

LIBERTY PLEDGE

newsletter

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MACK MAKES IT OFFICIAL ...

'Brady Bill' sheriff declares for Utah governor

Richard Mack, the former Arizona sheriff who successfully challenged the Brady Bill before the U.S. Supreme Court, has formally announced that he will run for Utah governor as a Libertarian.

"It's time to throw some good old-fashioned competition at the Democrats and Republicans," Mack said as he announced his candidacy in Salt Lake City on November 6. "The governor can do a lot more to stand against federal intervention and usurpation. I'm going to be the states' rights governor."

Mack, 50, joined the Libertarian Party in June. At the time he said he expected to run for governor on a platform of "limited government and the protection of individual rights."

Mack's formal announcement earned media coverage from *The Salt Lake City Tribune* -- the state's largest daily -- and the Associated Press.

During a September rally against the Patriot Act on the steps of the state capitol, Mack caused a controversy when he called for the resignation of Republican Sen. Orrin Hatch, one of the act's prime supporters.

"I've been very outspoken about the problems in this state and in the nation," Mack said. "And frankly, I figured I'd be a hypocrite if I didn't run and try to solve some of them."

Mack was a county sheriff in rural Arizona when he filed suit in 1995 against the Brady Bill's requirement that local law enforcement officials perform background checks on gun buyers. The suit eventually went to the Supreme Court, which ruled in 1995 that the requirement was unconstitutional -- and made Mack a national celebrity in the process.

"As governor, Richard Mack will use his office to limit activities by the federal government that hurt the quality of life for Utahns," said Rob Latham, Mack's campaign manager.

Mack has already received grassroots support from Republicans, Democrats, independents, and new voters, as well as endorsements from the Constitution Party of Utah and the Independent American Party of Utah, according to Latham.

"Our campaign acknowledges the challenges we face, but former Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura's victory shows that those challenges can be overcome," he said.

ELECTION VICTORIES...

LP candidates succeed in higher-level races

Libertarian candidates demonstrated several signs of "political potency" in the November elections, according to LP executive director Joe Seehusen.

"I'm thrilled not just with the quantity but with the quality of these victories," said Seehusen, who sees three signs of the LP's growing political potency in the election results.

■ Higher-level wins:

Of the LP's victories, 80 percent were for offices such as city council, county council and Board of Aldermen. "This shows that we have the power to improve the lives of more and more Americans," he said.

■ Holding onto seats:

A total of seven LP candidates in four states were re-elected. "Voters obviously like the fact that Libertarians are keeping their promises while in office, which is why they're rehiring them for a second term," he said.

■ Ousting incumbents:

"Seven Democratic and Republican politicians are now unemployed, thanks to their Libertarian challengers," Seehusen said. "This shows that when we run aggressive, properly funded campaigns, we can compete and win."

All in all, 20 of the 210 Libertarians running for office in 28 states emerged victorious in local elections on November 4.

Seehusen: Financial crisis over

The LP's cash crunch -- which began in 2002 and persisted throughout the first half of 2003 -- is finally over.

"Great news: The Libertarian Party is financially solvent!" Seehusen announced in early November.

The LP is now current on its accounts payable, current on Unified Membership Payments to state parties and has paid off its revolving credit debt in full.

Seehusen credited LP members who responded to a series of fund-raising appeals with turning the party around.

"You all stepped up and put your money where your mouth was," he said. "You believe in a free America and you made it clear you are willing to do what it takes to make it happen. Thank you."

Indiana Libertarian Party's tactic: Win just 1

By John Fritze

After years of suffering crushing losses at the polls, Marion County's **Libertarian Party** is switching its strategy in this year's election to focus on something different -- winning.

Libertarians have decided not to run a mayoral candidate for the first time in more than a decade. Instead, the party has shifted that money and support to a single candidate for City-County Council, the Rev. Greg Dixon.

And, for the first time in memory, the party's candidate has a shot at taking office.

"That was our strategic move this time around," said Sam Goldstein, chairman of the county's Libertarian Party. "We opted to put any effort we could behind Dixon's campaign."

Dixon preaches to about 1,000 parishioners in six congregations and has raised \$12,399 in his campaign -- more than his Republican and Democratic opponents combined.

The Libertarian Party is hoping not only that Dixon will win, but that his vote on major issues before the council will be sought by both major parties. If, after Election Day, the council ends up evenly split between Democrats and Republicans, Dixon could hold the swing vote.

Republicans now have a 15-14 majority on the council.

While Dixon has a shot at the council this year, it is still a long shot. The district, in Decatur Township, has leaned Republican in previous elections, and the incumbent, Bob Cockrum, has served on the council since 1996.

Still, Cockrum acknowledged that he is paying close attention to Dixon, who said he has knocked on thousands of doors this year.

"He's doing all the things that a candidate should do," said Cockrum, who has raised \$11,682, according to campaign finance filings. "It'll be interesting to see."

Democrat White, who has raised about \$700, said Dixon would have difficulty forging alliances in a two-party system.

If elected, Dixon said, he would side with council Republicans who favor lowering property taxes and freezing the local income tax rate, but he has mainly run a campaign focused on his district's needs -- including street and sewer repairs.

"We're not just voting on our whims or who gave us the most money," said Dixon. "We can vote based on what the U.S. Constitution and the Indiana Constitution say."

Libertarians have never won a seat on the council.

The party is running 21 candidates for 29 seats on the council this year, but Dixon is the one that Goldstein says has the best chance.

Bill Blomquist, a political science professor at Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis, said no matter what happens, the Libertarians have made an interesting choice in Dixon. "Going for a smaller target where you might do well is probably a smart strategy for third parties," he said.

(Left) *Indianapolis Star*, Indianapolis, Indiana -- October 29, 2003

(Below) *Bonita Daily News*, Bonita Springs, Florida -- October 16, 2003

Lee County to debate USA Patriot Act

By Charlie Whitehead

In Moscow they don't like the U.S.A. Patriot Act, and in Athens and Dublin the local governments have taken stands against it as well. That's Moscow, Idaho; Athens, Ohio; and Dublin, Calif. Lee County could join the three states and 186 towns, cities and counties across America when county commissioners meet Nov. 4 to debate a resolution on the Patriot Act.

The county commissioners resisted an effort to have them debate the act, and potentially adopt a resolution critical of it, when the local American Civil Liberties Union and the **Libertarian Party** urged it in August. The groups broached the subject again Tuesday, and this time commissioners agreed. The petitions were, in fact, impassioned and sometimes delivered with great volume. Opponents of the sweeping new powers the act gave American law enforcement often quote patriots such as Franklin and Jefferson.

"(Jefferson) would turn over in his grave at what those 535 individuals in Congress today have done to the Constitution," said North Fort Myers resident John Shundlich.

Shundlich said he's a Republican, but found himself allied with Libertarian Party Chairman Jack Tanner and ACLU local chapter Director John Szymonik.

Real patriots wrote the Bill of Rights, he said.

"I think there's room for discussion on both sides," Commissioner Doug St. Cerny said. "After 9-11, I think people felt there was merit in drafting a document like this. The regulations seem to some people to step over the line."

Commissioner Andy Coy, the other candidate, said America has a history of going too far in times of war.

"I would say America has a history during time of war of overreacting in taking away civil rights," he said.

Abraham Lincoln did it when he suspended habeas corpus during the Civil War, Coy said, and Franklin Roosevelt did it by interning Japanese during World War II. "They made some errors," he said. "And I think there are some errors in the Patriot Act."

What precisely commissioners are offered may well guide the debate. The original resolution offered by the ACLU runs three pages. County officials questioned parts that call on county employees not to cooperate with federal officials they felt were violating civil rights. Commissioners likely will look to tread more lightly.

Libertarians hope to end Republican rule

By: Natalie Root

HAGERSTOWN, Ind. -- With **Libertarian** candidates seeking all positions voters will elect here Tuesday, the party hopes to end a tradition of a Republican majority in office.

Republican Nicholas Jarrett, Tiffany Toler, Democrat, and Gayle Bond, Libertarian, are vying for the clerk-treasurer position. For town court judge, the incumbent Republican, Rebecca Justice, faces a challenge from Susan Bell, a Libertarian.

Jarrett served two elected terms on town council in the past. For those eight years, he was appointed chairman of the finance committee. For four years, he was utilities chairman.

He began discussing with his wife last year how he might again serve the town, he said. Jarrett believes his job and church experience make him a good fit for this position. He has more than 20 years of business management experience, including accounting supervision and general management. He is on the finance committee and church council at Hagerstown First United Methodist Church.

Toler said she gained related experience during her summer employment with the town during the past few years. She worked with utility employees and in the park.

"I think I have a lot of really good ideas," she said.

A 1999 graduate of Hagerstown Junior-Senior High School, Toler believes "it might be good to get some young blood in there."

She is scheduled to receive her bachelor's degree in elementary education from Indiana University in May. She will finish up in Bloomington in December and return to the area to do her student teaching in Centerville.

"I hope that people don't look at my age and think I'm not qualified," she said.

Gayle Bond is the Libertarian candidate for clerk-treasurer. He sought a town council seat in the past election.

"We were not happy with the way the office has been run the past few months or the past year," he said.

Although he originally planned to run for council again he ran for clerk-treasurer because his party wanted a candidate. He believes he has "the knowledge of town government and the fiscal operations, as well as the physical operations, of the town."

A councilman for six years in the past, Bond said he intends to be approachable and treat people with respect. Bond has worked for Nettle Creek Color Systems for 14 years. Prior to that, he worked for a company that handled photographic equipment for the Navy. He is retired from the Navy after 21 years.

Susan Bell, Libertarian, opposes Rebecca Justice, Republican, for the town court judge position. Justice was appointed to the position in 1999 and in 2000 was elected to the term she is completing.

Bell said she has always been interested in town court. If elected she would try to be professional and "community-friendly."

"I think you need to be a neutral party. I think it's somebody that needs to look objectively at each individual case," she said.

Bell and her husband Rex, the Wayne County Libertarian Party chairman, have owned a construction business for 30 years. She has had an upholstery business for 23 years. They opened The Corner Oak, a furniture store, in Hagerstown three years ago.

"I've always been self-employed and have to take the blows that come with being self-employed," she said.

Justice believes she has the legal knowledge and professional job experience necessary to serve as judge. She was employed as a deputy prosecuting attorney in Wayne County for four years, and owned her own law practice for five years.

Also, she said she has completed annual continuing legal education as required, including attendance each year at the City and Town Court Judges Conference

"I have established strong working relationships with other city and court staffs, our local government officials, and the state agencies which govern court processes," she said. "I have worked diligently to develop a respectful, professional atmosphere which serves the citizens well."

(Left) *Palladium Item*, Richmond, Indiana -- November 2, 2003

(Below) *Indianapolis Star*, Indianapolis, Indiana -- October 19, 2003

Hobnobbing, Hawaiian Style

During election season, even the Libertarians have rules. Leaders of the state's **Libertarian Party** may want fewer laws. But they apparently don't have a problem with dress codes.

At a recent hobnob sponsored by the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, the party leaders refused to introduce City-County Council candidate Andrew F. Hart to the crowd with the rest of the Libertarian candidates because he was wearing shorts and a Hawaiian shirt. That's the type of dress that Hart would wear to his definition of a hobnob: "An informal gathering of candidates and constituents to exchange ideas."

But everyone was wearing a black suit, Hart said -- even the women. And, though he stood there for 90 minutes, no one asked for his campaign literature. "I went through both invitations and all the Libertarian letters, and not one of them had anything about dress," Hart said. "And I don't even have a black suit, so they're out of luck."

Third parties a threat to Bush in 2004

By Lawrence R. Jacobs

The handicapping of the 2004 presidential election has so far ignored a potentially key factor -- the continuing and perhaps growing appeal of third parties. While the pundits focus on President Bush's chances against a stable of Democratic starters, the election next November is likely to be determined by the Green Party, the Independence Party or -- no joke -- the **Libertarian Party**.

Third parties may not be getting the attention they deserve because their display of electoral muscle has been so episodic. They were hardly present in the 1984 and 1988 presidential races, when the two major parties gobbled up 99 percent of the votes. But Ross Perot garnered a stunning 19 points as an independent presidential candidate in 1992 and a still impressive eight points in 1996.

To those watching midterm and statewide elections, though, Perot's success shouldn't have come as a shock. When third parties have done well in midterm elections, they do well in the next presidential election. In eight statewide races in 1990, third-party gubernatorial candidates together grabbed more votes than the winners' margins of victory. That had happened in only three states in the 1986 midterm races.

The third parties' weaker performance in 1998 was also a portent. Green Party candidate Ralph Nader won just three points nationally in 2000, although he still wielded quite a bit of influence in several states (including Florida, where he received 97,000 votes). The 2002 midterm elections suggest that third parties could sway the presidential outcomes of even more states next year. Together, third parties recorded 5 percent or more in 16 states last year, an even bigger showing than before Perot's success.

The danger of the Green Party to the Democratic nominee is clear. But here is the big news coming out of the 2002 statewide contests: Third parties also spell trouble for Bush. Democrat Jim Doyle broke a string of four straight Republican wins for governor in Wisconsin by a 45-to-41 percent margin over his Republican opponent, Scott McCallum, last year, and two reasons stand out: The Green Party's Jim Young drew only 3 percent of potential Democratic voters and, most impressively, the Libertarian candidate, Ed Thompson (renegade brother of the secretary of health and human services, Tommy Thompson), took a whopping 11 percent, hurting the GOP most.

The Libertarian and Independence parties are significant threats to the Republican Party in 2004. The soaring budget deficit in Washington, ballooning expenditures and an expansion of government under Republican control of the White House and Congress have not only fired up the usual inside-the-Beltway deficit hawks; they have also fueled a grass-roots protest movement. Some of those disaffected Americans won't vote at all. Some will vote Democrat. But many will go outside the box to vote for a third party. In 15 statewide elections last year, 2 percent or more of voters cast their ballots for the Libertarian Party, which has picked up the

banner of small government. Candidates running as independents, who generally promote balanced budgets, cleared the 2 percent mark in seven different states.

Whether Bush can win these states in 2004 may depend on these third parties and their sustained, or even enhanced, drawing power. Bush won Nevada by 3 percent in 2000; Libertarian Dick Geyer and two candidates running as independents, David Holmgren and Jerry Norton, together captured 4 percent of the vote in the 2002 gubernatorial race. The president won New Hampshire by about 1 percent in 2000; the votes for Libertarian candidates in the 2002 races for governor (John Babiarez) and Senate (Clarence G. Blevens) each exceeded Bush's margin. Arizona, a reliable Republican state, gave Bush a comfortable victory in 2000, but the independent candidate, Richard Mahoney, and the Libertarian candidate, Barry Hess, together drew a surprising 9 percent in the governor's race in 2002.

Here's the decisive question that is not being asked about the Bush campaign: Will voters for independent or Libertarian candidates in the 2002 elections coalesce behind one candidate in the 2004 presidential race?

It would pay the Republican Party, in particular, to think back to the high-water mark of third-party political power: the presidential election of 1912, in which Teddy Roosevelt, running as a Progressive, beat out incumbent President William Howard Taft, split the Republican vote and put Democrat Woodrow Wilson in the White House with only 42 percent of the vote. History could repeat itself if a credible, magnetic and effective third-party candidate emerges before the 2004 election. The voters are waiting.

(Left) *The Washington Post*, Op-ed, Washington, DC -- October 19, 2003

(Below) *Associated Press*, Santa Fe, New Mexico bureau -- October 20, 2003

3rd parties seek election board seat

Leaders of the state Green and **Libertarian** parties want Governor Richardson to expand a newly appointed elections task force to include more than Democrats and Republicans.

Richardson established a 20-member committee last week. It is to recommend ways to make New Mexico's elections smoother and the state's campaign finance law stronger. But the chairman of the Libertarian Party, Richard Oberfell, says the task force should include Greens, Libertarians, independents and even some New Mexicans who aren't registered to vote. The co-chairs of the Green Party, Carol Miller and Joe Lacayo, say a task force looking at election reform needs to be more than just a discussion between the two largest political parties.