

LIBERTY PLEDGE

NEWSLETTER

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The Libertarian Renaissance Man

by Andrew Davis
National Media Coordinator for the Libertarian Party

He calls himself a "Libertarian Renaissance man," and given his diverse experience gained in the 30 years that he has been involved in the Libertarian Party, Scott Kohlhaas has certainly earned this title. Kohlhaas, a 48 year-old activist who grew up 40 miles east of St. Louis, has done ballot access petitioning in more than half the states in the U.S., and has held leadership positions with affiliates in Missouri, D.C., Alaska and Illinois. He's also been one of the many Libertarians elected to local office, and has run for U.S. Senate.

Renaissance man, indeed.

Kohlhaas is currently living in Alaska, where he recruits, coordinates, consults and manages petitioners across the country. "As it stands right now, I am a recruiter," says Kohlhaas. "However, I always stand ready to go on a rescue mission in case there is an emergency." And in a political party that lives and dies by access to the ballot, there are few more important positions.

In 1992, the first time Kohlhaas traveled to Alaska, it was to help assist the state with a last-minute effort to get the Libertarian Party on the ballot for the Presidential election. "The state chair said he had the signatures, and the deadline came and went, and he disappeared into the woods," says Kohlhaas. He, along with four other petitioners, were sent to Alaska where they collected 5,000 signatures in a matter of days, which allowed the LP to be on the ballot in all 50 states.

Through being a petitioner, activist, protestor, state chairman, candidate, recruiter and state executive director -- it seems Kohlhaas has done well at spreading the Libertarian message. "The majority of people in America don't know where we stand," says Kohlhaas, but says significant improvements in name I.D. has been made. "We've made a lot of progress."

However, he recognizes that restoring liberty in America is a long row to hoe, and that it won't happen overnight. "I've seen a lot of people come and go," says Kohlhaas, referring to the people who jumped in the fight, but quickly left after realizing change wasn't going to occur immediately. "It's not easy to watch, but somehow with our philosophy, we renew our ranks and attract new members."

He cites the fact that the libertarian philosophy is the "right" philosophy as a reason for this, and also points to it as his inspiration to keep on going. "The fact that it is correct, and it is right," he says is what drives him to push on. "I believe in the Party's ability to succeed, and that's why I keep working at it."

It has been a need for activism and the desire for success that has motivated Kohlhaas to work steadfast for liberty within the LP for so many years and in so many locations. He's not afraid to admit that the work is tough and with little immediate gratification, but he says it's his long-term perspective that keeps him focused. "This party is going to be a party for 100 years. We need to think about things in those terms."

Kohlhaas points to his heroes in the Libertarian movement as other forms of inspiration when the times get tough. "I have seen so much heroism," says Kohlhaas in his decades of time being a Party activist. He specifically mentions people like David Hudson, a Massachusetts Libertarian who spent "every dime he had," according to Kohlhaas, to put an initiative on the ballot that significantly lowered the requirements for third parties for ballot access.

Paul Jacob, a long-time libertarian activist and a college roommate of Kohlhaas' is another person who Kohlhaas points to as a great example of libertarian heroism that motivates him to work harder for liberty in America. Kohlhaas says that while in college, Jacob was indicted for refusing to sign up for the draft, and even after he was offered a chance to register or otherwise be sent to jail, Jacob refused. "I've never seen anything more courageous than that," says Kohlhaas. "It was his training in the Party that made him a hero for the nation."

Kohlhaas says that he is looking for a leader in the Libertarian Party that will be able to explain libertarianism to the American public in a language that they understand. He says that in the meantime, however, he is building a national platform for that leader to be able to reach the American public.

One of the best ways to build this platform is ballot access in all 50 states, which Kohlhaas says is the key to the national debates. "The debate would be vindication for all of us," and something the LP has been striving to reach since 1971.

Though, in order to achieve nationwide ballot access, volunteers for petitioning must be found -- something on which Kohlhaas is currently working as the Ballot Access Coordinator for the Libertarian Party. "It's important that people connect with someone and learn about how to do it," says Kohlhaas, who hopes the LP can eventually develop a training video for petitioning. "The tough part of petitioning is going out and asking people. But, it's like Nike: Just do it. Just go out and start asking."

"Ballot access is a form of oppression," he remarks. "But it is also a great opportunity for Libertarians to roll up their sleeves and go out and talk to people." He says there is no substitute for Libertarians talking to people, which is one of the best ways to spread the libertarian message to non-Libertarians. This message, says Kohlhaas, is something the Party has been better at spreading than any other facet of the libertarian movement, and something he works hard to further in the community.

"I really believe the Party is one of the greatest ideas in the world, and certainly within the movement," says Kohlhaas. "The libertarian movement has many outlets, but the Party has reached millions of people. I don't think any think-tank or book has delivered our message as broadly as the Party." It is safe to say individuals like Kohlhaas have been a large part of the success of the Libertarian Party in the past 37 years.

For more information on how to become a petitioner, or for advice on how to petition, please contact Kohlhaas at 907-337-3171, or scott.kohlhaas@lp.org.

Engaging the Activist

by Austin Petersen
National Volunteer Coordinator for the Libertarian Party

Many people over the past several weeks have approached me with the concern that sometimes it seems like there just isn't anything for their volunteers to do. Of course, there is always something for them to do, especially this year. The older generations of Libertarians have leadership positions that require them to participate in activities that are more administrative in nature, but in order to grow we must recruit the youth who are eager to turn their energy into action.

The activists can be your strongest allies in recruiting new volunteers, as they are willing to get out in the streets and get into the public eye for rallies, petitioning and protests. Activism is a necessary tool for us to show our numbers, make our voices heard and reach our ballot access goals. Coordinating in New York City, there was a strong interest from our volunteers to protest the Federal Reserve, the war and other issues. My fellow coordinators encouraged them to take their signs and to speak out on the streets of Manhattan. In doing so, they elevated our profile, garnered positive media attention and were instrumental in recruiting even more activists to our cause.

Some people have expressed to me a certain level of apprehension with regard to "unleashing the rabid horde" of activists who might tar our image. They say that we don't want the media to give us a negative image, but with enough planning and good leadership, a protest event can energize and hearten young activists while spreading the message.

As I write this, the dreaded April 15 looms. Sean Haugh, political director for the Libertarian Party, observes: "It is the one day of the year that everyone in the United States is a Libertarian." For those who are looking to engage their volunteers, organizing an event to pass out literature at the post office as people drop off their income tax is a great way to spread the message.

One problem with activism nowadays is that no matter what the issue is, volunteers always seem to have an overall negative tone to their protest. To maximize impact of your message, have your volunteers create signs and slogans that turn a negative into a positive. Instead of yelling at local police to "Shut down the Fed," or "Stop the War," try approaching people directly and non confrontationally with simple questions and statements such as: "How would you like a 28 percent raise?" Or, "I just saved a bunch of money by switching to the Libertarian Party." Of course, being prepared with proper literature to pass out is essential.

When your event is petitioning and not an event or rally, the goal is an obvious one: to maximize the amount of signatures in a given time period. Volunteers who have never participated before can be shy and have a difficult time approaching strangers. One way of breaking down these barriers is to remind your people that what they are doing is really a public service. You are doing your communities a favor by giving them more options at the voting booth. Encourage them to tell signers these same things, and encourage them to spin it in a positive light. Tenacity is important. If someone is hesitant, but obviously listening to you, don't be afraid to catch up with him or her if they are walking away. Always be polite and respectful of the person if they ultimately say no, but don't be afraid to approach them vigorously.



In Virginia, for example, I was petitioning to get National Chairman Bill Redpath on the ballot for his U.S. Senate Race, along with a petition for our eventual Presidential candidate, and I had to get the voter to sign two different pages. Most people would want to sign one page, and then move on. To make them aware that I wanted them to sign twice, I would tell them that I wanted them to sign for my Presidential candidate while they were signing the Senate form. This way they understand exactly what you are requesting of them. Remember to always be respectful if they decline.

Most people are willing to help you if you approach them with a smile, and a good attitude. Starting your question with, "Excuse me, are you registered to vote in the state of Illinois?" will qualify your person's status immediately. If they say yes, simply say something to the effect of, "Would you please sign my petition so that a third party can appear on the ballot?" They will most likely oblige. If they ask you whom you are petitioning for, be honest, but don't get involved in a political discussion. Have literature handy to give to them, and move on with a thank you, so that you can maximize your signatures for the day.

Whether your event is a protest, rally, or petitioning, a positive attitude is key. Those people who might be on the fence about approaching a stranger can be persuaded to engage with us if the volunteer has the right spirit. Good leadership is essential. A good leader, with the right message and right approach, can inspire volunteers to achieve greater success.

Good luck!

Local Libertarian Election Victories

by Sean Haugh
Political Director for the Libertarian Party

Libertarians have already gotten a big start on this election season with five election victories in April in Missouri and Wisconsin. In two of these wins, a currently elected Libertarian defeated an incumbent to become Mayor.

Joel Stoner, an elected alderman in Macks Creek, MO is now Mayor after defeating incumbent Jack Daniels with 61 percent of the vote on April 1. Stoner won on the most basic local issue: fixing potholes. As an alderman, Stoner not only was able to convince the city to purchase two road graders, he would often personally transport and apply the road repair materials himself. Stoner also co-sponsored a plan to rebuild their City Hall after it was gutted by a fire in 2006, saving the taxpayers of Macks Creek money in the process.

Wisconsin Libertarians continued to show the way to the rest of the country with four winners in local elections on April 8. Recent gubernatorial candidate, Ed Thompson, became Mayor of Tomah for the second time, defeating incumbent Chuck Ludeking by almost a two-to-one margin. Thompson's record from his previous service as Mayor and City Councilman, plus all of \$20 in campaign spending, was enough to propel Thompson to victory.

In his previous term as mayor, Thompson cut city expenses by 13 percent while improving services to the community. Thompson says that large expenditures should be decided in referendum by the people, not by a handful of city council members. "The people have been left out of the political process at all levels," he said. "We're going to change government at the grassroots level. I want to show that Libertarian values are American values; that we, the people, don't want government bureaucracies meddling in our private lives."

"Thompson referred to his frugal \$20 campaign as a metaphor for how government should be run," according to Wisconsin state Chair David Hendrickson. His report quotes Thompson as saying, "Maybe I should run for governor again some day, but it would probably take more than 20 bucks; maybe more like a couple hundred."

Other Wisconsin victories included Kurt Schlicht, who was elected as Dane County Commissioner, Kevin Schuenemann who won re-election to Kewaskum Village Board, and Ken Ebsen won election to the Pardeeville Village Board as a write-in candidate. Schlicht owns a tavern and had served two terms on the Cross Plains Village Board. In their endorsement of him, the Wisconsin State Journal said, "His experience as a small businessman and local leader should help him keep careful watch over county spending." After noting his opposition to tax increases, they pointed out that "Schlicht's transparent style and local advocacy make him the better choice."

Schuenemann was unopposed in his bid for re-election. Schuenemann reported, "Unfortunately, the non-Libertarians won unopposed as well. I will continue to be the 'nay' vote in the wilderness on many issues."

In Ebsen's race, only two incumbents filed for the three available Village Board seats, so his write-in campaign was enough to claim the third seat. Ebsen is the publisher of the local Pardeeville Liberator newspaper, and has taken a leading role in organizing the town's annual Watermelon Festival. He's been able to produce immediate results, being the swing vote to defeat a proposed ordinance banning satellite television dishes in residents' front yards. Referring to the proposal as "a point of over-regulation," Ebsen's argument that people often get

better reception by placing the dishes in their front yards won the day for freedom.

Based on these candidates' records of community service and application of Libertarian principles in public office, they will now be showing all Libertarian candidates not only how to win elections, but even more importantly, how to serve well once they get into office.

Thanks to Julie Fox and David Hendrickson who contributed to this report.



ATTENTION LP MONTHLY PLEDGERS!!!

YOU AND A GUEST ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO THE LIBERTARIAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE'S 2008 PLEDGE RECEPTION, "FRIDAY NIGHT SNACK-DOWN," FEATURING WWE PERSONALITY GLENN JACOBS (A.K.A. KANE).

Friday - May 23, 2008 - 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM
Adams Mark Hotel - DENVER, CO

look for your invitation in the mail

Welcome to the Liberty Pledge Club!

Thank you for your generous contributions.

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This Month in the Media

by Andrew Davis
National Media Coordinator for the Libertarian Party

The following are issues on which the Libertarian Party responded to in the media. For copies of the actual press releases, please visit www.LP.org or contact media@lp.org.

Sen. Mike Gravel joins the LP

March 25 - In late March, the former two-term Senator from Alaska, Mike Gravel, joined the Libertarian Party. Gravel, who was running for the Democratic nomination for President, stated that the Democratic Party no longer tolerated his viewpoints. In a press release issued a few hours after he officially joined the LP, Gravel stated: "I'm joining the Libertarian Party because it is a party that combines a commitment to freedom and peace that can't be found in the two major parties that control the government and politics of America."

Gravel's jump from the Democratic Party to the Libertarian Party was not without a significant amount of fanfare, though in recent days the media has slowly waned despite his announcement that he is now vying for the LP nomination for President. Reporting on the Gravel switch was *Fox News*, *LA Times*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Baltimore Sun* and a number of other local outlets from across the nation.

The addition of Gravel to Libertarian ranks makes for two former members of Congress who have switched to the Libertarian Party in the past few years. In 2006, former Georgia Congressman Bob Barr officially joined the Party, and now serves on the Libertarian National Committee. "It is a distinct honor to have another former member of Congress within the Libertarian Party," Barr stated in a press release about Gravel's transition. "Just as Senator Gravel believes Democrats have lost touch with the American public, I too concluded Republicans had lost their core principles, and could no longer associate myself with the GOP. While coming from opposite sides of the aisle, Senator Gravel and I definitely agree on the fundamental need for systemic change in our political system, and that the only way we have of effecting that change is by supporting and working in the Libertarian Party."

Mostly known during his time in the Senate for his impassioned opposition to the draft and his reading of the Pentagon Papers onto the Congressional record for public dissemination, Gravel brings to the Libertarian Party the prestige of a former Senator with a legacy of defending civil liberties. Gravel served as a U.S. Senator from Alaska from 1969 to 1981, and now lives in Arlington, VA. Though never polling above 1 percent in nationwide polling during his Democratic bid for the presidential nomination of that party, Gravel became an Internet phenom with his offbeat, Internet political advertisements. In one such ad, Gravel is standing by a pond and stares silently into the camera for more than a minute before throwing a large rock into the water and walking away.

Spoiling the spoiled

April 11 - Responding to comments by the public and in the media about the Libertarian Party being a potential spoiler in the 2008 elec-



tions, the LP stated that while such concerns were understandable, "the time for political expediency in American politics is finished." Criticism of the potential to be a spoiler in close elections is common among the political establishment in regard to third parties.

Libertarians, while never having broken 1 million votes in a Presidential race, often influence the outcome of close, local elections. However, since the 2008 race is shaping up to be incredibly divisive, with mountains of disgruntled voters on both sides of the political establishment, a strong Libertarian candidate could easily break the benchmark set by LP candidate Ed Clark in 1980.

"True conservatives within the Republican Party are not convinced that John McCain is one of them," Libertarian Party National Media Coordinator Andrew Davis said in a recent press release. "Many people who are both socially tolerant and fiscally responsible are looking to the Libertarian Party, which is much more in line with their core beliefs, as a possible alternative to John McCain in 2008. Additionally, some voters who may typically cast a vote for Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama may choose to support the Libertarian Party due to the current economic crisis and the lack of solutions offered by those candidates."

"The Libertarian Party has the very real potential to capture principled voters in 2008," said LP Executive Director Shane Cory. The key to Libertarian Party success in 2008 will be highlighting how the main two parties have lost touch with American voters and have failed to offer solutions to the serious problems facing the country today. If the Libertarian candidate can present a viable candidacy to the American public while finding a way to present Libertarian solutions to current problems in a way that resonates with the average voter, the LP stands to make significant headways in its fight to restore liberty in the U.S.



Protecting the pajamas media



April 16 - Two years ago, bloggers were given protections from the FEC, who could have potentially considered linking to a campaign Web site or editorializing about a candidate a political contribution or expenditure. Unfortunately, these protections were only regulatory, meaning the FEC could change them without Congressional approval. Now, there is a bill that seeks to make those protections a statute, and will guarantee bloggers are granted the same protections as traditional media outlets.

The bill, H.R. 5699, is commonly known as the "Blogger Protection Act of 2008," and is sponsored by Rep. Jeb Hensarling (R-TX). "These guys really don't get the credit they deserve for all the work they've done to create accountability and transparency in American politics," says Andrew Davis, national media coordinator for the Libertarian Party. "Often, bloggers are the first to expose politicians for lying and corruption, and hold all politicians to a new level of accountability that would have been impossible only a few years ago. They fully deserve the same protection from government interference that is given to traditional media outlets."