

# LIBERTY PLEDGE

## newsletter

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## West Virginia LP helps overturn smoking ban

Using “moral and personal rights” arguments, West Virginia Libertarians have successfully lobbied to overturn a health board order that banned smoking in Monongalia County restaurants, bars, and bowling alleys.

Libertarians led a massive turn-out of 80 to 100 people at the County Board of Health meeting on January 23, and convinced the bureaucrats to overturn a previous 3-2 vote that made it a crime to light up in most private business locations, punishable by a fine of up to \$100.

After hearing from dozens of speakers opposed to the ban, the board reversed itself with a 1-3-1 vote.

“I have never seen a committee so thoroughly trounced as I did at that meeting,” said David Wallace, Chair of the Marion County LP. “The Libertarian Party of West Virginia had a great night.”

The County Board of Health passed the so-called Indoor Clean Air Act on December 12 without a public vote. A board member defended that decision, saying: “I don’t think that the people can vote on any issue involving health.” In response, Libertarians began to organize to overturn the ban.

### The high that collectivists get

Dr. Richard Kerr, Vice Chair of the LPWV, contributed an op-ed piece in a local newspaper, *The Dominion Post*, writing: “The one high that is more addicting than smoking is the high that collectivists get from suppressing individual liberty. Is a coercively smoke-free society really better than a free society? Libertarians think that it is not.”

And Travis Raines, the Chairman of the WV University College Libertarians group, said about the ban: “What really disturbed me is that [the board members] keep referring to these establishments as *public* places. These are not public places — they are owned by private citizens who should be free to use their property as they wish.”

But the climax of the anti-ban campaign came at the board meeting. Clearly stunned by the overwhelmingly negative reaction, the board heard their ordinance blasted as a civil rights violation and a moral mistake, and then promptly voted to overturn the law — to the delight of Libertarians.

“We clearly identified ourselves as LPWV members opposed to the anti-smoking ordinance,” said Wallace. “Everyone at that meeting came to understand that the West Virginia LP was there, where we stood, and why. It is certainly good to be right when you have the fortune of also having overwhelming public support.”

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Ohio Libertarians stop stadium

Libertarians in Ohio have done it again — they’ve helped kill a proposed multi-million dollar, tax-funded professional sports stadium.

On February 10, residents of Dublin, Ohio, rejected a proposed \$11.45 million stadium for the Columbus Crew professional soccer team by a 59% to 41% vote, thanks in large part to LP member Dean Grinch and his Families Acting to Conserve Taxes (FACT) lobbying group.

“Central Ohio voters did it again!” said Dena L. Bruedigam, editor of the *Ohio Libertarian* newsletter. “Now we’re hearing that the soccer team owner is going to London, Ohio, to try to con them into building his stadium. London is also in my region, so we’ll be keeping an eye on the situation there in case we have another fight on our hands.”

In May 1997, Ohio Libertarians successfully spearheaded a campaign to kill a \$192 million sales tax to pay for two professional sports stadiums in Columbus.

### Innis: Governor’s run uncertain

CORE president Roy Innis has joined the Libertarian Party — but now says he hasn’t decided whether to run for governor of New York on the LP ticket.

The African American civil rights leader joined the LP on February 4, and said, “I like the idea [of running for governor].” However, his CORE duties may not leave him enough time to run a “credible and competitive” campaign, he said.

In response, NY State Chair Lloyd Wright said he is working to put together a package of support to convince Innis to run.

“I believe that with Roy Innis as our candidate, we will achieve 50,000 votes [and major party status],” he said. “I believe we owe our members our best effort to recruit Roy Innis. Just signing him up for the party is a major coup. However, to convince him to run, I feel we must show that we can raise a considerable sum of money and show him a list of volunteers who would help with his campaign.”

Innis said he will make a decision about a gubernatorial run before the New York LP convention on March 14.

Whatever his final decision, Innis had words of praise for the Libertarian Party when he joined at CORE headquarters in New York.

“You have the kind of principles this country needs more of,” said Innis. “The Republicans are unable to deal in a forthright way with what’s going on in this country.”

# Former manager discusses campaign

■ In a national publication, candidate Murray Sabrin is criticized for his third-party run for New Jersey governor.

By RALPH SIEGEL  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TRENTON — The campaign of Murray Sabrin, New Jersey's first third-party candidate to reach the main stage, was marked by discord from Libertarians who believe he swung too far away from party ideology.

Former campaign manager Michael Buoncrisitano writes in the January issue of "Liberty" magazine, a national publication for Libertarians, that Sabrin during his campaign evolved into just another conservative Republican.

Buoncrisitano also disclosed that he was fired from the campaign by Sabrin on the day The Associated Press reported that he was keeping secret the names of hundreds of campaign contributors.

Sabrin said his campaign was a success because he made the Libertarian agenda familiar to New Jersey households, mainly through TV advertising and his participation in

three televised debates with mainstream candidates Christie Whitman and Jim McGreevey.

By raising the minimum \$210,000, Sabrin qualified for a \$2-to-\$1 match in public dollars, plus a podium at the debates.

"Getting into the debates was really the primary objective," he said. "I think the political establishment was put on notice."

Sabrin, 50, a finance professor at Ramapo State College, maintained his class schedule and did minimal street campaigning compared to his opponents. But at least for the duration of the campaign, his name became something of a household word.

Sabrin had \$894,111 to spend, according to the Election Law Enforcement Commission, buying radio and television exposure. He received 114,000 votes, an important total when noting Whitman defeated McGreevey by just 25,200 votes.

Sabrin said he succeeded in converting an ivory-tower ideology into practical campaign issues that appealed to ordinary residents.

"The challenge was to take the concepts of Libertarianism and translate that into policies that people understood without too much education (about the party)," he said.

Libertarianism is known to most only for its radical views on legalized guns, drugs and prostitution. Sabrin ignored those and emphasized the party's call for less government and no state taxes. He converted the party's hatred of government regulation into a simple campaign pitch warning voters about tougher auto emissions tests.

"I think it was an overwhelming success," Sabrin said, claiming the target had been 100,000 votes. "I think anyone who says otherwise really doesn't understand what we accomplished."

Buoncrisitano in his article concedes Sabrin made "a great personal sacrifice," but he disagrees about success.

"I wish he had done more to appeal to a broader audience and had honored his earlier commitment to party building," he said.

"I had counted on Murray to ensure that the Libertarians' message would be presented to all who might embrace it," Buoncrisitano said. "I wasn't prepared to see this campaign take on the appearance of a conservative Republican campaign. But I could feel the ground shifting beneath my feet."

The refusal to disclose contributor names resulted in the first "damage control" his campaign had

to deal with — a sure sign of entry into a campaign mainstream.

Of the \$356,983 Sabrin raised in private donations, \$197,644 came from people who donated \$300 or less. The law allowed Sabrin to withhold the names of those donors — the source of more than half his money — although no gubernatorial candidate who accepted public matching funds had ever invoked this right.

Buoncrisitano said he explained the campaign's use of the privacy clause to the AP, which quoted him in detail, but Sabrin sent him a letter firing him later that day.

Writers in "Liberty" magazine ridiculed Sabrin for taking public money at all, especially after soliciting donations from Libertarians across the country. Vin Suprynowicz, a Las Vegas newspaperman by trade, said Sabrin did not fully explain he wanted to qualify for "looted tax moneys."

Sabrin sheds criticism from purists.

"The Libertarian Party is not an end in itself," he said. "We are advancing something that we have been working on in our own way for 25 years, to see the welfare state get whittled down to size. I called for the elimination of the state income tax and the state sales taxes. How far do they want me to go?"

## Thumbs down

The Libertarian Party is campaigning against federal pilot programs that encourage states to fingerprint people who apply for driver's licenses.

"Americans should give a unanimous thumbs down to this new law," said Steve Dasbach, Libertarian Party chairman. "If we don't, your next trip to the Department of Motor Vehicles may resemble a booking on 'NYPD Blue': You'll be photographed and fingerprinted for the 'crime' of wanting to drive your own car."

Mr. Dasbach added: "The government wants to fingerprint law-abiding citizens, just in case they commit a crime. But why not just require every American to post bail or hire an attorney in advance, just in case they commit a crime? Politicians always find lofty motives, such as protecting children or fighting crime, to write more laws. But in the end it's ordinary Americans — not criminals — who pay the price."

## Slip and slide

Let's check in on Harry Browne, the 1996 Libertarian presidential candidate.

So Mr. Browne, what do you think of the latest stack of allegations against President Clinton, including charges that he used trooper bodyguards in Arkansas to recruit women for sexual encounters?

"No matter what you might think of his morals or politics, he may be the slickest politician ever to slide down Pennsylvania Avenue," Mr. Browne says. "Even if a videotape surfaces showing him with a bundle of checks and missing files in one arm and a woman of ill repute on the other, he'll continue to slip through the net."

## Golden years

What's the quickest way to become a millionaire? Get elected to Congress, then retire.

This get-rich-quick scheme is revealed in a new report by the National Taxpayers Union, which finds that many politicians will pocket nearly \$100,000 a year when they retire — in addition to Social Security benefits.

Among those outraged by the luxurious retirement pensions is Libertarian Party Chairman Steve Dasbach, who says our elected officials have "built themselves a golden parachute. The only problem is, it's our gold that's paying for it."

He cites Rep. Vic Fazio, California Democrat, who will rake in \$2.5 million in estimated lifetime benefits; and Sen. Dan Coats, Indiana Republican, who will retire at age 56 and look forward to a staggering \$3.2 million.

"In other words, politicians will be making far more money for not working than ordinary Americans get for working," Mr. Dasbach tells us.

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▲ *The Asbury Park Press*  
Asbury Park,  
New Jersey  
January 1, 1998

◀ (LEFT) *The Washington Times*  
Washington DC  
January 2, 1998

◀ (CENTER) *The Washington Times*  
Washington DC  
January 20, 1998

◀ (RIGHT) *The Washington Times*  
Washington DC  
January 21, 1998



# Strang Kicks off Run for State Senate

By **BILL RUFTY**  
The Ledger

WINTER HAVEN — Buoyed by relatives, friends, Libertarian party leaders and petition-toting grandchildren, former Winter Haven Mayor Carl Strang kicked off his third-party campaign for the District 17 Senate seat Wednesday.

Strang, 64, will carry the banner of the Libertarian Party and less government into the March 10 special election campaign to fill the seat left vacant by Rick Dantzler's resignation from the Senate to campaign for governor.

It would be the first time a Libertarian has been on the ballot for the Florida Senate. The party was founded in 1971.

"I am taking this step for a lot of reasons and most of them are around here," Strang said pointing to children and grandchildren in the crowd of 57 at Central Park in Winter Haven.

"Our children, especially, deserve to grow up in a freer society than we have today," Strang said.

Strang switched to the Libertarians from the Republican Party last year. Since the switch he has been active in trying to get ballot-access laws changed and has pushed for more privacy protections in Florida's Constitution, which is being revised this year.

Already running for the seat are Republican John Laurent, who is giving up his seat in the state House, and Tom Mims, a

Democrat and former state representative.

Strang's third-party attempt could have two major effects on the campaign: It will raise the issue of ballot access in Florida and it likely will siphon off votes from the major-party candidates.

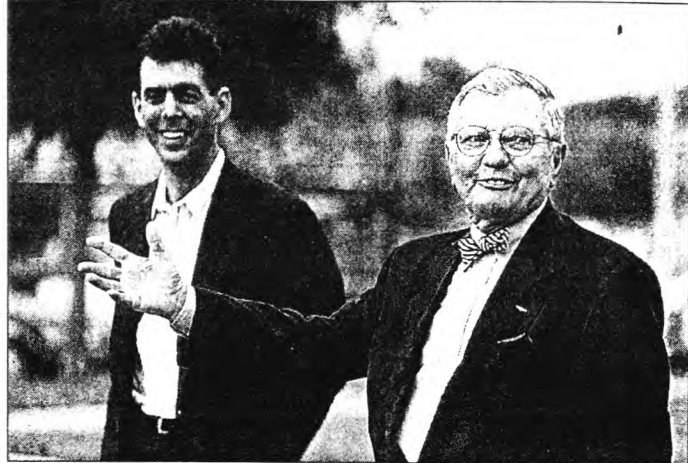
In a three-way general election, the person with the highest number of votes wins, even if the winning candidate receives less than 50 percent of the votes.

It is difficult to get on the ballot in Florida if you aren't a Republican or a Democrat. Unlike Laurent or Mims, Strang must come up with the signatures of 1,396 voters by Tuesday, which is based on a formula derived from the number of registered voters in the district.

"This is one of the things we want people to be aware of," Strang said. "No one realizes how the two major parties have tried to cushion themselves from challenges for real change."

Nick Dunbar, chairman of the Florida Libertarian Party, said volunteers from across the state will be in Senate District 17 through Tuesday trying to get the necessary signatures on petition cards. A group of students from a Libertarian Club at the University of Florida is due in for the weekend, he said. Petitioners will be on the jogging trail on the south side of Lake Hollingsworth from noon to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

"There is no doubt about it,



PIERRE DuCHARME/The Ledger

Nick Dunbar, left, state chairman for the Libertarian Party, stands next to Carl Strang as Strang announces his state Senate campaign.

the whole thing is purposefully skewed in favor of Republicans and Democrats." University of Florida political scientist Richard Scher said. "Now, I don't buy into the conspiracy claims of the Libertarians — they see conspiracies under every bush — but it was done long ago to protect the two major parties.

Scher said that Strang could be a viable candidate since he has an established constituency, has already served in elective office and has name recognition.

"Florida does not have as much history of third-party can-

didates as other parts of the nation," he said.

"But this campaign may be picking up on the general upset of people with government," Scher said. "It is not a bad strategy, quite frankly."

Republicans are the most vulnerable to a Libertarian campaign, Scher said, because many of the laissez-faire principles of the Libertarians track very conservative GOP ideals. But the Libertarian's hands-off approach to personal lives and advocacy of privacy issues appeals to liberals and moderates, he said.

▲ *The Ledger*, Lakeland, Florida, January 15, 1998

▼ *The Salt Lake Tribune*, Salt Lake City, Utah, January 10, 1998

# Libertarians Plan To Fight Eagle Forum — With Phone as Weapon

BY JUDY FAHYS  
THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

A small army being assembled by the Utah Libertarian Party plans to take up telephones as its primary weapon for the upcoming legislative session.

The Libertarians already have zeroed in on the conservative Eagle Forum.

"We're asking members and prospective members to join our phone tree, call their legislators and let them know there are other perspectives out there," said party Chairman Jim Dexter.

The latest issue of the party's newsletter, *The Utah Liberator*, urges members and sympathizers to mail in a coupon to become a "Libertarian Minute Man," a member of a phone tree that will mobilize on issues of special interest to the party, such as taxes and gun rights.

"Won't you please help us beat the Eagle Forum at its own game?" a recruitment article asks.

"For years, the intractable, blue-nosed, busybody Forum

has held the Utah state Legislature hostage with a barrage of phone calls supporting one restriction on personal liberty after another," it continues.

"If you and your liberty-minded friends were to call your state representative or state senator every time a bad bill was introduced, you'd help defeat the dark forces of evil who seek to impose their brand of uptight, repressive agency-denying morality on all Utahns."

Noting that their groups sometimes agree on legislative issues, Utah Eagle Forum President Gayle Ruzicka welcomed the new phone tree.

"Everybody should stand up for what they believe in," she said. "If people disagree with us, then they have the right to come up to the Legislature and do what we do."

Ruzicka pointed out her group has not earned its influence at the Capitol by entertaining lawmakers over elegant meals or handing them tickets to Jazz basketball games. Rather, the Eagle Forum has solidified its power over the years with its phone tree and contingent of reliable, unpaid lobbyists, she said.

"They listen to us because we are there and we have a telephone tree," Ruzicka added. "If we need to, we can generate a thousand calls in two hours."

Ruzicka said her group has about 2,000 dues-paying members and about 10,000 active sympathizers.

Always at the ready, the Forum phone tree has become the stuff of legend at the Capitol, and it has made it possible for her group to influence state policy on a wide range of issues.

One time the phone tree helped stop a bill extending the school year to 220 days by jamming lawmakers' lines over a couple hours, she said.

House Speaker Mel Brown said he could not recall an issue about which he had been contacted by the Eagle Forum. Still, he agreed with Ruzicka and the Libertarians that lawmakers generally value personal communication with constituents.

"Nothing is more effective," the Midvale Republican said. "A phone call is second-best; face-to-face contact probably would be the best, though."

Point of View/John Michael Flint

# A speedy decision on airbags

## They don't care

The Libertarian Party sent out a press release yesterday on the Clinton sex scandal, and this is what it had to say: We don't care.

"It would be a shame if Clinton was forced to resign or was impeached over allegations he pressured a White House intern to lie about an alleged sexual affair," said Steve Dasbach, the party's chairman.

"It would be a shame because Clinton would then face judgment over a simple moral or legal issue — and not face judgment over the fact that while president, he routinely violated the Constitution, trampled Americans' civil liberties and vastly expanded the size and cost of the federal government.

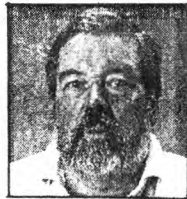
"Frankly, we're less interested in Bill's wrongs than what he's done to the Bill of Rights," Mr. Dasbach said.

▲ *The Washington Times*  
Washington DC  
January 23, 1998

► *The Modesto Bee*  
Modesto, California  
December 3, 1997

▼ *The Union Leader*  
Manchester, New Hampshire  
December 27, 1997

"I'm from the government, and I'm here to help you!"



*Now, we can turn them on or off*

the airbags in their cars.

Airbags save lives: This we are told. Pro-bag pitchpersons claim up to a couple of thousand over the past decade, and these numbers are generally accepted uncritically. They are, after all, Official Statistics.

**THE SKEPTIC OBSERVES** that each case involves individual judgment as to the role an airbag played in crash survival, and there's no way of knowing that the person making the judgment (a) is competent, and (b) has no ax to grind.

At best, it's educated guesswork.

Airbags kill people: this we know. The official statistic is close to 90, and there's no judgment involved: dead is dead.

The Feds who mandated these devices can't say they were caught unaware. As early as 1969, General Motors was warning that airbags could kill children, but Washington didn't want to hear it.

In 1979, then-NHTSA head Joan Claybrook all but accused GM of making it up (actually, she characterized the GM study with the phrase "hurry-up style," and implied that it was merely a delaying tactic).

Airbags were the *flavor du jour* in

This oxymoronic bit of irony echoed strongly in the recent announcement by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) that certain Americans will now be permitted to install on/off switches for



Chrysler Product Communications

Illustration shows air bag deployed after a simulated crash.

Washington then, and he who uttered a discouraging word was swept aside.

Awareness of the airbag as a lethal device has caught the media's attention only recently, but the Feds knew about it a lot earlier.

Writing in the September issue of *Car & Driver*, columnist Patrick Beardon cites an internal NHTSA memo from 1991, acknowledging at least a half-dozen airbag fatalities, but warning that "... bad press on these few cases could cause a lot of harm to the public's positive perception (of airbags)." They knew, but said nothing.

**A YEAR LATER**, when auto makers proposed strong warning language regarding airbags, an "auto safety group" chaired by Joan Claybrook objected, not wanting to "instill anxiety" in drivers by providing "unnecessarily alarming statements."

It took the recent decapitation of a child in a low-speed fender-bender in Idaho to really blow this cover-up and put the issue on the public radar.

Claybrook, now the head of Ralph Nader's "Public Citizen" group, has a

lot to answer for, but she's been given a pass by the mainstream media, which supports the idea of government-as-nanny, a concept that Claybrook personifies.

The real villains in this piece, though, are government arrogance and stupidity.

- Arrogance in forcing these devices on drivers, ignoring danger warnings, and covering up as long as they could when the predicted dangers materialized.

- Stupidity in believing they had a no-downside "silver bullet," because there is no such thing; there are always consequences.

When somebody tells you it's a "win-win" deal, grab your wallet and head for the exit. And when someone rings your bell, announcing he's from the government and here to help you, lie low and don't open the door.

Flint, a Modesto Libertarian, works in sales. He is one of 12 community columnists.

## Libertarians: Get Government Out of Education

Libertarian Party of New Hampshire leaders are urging the state government to avoid new taxes and get out of public education in the wake of the Claremont education funding court ruling.

"The only guarantee parents will have of 'adequate' education is to make educational decisions for their own children," said the party's Chairman, Danielle Donovan.

"And the only way to guarantee that parents will remain truly free to make those decisions is for the state to 'cherish' education from a safe distance, by clearly rejecting any notion of government mandates and letting a free market provide a wealth of educational opportunities to New Hampshire's children," Donovan said.

"Getting government out of education entirely would not only end the threat of a broadbase tax, it would slash property taxes by an average 75 percent statewide," she said.

"Contrast this bold initiative with the Republicans' in-

**"The only guarantee parents will have of 'adequate' education is to make educational decisions for their own children."**

— Libertarian Party Chairman Danielle Donovan

crementalist approach, which would tinker with the funding question and leave the deadening hand of the bureaucracy intact," Donovan said.

"The state should not owe anyone an education," said the party's vice-chairman, Paula Werme.

"Once you introduce the element that the state owes an

education to its citizens, it becomes no longer possible for schools to teach students about a free society, since one no longer exists," Werme said.

"The right to pursue an education differs from the right to be educated by the government," Werme said. "Mandating what the state must provide only leads to fewer freedoms for everyone."

It's time to end state mandates and give children "vastly greater opportunities" for higher-quality education, said the party's education committee Chairman, Brian Christeson.

"Over the last 150 years, Americans have seen nearly universal literacy replaced by a society in which 40 million adults cannot understand a news article or balance a checkbook," he said.

"Why? Because an ever larger, ever more centralized educational system has taken decision-making further and further away from those most fit to make the decisions: parents."