

# LIBERTY PLEDGE

## newsletter

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## Colorado LP takes part in 'Minor Party Summit'

In what may have been the first gathering of its kind in the nation, the Colorado Libertarian Party participated in a meeting of all the state's recognized minor parties.

More than two dozen representatives of the Libertarian, Reform, Green, and Natural Law parties met for what was dubbed a "Minor Party Summit" at the Denver Press Club on January 13.

### Common goals

Leading the Libertarian Party's contingent was State Chair **Bette Rose Smith**, who said, "We're here to band together and pool our resources toward our common goals" — such as "how to keep the state legislature from raising the number of signatures needed for third parties to get on the ballot, and how to make voter registration forms more friendly" to third parties.

"I'd really like to see what we can do together," she said. "Even if we are opposed to each other on some issues, it doesn't mean we can't work together on those things that we agree on. I am excited about the possibilities of working together to bring new ideas to the public."

At the meeting, the parties agreed to discuss ways to create a minor party newsletter, to influence ballot initiatives, to improve the state's election laws, and to gain access to debates.

"I was pleasantly surprised to find so many things that all of the minor parties can work on, from building voter awareness, to getting the voter registration card changed, to lobbying for instant runoff voting," said Smith. "I expected to come away with two, maybe three things for the minor parties to work together on — and we found six in our first meeting!"

Guest speakers at the meeting included the Secretary of State's Election Division Chief Bill Compton, State Senator Ron Tupa, and *Denver Post* senior political reporter Fred Brown.

### Duopoly

The meeting was the brainchild of Colorado Reform Party Chairman Victor Good, who said, "If we ever want to threaten the major-party duopoly, we have to come together in some form."

The next coalition meeting is planned for March, and will be hosted by the Green Party.

## NEWS FROM AROUND THE USA

### OREGON STATE SENATOR JOINS LP

A state senator in Oregon — who colleagues had described for years as a "closet" libertarian — has joined the Libertarian Party, while keeping his membership and registration in the Republican Party.

On January 20, State Senator **Gary George** joined the state and national Libertarian Party because he "believes that it is a viable platform from which to advance liberty," said **Richard Burke**, a past Oregon LP State Chair and currently George's legislative assistant.

George, 57, represents Senate District 2 in Oregon. A hazelnut farmer by trade, he was first elected to the state senate in 1996 and was re-elected in 2000. He will be term-limited out of office in 2004.

George decided to become a card-carrying Libertarian because the party is "finally building some stature and a good public image in Oregon," said Burke. "Senator George now believes that it is a viable platform from which to advance liberty."



■ **George:**  
Joins the LP.

### BROTHER TO RUN FOR GOVERNOR?

The Libertarian brother of outgoing Wisconsin governor Tommy Thompson has said that he may seek that seat in 2002 — which could result in a "Jesse Ventura type upset" victory, according to the LP state chair.

In mid January, **Ed Thompson**, currently the mayor of Tomah, said he was considering following in his older brother's footsteps, and launching a bid for the governor's seat.

His brother, Tommy Thompson, had previously announced he would step down after four terms as governor when President George W. Bush nominated him for Health & Human Services secretary.

If Thompson does run, "he [has] a good chance to gather a lot of votes," said LP State Chair **Robert Collison**. "If his campaign was run properly, he might even be able to pull off a Jesse Ventura type of upset."



■ **Thompson:**  
"In footsteps?"

## Minor Parties in Colorado Agree to Cooperate

By MICHAEL JANOFSKY

DENVER, Jan. 14 — Frustrated by their low profile around the state, Colorado's four minor political parties have agreed to combine their efforts and pool some of their limited resources to raise their visibility and get more of their candidates elected.

During a meeting at the Denver Press Club on Saturday, representatives from the Green, Libertarian, Natural Law and Reform Parties, about two dozen people in all, approved plans for a coalition of party leaders that would focus on mutually beneficial activities like trying to gain access to debates, sharing mailing lists and publishing a newsletter.

Although third parties in other states have informally discussed helping one another, party leaders here say they know of no other state where four of the country's larger minor parties have come together to address mutual problems.

"We're not competing against one another," Ronald N. Forthofer, a Green Party candidate who won 4 percent of the vote in Colorado's Second Congressional District last November, told the group. "The real enemies are Republicans and Democrats. They're the ones who have gotten us into the mess we're in now. That's why we have to collaborate to build third parties."

The participants conceded that working together had limitations,

given the policy disagreements among them. No one suggested that the efforts would lead to a merger.

But national leaders applauded the collaboration.

"This is a good thing if it's limited to access, procedural and fairness issues," Ralph Nader, the Greens' presidential candidate, said in an interview from Washington. "We each need each other's help here; we should do it on a larger scale."

Harry Browne, the Libertarian presidential candidate, who received less than 0.5 percent of the vote, agreed, saying, "We could never merge ideologically, but from the national to the local level, we could cooperate on procedural issues."

Kingsley Brooks, chairman of the Natural Law Party, took a longer view, suggesting that party leaders in some states might favor a merger in specific state and municipal elections as a way to improve their chances of winning.

"Everybody realizes that the one thing that unites us as third parties is the real stranglehold the duopoly of Republicans and Democrats has on the system," Mr. Brooks said. "The only way we can all make progress is to come together."

At the presidential level, these are not robust times for third parties. In the recent election, George W. Bush and Al Gore combined for 96.27 percent of the 103 million votes cast,

according to the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate. The most successful third-party candidate, Mr. Nader, drew 2.72 percent, a far cry from the 19 percent Ross Perot won as the Reform Party candidate in 1992. No other candidate in 2000 won as much as 0.5 percent.

Minor party candidates have fared much better in the state and local races, even winning some low-level elections in large places and high-level elections in small places. And those successes could spread, the party officials here said, if they could loosen the two major parties' political and financial grip on the state and national political system.

The meeting on Saturday, arranged by Victor A. Good, a member of the Reform Party and an also-ran in Colorado's Third Congressional District election in November, featured a free-flowing discussion of how to combat the power of the Republicans, the Democrats and the media outlets that virtually ignore third parties.

The party leaders agreed to meet every two months or so and, at the next session, to discuss candidate training, fund-raising and publishing the newsletter.

The meeting ended with what some participants viewed as the first symbolic act of their combined efforts: They passed around a hat to collect \$100 to pay for the room.

## Libertarian with Ventura aide launches bid to be governor

By HERB JACKSON

Trenton Bureau

The last Libertarian Party candidate to run for governor, Murray Sabrin of Leonia, got unprecedented publicity for a third party nominee in 1997 and still finished with less than 5 percent of the vote.

This year's Libertarian candidate, Mark Edgerton, a 50-year-old real estate broker from Hopatcong, declared Wednesday that those results were not discouraging and that he believes the race is winnable.

Edgerton said New Jersey wants a candidate who believes, as he does, that the state's drug laws need to be overhauled or scrapped, that gun laws should allow people to protect themselves, and that government should basically stay out of people's way.

"The government that governs least governs best," Edgerton said at a State House news conference where he formally announced his candidacy.

Edgerton's campaign manager is Douglas Friedline, who managed the long-shot campaign of Jesse Ventura, the former wrestler who stunned the political establishment in 1998 when he was elected governor of Minnesota.

"We're not here to get 3 to 5 percent of the vote," Friedline said. "There's a huge opportunity to control the outcome of the election."

Friedline said polls were showing Ventura with the support of just 10 percent of the voters in the early fall and that he ended up winning with 37 percent of the vote against well-known opponents, including the son of former Vice President Hubert Humphrey.

He said Ventura was able to run a low-cost campaign that relied on grass-roots organizing. Minnesotans are also allowed to register to vote on Election Day, and Ventura's victory was partly because of his ability to get people who had never voted before to go to the polls. In New Jersey, voters must

register at least a month before Election Day.

Edgerton said he does not know how many libertarians there are in New Jersey, but that he takes hope from the fact that there are more independent voters than there are registered Democrats and Republicans combined.

In 1997, Sabrin became the first third party candidate to qualify for public matching funds, and by doing so he gained entry into televised debates. As a result, he shared a stage with Governor Whitman, the Republican seeking reelection, and Democratic nominee James McGreevey.

Edgerton probably will face McGreevey, who is running unopposed for the Democratic nomination again, and the winner of a Republican primary between Jersey City Mayor Bret Schundler and Senate President Donald T. DiFrancesco of Scotch Plains.

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The  
**RIGHT**  
Stuff  
By DVQ

## The NEA has no business seeking government aid

The National Endowment for the Arts is here to stay, but it ought not to be at the expense of reluctant taxpayers.

The NEA, as most of my readers know, sponsors National Public Radio & TV. Also works like Maplethorpe's pornographic photos and a variety of so-called artistic projects including obscene acts on stage, and the bottle enclosing a figure of Jesus immersed in urine.

Though I have opposed the NEA in many of my columns, I must admit I have mixed feelings about the Endowment.

I believe most Americans can handle that kind of sacrilegious vulgarity in stride, recognizing the source.

HOW can one argue with reason that citizens who don't cotton to opera, symphonies, etc., preferring western, jazz or other popular genres, should have to pay taxes to support the sponsor of what they don't like?

In fact, citizens should not be taxed to pay for *anything* not prescribed in the Constitution. I write that as the nation's newest member of the Libertarian Party.

What I find most repugnant about the NEA is its liberal bias in reporting the news. Thus, while I can stomach the porn, I appreciate the classics which are an NEA staple. But I abhor their political adventures.

If they would agree to drop their politics, I would agree to limit my attacks on their insistence on support from U.S. taxpayers who want nothing to do with what the NEA puts out.

Thus, they would be secure, and I would enjoy the excellent fare they do find time to present.



# What does it mean to be 'libertarian'?

Those who read these editorials often try to label us as being "conservative" or "liberal" or devotees of some political party. In truth, all such attempts to bag and tag us usually fail.

If a one-word name must be used, we are "libertarian." Please note that this word does not begin with a capital letter, as would "Libertarian Party;" we have no allegiance to any structured political lobbying effort.

This does not mean that we will not acknowledge the rare instance when a political party, be it Republican, Democrat, Libertarian or other, comes up with something that fits our philosophy. Nor does it mean that we won't talk at times about "least worst" scenarios, even though they are not exactly what we believe is best.

For the most part, though, being libertarian in the sense that we mean must be difficult to understand by those who use what could best be defined as "government-think." If you think various levels of government have a right to control your life and to use whatever force necessary to do so, then you are not libertarian ... and that is why you may have trouble understanding our editorials.

So, if that is the case, we would offer the following "primer" in the hope that it may lead to a broader understanding of and appreciation for being "lower-case libertarian." It was written by one of the foremost champions of libertarianism, Robert LeFevre (1911-1986).

IF YOU ARE LIBERTARIAN-MINDED:

■ You wish massive

reform so that government no longer subsidizes or interferes with any foreign power.

■ You wish government to cease and desist from offering havens of refuge and subsidy to any business.

■ You wish all businesses to stand on their own feet without help or hindrance, except from customers.

■ You wish private charities and eleemosynary organizations such as churches to handle welfare (as they once abundantly did).

■ You do not wish persons in power to be paid with tax money; indeed, you wish to eliminate taxation altogether.

■ You wish persons using government services to pay for them as they pay for other services purchased in the market place.

■ You want those agencies which seek to maintain order in all public places to abandon efforts to roust and prosecute those persons who commit "crimes" where no one is victimized.

Without a doubt, these goals and others of a libertarian nature — would be difficult to accomplish. We are not so naïve as to think it would be easy to revert to a system that values personal freedom above all else, but we feel that this would be closer to the Founding Fathers' original intent.

Even small steps eventually will cover long distances. Just because there is a long way to go is no reason not to take the first step.

That step could be to simply consider the possibility that there may be a "better way."

# Libertarians' Grinch

MERRY Christmas.

In the midst of another holiday season comes a cheery news release from those purveyors of glad tidings, the Libertarians, who want to inform us about the real "Grinch" just as millions visit distant relatives.

Governments, they say, "gobble up 41 percent of your travel costs."

"For most Americans, Christmas is a season for giving," said Steve Dasbach, the national director of the party. "But for politicians, it's a time for taking things away. Their hidden travel taxes take away nearly half your buying power, making politicians the real-life Grinches trying to steal Christmas."

Seizing on a new report from the D.C.-based Americans for Tax Reform, Mr. Dasbach reports that "a \$400 airplane ticket would cost just \$240 without the taxes."

"A wide variety of levies, including a federal excise tax, passenger facilities charges, fuel taxes, arrival and departure taxes, air traffic control surcharges, Customs, Immigration, and agricultural inspection fees, combined with taxes paid directly by the airlines, adds 40 percent to the cost of the ticket," the release said.

What is unclear is why the Libertarian Party has a problem with these fees. They are based on usage. That is, only those who use the airports and airlines pay them — something Libertarians typically favor. They usually protest being compelled to pay taxes for services that go to somebody else. There is an easy way to avoid paying these taxes: Don't fly.

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The news release also beefs about the added 43 percent that travelers pay to stay in the average hotel. According to the report, an \$80 hotel room would cost just \$45.60 without the taxes.

Some of those taxes go to pay local property taxes and taxes that pay for tourism advertising. The

## POLITICAL NOTEBOOK

BY FRITZ WENZEL



premise is that hotel occupants should help pay to promote the local area, so that hotels can stay in business to serve people who visit the area and stay in hotels.

Without such promotions, hotels would presumably have fewer guests and would be forced to either charge a lot more money, or close their doors. Either alternative seems less appealing than the current system.

The news release also mentions the cost of food in restaurants and gasoline, where "a \$20 tank of gasoline would cost just \$9.80" with no taxes. It decries 43 different taxes added to gas, most of which go to pave roads on which cars with gas tanks drive. Without road repairs, car repairs to fix damage caused by driving on bad roads would more than make up the difference in savings from not paying gas taxes.

◀ *The Sun Journal*

New Bern, North Carolina, January 8, 2001

▲ *The Blade*

Toledo, Ohio, December 25, 2000

# Libertarians expect little of Bush

By Mark Melady  
TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF

**WORCESTER** — Despite the likely presence of a former Libertarian in President George W. Bush's Cabinet, the difference between Bush and Clinton administrations will amount to the letterhead on White House stationery, the state Libertarian Party chairman said last night.

"Both the Democrats and Republican parties have shown

they serve the interests that bring them to power, not the people" Elias Israel said during a meeting of about a dozen area Libertarians at Tweeds Restaurant.

Gale A. Norton, Mr. Bush's nominee for Interior Secretary was active in the Colorado Libertarian Party in 1979 and 1980 before switching to the Republican Party and serving as the state's attorney general in the 1990s.

The Libertarian director said

Ms. Norton supports "sensible, free market environmentalism ... a refreshing change of pace from the typical, knee-jerk, anti-capitalism, tree-worshiping environmentalist."

Mr. Israel, Libertarian candidate for lieutenant governor in 1998, said while he welcomed Ms. Norton's presence in the Cabinet, he expected the Bush administration to do little that Libertarians would applaud.

While Republicans pay lip service to the kind of "economic

liberty" espoused by Libertarians, Mr. Israel said, the party has done little to reduce government, the issue closest to Libertarian hearts.

"In fact when the Republicans have been in power they made government bigger," Mr. Israel said.

He expects President Bush to continue the war on drugs, which he described as an "insane assault on the Bill of Rights."

"We need a new way to deal with drugs and we're not going to get a new way from a Republican administration," Mr. Israel said.

Asked about another former Libertarian in the news, Tom Alciere, who resigned a seat he won in the New Hampshire legislature after it became known he advocated killing police officers, Mr. Israel quickly pointed out Mr. Alciere was thrown out of the Libertarian Party in 1993.

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## Libertarians increase in Mass.

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"He started saying stuff about killing police at our meetings, we told him he was a jerk and to get out," Mr. Israel said. "We took his membership away and gave back money he contributed to the party".

Mr. Israel said Massachusetts Libertarians were invigorated by the strong showing of the party's U.S. Senate candidate Carla Howell. She pulled more than 308,000 votes, or 12.1 percent of the vote in her race against incumbent Democrat Sen. Ed-

ward M. Kennedy and Republican Jack E. Robinson.

"That's the highest vote total in the state by a candidate who was neither a Democrat or Republican," Mr. Israel said.

Libertarian registration in Massachusetts was at 16,000 in October, more than double what it was for the 1996 election and Mr. Israel predicted the total will exceed 18,000 when the secretary of state announces the latest figures.

The party is attracting younger members than either the Democrats or Republicans,

Mr. Israel said.

"The average age of Democrats is 54 and Republicans, 51," Mr. Israel said. "The average age of Libertarians is 37 and a half."

He noted that 37½ is also the average age of the Internet user, which he happily concluded to be more than coincidence. Not only does the virtually tax-free Internet revel in economic liberty, but, Mr. Israel said, Web-users like doing things for themselves, as do Libertarians.

"We're the party of the 21st century," he said.

◀ *The Telegram & Gazette*  
Worcester, Massachusetts  
January 22, 2001

▼ (LEFT) *The Gainesville Sun*  
Gainesville, Florida  
January 2, 2001

▼ (RIGHT) *The Arizona Republic*  
Phoenix, Arizona  
January 9, 2001

### Gasping for tolerance

When the Maryland village of Friendship Heights recently passed a law to ban outdoor smoking, town fathers probably had no idea they would be branded as modern-day tyrants. But the national Libertarian Party has seized upon the new Friendship Heights ordinance, and others like it, as perfect examples of "social engineering."

"What do these laws have in common?" asks Libertarian director Steve Dasbach, "They no longer are attempting to protect the health of non-smokers, but are an effort to criminalize smoking, change the social norms, and force people to give up a habit that anti-cigarette extremists don't like." Smokers' liberation; a new cause for the new millennium.

### Libertarians push initiative for paper ballot

The Arizona Republic

While lawmakers consider spending \$3 million to upgrade voting systems from punch cards to computers statewide, Valley Libertarians launched an initiative Monday to require paper ballots for elections.

Under the proposed amendment to the state Constitution, paper ballots could be fed into a computer for tallying but a manual recount would be required in contested elections. Current

state law requires any recounts to be done with the same system used in the original tally.

"Their recount is just to push the button again," said Ernie Hancock, spokesman for Our Vote Counts? "If they're going paperless, you might as well throw the whole process out the window."

The group needs 152,643 valid signatures of registered voters to place its initiative on the 2002 general election ballot.

A legislative task force recommended spending state funds last week to update 10 counties from Florida-style punch-card systems to the electronic-scan system used in Maricopa and four other counties.