

LIBERTY PLEDGE

newsletter

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Kramer beats Means in news clip 'contest'

And the winner of the "Most-Publicized Libertarian Celebrity Candidate" contest is . . . Kenny Kramer.

Kramer, the real-life inspiration for the wacky Cosmo Kramer character on the *Seinfeld* TV show — and now the LP's candidate for mayor of New York City — generated 49 press clippings over the past few months, according to figures compiled by the LP national office.

That's a handful more than the 45 newspaper clips sparked by the New Mexico gubernatorial run of Russell Means, the Indian rights activist turned Hollywood star.

But both numbers are impressive, said LP Communications Director Bill Winter.

"When you consider that few of our non-presidential candidates receive any national publicity, it's quite remarkable that these two men collected almost 100 press clippings between them, in just a few months," he said. "It's certainly a statement about the value of celebrity in modern culture."

The LP national office subscribes to the Bacon's clipping service, which sends in newspaper and magazine articles from around the country that mention the Libertarian Party.

Columnist: 'I'm a libertarian'

A popular syndicated columnist and television commentator has acknowledged he is a libertarian.

Deroy Murdock, whose "This Opinion Just In" column is printed across the USA, said he is "libertarian" in an e-mail message to a Libertarian Party activist.

"I am a libertarian, not a conservative," Murdock wrote to San Diego LP activist Richard Rider on July 7 in response to an e-mail message about a recent column.

Elaborating, Murdock



■ Murdock: 'Libertarian.'

wrote: "I would legalize drugs, prostitution, and pornography for adults. The gov't should get out of the marriage business. I also would shut down the Fed."

Murdock has been a columnist for the *Washington Times* since 1985, and writes for the *Wall Street Journal*, MSNBC, and others.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE USA

THE 'QUIZ' APPEARS IN THE POST

The World's Smallest Political Quiz has appeared in one of America's most influential newspapers.

On June 17, the Sunday *Washington Post* (circulation: 1 million), printed the Quiz in its "Outlook" section. The article noted that the Quiz is a "quick way for you to find your place in the political spectrum."

The *Post* article lends credibility to the Quiz and to libertarianism, said LP National Director Steve Dasbach. "Having the Quiz appear in the *Washington Post* helps legitimize the concept of politics as a four-way quadrant, rather than a Left/Right straight line," he said.

The Quiz, invented by David Nolan and Marshall Fritz, uses 10 questions to measure a person's political beliefs on a four-way chart that includes Libertarian, Liberal, Conservative, and Authoritarian.

THE BILL OF RIGHTS: IN TROUBLE?

The Bill of Rights is in trouble, according to a new survey by Wisconsin Libertarians.

Of 232 people surveyed during Green Bay's Celebrate Americafest, only 11 recognized the Bill of Rights, according to Eric Christianson, vice chair of the Northeast Wisconsin LP.

And only about 40% said they would be willing to sign a petition supporting the 10 Amendments that guarantee the right of free speech, protection against unreasonable search, and other rights.

The results were frightening, said Bob Collison, State Chair of the Wisconsin LP: "They'll parade in the name of freedom, but ask [people] about these issues, and they don't come down on the side of freedom."

BALLOT BILL BECOMES LAW IN OREGON

For the second time in a month, an LP-inspired ballot access bill has become law in Oregon.

On July 2, the governor signed a bill that makes it easier for the party to obtain "major" party status. The bill reduces the requirement from 15% of the vote in two consecutive elections to 5% of registered voters.

The bill was written by LP activist Richard Burke, and introduced by Senator Gary George, who became an LP member in January while keeping his GOP registration.

"We're on a roll here in Oregon," said Burke. "We're paving the way to become a major force."

Sticks & STONES

Steve Dasbach, the Libertarian Party's national director, has an **interesting slant on Senator Jim Jeffords of Vermont's momentous decision** to bolt the Republican Party. Dasbach says the inside-the-beltway crowd missed the real story by failing to acknowledge the role of Libertarian candidates in close senatorial races — including Slade Gorton's loss to Maria Cantwell last November.

In the 1998 Nevada senatorial race, Democrat Harry Reid beat Republican John Ensign by 428 votes while Libertarian Michael Cloud garnered 8,044 votes. Gorton lost by just 2,228 votes, Dasbach points out, while Libertarian Jeff Jared raked in 64,734 votes, most of them from conservatives.

Had it not been for those two races, Dasbach argues, the Republicans would have had a 52-48 majority in the Senate after the 2000 election, instead of a 50-50 tie, and Jeffords' defection wouldn't have meant a thing.

Dasbach suggests that the major parties had better pay attention to their ideological flanks lest a few thousand votes siphoned away here and there cause repercussions at the highest levels.

The man has a point.

Libertarians want credit for Senate's power shift

A new "giant killer" has emerged in Washington, D.C. — at least that is the way the Libertarian Party is describing itself.

Libertarians claim Vermont Sen. James Jeffords didn't change the balance of power in the Senate by leaving the Republican Party to become an independent and causing a 50-50 split to become 50-49 in the Democrats' favor. Libertarians claim the GOP would still be in power if their candidates had not taken so many votes away from Republicans last year in Washington and in 1998 in Nevada, allowing Democrats to win two Senate seats. With those seats, the GOP would still have a 51-49 edge, Libertarians say.

"The evidence is irrefutable," Libertarians contend.
 "The Republicans' real problem is not that they're too conservative," Libertarians have proclaimed in

mailings to newspapers across the country. "It's that they're not Libertarian enough." What does that mean? We're guessing it means the GOP has campaigned on issues such as smaller government and less spending, but since Bush became president and Republicans have had control of both the House and Senate, nothing has been done to reduce the size of government or to cut spending.

Libertarians are claiming the same "giant killer" status in the Senate that Ralph Nader claimed last November in the presidential election. Politicos claim Gore would have become president had it not been for the Democratic votes that went to Nader's Green Party.

Maybe the major Goliath parties have learned some lessons from the little Davids.

Libertarian running to make marijuana legal

BY CHRISTINA NUCKOLS
 THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

RICHMOND — Last year, 53 Virginians voted to send a ficus tree to Congress. This year's candidate from the floral kingdom is an outlaw, so it's using a human stand-in.

Gary A. Reams, a member of the Libertarian Party of Virginia, says a vote for him is a vote for marijuana.

Reams wants to legalize the drug. Because Virginia does not allow citizen groups to place referendums on the ballot, he is running for lieutenant governor in what he calls a "reeferendum."

"This campaign is about ending pot prohibition," Reams said in a news conference at the state Capitol on Tuesday. "When they vote for me, it is not a vote for Gary Reams the person."

Reams' crusade is unrelated to last year's Ficus 2000 for Congress movement, started by filmmaker Michael Moore to poke fun at politicians

across the country who were running unopposed.

The tongue-in-cheek campaign generated 53 votes for a ficus tree in a write-in campaign against Rep. Robert W. Goodlatte, R-6th District.

Unlike the ficus tree, Reams hopes to have his name on the ballot in November.

He said he filed 19,000 signatures with the State Board of Elections.

State officials will review the petitions to ensure that they include at least 10,000 valid signatures before placing him on the ballot.

Reams is a resident of Fairfax County and a director of quality for a telecommunications firm.

Virginia Libertarians also have nominated William Redpath as their gubernatorial candidate.

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Gary A. Reams is running for lieutenant governor in what he calls a "reeferendum."

▲ [LEFT] *The Tacoma Reporter*, Tacoma, Washington
 June 7, 2001

▲ [RIGHT] *The Virginian-Pilot*, Norfolk, Virginia,
 June 13, 2001

◀ *The Pantagraph*, Bloomington, Illinois,
 June 4, 2001

▶ *The Metrowest Daily News*, Farmingham, Massachusetts,
 June 6, 2001

Libertarian outrage

Not every motorist is pleased by the national effort over Memorial Day weekend to encourage seat belt use.

Police checkpoints around the country as part of an "America Buckles Up Children" effort is the "largest highway harassment campaign" in history, according to the Libertarian Party.

The Libertarians say since 71 percent of Americans wear seat belts, the checkpoints are harassing "millions of Americans over a victimless crime."

Of course, seat belt use in Massachusetts, where police can't make stops solely on that basis, is far lower than the national rate.

Mathias will run for rep

Means for governor

American Indian activist Russell Means said he will run for governor of New Mexico in 2002 as a Libertarian, even though a felony conviction could block his candidacy.

Mr. Means, who made his announcement Monday, said he would challenge a new state law that prevents felons from holding office unless they have been pardoned.

"I've already committed my felonies, so people won't have to worry about me as governor," Mr. Means said.

Mr. Means, convicted in a 1975 clash with police in South Dakota, will register as a Libertarian under the same law, which allows felons to vote after completing their sentences, the Associated Press reports.

▲ *The Washington Times*,
Washington, DC
June 1, 2001

► *The Metrowest Daily News*,
Framingham, Massachusetts
June 20, 2001

▼ *The Indianapolis Star*,
Indianapolis, Indiana
June 4, 2001

By Mitchell Polatin
NEWS STAFF WRITER

ASHLAND – Craig Mathias has tossed his hat into an already crowded ring for the vacant 7th Middlesex District state representative seat.

Although he knows his political affiliation is far different than that of the other four candidates, the staunch Libertarian does not want to be mistaken for an anarchist.

One thing for sure is he will not be confused with the four Democratic candidates who are also hoping to fill John Stefanini's place on Beacon Hill.

Stefanini left his seat, which covers South Framingham and all of Ashland, when he recently accepted the position as House Speaker Thomas Finneran's chief counsel.

Mathias, who just completed a three-year term on the Ashland Board of Selectmen, said he has witnessed a decline in recent years of individual liberty and personal responsibility.

"It's time we get back to some basic values that work," he said.

Some people confuse Libertarian ideals with anarchy, according to Mathias, who hopes to be the first Libertarian on Beacon Hill.

While anarchists fight any form of organized government, Libertarians advocate the least amount of government possible, he said.

Libertarian philosophies are becoming more mainstream in the political realm, according to Mathias, who points out that it is the third most populous political affiliation in the state with more than 16,000 members.

Mathias seeks to provide residents, many of whose political interests have been soured by the current climate, with a different perspective on government.

"I think government is an amazing creation of mankind," he said. "But like everything else in human nature, it can get out of control."

Mathias has not thought much about the four other candidates. He insists he is not running against anyone, but that he is running for the benefit of the state.

"I don't like the state of politics when the object is beat the other guy," he said. "If you are so desper-

ate you have to attack someone to win an office, you don't deserve it."

The four Democratic candidates are scheduled to face off in a Sept. 25 primary. They include Framingham School Committee member Suzanne Aymes, Ashland School Committee member Karen Spilka, Ashland Selectman David Teller and Ashland attorney Michael Crowe.

The primary winner will face Mathias in the Oct. 23 general election.

Libertarians support a simple cost-effective government, and Mathias plans to rally around that ideal throughout his campaign.

"I will not support tax increases, and I will do everything I can to lower (taxes)," he said.

During his three years on the Ashland Board of Selectmen, Mathias received more complaints about taxes than anything else.

Many residents called to tell him they could not afford to live in their homes because of rising property taxes. Mathias saw people move out of a town they loved, because they did not have the money to stay.

"There's something wrong," Mathias said. "I'm outraged at that."



Craig Mathias

Aching for a 'Republican hangover' cure

I've never actually been in a riot or a Democratic convention, so I don't know for sure. But I suspect that I could, if I'm not careful, fall into a really good mob hysteria — such as the one being whipped up by Republicans over the defection of Vermont's new free agent, Jim Jeffords.

Predictably, Democrats are delighted that Jeffords left the GOP. Also predictably, a lot of Republicans feel betrayed; some are so angry that the senator fears for his life. It's almost as though Reggie Miller went off to play for Boston.

What's not so predictable is how many Republicans have tired of the game. Obviously, Republicans thought they'd won the long elusive hat trick with Senate, House and presidency wins last November. Despite what the Democratic loyalists say, George W. Bush was chosen by a larger percentage and by more voters than Bill Clinton was in two elections.

So when Jeffords fouled the Republican's apparent public mandate, some NCAA championship-style hysteria was inevitable. Ordinarily, mass hysteria isn't a desirable outcome. But this one, unlike the brief public intoxication following Jesse Ventura's win in Minnesota, may be turning into a mob epiphany.

I'm no longer surprised when some-



Andy Horning

body turns sides against the old parties with an outpouring of libertarian angst. It happens all the time. But until May 31, I was pretty comfortable that I had the local monopoly writing anti-establishment newspaper columns.

On that day, in separate columns by Sheila Suess Kennedy and Andrea Neal, it became obvious to me that at least two respected local writers are shaking off a nasty Republican hangover, and are aching for the cure.

Please, permit me. Neal wrote about our nation's relatively libertarian Founders (slavery certainly isn't libertarian!), and detailed, with very reasonable displeasure, the anti-libertarian profligacy of the New Republicans.

Kennedy's column invoked the memory of that famously libertarian Republican, Barry Goldwater. She discussed his libertarian philosophy that

she so admired. She also expressed perfectly reasonable disgust with the Republican Party's fall from libertarianism. So when she wondered, in essence, what a nice girl like her was doing in the Republican Party, I suspect her question, "Where do we go?" was rhetorical.

Back in the early 1970s, when Richard Nixon represented the Republicans, a group of Goldwater fans facing the same question started the Libertarian Party. Now that party has been given a bad rap over the years. Some of it was deserved, since a political party that doesn't have money or power attracts only those who aren't motivated by money or power. Voters, as an obvious rule, don't approve of such losers. Yet the game we've all been playing is changing fast.

Senate Bill 329, yet another attempt to make elections much harder for all the non-Democratic, non-Republican candidates in Indiana, passed through the Indiana General Assembly entirely unopposed; and our governor, ordinarily a nice man, signed it into law. When the Democrats and Republicans play as a single team, they're usually playing against those of us who'd challenge their game.

Bad news? Hardly. The entrenched parties are worried. Why?

We know that the Green Party has

shaken Democratic loyalists, and the Reform Party has certainly had its day.

But the Libertarian Party is much bigger, with over twice as many elected officeholders as all the other so-called "third parties" combined. At least two Republican former senators, Slade Gorton of Washington and John Ensign of Nevada, lost their seats because Libertarian candidates "stole" a huge percentage of "Republican" votes.

Libertarians are already changing the game of power and powerbrokers in America.

So while I think Jeffords is over-rated as a lightning rod, the time is right to re-establish the libertarian government that made this nation great. Ignore what Goliath is telling you; the principled few have always determined the course of history. A tiny band of libertarians beat a global empire once, and we can do it again. This time, however, we needn't take up arms. As long as we have voting booths, let's remember what they're for: peaceful revolution. That's so much more productive than hysteria.

Horning is a former candidate for office who writes from a Libertarian perspective. Contact him via e-mail at andrewhorning@juno.com

Libertarian convention a success, officials say

By Dave Burge/Staff writer

FARMINGTON — The state Libertarian Party convention held over the weekend at the Marriott Courtyard was a big success, party officials said Monday.

About 40 delegates from across the state attended the three-day event. Total attendance was about 50 people.

"It was probably the smoothest convention I've ever been to in the Libertarian Party," said Joseph Knight, a Flora Vista resident and state chairman for the party.

"There was no blood-letting. Not an unkind word was spoken."

Keynote speaker Peal Means, the wife of Native American activist Russell Means, was well-received and "set a positive tone that carried through for all three days," Knight said.

The convention featured a wide variety of speakers, including Ed Nagel, the past chairman of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools, and Attila Csanyi, who participated in the failed 1956 Hungarian revolution which was quashed by the Soviet Union.

"I thought Ed Nagel was the highlight," said Margaret Mathers, a Farmington resident and founder of the San Juan County Libertarian Party.

Steve Dasbach, the national director of the Libertarian Party, gave a "stimulating talk" on the party's national progress, Mathers said. Mathers also enjoyed Leslie Hays' discussion of the La Luz gun raid that occurred in February in southern New Mexico.

During the business portion of the convention, Knight was re-elected to a second two-year term as state party chairman.

"The way I put it, I was sentenced to another two years for not getting it right the first time," Knight said.

Knight said he wants to resolve the Libertarians' ongoing dispute with the state over the party's status.

"Right now, the party is in limbo," Knight said.

"We could be a major party, a minor party or no party," he said.

Knight said he also wants to strengthen the party's overall organization and gain a stronger presence in New Mexico's 33 counties.

"We have about a half dozen counties with credible organizations," Knight said.

Russell Means was officially nominated by the party to run for governor in 2002, while Bill English was nominated to run for U.S. Congress in District 2, which consists of the southern part of the state.

Susan Ruch of Ruidoso was elected vice chair of the party, Ron Bjornstad of Rio Rancho was elected secretary and Jim Blacic of Los Alamos was re-elected as treasurer.

La Plata resident Bob Ziesmer was re-elected to serve on the state central committee.

"It was great," Mathers said. "The business meeting was a real pleasure. We didn't get sidetracked on other issues and kept within our time limit. It went very smooth."

"Every speaker had something of value to say for people who are concerned about government intrusion into our lives."

Knight agreed that the convention was one of the smoothest the Libertarians have ever held.

"We like to joke that we calmly and rationally discuss the issues," he said. "This time, we did calmly and rationally discuss the issues."

▲ *The Daily Times*, Farmington, New Mexico, June 12, 2001

▶ *The Northwest Arkansas Times*, Fayetteville, AK, June 1, 2001

▼ *The Gazette*, Colorado Springs, Colorado, May 19, 2001

Ax the tax

Thank you, Libertarians

THE MOST useful function of third parties in the American system has been to go where the Big Two won't, either because the major parties are out of new ideas or in thrall to old, well entrenched interests.

Some third parties, like the Free Soilers and Populists, are now studied the way we do dinosaurs in museums—as interesting but dead species. One third party, the Republicans, replaced one of the major parties, the Whigs, who had grown unable to cope with change.

But just because a minor party didn't become a major one doesn't mean its existence was pointless. On the contrary, the influence of the Populist Party produced a wide range of social, economic and political reforms. Mainly because the Populists were able to reflect a popular discontent with things as they unfairly were in the Gilded Age—and translate that discontent into a reform program so compelling that the major parties paid it the ultimate compliment: They stole it.

Last weekend, Arkansas' third party tackled a long-standing grievance in this state, a continuing moral outrage that neither Democrats nor Republicans have had the hardihood to address directly, let alone satisfy. Namely, the sales tax on groceries. Surely no one can believe that such a regressive tax is fair. For it weighs heavily on those least able to pay it.

This is the kind of tax—on the very necessities of life—that has been denounced since the prophets. It grinds the faces of the poor. And every public opinion shows that we the People recognize the immorality of it.

But neither major party has been willing to actually repeal the shame-

ful thing. There is always an excuse: When times are uncertain, like these, we're told the state can't afford to repeal the grocery tax. When times are good, all kind of complicated, mickey-mouse schemes are offered to offset the revenue it brings in, until the whole Rube Goldberg scheme falls apart in the Legislature.

Has any genuine grievance been so regularly ignored as this unfair tax has been by the Legislature and a whole succession of excuse-making governors?

So why not Just Do It?

That's what the Libertarian Party of Arkansas has proposed. How make up for the lost revenue to government? Well, once this unfair tax is repealed by popular demand, does anybody doubt that the politicians will find a way to replace it? This past session again demonstrated that legislators and governors do not lack ingenuity when it comes to raising revenue, whether the vehicle is another tax on beer or a cruel bed tax on nursing home patients. There is no shortage of taxers at the state Capitol.

Once the people finally kill this most regressive of taxes, the politicians will get serious about replacing it, but not before. Just raising the sales tax on other purchases would be preferable to taxing the bread and milk of the poorest Arkansans. Or even those just scraping by.

That's why the Libertarian Party's petition drive to put this issue on the ballot in 2002 deserves every signature it can get. Sometimes the people just have to get the pols' attention. And if it takes a two-by-four like this petition to do it, and evidently it does, then that's all the more reason to be grateful that third parties exist.



Libertarian official praises local party

National chairman says he could learn a lot from county's voter turnout success

By Ed Sealover
The Gazette

Overseeing a campaign in which your party's most popular candidate gets 25 percent of the vote would likely get a Republican or Democratic leader fired.

But when you're the Libertarian Party trying to buck the two-party system, helping a candidate grab one out of every four votes earns you a visit from your party's national chairman.

James Lark, a University of Virginia engineering pro-

fessor who has been the national Libertarian head for almost a year, spoke with El Paso County party members Thursday and Friday.

Although Lark was in Colorado for the state's Libertarian Party convention in Denver this weekend, his Colorado Springs visit wasn't just a social call. The El Paso County group was the one specific constituency he spent time with, and Lark said it was because he could learn from its 2000 election success.

"There's not a heck of a lot of advice I have to offer to them," he said. "They seem to have a pretty good idea of how to build the EPLP into the majority party around here."

Although Libertarians did not elect anyone locally last year, they gathered votes at a greater percentage than most third parties nationally: Patrick Lilly pulled in 24.6 percent of ballots in his quest for Senate District 12, and Steven D'Ippolito garnered 23.8 percent of the vote in running for El Paso County Dis-

trict 4 commissioner.

National gains for the party, which advocates very limited government, are slow and have not been permanent, Lark said. Surges that put several Libertarians in the Alaska and New Hampshire legislatures over the past 25 years were followed by surges that took them out.

Lark advised 22 party members at a weekly gathering Thursday to continue working hard and reaching out to many groups in the communi-

"My friends out here are doing a lot of good things," he said.

Local Libertarian fundraising director Steve Gresh, who has met Lark before, said he realized again how hard it is to run a national party striving for recognition.

"What I'm learning from him is the enormous amount of responsibility he has to deal with," Gresh said.

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