

# LIBERTY PLEDGE

## newsletter

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MAY 2001

## LP member appointed Superior Court judge

Longtime Libertarian Party member John Buttrick has been appointed to the Maricopa County Superior Court in Arizona — apparently making him the first LP judge in the USA.

Buttrick was selected on May 1 by Arizona's Republican governor, Jane Hull, beating 39 other contenders for the position.

"The other 39 were, of course, Republicans and Democrats," said Buttrick, who was selected even though his "party affiliation was known throughout the entire selection process.

"It may possibly be the first time a registered Libertarian has been appointed to any judgeship anywhere



■ Buttrick:  
LP judge.

in the country," he said.

As a superior court judge, Buttrick will have jurisdiction over civil matters where more than \$10,000

is in dispute — as well as felony trials, including capital offense cases.

Buttrick has a long history of LP activism. He has run for governor (1994) and state representative (1998); was a member of the Libertarian National Committee (1997-2000), and was the chair of the LP National Platform Committee (1998 and 2000).

## NEWS FROM AROUND THE USA

### ROCKER MOJO NIXON JOINS LP

Nixon is a Libertarian. Mojo Nixon, that is. The musician — long a cult favorite for his quirky, irreverent songs — joined the party at the Ohio Libertarian Party's convention in Columbus on April 21.

Nixon, 44, signed an LP membership form after giving a speech and performing several songs to a crowd of about 150 people.

"I was extremely pleased [that] Mojo decided to join," said Ohio LP Executive Director Dena Breudigam. "He is definitely one of us."

In his speech, Nixon said, "I want the government out of my face." He also voiced support for personal accountability and "treating adults like adults" — and opposition to the War on Drugs.

With 12 albums, numerous national tours, and a rabid cult following to his credit, Nixon "resides just below the threshold of household name status," according to TheOnion.com.

Perhaps best known for his novelty hits "Elvis Is Everywhere" (1987) and "Debbie Gibson is Pregnant With My Two-Headed Love Child" (1989), Nixon has spent two decades playing his humorous songs and raw, stripped down brand of rock 'n' roll.



■ Nixon: An  
LP member.

## Republican group declares 'all-out war' on Libertarian Party

A tiny Republican group appears to have declared an "all-out war" on Libertarians, after a magazine reported that the LP cost Republicans control of the U.S. Senate.

In an e-mail on April 30, Eric Dondero said that the Fairfax, Virginia-based Republican Liberty Caucus (RLC) plans to "fatally strike at the LP."

Dondero, a member of

the RLC's Executive Committee, said, "We are now at a state of all-out war with the LP. They are the enemy. Much more so than the Democrats or moderate Republicans."

There was no confirmation from the RLC — which says it exists to move Republicans towards "limited government [and] personal freedom" — whether Dondero was speaking officially

for the organization.

Dondero's announcement came after the April 16 issue of *National Review* reported that LP candidates are "seriously hurting Republicans" and had probably caused two GOP candidates for U.S. Senate to lose.

Even if the threat of a "war" is true, said LP National Director Steve Dasbach, Libertarians shouldn't lose any sleep over it.

"It's difficult to get too worried about the lilliputian RLC," he said. "They've been around for 13 years, but are organized in fewer than two dozen states. They've had no luck in making Republicans more libertarian. And, according to documents filed with the FEC, the RLC managed to raise only \$9,049 last year — which is what the Libertarian Party raises in about two days."

VIEWPOINT

# A Neglected Story: Libertarians Cost Republicans Edge In The U.S. Senate

BY JOHN J. MILLER

Democrats in Washington are waiting for a funeral. If Republican Sen. Strom Thurmond passes away before leaving office — he will hit the century mark next year, and his current health is not said to be good — then South Carolina's Democratic governor will appoint a successor. And that, presumably, would break the Senate's 50-50 partisan deadlock.

Last year, Democrats picked up a Senate seat when Georgia Republican Paul Coverdell suddenly died, and another when Democrat Jean Carnahan beat incumbent John Ashcroft in Missouri on what was arguably a sympathy vote for her husband, who perished in a plane crash shortly before the election.

No wonder Democrats aren't the pro-life party.

### Underreported Trend

There's a hidden reason why Senate Republicans are on the ropes, though, and it may represent the most underappreciated political phenomenon of the last two election cycles: In both 1998 and 2000, a Republican candidate for the Senate lost to a Democrat by a margin far less than a Libertarian's total vote.

Much has been said about how Ralph Nader kept Al Gore out of the White House. The Green Party nominee attracted more than 97,000 votes in Florida, for example. Yet few people have noticed how Libertarians have done similar damage to Republicans in the Senate.

The most recent victim was Slade Gorton of Washington. In a final tally that took weeks to add up and confirm in November, he lost to Maria Cantwell by 2,228 votes. In that race, Libertarian Jeff Jared hauled in 64,734 votes.

Two years earlier, Republican John Ensign lost to incumbent Democrat Harry Reid in Nevada by a measly 428 votes, in an election that saw Libertarian Michael Cloud carry 8,044 votes.

Republicans would probably now enjoy a 52-48 majority in the Senate if Libertarians hadn't run in these races.

### Cutting Into GOP, Not Democrats

The problem isn't confined to the Senate. The GOP arguably would also control two more House seats if there were no Libertarian Party.

Rep. Steve Kuykendall of California lost his re-election bid against Jane Harman by 4,452 votes; Libertarian Daniel Sherma attracted 6,073 votes in that election. In New Jersey, Democratic Rep. Rush Holt fended off Republican Dick Zimmer by 651 votes; Worth Winslow of the Libertarian Party took home 1,225 votes in that election.

◀ *Investor's Business Daily*,  
(National Newspaper),  
May 9, 2001

▶ *The National Review*,  
New York, New York,  
April 16, 2001

▼ *The Washington Times*,  
Washington, DC,  
May 8, 2001

Of course, not every Libertarian voter would support the GOP in the absence of a Libertarian candidate. Many might not turn out at all. Others would choose another minor party, such as the Greens, in order to register disapproval with the two major parties. A few might even vote for Democrats.

But in the main, Libertarians are freedom-loving, small-government devotees who would find a more natural home in the GOP than almost anywhere else.

"Exit polling shows that we take twice as many votes from Republicans as from Democrats," says Libertarian Party spokesman George Getz.

The proof may be found in the 1992 Georgia Senate race, in which no candidate won a majority. Republican Paul Coverdell led the pack with 49%, incumbent Democratic Sen. Wyche Fowler nipped at his heels with 48% and Libertarian Jim Hudson took 3%.

In a runoff between the two leaders, Coverdell prevailed, 51% to 48%. Hudson had endorsed him, and Libertarians like to think that their flock accounted for Coverdell's jump in the runoff.

### GOP Is Partly To Blame

To some extent, Senate Republicans have only their spendaholic ways to blame for this predicament. They blanched at President Bush's proposal that the federal budget grow 4%, and have forced the White House to accept a 5% increase that will almost certainly expand later this year when "emergency" spending bills come up.

When the GOP is a full participant in this predictable process, it isn't hard to see why Libertarians believe there isn't just a single party of big government in Washington. The Libertarian Party's Web site says only one member of Congress — Rep. Ron Paul, a Republican of Texas and a former Libertarian — introduced bills last year that would have reduced the overall size of government.

In one respect, it's troubling to see some Libertarians delight in hindering the GOP. By letting the perfect become the enemy of the good, their political larks may very well keep taxes higher than they would be otherwise. But it's also not fair to lay all blame at the Libertarians' doorstep.

By helping the government expand, the GOP hands Libertarians a motive for wanting to see the Republican caucus shrink.

*John J. Miller is a writer for National Review.*

■ Much has been said about Ralph Nader's keeping Al Gore out of the White House—the Green-party nominee drew more than 97,000 votes in Florida, for example—but hardly anybody has noticed what Libertarians have done to the Republicans. In both 1998 and 2000, a Republican nominee for the Senate lost to a Democrat by a margin much less than the Libertarian vote. The most recent victim was Slade Gorton of Washington. Maria Cantwell beat him by 2,229 votes in a race that saw Libertarian Jeff Jared hauling in 64,734 votes. Two years earlier, Republican John Ensign failed to unseat Democrat Harry Reid in Nevada by 428 votes. Libertarian Michael Cloud drew 8,044 votes in the same election. "Exit polling shows that we take twice as many votes from Republicans as from Democrats," says Libertarian-party spokesman George Getz—which means Republicans might very well have had a 52-48 Senate majority right now if not for the Libertarians. Washington would not be consumed with speculation about Strom Thurmond's health. Those Libertarians who are not intransigent opponents of the GOP should reconsider their tactics. Republicans, for their part, should pay more attention to their libertarian constituents. It's something Trent Lott may want to think about when members of his GOP conference complain that President Bush's proposal to limit federal growth to 4 percent is too austere. If they let government grow, their caucus may shrink.

## Hizzoner Cosmo

Kenny Kramer, the man who inspired hipster/doofus character Cosmo Kramer on the "Seinfeld" TV series, is running for mayor of New York City on the Libertarian Party ticket. Now all the "real" Kramer needs is 7,500 signatures to get him on the November ballot.

"I'm in it to win," he said. "With the success of Jesse Ventura becoming governor [of Minnesota], why can't I become mayor?"

Mr. Kramer lived across the hall from "Seinfeld" co-creator Larry David some 12 years ago and was working at the time as a reggae band manager, a stand-up comedian and a disco-jewelry designer. These days he offers a "Kramer Reality" tour to tourists interested in seeing the old Seinfeld haunts.

"I am the only one in this race who's not a lifelong politician," Mr. Kramer said. "And I am not a lawyer, which is reason enough to vote for me."

# Big media's lonely libertarian

**I**t doesn't take long to figure out there's something odd about ABC's John Stossel, the consumer and environmental reporter who does those "Give Me a Break" segments on "20/20" on Friday nights.

For one thing, unlike most of his colleagues on and off the air, Stossel is no liberal Democrat. Nor is he just another Brit Hume conservative. He is much rarer: Stossel is the only network reporter who is an unabashed, out-of-the-closet, on-the-air, ideology-pushing libertarian.

Not surprisingly, Stossel, who is coming to Pittsburgh next Saturday to speak to the Young America's Foundation Conference at the Ramada Plaza Suites in Oakland, has gotten grief from the religious left for saying such politically incorrect things as "greed is good for the economy" and calling environmentalists who fret about global warming and pollution "scaremongers."

The left-wing media watchdog group, Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), monitors Stossel's every word and regularly accuses him of bias and inaccuracies. If FAIR knew that the Palmer R. Citester Fund of McKean, Pa., has made it possible for Stossel's videos to be seen by 173,000 students in 600 institutions like Shaler High School and Duquesne University, they'd be even more annoyed.

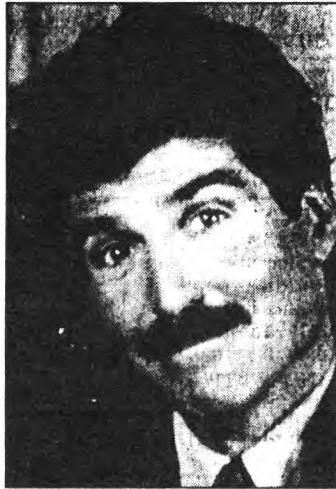
I talked to Stossel Wednesday by telephone from Florida, where he was vacationing with his family.

**Q:** How is it that you've gotten into such a powerful position in the national media? Do you have incriminating video of network executives, or what?

**A:** Ah ... noooo. I guess they just find my work worth putting on.

**Q:** At the Web site of FAIR, one of your biggest enemies, they complain that "Nobody but nobody gets to use network news as a soapbox to proselytize for his personal ideological views" like you do. How has this happened?

**A:** Well, I started as a consumer reporter, where I'd do research on different products and come to a conclusion. So I've always been giving my point of view — my research-based point of view. Possibly I did that differently from other reporters because I never learned journalism in journalism school, because I never went to journalism school. But that's how I've always done reporting. It became controversial with the groups from the



John Stossel



**Q&A**  
with Bill Steigerwald

totalitarian left, like FAIR, when I started criticizing their sacred causes.

**Q:** For the record, how do you describe your politics?

**A:** Jeffersonian. Government that governs least, governs best.

**Q:** How did you come upon these ideas?

**A:** I watched the regulators work, as a consumer reporter. I watched them fail and I watched them enrich lawyers and make consumers' lives worse with their interference with the free market. I came to conclude that protecting peoples' freedom, property and life is the role of government and people do best when government does little more than that.

**Q:** You came to these ideas through your own experiences, not through books?

**A:** Yes. I did discover Reason magazine 10 years ago, which was an epiphany to find that other people had been saying things along these same lines and that there was an intellectual foundation behind it. It was an enormous relief to discover I wasn't alone.

**Q:** In your specials and on "20/20,"

what is the message you are trying to deliver? Are your enemies right to call it a coherent ideological viewpoint?

**A:** ... (M)any of the stories I do don't fit any particular ideology. When I do put in my ideological political point of view, I just go back to this idea that government that governs least, governs best and that individual freedom is a good thing.

**Q:** Why are you doing what you do? Obviously you have a good job, make a nice living. You don't have to cause the trouble you cause.

**A:** I just believe passionately that this idea that is so seldom broadcast in the mainstream media is the idea that has lifted more people out of the mud of misery and poverty than any other. And yet it is sneered at universities and neglected by the press.

**Q:** You've been in network TV for 15 or 20 years. Have you ever met another libertarian, or somebody who thinks like you on all subjects?

**A:** No. I would think that most of my colleagues, politically, would agree with FAIR on most issues. They might not write about them as often as FAIR would like, but I think politically they are quite comfortable with the Naderite, left-end of the spectrum.

**Q:** You got into some trouble with the organic farming industry last year. You made a mistake and apologized for it on the air. What is your 40-second sound-bite on what happened and how the rest of the world reacted to your mistake?

**A:** The gist of the story is absolutely true — which is that organic food is largely silly and it's silly for people to pay much more for food that is no better. In the piece we pointed out that some people think it may be worse, because it is grown without artificial fertilizers, which means that there may be more e-coli bacteria. The main point, though, is that the food supply is all safe, and it's silly to spend more for organic.

In the course of that, a producer had a dyslexic moment or something and got confused on what one of the scientists said. We had paid some scientists to do some testing for us.

They found slightly more e-coli in organic food. The producer also was under the impression that they

had tested for pesticide residues and had found none, but in fact they had not tested for that. We then were wrong on the air and I went back on the air and apologized for that.

**Q:** Some people — the FAIR people — wanted you to be shot on "20/20" or at least fired over this. This was a fringe group, but was the idea of you quitting taken seriously by anyone else or by your bosses or colleagues?

**A:** FAIR has always been demanding that I be silenced. The totalitarian left doesn't want other people heard. Now they had a real mistake to focus on. It was a very uncomfortable time for me. I don't think anyone was planning to fire me.

**Q:** Your videos are enthusiastically used in high school and college classrooms. I'm sure that's gratifying to you.

**A:** It thrills me. It's very frustrating to work so hard on these shows and then have them air a couple times and disappear — and then to get letters from professors saying, "Oh, I so wish I could have taped this to use in my class." So now ABC has licensed a charity to help put it into classrooms. I love that.

**Q:** Which of the four in classrooms is your favorite?

**A:** My favorite is "Are We Scaring Ourselves to Death," because it was my first special. It was hard to get it on the air. Some of the people with whom I worked did not think it should have been aired, but ABC News executives, to their credit, said we don't agree with (its point of view), but it's an interesting intellectual argument and it deserves to be made. I think they were then surprised to see how well it rated.

**Q:** When you speak in Pittsburgh, what will be your main message?

**A:** The same ideas that are in "Are We Scaring Ourselves to Death" and "Is America No. 1?": That freedom works and we ought to wise up to that and we ought to stop expanding government and covering our lives with a spider web of little rules that limit our freedom and make life worse.

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# Former drug czar's message ignores reality

It seems that *Traffic* has them squirming.

The former director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, Barry McCaffrey, and his former assistant, Robert Housman, have been moved to fire a missive regarding the entertainment industry's recent drug scripts ("Hollywood's drug scripts don't reflect reality," March 19).

The recently published opinion states, right out of the box, that our national "strategy" against drugs is working. That head-in-the-sand position should alert any reader that the rest of their assertions can be safely ignored, but for those who read on, I would like to point out their errors — or rather, deceptions.

■ *THC, the active ingredient in marijuana, has been shown to cause cancerous tumors.* To the contrary, the few studies by the federal government regarding marijuana and cancer tumors have seen funding abruptly cut off. Why? Because the evidence showed that marijuana may actually shrink tumors, and what kind of message would that send to our nation's children?

■ *New research suggests*

MY TURN



MICHAEL J. PETRO

that marijuana users may be at a higher risk for cancer than cigarette smokers. Steve Kubby, a Libertarian candidate for governor of California (who recently won a landmark medical-marijuana cultivation case), has a rare form of adrenal cancer that normally kills within five years. To stay alive, he has been a heavy daily smoker of marijuana for over 15 years. His lungs were recently examined: No damage was found.

■ *Studies show that young people who smoke pot tend to be more prone to committing violent and property crimes.* There are no such studies, and I challenge the former general to cough them up. I'm betting that there is something around out there, but the only thing it shows is that a cavalier attitude about one law (against property violence) probably extends to others (against drug use).

■ *We are not locking people*

up for simple possession of marijuana — only 33 federal defendants were sentenced. Counting state arrests, there were over 750,000 marijuana arrests in 1999, an increase presided over by our non-inhaling former president. Much state enforcement of drug laws is driven by federal incentive dollars. Regardless of how few people McCaffrey claims to have harassed, it is hardly comforting for otherwise law-abiding adults to know that arbitrary enforcement of the law is the order of the day.

But let me tell you of two of those "33" federal defendants who were convicted. Todd McCormick, who has suffered from bone cancer since he was a child, was thrown into federal prison for growing medical marijuana in a state (California) that had legalized medical use. When he requested Marinol (a legally prescribed synthetic version of marijuana), he was drug-tested and thrown into solitary confinement. His health is failing. Peter McWilliams, a co-defendant with full-blown AIDS and cancer, was awaiting sentencing at home when he choked to death on his own vomit while trying to keep his medication

down. He was being drug-tested, and was not permitted to use his anti-nausea medication.

■ *Legalizing drugs would make drug use an accepted behavior.* Law exists in order to protect property and person, not to educate us about "accepted behavior." It is ironic that the right-wing purveyors of limited government can justify this blatant social-engineering premise. And that the believers in Family Values seem to think that keeping beers and drugs out of the hands of our children is just a bit too much trouble for the good parents of America.

And finally, the good general is very concerned about the accurate content of the entertainment industry. This is why the ONDCP was caught and chastised for overseeing scripts for popular television shows, to make sure they contained a government-sanctioned "message" about drugs.

Yes, it seems that *Traffic* has them squirming.

Michael J. Petro lives in Phoenix. He is a software programmer and member of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML).

## Young Libertarian takes action

If conventional wisdom says that young people in America are apathetic about politics, then meet another of those exceptions to that rule.

Her name is Sara Gillis, a 21-year-old anthropology major at the University of Rochester. She is also the current chair of the Monroe County Libertarian Party. That's right. The head of the party, albeit a small third party.

Gillis wanted to start a Libertarian organization at UR but "I couldn't get the support, so I went for the real party."

No sooner had she joined, than there was a vacancy for the top spot in the party. Gillis went after it. She ran unopposed.

She's been in the leadership role for about six weeks now. Her main chore is building the party, which is only two years old and

has about 20 core members. And she's organizing a protest against high taxes at the Henrietta Post Office on April 17, the last day in Western New York that people can file their tax returns.

Libertarians believe in radically scaling back government. They would like to see the end of public schools and laws that regulate drugs. They support an unfettered right to bear arms and for women to choose abortion.

Gillis said she finds herself alone on the UR campus. Most professors and students lean more toward the liberal philosophy. "But my teachers are great. They don't discourage dissenting opinions," she says.

Gillis isn't planning to be a vocal chair like Steve Minarik, the outspoken Republican boss.

And Gillis isn't sure she will



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INSIDE POLITICS

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▲ *The Arizona Republic*,  
Phoenix, Arizona,  
March 30, 2001

◀ *The Rochester Democrat & Chronicle*,  
Rochester,  
New York,  
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make her home in Rochester after graduation. "Taxes are too high here, there's too much government intrusion," she says.

Whether you agree with Gillis' philosophy of minuscule government or not, you have to hand it to this college student for taking an interest in things political.