neighboring states as well as other states of similar population size across the country.

Oklahoma Libertarian Party Chairman Richard Prawdziński says, "Allowing more parties access to the ballot will help increase

voter awareness of issues and improve voter turnout." He said, "Voters will have a whole new kind of power at the polls."

"Not surprisingly, numerous legislators have expressed their dislike for this bill," he said. Prawdziński believes they are opposed to the Fair Ballot Access Bill because they don't want a level playing field for all parties. "They are afraid of the competition and open dialogue."

The next step in the legislative process is for HB 2654 to pass out of Rules Committee. Prawdziński said, "Last year, every election reform bill died in this committee and was never voted on by the entire House. He said, "The committees past action makes it vital that Rules Committee members hear from their constituents."

Ballot Access News, Richard Winger says, "Oklahoma is one of the most difficult states in the union for third party presidential candidates to get on the ballot." He said, "Oklahoma has kept more important minor party and independent presidential candidates off its ballots, than any other state. They include Theodore Roosevelt in 1912, Norman Thomas in 1932, Congressman William Lemke in 1936, former vice-president Henry Wallace in 1948, Strom Thurmond in 1948, and Ralph Nader in 2000.

▲ *The Hugo Daily News*, Hugo, Oklahoma, February 6, 2002

▼ *The Medford Daily Mercury*, Medford, Massachusetts, February 6, 2002

Libertarian candidate to challenge U.S. Sen. John Kerry

By JOHN McELHENNY

A fund-raising "rainmaker" for Libertarian candidates around the country plans to challenge U.S. Sen. John Kerry in November.

Michael Cloud, 50, said on Monday that he plans to stress small government, individual liberty and personal responsibility in an attempt to oust Kerry, a Democrat.

But he admitted that he was a "mega-longshot" against Kerry, who has been the state's junior senator for 17 years.

"I'd probably give me the same odds as they gave the Patriots before

the season," Cloud said. "I'm sure that John Kerry won't lose one minute of sleep because of me."

Cloud referred to himself as a fund-raising "rainmaker" who has raised \$7 million for Libertarian candidates and campaigns around the country in the last 11 years, including Harry Browne's presidential run in 1996.

Libertarians claimed 16,071, or about 0.4 percent, of the state's registered voters in October 2000, the last official statewide count.

The party's strong emphasis on reducing the size of government, including abolishing the U.S.

Department of Education, has proven too extreme for many Bay State voters.

But Cloud, who lives in Wayland with Carla Howell, a Libertarian candidate for governor, said Libertarians enjoy more support during times of recession because that's when voters prefer lower taxes and smaller government.

Howell, Cloud and other Libertarians are also pushing a ballot question that would eliminate the state's income tax.

Kelley Benander, a Kerry spokeswoman, said Kerry "welcomes all

perspectives."

The Republican Party currently has no one to challenge Kerry, though a spokesman said a candidate would be named in coming weeks.

In 2000, the Republican Party was embarrassed when it fielded a challenger for U.S. Sen. Edward Kennedy, Jack E. Robinson, and then withdrew its support after he admitted a series of misdeeds, including a restraining order from an ex-girlfriend.

Kennedy, a Democrat, easily won re-election. Robinson got 12 percent of the vote and Howell received 11 percent.

Libertarians hoping to break through on local level

BY JASON CARR
of the Daily News

For many voters, the choices seem limited: vote Republican, vote Democratic, or vote not at all.

But another party is trying to expand that range of options.

The Libertarian Party has existed nationally for more than 25 years, and its local chapter, the Tri-City Libertarian Party, has been around for four years. The Tri-City Libertarians now count 38 members.

Tri-City President Stephen Townsend said the party has decided to move away from simply educating the voters about libertarianism.

"We're a party just like the Democrats and the Republicans, and like them we have one function - to elect candidates to public office," Townsend said. To do that, the Tri-City Libertarians "plan to engage the two major political parties on the local level."

Although the Libertarians will still run candidates for governor and U.S. Senate, Townsend said getting candidates elected can show people that libertarian ideas work.

Libertarian ideas revolve around the principles of maximum freedom and strong, but limited government.

One area Townsend points to in explaining libertarian principles is the county government's recent approval of installing credit card machines. The benefits of credit card machines apply only to people who use credit cards to pay the county, but the fee the county pays to use credit card machines comes from the general fund and is thus spread among all taxpayers.

"That essentially is a redistribution of wealth," Townsend said.

◀ *The Midland Daily News*,
Midland, Michigan,
February 10, 2002

▶ *The Waxahachie Daily Light*, Waxahachie, Texas,
February 3, 2002

▶ (FAR RIGHT)*The Oregonian*, Portland,
Oregon, February 11, 2002

▼ *The Enquirer-Journal*,
Monroe, North Carolina,
February 7, 2002

Libertarian Party seeking members

The newly created Libertarian Party of Ellis County is seeking members and/or potential candidates for local and statewide office.

The Libertarian platform calls for the drastic reduction in government in both economic and social affairs, as well as increased individual freedom and limited taxation.

Founded in 1971, the Libertarian Party has become America's largest third party, winning more elections and running more candidates than all other third parties combined.

Membership to the national Libertarian Party is \$25, and qualifies for membership of the Libertarian Party of Texas, as well as the LP of Ellis County.

Members receive LP News, the official, monthly newspaper of the Libertarian Party.

For more information, or to join, contact the Ellis County chapter at ECLibertarians@hotmail.com or (972)617-9537.

Libertarian running for Myrick's seat

FROM STAFF REPORTS
Charlotte

The Libertarian Party of Mecklenburg County has announced that Christopher Cole of Charlotte has declared his intention to run again for the 9th District seat in the U.S. House currently held by Republican Sue Myrick.

The 9th District now includes part of Union County.

Cole placed third out of four candidates in 2000. His nomination will require the approval of the state Libertarian convention in May.

In a press release, Cole said Myrick is addicted to big government. "When she was first elected in the Republican revolution of '94, she made promises to abolish unconstitutional federal agencies, including the



Cole

Department of Education," he said. "Yet, not only do they continue, but they have grown massively under Republican control."

Cole also noted Myrick's term-limits pledge, in which she promised to retire after three terms. She is currently serving her fourth term.

Cole plans to target for abolition all federal agencies not authorized by the Constitution, starting with the Department of Education. According to the press release, he has set a four-year goal of abolishing the personal income tax, and a two-year goal of ending the so-called War on Drugs.

Libertarians plan to spoil elections for tax supporters

The Libertarians are getting ready to try to ruin somebody's day in this fall's elections.

Not content with the accidental spoiler role the party's candidates sometimes play in close races, state Chairman Mitch Shults says the Libertarians intend to play the spoiler game on purpose in the upcoming legislative races.

The issue is taxes, and the target will be lawmakers — Democrat or Republican — who vote to raise taxes to help balance the state budget.

"Ignore us at your personal and political peril," Shults said at a Capitol news conference last week. "Even if our candidate doesn't win, we'll at least spoil the race for you."

Shults said both major parties are pursuing wrong-headed solutions to the state's budget crises. Democratic Gov. John Kitzhaber is promoting tax increases on tobacco and alcohol, which hit poor people the hardest, he said, while Republican leaders want to throw the state into more debt. Few lawmakers are willing to balance the budget entirely with spending cuts.

Richard Burke, the party's executive director, said Libertarian candidates typically garner 5 percent to 20 percent of the vote in legislative races, depending on the district and the candidates.

It may not be enough to win, but can be enough to decide who wins, Burke said.

The party plans to hold its nominating convention in July, after the May primary. It will look for close races, then decide whether it wants to pull votes away from the Democratic or Republican candidate.

If the Democrat is the target, the Libertarians will field a candidate with strong views on assisted suicide, medical marijuana or abortion. If they want to punish the Republican, their candidate will be more conservative.

"Were trying to help both parties stay true to their principles," Burke said.

Respect for libertarianism

TIBOR R. MACHAN

Robert Nozick, author of *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (Basic Books, 1974), who single-handedly made libertarianism academically respectable, died January 23, after being ill with stomach cancer for several years. Despite his illness, he had been productive and intellectually active until the very end, having finished perhaps his most ambitious book, *Invariance's* (Harvard 2001), just a few months before his death.

Nozick obtained his PhD degree at Princeton University, where he was an excellent student in philosophy. He quickly rose to prominence, even before he published his first book, and was appointed a full professor at Harvard University when he was only 30 years old. He had been a critic of John Rawls's egalitarian political philosophy after having been convinced by reading some free market economists that his own youthful leftism simply couldn't withstand the critiques of F. A. Hayek and Milton Friedman. But more than that, Nozick found trouble not only with the left but also with the right, maintaining that there was no

better reason for enforcing what conservatives deemed to be proper conduct on free citizens than enforcing what modern liberals deemed to be principles of economic equality on members of a free society.

Nozick's approach was quite daring — unlike previous defenders of individual liberty, Nozick argued by first assuming that we have the right to liberty and then seeing what kind of a society would emerge if this assumption were taken seriously as the foundation of a society's legal system. He concluded that the results would far more readily accord with our understanding of justice than anything either those on the left or those on the right had to offer. Both of these were, in fact, fostering a coercive, even tyrannical political order, even though they did this in the name of their misconception of justice.

Nozick advanced an especially ingenious argument against wealth redistribution, showing that to establish some kind of equality of welfare a society would need a police state. Suppose that a famous basketball player — his example was Wilt Chamberlain — earned a lot of money people freely gave him to play ball. To eliminate the inequality of wealth this would create, the next day the authorities would have to come in and take his wealth and distribute it among everyone. But then a great many people would once again pay the ball player great sums to play for them, so the next day the coer-

cive equalization would have to resume — and this would go on endlessly, making the society a police state from top to bottom, something that is much more objectionable, morally, than is the inequality of wealth that is supposed to be destroyed in the process of redistribution.

Before Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* was published, the idea of the free society had champions mainly in economics departments across the academic world. There were others, such as Ayn Rand and H. L. Mencken, to name just two, who wrote vigorously in support of the free society but academics pretty much ignored these writers. But when Nozick, with his Harvard University credentials, published his libertarian masterpiece, that could no longer be ignored.

Nozick was a charming, bright, somewhat quirky man, who loved arguments and who eschewed becoming identified with any point of view, thinking that the most important way to work in philosophy is to explore, experiment, seek out new ways to approach old problems. Those who love liberty must be grateful to Robert Nozick and can only be saddened by his untimely death. And those who love philosophy must join them in this grief, as well.

Tibor Machan wrote this for Freedom Communications, Inc.

▲ *The Daily Press*, Victorville, California, February 13, 2002 ▼ *The St. Augustine Record*, Saint Augustine, Florida, February 3, 2002

Libertarians trying to continue party's growth

By MICHAEL REED

Staff Writer

The Libertarian Party of Florida State Convention this weekend in St. Augustine highlighted an emerging political force in St. Johns County.

The St. Johns County chapter was established last September and has about 150 members, according to Doug Klippel, chair of the Duval County Libertarian Party. Clay and Nassau Counties have also developed chapters within the last year of what Klippel called the fastest growing and largest third party in the country.

"We are seeing a tremendous growth of Libertarianism in Northeast Florida," Klippel said.

The message is principle driven:

lower taxes and limited government. The party advocates ending welfare, legalizing drugs and individuals taking responsibility for themselves.

Klippel said many people hold Libertarian beliefs and don't even know it.

"We tend to appeal to people more on a philosophical level," he said.

The convention, which began Friday and ends today, included speakers and workshops designed to provide tools for people to spread the Libertarian message. It was held inside the Ponce de Leon Hotel and Resort on U.S. 1 North.

One of the speakers Saturday was Elias Israel from Massachusetts, a candidate for national chairman of the party. He was enthusiastic about the party's future.

"It is going to be one of the prime movers, one of the shakers, of politics in the 21st Century," Israel said.

Another speaker was Geoffrey Neale, who is also vying for the national chairmanship. Neale is the Texas chairman of the party. He also said the party is growing.

"I think what you're seeing here is being mirrored in places throughout the country," Neale said.

But the national party has been around for 30 years, and local organizers know it will take time to get Libertarians in office.

"We are optimistic, but realistic," Klippel said. "We recognize that overnight success is not something that is likely to occur with our party."

This year's goal is to run a full

slate of Libertarian candidates in local elections throughout Northeast Florida, he said. Douglas Price, treasurer of the St. Johns chapter, said the party is reaching out for Libertarian candidates right now.

"We're in such an early stage in organization," Price said.

Price lives in Ponte Vedra Beach with his wife Ann, who is the secretary of the St. Johns County chapter. He said more and more people are disassociating from the Democratic and Republican Parties.

Klippel agreed, and said the Libertarian Party offers a very clear alternative choice.

"We are going to give people an option at the polls," Klippel said.

For more information visit, www.lpjax.org.