

LIBERTY PLEDGE

newsletter

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JANUARY 2000

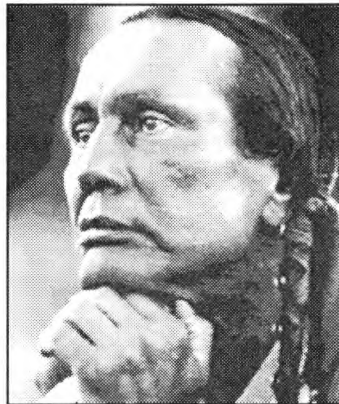
Russell Means set for Convention

A man whose biography reads like the plot of a movie — Indian rights activist turned candidate for the LP's presidential nomination turned Hollywood star — has been scheduled to speak at the 2000 Libertarian National Convention.

Russell Means, who parlayed three decades of political activism into starring roles in movies like *The Last of the Mohicans* and *Natural Born Killers*, has been confirmed as one of the premier speakers at the convention, said LP Political Director Ron Crickenberger.

Reach out

"Russell Means is one of the people who will help redefine freedom in the 21st Century — and help the lib-



■ **Russell Means: The Indian rights activist turned Hollywood star will speak at the 2000 LP convention.**

ertarian movement reach out to minorities and the less fortunate," he said. "We're honored to have him speak at our convention."

Means, born into the Oglala/Lakota tribe, was the first national director of the

American Indian Movement (AIM) in the late 1960s.

In 1987, he discovered libertarianism, and announced his candidacy for the LP's presidential nomination. After a spirited campaign, he came in a close second to former Congressman Ron Paul.

In 1992, he starred in *The Last of the Mohicans*, and began a new career in Hollywood. Since then, he has appeared in *Pocahontas* (1995), *Hearts and Bones* (1999), *Natural Born Killers* (1994), and *Song of Hiawatha* (1997). He has also published a popular autobiography, *Where White Men Fear to Tread*.

The LP National Convention will be held June 29-July 3, 2000 in Anaheim, California.

Two Washington state officeholders will join LP

Two officeholders "at the ground level" of Washington state politics will switch to the Libertarian Party this spring.

Precinct Committee Officers (PCO) Ben Johnson and Shanna Follansbee, both former Republicans, have confirmed they will join the LP.

"I was tired of working for the Republicans when they did not believe the goals I care about — like lower taxes and more freedom —

were important enough to strive for," said Johnson, 21. "After [being in] the Republican Party and watching them promise smaller government, more freedom, less taxes, and never delivering, I became fed up."

Making headway

Now, "as a Libertarian, I feel I'm finally making headway instead of just making waves," he said.

Both Johnson and Follansbee were elected to their

two-year terms in 1998.

In Washington state, PCOs serve a quasi-public/quasi-partisan role. Elected in the general election by voters of all parties, they actually work for a specific political party, gathering "data from a precinct about what the populace finds important," said Johnson.

Having two PCOs join the Libertarian Party is likely to boost voter awareness of the party, said State LP Executive Director Carol Miller.

NEWS BRIEFS

■ Former N.H. State Representative **Don Gorman** has said he will probably enter the race for the LP's presidential nomination, and will announce his exploratory committee at the California LP convention in February. "I have seen a groundswell of support from grassroots Libertarian activists encouraging me to run," he said. Gorman, 62, was twice elected to the N.H. state legislature.

■ The **Commission on Presidential Debates** has issued new standards for inclusion in the 2000 debates. The criteria — which include showing up at 15% or more in polls — will probably keep out the LP candidate, and would have barred almost every major third party challenger of the past 70 years, the LP pointed out.

■ The **Harry Browne** for President campaign will issue a 30-minute infomercial in mid-February. The program — *The Great Libertarian Offer* — will run on national cable TV, and will be available to activists. Look for more information on Browne's campaign website—www.harrybrowne2000.org — after February 15.

117 state Libertarian hopefuls and counting

By Dianne Barth
Record Staff Writer

Lodi bookstore owner Tom Kohlhepp is in his fifth campaign for the Assembly and very sure he won't win next November's contest. But inspired by his party's strategy for the 2000 elections and booming registration numbers, he felt he couldn't turn down the chance to try one more time. "My goal has never been about winning but about getting my party's message out," Kohlhepp

said. For California's Libertarians, delivering their principled platform of more tolerance and better protection for individual liberties and less government has always been more important than putting people into office. But for the 2000 elections, the party is melding both political ideals by reaching out to voters with a record number of candidates for state and local offices. "That's where you get your message across. ... The candidates get

invited to forums, they participate in debates, are included in gatherings," state party Executive Director Juan Ros said. Added Libertarian candidate recruiter Ted Brown: "How else will anyone know who we are? How else will they hear us?" The national party goal is 2,000 candidates in 2000, with 200 of those in California races. So far, the Libertarians have 117 candidates for 154 partisan state offices and dozens more for local nonpartisan races.

State political watchers say that's amazing. "It's becoming the stealth party," said Bob Stern, political analyst for the Los Angeles-based Center for Government Studies. "It's fascinating. That number of candidates is truly impressive." Especially so because this year for the first time many Libertarians got on the ballot by collecting signatures of supporters in place of paying the traditional filing fee. "It's not easy to go out and get 150 people to sign for you, especially if it means a lot of them

have to switch parties to do that," Kohlhepp said. Other candidates said they were surprised it wasn't harder. Carol Brow, a Clements grape grower in her first campaign, said she just got a list of the district's Libertarian voters and called on them. "There were more than I thought," said Brow, running for the 5th Senate District. "And we all worked together on this. That

Please see LIBERTARIAN, A15

LIBERTARIAN

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helped." Libertarian registration in San Joaquin County has stayed about the same, hovering at 860 for the past four years. But the party has grown substantially in Humboldt, Santa Cruz, Calaveras and Mother Lode counties, with statewide registration jumping by 15 percent since 1996.

Registration went from 74,183 in the last presidential election to 84,947 as of Oct. 5, according to Secretary of State reports issued last month.

They represent just 5 percent of all voters, and their numbers still trail the Reform, Green and American Independent parties — but they are growing faster than any other party.

What works

Over the past two years, the party has embarked on a campaign to improve the organization. For the first time since the party was formed in 1971 in Colorado, Libertarians made a major effort to expand the number of \$25-a-year dues-paying members as well as recruit and even field candidates who actually might win.

The new strategy also has meant reaching out to members of the big parties who might be disenchanted.

That included such unlikely bedfellows as members of the National Rifle Association and the American Civil Liberties Union. "Well, they align with us on a lot of things," said Brow, 54, a Libertarian since the party was formed.

Traditionally considered more conservative than liberal, the Libertarians draw from Democrats and Republicans is now about 50/50, Ros said.

The party attracts Democrats for its tolerant view of marijuana, while Republicans tend to go for the party's anti-government spending, anti-gun restriction tenets.

California Libertarians say they hear from voters who no longer see a clear distinction between the two big parties.

"Democrats and Republicans talk differently," Brown said. "But they really are the same when it comes to assaults on civil liberties and more taxes. ... Look at the GOP 'revolution' that was supposed to roll back government. Instead, the Republicans are proposing a higher budget than even Clinton."

But Brown concedes the party does better in nonpartisan races and could be the unlikely winner in the state's new open-primary system.

"We would very much like to get someone elected to a partisan office, but we have not achieved that victory yet," Ros said. "But we have done much better in local races where the party isn't a factor."

who told me that voted with us, we'd be in much better shape."

The fact is, Ros said, that the same thing can be said for the Democrats and the Republicans. "I mean, if you are a Democrat and vote for a candidate who lost, then it could be said you wasted your vote."

The open primary is going to help, he said, because registered Libertarians can go in and expect to vote for whoever they want.

The trick, and that's where the candidates come in, will be to persuade them to vote Libertarian.

Mainstream politicians suggest heavy campaign advertising, television time and phone banks — traditional election tactics that

work for the big parties. The problem is the cost.

Libertarians don't have the kind of funding base the Democrats and Republicans can count on and their numbers are too small in most communities to raise money for political consultants, opposition research or even mailers.

Kohlhepp thinks he'd have a much better chance, for instance, if he could just do one districtwide mailing. But at \$50,000, that's not going to happen. Kohlhepp thinks it's important enough that he'd support asking the federal government to allow candidates for state offices one free mailing.

But his party isn't going for it. "It is so tempting," Brown said.

"Because we don't have much money to help candidates run campaigns. But we just cannot force the taxpayers to contribute to campaigns they might not support."

At a time when a winning California state Senate race often costs upwards of \$1 million, the genuine grass-roots campaigns most Libertarians run are more often than not serious long shots.

"But we are committed to change," Ros said. "If people would just give us a chance."

■ To reach reporter Dianne Barth, phone 546-8294 or e-mail dbarth@recordnet.com

Statewide, there are roughly 40 Libertarians either in elected positions or appointed to commissions or panels. Calaveras County Supervisor Thomas Tryon is running for his fifth four-year term in office; the mayor of Los Gatos is a Libertarian, as are the Mendocino County district attorney and city council members in Arcata, Humboldt and Saratoga.

This year, the national party is getting behind a drive to get San Marino Valley City Councilwoman Bonnie Flickinger, a Libertarian, elected to the state Assembly.

When people pay attention to the Libertarian candidates, Ros said, they tend to agree. "A lot of what we've been saying for years is catching on. ... We've been talking about privatization for Social Security for decades. Well, now the mainstream parties are looking at that too."

And the public is even beginning to shift on the party's stance against the war on drugs, he said.

"We've always said drugs are a public-health issue, not a criminal issue," he said.

The challenges

Still, the Libertarian platform isn't an easy sell. Just ask Tryon — up against a Republican in his reelection bid for the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors.

Calaveras County voters like his fiscal conservatism, he said. They strongly support protecting property and economic rights. Where the conservatives leave the party line, he said, is on civil rights.

"I am not a drug warrior. I'm not for a flag-burning amendment," he said. "Those are hot issues that always get the press, so I am always perceived as vulnerable. I always have a race."

Voters who might otherwise go Libertarian also stop short on its position on abortion. The party supports a woman's right to choose.

"People have strong emotional feelings about these issues up here," Tryon said. "My sense is that 45 percent of our voters strongly support me, and 45 percent strongly oppose me, and I always have to go out and fight for that remaining 10 percent."

Issues aside, the biggest obstacle Libertarians say they face is the so-called "wasted vote" argument.

"It's the single biggest challenge we have; people saying, 'I agree with you, but I don't want to waste my vote,'" Ros said. "If everyone

Who's who among Libertarians

San Joaquin County/Mother Lode Libertarian candidates include:

- Carol Brow, 52, grape grower/travel consultant, Clements, for 5th Senate District.
- Roy Busch, 57, Caltrans engineering associate, Manteca, for 17th Assembly District.
- Tom Kohlhepp, 51, bookstore owner, Lodi, for 10th Assembly District.
- John Peterson, age not

available, for 1st Senate District.

- Kathryn Russow, 29, office worker, Stockton, for 11th Congressional District.
- Thomas Tryon, 54, rancher, incumbent for Calaveras County Board of Supervisors.

Information: Write to Libertarian Party of San Joaquin County, 10047 E. Acampo Road, Acampo, CA 95220; or call (800) ELECTUS.

Jolly old St. Nicholas taking liberties with law

Libertarian Party recruiting members for candidacy

AUSTIN — The Libertarian Party of Texas will recruit 100 candidates to run for all levels of elective office in Texas for 2000. Nationally, the Libertarian Party plans to run 2,000 candidates in all 50 states.

The party has been on the ballot in all 50 states since 1992 and now has almost 300 members in elective and public office.

Prospective candidates must file their application for nomination with the state or county chairman by Jan. 3. They will be asked to sign the pledge that they "do not believe in the initiation of force to achieve political or social goals." They should be in substantial agreement with the party's platform calling for much smaller government and minimal taxes. They also must defeat "none of the above" and any other candidate for the same office nominated at the county or state convention in June at Corpus Christi. The national convention will be July 3 in Anaheim, Calif.

There is no filing fee. Forms and other information may be obtained by calling (800) 422-1776 or (713) 271-1776.

Watch out Santa Claus, the Libertarians are at it again. Recently the Libertarian Party jumped to the defense of prune farmers who wanted to call their product dried plums but ran into government red tape. Now their target remains big government, but Santa Claus, an innocent bystander, is taking a few licks too.

"Hark the federal agents sing, Santa is guilty of nearly everything," said George Getz, Libertarian Party press secretary. "The feds know when Santa's been bad or good — and he's been bad for goodness sakes."



Tim
CONNOLLY

Politically
Speaking

The Libertarians feel that if Santa Claus was held to the same standards as typical Americans he would land in jail. His crimes? Here are the top five:

- **Illegal immigration.** He sneaks across the U.S. border every year with concealed contraband.
 - **A host of Federal Aviation Administration violations.** He flies a custom-built sleigh that has not been approved by the FAA. He never files a flight plan. He doesn't have a pilot's license. And he flies at night with just a single red nose to guide him — a clear violation of FAA safety regulations.
 - **Abusing protected species.** Those tiny reindeer are protected by the federal government, yet Santa puts them to work at hard labor. Santa never bothered to register and license the genetically-engineered animals. On top of that he keeps them penned all year.
 - **Operating a sweatshop.** What else can you call a place that keeps little Third World elves busy all year making toys for virtually no pay. And the Occupational Safety and Health Administration has never inspected the place either. Getz said Santa runs a workshop that only Kathy Lee Gifford could love.
 - **Operating a monopoly.** Santa might be the Bill Gates of Christmas. He has cornered the Christmas gift market by giving away toys in a sinister attempt to crush all competition.
- "It might be tough sledding for Jolly St. Nick this Christmas if the government decides to prosecute him," Getz said.
- The unspoken message here is that if you vote for Libertarians they will leave old Santa alone and everyone else as well.

▲ *The Galveston County Daily News*
Galveston, Texas
December 14, 1999

▲ [RIGHT] *The Telegram & Gazette*
Worcester, Massachusetts
December 25, 1999

► *The Las Vegas Business Press*
Las Vegas, Nevada
December 6, 1999

Federal government nation's worst polluter, report says

A new investigative report printed in the *Boston Globe* charges the federal government is the worst polluter in the United States.

The Libertarian Party notes that federal agencies have contaminated at least 61,155 sites across the country, produced more toxic waste annually than the nation's five largest chemical companies, and have polluted 475 billion gallons of groundwater.

According to the four-part report, the estimated cost of cleaning up the damage

done by federal agencies and the military could pass \$300 billion, compared to an estimated cost of \$57 billion to clean up the pollution caused by chemical and oil companies.

Additionally, many federal agencies are exempt from environmental laws, such as the Clean Water Act, and individual bureaucrats are immune from criminal prosecution. As a result, the *Globe* notes, the federal government "has a license to pollute."

Libertarians take stand on plight of prune

The Libertarian Party has taken up the cause of the lowly prune.

Evidently, California prune farmers are worried they will be fined or sued by the Food and Drug Administration for calling their prunes "dried plums." The prune industry, in an effort to attract young people to its product, decided to go with the new name because prunes have become associated with laxatives for old people.

"A rose by any other name would still smell as sweet — but a prune by another name could get you in trouble with the Food and Drug Administration," said Steve Dasbach, national director of the Libertarian Party. "Libertarians have to ask: Should it really be against the law in America to call something exactly what it is?"

The FDA is concerned about changing a product name and wants more information from the prune industry. Mr. Dasbach called it a case of "bureaucratic constipation."

the INSIDER report

That delicious meal you had for Thanksgiving — and the festive feast you may be planning for Christmas and New Year — may get hit with a "fat tax" if certain public health proponents get their way.

The Libertarian Party is lambasting a proposal by some groups for a new federal tax on food items with high-calorie and high-fat contents. One group, the American Obesity Association, said it would pay for anti-obesity programs.

"Hide the ham, guard the gravy, and hold on to your hamburger: The calorie cops are coming after us," said **Steve Dasbach**, the party's national director. "If we don't stop them, the grease Gestapo will do to fatty foods what they've already done to cigarettes."

Political litmus test

WHICH WAY DO YOU LEAN?

The Libertarian Party of El Paso County jumped on the Web earlier this year with a small site that features an interactive quiz to help pinpoint you on the political spectrum. Are you a moderate? Liberal? Authoritarian? Conservative? Or Libertarian? It's a rather fun instrument if you want a snapshot of your political self. We tested to make sure the quiz calculator didn't return "Libertarian" no matter what you filled in — but no, all the stances are represented if you change your answers a certain way.

www.lpep.org

◀ [TOP] *The Telegram & Gazette*, Worcester, MA, December 18, 1999

◀ *The Gazette*, Colorado Springs, Colorado, December 8, 1999

▲ *The Ft. Worth Star-Telegram*, Fort Worth, TX, December 19, 1999

▼ *The New Jersey Herald*, Newton, New Jersey, December 12, 1999

Local Libertarian running for governor

By **MARK HARTMANN**
Herald Staff Writer

Hopaccong man's platform is change

HOPATCONG — Mark Edgerton said he is gearing up to run for Governor in the 2001 gubernatorial race as the Libertarian Party's candidate.

Edgerton, a 49-year-old real estate broker who lives in Hopaccong, said he will be the "people's candidate" hoping to offer voters a change with his candidacy in a third party.

"In the past two years, I have talked to people from all areas of this state, in all economic groups," Edgerton said. "Listening to what they say, I heard the citizens of New Jersey say they are ready for

change."

Having never held public office,

Edgerton knows he will have to work hard for a victory, and that's why his campaigning has started two years early.

"All the voices of the Libertarian Party are joined together, and the same message will be repeated over and over,"



EDGERTON

Edgerton, who captured the party's nomination on Nov. 13. "We will be heard this time, and we will win."

Libertarian Party candidate Murray Sabrin received 114,000 votes during the 1997 gubernatorial election. Sabrin came in third following Democrat James McGreevy with 1.1 million votes and Republican Gov. Christine Whitman with 1.13 million votes.

Sabrin raised about \$800,000 during his 1997 election campaign, but Edgerton said he will raise three to four times more than Sa-

brin. "I'm not going to be looking for large donations either, I'd really like 800,000 one-dollar donations," he said.

Edgerton's platform lies on challenging the existing two-party system to restore voters' faith in their government. "The people are not just talking about oppressive taxes," he said. "The people of this state are ready to separate themselves from corruption, coercion and tyrannical power."

Edgerton has set up a Web site where people can read more about his campaign platform. The address is www.wallnet.com/~edgerton.

edgerton.

Born in Montclair, Edgerton has been a lifelong New Jersey resident. He's attended college, although he has not completed a degree. Edgerton has been the president of Edgerton Realty Corp. in Parsippany, a full-service real estate firm, since 1977.

A licensed real estate broker, Edgerton has taught the real estate broker and salesperson course at Raritan Valley and Warren County community colleges.

Before moving to Lake Hopaccong two years ago, Edgerton lived for more than 20 years in Independence Township. He has two grown children and enjoys spending time on his 25-foot sailboat named "Rosa."