

LIBERTY PLEDGE

newsletter

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'Born Libertarian' couple pledges \$200 each month

Donna and Richard Mancini are partners in the fight to wake America for liberty

Donna Mancini's Libertarianism goes back a long way.

"Philosophically, I've been a libertarian since the day I was born," said Donna Mancini, a \$100 monthly pledger and state chair of the Kentucky LP.

Despite her lifelong commitment she did not discover the Libertarian Party until about 10 years ago. In 1995, she read a letter to the editor in her local Louisville newspaper, which described Libertarian perspectives and gave a phone number.

Suddenly, her beliefs had a name. She called the number and joined that very day.

"I've been going nonstop ever since," she said. "You never know who you are reaching and influencing. It's very important."

Donna is running for a seat on the Louisville metro council in November. She feels she has a great chance, given her name recognition developed from her previous campaigns for public office. She ran for metro mayor in 2002 and in 2000 made a run for Congress in a historic race – all three candidates were women.

Donna's husband, Richard Mancini, is also a \$100 pledger.

"We've been married 20 years and we do things as a team," she said. "I may be more visibly involved, but Dick is behind me 100 percent. We are together on our beliefs."

Dick and Donna are both registered dietitians, which is how they met. Neither still practices dietetics; however, their commitment to health remains evident in their hobbies. Dick is a golfer and Donna an avid swimmer.

Today, Dick works in the health care industry and Donna, a former county Health Department employee, helps run the family

"Libertarians are the type of people who are in love with their beliefs. My involvement (with the LP) has expanded my life." - Donna Mancini

business, a flag company. If you attended the national convention in Atlanta or watched it on C-SPAN, the state flags displayed across the delegate hall were donated by the Mancinis, as their way of participating even though they could not attend this year.

Part of the reason the Mancinis are so involved with the party has to do with the friendships cultivated in their years of activism. "Libertarians are the type of people who are in love with their beliefs," she commented. "My involvement has expanded my life, much more than if I had never met these colorful characters in this

Party." She noted that Libertarians can often be uncompromising people, but, "they are also intelligent, committed, and passionate people," she said.

Both Donna and Richard see their monthly pledges as a concrete extension of their worldview. "I believe in this party," Donna said.

She understands that the LP has its problems, but believes that nothing is perfect.

"I want to give and I can think of nothing else to give to that more logically reflects my beliefs," she says.

Mancini commented on the convenience of the pledge system, saying it helps to be able to plan it into a budget and thereby, give more over time. Donna said, "If you are financially able to give you should, and I trust the Libertarian Party."

Along with all of their Libertarian activism, Donna and Dick support the arts in the Louisville community, particularly the Louisville Ballet. "And yes – real men do go to the ballet! Dick loves it," she said. They also donate to the local zoo. Donna then said, "Not that I am comparing the LP to the zoo, but you know."

Donna said she was excited about the Badnarik campaign. "That's my fantasy – to have a Libertarian elected president and for the American people to understand that freedom works!" she said. "I hope I get to see that in my lifetime."

However, Donna believes Americans do not value their freedoms as much as they used to. "I was born in a much freer world," she said. As an example, she pointed to an attempt by the Louisville City Council to rule that minors cannot purchase spray paint or magic markers to cut down on graffiti and noted that the federal government regulates the weight of toppings on frozen pizzas.

"The Libertarians seem to be the only people laughing at all this stuff," she observes. "That's what is frightening."

Despite this, she has confidence that the tide will turn.

"One day it will quickly change and people will wise up!" Mancini said. "America needs the Libertarian influence. I want to see Americans win their freedom back and come out of this denial they're in now."

And when America does wake up, they will have articulate, passionate people like Donna Mancini to vote for.



Donna and Richard Mancini

Ballot access injustice in Alabama denounced

By Sean Reilly

Dick Coffee has nothing against U.S. Rep. Jo Bonner, R-Mobile. He thinks Democratic challenger Judy Belk of Citronelle is a nice person.

Coffee, a Libertarian from Mobile, just believes that he deserves equal space with the two of them on the November ballot for southwest Alabama's 1st Congressional District seat. He won't get it, however, courtesy of one of the nation's toughest obstacle courses for third-party and independent candidates.

So it goes for Libertarians and other third-party and independent candidates across Alabama. Two years ago, the Libertarians alone fielded 58 candidates in races ranging from governor to county tax collector. This year, they risk being completely shut out of the Nov. 2 election.

The two major parties feel "that any competition (is) bad for them," said Mike Rster, administrator for the Birmingham-based Libertarian Party of Alabama. "I think their mindset is Republican or Democrat or the highway."

Just this week, hopes of getting Libertarian presidential candidate Michael Badnarik on the Alabama ballot took a hit in the form of an advisory opinion by the Alabama attorney general's office.

Through a nonpartisan group called Independent Alabama, the Libertarians had teamed up with supporters of Green Party presidential contender David Cobb and independent Ralph Nader to collect the 5,000 signatures needed to put all three on the Alabama ballot as independents through a joint petition.

By the reckoning of Richard Winger, the editor of a newsletter devoted to ballot access issues, only two other states — Illinois and Georgia — make it harder than Alabama in any respect for independents and third-party candidates to present themselves to voters.

To get on the ballot here, state law requires all such candidates — except independents seeking the presidency — to gather signatures of registered voters equal to 3 percent of the number who voted in the most recent governor's race.

"This thing is totally stacked against us," he said.

For a third party, the only way around the signature requirements is for at least one candidate to collect 20 percent of the vote in a statewide race. After a major investment in the 2000 elections, the Libertarians hit that threshold in a state Supreme Court race. That cleared the way for them to run their largest field ever in the state two years ago. However, none came close to reaching the 20 percent mark in 2002.

To Winger, Alabama's inhospitable climate for third-party candidates and independents carries a strong whiff of irony. Running as the American Independent Party's presidential candidate in 1968, the late Gov. George Wallace successfully sued to overturn an Ohio law requiring 433,000 signatures to get on the ballot, Winger said.

(Left) *Mobile Press Register*, Mobile, Alabama — August 19, 2004

(Below) *The Associated Press*, Washington, DC — August 12, 2004

Alaska Libertarians fight threat to party status

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Alaska's smaller political parties stand to lose state recognition this year because a presidential election could make it difficult to secure enough support to meet new state rules, according to some party leaders.

Smaller parties didn't expect to have to meet the state's requirements this year, said Scott Kohlhaas of Anchorage, chairman of the Alaska Libertarian Party. But the Alaska Legislature's last session amended the rules, he said.

Official party status is important because candidates from such parties can get their names on election ballots automatically. Other candidates must submit petition signatures to the state.

Currently, the state recognizes the Green, Libertarian and Alaskan Independence parties, beside the major parties.

For several years prior to the Legislature's action, a party could be recognized in two ways: If its candidate received at least 3 percent of votes in the most recent gubernatorial race or if its registered party members equaled at least 3 percent of the votes cast in that gubernatorial race.

The Republican-led Legislature this year decided that parties must meet the 3 percent standard not just in gubernatorial races, but also in U.S. Senate and House of Representatives races.

So instead of meeting the percentages once every four years, small parties now must do so every two years.

The new rules could be a problem because this year's general election, where the U.S. Senate race will be the qualifying contest for parties, also features a presidential showdown, Kohlhaas said.

Alaska's small parties have party status because each of their memberships, not their turnouts, totaled at least 3 percent of the votes cast in the 2002 gubernatorial election.

With a presidential election, which is typically more popular, that standard will be harder to meet, Kohlhaas said.

The state Division of Elections counts 7,335 registered Libertarians in Alaska. Kohlhaas said he figures it will take 9,000 Libertarian registrants to make sure the party rolls equal at least 3 percent of the turnout in the U.S. Senate race.

Kohlhaas is the sole Libertarian candidate in that race.

Washington LP faces initial major party challenge

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

TACOMA — They don't get as much attention as Democrats and Republicans but Libertarians are the third "major" political party in Washington, rating a separate primary ballot along with the other two.

That privilege is on the line in Tuesday's election.

The Libertarian Party of Washington State has 46 candidates on the ballot: two for governor, one for each of the other statewide elective offices, three for Congress and 32 for the Legislature.

"If we can get our candidates to the general election, we think we will easily maintain our major party status," Larey McLaren, the party's state chairman, told *The News Tribune*.

"We see that as the first step toward getting to the table and trying to affect policy from the inside," he said. "That's why we worked hard to get it and are working hard to keep it."

Libertarians secured major-party status — requiring 5 percent of the vote in a statewide race — in the state's 2000 election. Libertarians cleared the 5 percent hurdle in three races: for lieutenant governor, state auditor and commissioner of public lands.

How many voters will choose the Libertarian ballot? Jocelyn Langlois, party vice chairwoman and Libertarian candidate for lieutenant governor, said it's difficult to predict.

In the past, Libertarian candidates have often gotten votes from independents or disaffected Democrats and Republicans. But that was under the blanket primary system, which allowed voters to cross party lines at will.

If they had remained minor-party candidates, Libertarian office-seekers could have been nominated by collecting signatures at a convention, and then gone directly to the general election.

Libertarians tried to get rid of the 1 percent minimum threshold in the primary, McLaren said, but their efforts were thwarted by legislators.

"We worked our rear ends off in 2000 to get it," Langlois said. "Being a major party has a psychological advantage. It means we have advanced. We're up there with the big boys."

The new primary law also gave Libertarians a higher profile through a \$1.7 million voter-education campaign by Secretary of State Sam Reed. The party symbol, Lady Liberty, got equal time in state radio and TV ads with the Democrats' donkey and the GOP's elephant.

Libertarians are an eclectic group. Gubernatorial candidate Ruth Bennett is a lesbian and staunch believer in same-sex marriage. Some party members want to pull out of Iraq. Others want to legalize marijuana and end the war on

drugs. Some want to slash government spending.

But there's a unifying theme, McLaren said.

"Libertarians want to live their lives and be left alone as long as they don't harm or hinder anyone else's right to do the same," he said.

Badnarik gains momentum in New Mexico

Associated Press

SANTA FE — Libertarian presidential candidate Michael Badnarik believes 2004 can be the year his party gains national support.

"I'm tired of the Libertarian Party being a debate society. I'm tired of us being an insignificant player. And I think we can influence American politics," Badnarik said Wednesday during a swing through Santa Fe as part of a statewide tour.

Badnarik, a 50-year-old computer consultant from Austin, Texas, has been running television ads in New Mexico. He has spent \$68,000 on the spots, which tout his stances against the war in Iraq and in favor of less government and strengthened civil liberties.

He said he targeted New Mexico because the presidential race here is expected to be tight, and because most of the state's population lives in Santa Fe, Albuquerque and Las Cruces, making it easier to reach more people with limited resources.

Some 1 percent or less of New Mexico voters backed the Libertarian ticket in 1996 and 2000. However, Badnarik said his candidacy is gaining momentum.

He rejected the idea his role could sway an otherwise tight two-man race.

"I am not stealing anyone's vote," Badnarik said. "Votes don't belong to candidates; they belong to voters. Any votes I am getting, I am winning those votes because I am for liberty."

University of New Mexico political science professor Gilbert St. Clair said Badnarik's appeal, while probably small, could come from Republicans who feel strongly about smaller government and less intrusion on individual rights.

"I don't think anybody's going to be hurt much by it," he said. "If it's going to have an effect, very likely it's going to pull off Bush voters."

Badnarik said that if he were president, he would immediately pull U.S. troops out of Iraq. The war isn't about national defense and has no connection to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, he said.

On other issues, he emphasizes restitution to crime victims over punishment of criminals. Japan, which Badnarik said is the only industrialized country to consistently lower crime rates, uses that approach, he said. He opposes gun control, saying: "My rights are not negotiable."

(Above) *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Seattle, Washington — September 12, 2004

(Right) *Albuquerque Journal*, Albuquerque, New Mexico — August 12, 2004

Badnarik offers alternative to ‘Berry and Kush’

By Vince Keenan

Nostalgic Reagan-era Republicans may be one of Michael Badnarik’s best assets – and President Bush’s biggest handicaps – in tight election states like Nevada, based on some mutterings at a recent fundraiser.

Badnarik says if he were at the helm, “the federal government would be decreasing by significant percentages.” He also vows to veto bills that would infringe on people’s constitutional rights. “Most of what the government does is unconstitutional and I find that unconscionable,” Badnarik told about 30 supporters at Carluccio’s Tivoli Gardens restaurant. “They used to be whittling them away, now they’re tearing down our rights.”

With 5,490 registered voters statewide, the Libertarian Party will likely need all the help it can get on Election Day. The party garnered 0.54 percent of the Nevada vote, or 3,311 votes, in the last presidential election, when Harry Browne was the nominee. Most support came from Clark County, where 1,962 votes in Browne’s favor were cast, followed by Washoe County, where the total was 690, according to state election records.

In this campaign, Libertarians say they are trying to court the political outskirts of the two major parties, and it’s working, they claim. “During my campaign I have had both Republicans and Democrats complaining that they are disenchanting with the status quo,” Badnarik says.

Party members say liberals and conservatives alike find Libertarian stances more appealing than the largely similar planks presented by the two top contenders: Bush and Democratic Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts.

“Berry or Kush – whatever. I get them mixed up,” quipped Jim Duensing, a Libertarian candidate running against Rep. Shelley Berkley, D-Nev.

Badnarik, who is on the ballot in 43 states, including Nevada, and is seeking to gain access in the remainder, says voters are starved for change and the success of his campaign hinges largely on getting the word out. “Selling the Libertarian message is like selling ice water in hell,” he said.

His campaign seeks to amass another \$4.5 million so it would have \$5 million to buy publicity and boost poll ratings. He said if voter approval hits 15 percent, that grants him a spot in the presidential debate Oct. 13 at Arizona State University. He feels confident he will achieve that goal, and thereby “change the course of American history.”

“We’ve gone from 1 1/2 percent to 8 percent and I still got a month before the debate,” said Badnarik, citing a handful of recent polls. “If we continue to get the word out, there’s no reason why we can’t get 15 percent.”

The Libertarian platform incorporates the fiscal responsibility and regard for constitutional rights that Republicans once possessed, along with pro-civil liberties positions prized by Democrats, said Tom Hurst, a Libertarian running against Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev. “I think it takes the best of both parties,” said Hurst, a 46-year-old physics lecturer at UNLV.

Badnarik is talking up gun rights, as well as halting deficit spending and easing government regulation to help lower health care costs and create jobs, stances typically appealing to conservatives. But he says his ideas also appeal to liberals. For example, his platform opposes any government say in same-sex unions, in contrast to Bush and Kerry. And his noninterventionist foreign policy plank opposes the war in Iraq and any other type of unprovoked military involvement.

“There are many liberals who recognize that the war in Iraq was a mistake and it’s a mistake for us to stay there,” Badnarik says.

(Left) *The Las Vegas Mercury*, Las Vegas, Nevada – September 9, 2004

(Below) *The Statesman Journal*, Salem, Oregon – August 18, 2004

Oregon Libertarian Party fields record number of candidates

Associated Press

The Libertarian Party, which seeks to reduce the size and reach of government, plans to field a record 32 candidates in Oregon’s general election.

While it’s unlikely that any of the candidates will win, the anti-tax party could affect several races. Its members campaigned actively during the winter to defeat a ballot measure that would have raised taxes.

Voters rejected that tax increase 59 percent to 41 percent, giving the party hope that its candidates will resonate with Oregon voters this fall.

“I have not seen Libertarians have this good a chance at influencing candidate elections since the mid-1970s,” said Jim Moore, a political science professor at Pacific University.

The Libertarian slate includes nearly two dozen legislative candidates, including former gubernatorial candidate Tom Cox, who won almost 5 percent of the vote when Democrat Ted Kulongoski defeated Republican Kevin Mannix in 2002.

This time, Cox hopes to defeat Rep. Mary Gallegos, R-Cornelius, one of 11 House Republicans who voted for the tax increase that voters ultimately rejected.

“Tom will be the guinea pig to watch,” Moore said. “He has never done a serious campaign. Will we see it this time?”

Libertarians also could play a role in several other House races that have no incumbent, such as House District 54, which Rep. Tim Knopp, R-Bend, will exit.