

LIBERTY PLEDGE

newsletter

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Will the Web spawn a new political party?

A new political party might arise from the Internet — and it will probably be libertarian in nature. That's the prediction of *Investor's Business Daily*, which wrote that "the idea that one of the big parties could fall by the wayside isn't far-fetched . . . nor is the idea that the two-party system itself could be in danger."

In a front-page article on March 18, reporter Charles Oliver noted "the switch from an industrial society to an information society has brought enormous changes . . . it's difficult to think politics will be immune to these forces."

Specifically, the rise of the Internet and World Wide Web — "where voters everywhere are tied together by computer, constantly exchanging political ideas and information" — could force "tremendous change" on America's political system, predicted the national investment newspaper.

And who might gain from a cyber-revolution in American politics? A libertarian-style party, speculated Oliver — while acknowledging that the "Libertarian Party has not yet emerged as a threat to Democrats and Republicans."

But the good news for LP members: "If the two big parties fail to win over wired voters, others are ready to try. The Libertarian Party claims to have been the first party with its own Web site. It now aims many of its activities at winning the online vote," he wrote.

Libertarian books dominate Amazon.com's political lists

Who says the Internet is a stronghold of libertarian beliefs? Amazon.com, that's who. In early April, the massive online "virtual" bookstore listed three explicitly libertarian books among its top 10 bestselling "Ideological Tracts and Manifestos."

According to Amazon.com, its #1 bestselling ideological book is *Libertarianism, A Primer* by David Boaz; followed by *The Libertarian Reader* by David Boaz, editor (#2); and *Why Government Doesn't Work* by Harry Browne (#8).

And four libertarian works are included on the online bookstore's list of 15 bestselling "Political History, Theory and Biography" books: *Libertarianism, A Primer* by David Boaz (#5); *What it Means to be a Libertarian* by Charles Murray (#7); *The Libertarian Reader* by David Boaz, editor (#11); and *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal* by Ayn Rand (#14).

Jacob Hornberger considers run for LP's presidential nomination

Jacob Hornberger, the president of the Future of Freedom Foundation and a public speaker known for his passionate oration, has announced that he is "giving serious consideration" to seeking the LP's presidential nomination in 2000.

In an advertisement in the May issue of *LP News*, Hornberger said that over the next 18 months, he will make "a final decision whether to seek" the party's nomination.

"I am very excited about the possibility of entering the competition to be your nominee for president. And I am looking forward to exploring this possibility with you in the months ahead," Hornberger wrote.

A noted public speaker in Libertarian circles, Hornberger gave the popular keynote address at the 1996 LP National Convention.

He is the founder and president of the Future of Freedom Foundation, a Virginia-based, non-partisan, non-profit "educational foundation whose mission is to advance liberty and the libertarian philosophy by presenting an uncompromising moral, philosophical, and economic case for individual freedom and limited government."

LP sets record: 25,000 members

Thanks to a 165% growth in members over the past four years, the LP has passed a milestone once considered an "impossible dream" — 25,000 dues-paying members.

On March 25, the party reached the 25,000-member threshold, thanks to a flood of new memberships generated by the LP's direct-mail marketing blitz, Project Archimedes.

The new record represents a dramatic 165% growth since March 1994, when there were 9,512 contributing LP members — and is a 294% increase since 1988, when party membership stood at only 6,402.

LP National Director Ron Crickenberger said he was delighted by the new record — but said he prefers to focus on what the party can *accomplish* with so many new members.

"I believe that hitting 25,000 members is just the beginning of the curve — that we are poised for continued growth at a rapidly expanding pace," he said.

"But keep in mind why we need new members: As our membership grows, so grows the number of Libertarians in office, so grows our media presence, and so grows our influence in the political debate. That's why we exist as a political party — and that's why this membership news is so exciting. It means we have more people working for liberty."

Third-party candidates seek help for struggle from Capitol Hill

WASHINGTON — As polls continue to reflect widespread public apathy if not disgust toward the two major political parties and interest in an alternative, long-shot efforts are going forward to crack the door open for independent and third-party candidates in the next presidential election.

Leading the effort is Republican Rep. Ron Paul of Texas, who was the Libertarian Party's presidential nominee in 1988 and was elected to the House as a Republican in 1996. He is sponsoring bills that would make it easier for such candidates to gain ballot position in the various states and to gain admission to presidential debates. They had hearings before the House Oversight Committee last week, and while they caused hardly a ripple, they served notice that

third-party advocates are persevering in their uphill fight.

The first bill would require states to establish "fair, uniform and nondiscriminatory standards" for all candidates to get on their ballots. In 1996, the Libertarian Party managed to achieve ballot position in all 50 states for its nominee, Harry Browne, but the effort was extremely costly and time-consuming. Ross Perot's Reform Party also qualified in all 50 states, and two other minor parties, the U.S. Taxpayers Party and the Natural Law Party, earned ballot position in about 40.

Helping the rejected

Mr. Paul's second bill addresses the rejection of Mr. Perot and Mr. Brown in 1996 by the Commission on Presidential Debates, headed by former Republican and Democratic national chairmen, to compete

GERMOND & WITCOVER

with Democratic nominee Bill Clinton and Republican nominee Bob Dole in their three debates.

It would bar presidential candidates who accept federal matching funds (Mr. Clinton and Mr. Dole in 1996) from taking part in debates that exclude other candidates who have qualified for the ballot in at least 40 states.

Mr. Browne, who wound up winning nearly 486,000 votes, never got serious consideration for the debates.

The commission debated the merits of admitting Mr. Perot, who

participated in the 1992 presidential debates, but he was rejected under new commission guidelines that stipulated that a candidate had to have "a realistic chance" to be elected. Mr. Perot's supporters complained about the use of such a subjective criterion, but in vain.

Unfair competition

The commission's decision caused an uproar not only in the Perot camp but among advocates of some alternative to the Democratic and Republican parties. The Reform Party went to court charging that federal election laws were rigged against third parties and were unconstitutional, but a federal district judge recently dismissed the case.

In testimony before the House committee, Ron Crickenberger, national director of the

Libertarian Party, charged that "political discrimination is the civil rights battle of the '90s."

While state election laws require only 25,000 to 50,000 signatures from Republicans and Democrats to obtain ballot position, he said, "the law requires third-party candidates to gather approximately 700,000 signatures."

He called the requirement "a poll tax on those with differing political affiliations."

Of Mr. Paul's proposal on debates, Mr. Crickenberger said it "simply recognizes that candidates who take money from taxpayers [under the federal subsidy that matches private contributions] have a special responsibility to debate people who are expressing the same wide variety of ideas that Americans hold."

In 1996, third-party candidates received about 9 million votes, 7.8

million of them going to Mr. Perot.

The stock argument against admitting third-party candidates to the presidential debates is that they clutter them up, and impair the voters' ability to hear and make judgments about the major-party nominees. It is an argument that won out in 1996, and is likely to prevail again in 2000, unless a third-party candidate demonstrates the strength in the polls that Mr. Perot mustered in 1992, when he won 19 percent of the vote.

A third choice

Still, if voters are as unhappy with the choices the two major parties give them as the polls indicate, the fight of the third-party forces may not be forever in vain.

Jack Germond and Jules Witcover write from The Sun's Washington bureau.

Taking drug intolerance a step too far

There are two ways to lose the war on illegal drugs. The most obvious is to allow wholesale violations of the law, as is seen in Colombia, where intimidation and assassination make a mockery of justice.

Another dangerous outcome would come from cracking down so hard on drug abuse that cherished civil liberties are damaged. That is where some lawmakers throughout the United States, in their tenacity to get a grip on drug problems, would take us.

In Mississippi a legislator proposes giving drug convicts a choice: serve serious time locked up or have a body part amputated.

"If it was me, I may lose a finger instead of sitting in a jail cell," said the author of the bill, Rep. Bobby Moak.

Even marijuana smokers would have their limbs at risk if Moak's amputation bill became law. According to a report in the Sun Herald in Mississippi, the judge and the drug offender would have to agree before a foot, a hand or some other body part was taken in

lieu of jail time.

In Kansas, a lawmaker proposes life without parole for anyone convicted of growing marijuana, a sentence that would have pot gardeners serving more time than most murderers.

Steve Dasbach, chairman of the Libertarian Party, points out that 72.4 million Americans, or about 34 percent of all adults, have tried illegal drugs and more than 22 million Americans used illegal drugs last year.

If widely implemented, these laws would subject a third of the U.S. adult population to surgical torture or life in prison, says Dasbach.

The brutal anti-drug bills that are popping up reveal a frustration stemming from the fact that a large minority of Americans refuse to behave precisely as pertinent laws demand. Fortunately, most legislators understand that cutting off a hand to spite a drug user would also dismember the Constitution.

▲ *The Baltimore Sun*
Baltimore,
Maryland
March 11, 1998

◀ *The Tampa Tribune*
Tampa, Florida
March 9, 1998

▼ *The Winchester Star*
Winchester,
Virginia
March 6, 1998

Libertarian Spokesman: Fewer Signatures Mean More of a Chance

By JASON ENGLISH
The Winchester Star

Area Libertarians are celebrating a legislative victory after the Virginia General Assembly passed a "more reasonable" petition requirement for political candidates of lesser-known parties.

Robert Snapp, area spokesman for the Libertarian Party, said it was an "arduous" struggle to ease the requirements statewide and congressional Libertarian candidates must meet to get their names on an election ballot.

The House of Delegates and the Senate each passed versions of a "ballot access" bill during the session that ends today.

Previously, statewide candidates for parties not officially recognized by the state—like the Libertarian Party—were required to obtain, at a minimum, the number of signatures equal to one half of 1 percent of the total number of registered voters in Virginia in the specific election year.

That number totaled about 17,000 signatures statewide.

The General Assembly has reduced

that requirement to 10,000 signatures, significantly easing the burden for candidates hoping to break the two-party system's control in national and state politics.

"We were hoping for 5,000 signatures, but it's still a major improvement," Snapp said in a phone interview Saturday.

Candidates for congressional offices will only have to obtain 1,000 signatures, compared to about 1,550 previously.

Snapp said since last summer, area Libertarians have focused on the ballot-

access issue, making phone calls and writing letters to the area's state legislators. Snapp didn't know if the increased pressure made the difference in the General Assembly's mind.

"We'd like to think so," he said. He said he was especially pleased to see Del. Beverly Sherwood, R-Frederick County, support the ballot access bill, after he said she voted to table comparable legislation last year.

To be recognized as an official party in Virginia, which means having automatic ballot access, a party must win 10 per-

cent of the total vote in either of the two previous elections. Bruce Meadows, secretary for the state Board of Elections, has said.

Virginia is one of eight states to never field a Libertarian candidate for U.S. Senate or governor, and it's the only state that doesn't allow an individual petitioner to circulate petitions throughout the entire state.

Snapp said Libertarians are still trying to name a candidate for the 10th Congressional District seat, held by Republican Rep. Frank Wolf.

Libertarians celebrate their gains, challenges

By ERICA GARCIA
CORRESPONDENT

FRANKLIN — New Jersey Libertarian Party members applauded their progress but vowed to press on yesterday at the group's annual convention.

Murray Sabrin, the party's candidate in November's gubernatorial race, said that since he received nearly 5 percent of the vote, party recognition has increased, and Libertarian ideas have become part of the mainstream.

"We have made the term 'Libertarian' a digestible term," he told the convention crowd.

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. He said he gave a talk on why Jews must be Libertarians and joked that he could give a similar speech for Christians and other denominations because it is based on the Ten Commandments.

Sabrin 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 3rd 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."

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

Much of the party's success may be attributed to concentration at the local and grass-roots 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 local and state levels.

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 has doubled from a few years ago. Elected officials now total about 250, he said, with Pennsylvania having the greatest concentration, at 34.

TECH TALK

Big Brother's using high-tech gadgets on you

Do high-tech cameras leave your body nekkid before the police?

The Libertarian Party says the Fourth Amendment's protection against unreasonable search is under "technological siege."

The group cites national newspaper accounts, which you can consider while you search for that lead apron to tie around your waist:

■ North Carolina: County governments use spy satellite photographs to search for property improvements to increase property tax assessments.

■ Arizona: State officials use satellites to monitor farmland and compare images to databases to determine which farmers don't have irrigation permits.

■ New Jersey and California, etc.: Police sitting in their cruisers can use thermal imaging devices to scan houses for unusual heat sources that could indicate indoor marijuana growing.

Libertarians back action committee formed to fight tax hike for stadium

BY FRITZ WENZEL
BLADE STAFF WRITER

An anti-tax group known as People Incensed by the Stadium Tax has formed a political action committee that will help in the fight against increased taxes in Lucas County to pay for a sports stadium in downtown Toledo.

The group, which is backed by the Lucas County Libertarian Party, is not opposed to the construction of a sports stadium, said Dave Domanski, chairman of the group. But it is opposed to the use of tax money to build it, he added.

"The function of government is not to build a stadium," Mr. Domanski said.

In addition to his role with the political action committee, Mr. Domanski is chairman of the county Libertarian Party, and is a former Toledo mayoral candidate.

Lucas County commissioners have voted to refer to voters a one-quarter-cent sales-tax increase to pay for the stadium, which would be the new home of the Toledo Mud Hens Class AAA baseball team, and for a swimming complex at the Lucas County Recreation Center in Maumee.

Voters will face the measure in the May 5 primary election. If approved, it would raise the sales tax in the county from 6.25 cents to 6.5 cents on the dollar.

The tax increase would

remain in effect 35 months, generating \$35.4 million. Most of the money — \$26 million — would pay to build a 12,900-seat stadium, proposed for a site in the warehouse district between Summit and Superior streets.

The rest, \$9.4 million, would fund construction of the aquatic complex at the recreation center.

Jim Boehm, committee treasurer, called the proposed sales tax a "regressive tax that impacts the poor the hardest."

"It is especially unfair when they will likely be using the stadium the least — or are commissioners planning to give free seats away to the poor?" he asked, adding, "Don't count on it."

▲ (TOP) *The Home News Tribune*, East Brunswick, New Jersey, March 16, 1998

▲ (RIGHT) *The Indianapolis Star*, Indianapolis, Indiana, March 2, 1998

▶ *The Blade*, Toledo, Ohio, March 17, 1998

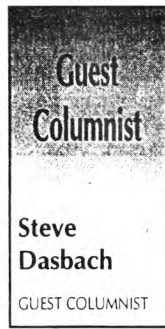
Washington full of high-paid staffers

If you think congressmen are paid too much, wait until you hear how much Capitol Hill staffers get: 554 congressional employees make more than

\$100,000 per year. That number has grown since 1995, according to a new study.

Working for the government used to be considered public service. Now it's highway robbery. First politicians raised their own pay without a vote. Now they're using our tax dollars to pay ridiculous salaries to hordes of staffers.

According to a study in Roll Call newspaper, the number of political staffers in Washington, D.C.'s exclusive \$100,000 Club



has hit an all-time high.

In fact, for the first time in history, there are more behind-the-scenes congressional staffers pulling down six-figure salaries than congressmen and senators.

These figures will be an expensive surprise for most taxpayers. Most Americans assume you make a sacrifice when you take a political job in Washington, D.C. In fact, we taxpayers are the ones making the sacrifice — to pay inflated salaries of Washington's bureaucratic ruling class.

The total taxpayer tab for the 554 six-figure staffers? More than \$63 million per year.

This is a dramatic illustration of how large and unaccountable government has become. Politicians aren't content to raise their own salaries behind our backs. They're also sharing the loot with hundreds of Capitol Hill flunkies.

As a result, Americans struggling to get by on the median

family income of \$37,000 pay exorbitant taxes to fund the salaries of political aides who earn nearly three times as much.

Currently, 81 GOP congressmen and senators pay out \$100,000-plus salaries to staff members, compared to 59 Democrats.

When it comes to padding the payroll, Republicans are leading the charge. The number of six-figure employees has skyrocketed since the so-called Republican Revolution of 1994.

Republicans are doing the same thing to their employees' salaries as they're doing to the rest of government: rapidly expanding it.

But the federal salary scandal doesn't end with congressional staffers. The \$100,000 Club is just the tip of the iceberg:

- Despite the "Reinventing Government" scheme that President Clinton boasts about, the overall cost of the salaries and benefits paid to federal workers grew to

\$101.4 billion in 1996, compared to just \$93.7 billion four years earlier. This is despite the fact that federal employment has fallen by more than 300,000 workers, thanks to military downsizing.

- When it comes to getting raises, federal employees are experts. Since 1980, compensation for federal workers has risen five times as fast as for private sector employees, according to a study by Wendell Cox.

- Over the last 18 years, the average federal employee's inflation-adjusted compensation (wages and benefits) has jumped by more than 25 percent, compared to just more than 5 percent for everyone else, the study says.

It's time to make these high-priced bureaucrats get honest jobs. Federal workers are earning too much for doing too little — or, even worse, earning too much for doing too much that's harmful to our liberty and prosperity.

Steve Dasbach is the national chairman of the Libertarian Party.

▲ *The Clayton News-Daily*, Jonesboro, Georgia, March 4, 1998

▼ *The Charleston Gazette*, Charleston, West Virginia, March 12, 1998

Libertarians offer alternative on ballot

By John K. Brown

THIS YEAR marks the first time since 1914 a new political party will field candidates in all West Virginia congressional races.

In fact, if the Republications fail to appoint congressional candidates in the 1st and 3rd Districts, this new political party, the Libertarian Party, will be the first third party to replace one of the two traditional parties at the top of the ticket.

Recently, the party was added as a choice on new voter's registration forms. It is the first time in state history that a political party other than the Democratic and Republican parties has been listed as a registration choice.

The party will nominate its candidates by state convention in 1998. The primary nomination convention will be held May 9 at the Holiday Inn Charleston House in Charleston. Since it will be held three days before the Democratic and Republican primary elections, the Libertarians will be the first candidates named to the general election ballot in November. The filing deadline for Libertarian candidates is May 11 if nominated at the primary convention.

By winning more than 16,000 votes in the 1996 gubernatorial contest, Dr. Wallace D. Johnson of Beckley earned the Libertarian Party major-party status.

The philosophy is that individual rights are supreme to society's whims.

His showing, in fact, was the best showing of more than 15 third-party gubernatorial candidates nationwide that year. But earning enough votes wasn't the most difficult task that year. The party had to collect more than 32,000 petition signatures just to get on the ballot. This was a monumental task, since the signers had to be registered voters who gave up their right to vote in the primary election that year.

The party's philosophy, libertarianism, is best described as, "a defense of Liberty," hence the root word. This is further evident by the party's choice of mascot or emblem, the Statue of Liberty. The party was founded in 1971, but really didn't begin to take root in West Virginia until 1995.

Despite the relatively short existence of the party, the philosophy is founded upon ideas proposed in the Declaration of Independence, and the United States Constitution, including the Bill of Rights. The central theme of these documents is clear: the rights of the individual are supreme to the whims of society. Libertarians view the

role of government as a service to protect these basic rights.

It should come as no surprise that Libertarians consider Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence, as their unofficial founding father.

His words serve as their credo: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

The essence of the words above is "Life, Liberty, and pursuit of Happiness." The right to life requires the government protect us from crimes of force and fraud, including foreign aggression. The right to liberty requires the government not to disrupt any peaceful and honest activities of its citizens. The right to pursue happiness requires government not to disrupt the pursuits of its citizens that do not con-

flict with the rights of others.

It is easy to see why the Libertarian Party is the party of less government. It believes the government's only role is essential executive, legislative and judicial services. Anything more is reserved for free enterprise or the states.

Libertarianism, like the ideas of our Founding Fathers, is rooted in capitalism. Capitalism is the social system driven by the actions of the free market and competition. It is the opposite of socialism. Communism is the advanced, pure form of socialism, which gives the government total control. Communism's ultimate goal is an unattainable utopia where the good of the state is supreme.

Communists and socialists view liberty as dangerous and they are partially correct. Someone once said, "Liberty is always dangerous, but it is the safest thing we have." And Benjamin Franklin once wrote, to war 1, "Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

The state motto in West Virginia is "Montani Semper Liberi" which is Latin for "Mountaineers are always free." If this truly has meaning to state voters, it's time to consider a new alternative. West Virginia's new choice in politics is the Libertarian Party.

Brown is chairman of the Libertarian Party of West Virginia.