

# LIBERTY PLEDGE

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FEBRUARY 1997 *newsletter*

## Clint Eastwood: I'm a "libertarian"

Movie star Clint Eastwood "made the day" of Libertarians across the county this month when he announced that he's a libertarian.

In an interview in the March issue of *Playboy* magazine, the Oscar-winning actor and director candidly affiliated himself with the libertarian movement when he was asked: "How would you characterize yourself politically?"

The laconic Eastwood answered, "Libertarian" — and then went on to explain the philosophy in simple terms: "Everyone leaves everyone else alone."

He also took a swipe at the Republicans and Democrats, noting that neither of those political parties "seems to have the ability to embrace that sort of thing."

However, Libertarian Party members shouldn't expect to see "Dirty Harry For President" bumperstickers appearing soon; Eastwood flatly rejected a career in politics. "Being a politician is about the last thing I'd want to do," he said. "It's a lot of work and a lot of frustration."

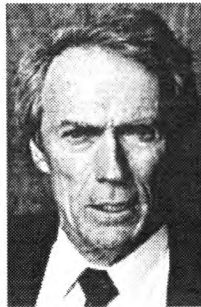
But if the movie star ever changes his mind, the LP says it would love to sit down and talk to him.

"If Mr. Eastwood ever decides to join the Libertarian Party or seek public office on our ticket, we'd be happy to discuss with him how that could advance the cause of liberty in America," said the party's national director, Perry Willis. "Until that time, however, we're delighted that he's on our side philosophically."

The 66-year-old Eastwood has been an outspoken critic of government abuse in recent months — echoing Libertarian criticisms of the federal government's role in the bloodbath at Waco, Texas, and the shooting of Randy Weaver's family at Ruby Ridge, Idaho.

In an essay he wrote for the January 12, 1997 issue of *Parade Magazine*, Eastwood noted: "Abuse of power isn't limited to bad guys in other nations. It happens in our own country if we're not vigilant."

For example, he wrote: "At Waco, was there really an urgency to get those people out of the compound at that particular time? At Ruby Ridge, was it necessary for federal agents to go up there and shoot a 14-year-old in the back and shoot a woman with a child in her arms? What kind of mentality does that?"



■ "Libertarian"  
Clint Eastwood

## LP of Alabama's State Chair appointed to state banking job

The Chairman of the Libertarian Party of Alabama has been appointed to a high-ranking position in that state's banking department — and says he is "optimistic about achieving some good for the people of Alabama."

Mark Thornton, an economics professor at Auburn University and state LP Chairman since 1996, was appointed as Assistant Supervisor of Banking in the State Banking Department in mid-February by Republican governor Fob James. He has stepped down as LP Chairman to take the new job.

The appointment followed Thornton's high-profile campaign for the U.S. Senate in 1996 — a campaign which he said seemed to leave the "media and the voters favorably impressed" by his ideas and credibility.

"I think that the visibility of my campaign for U.S. Senate did have something to do with the appointment," said Thornton. "It was a positive campaign that stressed issues and solutions."

Even so, the appointment of a high-ranking Libertarian Party member did surprise some observers.

"I am a tough and outspoken critic of some Republican policies and a member of an alternative political party," noted Thornton. However, the fact that "libertarian economic thought is winning the day all over the world" may have made the difference, he theorized.

As Assistant Supervisor of Banking, Thornton will help oversee the deregulation of the state's banking industry.

## Libertarian group challenges tardy gun permits in New Jersey

Libertarians in New Jersey have filed a lawsuit to force local police departments to stop their foot-dragging when issuing gun permits.

The Libertarian Party of Somerset & Middlesex Counties filed a suit in early January after LP member Diane Alder had to wait 56 days before being granted a permit. According to state law, permits must be granted or denied within 30 days.

LP spokesperson John Paff said their specific goal in this case was "to pressure police chiefs to issue permits more quickly" in hopes that other New Jersey citizens would not have to wait as long as Adler did.

However, Paff noted that Libertarians "oppose all forms of gun control," and "believe that an armed citizenry is essential to a free society."

# Libertarians have made great inroads

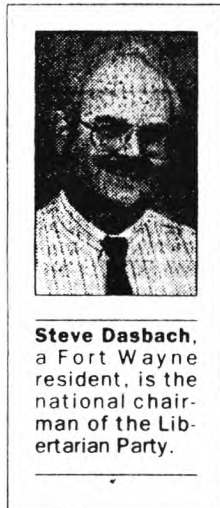
By Steve Dasbach

In 1848, the Whig ticket of Zachary Taylor and Millard Fillmore captured the White House. Probably no one suspected that it was the last presidential election the Whigs would ever win. Yet, 12 years later, as Republican Abraham Lincoln took the oath of office as our 16th president, the Whigs had ceased to exist as a political party. Could we be witnessing the start of a similar political realignment over the next 12 years? Consider:

- ◆ Despite millions of new registered voters, fewer Americans voted in 1996 than in 1992.

- ◆ Fewer than one in five Americans trusts the government in Washington to do what is right.

- ◆ More than three in five Americans want to see a new major political party. The most likely candidate for that new major political party, the Libertarian Party, celebrated its 25th anniversary last Wednesday,



**Steve Dasbach**, a Fort Wayne resident, is the national chairman of the Libertarian Party.

marking a quarter century as America's most politically active, successful and influential third party. Since its founding in 1971, the Libertarian Party has helped to fundamentally shift the nature of American political debate — despite the fact that it has yet to elect a congressman or president.

Libertarian ideas that were considered outlandish 20 years ago — such as getting rid of the personal income tax and the IRS, ending the insane war on drugs and replacing the bankrupt Social Security system with private retirement accounts — are part of mainstream political debate now. Libertarianism has become one of the most powerful intellectual forces in America.

This influence hasn't escaped the notice of the media. Libertarianism has been called "the real inspiration behind the Republican revolution" (New York magazine, 1995), "the de facto philosophy of a generation (for) the youth of the 1990s" (USA Today, 1995) and "the cutting-edge politics of the time" (The Village Voice, 1996).

"The Libertarian Party today wields influence far beyond its ranks," acknowledged the Congressional Quarterly Researcher (1995). "In Washington, libertarian positions now form part of policy debates on issues ranging from health care and government regulation to welfare and tax policy."

Beyond its philosophical victories, the Libertarian Party has also helped redraw

New York magazine calls Libertarianism "the real inspiration behind the Republican revolution."

America's political map, rewrite the record books on third-party success and reform the nation's ballot access laws:

- ◆ **Political Map:** Americans used to think that politics was a straight line from left to right. Now, every credible political scientist understands that politics is actually a four-way spectrum that includes libertarianism and authoritarianism. In 1996, you can't talk about political philosophy without acknowledging libertarianism.

- ◆ **Political Success:** The Libertarian Party has elected state representatives in New Hampshire and Alaska, mayors in California and Utah, and hundreds of other candidates to local and county offices. The party now has about 170 members serving in public office — giving "the party a status that no third party has enjoyed in decades," wrote the Congressional Quarterly Researcher (1995).

"The Libertarian Party provides a case study in how a grass-roots organization works to establish itself as a third voice for a frustrated electorate," wrote The Hill newspaper (Washington, D.C., 1996).

- ◆ **Ballot Access Reform:** Through relentless lobbying and lawsuits, the Libertarian Party has made it easier for newer parties like Ross Perot's Reform Party to get on the ballot. "The Libertarian Party is directly responsible for significant improvements in ballot access in 20 different states," says Richard Winger, publisher of Ballot Access News and the nation's leading expert on third parties and ballot access.

Here in Indiana, the Libertarian Party filed a record number of candidates in 1996, including a full slate of congressional candidates, and received the most votes ever in a statewide race. Most significantly, Tippecanoe County Council candidate K.D. Benson beat her Democratic opponent, finishing only a few percentage points behind the Republican winner. Over the past two years, the Libertarian Party has more than doubled its national contributor base. This year's growth alone exceeds the growth of the previous 11 years combined.

For 25 years, Republicans and Democrats have been hoping that the Libertarians would shut up and go away. But there's no chance of that. Every time they suggest a new tax, or create a new bureaucracy, or impose more censorship, or get America involved in another futile, bloody war, or subsidize their corporate clients, the Libertarian Party will be there to point out their sins. And when the American public eventually grows tired of the politics-as-usual of the two older parties, the Libertarian Party will be ready to help them follow the Whigs into the history books.

▲ *The Journal Gazette*  
Fort Wayne, Indiana, December 15, 1996

► *The Island Packet*  
Hilton Head Island, SC, December 31, 1996

# Libertarian files to run in District 2

BY FRANK SHELTON  
Packet staff writer

A Cotton Hope man has become the third candidate for the vacant District 2 seat on the Beaufort County Council. Chuck Williams, 45, a local water and wastewater consultant, said he filed Thursday with the Libertarian Party.

Williams joined Republicans Tom Taylor and Cynthia Bensch in the race for the seat formerly held by Republican Vicki Mullen.

The filing deadline for party candidates was noon Monday. No Democrats filed for the seat, according to Sam Svalina Sr., the county's Democratic Party chairman.

Williams, a Savannah native who grew up in Ridgeland, said the local issues that concern him the most are the ones dealing with property rights.

"Just because you covet your neighbor's property doesn't mean you have the right to hold a gun to his head and tell him not to cut down his trees," he said.

Williams said documents like Beaufort County's draft comprehensive plan give too much regulatory power to government and take away individual property rights.

"I could only support it if it were a voluntary plan," he said of the comprehensive plan.

Williams said the Libertarian Party members believe that an ever-expanding government is not what was envisioned by the authors of the U.S. Constitution.

Libertarians also support the free market system and believe that voluntary action goes farther than government regulations, he said.

"I hope I get the chance to speak my mind on these issues, and I'll see if I can get some people to listen," he said. "You never know what can happen."

Williams is married and is the president of a Cotton Hope regime. He is also the vice chairman of the state Libertarian Party. The District 2 seat has been vacant since Dec. 2 when Mullen resigned to become the state House District 123 representative.

Bensch of Windmill Harbour filed last week with the Republican Party. Taylor filed earlier with GOP officials after he moved from Hilton Head Plantation in District 1 to Spanish Wells Plantation in District 2.

Bensch said she wanted to wait until the new year to talk about her candidacy.

"Everybody's worn out with politics," she said. "Let voters enjoy the holiday season."

Taylor, who has represented District 1 since 1990 and served as the council chairman since January 1993, said he knows little about Bensch or Williams.

"(But) the public is always well-served to have a contested race," he said.

Bensch and Taylor will face each other in a Feb. 11 primary election. The winner will then face Williams in an April 22 special election.

Independent candidates also may file by petition for the District 2 seat from Feb. 11 to Feb. 18. Qualifying requires getting signatures from 5 percent of the district's 5,847 active registered voters, according to county elections director Agnes Garvin.

Party candidates may file for the District 1 seat that Taylor is vacating between Jan. 10 and Jan. 20, Garvin said. A primary election for that seat will be held March 4, and the party winners will meet in the April 22 special election.

*Just because you covet your neighbor's property doesn't mean you have the right to hold a gun to his head and tell him not to cut down his trees.'*

Chuck Williams

# Moving away from Big Brother

**A**mericans have lived through the age of liberalism, which peaked in the 1960s, and the age of conservatism, embodied by Ronald Reagan. Is it possible that we are now entering the libertarian era?

In 1996, nearly half a million Americans went to the polls to vote for the presidential nominee of the Libertarian Party, even though he had as much chance of winning as I have of dancing with the Joffrey Ballet. Recently, libertarianism earned admiring words from archconservative Washington Post columnist Charles Krauthammer. Slate magazine editor Michael Kinsley, who occupied the liberal chair on CNN's "Crossfire," now calls himself a "redistributionist libertarian." The Republican Party even has a "libertarian wing" opposed to the repressive moralism of Pat Buchanan and the Christian Coalition.

Most people don't know quite what the word means, but the truth is that America is essentially a libertarian country: one based on democracy, private property, personal liberty and free markets. We were the first nation ever founded on those ideals. We were also the first one ever dedicated to a proposition that still strikes some people as dangerous: the right to the pursuit of happiness.

In the 19th Century people who favored the expansion of freedom were called "liberals." But eventually, that term became synonymous with large, meddlesome, bureaucratic programs. Conservatives sometimes rhapsodize about liberty, but not consistently. Friedrich Hayek, one of the greatest libertarian thinkers, got so tired of being mislabeled that he titled a chapter in one book "Why I Am Not a Conservative." Those who believe in freedom across the board had to give themselves a new name: libertarians.

## More quotas coming

As far as the U.S. government is concerned, you are either white, black, American Indian/Eskimo, Asian/Pacific Islander or Hispanic.

But now, as brought to our attention yesterday by the chairman of the Libertarian Party, federal bureaucrats are hard at work to add new categories to America's "official" list of federally recognized racial and ethnic classifications.

The current categories were

created by the Office of Management and Budget in 1977, but for the past three years the OMB has been weighing proposals to recognize further categories, including Hawaiian, six different kinds of Latino, multiracial, Middle Easterner, Arab American, "other," Creole and Germanic.

"Various ethnic groups are lobbying to have their category added to the official list of races, because they know they'll hit the jackpot if they become a protected class under anti-discrimination laws," says Steve

## Stephen Chapman



The vast majority of Americans are at least selectively libertarian. Liberals don't want Jesse Helms composing prayers for their kids to recite in school. Conservatives don't want Hillary Rodham Clinton looking over their doctor's shoulder. The American Civil Liberties Union thinks the government should keep its hands off books and videos. The National Rifle Association thinks it should keep its hands off handguns.

Deadheads wish they could smoke dope in peace. Cyberfreaks prefer the Internet to be a wide-open, unregulated medium. Overburdened taxpayers want to keep more of what they earn.

On the matters that directly affect our daily lives, most of us prefer to make our own choices. Increasingly, we are apt to feel that way about other matters, too. In 1964, three out of four Americans said you can trust the government to do the right thing most of the time. By 1994, three out of four said you can't.

But libertarianism is more than a vague, occasional impulse. It's also a coherent and hard-headed political philosophy that offers persuasive answers to a range of problems. Anyone interested in exploring that philosophy can turn to a pair of excellent new books: Charles Murray's "What It

Dasbach, the Libertarian chairman.

Federal agencies use the race and ethnicity data to enforce everything from quotas for college admissions to quotas for whom to hire and fire.

"Instead of working to end racism, federal bureaucrats are planning to increase their list of government-recognized racial classifications to further divide this nation on racial grounds," Mr. Dasbach says.

Means to Be a Libertarian: A Personal Interpretation" and David Boaz's "Libertarianism: A Primer."

They are very different works. Murray's is spare and elegant, concentrating on basic principles. Boaz's is dense and wide-ranging, rich in details about practical application. Both, however, make hash of the notion that libertarians are just anti-social loners and selfish yuppies who care nothing about their fellow man.

Both see freedom as valuable because it respects the choices and elevates the condition of everyone—and because it demands the responsibility needed to foster productive lives and a healthy society. Murray wants to explain how "such a society would lead to greater individual fulfillment, more vital communities, a richer culture. Why such a society would contain fewer poor people, fewer neglected children, fewer criminals."

What gives libertarianism, which is not a new way of thinking, its sudden appeal? Boaz explains: "The alternatives to libertarianism—fascism, communism and the welfare state—have all been tried in the 20th Century, and all have failed to produce peace, prosperity and freedom. . . . More and more people—in the United States and elsewhere—recognize that Western-style big government is going through a slow-motion version of communism's collapse."

That's why, from Bombay to Bonn to Buenos Aires, the world is moving toward less regulated markets, lower taxes, a freer flow of information and greater respect for individual choices. Skeptics have always sneered that libertarian ideas could never work in the real world. We may get the chance to find out.

## ▲ *The Chicago Tribune*

Chicago, Illinois, January 26, 1997

## ◀ *The Washington Times*

Washington, DC, January 30, 1997

## ▼ *The Baltimore Sun*

Baltimore, Maryland, January 19, 1997

## Burgeoning libertarianism: They're on to something you should know about

**L**ibertarianism, David Boaz writes, "is the view that each person has the right to live in any way he chooses so long as he respects the equal rights of others. . . . Libertarians defend each person's right to life, liberty and property—rights that people possess naturally, before governments are created. In the libertarian view, all human relationships should be voluntary; the only actions that should be forbidden by law are those that involve the initiation of force against those who have not themselves used force."

Do you really care? Aren't these a bunch of kooky nostalgists rolling in the dustbin of a 17th century fantasy?

Maybe. But. They are alive and well for exactly the same reason that Ross Perot rose to the fore. Their increasing energy comes from the same sources as a hundred other evidences of Americans' alienation from government.

"Why is there a libertarian revival now?" Boaz asks, also in his new "Libertarianism: A Primer"

(Free Press, 336 pages, \$23) "The main reason is that the alternatives to libertarianism—fascism, communism, socialism, the welfare state—have been tried in the twentieth century and have all failed to produce peace, prosperity and freedom."

Boaz is executive vice president of the Cato Institute, a think tank, and writes widely in serious magazines, newspapers and journals. His companion volume, also just out: "The Libertarian Reader: Classic and Contemporary Readings from Lao-tzu to Milton Friedman" (Free Press, 320 pages, \$25), a lush, elegant source book.

### Think tankery

By chance, or popular demand, a related volume is just being published: "What It Means to Be a Libertarian: A Personal Interpretation," by Charles Murray (Broadway/Bantam, 192 pages, \$20). Murray, most famously co-author of "The Bell Curve," and sole author of "Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950-1980," is a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

Both men define their liber-

## MICHAEL PAKENHAM

arianism as lower-case, not absolutist—for the unalloyed libertarian model is, finally, an indelibly Darwinian jungle. These libertarians find their roots in classic liberalism, directly from John Locke and importantly from Adam Smith and disciples of the free market. Indeed, they would call themselves "liberals" but for the fact that in America two or three generations ago the term became a label for essentially benevolent but characteristically intrusive big-government statism.

Murray's and Boaz's programs and proposals vary in degree and nuance, but essentially they are on the same team. They revile equally American "liberal" doctrine and statist conservatism—as epitomized, say, by Patrick Buchanan.

They would simply do away with much of government, except that which prevents or punishes violence or allows citizens who have been damaged to gain redress. They would decriminalize all "victimless" offenses—prostitution, pornography, drugs—except to protect the young. Public education would become a simple matter of a \$3,000 unrestricted tuition voucher to every child in primary and secondary school, letting the market do the job.

Murray defines well their basic motivation. In virtually every area of American life, he contends, "It is not that government intervention hasn't done as much good as people think, but that it has not made any perceptible change in the outcomes of that life matter. It is said that roosters think the sun rises because they crow. Politicians and bureaucrats are much the same."

They are, of course, on to something. For me, their argument breaks down on its most basic programmatic scheme: The substitution of tort litigation for government regulation, oversight

and enforcement. This is the answer they have for dealing with matters such as work and product safety, the responsibility of professional and financial services, food and drug purity and a vast array of other areas now policed by bureaucrats.

### Natural tendencies

I have spent what I wistfully call my adult life as a reporter and editor, working in five of the largest and most governed cities in America—including New York, the most social-democratic of all U.S. polities. I give quarter to no one in my revision against the natural and common tendency of government and government employees to demean, strangle, corrupt, pillage, subjugate, starve, exploit, humiliate, and otherwise abuse the citizenry and to keep it defenseless. (Yes, they do good as well, but that's what we pay them for.)

With the most searching attention, I can think of only one other category of vertebrate life in which the propensities toward committing all of those abuses are of a baser order than that of the bureaucrats. That is the

plaintiff's trial bar. If contingency-fee tort litigation is not the most corrupting force in America's economic, social and political dynamic today, I have yet to witness its challenger.

For me, this is where Murray's and Boaz's entire house of cards comes crashing down.

Responsibility for protection of the common citizen must be taken away from society's spontaneously most self-indulgent and arrogant agglomeration of power, they say. Right on! But to turn it over to the characteristically most rapacious?

That dawg don't hunt. Boaz's book is substantially longer than Murray's without being repetitive. It is a learned, thoughtful and informative study, whereas Murray's is a provocative, lean manifesto. For the polemic, read Murray. For rich, concise historic and philosophical detail, read Boaz.

For anyone of an age or an ambition to look into the likely political debates, causes and shifts of government in the first quarter of the 21st century, I recommend both.

# Libertarian Calls For Across-The-Board Tax Cuts

By MARK THORNTON

The Libertarian Party is now 25 years old and is celebrating its best year ever. In 1971, a handful of dissident Republicans, Democrats and independents gathered in David Nolan's living room in Colorado to form the Libertarian Party; in 1996 the Libertarian Party doubled its membership, received record news media coverage, garnered a record number of votes and one of its best presidential vote totals ever.

Closer to home, tens of thousands of Alabamians voted Libertarian, many for the first time. Two Libertarians were elected as constables in Mobile County. Libertarian John O'Donnell-Rosales became the first Hispanic-American to be elected in Alabama since 1819.

However, our biggest sign of success might have been the state Legislature's tripling the ballot access requirements for third parties in order to protect their incumbency from competition.

Alabamians and all Americans are now aware that government cannot solve the problems in families, health care, schools and the economy. In fact, big government is increasingly seen as the source of these

problems. Almost everyone now supports our idea of a constitutional amendment to balance the budget and, amazingly, the Libertarian solution of privatizing Social Security is now supported by a majority in public opinion polls.

The old parties had a bad year in 1996. Both are losing straight ticket membership and neither can excite the young voters of Generation X. The national leadership of both parties is either retiring or under criminal investigation.

Despite all this, Libertarians are willing to bury the hatchet with Democrats and Republicans. Really! The old parties could do what Libertarians and the majority of Alabamians want and drive the Libertarian Party right out of business. The recipe of success is so simple that even Democrats and Republicans can figure it out. It includes one part tax cuts, one part government program cuts, and one part deregulation.

Both parties talk about cutting taxes of

their own supporters, but what America needs is across-the-board tax cuts on capital and labor. Lower taxes mean more economic pie for everyone. Why not cut every federal tax by a small percentage this year and plan on a similar cut next year?

The central government taxes us \$6,000 for every man, woman and child in the country and still can't balance its budget. More importantly we don't get much for our money. So much of the federal government is either unnecessary or counterproductive. You don't have to decide what to cut, just cut every budget by 10 percent this year and plan on another 10 percent next year.

The feds try to regulate everything and have accomplished no good in the process. The Food and Drug Administration harms more patients than it helps, the minimum wage reduces total wages and employment, and automobile regulations have actually made cars more dangerous, not less.

Eliminating regulations has been found to increase competition, reduce prices, increase employment, and even to enhance

safety and consumer satisfaction.

Other ingredients include a sound monetary policy, eliminating federal mandates, withdrawing the federal government from education and crime control, and observing the primacy of the Constitution in everything the federal government does.

These policy ingredients combined for several years will produce a balanced budget and subdue the problems of budget deficits and the national debt. Under this political regime, our economic pies will grow and the family, education and crime control will be repaired and will eventually be restored to its old grandeur.

Will 1997 be another record year for the Libertarian Party and other alternative political organizations or will the Democratic and Republican parties start working to restore the American way of life? I'm not putting my money on the old parties, but as you can see, the key to their own success is as easy as pie.

Mark Thornton, an economist from Auburn University, is the chairman of the Alabama Libertarian Party. He was the state party's candidate for the U.S. Senate in 1996, getting almost 2 percent of the total vote.



ALABAMA VOICES

# Libertarians say they offer option to 2 major parties

By Diane Hartson

They're fed up with the government being on their backs and they're fed up with the two major parties.

So a group of about 10 local residents have turned to the Libertarian Party and they are forming a local unit of that political organization.

Some were Democrats, some were Republicans, some were never actively involved in politics before.

But all said the Libertarian Party offers them an alternative and some hope of making a difference.

"I was a Republican for quite a few years," said Clarke County resident Mike Wilson. "I became progressively less enchanted with what they are doing."

Wilson complained about the impact of burdensome government regulations and paperwork on his business. He is a farmer and blacksmith.

He saw the Republicans as being just as guilty as the Democrats in supporting the growth of the government.

"That's why someone who is otherwise a conservative would be a Libertarian," he said.

"Government doesn't work," said Gail Hughes, a Frederick County resident who is the chairwoman of the local unit. "Every program has made the problem worse. For example, the war on drugs."

Many are disgusted with the political process and have even stopped voting, Ms. Hughes said.

"They feel if I don't vote Republican or Democratic I'm out of the loop, I can't make a difference," she said. "I am looking for a way of bucking the leviathan. The Libertarian Party gives me an avenue."

The new unit will be open to members from Frederick, Clarke, Warren and Shenandoah counties and Winchester.

Members met Sunday in Winchester with Shelley Tamres, the 10th District representative on the Virginia Libertarian Party's state Central Committee.

She outlined the state party's hopes to go beyond its original purpose of working to get the party's presiden-

tial candidates on the ballots here.

That task is made more difficult by Virginia's ballot access laws, which require that the party collect about 20,000 signatures to get their candidate on the ballots, she said. The state party will be working to get those laws changed.

And it will strive to get candidates for statewide offices, she said.

"We're ready for state senator, delegate (races) but we're not ready for governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general," she said.

The local unit just organized about a month ago and although members hope they too will be fielding candidates in local races, they're not ready yet, Ms. Hughes said.

They will concentrate on attending local government meetings and taking positions on local issues, she said.

The main goal now is "to get the message out to the public that there's an alternative to the Republican or

Democratic parties," she said. "As issues come up at the City Council, the School Board, we'll have a position. Awareness of our existence will creep through to the community."

The party has one local elected official in Virginia, Tom Jamerson, who is a member of a local Soil and Water Conservation Commission in the Richmond area, Ms. Tamres said.

And it has four local affiliates, three in the 10th District, she said. Fairfax and Prince William counties, which are partly located in the district, have local units, and the new group, which calls itself the Blue Ridge Libertarian Party, is the third, she said.

"I am thrilled to be here," she said Sunday. "Nobody anticipated we would have a local affiliate in one of the less populated areas of Virginia. You guys are really setting an example for the rest of the state."

Those interested in attending the local party's meetings can contact Ms. Hughes at 877-2319.

▲ (TOP) *The Montgomery Advertiser*, Montgomery, Alabama, January 19, 1997

▲ *The Northern Virginia Daily*, Strasburg Virginia, January 13, 1997

▼ *The Concord Monitor*, Concord, New Hampshire, January 22, 1997

# Libertarians contest election law reading

## Issue: How many votes for ballot spot?

By DAN BILLIN  
Valley News

The Libertarian Party of New Hampshire is pushing an alternative interpretation of state election law in an effort to regain its place on the ballot — an interpretation that would also qualify Ross Perot's Reform Party for ballot status.

The Libertarian Party lost its ballot status in the November election, when its candidate for governor, Robert Kingsbury, drew only 1 percent of the vote. State law says parties must receive "at least 3 percent of the total number of votes cast for the office of governor" in order to be automatically included on the next ballot.

Libertarian Party Chairman Mark Tuniewicz says the law can be read to mean that party totals in any statewide race can satisfy the requirement — as long as the number is greater than or equal to 3 percent of the votes cast in the race for governor.

The Libertarian candidate for U.S. Senate, Ken Blevens, received 21,366 votes — not nearly enough to win his race, but well over the 14,843 votes needed to equal 3 percent in the race for governor. Perot drew 48,140 votes in the presidential race.

Tuniewicz said Blevens pitched the new interpretation last week to Gov. Jeanne Shaheen's legal counsel, Judy Reardon.

"I understand that they're going

to take the matter up with the attorney general's office," Tuniewicz said. Reardon did not return a call from the *Valley News*.

Although the Libertarians want to avoid a lawsuit, they may take the matter to court if state officials can't be convinced, Tuniewicz said.

One ballot-access activist says there are two legal precedents for the Libertarians' argument.

Vermont had a virtually identical law that was successfully challenged by the Liberty Union Party on the same grounds, according to Richard Winger, publisher of the San Francisco-based *Ballot Access News*.

"If you read the (New Hampshire) law very carefully, you can see that it really is ambiguous," Winger said. "The Vermont Supreme Court disagrees with the New Hampshire secretary of state

about how to read a sentence like that."

And just recently, the Green Party won ballot status in New Mexico with a similar challenge, according to Winger.

The Libertarians first won ballot status in New Hampshire in 1990 and were able to hold it through the next two election cycles. Now that they are off the ballot, New Hampshire joins a minority of states without a qualified third party, Winger said.

"New Hampshire is one of only 11 states that (doesn't) have a recognized third party right now," he said.