

# LIBERTY PLEDGE

## newsletter

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newsletter

## Leadville, Colorado city council's Libertarian majority gets sworn in

The four-person Libertarian majority on the Leadville, Colorado city council has been sworn into office — creating the first LP-controlled city council since the 1980s.

On January 7, Libertarians Carol Hill and Ken Cary took the oath of office in the historic mining town, which is located in the rugged mountains just west of Denver.

They joined incumbent Libertarian city councilors Joe Swyers and Lisa Dowdney on the seven-member body.

The four Libertarians make up the first Libertarian-majority city council in Colorado, and only the second in the party's history. In 1987, Libertarians held every city council seat in the small hamlet of Big Water, Utah.

### Practical politics

Longtime Colorado LP activist Steve Gresh, who witnessed the swearing-in ceremony, said the event was a landmark of "practical" Libertarian politics.

"What Leadville is showing Libertarians is it's possible to actually use practical political ideas to gain control of a body of government," he said.

The four Libertarian officeholders took different routes to build their majority: Hill and Cary were elected to



■ The Leadville city council Libertarian majority (l-r): Joe Swyers, Ken Cary, Lisa Dowdney, and Carol Hill.

the non-partisan city council on November 6, 2001; Swyers is a registered Libertarian who has served on the council since 2000; and fellow incumbent Dowdney registered as a Libertarian on November 8.

Swyers, the ranking Libertarian on the council and owner of an office supply store, said the Libertarian majority proves that "we can do it — we can win. This will give Libertarians some experience in dealing with the wide range of issues that face councilors or any legislative body."

With his three Libertarian allies, Swyers said he will work to restrain the budget, reduce the burden of property regulations, "turn loose the power of free enterprise," and repeal a local ordinance

that restricts fireworks.

Hill, a bookstore manager, said she was "excited" about the possibilities of serving with a Libertarian majority.

"If we play our cards right, we can accomplish a lot," she said. "If we do it right, I think [city residents] will come to understand they are more libertarian than they realize."

Colorado LP State Chair John Berntson said the party was "very pleased" with the election of the Libertarian majority and their formal ascension to power.

"We keep hearing a Libertarian can't win an election," he said. "How about this? Not just a single officeholder — a majority! This is a real breakthrough. We look forward to many more."

### news blurbs

■ Future of Freedom Foundation President Jacob Hornberger says he will run for the U.S. Senate in Virginia. His "dynamic, guerrilla-style campaign" will focus on African-American and Hispanic communities, he vowed.

■ San Miguel County, Colorado Sheriff Bill Masters celebrated the publication of his book *Drug War Addiction* with a media blitz throughout the state. Masters spoke at the University of Colorado in Boulder, appeared on local TV stations, and did a number of radio interviews in early December.

■ The actor who played ensign Wesley Crusher on *Star Trek: The Next Generation* says he's a libertarian. Wil Wheaton said he is "a geek and a libertarian" in a wide-ranging discussion on Salon.com in December.

■ LP members want the party to increase public awareness of libertarian ideas. That's the *most* important strategic goal for the LP, according to a mail survey of party members, conducted in late 2001. Tied for #2 were increasing the number of Libertarian officeholders, remaining the "Party of Principle," and increasing the LP's support base.

# Gubernatorial candidate is full of confidence

JUDY JUENGER  
NEWS REPUBLIC

BARABOO — "We're going to do this for a million or less — and win." Ed Thompson said confidentially Thursday of his third-party campaign for governor.

The Libertarian candidate is on one of the many trips he will take around the state during the next 11 months in his bid to unseat Republican Scott McCallum.

Thompson, mayor of Tomah and a brother of former Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson, said it is the common people who will help him win big in the gubernatorial election.

"I feel one with them and they feel one with me," he said.

Thompson won't even be upset if he wins the race because disenfranchised voters come out to vote for him because they don't want to vote for the other candidates. Thompson said he'll work for the state's residents just the same.

"Nobody will outwork me," he said.

Thompson had few specific guidelines for changing the state, although he had issues to address. As a conservative, he didn't want to see the state fund abortions, but in the final analysis, he said, he wanted to provide good health care for those who sought the procedure.

He would seek to balance the state budget, and one step he would take would be to automatically cut 10 percent from the governor's budget. Thompson said he would expect Cabinet members to do the same. He said he believes controlling state spending will jump-start the Wisconsin economy.

To provide help to farmers, Thompson said he would control the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Smart Growth plan and cut taxes.

"It's all related to taxes," he said of the state's woes. He

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## THOMPSON

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NEWS REPUBLIC

Gubernatorial candidate Ed Thompson chats with Baraboo News Republic editor Judy Juenger during a campaign stop Thursday.

pointed to the fact that Wisconsin is the third highest taxed state in the nation.

Thompson stressed an honest, deep discussion of issues, including education. He said there is a need to review programs in light of children, such as revenue caps. Thompson believes in home schools, magnet schools, charter schools and occupational training as well as improving how public schools operate.

Sauk County is building a new jail to house more prisoners, and there is an increase in prisoner populations statewide.

"In my heart, I believe we're spending way too much money on prison," he said.

Thompson preferred the use of electronic monitoring of nonviolent inmates rather than incarcerate them because of the cost difference. He said it cost about \$2,000 for electronic monitoring, and

\$25,000 for incarceration.

If confidence wins the race, Thompson will be in state government in a year.

"We're at the bottom of the mountain," he said. "We plan to be at the top of the mountain in 11 months."

## Libertarian Party responds to O'Bannon's tax plans

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — The state Libertarian Party, which has no elected representatives of the General Assembly, wants lawmakers to consider the party's response to Gov. Frank O'Bannon's tax restructuring plans.

The Libertarians' alternative focuses on local control of property taxes and schools.

The proposal's fiscal impact hasn't yet been worked out, state party chairman Mark Rutherford said.

"I hope the plan will wake up

the electorate that there are alternatives," Rutherford told the Journal and Courier of Lafayette for a story published Sunday. "This is thinking outside of the box."

Rep. P. Eric Turner, R-Marion, a member of the budget and tax-writing Ways and Means Committee, said he plans to review the Libertarians' proposal.

O'Bannon has proposed balancing the state budget by making spending cuts and raising taxes on cigarettes and admissions to riverboat casinos.

He also is promoting a tax-restructuring package designed to protect homeowners from the impact of a court-ordered change in how property taxes are assessed.

The package would raise sales and individual income taxes to eliminate or reduce some local property taxes and shift their costs to the state. Among other things, the state would take over a greater share of school operating costs.

The Libertarian plan also would change property taxes and assessments and would restructure

school funding.

Sheri Conover Sharlow, Grant County Libertarian Party chairwoman, said the party's proposal would keep elected officials more accountable for tax and spending decisions.

"The plan focuses attention back on the counties," she said. "You can then challenge spending that is unreasonable."

Under the plan, land would be taxed by a flat rate, per unit of land. Structures would be taxed only on a square-footage basis and classified as residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural.

▲ *The News Republic*,  
Baraboo, Wisconsin  
November 30, 2001

◀ *The News Gazette*,  
Winchester, Indiana  
December 3, 2001

▼ *The Chronicle Tribune*,  
Marion, Indiana  
December 2, 2001

# Libertarian Party proposes plan

Not all budget numbers have been calculated

BY STAFF WRITER  
SHANNON LOHRMANN

INDIANAPOLIS — The state Libertarian Party is answering Gov. Frank O'Bannon's call for alternative tax restructuring plans, which focuses on local control of property taxes and schools.

Libertarians have not yet calculated all of the budgetary numbers associated with the plan, state Party

Chairman Mark Rutherford said.

"I hope the plan will wake up the electorate that there are alternatives," he said. "This is thinking outside of the box."

Under the proposal, schools would get a \$3,500 grant per student for each school year to finance their education. Any additional money would be raised on the county level.

Parents would be able to send their children to any state supported public or charter school. For those who select private or parochial school or to home-school their

### AFFECTING STATE TAXES:

Property taxes and assessments also would change under the Libertarian plan.

Land would be taxed by a flat rate, per unit of land. Structures would be taxed only by a square footage basis by four classifications: residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural.

■ All property within each classification would be taxed at the same rate, decided on a county-by-county basis.

■ Any local tax increases would need to be approved by a county or city referendum.

■ Property taxes would then be used to fund only education, police, fire and park funds. Welfare would be removed, and the Libertarians would rely on local charities to provide those services.

■ Personal property, on the other hand, would not be taxed.

children, the Libertarians credit for each child. The proposal would make want a \$1,750 income tax

school buildings, including gymnasiums and swimming pools, community resources that would be financed on the county level, Rutherford said.

"The plan focuses the attention back on the counties," Grant County Libertarian Party Chairwoman Sheri Conover Sharlow said.

Other essential elements of the proposal would be to make all state programs, laws and agencies not mandated by the state Constitution expire after 10 years. Lawmakers would then need to decide whether or not to renew them.

Also, any changes to the state tax code would need to be approved through statewide referenda.

Elected lawmakers will get the opportunity to alter Indiana's tax system during the next legislative session starting Jan. 7. However, no Libertarians have been elected to that body. Instead, Rutherford hopes that sitting lawmakers steal and implement his party's ideas.

"I am certainly going to take a look at their plan," said Rep. P. Eric Turner, R-Marion, a member of the budget- and tax-writing Ways and Means Committee.

# Thirty years of liberty

We have always had some ambivalence about the Libertarian Party, whose founding 30 years ago is celebrated in today's Orange Grove by David Nolan, who not only founded the party but has shown the good taste to live in Orange County. Our belief — and we suspect it is shared by many party members — is that liberty grows not through overt political action but through an increase in the number of people who understand that reliance on a political system to achieve shared or individual goals is a snare and a delusion and order their lives accordingly.

While the Register's editorial pages share many beliefs with the LP, we have no connection with it, for practical and philosophical reasons. We seek not to persuade politicians to become libertarian or to say they have, but to reduce the role of political governance in our lives and increase the realm in which people can govern themselves.

Although we have sometimes been tempted, we have chosen not to endorse candidates for political office. It's not that we don't recognize the importance of the political system and elected officials. But we believe officials cannot give us a free society from the top down; it must be built from the bottom up as people come to recognize the impor-

ance of personal freedom to any order that aspires to be civilized.

All that said, the Libertarian Party has been an important part of the broader campaign of persuasion and direct action on behalf of a freer society. Regardless of how well the party has done in the electoral game — critics will point to disappointing results for presidential candidates while optimists will cite the number of candidates fielded and some electoral successes — running candidates has proven to be a cost-effective way to spread the libertarian message.

The LP has certainly made mistakes and wasted money. Some of its candidates or spokespeople have been ineffective. It has not yet achieved what early socialist parties might claim — that its ideas have been adopted by the major parties. But it has been able to place alternative ideas before voters and citizens in a way that writers, think-tankers and others would never be able to accomplish.

The Libertarian Party has always been more about principles than personalities, a mixed blessing in rough-and-tumble electoral wars. But it has survived 30 years and tempered the rush to statism. The need for a party of liberty is unlikely to vanish soon. If the LP continues to serve that function it will serve the country.

## Libertarian Party to mark 30th year

SANTA MARIA — Members of the Libertarian Party will gather in Santa Maria on Sunday to celebrate the 30th anniversary of their political party.

The celebration, which is open to the public, will take place at 5 p.m. at the Santa Maria Inn, 801 S. Broadway.

In February, the party will hold its state convention at the Santa Maria Inn.

▲ *The Orange County Register*, Santa Anna, California, December 11, 2001

► (TOP) *The Washington Times*, Washington, DC, December 11, 2001

► (BOTTOM) *The Macon Telegraph*, Macon, Georgia, December 11, 2001

◀ *The Santa Barbara News-Press*, Santa Barbara, California, December 7, 2001

## Third wheel?

That was the Libertarian Party blowing out 30 birthday candles yesterday, marking three decades — founded Dec. 11, 1971, in Colorado Springs — as the “alternative” party in America.

“For 30 years, Republicans and Democrats have been hoping Libertarians will go away,” says party national director Steve Dasbach, who pledges that the Libertarians will stick around until Republicans and Democrats “follow the Whigs into the history books.”

Some self-described Libertarians include actor and former politician Clint Eastwood, columnist Dave Barry, author Camille Paglia, and television newsmen John Stossell and Hugh Downs.

## ■ STATEWIDE

### Libertarians mark 30th anniversary

The Libertarian Party will celebrate its 30th anniversary today. The party was founded in 1971 by what the organization calls “a small group of liberty-minded activists in Colorado.” The party has become the most successful alternative party in the last half century, party leaders say.

“We are pleased with the achievements of the past and look forward to even greater success in the future,” said Helmut Forren, chair of the Libertarian Party of Georgia. “Despite considerable obstacles imposed by Democrats and Republicans, the Libertarian Party has made its mark on American politics.”

Forren said the party has more than 240,000 registered voters across the nation. There are 289 Libertarians who hold elected office, more than all other third parties combined, he said. In the 2000 elections, 256 Libertarian candidates ran for the U.S. House. That was the first time in 80 years that any third party had contested a majority of Congressional seats. The candidates received 1.7 million votes in 2000, the most ever by any third party slate, he said.



James W. Lark III, a professor at the University of Virginia and the national chairman of the Libertarian Party, told members Saturday that people should know "government can protect them, but not very well."

## Party official urges Libertarians to keep protecting civil freedoms

At Beach gathering, members are warned that often in wartime, civil liberties are loser

BY MICHELLE MIZAL-ARCHER  
THE VIRGINIAN PILOT

VIRGINIA BEACH — Since the terrorist attacks Sept. 11, civil liberties are at risk, the national chairman of the Libertarian Party told local members Saturday.

Wartime can coax people to "trade liberty for security," said James W. Lark III. He referred to recently passed legislation which gives the government, among other things, multiple wiretap powers in terrorism cases.

Lark said that, for years, citizens have allowed the government to do whatever it wants in times of war. He said it's important for people to know that government "can protect them, but not very well."

That's why he asked Libertarians to promote the party's vision, which includes a country steeped in civil liberties and a foreign policy of non-intervention, a not-so-popular viewpoint in wartime, Lark said.

"I always like to bring good news, but unfortunately this is not a happy time for us, and I want to challenge you to, in whatever steps you are promoting the Libertarian vision, to kick it up a few notches," Lark said to more than 25 local Libertarians.

Edward J. Sargent, a member of the Virginia Beach Libertarian Party, agreed and decided to get more involved.

"It's a tough time for the party to deal with," Sargent said. "But it's important to put forth our views. It's more important to be diligent now in protecting



Party members Lendon Derrick, left, Dan Carey, center, and Stephen Merrill, right, prepare for the meeting Saturday morning. About 25 people heard the message of the Libertarians' national chairman.

our liberty."

The group also applauded the announcement of a Beach Libertarian's decision to run for an at-large City Council seat.

"We did feel that it was important to get names and faces out in the community," said Dan M. Carey, who declared his candidacy Saturday. "This is

**The group was asked to promote civil liberties and a foreign policy of non-intervention.**

something we are ready for."

Carey said more specifics on his positions will come soon, but for now he's advocating that the council leave real estate development to private industries and get back to what he calls "the four S's" — funding for schools, safety, streets and services.

Carey's plan to campaign comes during troubled times for Libertarians nationally.

said Lark, who traveled from Charlottesville to speak on civil liberties restrictions since the terrorist attacks.

Lark called these times the "most dangerous moment" for the Libertarian party.

"War has been the death of libertarian parties around the world," he said, citing the decline of the British Liberal Party during World War I.

On Saturday, the Beach's Libertarian party also unanimously voted to oppose Mayor Meyera E. Oberndorf's proposal to move City Council and School Board elections from May to November.

Some members said the move would not leave much money for local candidates and would only add more names and issues to an already loaded ballot.

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# Sheriff: U.S. drug policy a failure

'We need to admit that,' San Miguel lawman says

By Deborah Frazier  
News Staff Writer

San Miguel County Sheriff Bill Masters is taking his war against drugs on the road.

"America's drug policy is a failure. We need to admit that and switch to a system of careful control," Masters said.

Masters, a Republican turned Libertarian, was elected in 1979 in a county that includes Telluride.

"The plan is not to have heroin stores everywhere, but a system where people can clearly see all the drugs and know they don't need them," he said.

"The police and the politicians need to admit they've failed."

That's also the message in his book, *Drug War Addiction: Notes From the Front Lines of America's No. 1 Policy Disaster*, published by Accurate Press of St. Louis and due out this month.

The drug war, which reportedly costs every citizen \$200 a year, has failed to curb gang warfare, drug-related murders and robberies, although half the inmates in federal prison are serving terms for drug offenses, he said.

"We are a drug culture. It's encouraged by ads for Prozac, Ritalin and Viagra," said Masters, who tries to avoid all drugs, but occasionally takes ibuprofen.

"I know that when I take something, it affects me."

Some drugs should be available, he said.

"Take medical marijuana. You have to be deathly ill from chemotherapy, suffering from cancer and lying on the bathroom floor vomiting and crying," he said.

"How can we be so cruel?"

For all the millions of dollars spent and thousands of people jailed, the same percentage of the population — 1 percent — is addicted to heroin and morphine today as were in 1900, Masters said.

"If people like drug killings, meth labs, overdoses, police corruption and drug-related crimes, then we have the perfect drug policy," he said.

"Thirty years ago, we had a little tiny drug problem.

"Now the quantity and quality are better, and it's all over the place."

▲ *The Virginian Pilot*, Norfolk, Virginia, November 25, 2001  
▼ *The Rocky Mountain News*, Denver, Colorado, December 10, 2001