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# Liberty Pledge

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 1996

Libertarian National Committee, Inc. ♦ 2600 Virginia Avenue, NW, Suite 100 ♦ Washington DC 20037 ♦ (202) 333-0008

## A Texas Libertarian In Queen Oprah's Court

A Libertarian who appeared on the Oprah Winfrey Show said the experience was frustrating — but worthwhile. “It was a fun adventure,” said Richard King, the Chairman of the Lubbock County (Texas) LP.

King was invited onto the #1 rated syndicated talk show on February 27th to debate the author of a proposed Texas law prohibiting children from riding in the back of pick-up trucks.

King's appearance was scheduled by the National LP office, in response to a request from one of Oprah's producers to furnish “a Libertarian in Texas who drives a pick-up truck.” But before the show, Oprah's producer told King they had decided against the “Libertarian angle.” “In fact, she said don't even mention [the word] Libertarian,” he said.

But that was just the first of many surprises.

Although only one other guest had been mentioned, King found himself sharing the stage with more than a dozen people. And the topic of the show? “Victims of Accidents Who Want More Government Regulation.”

“There were at least eight people who had been involved in tragedies,” said King. “[For example], there was a woman who wanted to ban iguanas because her kid caught some rare disease from it. [The show] was making heroes out of people who [wanted] more regulation.”

Because of the glut of guests, King said, “I got to say three sentences.” When the topic turned to pick-up trucks, he was able to say, “Risk is part of life. All the laws in the world can't keep these things from happening. Sooner or later, you have to take personal responsibility.”

But Oprah immediately shot back: “But how can you justify kids dying?”

King wanted to respond, but “they just wouldn't let me get going!” he said. The show quickly moved on to the next victim, and King was left to ruminate over the principal lesson he learned: “You gotta say what you need to say in your first two sentences. You can't dilly-dally!”

Was the show worth doing?

“Overall it was a good experience” said King. In fact, he said, Libertarians need to do more programs like Oprah.

“It's a fertile field,” he said, “These talk shows are filled with so much junk. We can use them to hammer out the issue [of less government]. More of us need to get out and do this kind of stuff.”

## Harry Browne wins first six LP presidential primaries

Harry Browne has racked up a perfect record in Libertarian Party presidential primaries so far — winning all six of the non-binding contests by lop-sided margins.

Browne won the March 26 **California** primary with 50% of the vote, beating Rick Tompkins (21%), Irwin Schiff (15%), and Doug Ohmen (11%). Other results:

■ **Illinois** (March 19): Browne, 73%. Schiff, 27%.

■ **Massachusetts** (March 5): Browne, 41%. Other, 40% (Write-ins, no preference.) Tompkins, 12%. Schiff, 7%.

■ **South Dakota** (Feb. 27): Browne, 65.4%. Schiff, 34.6%.

■ **North Dakota** (Feb. 27): Browne, 100%.

■ **New Hampshire** (Feb. 20): Browne, 40.3%. Other, 38.8% (Write-ins.) Schiff, 20.9%.

“Harry's resounding victories in the presidential primaries confirm what his campaign staff has known since the beginning of the campaign: Harry Browne is the right candidate, with the right message, at the right time,” said Browne campaign manager Sharon Ayres.

Schiff campaign manager Jeff Kantor said, “The vote totals were good in some instances, disappointing in others.”

Tompkins said, “It's obvious from the primaries that no candidate has a solid majority of support. Along with many other indications, the primary results show our steadily increasing support.”

## Two more talk show hosts join LP

Two more high-profile radio talk show hosts became official “card-carrying” Libertarians last month.

Irv Homer in Philadelphia and Dr. Roger Libby in Atlanta have both signed up as contributing LP members.

Homer, a 19-year veteran of the radio business on WWDB, joined the party on March 2nd at the LP state convention in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania.

“[Homer] has for years promoted the Libertarian cause,” said Don Ernsberger, Libertarian National Committee member from Pennsylvania, citing Homer's on-air endorsements and numerous appearances at Libertarian Party meetings, rallies, and candidate events.

Meanwhile, in Atlanta, Dr. Roger Libby of WNNX radio joined the party on March 26th, after speaking to an LP dinner group. “There certainly appears to be a Libertarian virus in the Atlanta airwaves,” quipped LNC member Ron Crickenberger, noting that Libby joined the LP just seven weeks after fellow Atlanta host Neal Boortz.

# Libertarians challenge new law that limits election inspectors

By SUSAN L. OPPAT  
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

The Libertarian Party of Michigan has filed a lawsuit in Washtenaw County Circuit Court challenging a new law that requires election inspectors to be Democrats or Republicans.

The suit requests the Michigan Secretary of State and Gov. John Engler to show cause why

Public Act 261 of 1995, which takes effect March 28, does not violate the Michigan Constitution's purity of elections and civil rights clauses.

The suit asks for an emergency restraining order to keep the law from going into effect, but no hearing date has been set, said party spokeswoman Emily Salvette. Staff in the office of Judge Patrick

See LAWSUIT, C4

J. Conlin said they were unaware of the suit.

Local election commissions will be required to appoint election inspectors from only the two major parties. Applicants for inspectors will need to state that they are not members or advocates of political parties other than the GOP or Democratic parties, the Libertarians say in their suit.

David Raafaub, attorney for the Libertarian Party, said minor party members are just as qualified to ensure a fair election as any other type of voter.

"If only Democrats and Republicans can work at the polls, how will the state guarantee impartiality for independents, Libertarians and other minor parties as the Michigan Constitution's purity of elections clause requires," he said in a press release.

Salvette said the party filed suit here in Washtenaw County simply because it is convenient to people filing the suit who live here in Ann Arbor.

"I'm just not one of these real confrontational people," she said. "Our job is to run candidates, not to bully the state."

"But gol, I've got three people who are just begging me to do something about this, because they like to work on elections. They do it because it's their civic duty, it makes them feel good. And they're out, they cannot work, because they cannot sign the application forms" because they are not Republicans or Democrats.

"It's just incredible to me that, in a time when a lot of people are more interested in independent candidates and other options besides the Democrats and Republicans, that the party would clamp down like this, and start taking more control."

Alan Robertson of Ann Arbor, who said he has been an election inspector since 1981, will be affected by the new law.

"Now, just because I'm a Libertarian, the Lansing politicians say I can't be trusted," he said in a press release. "I suppose the city clerk will have to find someone to replace my experience. I wish she didn't have to."

Ann Arbor City Clerk Winifred Northcross said this morning Robertson is a long-time election worker, a precinct chairman, and "one of our best workers," and now she won't be allowed to hire him.

Northcross said the bill could affect as many as one-third to one-half of her election hires later this year.

"It's a major headache," Northcross said. "We don't like it at all. We're just at a loss to understand the thinking, the reasoning, we don't understand why this has happened. We have never had a problem with someone's political party preference, in terms of their ability to work as a poll worker. That's a non-issue. For this to now be a qualification, is ridiculous. What's the point, what's the purpose of it? I just don't get it."

"A person's political party has never impacted on the quality of their work. This just seems very unfair. We're supposed to be a democratic society, inclusive. This is about freedom of choice. People have the right to join whatever party they want, or to adhere to whatever philosophy of whatever political party they wish. That's a very personal, individual thing. That's the individual's right."

Northcross also said she believes city clerk offices across the state have inundated the Secretary of State office in Lansing with complaints about the new bill.

## Libertarian wants to be V.P.

By ROBERT BEHRE  
Of The Post and Courier staff

Libertarian Party vice presidential hopeful Jo Jorgensen of Greenville figures she has something most third party candidates only dream of.

"Right now, I'd say my chances are 50-50 that I'll be on the ballot in all 50 states in November," she said.

So far, more than 230 presidential and vice presidential candidates have filed with the Federal Election Commission, which is required of any office-seeker who has raised or spent more than \$5,000.

An unknown number of other citizens — such as teacher Arden Lommen of Walterboro — are running their own campaigns but have virtually no chance of appearing on a ballot, much less of winning.

As the only South Carolinian who has filed with the federal government, Jorgensen said, the question she most often faces is not about her politics — it's whether she is old enough to run.

She is: Her 38 years are three more than what's required under the U.S. Constitution.

Jorgensen said she was not ac-

tive in politics during high school and college, adding, "I have no political experience. That's what qualifies me for the job."

That is not quite true: In 1992, she ran for Congress as a Libertarian and received about 4,300 votes in South Carolina's 4th District. Republican Bob Inglis defeated incumbent Democrat Liz Patterson by a 51-47 percent margin, and Jorgensen received 2 percent of that vote.

Her political philosophy was shaped by novelist Ayn Rand's "Atlas Shrugged" and by frustration with Republicans' work on shrinking government. "They're not giving us smaller government. They're giving us huge government," she said. "That's not a revolution."

Jorgensen said Libertarians would seek to cut federal spending — currently about \$1.6 trillion a year — at least in half.

"We believe government's only legitimate function is to protect people from force and fraud. We need to protect people from foreign invasions and from people within," she said. Other than a national military, police and court system, Jor-

gensen said she would favor doing away with most other spending.

She is president and 38 percent owner of DigiTech Inc., a software duplication company. She has two daughters who live with her ex-husband. The bulk of her time is spent at work or on the campaign trail.

Jorgensen said she began her campaign Jorgensen in 1994 and already has visited 25 states.

Unlike the Republican and Democratic parties, where the presidential candidate chooses his own running mate, Libertarian conventioners pick both slots themselves.

To reach these convention delegates, Jorgensen has spent about \$18,000, including \$3,500 of her own money, so far, and she expects her total bid will cost about \$50,000.



## Local Libertarian looks forward to July

Ken Sturzenacker sees voter frustration turning to success for his party.

By PETE LEFFLER  
Call Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Ken Sturzenacker watches Republican presidential candidates leapfrog across America, hears complaints about Democrat Bill Clinton, and looks forward to July.

That's when the Libertarian Party gathers in Washington, D.C., to choose its own presidential nominee.

And Sturzenacker, Libertarian Party chairman in Pennsylvania and a North Catasauqua councilman, envisions frustrated voters turning to a Libertarian as the best alternative to the major party picks.

A representative of the 25-year-old organization will be on the ballot in enough states to win the Electoral College, party leaders point out. But analysts counter that ballot access does not guarantee popular success.

Libertarian Andre Marrou got just 291,628 popular votes from all 50 states during the 1992 presidential race. That put him a distant fourth behind Clinton, Republican George Bush and independent Ross Perot, but ahead of a score of other long-shots.

But that's for another day. Today, Sturzenacker opens the annual convention of the state Libertarian party. Tomorrow the party selects the 50 delegates it will send to Washington this summer.

And that has attracted the party's presidential wannabes to the weekend event, held at the Valley Forge Hilton on Route 202 in King of Prussia.

The candidates will be feted at an 8 p.m. reception and are expected to stay into Saturday. The candidates are:

► Harry Browne, 63, Costa Mesa, Calif., an author and investment adviser.

► Douglass J. Ohmen, 61, Danville, Calif., and engineer, economics teacher and a former naval officer.

► Irwin Schiff, 68, Las Vegas, author of the 1982 best-seller, "How Anyone Can Stop Paying Income Taxes."

► Rick Tompkins, 56, Scottsdale, Ariz., a Vietnam veteran and radio talk show host.



▲ (Top)  
Ann Arbor News  
Ann Arbor, Michigan  
March 7, 1996

▲ (Center)  
The Post & Courier  
Charleston, SC  
March 19, 1996

► The Morning Call  
Allentown,  
Pennsylvania  
March 1, 1996

## In Other Voices

# High court ruling violates Fifth

From *The Libertarian Party News* on the recent Supreme Court property forfeiture ruling:

"Private property? Thanks to the Supreme Court it's an 'endangered species' in America ...

"The Supreme Court's ruling (last) week on property forfeiture means the government can seize your property whenever it wants, even if you're innocent of any crime," said Steve Dasbach, Chairman of America's third largest political party.

"Cops have become the robbers with a license to steal, under this new ruling," he said.

"The Supreme Court ruled on Monday (March 4) that the government can seize property used to commit a crime, even if the owner was innocent of any wrongdoing.

"The case involved a Michigan woman whose family car was confiscated when her husband used it for sex with a prostitute. The Court rejected her argument that as an 'innocent owner' she was entitled to compensation for her half-interest in the automobile. ...

"This ruling obliterates the protections of the Fifth Amendment, which states that private property shall not "be taken without just compensation," and demolishes the 14th Amendment, which adds "neither shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law," he said."

# Libertarian membership up

By **RICHARD GRIMES**  
DAILY MAIL POLITICAL EDITOR

The Libertarian Party of West Virginia was the fastest growing state party percentage-wise in 1995, according to membership figures released by The Libertarian National Committee.

Paid membership in the West Virginia party increased by 167 percent, while the Libertarian Party itself grew by only 28 percent in 1995.

Roger Fritz, a party spokesman, said when the party formally started in West Virginia in November 1994 it had 24 dues-paying members. On March 15, 1996, it had 85 members who paid a \$25 fee to join the party formally.

State Party Chairman John

Brown credits the growing disenchantment with government for the party's growth.

"We're getting disgruntled Democrats who are tired of their former party continuously raising taxes. And we're getting disgruntled Republicans who are scared of their former party's move toward becoming the morality police," Brown said. "We are the home for people who want economic and personal freedom."

Brown said the Libertarian Party of West Virginia's membership even outdid successful affiliate parties in such places as the District of Columbia, which grew by 124 percent; Rhode Island, 77 percent; and Nebraska, 74 percent.

He said early membership

figures indicate the Libertarian Party of West Virginia will double its membership in 1996.

He said the party is gathering signatures to put its candidates for president, governor and state Senate in the 9th District on the ballot.

The presidential candidate will be determined at the national party convention in July. Dr. Wallace Johnson of Beckley is the gubernatorial candidate and will be on the November ballot. Dr. Joseph Whalen of Beckley will also be on the November ballot representing the 9th District.

Party officials also announced the Libertarian Party, will have a presence on the computer Internet system. Its page is: <http://home.aol.com/LPWV>.

◀ *The World*, Coos Bay, Oregon, March 13, 1996

▲ *Charleston Daily Mail*, Charleston, West Virginia, March 22, 1996

▼ *The Houston Chronicle*, Houston, Texas, March 4, 1996

# Libertarians take aim at U.S. government

By **T.J. MILLING**  
*Houston Chronicle*

James Bovard looks like an absent minded professor and comes off like a stand-up comedian.

But his is a dark comedy, a comedy of errors by an American system of government that he says has vastly overstepped its bounds.

Bovard, the author of such books as *How the Government Screws You From A to Z*, begins with seizure laws, that little legal wrinkle that allows police to seize property suspected of being used in illicit activities. There was the case in Georgia where the FBI grabbed three Mercedes because the owner's husband made a sports bet on one of the cars' phones.

"I think the FBI likes Mercedes," Bovard quips from the podium at The Future of Freedom Foundation's Saturday program, "Libertarianism: The Hope for America."

## System greatly overstepped its bounds, says author at Freedom Foundation

Then there are apartment buildings seized by cities because the owners allegedly did not do enough to stop drug trafficking on their properties, when it was the owners who complained to the cities that the trafficking was a problem and it was the cities who failed to stop the trafficking.

Under this rationale, every federal housing project, which he said are drug dens, could be confiscated, Bovard said, but who would confiscate them?

Then there is the federal Drug Enforcement Administration's policy of questioning of airline passengers who pay for their tickets in cash, or the policy of stopping anyone carrying large amounts of cash. A drug dog is trotted out to sniff the money. If the dog alerts, the money

is confiscated, Bovard said. That may sound reasonable, except for the fact that the majority of paper money, at one time or another, has picked up the taint of illegal drugs, Bovard said.

Before even allowing a person to protest his innocence and retrieve his property, the government requires a bond of 10 percent of the property's value to cover the government's legal expenses.

"These are laws that turn law enforcement officers into public enemies," he said. "There is no proof, no evidence. ... It's time for us to rise up and put government back in its place."

Putting government in its place was a recurring theme of the forum, and for Libertarians that place isn't very big at all. Eliminate welfare,

Social Security, the Food and Drug Administration, government health care, public housing, public schools, affirmative action, the Postal Service and gun control and slash taxes, and you are well on your way to the Libertarian ideal.

Many of these ideas are why Libertarians are characterized as arch-conservatives. But they also support an end to the draft, the repeal of all immigration and emigration laws, legalization of drugs and many other things that sound decidedly liberal in a contemporary context.

Their rallying cry is individual liberty and responsibility, and their buzz words are "market forces." End welfare, and people will be more likely to voluntarily help the poor. End affirmative action programs, and those who insist on racist policies will lose out in open competition with more open minded employers. End public schooling,

See FORUM on Page 13A.

## Forum

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and the demand will create a supply of private schools.

Speaker Sheldon Richmond authored a book on the subject of abolishing public school in America.

"The Constitution gives the federal government no authority whatsoever in the area of education," Richmond said. "Let's get the government

out and give freedom and responsibility to the parents. ... Public schools treat parents like children."

Money once gone to school taxes could be used to shop for an education, Richman contended. He did not address the predicament of the poorest parents, who are unlikely to be courted by these new, profit-driven private schools.

But Libertarians insist that individuals can do a better job, that government has blundered in everything it has ever done, from race relations to education to economic

regulation to crime. And they don't hesitate to tell you, "I told you so."

"We Libertarians rejoice over this whole state of affairs," said Foundation President Jacob Hornberger. "We would have been depressed if it worked."

But the Libertarians have a problem. Few people know who they are, and many that do dismiss them as extremists, even though somewhat less now than in times past. Certainly the recent Republican revolution in Congress could be framed, at least in part, as a swing toward

Libertarianism. Cut taxes, cut spending, end big government. It is still far from ideal for the 75 people at Saturday's forum. And while mainstream politicians may pick and choose a few Libertarian ideas, they are not lining up for a third party ticket. The Foundation is distinct from the Libertarian Party, but they share similar views.

Hornberger and the rest had the unwavering resolution of ideologies.

"You have to wait," he said, "and let them come to you."

# Libertarian Party forming branch in Chowan

■ Party wants minimal local government, lowest possible property taxes

By GINGER LIVINGSTON  
Staff writer

EDENTON — The Libertarian Party, champions of "individual responsibility and maximum individual liberty," is taking a stand in Chowan County.

John Sams, a retired Navy commander and former Chowan County commission candidate, is organizing a branch of the party in Chowan County.

Sams says he was encouraged to form a branch of the Libertarian Party in Chowan after his good showing against Commissioner At-

Large A.F. "Jerry" Downum in 1992.

Running as a Libertarian candidate, Sams didn't win but received nearly 20 percent of the vote — a significant number of votes for someone who had lived in the county only six months.

"I think it showed people wanted a choice," he said. "I was hoping the Republicans would be organized enough to give the voters a choice."

Sams said the Chowan County Libertarian Party will focus on local issues deemed most important by its members. The emphasis will be on minimal, efficient government and the lowest possible property taxes.

Sams says the party will be paying close attention to the process of reevaluating property values in

Chowan, already underway but scheduled for completion in 1998.

"I think that's an item deserving close attention," he said.



Sams

expressed interest in the party's philosophy, he said.

Behind the Democrats and Republicans, the Libertarian Party is the nation's third largest political party. Its national platform

focuses on a balanced budget, term limits, lower taxes, less government spending and reduced government regulation.

The party also champions what it calls "individual responsibility and maximum individual liberty" as long as it doesn't infringe on others' rights.

"Libertarians believe in returning the federal government to the limited status assigned it by the founding fathers," Sams said. The Libertarians believe the best governing decisions come from localities, not centralized governments.

"Government should exist to protect the rights of individuals so if someone is forcing you (to do something you do not wish to do), the government can step in and protect your rights," Sams said.

Sams wouldn't say if he is consid-

ering a run for the county board of commissioners.

"I'm not a politician. I won't rule it out, but I got a lot of things going on and I'll decide later," he said.

To be eligible to run, the Libertarian Party must receive certification from the state Board of Elections and Sams will have to obtain signed petitions.

During the 1992 election, Libertarian Party candidates in state elections received over 837,000 votes. Libertarian gubernatorial candidate Scott McLaughlin received over 4 percent of the total vote.

Once organized, the Libertarian Party of Chowan County will elect officers and hold regular meetings. Interested individuals should call Sams at 221-8555 for more information.

# Bucks Libertarians see a surge in membership

By Rick Martinez  
Staff Writer

In this primary season of Bill, Bob, Pat, Steve and Lamar, few people are wild about Harry.

Harry Brown, the front-runner in the race for the Libertarian Party's presidential nominee, is familiar to few voters.

This anonymity exists despite the Libertarians' status as the third largest political party in the country and that its anti-tax, small-government platform embodies what most polls show is the spirit of the current political climate in America.

The reasons, local Libertarians say, have more to do with history and unfair election laws than with the party's ideas and candidates.

For example, a Democrat or Republican running for Pennsylvania governor must get 1,000 signatures on his election peti-

tion. A Libertarian, because the party does not have at least 15 percent of the state's registered voters, must gather 28,000 signatures.

"Every election we have to spend all this money just to get access to the ballot," said Don Ernsberger, chairman of the Bucks County Libertarian Party. "The Democrats and Republicans don't have to spend that money because they're automatically on the ballot."

Ernsberger was not whining. In fact, he and other Libertarian officials are upbeat about their party's recent fortunes.

Some 25 years after its founding, the party is enjoying a surge in membership, logging a 13 percent rise nationally since 1994.

Locally, the numbers are even more encouraging. In one year, from fall 1994 to fall 1995, the number of Bucks County Liber-

tarians grew by 59 percent to 1,113 voters. By last month those numbers had increased to 2,000.

Bucks County is the hotbed of Libertarianism in Pennsylvania. Not only was it the first Pennsylvania county to have more than 1,000 party members, Bucks has the state's highest percentage of registered Libertarians.

Nationally, Pennsylvania has the second-highest number of registered Libertarians, after California and before Texas.

"I suspect in 12 years we'll be as big as the Democratic and Republican parties," said Matthew Stover, the party's Southern Bucks vice chair.

Stover said evidence of the party's mounting popularity can be seen in Brown being the first Libertarian candidate running for president to qualify for federal matching funds. That Brown will not accept the funds — Libertari-

ans do not support funding political races with tax money — is beside the point.

In fact, if given a chance to hold the reins of office, a lot about electing leaders would change. Foremost would be easier access to the ballot for third-party candidates.

Libertarian candidates can only be listed as such in 30 states. In most the others they must identify themselves on the ballot as "independent."

Another way Libertarians would change the electoral system is to offer "none of the above" on each and every ballot, something now practiced in Nevada. If "none of the above" won, the office would remain unfilled and unfunded.

"This would improve the quality of campaigning and the caliber of the candidates," said Ken Sturzenacker, Libertarian Party

state chairman. "It would be a great way to downsize government."

At the state party's convention last weekend at Valley Forge, Sturzenacker said his biggest frustration as a Libertarian was watching the media consistently ignore third-party candidates.

"If nobody knows we're running, how can we win?" he asked. "The Libertarian Party is not subject to being covered in short sound bites."

At the convention the party's four presidential candidates campaigned but were not awarded delegates, a practice, Sturzenacker said, that was not in keeping with members' fierce individuality. Instead, there will be an open nominating convention in July.

Evaluating politicians from other parties, Ernsberger said, Steve Forbes is probably the closest ideologically to the Liber-

tarian platform. Sturzenacker called Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich and Pennsylvania's U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum pseudo-Libertarians.

Not surprisingly, all three men are Republicans. Rich Piotrowski, who will run for Congress in Bucks County this fall, said Libertarians are often mislabeled as "radical Republicans."

"Perhaps more of our members were former Republicans, but we get them from both parties," he said. "We also get a lot of people who never registered with any party before."

Libertarians, Piotrowski said, believe in less government in both economic and social issues. Republicans are usually much more willing to let government act as a moral arbitrator, he said, something Libertarians are loathe to do.

# Libertarians seek to bar sale of county office site

By PATTY PAUGH

Four Sussex County Libertarians have gone to court in their bid to scuttle freeholder plans to sell the county administration building to Sussex County Community College.

In a lawsuit filed in Newton earlier this week, Robert Heitner, Ed Wiessmann, Tony Federici and Don Imbriale contend the county board of freeholders violated state law by failing to hold public hearings before approving a sales contract. The freeholders sanctioned the \$2.6 million agreement in a 3-2 vote Feb. 14.

The plaintiffs, who are representing themselves in the litigation, are seeking a court order voiding the contract. Heitner and Wiessmann previously ran unsuccessfully for freeholder.

Freeholder Director John Warren and a colleague Thomas Clark, strong

## Suit claims Sussex acted illegally, cites failure to hold public hearings

advocates of the sale, both termed the lawsuit frivolous. They argued the county may be exceeding its legal requirements by holding public hearings at all, and they contended public hearings may not be mandated when two government agencies are parties to a sale.

"If anything, we're erring on the cautious side," Warren added.

But Heitner said a state Division of Consumer Affairs official, whom he declined to identify, told the plaintiffs two public hearings must be held before a contract is signed. The county plans to hold its sessions in one week

and April 10.

Heitner said that schedule is too late to alter the sale, adding the freeholders took a legally binding step without the benefit of their constituents' questions and opinions.

"Basically they've signed an irrevocable contract. The idea of the public hearing is to gather input from the public," he explained.

Warren argued terms of the contract enable the county to cancel the sale, although he doubted there would be cause to do so.

Warren, Clark and Freeholder Erma Gormley all favor the college's

growth. But Freeholders Jeff Staple and Richard Durina are opposed to the plan, citing the overall cost to the county.

State funds will pay for the college's purchase of the building. As part of the overall project, however, the county must pay for half of the \$3.2-million renovation to the campus. The state will pay for the remainder.

In addition, the county also must find a new home for county government, and the freeholders have been unable to agree on a location after months of discussions.

Staple and Durina contend it would be cheaper for the county to stay put and renovate existing offices, while their colleagues argue the building is not worth repairing. That approach also would thwart the college's expansion, the majority agrees.

▲ (Top) *The Daily Advance*, Elizabeth City, North Carolina, February 26, 1996

▲ (Center) *The Intelligencer*, Doylestown, Pennsylvania, March 5, 1996

▲ (Bottom) *The Star-Ledger*, Newark, New Jersey, March 21, 1996