

LIBERTY PLEDGE

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MARCH 1997

newsletter

LP hires its first ever full-time Political Director

For the first time in its history, the Libertarian Party has hired a full-time, paid Political Director — whose major goals will be to recruit more LP candidates, boost the number of Libertarians in office, and, as quickly as possible, help elect more Libertarian state representatives.

Ron Crickenberger, a long-time Libertarian National Committee member and current volunteer chair of the LP's Campaign Committee, accepted the job of Political Director in March. He will join the staff at the party's office in Washington, DC by June 1st.

"I feel very honored that [LP National Chairman] Steve Dasbach asked me to be the party's first political director," said Crickenberger. "His confidence in me as the best person for the job is going to give me a lot to live up to."

Crickenberger has been active in the LP since the early 1970s. During that time, he's done "just about every type of volunteer job there is" — but his proudest accomplishments, he said, came from his work on the party's Campaign Committee. During his tenure as committee chair, the number of Libertarians in office increased by 138% — from 76 to 181.

"I've worked closely with many campaigns, but I've always known there was so much more that needed to be done for our candidates," he said.

LP Chair Dasbach said Crickenberger's record of success made him a natural choice for the new job. "Ron's experience in training candidates, managing Libertarian campaigns, and getting Libertarians elected to office makes him uniquely qualified to serve in this position," he said.

Now that he can devote all his time to supporting Libertarian campaigns, Crickenberger said he has ambitious goals.

"I want to see our candidates move to the next level of performance in 1998," he said. "We've set a numeric goal of 1,000 candidates at all levels, 218 congressional candidates, and 100 of our candidates raising at least \$10,000."

In 1998 or beyond, Crickenberger said, "I also want to see us elect a Libertarian to a significant partisan office — State Rep. or above — solely on the Libertarian ballot line."

But will one person be able to accomplish these goals — even if he is working full time as LP Political Director?

"I've certainly got my work cut out for me," he laughed. "There's no shortage of things that need to be done."



■ **Political Director Ron Crickenberger**

Florida Supreme Court upholds anti-3rd party laws

The Florida Supreme Court has ruled that the state government has a compelling interest in protecting "established" political parties — and refused to overturn ballot access laws that discriminate against the Libertarian Party.

In a February 17th decision, Florida's highest court declined to re-hear an LP lawsuit questioning a state law that refunds ballot access filing fees to Republicans and Democrats — but not to any third party challengers.

"It's a stinging blow to the democratic process," said Florida LP Chairman Nick Dunbar. "We deplore the court's failure to open up the election process."

The case was filed in 1994 by LP state house candidate Robert Wilson, who challenged a state law that refunds 50% of all ballot access filing fees for Republican and Democratic candidates. Third party candidates get no refund.

In a December 5, 1996 decision, a lower court held that the discriminatory laws were needed to prevent "factionalism, voter confusion, or overcrowded ballots."

"These are hardly the problem in Florida, where one third of Congressional races and about half of state house races routinely go uncontested," countered Dunbar.

But the state Supreme Court's refusal to reconsider the case means the lower court's decision stands, and the anti-third party laws remain in force. The Florida LP is deciding whether to appeal the case to the U.S. Supreme Court.

New polls show more libertarians

There are more libertarians out there than suspected.

That's the consensus of two recent surveys, which show that 24% to 30% of Americans take "a libertarian position," according to Washington DC's *Roll Call* newspaper.

That's a significant improvement over a January 1996 Gallup survey that said 20% of Americans were libertarian.

"Poll after poll reveals enormous skepticism about the performance of the federal government, a disposition that should boost Libertarians' fortunes," the newspaper reported.

■ A poll taken by Penn & Schoenn Associates found that 30% of Americans say that "government should stay out of people's lives so they can solve their problems without interference or regulation."

■ And a survey taken for *U.S. News & World Report* reported that 24% of Americans agree that: "Other than providing for national defense and the fair administration of justice, government should do as little as possible to interfere in the lives of individuals."

MICHELLE MALKIN / *Times* editorial columnist

Do you have what it takes to become a libertarian?



HAVE you ever taken The World's Smallest Political Quiz?

At a libertarian supper club in Seattle last fall, someone handed me the popular 10-question test. Several readers have since sent me xeroxed

copies of it. It's also on the Internet at <http://www.self-gov.org/quiz.html>, where more than 67,000 curious test-takers have discovered their political philosophy in a matter of seconds. And in David Boaz's new book, "Libertarianism: A Primer" (Free Press, \$23), a version of the quiz appears in an appendix titled "Are you a libertarian?"

Half of the questions are devoted to matters of personal freedom. Should drug laws be repealed? Should military service be voluntary? Should the government censor the Internet? The other half address matters of economic freedom. Should minimum-wage laws be repealed? Should farm and business subsidies be ended? Should individuals be forced to contribute to Social Security?

The idea behind this simple quiz is to broaden the spectrum by which we normally define political philosophy beyond left-to-right or liberal-to-conservative. As Boaz writes, "On the contemporary American left-right spectrum, libertarianism is neither left nor right. Libertarians believe in individual freedom and limited government consistently, unlike either contemporary liberals or contemporary conservatives."

Consistency is the key word. While conservatives frequently preach limited government on economic issues (lower tax-

es! reduce regulation!), they can be found endorsing government restrictions on people's personal freedom just as emphatically (censor rap music! outlaw flag burning!). And while liberals frequently preach limited government on personal issues (stay out of my womb! get out of my bedroom!), they can be found endorsing government restrictions on people's economic choices just as emphatically (raise taxes! increase regulation!).

Libertarians, by contrast, have a single request for busybodies in both government and in society: Leave us alone, all of you, period!

Libertarianism is commonly mistaken for a radical libertinism in which oddball individualists throw up their real and invisible hands, and let chaos reign. But freedom of personal behavior is not license. And self-interest is not self-absorption. Contrary to popular wisdom, Adam Smith — author of "The Wealth of Nations" and libertarian godfather of laissez-faire economics — was not a soulless advocate of obsessive capital accumulation.

As Boaz notes in a companion anthology, "The Libertarian Reader," (Free Press, \$27.50), Smith cared deeply about human motivations, including both self-interest and sympathy for others. In his lesser-known work, "The Theory of Moral Sentiments," Smith wrote: "He is certainly not a good citizen who does not wish to promote, by every means in his power, the welfare of the whole society of his fellow citizens."

Boaz's two books offer an intensive scholarly overview of why libertarians oppose the use of force — whether public or private coercion — to promote this noble

end. In a much slimmer tract, social scientist Charles Murray makes a similar case. There is a profoundly moral reason to advocate limited government, Murray argues. In "What It Means to Be a Libertarian" (Broadway Books, \$20), he writes simply: "Force is bad, and cooperation is good."

Libertarian animus to the welfare state stems from the fact that it is a freedom-limiting instrument that has proven sorely ineffective over the past 60 years. "That America is not the land of universal plenty it should have become is for many libertarians, including me, the source of our deepest anger about what big government has done to this country," Murray writes.

Advocates of the welfare state have consoled themselves and the public that "at least they are trying." But what libertarians demand is a measure of success that produces an actual decrease in suffering — rather than grand government schemes and safety nets that are supposed to reduce suffering but produce even more.

Critics view the libertarian vision with alarm and castigate its proponents for giving up. What will happen to the elderly, the poor, the children? But as Murray points out, "the reality is that right now millions of Americans are experiencing precisely the kinds of suffering that people predict will happen if we get rid of the welfare state."

In a recent Gallup poll, 52 percent of Americans said "the federal government has become so large and powerful that it poses an immediate threat to the rights and freedoms of ordinary citizens." And as the latest issue of Ballot Access News, a San Francisco-based publication that tracks election and registration data, reports, the number of registered libertarian voters grew by 49 percent in the past two years.

Not all have pondered as heavily and eloquently as Murray and Boaz what it means to be a libertarian. But the principles are easy enough to understand: Let us be happy. Let us be free. Leave us in peace and leave us alone.

Michelle Malkin's column appears Tuesday on editorial pages of The Times. Her e-mail address is: malkin1@ix.netcom.com.

▲ *The Seattle Times*, Seattle, Washington, January 21, 1997

▼ *The Capital Times*, Madison, Wisconsin, February 24, 1997

Plain Talk

DAVE ZWEIFEL

Libertarians on target on corporate welfare



Zweifel

Local Libertarian Party chieftain Jim Mueller has been supplying me with information about the scandalous status of corporate welfare in this country.

The Libertarian Party has been at the forefront, along with several members of Congress from both the Republican and Democratic parties, in calling for an end to taxpayer subsidies for big corporations.

In fact, Mueller is proud to point out, his party has been calling for corporate welfare reform for the past 25 years.

The Libertarian drive is hitting home with more people this year since those same corporations and their lapdogs at both the state and federal level made such a big deal about "ending welfare as we know it" for the poor people in our midst.

Mueller, for example, sent along a copy of the Libertarian Party's recent press release that begins:

"Ronald McDonald is a welfare cheat.

"Despite billions in profits last year, the fast-food chain represented by the popular clown mascot pocketed \$1.6 billion in taxpayers' money in 1996."

The release goes on to explain how

McDonald's received \$1.6 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's "Market Access Program" to help pay for its advertising campaign that is aimed at convincing Europeans to eat Big Macs, fries, etc.

The same release reveals that the Walt Disney Corp., far from being one of this country's paupers, received \$300,000 from the taxpayers to "perfect its fireworks displays."

Archer-Daniels Midland, the multinational company that has long been a major political contributor and a recipient of government favors, received \$6 billion in ethanol subsidies over the past decade, according to the Libertarians.

The Gallo wine family, another flourishing American corporation, got \$7 million in federal subsidies in 1994 while the wealthy Sunkist Corp. of Florida has received \$78 million from the feds to market oranges in Asia.

"Every taxpayer who learns about these programs wants them eliminated immediately," the release says. "But politicians and their rich, corporate friends have fought to protect them. It's time to protect taxpayers instead."

Amen.

Dave Zweifel is the editor of The Capital Times. His e-mail address is dzwiefel@captimes.madison.com.

Freedom Rings

The Libertarian Party has released its annual Modeerf Awards. Why Modeerf? Because it is freedom spelled backward, and the awards are bestowed on those "individuals and organizations" who have done most to move freedom in that direction in 1996, according to a statement released by Bill Winter, the party's communications director.

Insight couldn't agree more on at least two of this year's winners: one, a "Sometimes a Cigar Is Just a Cigar" award to the City of San Francisco, which is spending taxpayers' money on an ad cam-

paign designed to convince the city by the bay that cigars are stinky, foul, equivalent to dog droppings and should be banned. The anticigar drive was launched after politicians discovered that many young women were smoking cigars, according to the Libertarians.

A second award went to the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled that it's okay for the government to seize the property of innocent people under asset-forfeiture laws. "This ruling proved that the Supreme Court doesn't know their assets from a hole in the Bill of Rights," said Winter.

▲ *Insight Magazine*
Washington, DC, February 3, 1997

▼ *Albert Lea Tribune*
Albert Lea, Minnesota, February 10, 1997

Factionism of races prevents a melting pot

Ask yourself this question.

When was the last time you filled out a form in which you were asked to make a statement of race? Black? White? Hispanic? Asian? Native American? Eskimo?

Now ask yourself why.

In a world where people supposedly were created equal, why does the government or anyone else care to what shade your skin is pigmented?

Would it surprise you to learn that the Office of Management and Budget is currently considering which racial categories to *add* to the official list. Germanic, Creole, Middle Easterner, Arab American, Hawaiian and six different classifications of Latino are some of the possibilities.

"Dr. Martin Luther King dreamed of the day when Americans would judge a man by the content of his character rather than the color of his skin," said Libertarian Party Chair-

man Steve Dasbach. "The last thing Dr. King would have wanted is for Americans to be judged by the federally categorized color of their skin."

Indeed.

People's choice of education, home loan and occupation never will be free of racial influence as long as the government recognizes it.

Each of us must understand that the government cannot give preference to one race without taking something away from another.

The government uses racial data to arrange low interest loans, enforce college admission quotas and even to decide its own personnel decisions.

Only time can heat the melting pot.

But not as long as government factionism creates a heterogeneous mob of self-interest in search of the public feedbag.

▲ *Amarillo Daily News*
Amarillo, Texas, February 1, 1997

Drug war worse than drugs; shreds Bill of Rights

I agree with Joycelyn Elders, the former Surgeon General, on at least one point. We need to rationally discuss the drug issue. When people suggested legalization of drugs 10 or 15 years ago, I thought they were nuts. I believed it would be foolish to legalize something that I had seen cause so much harm to others of my generation. I was wrong. It is time end this appropriately named "war on drugs."

A journalist once observed that "the first casualty of war is the truth." The next casualty is civil liberties. This is true whenever government declares war. We have already done too much damage to the truth and our civil liberties.

Misguided from the start, the drug war has become an obsession fueled by emotion and devoid of reason and common sense. Students have been expelled for possession of over the counter analgesics such as aspirin or Midol. People have died during no-knock searches or drug raids when no drugs were found. Homes, bank accounts, cars, boats, airplanes, cash and other property have been

Rich Osness

Guest Columnist



forfeited without legal process or even charges being filed. The Bill of Rights has been shredded.

A huge crime industry has developed to take advantage of the high profits available to those willing to assume the risk. Much of our law enforcement community and judiciary has become corrupted by the illegal drug industry or jaded by the enormity of the problem. Drug abuse and addiction is now more common than when the war on drugs started.

Illegal drugs are common and easily obtained in our jails and prisons. Our military is the most regulated part of our society. Drug use in the military is not uncommon. During the Vietnam War drug use by our military in Viet-

nam was both illegal and rampant. The government has not prevented illegal drug use in the most restricted segments of our society, our military and prisons. Even if we surrender all of our civil liberties and become a total police state it will not decrease recreational drug use. It is time to face the truth. The drug war is worse than the drugs.

In 1919 we tried prohibiting alcohol. We even amended the constitution. A huge criminal enterprise developed. Violent crime soared. Police and judicial corruption were rampant. We still had alcohol and alcohol abuse. Does this sound familiar? We had leaders wise enough to realize that prohibition was a mistake. In 1933, we amended the constitution again, legalizing alcohol. Violent crime dropped. We still have alcoholics and alcohol abuse but few suggest the return of alcohol prohibition.

What do we do? Just give up? Let the drug lords and gang members take over our society? Give drugs to every kid in America? Legalization of drugs would not

cause any of these problems. A free and legitimate drug market would not have enough profit to entice the violent criminals. Parents would have the responsibility of properly raising their children, just as they do now. Some people would still use drugs to excess. Some people would still become addicted. These drug abusers and addicts would be less of a problem than they are today. Because the drugs would be less expensive there would be less crime committed to support drug habits. Because the drugs would be more predictable there would be fewer health problems. With drug abuse and addiction decriminalized and out in the open the problems would be easier manage.

I personally oppose recreational drug use. To use the law to force my personal beliefs on others may be wrong but it is definitely futile. I strongly support the total end of drug prohibition, the war on drugs. Nothing else makes sense.

Rich Osness ran for Minnesota Senate under the Libertarian Party banner in 1996.



NEWS PHOTO BY KEN MCGAGH

Steve Epstein of the Massachusetts Cannabis Initiative speaks during the 1997 Massachusetts Libertarian Convention at the Best Western Hotel in Marlborough yesterday.

Libertarians attract members to platform

Reflect alternative to mainstream parties

By Colin C. Haley
NEWS STAFF WRITER

MARLBOROUGH — As the line between the two major political parties blurs, leaders of the Libertarian Association of Massachusetts yesterday said their platform of smaller government, limited taxation and individual rights is attracting more voters than ever.

About 80 people from across the state attended the party's annual convention at the Best Western Hotel. In addition to discussing a range of topics, party members elected officers and mapped out strategy for the coming year.

"People are fed up with the whole government," said Carla Howell, who helped organize the event. "They've seen programs that aren't working and politicians that don't tell the truth."

At the beginning of last year, there were only 300 registered Libertarians in Massachusetts, Howell said. But thanks to a more active membership and voters disillusioned with the Republican and Democratic parties, that number jumped to 8,000.

The idea of a fiscally conservative, socially liberal party appeals to a lot of voters, Howell said. The problem, she said, is convincing them that casting ballots for Libertarians is not a waste.

"Every vote for the major parties is a vote that furthers their dominance and promotes business-as-usual," said Howell, a 41-year-old Wayland resident. "The only way we will

change things is to vote outside the system."

George Phillies of Worcester was a longtime Republican until joining the Libertarian party about 10 years ago. His switch was prompted by President Bush's conservative stances on abortion and censorship.

"The Republican Party walked out on me, not the other way around," said Phillies, a physicist at Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

Phillies was the Libertarian choice for U.S. Senate this year but was unable to gain the necessary signatures to get on the ballot. He dismissed criticism that his party takes a radical stance on too many issues, such as the legalization of drugs.

"The war on drugs has caused more damage to society than drug use," Phillies said.

An example, he said is the ability for the federal and state government to seize property of alleged drug dealers. The action is a violation of civil liberties, Phillies said.

The 49-year-old also said the current tax system needs to be revamped. Major corporations should not receive lower tax rates than small-business owners, he said, noting a medical corporations' new deal with the city of Worcester.

Phillies said it is fitting the convention was held in Marlborough. "This is the only city in Massachusetts where (Libertarian presidential candidate) Harry Browne out-pollled Ross Perot.

Mother of libertarianism remembered on birthday

Area chapter of political party will honor the late Ayn Rand at ceremony.

By Nicole Bondi
The Detroit News

Her birthday may not be a national holiday, but to some Ayn Rand is just as important as George Washington.

"It's sort of like a Martin Luther King Day for libertarians," said James Hudler, vice-chairman of the Libertarian Party of Washtenaw County.

The group honors Rand, a writer and co-founder of modern libertarianism, each year for her birthday, which is Feb. 2.

This year's celebration is today at the regular business meeting, but anyone's welcome.

There'll be birthday cake, someone will read aloud from one of her books and others will talk about how the Russian-born writer influenced their lives or why they admire her.

Rand's books have a cult fol-

▲ *The Detroit News*, Detroit, Michigan, February 6, 1997

◀ *The Middlesex News*, Framingham, Massachusetts, February 16, 1997

▼ *The Suburban Advertiser*, Wayne, Pennsylvania, February 3, 1997

Ayn Rand Birthday Celebration

Sponsor: Libertarian Party of Washtenaw County

When: Today: 6:30 p.m., dinner; 7:30 p.m., meeting

Location: Forbidden City, 3535 Plymouth Rd. near U.S. 23, Ann Arbor

Information: (313) 475-9792.

lowing and her Objectivist Movement is seen as a precursor to the modern libertarian movement.

She believed in individual liberty, free markets, reason and rationality.

A line from her 1957 novel *Atlas Shrugged* is the guiding principle of libertarianism: "The initiation of force and fraud is evil and should be barred from human action."

Rand, who died in 1982, would have been 92 this year.

Brennan new Libertarian chair

By Kyle M. Ashinhurst
Staff writer

The Chester County Libertarian Party has a phone number.

That's more than you can say for the Democrats, who not long ago **County** closed their headquarters and disconnected the phone.

Small but scrappy, the Libertarians are determined to emerge as a political force in Chester County, where being a registered voter is practically synonymous with being a Republican.

Last month, Coatesville resident J. Michael Brennan was elected chairman of the fledgling Libertarian organization. He succeeded Joseph Lisowski, who now becomes vice-chair.

"I'm definitely pleased," said Brennan, "especially since the people who nominated and elected me have been in the party a lot longer than I have."

Brennan, 28, is a former Repub-

lican who quit the G.O.P. in 1995.

"I left for several reasons," he explained. One was the Ridge administration's approach to auto emissions testing, which he saw as "extremely unfair" to car owners.

Another was the "War on Drugs." "It's out of control," Brennan said. "It basically boils down to confiscation of people's property and infringement of individuals' basic rights...I don't believe a government bureaucrat should tell me how to live my life. I can do that myself."

That philosophy — the primacy of the individual — is the defining characteristic of Libertarianism.

"We believe in people," Brennan asserted. "Government shouldn't be your daddy and it shouldn't be your mommy. You're an adult, and you should be treated that way."

There are approximately 840 registered Libertarians in Chester County, according to the most recent statistics available. Brennan

said that number is rising by 30 or 40 a month.

In addition, there appear to be at least as many Chester Countians who think of themselves as Libertarians but haven't changed their party registration. In last year's presidential election, Libertarian Harry Browne won 1,940 votes in the county. While only 1.2 percent of the total, that's more than double the party's registration.

A 1987 Coatesville Area Senior High School graduate, Brennan is now working on a bachelor's degree at Immaculata College. He is employed at the Vanguard Group.

Brennan wants to focus on getting the Libertarian message out.

One way to do that is via the Internet. The Chester County Libertarian Party recently set up a World Wide Web page. It can be accessed at <http://www.cclp.org>.

"The Internet is a great opportunity for us," said Brennan. "For one thing, it's cheap."

A phone and a Web page? The Democrats must be jealous.