

LIBERTY PLEDGE

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newsletter

LIBERTARIANS IN OFFICE . . .

North Carolina Alderman quits GOP to run for re-election as Libertarian

An incumbent officeholder in North Carolina has switched to the Libertarian Party, and plans to run for re-election under his new party's banner.

In early July, Alderman Kenneth Lankford in Madison switched his party affiliation to Libertarian, and is now gearing up to run for a second term on the Town Board, announced State Chair Sean Haugh.

"Ken is the first of many to follow," said Haugh. "Those [people] who entered politics out of an honest desire to serve the people and the Constitution are finding they have a home in the Libertarian Party."

Lankford, a former Republican, said he made the jump because the other parties are too eager to run peoples' lives.

"I switched to the Libertarian

Party because it appears to be the only group dedicated to keeping government within Constitutional boundaries," he said. "The purpose of government is to protect our unalienable rights, not to run our lives."

If re-elected, Lankford said his principal goal will be to hold down the cost of local government.

"I want to [put] the finances of the town in better shape without increasing taxes," he said.

Meanwhile, the goal of the Libertarian Party of North Carolina will be to give Lankford some company as an elected officeholder.

"[Our plan is to] field over 100 candidates, from Governor and U.S. Congress to County Commissions and School Boards," said Haugh.

"We don't intend for Ken to be the only elected Libertarian in North Carolina for long."

Local Libertarians in Massachusetts save puppies from taxman

Thanks to local Libertarians in Massachusetts, some lost puppies will get a better home — safe from the taxman.

On July 8, the Dartmouth Libertarian Town Committee presented a check for \$1,250 to the Fairhaven Animal Shelter. The money replaced the big tax "bite" the state government had taken out of the proceeds of a raffle held earlier by the shelter.

"The people giveth and the government taketh away," said Mike Conway, Chair of the Dartmouth LP. "And sometimes, when even puppies in need are taxed, good people will make things right."

Raffle tickets

The contribution came after the Fairhaven Animal Shelter held a raffle and sold tickets to raise sorely needed funds, said Conway. In all, the shelter raised \$6,000 to expand and improve the conditions for stray animals and lost cats and dogs held at the shelter.

Unfortunately, the shelter was immediately hit by a tax bill for \$1,250 from the state, since the raffle was considered "revenue."

Upon learning of the shelter's plight, Dartmouth Libertarians sprang into action, quickly raising the \$1,250 to reimburse the shelter.

"What you have here is government taxation out of control," said Conway. "This is a case of people trying to help their community while the government is getting in the way."

Looking for libertarian stuff on TV?

Looking for something good (and libertarian) on television? A new free weekly electronic newsletter created by LP member Jon Osborne — and devoted to freedom-oriented television programming — may be able to help you.

"Each week I scan the listings of broadcast and cable TV stations for programming of interest to libertarians, organize it into a customized schedule, and e-mail it to subscribers," said Osborne. Each listing includes the date, time, and network or channel where the show will be appearing.

With his e-newsletter, Osborne said, "I am trying to bring libertarian programming to the attention of a wider audience."

For more information or to subscribe, visit: www.missliberty.com.

By Ken Sturzenacker

Ridge should forget vouchers and boldly pursue tax credits

Tom Ridge won re-election as governor last year with less opposition and an even bigger margin than he achieved the first time. So, we expect that he understands both how to develop supportive constituencies and how to minimize his opposition.

But his repeated failures to win approval for his school voucher program call that assumption into question. Ridge has failed because he has not built his constituency beyond the usual vocal, competing special interests.

Most of the people who want vouchers fall into two categories: school administrators who hope their enrollments will go up, and parents who want government to subsidize getting their children out of government schools.

Compare that to the numbers of administrators who fear enrollments will drop, teachers who fear losing their jobs, and people who are rightly concerned government will extend its arbitrary, med-

dling powers to wherever it spends money. Ridge doesn't have much of a chance.

Throw in the millions of us required to support government schooling with the taxes we pay. We have no control over where or how our money is spent. Ridge might lose on vouchers even if he could win re-election forever.

Success on this issue requires Ridge to dare to be bold. Mediocrity should not be the key to being chosen to run for vice president.

Ridge should forget vouchers, and go straight to tax credits.

The "thou shalt have no other schools but government schools" bunch would still oppose him, but Ridge would find many new and potentially enthusiastic allies.

Parents who take their children out of government schools reduce both the state government's and the school district's costs. A dollar-for-dollar tax credit, up to the government's cost of education, is no net loss either to the state or the local district. It should be possible to either provide this credit in the state income tax, or, better yet, as a credit against local property taxes. (Yes, parents still would and should pay the cost of transportation.)

Ridge should extend the credits to that much bigger constituency he needs to succeed — everyone who pays taxes. Many of us without children in school might like to help pay the non-government

school costs for grandchildren, nieces and nephews, or even that bright, hard-working kid down the block.

Ridge should extend his tax credits offer to business, which has a vital interest in getting applicants who are actually qualified to do the work they have applied for. In an economy with unemployment below 4 percent, the biggest barrier to entry into the workplace is the failure of government schools to graduate individuals skilled in the three R's. That failure has persisted year after year, especially in our major cities, where roughly half of the students who start ninth grade fail to graduate from high school.

These last two would vastly extend the many voluntary scholarship programs already in place.

Thousands of teachers across this commonwealth already pay tuition to send their own children to non-government schools; they ought to be thrilled with new tax credits. Ridge should ask them for their support. If they refuse, he should ask them to explain why they take their own children out of the systems in which they get paid with our money, and willingly spend that money on alternative educational programs.

Dollar for dollar, tax credits simply and elegantly re-allocate the money now being spent on schools to where and how all of us who pay for education would like them to be spent.

We already enjoy and benefit with our choices with communications and utilities. Students, teachers and parents would all benefit with choices in education.

As teachers find opportunities to be innovative and creative in ways government schools do not allow, some marginal students and dropouts could be drawn back to classes they find interesting and challenging for a change.

We do not know how many parents and teachers would choose to stay with government schools, or how many people would choose to direct their money to them. Nor do we know how many would choose alternatives. So Ridge might want to be guided by this comparison: If government schooling is as good as its advocates claim, they have little, if anything, to fear from tax credits and some competition. But if government schooling is anywhere near as bad as its critics suggest, Tom Ridge ought to be getting as big a constituency together for school choice as rapidly as possible.

Given the ferocity with which the establishment fights school choice, we may already know the reality.

Be bold, Tom Ridge. Offer full tax credits for education. Do it for our children.

▲

(Ken Sturzenacker is a South Whitehall Township-based financial adviser and a former chairman of the Libertarian Party of Pennsylvania.)



RAY ALDRIDGE

Libertarians rule on the Internet

The dominant political philosophy in the Southern Bible Belt is Republicanism.

The Democrats occupy the top of the food chain in Massachusetts high society.

But what political philosophy controls the Internet, that newest human ecological niche? On the information superhighway, libertarianism has run all the older varieties of political thought right off the road.

In just about every online survey, people whose opinions are distinctly libertarian vastly outnumber those who hold traditional political ideas.

This is particularly striking when those whose energy and genius built the modern Internet are surveyed.

Almost to a person, they hold libertarian ideals. (By the way, contrary to what you may have heard, Al Gore did not build the Internet.)

This new political allegiance is natural enough, because the Internet is a sample of what the world would be like if we were all libertarians.

The government can't control the Internet. Under libertarianism, the government wouldn't even try, which would save us all a lot of money and aggravation.

Another example may serve to further illustrate this idea. Online, no one believes that the war on drugs is succeeding. It never has, and there's no evidence at all to persuade any intelligent person that it ever could.

Libertarians would end this abysmal destructive failure, along with a number of other government social engineering projects.

We ought to make an effort to understand libertarianism, just in case the electorate wises up and stops sending Republican drones to Washington.

'A dollar-for-dollar tax credit, up to the government's cost of education, is no net loss either to the state or the local district.'

▲ *The Morning Call*, Allentown, Pennsylvania, June 24, 1999

▶ *The Northwest Florida Daily News*, Fort Walton Beach, Florida, June 20, 1999

Woman of the century? A vote for Ayn Rand

No other female writer has influenced ideas more than the controversial author of 'Atlas Shrugged'

In 1991, the Library of Congress commissioned a nationwide survey seeking books that changed the lives of their readers. The book most often named was the Bible. The second book, to the surprise of many, was "Atlas Shrugged" by Ayn Rand.

Like the hero of that 1957 novel, Ayn (pronounced *eye-en*) Rand became a legend in her own lifetime. And since her death in 1982, the legend has grown.

A documentary about her, "Sense of Life," was nominated for an Oscar last year. The post office issued a commemorative stamp in April celebrating her accomplishments. And last Sunday, Showtime aired the made-for-television biographical movie, "The Passion of Ayn Rand."

In my mind, no one has surpassed the influence and originality of thought of this novelist/philosopher in this century. Because of her use of artistic writing to express her philosophy; the clarity, logic and originality of her nonfiction; because of the influence of her work on social and political life, not only in this country but around the world, and especially because

of her ability to define the case for an objective morality, I nominate Ayn Rand as "woman of the century."

The 40th anniversary of publication of "Atlas Shrugged" was marked by a conference in Washington, D.C. In reviewing

the affair, the Chicago Tribune reported that "Rand's views of enlightened selfishness and laissez-faire capitalism are reflected everywhere . . . They reverberate today in arenas as diverse as deregulation of the trucking, airline and telecommunication industries; in the domestic debate over welfare reform." The Washington Times reported that "most

important, Rand established the moral foundation of capitalism for the first time."

What is it about this Russian emigre who came to this country in 1926 that generates such tributes? Perhaps it's because her novels challenged the fundamental premises of our culture. Ayn Rand's major books, "The Fountainhead" and "Atlas Shrugged," launched a nationwide intellectual philosophy, objectivism. Its principles hold that man's life, the life proper to a rational being, is



AYN RAND

the standard of moral values. Objectivism regards altruism as incompatible with man's nature, with the creative requirements of his survival and with a free society.

In the political area, Rand's ideas led to the formation of the Libertarian Party, whose political philosophy has spread to 82 countries.

Today, Ayn Rand's name is synonymous with rugged individualism. Few American writers have generated more controversy, debate and influence. Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan was a close friend and admirer and wrote three essays for her nonfiction book, "Capitalism, the Unknown Ideal." Rand's birthday, Feb. 2, is celebrated across the country as Ayn Rand Day by members of the Association of Libertarian Feminists, organized 26 years ago in Eugene.

There is no question in my mind that Ayn Rand has had more influence on ideas than any other woman author. She has influenced art, science, economic theory, philosophy, ethics and politics. "Atlas Shrugged" has been described as the first novel of ideas written by a woman this century; her characters' actions illustrate her philosophy.

The book's influence is unmatched by any other novel. Certainly, in the minds of millions of admiring readers, Ayn Rand is the woman of the century.

Tonie Nathan of Eugene is past national director of media relations for the Libertarian Party and was its first vice presidential candidate. In 1972, she received the first Electoral College vote ever awarded to a woman.

The Oregon Libertarian Party holds its state convention Friday and Saturday in Bend. For information, call 1-800-829-1992.



IN MY OPINION

Tonie Nathan

Libertarian Hari sworn in to Ford Co. Board of Review

Ford County Libertarian Mike Hari was sworn into office as a member of the Ford County Board of Review Tuesday morning at the county courthouse.

He joins two Republicans on the board and replaces a Democratic member. Also sworn in was Edwin Sauer of Gibson City.

Ron Bork of Piper City is the third member of the board.

The Libertarians became entitled to the seat on the board after running their full slate of candidates for Ford

County offices in last November's elections. Hari was appointed to a two-year term last month.

Hari will attend a meeting of assessors of boards of review members at the Illinois Department of Revenue in Springfield along with Ford County Supervisor of Assessments Chuck Warner.

The Libertarian Party is the third largest political party in the U.S. and the second most active party in Ford County.

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STUDY PROVES HYPO-CRISY. The Libertarian Party released the findings of a 1993-1995 study conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention on kids and guns. According to the government's own report, children who get guns from their parents are less likely to commit any kind of street crime (14 percent) than children who have no gun in the house (24 percent)—and are significantly less likely to do so than children who acquire an illegal gun (74 percent). Steve Dasbach, the Libertarian Party national director, says: "The evidence is in: The simplest way to reduce firearm-related violence among children is to buy them a gun and teach them how to use it responsibly."

Sobran thoughts

With the brunt of the 2000 campaign looming, we must prepare for the long season of poll-tested sound bites.

It's hard to imagine any of today's politicians, however, matching the eloquence and substance of a sample of quotations put together by the Libertarian Party:

"Government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it." — Ronald Reagan.

"A government which robs Peter to pay Paul can always depend on the support of Paul." — George Bernard Shaw.

"No man's life, liberty, or property are safe while the legislature is in session." — Mark Twain.

"Government is the great fiction, through which everybody endeavors to live at the expense of everybody else." — Frederic Bastiat.

"Ask not what you can do for your country, ask what your government is doing to you."

— Joseph Sobran.

▲ (TOP) *The Oregonian*
Portland, Oregon
June 23, 1999

▲ (CENTER)
The Paxton Daily Record
Paxton, Illinois, June 2, 1999

▶ (RIGHT)
The Washington Times
Washington DC,
June 29, 1999

▶ (BOTTOM)
The Spotlight, Washington DC,
June 14, 1999

Libertarians advocate individual rights

Libertarians are convinced that individuals inherently make better choices than governments.

By Brian Irving
Fayetteville

Do you believe you're a better judge of what's good for you and your family than the government?

Do you want to be free to pursue your own dreams and reap the rewards of your hard work? And are you willing to endure the consequences if you fail?

Then you may be a libertarian.

No, I didn't say libertarian — I said libertarian.

Libertarians are people who believe everyone should have the right to exercise sole dominion over their lives, to do whatever they want, so long as they don't harm others, or prevent others from enjoying the same privilege.

Libertarians "hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by the Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Do these words sound familiar? They should. They're from the Declaration of Independence.

Thomas Jefferson and the "Founding Fathers" were libertarians. Libertarianism is American's heritage of liberty, patriotism, personal responsibility and honest work trying to make a better life for yourself and your family. Libertarians want a society which will preserve that heritage for our children.

Libertarianism is the idea that a free and independent life is the best. If you want to take risks, to shoot for the moon, you should be able to take your chances and go for it.

Libertarianism is a caring, people-centered approach to politics.



Irving



We want a society where each unique individual is respected and which allows people to reach their greatest potential. We want a society which encourages the development of harmonious relationships among all people.

Libertarians are not "liberal" or "conservative"; there's no "litmus test" to being a Libertarian. All you have to do is recognize you have a right to be free, to decide what's best for you — and the obligation to respect the rights of all others.

Libertarians believe the purpose of government is the protection of the rights and property of peaceful individuals. We believe the initiation of force or fraud for political or social reasons is always immoral and contrary to the principles of legitimate government.

This last point is important. In order to join the Libertarian Party you must sign a "noninitiation of force" statement, something the Republicans or Democrats do not ask you to do.

Libertarianism is the opposite of totalitarianism. We're convinced that individuals inherently make better choices than governments. Throughout history, governments have operated on the opposite principle — that the state is a better judge of what's good for "the people" than individuals are, and that the state has the right to dispose of the lives of individuals and the fruits of their labor.

Even within the United States, all political parties — other than the

Libertarian Party — grant to government the right to regulate the lives of individuals and seize the fruits of their labor without their consent. On the contrary, Libertarians deny the right of any government to do these things and maintain that where governments exist, they must not violate the rights of any individual. In other words, we believe in the Constitution of the United States, even when it is not convenient or we don't like the way others are exercising their rights.

Libertarians take the right to life seriously. We oppose the initiation of physical force against other people — or nations.

Libertarians believe the right to liberty of speech any action is paramount. We oppose an attempt by government to abridge the freedom of speech and press, as well as government censorship.

Libertarians respect the right to property. We oppose all government interference with private property, such as confiscation, nationalization, and eminent domain and support the prohibition of robbery, trespass, fraud and misrepresentation.

Since governments must not violate individual rights, we oppose an interference by government in the areas of voluntary and contractual relations among individuals. People should not be forced to sacrifice their lives and property for the benefit of others. They should be left free by government to deal with one another. The resultant economic system, the only one compatible, with

the protection of individual rights, is the free market.

Americans put very little trust in government or politics today because our so-called leaders have led us away from the principles of individual liberty and personal responsibility our nation was founded on.

The scandals and negativism that permeate America's politics today come about precisely because politicians are more interested in expanding the power of government — their power — than they are about helping people. The only difference between tax-and-spend Republicans and the spend-and-tax Democrats is what they will tax and who they will spend it on.

Libertarians, in stark contrast, believe in the original intent of the Founding Fathers: that the only purpose of government is to protect the person, property and rights of citizens. Otherwise it should leave them alone.

That is why the Libertarian Party is the third largest and fastest growing political party in the United States. It is the only "third" party officially recognized with ballot status in North Carolina.

The Libertarian Party of Cumberland County is the fastest growing chapter in the state. Founded in January 1999, we held our first county convention in March, adopted a constitution, elected officers, sent delegates to the state Libertarian Party Convention and drafted a platform. The LPCC meets at 7 p.m. each Wednesday in the Huske Hardware House Brew Pub, 405 Hay Street, downtown Fayetteville.

The meetings are open to everyone.

For more information you can call, e-mail or check out our web site.

Call Christian Davis at 485-4848 (e-mail: seedee@earthlink.net), or Brian Irving at 822-9418 (e-mail: irvingink@faynet.com).

Our web address is: http://members.tripod.com/Liberty_CC

Irving is communications director of the Libertarian Party of Cumberland County.