

LIBERTY PLEDGE

newsletter

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TOTALLY FED UP . . .

Syndicated radio star Gary Nolan joins Libertarian Party on the air

Gary Nolan, a syndicated radio talk show host heard on 45 stations around the country, has become the latest member of the broadcast industry to join the Libertarian Party.

On January 12, Nolan "signed on the dotted line" and became a card-carrying member of the party during a live, on-air broadcast of his program, *Nolan At Night*.

He was joined for the occasion by LP National Director Steve Dasbach and LP Press Secretary George Getz, who welcomed him.

Nolan, a self-described "libertarian-Republican," said he finally decided to leave the GOP and join the LP because "Republicans seem as anxious to spend my money as the Democrats."

Getz, who has been a regular guest on Nolan's show for several months, said he was delighted by Nolan's decision — but not surprised.

"I could tell that Nolan was a good prospect for conversion, because he was so principled and logical," he said. "I thought the best thing we could do was to keep building a relationship, and wait for him to get fed up with the GOP."

"When the Republicans passed their latest budget bill, I knew Gary was close to joining the LP. Then, on January 6, Nolan called and said, 'That's it; I've finally decided to join the party.' I'm not sure which straw broke the camel's back, but suspect he was fed up with the way Republicans keep promising smaller government and delivering the opposite."

Nolan is syndicated on the Radio America network and appears on about 45 stations around the nation, including some major markets like Seattle. He is also the head of Capitol Watch, a conservative-leaning, budget-cutting group based in Washington, DC.

SHOCKING SECRET . . .

Jerry Springer: A Libertarian?

Warning: There may be a sudden outbreak of chair-throwing and hair-pulling in the libertarian movement. That's because Jerry Springer says he's a libertarian.

According to the *Liberator Online*, the e-mail publication of the Advocates for Self-Government, the controversial TV talk-show host revealed his shocking libertarian secret to Ken Bush, a long-time LP activist from Missouri.

Bush, who met Springer while he was in St. Louis to promote his new book, *Ringmaster*, "asked Springer if he was a libertarian. Springer nodded his head affirmatively," reported Paul Schmidt, *Liberator Online* editor.

"Ken was a bit skeptical, so he gave Springer a short summary of what libertarians believe in: Civil liberties and economic freedom. Springer continued to affirm that he was a libertarian."

Springer — whose trashy, raucous show has rocketed to the top of the daytime TV ratings — had a very respectable previous life before becoming the bad boy of tabloid TV. He has a law degree, won 10 local Emmies as a newscaster, served on the Cincinnati City Council, and was elected mayor of Cincinnati in 1977.

Although not an LP member, Springer has also been an outspoken defender of freedom of speech.

LP to speak at Social Security forum

A representative of the LP of California has been invited to participate in a forum about the future of Social Security — and he says he plans to use the opportunity to call for a completely private pension system.

Juan Ros, executive director of the California LP, will be a speaker at a Americans Discuss Social Security (ADSS) forum, which will be hosted by the Pew Charitable Trusts. The event will take place on January 23 at the University of Southern California.

"I believe [this forum] honestly wants to provide all sides of the issue, even someone who wants to abolish Social Security," said Ros.

RIGHT-WING RIP

Laws to legalize pain-management drugs split conservatives



Tim O'Brien of the Libertarian Party of Michigan

I have long suspected that the marriage of convenience between religious-right and nanny-state conservatives must inevitably end in a messy divorce.

Other than a desire to achieve political power in order to compel the rest of us to follow their vision (by force, if necessary), these two groups actually have no more in common than, say, environmentalists and feminists — strange bedfellows from the other wing of the bird.

Now, it appears the catalyst for the final breakup may have appeared on the scene in the person of Jack Kevorkian.

Right to Life, the Roman Catholic Church and their fellow travelers are well aware that their successful campaign to defeat Proposal B last month (which would have permitted physician-assisted suicide under strictly regulated conditions) is ultimately only a holding action.

The scare tactics about granny being brow-beaten into submission by greedy heirs — and, ironically, the appeal to libertarian objections about the proposed bureaucracy's intrusiveness — will give way to the sensible notion that human beings are entitled to at least the same level of compassion society has for its suffering pets.

Kevorkian made this point rather forcefully a few weeks ago on network television.

That's why some of the Citizens for Compassionate Care who fought Proposal B are now calling for a significant overhaul of state laws regarding pain management.

This, of course, means adopting a new attitude about and approach to the use of drugs — the ultimate bugaboo of their erstwhile allies in the conservative movement.

Now there is little dispute in the scientific community that the most efficacious treatment for intractable pain would be the refined version of morphine, the best drug currently available.

Not surprisingly, the more potent form provides better pain relief at lower doses and with fewer side-effects. Indeed, this drug was originally developed more than a century ago for precisely those reasons. Prior to being made completely illegal, it was marketed in the United States by the Bayer company under the trade name: Heroin.

We can probably gauge the reaction of the nanny-state conservatives to a proposal to make heroin available for medical use by their response to similar recent proposals with regard to marijuana (a drug so mild that there has never been so much a single recorded instance of a fatal overdose).

In 1996, medical marijuana proposals appeared on ballots in California and Arizona. They passed in both states.

Federal government officials promptly went ballistic. A furious Gen. Barry McCaffrey, White House drug czar, threatened to pull the prescription writing privileges of any doctor who dared recommend marijuana to a patient (the drug has proven effective in ameliorating the side-effects of cancer and AIDS treatments as well as relieving the symptoms of glaucoma, multiple sclerosis and other chronic maladies.)

This year similar measures appeared on ballots in Washington, Nevada, Oregon, Alaska and the District of Columbia. Also, the legislature in Arizona put a referendum on the ballot asking its citizens if they didn't want to reconsider their 1996 vote.

The results were that laws allowing medical marijuana use passed in all four additional states.

Furthermore, the good folks in Arizona said they were not interested in rescinding the approval they had given previously.

However, the results of the vote in Washington, D.C. remain unknown. It seems that Rep. Bob Barr, R-Ga., managed to insert a provision in the District's budget authorization bill last October that prohibited the local government from expending any funds whatever on any vote for any measure that would reduce the penalties for marijuana possession. Too late to amend the already printed ballots, the vote went ahead. The results were simply withheld.

The American Civil Liberties Union promptly filed a lawsuit demanding that the results be released under the Freedom of Information Act and alleging that the measure attempting to prohibit the vote was an unconstitutional "viewpoint-based restriction" in violation of First Amendment in any case.

The Libertarian Party has filed a friend-of-the-court brief and joined the complaint, which was heard by U.S. District Judge Richard W. Roberts on Dec. 18. A ruling is expected by year's end.

Whatever the outcome, one thing recent events have made manifest about the nanny-state branch of conservatism — is that their drug jihad hysteria has reached truly astonishing proportions. They not only no longer care about the wishes of the people, but refuse to even recognize that in a democratic system citizens have a right to make their wishes known.

Of course, the religious-right zealots who want to stop Kevorkian at all costs are a pretty determined bunch themselves.

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◀ *The Detroit Free Press*
Detroit, Michigan
December 23, 1998

Tim O'Brien is chairman of the Libertarian Party of Michigan. Write to him in care of the Free Press, Editorial Page, 600 W. Fort St., Detroit, Mich. 48226.

Water board boasts two Libertarians

By RON HAWKINS
Staff Writer

Prince William County residents had never elected a Libertarian to office prior to last week but on Tuesday they put two party members on the same board.

Libertarians Jennifer Reams and William F. Lawry were elected to the Prince William Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors and will take their seats in January.

Reams was the only person listed on the ballot for three officially non-partisan positions on the board while Lawry, the county registrar's office announced Friday, received 82 write-in votes to earn his spot. Jeff Guide, a Democrat, received 120 write-in votes to take the remaining spot.

Reams, a Woodbridge resident who works for Kaiser-Permanente, said that, while Libertarians believe in keeping government regulations to a minimum, government involvement in ensuring the cleanliness and safety of the soil and water

supply is appropriate.

"Libertarians believe that the role of government is to ensure that one person does not violate another person's rights," Reams said. "Clearly, this is one area where we have to have regulations."

Lawry, who runs a computer systems design company in Dale City, agreed, saying that it is "perfectly justifiable" for the government to be involved in soil and water issues.

He said he does not know how the presence of two Libertarians will affect the board.

"We're going to have to wait and see," he said.

Reams and Lawry were the only Libertarians holding elected office in Virginia, according to party officials.

Guide, a Dale City resident who works at the Library of Congress and once worked for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, said he has "always been interested" in conservation issues.

He decided to run, he said, when he learned of the lack of candidates on the ballot.

▲ *The Potomac News*
Woodbridge, Virginia, November 7, 1998

▶ *The Richmond Times-Dispatch*
Richmond, Virginia, December 17, 1998

▼ *State Government News*
Lexington, Kentucky, December 15, 1998

Third party ticket

The Libertarian Party was running more candidates for public office in 1998 than any third party in 50 years, the party announced in October.

The party said 836 Libertarian candidates were on ballots in 44 states. Libertarians appeared on

73 percent of the ballots nationwide, including 253 candidates for state representative and 85 candidates for state senator, the party said.

The party said the Socialist Party in the mid-1930s was the last third party to run as many candidates.

Evasion parties

Harry Browne, the 1996 Libertarian presidential candidate, didn't have a submission for our contest to help President Clinton choose a fitting New Year's Resolution, but he did hand Inside the Beltway his resolution:

"I resolve not to adopt the tactics of Republicans and Democrats. They use character assassination, evasions, and intimidation because they have no real benefits to offer Americans. We, on the other hand, are offering to set people free — and so we can win simply by focusing on the better life our proposals will bring."

▲ *The Washington Times*
Washington DC, December 31, 1998

Damaged Good

Steve Dasbach, national director of the Libertarian Party, is tired of the hypocrisy in Washington and says politicians ought to be held to the same standard of accountability as regular stiffs. But Dasbach isn't referring to the debate about whether perjury laws apply to Bill Clinton. His position is that if politicians can declare war on the manufacturers and merchants of tobacco, guns, and ammunition — insisting that damages be paid for the death and destruction caused by such products — then ordinary Americans ought to be able to sue politicians for the damages of government programs. For instance:

■ Why don't the parents of the 49 children who have been killed by government-mandated air bags have a right to sue legislators for the circumstances that led to their loss?

■ Given that 18 states (including Virginia) control the sale of liquor, why aren't those states legally liable for every liquor-caused crash?

■ In states that haven't toughened parole, prisoners are released years before the end of their sentences. Shouldn't the officials who turn them loose be held responsible if parolees commit subsequent crimes?

■ State-sponsored gambling is directly responsible for innumerable bankruptcies, suicides, and divorces. So why aren't the states held accountable for the damages their lotteries *et al.* conduce?

Dasbach knows he is engaging in wishful thinking — yet his point is well taken. After all, if it is wrong for businesses to sell products individuals may willingly buy or misuse, then isn't it even worse when individuals are damaged merely by complying with the law (*e.g.*, airbags)? Perhaps if lawmakers had to worry that reckless legislation could make them the target of lawsuits, they would be blessedly hesitant to enact so many damage-inflicting measures.

The public wage-scale scandal

JUAN C. ROS

Gov.-elect Gray Davis's recent reversal on his campaign promise not to accept a pay raise comes as no surprise. Voters have long been accustomed to career politicians like Davis having a poor record of keeping campaign promises.

The raise itself is not much of a surprise. Some voters expressed outrage last March when the California Citizens Compensation Commission, the appointed panel that decides pay raises for legislators and statewide officers, voted to increase annual salaries for those positions by 26 percent.

But things were relatively quiet on Dec. 1, when the raises kicked in. State legislator paychecks suddenly increased from \$78,624 to \$99,000, while the governor's salary jumped from \$131,040 to \$165,000.

Back when the raises were announced, Davis called them "unthinkable" and said he was "shocked and disappointed." He pledged not to accept a raise if elected governor.

On Dec. 7, the first day of the new biennial legislative session, Davis did an about-face and announced he would accept a salary of \$156,750 — a mere 5 percent below the authorized full salary, but a 19.6 percent raise nevertheless.

Davis defended his actions by arguing that he isn't accepting the full raise he is entitled to by law and is therefore keep-

ing his campaign promise — a use of semantics right out of the Clinton playbook.

But the problem isn't the broken promise or the raise itself. The problem extends far beyond Davis. He is just one out of 234,000 state government employees, most of whom have not received a pay raise since 1995.

The real problem is the growing divide between private-sector and government salaries. State government wages and salaries exceed private wages and salaries in 44 states, including California,

according to a report issued in August by the Public Interest Institute at Iowa Wesleyan College. The report also shows:

■ Average annual state government wages in California are \$39,663, while average private-sector wages are \$31,183 — a 27 percent difference and the seventh-highest pay advantage over private-sector workers in the country

■ State government wages in California are 26 percent higher than the national average of \$31,418 and are the third highest in the country, behind New Jersey and Massachusetts

■ Even local governments are problematic: Average annual local government wages in California are \$32,782 — 5 percent higher than the private-sector average

In Iowa, state employees are paid almost 50 percent more than private-sector Iowans on average — the biggest pay advantage over private-sector

workers in the country.

What can be done to bring government salaries closer to private salaries? In 1995, the American Legislative Exchange Council published a model piece of legislation called the Public Pay Equity Act, which, if enacted, would introduce competitive forces into the determination of public-sector salaries. Those competitive forces are exactly what drive wages in the private sector, and it is in the public interest to do the same in the government sector.

The Public Pay Equity Act would establish an annual ceiling limiting public salaries to the same rate of change as the private sector. If private salaries increase, average public salaries can increase by no more than that amount. But if private salaries decrease, public salaries must decrease by at least the same percentage.

It will probably take a governor with more courage than Davis has thus far demonstrated to guide such a bill through the Legislature while under the intense pressure of the state employees' union.

Taxpayers will probably never get their money's worth when it comes to government — but they can at least demand fairness and equity of pay.

Of course, Davis can always decide to eliminate thousands of unnecessary state government jobs. That will more than pay for his raise.

Juan C. Ros is executive director of the Libertarian Party of California. E-mail: director@ca.lp.org.

► *The North County Times*
Escondido, California
December 21, 1998



Local Libertarians optimistic

STAFF REPORT

The head of the San Juan County Libertarian Party says things are looking up for the party in the local area.

"I've seen an increased interest in the party," said Margaret Mathers, the longtime chairwoman for the local Libertarian Party.

According to a news release

issued by the party, there are 154 registered Libertarians in San Juan County, compared with 84 registered Greens.

"The Greens may be the third-largest party in New Mexico, but that's not the case nationally nor in San Juan County," Mathers said.

During the Nov. 3 election, San Juan County gave Maurice McDonald, the Libertarian candi-

date for public lands commissioner, the second highest vote total among the state's 33 counties.

"We've had an active party here before and we're going to again," local activist Joseph Knight said.

Mathers said the local party will hold a convention sometime in January to elect new officers and to plan its local voter registration drive.

◀ *The Daily Times*
Farmington,
New Mexico
December 5, 1998