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Lynn re-elected to Davenport City Council

By J. Daniel Cloud
LP NEWS EDITOR

Libertarian Bill Lynn, a professor of economics at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa, has been re-elected to the city council in Davenport — a city of nearly 100,000.

Lynn took 58 percent of the vote in a field of four candidates in the Oct. 11 primary, so he was confident of his chances in the general election. His confidence was not misplaced: He received 66 percent of the vote to Joel Franken's 34 percent, easily winning his bid to serve two more years on the 10-member board.

The election was nonpartisan and party membership isn't usually an issue in the Davenport alderman's races, but Lynn has made no secret of the fact that he's a Libertarian.

That said, however, most of the voters in town don't seem to care what Lynn's party affiliation is, no matter how hard the mayor and other local politicians try to make an issue of it.

In this election, Lynn's opponent was a Davenport newcomer who had served as a city councilman for about 13 years elsewhere in Iowa before moving to Davenport about a year ago.

Franken hammered Lynn before the election about being a Libertarian, "but it didn't seem to go very far," Lynn said after the votes were tallied. "The voters didn't seem concerned."

Lynn noted that Davenport's mayor has "continually made a point of telling people I'm a Libertarian," and that he has tried to turn the voters against him.

But when it came to the vote, the mayor was more unpopular than Lynn was: He ran for an alderman's seat this time and was elected by a margin of only four votes against a total unknown, Lynn said.

Now that he's been elected again, Lynn is looking forward to the next two years.

"I'm being told that I'm probably going to end up taking the position of leadership on the

See **LYNN** Page 2

LNC meeting in Baltimore

The Libertarian National Committee meeting in Baltimore on Nov. 12-13 proved anticlimactic in some ways, as committee members voted not to "outsource" *LP News* after all, and not to entertain alternate proposals for handling party dues.

The LNC voted earlier this year to spin *LP News* off into a separate business, independent of the LP national headquarters office, and asked for proposals from people interested in taking over this paper.

Three prospective publishers presented their ideas for *LP News'* future: Brandon Millett, who currently edits a 150,000-circulation publication that exposes political and legal corruption; Kevin Rollins, editor of *The Free Liberal*, a libertarian-friendly paper distributed in Washington, D.C.; and Todd McGreevy, president of a media and marketing company in Davenport, Iowa.

Members of the LNC expressed interest in each of the three proposals during the Saturday session, but on Sunday morning voted overwhelmingly not to outsource *LP*

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■ The Libertarian National Committee met in Baltimore, Md., on Nov. 12-13. Because the meeting was so close to the LP's national headquarters in Washington, D.C., many LP staffers were able to meet the LNC members for the first time. Above, several LNC members greet LP staffers and other visitors at a dinner following Saturday's session. (Photo by LP News Editor J. Daniel Cloud)

Colorado LP member elected to city council

On Nov. 3, long-time Libertarian Party member Doug Anderson was elected to a city council seat in Lakewood, Colo.

With more than 144,000 residents, Lakewood is the fourth largest city in the state. Anderson was victorious against incumbent Tom Booher, in addition to two other challengers.

Anderson took just over 40 percent of the vote (3,399 votes). Booher was his nearest competitor, earning only 121 fewer votes (38.9 percent). Rich Olver and Walt Heidenfelder took 13.9 percent and 6.8 percent, respectively.

One of Anderson's major issues in the campaign was his opposition to a proposed city sales tax increase from 2 percent to 3 percent, an increase of 50 percent.

A few larger corporations and corporate developments in the city are exempt from the tax, thus putting an unfair tax burden on smaller businesses.

"Too many developers are getting special deals," Anderson said. "This administration just seems to have a

different ethic than I do."

He promised to return Lakewood city government to "common sense and fiscal responsibility," saying that he is "very frustrated with the direction the city is taking."

Anderson was born in Boston and has lived in Colorado for 25 years.

After a career as a real estate investor, Anderson recently began transitioning into retirement and said he will now be able to concentrate on helping to improve the city where he's been elected.

A political activist for many years, he has worked on a number of campaigns, culminating (until this most recent election) in his election to a four-year term as Denver's election commissioner.

In this position he cut the full-time staff from 21 to 12 employees without laying anyone off, proving his dedication to cutting the cost of government.

Other elected Libertarians in Colorado include San Miguel County Sheriff Bill Masters, San Miguel County Coroner Robert Dempsey, Frederick City Trustee Joe Johnson, and Hudson City Trustee John Hon-

nold.

Anderson's campaign team included Apryl Brady, who also served as campaign manager for Joe Johnson's winning campaign in Frederick, Colo., last year.

"The LP of Colorado is very proud of Doug Anderson and his campaign's victory," said state LP Chair Travis Nicks. "He ran an honest old-fashioned grassroots campaign [and] I couldn't think of a better person to serve on the city council. Doug's values are rooted in liberty. He'll do what's right for the taxpayers and small business owners of Lakewood."

Lamentably, the tax hike against which Anderson was campaigning was approved by voters, passing with 53.25 percent of the vote.

In addition to Anderson's victory in the city council race, the Colorado LP helped defeat statewide Referendum D, which would have allowed the state to borrow more than \$2.072 billion to be used for new school construction, transportation projects and local fire and police pension obligations.

In order to defeat Referendum

D, the Colorado Libertarians formed alliances with many like-minded groups, including FreedomWorks, the Colorado Club for Growth, the Colorado Union of Taxpayers and the Independence Institute.

The LP also celebrates a victory in Denver, where marijuana possession will now be treated the same as alcohol. Called the Alcohol-Marijuana Equalization Initiative, the ballot measure removes criminal penalties for possession of up to an ounce of marijuana by adults aged 21 and over. This measure was approved by 53.46 percent of voters following support from the Colorado LP and other activists.

Given the Supreme Court's recent decision that federal prohibition outweighs any local or state laws concerning marijuana, many consider the victory to be largely symbolic.

However, as the Colorado LP Web site notes, the victory "does signify that the people of Colorado are growing increasingly tired of the oppressive, counter-productive prohibition of marijuana and the War on Drugs."

NEWS BRIEFS

Property taxes increased to pay for views

In New Hampshire, town officials are permitted to levy an additional tax on homes with scenic views, as such views are considered a bonus feature. This additional property tax has become known as a "view tax."

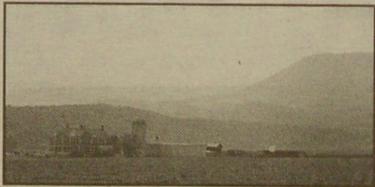
Residents are questioning how local officials determine the value of a scenic view, especially with high-value properties. One local official admits the process is subjective. The assessor for the town of Conway said it's an "I know it when I see it" process.

There are no formal guidelines in determining if one scenic view is more valuable than another scenic view.

Various informal guidelines have been developed. One appraisal company was quoted

in the *Washington Post* as saying that if the property has a view of a well-known mountain such as Mount Washington, it would be worth more than if it has a view of a less-known peak.

Some New Hampshire property owners have seen their property tax assessment jump solely because it has a scenic view. Brad Wilder, who owns a house in Plainfield, reportedly had to pay an extra \$4,700 for his view of Mount Ascutney and the Connecticut River Valley.



'Hate crime' legislation not defeated yet

The U.S. House of Representatives on Sept. 14 passed the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2005, better known as the federal "anti-hate" bill. It was approved 223-199 after being inserted as an amendment to the Children's Safety Act. Unexpectedly, however, the Senate Judiciary Committee stripped the hate bill back out of the Children's Safety Act in late October.

Talk radio hosts and commentators around the country helped draw attention to the bill's draconian intent: It would bring local law enforcement under federal control in prosecuting free speech.

The Libertarian Party has consistently maintained that criminalizing any form of speech — and hence, criminalizing thoughts — is blatantly unconstitutional.

Many of the bill's opponents may be lulled by the Senate's decision to remove this portion from the Children's Safety Act, but it's too early to relax. Sen. Edward Kennedy, among others, is determined to reattach the offending legislation to another bill, such as the Sex Offenders Registration Act.

And the bill could still pass: Remember, the Senate approved the hate-crime bill in 2004 by a two-thirds margin.

Don't be pacified by the apparent removal of hate crime legislation. As famed abolitionist Wendell Phillips noted, "only by continual oversight can the democrat in office be prevented from hardening into a despot. Only by unintermittent agitation can a people be kept sufficiently awake to principle not to let liberty be smothered..."

Feds to continue encouraging home buyers

If U.S. Rep. Ben Cardin (D-Md.) gets his way, the the federal government could begin providing a tax credit to developers who build or renovate homes in below-median income areas. Cardin's proposal is part of the Renewing the Dream Tax Credit Act that is currently being reviewed in a House subcommittee.

The tax credits would be funneled through the states. If the act is approved, each state would receive a tax credit allotment based on population. This allotment would be \$1.80 per person or \$2 million for states with small populations that don't automatically meet the minimum, according to FoxNews.com.

Despite the fact that U.S. homeownership is at an all-time high, Cardin believes many middle-income families are being priced out of buying a home, so the government should encourage the development of "affordable housing."

The new federal affordable housing credit would be the latest in a series of federal government policies to encourage homeownership — policies that aren't needed, given the continuing home-buying trend.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development offers the Homeownership Voucher Program, which provides assistance in buying a first home to individuals who reside in public housing. The Veterans Administration provides guaranteed loans for veterans who wish to construct or purchase a new home with "favorable loan terms" and competitive interest rates. The IRS offers the Mortgage Interest Credit, which allow lower-income individuals to receive partial tax credit on mortgage interest paid.



Libertarian Leadership School introduced

Continued from Page 1
News after all.

"We really didn't have a good picture of how it would benefit the LP to do so, and how the business would work if it wasn't directly under the party's oversight," said LNC member George Squyres. "The benefits of doing so were not viewed as outweighing the risks."

It was a different story for the outsourcing of the LP's material sales, including bumper stickers, brochures and other outreach products.

Webb Garlinghouse, president of National Electronic Type in Topeka, Kansas, was the only person to present a proposal for taking over the material sales project, and his proposal was approved.

Garlinghouse has done work for the LP before: He printed the "New Vision for America" brochure that the LP has been distributing in recent years.

Various LNC members said they think the LP's outreach materials will be more consistently available — and that there will be a wider variety of materials to choose from — when their production is taken over by Garlinghouse and his company.

The LNC's proposed agenda included discussion of a couple of alternate proposals for the party's dues structure, rather than lowering dues to \$0 and eliminating the Unified Membership Program.

Saying he was doing so at the insistence of a state affiliate in his region, LNC representative Dan Karlan made a motion that UMP be reinstated as it was prior to the August 2005 meeting, and that membership dues be set at \$30.

However, the proposal was removed from the agenda following an objection — without explanation — and such alternatives to eliminating LP membership dues

were not discussed.

On a positive note, the LNC expressed their approval of the new Libertarian Leadership School that is being formulated by members of the LP national staff.

"We said very clearly three months ago that we need to train our people," said LNC Chair Michael Dixon. "We need to train them so they are prepared to run for office."

The online classes will include courses on fundraising, on candidate recruitment and preparation, and on a host of other subjects — all of which will help Libertarians become more politically effective, said LP Chief of Staff Shane Cory.

"We don't expect to fill every class, but we will certainly be able to train a great number of people in the coming year," Cory said.

Information on available classes will be released on LP.org and in *LP News* as details become available.

Bill Lynn re-elected to city council

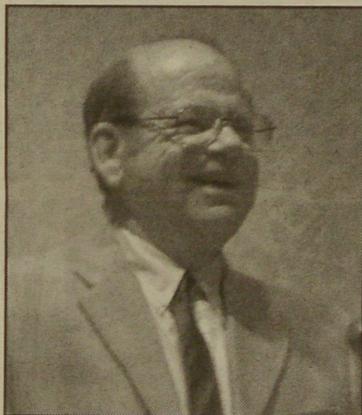
Continued from Page 1

council," he said. "The guy who was the leader on the council didn't run again, and we had two incumbents defeated, receiving only 22 percent of the vote."

There's a reason for Lynn's popularity with the voters. Earlier in 2005 he strongly opposed a new stormwater management fee the city imposed, and both of the incumbents who were defeated had voted in favor of the fee, he said.

"The government mandated that we institute a stormwater management program," Lynn explained. "To pay for that program, we instituted a fee, which I opposed. Almost none of the money will be used to pay for the stormwater management program. It's just another way to raise money for the general fund. Apparently the voters understood that and fought back against the people who voted in favor of the fee."

Lynn hopes to convince the other aldermen to do away with the stormwater fee, which is included in Davenport's property tax bills and will cost taxpayers an additional \$2.3 million this year. If he succeeds, the taxpayers will only have to pay the fee once, on tax bills they



received this November, Lynn said.

Lynn also hopes to change the way the city government budgets.

"One problem with government is that people say the right things — such as 'we need to make government more efficient' — but they don't know how to do it," he said. "This term, we're really going to try to get the city government straightened out."

With his Ph.D in economics and 11 years of experience teaching at the college level, Lynn may be just the man to help solve Davenport's budget problem.

He said he was surprised in his first term how beneficial his eco-

nomics training was for the city council: "I've actually been quite amazed. It has been very helpful."

Libertarians often complain that their ideas aren't taken seriously or that people discount them simply because the ideas came from a Libertarian, Lynn said — noting that these LP members need to learn how and when to introduce their ideas, and how to sell them to the public.

In Lynn's first term, he focused on decreasing crime by calling for community-based policing. Crime decreased in the targeted areas, and he was re-elected. This time he stressed the unpopular stormwater fee that he had voted against, and he hopes to eliminate that fee before taxpayers have to pay it again.

If he manages that and is also able to make city government more efficient, he will stand a good chance of being elected yet again in two more years. Then again, he may instead take the advice of many of his constituents — who have asked him to run for mayor.

For now, though, Lynn is satisfied simply to do his job as an elected alderman. The question of a higher office will wait until another time.

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The Mission Statement of the Libertarian Party: "To move public policy in a libertarian direction by building a political party that elects Libertarians to public office."

Voters reject PA Supreme Court judge after secret pay increase

For the first time in Pennsylvania history, an appellate court justice was not "retained" as a judge by voters — and a Libertarian-led group has been given partial responsibility for the upset.

Had state Supreme Court Justice Russell Nigro been retained, he would have held his seat for another 10 years. But voters turned against him and only narrowly retained Justice Sandra Schultz Newman.

Why this sudden rejection of a state Supreme Court justice?

Representatives of PACleanSweep — founded earlier this year by Libertarian Russ Diamond to oppose all state legislators and judges who supported a secret pay raise for state officials — are claiming that people voted against Nigro because of his support for the highly unpopular pay increase.

In July, lawmakers' pay was increased by between 16 percent and 54 percent. The new base salary is

\$81,050 — more than any other state except California.

PACleanSweep and other anti-pay raise groups had been actively protesting the Supreme Court's role in the pay increase.

In recent weeks, the state General Assembly became deadlocked over a last-minute repeal of the raise, which applied to all three branches of state government. The sticking point in the legislative standoff was the judicial portion of the pay increase.

And then, suddenly, voters gave the boot to one of the state's high judges. Coincidence?

The media didn't think so.

Pittsburgh *Tribune-Review* reporter David M. Brown pointed out in a Nov. 10 story that a poll by his newspaper revealed that 54 percent of Pennsylvania residents aren't likely to re-elect members of the legislature who voted to increase their own salaries.

Brown noted in his story that Diamond and others with PACleanSweep "helped create a swell of public opinion against the pay raises," and added that even if legislators repeal the raises, it's probably too late to save the jobs of some who initially supported the raise.

"We're pleased that the people have decided to boldly move forward by insisting that those charged with serving as guardians of the supreme law of the land take their duties and their oaths of office seriously," Diamond said after the election.

"Our attention now turns to the governor and the Senate, who are charged with appointing and confirming a temporary replacement to the bench until a contested election can be held in 2007," he added.

"We advise [Gov. Ed] Rendell to tread carefully in this matter, as he is up for re-election in 2006 — along with the 228 incumbent lawmakers we've been targeting since July 18."

POLITICS 2005

SF gun ban, criminal libel and drugs

■ The November 2005 issue of *America's First Freedom*, an NRA publication, notes in an article about the (then proposed, now actual) San Francisco handgun ban that the LP of San Francisco opposed the measure. The ban has since been approved by voters. "It's nice to see that, while most (if not all) of the NRA's top officials still hope the Republican Party is their friend, they're willing to acknowledge our presence on the pro-RKBA [right to keep and bear arms] side," said Jeff Daiell, chairman of the Harris County, Texas, LP.

■ Consider Richard Paey, a 46-year-old father of three, as the new face of the War on Drugs. A paraplegic after a disabling car accident and a case of multiple sclerosis, Paey moved to Florida from New Jersey, and couldn't get his new doctors to prescribe him the medication he needs for constant pain. His repeated requests for the meds caught the attention of Florida authorities, and Paey was arrested for drug distribution. The authorities conceded there was no evidence that Paey sold or gave away his medication, but convicted him of distribution anyway because of the amount of medication he at one time possessed — even though it was prescribed, and was for his own use. He was sentenced to 25 years in a Florida prison. There he was provided with a morphine pump that gives him the same medicine — in the same dosage — that the state of Florida told him was illegal.



■ In late October, Harriet Miers — President Bush's choice for the U.S. Supreme Court — withdrew her name from consideration for the seat, as a battle over her qualifications had Republicans at each others' throats, never mind the Democrats and representatives of other parties. Miers reportedly said in a letter to Bush that she was "concerned that the confirmation process presents a burden for the White House and our staff that is not in the best interest of the country."

■ A New Mexico man was given a suspended sentence of 360 days in October after publicly accusing a Farmington police officer of harassment. This was only the second case of criminal libel in New Mexico since before the 1920s: Libel is usually considered solely as a civil matter, and the state Court of Appeals has already ruled that criminal libel is unconstitutional. Interestingly, the judge who handed down the guilty verdict happened to be a former police officer who was friends with the plaintiff. Mata said he will appeal the decision.

■ Seattle voters on Nov. 8 rejected a monorail plan that they had voted four times since 1997 to support. The vote was on a shorter-than-originally-proposed monorail, which would have cost less than the \$11 billion proposed last summer. According to media reports, the Seattle Popular Monorail Authority must now dissolve itself, sell real estate it has acquired, and pay off millions in debt. And the city has spent those millions for nothing more than what the *Seattle Weekly* referred to as "a symbol of everything that can go wrong with a major transit project."



■ Citizens Against Government Waste named Rep. Ray LaHood, a Republican from Illinois, as its Porker of the Month in October for "preaching fiscal restraint in hurricane relief spending while seeking to protect and expand pork and wasteful handouts in his home district." LaHood favors coupling drought relief money for Illinois with hurricane relief measures and he has refused requests to return \$44 million in federal funding for Illinois highway projects, so that the money could be used for hurricane rebuilding efforts.

■ Following Congress' approval in May of the Real ID Act, the Department of Homeland Security has been charged with developing new federal standards for drivers' licenses. The DHS is considering is forcing states to embed a computer chip in every license. The chips would have the capacity to store health records, family history, and bank and credit card transactions — which could be accessed remotely. The chips would cost states an estimated \$17.4 billion, approximately quadrupling the cost of a driver's license.

Indiana LP executive director resigns

Indiana LP Executive Director Brad Klopfenstein has resigned his position of leadership after more than five years. He has accepted the same position at the Indiana Licensed Beverage Association.

"I loved my five and a half years with the Libertarian Party and am proud of the achievements we've made in that time," Klopfenstein said. "I look forward to the new opportunities that will come for the ILBA, and I look forward to the opportunities for the LP as Daniel Drexler becomes the interim director."

"I'm both grateful for all Brad Klopfenstein has done for the Libertarian Party and hopeful for the party's future in Indiana," said state Chair Mark Rutherford. "Brad has built the relationships with the media and with the state Election Commission that will help our next director take the party to the next level."

During his tenure, Indiana Libertarians set vote and percentage records for LP candidates in statewide, legislative and local races. Six of the seven Libertarians elected and currently serving in Indiana were elected during this period, as well as all eight appointed Libertarians.

"We'll be able to do a proper search when we achieve our ballot access for another four years," Drexler said, looking forward to the 2006 elections. "In the meantime, we need to be focused on winning some elections. Then I'll step away."

"Daniel Drexler's experience in helping businesses grow is just what the Libertarian Party needs to get to the next level, which is winning even more offices and getting more appointments," Klopfenstein said.

Rutherford echoed this sentiment, saying the party is "proving

our commitment to small businesses" by choosing someone "with such a strong business background and someone who knows his way around state and federal government."

After graduating from Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Drexler interned with the state Department of Commerce's East Asian Office for two years. Upon returning to Indiana, he became executive of the Rush County Chamber of Commerce and Industrial Development Corporation.

Andy Lecureaux wins third city council term in Michigan

Libertarian Andy LeCureaux was re-elected Nov. 8 to city council in Hazel Park, Mich., a city of 19,000 in the Detroit metro area.

This will be LeCureaux's third two-year term on the city council, to which he was first elected in 2001. In the 2003 election he received the most votes among the city council candidates and was named mayor *pro tempore*.

This year, all four incumbents on the city council were re-elected, out of a field of six total candidates.

opment Corporation.

Since then he has worked with the Indiana Department of Commerce's International Trade Division, the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Ford Meter Box Company, and later his own product distribution company. In addition, he has been a member of numerous service clubs and other local organizations.

He is taking a sabbatical from his company to work full time for the LP.

LeCureaux won just 52 votes fewer than the leading candidate — 1,249 votes to Jan Parisi's 1,301.

LeCureaux is one of the success stories of campaign team "the Troika," which has helped a number of Michigan Libertarians into office.

During his first term in office, LeCureaux helped reduce his city's general fund budget from \$12.4 million to \$10.8 million.

LeCureaux joined the LP in 1998. He was a Libertarian candidate for U.S. Congress in 2000 and was on his county LP executive board until his city council win in 2001.

Beginner's Introduction

ABORTION IS UNLIBERTARIAN

See why. Go to: www.L4L.org

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Libertarian elected to city council in Irwinton, Georgia

In a recent LP News story, Georgia LP Chair Mark Mosley was quoted as saying that Libertarian Jeff Edgens had a serious chance to win a place on the city council in Irwinton, Ga.

He was right.

Edgens took almost 54 percent of the vote in the two-way election on Nov. 8.

Although Irwinton is the county seat of Wilkinson County, there are only about 600 residents in the county. Those numbers help put voter turnout in context: The fact that 186 people voted (100-86, advantage Edgens) illustrates the interest in this race.

And the fact that two of the three full-time employees at City Hall were actively campaigning against Edgens made victory even sweeter, he said.

"The chief of police and the city clerk were working very hard against me and they thought they had it won, so it was a good night," Edgens added.

This was Edgens' first run for office, though he had previously run several partisan campaigns for other people.

The Libertarian candidate moved into Irwinton in April, just in time to qualify for residency for this election, he said, noting that his opponent had run twice before for the council seat.

To effect such a quick acquaint-

ance with the city's residents, Edgens went door to door throughout the community, ran ads in each of the city's two weekly papers the weekend before the election and distributed yard signs liberally along roads leading into town.

"We began to raise funds in late September, began spending that money in mid-October, and knocked on every door in the city just before the election," he said.

"We were able to quickly build up a lot of excitement for the campaign."

Now that Edgens has been elected and will soon take office for four years, he has been meeting with other members of the city council in hopes of being elected mayor *pro tempore* when they take office in January.

"That is a position with some administrative authority," Edgens said, adding that it is a position in which he would be able to more directly affect the city's operations.

The changes he hopes to effect are the same as those he stressed in his door-to-door campaign: reducing taxes, reducing spending and protecting property rights.

Edgens is assistant dean at Georgia Military College, and he said his career in higher education has prepared him for city governance.

"I think the best preparation it's given me is that, if you can handle faculty members and that kind of

thing, it prepares you for just about anything out in the outside world," he laughed.

"Besides that, I have experience with budgetary preparation, and I certainly think that experience will be valuable on the city council."

The election was nonpartisan. However, Edgens did receive some funding from the Georgia LP, which helped him with yard signs and other funding issues related to his campaign.

Some factors assisting Edgens in attracting the voters' attention were the facts that his family has been in the community for almost 200 years and that three of his family members are already involved in local government in the county.

But it wasn't just family connections that earned him the spot. His education and work experience are also confidence-inspiring.

Edgens graduated from Georgia Military College in 1985, and earned his bachelor's degree from Presbyterian College in Clinton, S.C.

He also holds a master's degree and a doctorate in public policy and administration, from the University of West Florida and Michigan State University, respectively.

His professional career has ranged across the public policy field with stints at agricultural organizations, land grant universities and activist work with free-market think tanks.

THE PROFILE

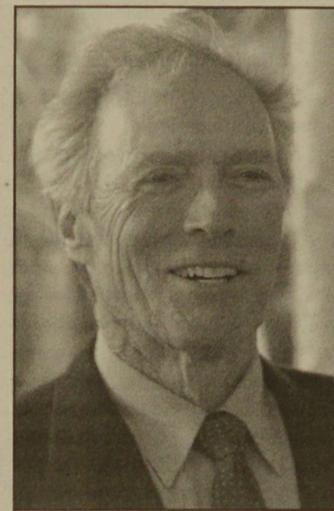
Clint Eastwood

By Bill Winter

THE ADVOCATES FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT

Over the years, Hollywood icon Clint Eastwood has uttered many memorable lines in many memorable movies: "Go ahead, make my day," in "Sudden Impact." "You've got to ask yourself one question: Do I feel lucky? Well, do ya, punk?" in "Dirty Harry." "Girlie, tough ain't enough," in "Million Dollar Baby."

But the most revealing line Eastwood ever uttered was to *USA Today* (Jan. 25, 2004), when he said, "I like the libertarian view, which is to leave everyone alone."



The quote confirmed that Eastwood is not just one of Hollywood's longest-lasting stars, but perhaps America's highest-profile libertarian.

Eastwood has made no secret of his pro-liberty views. He explicitly went on the record as a libertarian in a March 1997 *Playboy* interview, when he was asked: "How would you characterize yourself politically?" Eastwood replied: "Libertarian... Everyone leaves everyone else alone."

He reiterated that with his 2004 *USA Today* quote, and then elaborated when asked about same-sex marriages. Eastwood replied: "From a libertarian point

of view, you would say, 'Yeah? So what?' You have to believe in total equality. People should be able to be what they want to be and do what they want — as long as they're not harming people."

Eastwood's career is an example of someone being what he wants to be: He went from playing bit parts in low-budget movies to become one of the world's biggest box office stars. Then, at a stage in his life when most actors would be content to bask in fading glory, he reinvented himself as an Academy Award-winning director.

Born in 1930, Eastwood did a stint in the U.S. Army and briefly attended Los Angeles City College before dropping out. He turned to acting, and made his movie debut in *Revenge of the Creature* (1955). From 1959-1966, he starred in a TV western, "Rawhide," and got his first taste of national fame.

That role led to an invitation to star in a trio of Sergio Leone "spaghetti westerns": "A Fistful of Dollars" (1964), "For a Few Dollars More" (1965), and "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly" (1966). Eastwood's laconic character, The Man With No Name, captivated audiences around the world and made Eastwood an international star.

Eastwood hit pay dirt again in 1971 with "Dirty Harry." As .44 Magnum-wielding police inspector Harry Callahan, he created one of his most memorable characters. That same year, he got his first job behind the camera, directing "Play Misty for Me." For the rest of the 1970s and 1980s, he alternated between popular action thrillers and oddball comedies.

In 1992, Eastwood directed and starred in "Unforgiven." The movie, a gritty "revisionist" western about an aging gunfighter, earned an Academy Award for Best Picture, and Eastwood won for Best Director.

In 2004, he scored a knockout punch with "Million Dollar Baby." Like "Unforgiven," it turned a genre's clichés upside down; this time by transforming a feel-good boxing movie into an unflinching examination of a tragic disability. "Million Dollar Baby" won Eastwood a second Best Director Academy Award, and also picked up a trophy for Best Picture. His World War II movie, "Flags of Our Fathers," is scheduled for 2006.

Eastwood has interests outside of acting and directing. He's a longtime jazz fan (and wrote music for nine of his movies). In 1986, he was elected mayor of Carmel-by-the-Sea, Calif., and served a two-year term. He's also become an outspoken critic of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), after an inn he owns was hit by an ADA lawsuit. In 2000, he testified before Congress in support of a bill that would help protect small-business owners from such opportunistic lawsuits.

■ This is a recurring column about celebrities who call themselves libertarian. This article reprinted with permission from the *Advocates for Self-Government*. To read profiles of dozens of libertarian celebrities, visit: www.TheAdvocates.org/celebrities.html.



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Lawsuit filed against San Diego's new 'tax on the poor'

In late October, Libertarians in San Diego, Calif., filed a lawsuit against the city for instituting a new "tax on the poor."

With almost 140,000 rental properties in the city, San Diego already collects approximately \$11.5 million for a tax on rental housing and businesses. Now they've started imposing a "processing fee" of \$25 on top of the tax.

"In other words, the city is charging a fee before it will accept rental tax payments from landlords," said Edward Teyssier, attorney for the lead plaintiff, Sidney Weisblat.

Both Teyssier and Weisblat are Libertarians.

Owner-occupied property is charged neither the tax nor the new fee.

City officials said the fee was imposed to make up for decreased tax revenue from the state level, noting

that the fee will raise an additional \$3.5 million per year for the general fund.

Weisblat is a landlord. He explains that the additional fee will have to be passed on to his tenants via a rent increase, exacerbating an already-expensive housing market.

"Because tenants are typically less affluent people, those without the financial means to buy their own homes, this fee is really a tax on poor people," he said. "Consider

how ludicrous this 'fee' is. First the government charges me \$55 for offering a house for rent. Then, because the politicians want more money without raising taxes, they have the audacity to impose (on home rental landlords like myself) a \$25 'fee' for processing my \$55 tax payment!"

While a \$25 tax may not seem like much, it is simply "another burden on an already over-burdened housing market," Weisblat continued.

"Furthermore, if the city is able to get away with this sham, then next year this so-called fee may be \$35, and every year it can continue to grow."

The city wants to call this increased tax a "fee" because San Diego is legally prohibited from imposing new or increased taxes without a referendum, Teyssier said.

"Everyone knows this 'fee' is really a tax increase, but the ... politicians think that by calling this tax

increase a 'fee,' they'll get around the vote requirement," he added. "Who do they think they're kidding?"

Yes, the San Diego city government is in a "dire financial predicament," said Weisblat. "But it is a predicament of its own choosing, brought about by the financial mismanagement of the present and former city councils. It isn't fair that the mistakes of the city council should be borne by the poor."

Libertarian gets illegal law wiped off the books

It's now safe to walk around aimlessly in Highland Park, New Jersey. At least, people who do so can't be prosecuted for such activity.

A New Jersey Libertarian has succeeded in getting a loitering ordinance stricken from the books in the municipality after pointing out that the law is illegal.

John Paff, secretary of the Central New Jersey LP, brought the loitering ordinance to the attention of the Highland Park Borough Council, citing a 1982 New Jersey Supreme Court decision that makes such laws illegal. In its opinion, the court found that Newark's anti-loitering ordinance was pre-empted by state law, which provided no prohibition of loitering.

The ordinance defined loitering as "remaining idle in essentially one location and shall include the concepts of spending time idly, loafing or walking about aimlessly."

"The court determined that loitering was so precarious, so subject to abuse by law enforcement, that we will not allow it to be prohibited anymore," the *Home News Tribune* in East Brunswick, New Jersey, quoted Paff as saying. "Police sometimes do have axes to grind. They can persecute someone they don't like."

The ordinance allowed police to ask someone to leave a public place if that person is "causing or likely to cause any condition which would obstruct or interfere with any person lawfully in any public place."

A spokesman for the Highland Park Police Department said loitering isn't much of a problem in the borough, and that the issues that do arise can be dealt with under other ordinances.

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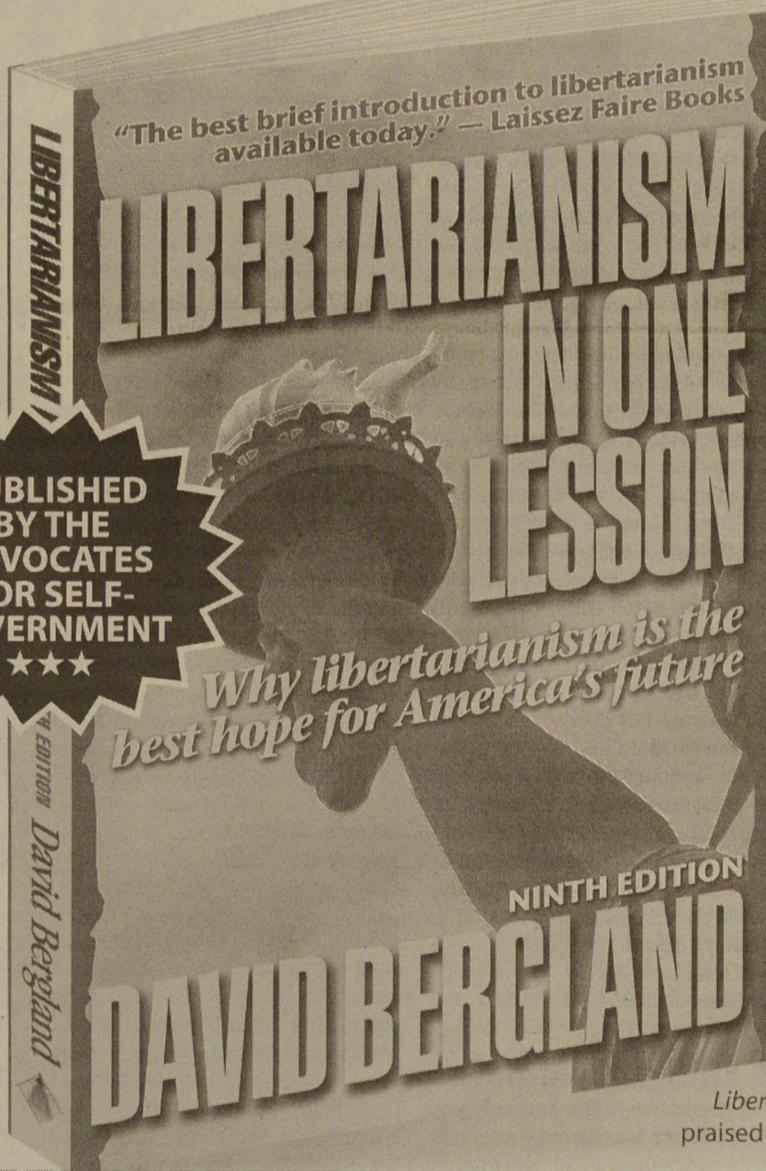
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LPNews DEC 05

TALKING POINTS

Eminent domain, outlawed guns, and seats in need of candidates

■ 'Open' elections

The Portage County [Ohio] village of Sugar Bush Knolls has four open council seats and no candidates.

Clerk Bill Elder said few of the village's 200 residents are interested in the unpaid council jobs and all four incumbents forgot the Aug. 25 filing deadline for the Nov. 8 ballot. The village also forgot to remind them.

Elsewhere across Northeast Ohio, more than 350 candidates for public office face no opposition next month. School board and council positions make up 80 percent of the unchallenged spots.

—TASHA FLOURNOY
Plain Dealer Reporter
October 25, 2005

■ Interrogation

President Bush strongly defended U.S. interrogation practices for detainees held in the war on terrorism Monday, insisting, "We do not torture."

Bush said at a news conference that he will not relent in battling terrorists.

"There's an enemy that lurks and plots and plans and wants to hurt America again," he said. "So you bet we will aggressively pursue them, but we will do so under the law."

Bush was asked to respond to reports, first published in *The Washington Post*, that the United States maintains secret prisons in Europe and Asia for terrorism suspects. The president didn't acknowledge that they exist.

U.S. interrogation practices have been under fire since news accounts in 2004 reported harsh tactics by U.S. interrogators at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, Guantanamo Bay in Cuba and at detention facilities in Afghanistan. In a new case Monday, five Army Rangers were charged with abusing detainees in Iraq.

Over White House opposition, the Senate voted 90-9 last month to approve an amendment by Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., that would ban the use of torture. Vice President Cheney has pushed for an exemption for the CIA.

The administration ... opposes the measure because it would be "unnecessary or duplicative" and could restrict "the president's ability to conduct the war (on terrorism) effectively under existing law."

—RICHARD BENEDETTO
USA Today
November 7, 2005

■ Eminent domain

Conservative defenders of private property and liberal protectors of the poor joined in an overwhelming House vote to prevent local and state governments from seizing homes and businesses for use in economic development projects.

The House legislation, passed 376-38, was in response to a widely criticized 5-4 ruling by the Supreme Court last June that allowed eminent domain authority to be used to obtain land for tax revenue-generating commercial purposes.

The bill would withhold for two years all federal economic development funds from states and localities

that use economic development as a rationale for property seizures. It also would bar the federal government from using eminent domain powers for economic development.

It now goes to the Senate, where Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, has introduced similar legislation.

About half the states are also considering changes in their laws to prevent takings for private use.

—JIM ABRAMS
The Washington Post
November 4, 2005

■ Another Bush?

Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, the brother of President George W. Bush, ruled out running for president in 2008 but left open the possibility of a subsequent bid in an interview with a German magazine.

"You should never say never. But for the 2008 election, my answer is definitely no," he said, in comments translated into German by the magazine.

Asked whether his answer meant a later challenge was possible, he said: "Let's say there's a vague chance."

—REUTERS
November 13, 2005

■ Suing judges

A South Dakota businessman has turned in about 46,800 signatures supporting a ballot measure that would let people sue judges they believe have abused their authority.

William Stegmeier of "Tea on Monday" gave the petitions to Secretary of State Chris Nelson and state Election Supervisor Kea Warne. If Nelson's office says the petitions have the required 33,456 valid signatures, the proposed constitutional amendment will go to a statewide vote in the November 2006 election.

The measure would strip judges of their traditional immunity from lawsuits related to their judicial acts. People could seek damages or criminal charges against judges they believe have harmed them by deliberately violating the law.

"Right now, for all practical purposes, judges enjoy judicial immunity," Stegmeier said. "Even if they do something wrong, it's virtually impossible to hold them to account."

People could file complaints against judges after the traditional appeals process has concluded.

The measure would apply only to South Dakota state judges, not federal judges.

—CHET BROKAW
Aberdeen [S.D.] News
May 13, 2005

■ Handguns

Voters approved a ballot measure to ban handguns in San Francisco.

The gun ban prohibits the manufacture and sale of all firearms and ammunition in the city, and makes it illegal for residents to keep handguns in their homes or businesses.

Only two other major U.S. cities — Washington, D.C., and Chicago — have implemented such sweeping handgun bans.

With all precincts reporting early Wednesday, 58 percent of voters backed the proposed gun ban while 42 percent opposed it.

Although law enforcement, security guards and others who require weapons for work are exempt from the measure, current handgun owners would have to surrender their firearms by April.

A coalition led by the National Rifle Association has said it plans to challenge the initiative in court.

—LOUISE CHU
Yahoo! News
May 13, 2005

■ Abortion

One of the weirder templates of the abortion debate is that opposition is either constitutional or religious or both; people rarely talk about opposition that is simply moral in nature.

One wonders how many unreligious abortion opponents have stayed on the sidelines because they've found the prospect of rubbing elbows with all those doctrinaire Jesus freaks personally distasteful.

—ANDREW CORSELLO
GQ
November 2005

■ Church v. IRS

Worshippers at a prominent liberal church were told that the Internal Revenue Service has warned that the church could lose its tax-exempt status because of an anti-war sermon that a former rector

delivered two days before the 2004 presidential election.

In his sermon, the Rev. George F. Regas did not urge parishioners at All Saints Episcopal Church to support either George Bush or his opponent, Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass. But he was sharply critical of the Iraq war and Bush's tax cuts.

The IRS in a June 9 letter warned the church that its tax-exempt status was in jeopardy because the federal tax code prohibits such organizations from intervening in political campaigns and elections.

Marcus Owens, the church's tax attorney and a former head of the IRS tax-exempt section, wrote in an October letter to the IRS that "it seems ludicrous to suggest that a pastor cannot preach about the value of promoting peace simply because the nation happens to be at war during an election season."

—LOS ANGELES TIMES
November 7, 2005

■ Scooter Libby

Scooter Libby, who got indicted, has set up a legal defense fund to help pay his legal bills.

It's pretty good: For a \$1,000 donation you get a hand-written thank you note and the name of a CIA agent.

Things are not going well for Scooter Libby.

You see him walking around on crutches? Yeah, apparently he hurt his ankle taking the fall for Karl Rove.

—JAY LENO
The Tonight Show
November 5, 2005

■ Traveling

"A program that speeds pre-screened travelers through security will begin June 20, launching what airports hope will be a new era of checkpoint screening," *USA Today* reports.

"Transportation Security Administration chief Kip Hawley announced the start date Thursday at a congressional hearing. The Registered Traveler program will allow people who have passed a background check to go through checkpoints quicker.

"Participants must pay a fee, go through a records check for criminal warrants, and provide a fingerprint and eye scan. They'll be checked against databases of known terrorists."

In his testimony before the House Subcommittee on Economic Security, Infrastructure Protection, and Cybersecurity, Jim Harper, director of information policy studies at the Cato Institute, had this to say: "The Registered Traveler program essentially denies fairness, due process, and privacy protections to volunteers.

"And the 'voluntariness' of the program could disappear at any time. Because it is a government program, no promise about it being optional can be assured."

—KRISTEN A. KESTNER
Cato Daily Dispatch
November 4, 2005

**"THE SMALLEST
MINORITY
ON EARTH IS THE
INDIVIDUAL."**

— AYN RAND —

Not to argue with Ayn Rand (who would dare to?), but sometimes it seems that the smallest minority on Earth are the Libertarians. There just aren't as many of us as there should be. That's why the support of each individual Libertarian Party member is so crucial for our party to succeed. And Job One (for all of us) is to figure out ways to get more Libertarians. Here's one way you can do your part to help the party grow: Name the party in your will or insurance policy. For a confidential discussion of this option, call National LP Treasurer Mark Nelson at (563) 340-6151. Or e-mail him at: treasurer@lp.org, and include "Planned Giving" in the subject line.



AFFILIATE NEWS

Libertarians fight tax hikes, utility takeover and price fixing

■ CALIFORNIA Prescription drug discounts defeated

Shortly before the Nov. 8 elections, San Diego LP Chair Edward Teyssier was quoted in that city's *North County Times* as saying that California voters should turn down two prescription drug discount initiatives that had been proposed.

The Republicans were promoting Prop. 78, which was backed by drug companies. This plan would have established a prescription drug discount program for California residents earning up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level. Drug companies would have been given the option to join, but would not have been forced by law to do so.

Proposition 79, on the other hand, was backed by the Democratic Party, along with many consumer groups and labor unions. It would have provided drug discounts to California residents who earned up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level. Drug companies would have been forced to participate and would have faced civil lawsuits if they were seen as "profiteering" from the sale of prescription medications.

William Finn Bennett, a writer for the *North County Times*, pointed out that "at least one San Diego party is encouraging people to vote down both proposals."

Teyssier was quoted as saying he thought voters might vote their

own minds on these propositions rather than following the Democrat and Republican party lines: "We are the voice of logic, reason and responsibility — the one the taxpayers look to for advice on matters like this," he said.

In this election, the drug companies were trying to limit the damage they would. Prop. 78 would have cost them much less than Prop. 79 would have.

But in the end, voters followed the Libertarian suggestion and voted "No" on both propositions.

Since then, supporters of both propositions have tried to say that they won, simply because the other one didn't pass.

Who actually won? The Libertarian Party and the residents of California, who won't be hit with the unintended consequences that were sure to come had the state begun fixing the prices of prescription drugs.

■ NEW HAMPSHIRE LP fights city takeover of utility company

As Free State Project advocates and others have pointed out time and time again, New Hampshire is home to some of the nation's most Libertarian-friendly laws and government practices.

But the state isn't perfect, as the state Supreme Court illustrated quite well on Nov. 16 when it ruled that the city of Nashua can proceed

with its intention to take over a utility company under New Hampshire eminent domain law.

The New Hampshire Libertarian Party quickly stepped up to decry the Supreme Court's decision, adding its voice to the others who recognize that the government takeover of a utility is nothing less than theft.

The city of Nashua has been trying to buy Pennichuck Water Works for years, but Pennichuck has rejected the city's offers — most recently for \$121 million, in December 2003. The corporation tried to stop the takeover in court in 2004, losing the case in Superior Court. So Pennichuck appealed to the Supreme Court, which also ruled against continued private ownership of the utility.

The city's attorney argues that state law gives cities wide power to acquire a utility if it is in the public interest. Like most big-government proponents, he apparently doesn't understand the difference between "public interest" and "government interest."

Now that the high court has ruled, the Public Utilities Commission is scheduled to decide the outcome of the takeover in a trial to begin in early 2007.

Interestingly, the Superior Court pointed out when it heard the case that Pennichuck Corp. will be within its rights to seek recompense from the city for any damages that arise from the eminent domain process,

thus assuring an equitable settlement for its shareholders. And the utility will have the right as well to seek a jury trial after the utilities commission hands down its verdict.

However, the lengthy trial and appeal that have already occurred have cost taxpayers a great deal of money — and taxpayers will be further injured if the city decides to continue its eminent domain proceedings against the utility, a Pennichuck spokesman said.

One way or another, this case won't turn out well for the Nashua taxpayers.

■ OHIO Bloggers arrested for exposing corruption

Dr. Elsebeth Baumgartner and Bryan DuBois run a blog called *Erie Voices* that focuses on local issues in northern Ohio, especially those that are under-reported by local newspapers. Many of their posts deal with judicial and governmental corruption in northern Ohio.

The bloggers were arrested in July on charges of intimidation, retaliation and possession of criminal tools — since they used a computer in commission of their "crime." Their trial began in mid-November.

The charges originated from a complaint made by retired visiting Judge Richard Markus, who alleges that Baumgartner and DuBois intimidated and threatened him in 2004 prior to a civil trial in which Baumgartner was the defendant, according to media reports.

The bloggers believe the indictments against them were for "publishing about judicial corruption." Daniel Kasaris, the county assistant prosecutor who filed the charges against Baumgartner and DuBois, had been the subject of criticism on the *Erie Voices* blog.

Baumgartner and DuBois accused Kasaris of submitting a forged indictment the day before a pre-trial hearing.

More specifically, the bloggers claim on their site that the grand foreman's signature was forged, and that the document does not resemble other Cuyahoga County indictments.

Baumgartner has for years been fighting corruption in Ohio, but her efforts have usually been stymied: She was a practicing attorney until disbarred by the state because of her anti-corruption stance.

The Ohio LP is helping to defend Baumgartner and DuBois, hoping to draw attention to the case and protect the rights of Internet activists.

■ TEXAS LP petitioning to limit tax increases

Texas LP Executive Director Wes Benedict is spearheading the effort to form an Americans for Prosperity organization in Austin. The organization's goal is to ensure that Austin voters have more control over tax increases in their city.

Benedict is leading a petition drive to amend Austin's city charter to allow for an automatic referen-

dum if the city's leaders attempt to increase taxes by an amount that is larger than inflation or population growth.

State law allows taxes to increase by up to 8 percent.

If any city increases taxes by more than that amount, it automatically triggers the option for an election to roll back the tax rate. However, in any home rule city, 10 percent of registered voters must sign a petition asking for a referendum to decrease the tax rates.

Austin-area Libertarians have consistently opposed high taxes. They hope that joining forces with Americans for Prosperity will help them in that effort.

■ WASHINGTON UW Libertarians hold earthquake benefit

Libertarians at the University of Washington (LUW) recently hosted a bake sale to benefit earthquake victims in Pakistan, raising more than \$450 in about five hours.

The money will be donated to Pakistan Relief, an organization that provides direct aid in the region.

Nearly 80,000 people were killed in the earthquake that hit Pakistan in October and hundreds of thousands were displaced, resulting in a desperate need for food, clothing and shelter.

However, aid for this disaster has been lackluster compared to the response to the tsunami in Indonesia and to Hurricane Katrina, representatives of the group said, noting that this prompted their relief effort.

"Several of our members expressed frustration with the lack of public attention given to the Pakistan disaster, so we decided to raise money and awareness by holding the bake sale," said LUW President Don Rasmussen.

The group also planned to help the Pakistan Association of Greater Seattle with another drive to raise money for temporary shelter for the homeless in Pakistan.

When asked why a political organization was raising money for the earthquake victims, LUW founder Travis Wright responded, quite simply: "Because somebody has to. We can't just pass that off to the government or expect someone else to do the work."



■ Blogger Timothy West, at left, speaks with national LP Chief of Staff Shane Cory and development associate John LaBeaume between sessions of the Libertarian National Committee meeting in Baltimore, Md., on Nov. 12-13. West's blog, LibertyForSale.com, is one of the fastest-growing Libertarian blogs. (See LNC meeting story on Page 1)

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THE REVIEW

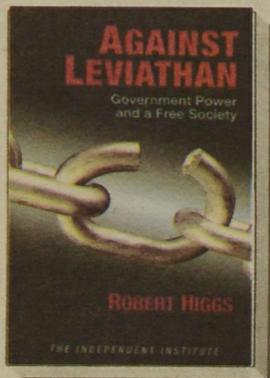
Against Leviathan

■ *Against Leviathan: Government Power and a Free Society*, by Robert Higgs. Published 2004 by The Independent Institute. Paperback, 408 pages. Available at www.independent.org.

Reviewed by J. Daniel Cloud
LP NEWS EDITOR

“With few exceptions, historians have taken a positive view of the New Deal,” writes Robert Higgs in the fourth chapter of *Against Leviathan*, and he clearly is one of the exceptions. The title of the chapter had already given away what was to come: “The Mythology of Roosevelt and the New Deal.”

The author doesn't remember Roosevelt as the savior that others have proclaimed him to be. No, Roosevelt was “a born politician — which is to say he was devious, manipulative, and mendacious,” Higgs says.



And when he reminds readers of Roosevelt's campaign promises — “to cut federal spending, balance the budget, maintain a sound currency, and rein in the bureaucratic centralization in Washington” — it's clear that Higgs is pointing to the current presidency as well, and to just about every other president in U.S. history.

Notable exceptions include Grover Cleveland, who according to Higgs “may have been the best of them all.”

How's that? What exactly is Cleveland's presidency noted for? There were no great wars, no Great Depression, no lengthy periods of domestic unrest to be calmed by presidential intervention.

That's precisely what made Cleveland a great president, Higgs said, noting that Cleveland kept the country at peace, respected the Constitution, fought to lower tariffs and preserved the gold standard.

Unfortunately, the U.S. public — and most historians — have come to believe that the legacy of a great president can be formed only under duress, as a diamond is famously formed from coal under pressure. In Higgs' lexicon, however, greatness means almost exactly the opposite: Greatness in an American president appears solely in those who lead by keeping out of the way, by preserving the peace, by following the Constitution, and by striving to keep government out of the lives of the American people as much as possible.

Of course, by Higgs' definition, greatness is rarely seen in a president. Much more often, these leaders do increasing damage to the nation. But there is an oft-used recourse: “Citizens in a democracy can always ‘throw the rascals out’ at the next election,” he says.

But getting rid of one set of rascals isn't enough, he continues. “Here in the United States we have been flinging rascals hither and yon for more than two centuries. But what do we have to show for it?”

What we have to show for it is “two revolving factions of a one-party state [who] farcically masquerade as authentic alternatives, the one specializing in crushing economic freedom and the other concentrating on crushing every other form of freedom,” Higgs says.

Our leadership isn't the only twisted facet of American politics on which Higgs focuses a rational, Constitution-fueled spotlight.

The 40 essays and reviews in *Against Leviathan* are divided into seven larger categories: Welfare Statism; Our Glorious Leaders; Despotism, Soft and Hard; Economic Disgraces; The Political Economy of Crisis; Retreat of the State?; and Review of the Troops.

Higgs, who for many years was a professor of political economics at various universities, is editor of the Independent Institute's *Independent Review: A Journal of Political Economy*. Almost half of the essays in *Against Leviathan* originally appeared in that journal, and all but one appeared in print before being collected for publication as a book. That single exception is one of the best essays in the book — a scathing ex-coriation of the FDA that briefly encapsulates the powerful arguments against the government agency.

Perhaps the most important feature of this book is Higgs' constant evidentiary condemnation of pro-big-government bias. The subject of each chapter is some aspect of the failure of Thomas Hobbes' dreamed-of all-powerful government, which Hobbes called “Leviathan.”

Any thoughtful person who reads *Against Leviathan* will quickly learn to recognize government's abuse of power, whether or not they initially agree with the author.

Higgs notes that “few people in the United States today really give a damn about living as free men and women,” that most Americans have begun to simply allow government to seize their freedoms.

That being the case, pick up a copy of *Against Leviathan*, take your time giving thoughtful consideration to it, then pass the book along to one of the many who don't really give a damn about living free. Chances are, if they actually read it, they'll soon feel differently.

New publication in Oregon gives a libertarian spin on the news

There is a new newspaper run by Libertarians in Oregon: the *Northwest Meridian*, which is published by Wes Wagner, a member of the LP since 2000.

“In Portland there was only one kind of newspaper before we started printing ours: leftist,” Wagner said. “Seeing that there was a large hole in the market, and that there was a growing dissatisfaction among the common Oregon citizen with the current politicians in power, I believed that a new publication could survive and thrive.”

For example, while more than 60 percent of Oregonians supported a recent ballot initiative, “every major publication editorialized against the measure and claimed that it would be the death of the Oregon planned land use system” because it put the primacy of property owners over the power of the state to regulate land use, Wagner said.

“The legislation passed overwhelmingly because people were finally tired of being regulated,” he added. “I think they are now also ready for a new outlet and voice.”

Wagner is an experienced businessman, but this is his first newspaper. Because of this, he hired longtime Oregon journalist Mark Engler as editor.

“Marc Delphine, another longtime LPO member, put me in contact with Engler when I was hinting

around that I thought a libertarian newspaper could work in Oregon,” Wagner said.

Working with Engler — as well as with several members of the Libertarian Party in Oregon — Wagner developed what would become the *Northwest Meridian*.

is growing dissatisfaction.”

While most small papers in Oregon (and in other parts of the country) primarily cover entertainment and the arts, Wagner said the *Northwest Meridian* will cover local, state and national politics — and they'll report on the news from a distinctly libertarian-leaning editorial stance, critical of the government and skeptical of politicians' motives.

“We are attempting to change the political dynamic, which is currently decided based on pathos, to a process based upon reason and facts,” he said.

Like many Libertarians, Wagner says he didn't know where he fit in the political scene until he was introduced to libertarianism by a party member.

“I always knew that I was opposed to government nannying, regulation, taxes and welfare,” he said. “But of course both the left and the right want to control some aspect of your life. They just don't agree on which parts to control.”

And because he always preferred that the Democrat- and Republican-led government control no aspect of his life, Wagner realized after spending time with libertarians that he naturally fit the LP.

“I hope this newspaper can inspire others to forge their way into new territories for the cause of liberty and freedom,” he said.

“I HOPE
this newspaper can
inspire others to forge
their way into new
territories for the
cause of liberty.”

— WES WAGNER

The paper's first issue came out in mid-October. It will initially be published every two weeks.

“Although the private company running this paper is in no way affiliated with the Oregon LP, I believe that the time is nigh for libertarian publications to emerge from the underground,” Wagner said.

“Neither the left nor the right has any good alternatives to offer. America is becoming an increasingly imperialistic state, civil liberties are reaching an all-time low, and there



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Pennsylvania Libertarian David Owens elected chairman of the board of township supervisors

Pennsylvania Libertarian David Owens has been elected as chairman of the board of supervisors of London Britain Township, in Landenberg, Pa.

"For those who don't speak the language of Pennsylvania townships, that essentially means I'm mayor for a small town of about 4,000 people," Owens said.

Owens was appointed as one of three township supervisors this past May, just days before the May 6 primary election.

In the primary Owens was up against three Republicans and two Democrats, all of whom ran write-in campaigns. Through the primary election, he managed to get the nominations of both the Libertarian and Republican parties for the Nov. 8 election, in which he ran against a sole Democrat. They were running for the two years remaining in his predecessor's unexpired term.

Only 112 people voted in the primary, about 5 percent voter turnout.

"Because I was the candidate for both the Republican Party and the Libertarian Party in the general election, I received a vote for everyone who voted a straight Republi-

can Party ticket, and that certainly helped put me over the top," Owens said.

During the months Owens served as an appointee to the board of supervisors he helped change town law so that people no longer have to get a county or township building inspector to inspect homes. Instead, they can now hire a private inspector.

And on the "public health" front, he pushed for a grassroots non-tax-funded deer feeder program, in which deer are lured to specific sites to feed, and are (unbeknownst to them) simultaneously treated for the ticks that cause Lyme disease and other ailments.

These and other issues were brought up in Owens' door-to-door campaign for election, but he particularly stressed development issues — and the voters obviously were convinced he was the man for the job.

On Election Day, 18 percent of registered voters in the township voted, and Owens won by just 11 votes.

Several town and county employees actively campaigned against him, bringing strong financing and



an active e-mail campaign to the fight. Even so, Owens managed to get a convoy of his supporters to the polls to take the victory.

And on a board of three county supervisors, there are now a Democrat, a Republican and a Libertarian — and the Libertarian is chairman.

"My Democratic opponent had the backing, support and resources of the entire Democratic Party county machine," Owens said.

"I was basically on my own, with very little money and only two volunteers, but I just kept at it, reminding people of what I had ac-

complished in my short time in office, talking about where I wanted us to go and how I would take us there.

"That message rang true with the voters. Despite considerable opposition and an incredible push by the Democrats in the last week, I was able to pull out a win in a difficult race."

Owens contends that winning local races for positions such as township supervisor and city council is the only way that Libertarians will win higher office, and that these local races are winnable if we do the hard work of real politics and real campaigning.

"To tell you the truth, I actually put a lot of effort into this race because I took to heart the advice of *LP News* Editor J. Daniel Cloud earlier this year, when he said in a column that it was time for Libertarians to 'get off their principled asses' and do something politically meaningful," he said. "I've been saying that for quite some time, but obviously action and results speak louder than words."

"Doing real politics is nothing new to many Libertarians," he added. "It is not magic nor is it rocket

science; it is just hard work. It is getting out and meeting people and listening to them and being honest about what you stand for — not flinching if someone doesn't agree completely with you."

Online Resources for LP Members

■ Find contact info for your state Libertarian Party or your State Chair

Visit: www.LP.org

Click on: Organization

Click on: State Parties

Click on: [Your state]

■ Find contact info for the National Committee

Visit: www.LP.org

Click on: Organization

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– **George Whitfield**
(Executive search consultant)
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THE FORUM

Get back to our signature issue: Ending the War on Drugs

In 2001, the Strategic Plan adopted by the LNC designated a signature issue — ending the War on Drugs at the federal level. The Strategic Plan was developed using the most rational, most information-driven effort that I have been involved with in the Libertarian Party. The Strategic Plan, and the signature issue, were approved by a large majority of the LNC in December 2001.

By Mark Nelson

There are things to dislike about the Strategic Plan, mostly its lack of prioritization. But overall, it expressed the best hopes for moving the Libertarian Party forward.

The first step in the efforts to end the War on Drugs points to marijuana reform. The most frequent tactic is to focus on the legalization of marijuana for medical use. The late Ron Crickenberger, the primary advocate of this strategy, worked hard developing plans to implement this strategy at the state, local and federal levels.

The right of an individual to use medical marijuana is well received in the political mainstream.

The approval of medical marijuana continually polls well with the general public. Several states have approved the use of marijuana for

medical treatment, often with the leadership and assistance of prominent LP activists.

It is clearly the most successful issue identified with the Libertarian Party.

So it is only natural that the Marijuana Policy Project, the leader in the movement for medical use of marijuana — as well as relaxing, if not eliminating, the laws regulating general marijuana usage — wants to work with us, and has offered to take a significant role in our 2006 convention in Portland, Ore.

This role would include providing financial support.

As the LNC treasurer, I consider the MPP's offer of financial help to be a blessing. Two of our last three conventions have lost significant amounts of money. The initial review of revenue and expenses projections suggests that the 2006 convention — an off-presidential nominating year convention in a secondary, high cost market — has several signs indicating it could also have financial shortfalls.

However, representatives of

some state parties, as well as some representatives to the LNC, have objected to the LNC entering this relationship with the MPP. Anecdotal support has been given for their opposition, contrary to the above-noted broader success.

Additionally, the late summer fundraising letter on medical marijuana has been portrayed as a poorly performing letter. In fact, this letter had the second most responses of the issue-based fund raising letters the LNC has sent in the past year. The only issue-based letter that generated more responses this year was the PATRIOT Act letter. The high member response indicates that there is broad support from the LP membership on this issue.

This fund raising letter was also mailed to 30,000 lapsed members, which did not receive a strong response. This could be explained by several factors, the primary one being a pattern of heavy mailings to lapsed members lowering the response rates.

Ron Crickenberger's efforts were stalled by the LP financial difficulties following 9/11, and they ended with Ron's untimely death in 2004. As the Libertarian Party's financial health improves, a return to those efforts should be on the table. Instead, some in the party leadership do not want to be identified with marijuana reform.

Please join me in asking my fellow Libertarian National Committee members: "What happened in the past four years to cause the leadership to want to back away from what was designated our signature issue?"

And then I'd encourage you to contact the LNC officers, the at-large representatives, and your regional representatives and ask them to proudly stand with the Marijuana Policy Project at our 2006 annual convention.

■ **About the author:** Mark Nelson is treasurer of the national Libertarian Party.

Immigration policy enforcement is 'bound to fail'

According to Fred Drew (in *The Forum*, Nov. 2005 *LP News*), we should not consider liberalization of our immigration laws until we successfully enforce the current law.

By Philip Blumel

This, he argues, is required out of respect for the rule of law.

Using this logic, alcohol prohibition should not have been ended until all the bootleggers and speakeasies were shut down. The federal government should not have al-

lowed states to raise the national speed limit above 55 until highway traffic actually slowed down to that speed.

As a practical matter, had this policy been followed, it would have ensured that we would still be saddled with Prohibition. And the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit would be in force now and forever.

Drew is essentially arguing that an unworkable government program has to work before we should dismantle or even reform it.

The fact is that the war on immigration — like the War on Drugs — is itself corrosive to rule of law

because it is immoral and unenforceable.

For a good practical discussion about why this is so, see the recent study by the libertarian Cato Institute, "Backfire at the border: Why enforcement without legalization cannot stop illegal immigration."

It is available without charge at www.cato.org.

As the study notes, "Increased border enforcement has only succeeded in pushing immigration flows into more remote regions. That has resulted in a tripling of the death rate at the border and, at the same

time, a dramatic fall in the rate of apprehension.

"As a result, the cost to U.S. taxpayers of making one arrest along the border increased from \$300 in 1992 to \$1,700 in 2002, an increase of 467 percent in just a decade. ... A border policy that relies solely on enforcement is bound to fail."

■ **About the author:** Philip Blumel of Atlantis, Fla., is a long-time Libertarian who serves as an elected member of the Palm Beach County Soil and Water Conservation District Board. He is a member of the Republican Liberty Caucus.

Defining freedom — and teaching Americans not to fear it

Two years ago, I heard an interview between two radio talk show hosts — conservative pundit Sean Hannity and libertarian Larry Elder.

During the course of the interview, Mr. Hannity asked why, in elections, Libertarians frequently get between 1 percent and 3 percent of the vote. Mr. Elder replied that the reason for this was that "people fear freedom."

At that time I was taken aback by his statement.

Today, sad to say, I am inclined to agree. I came to this position reluctantly. I became convinced after witnessing the goings-on in American society today. I believe my American brothers and sisters have forgotten what the words "freedom" and "liberty" mean.

I had to write a partial list of examples of freedom, it would include the following:

1. The freedom to think, speak, write, broadcast, assemble and express ones views and beliefs not only in private but in public as well,

and not get penalized for it, no matter how controversial or provocative it or they may be.

2. The freedom to worship a higher power, and to practice one's faith as he or she sees fit, and to worship that power not only in a church, a mosque or a synagogue, but in the public square as well.

3. The freedom to build and enjoy one's property. To be free of government interference with that right, and to not fear that the government will take it away from you, for their own benefit or to benefit another party.

4. The freedom to work in the many trades and fields available, and to enjoy one's earnings and benefits and not have half or all of it claimed or taken by government via taxation or any other means.

5. The freedom to save, invest and plan for one's retirement as one sees fit, and not have it taxed or

taken away by government.

6. The freedom to be secure in one's person, home, papers and effects, and not have government violate those rights.

7. The freedom to own or participate in a business and not have government put up barriers, regulations, requirements, restrictions or obstacles of any kind on it.

8. The freedom to associate with whomever one pleases and not be forced by government — or anyone else — to join a particular organization or entity. It is also not having government punish one for his or her use of this freedom of association.

9. The freedom to vote one's conscience in elections, to have that vote counted, and not to have government — or anyone else — penalize or punish one for that.

10. The freedom to eat, drink, digest, smoke or inhale whatever one desires and not have government infringe on that liberty.

11. The freedom to enter into contracts and agreements with

whomever or whatever and not have government infringe or meddle in any way.

12. The freedom to own and have a free press and not have politicians, bureaucrats or interest groups interfere with that right.

13. The freedom to send one's child or children to the educational facility of one's choice, recognizing that it is the right of the parents, and not the government, to instill values.

14. The freedom to purchase, own and use firearms, and not have government pass restrictions or ban that right whatsoever.

15. The freedom to live. To live one's life to the fullest and not have it taken away by the state or another individual. To be free from aggression, harassment or intimidation by government, any group, any entity or any human being.

So what's my definition of freedom and liberty? That one can do whatever one wishes and desires, provided that he or she does not hurt, trespass, or trample upon the

rights of another.

It is also reminding the state that we are responsible for our own lives and welfare. It is telling the government that it has no right to be on the backs of the people. That it has no right to interfere in the lives of its citizens. That government has no right or duty to restrict or take away anyone's freedoms and liberties.

It saddens me that not many know what freedom is, especially in an age of political correctness, a war on terror, a massive welfare state, and an overzealous government.

It is time to for Americans to reacquaint themselves with this nation's roots and with freedom and liberty, not only for their sakes but also for the sake of their children, their children's children — and for the sake of the future.

■ **About the author:** Alex Pugliese is a member of the Libertarian Party from Kenilworth, New Jersey. This essay originally appeared in a northern New Jersey newspaper, the Herald News, as a letter to the editor.

THE CHAIR

Change is hard — but it's also necessary

Three months ago I wrote to you about the excitement I felt over the change in direction undertaken by the national LP's leadership.

Since I expect you don't spend quite as much time looking in on the national organization as I do, I thought I would give you a progress report.

As I remind my clients and friends on a nearly daily basis, "change is hard." And if, in the process of change, we don't feel just a little bit (or even a lot) uncomfortable, we are probably not really changing. For this reason, I have welcomed with enthusiasm the feelings that have accompanied the ongoing changes at the national office.



By Michael Dixon

NATIONAL CHAIRMAN

Since the momentous changes of the August meeting our national staff has been hard at work. Some of this has been the drudgery of back-office process changes. Work rules have been rewritten. The mailing schedules and member-oriented literature are being changed.

Of course these tasks have been pursued countless times in the nearly 35 years of the party's history. What hasn't happened in the recent past are some of the other things that have been going on.

The national staff, lead by our Chief of Staff Shane Cory, has been hard at work developing candidate and activist training

opportunities. Faculty members are being recruited to teach seminars on a wide range of topics. These programs are not issue seminars designed to improve our understanding of the great issues of freedom, but instead are skill- and process-oriented courses designed to improve our grassroots abilities to compete in the real world of politics.

In early 2006 we will all be able to participate in the programs that are being developed now. Individuals and groups will be able to access information and training which will equip our candidates, campaign managers and activists with tools that they need to affect the world of politics.

At the same time that our staff has been hard at work developing new systems, the members of the Libertarian National Committee has created a finance committee to address our largest donors in a new and different way. At-large LNC representative Mark Rutherford has coordinated the work of many of our committee members. They have been reaching out to our largest supporters and discussing ways that they could help move our party forward into the political fight that we are engaging.

These contacts have been particularly successful. We have reconnected with some old friends who had been overlooked for a while. In the process we have learned about their interests and hopes for the future. The short-term results have been reinvigorated friendships and ideas for new programs and priorities.

While the national organization has been at work envisioning new activist training opportunities and processes along with the means to finance them, our state organizations have been reengineering their own processes.

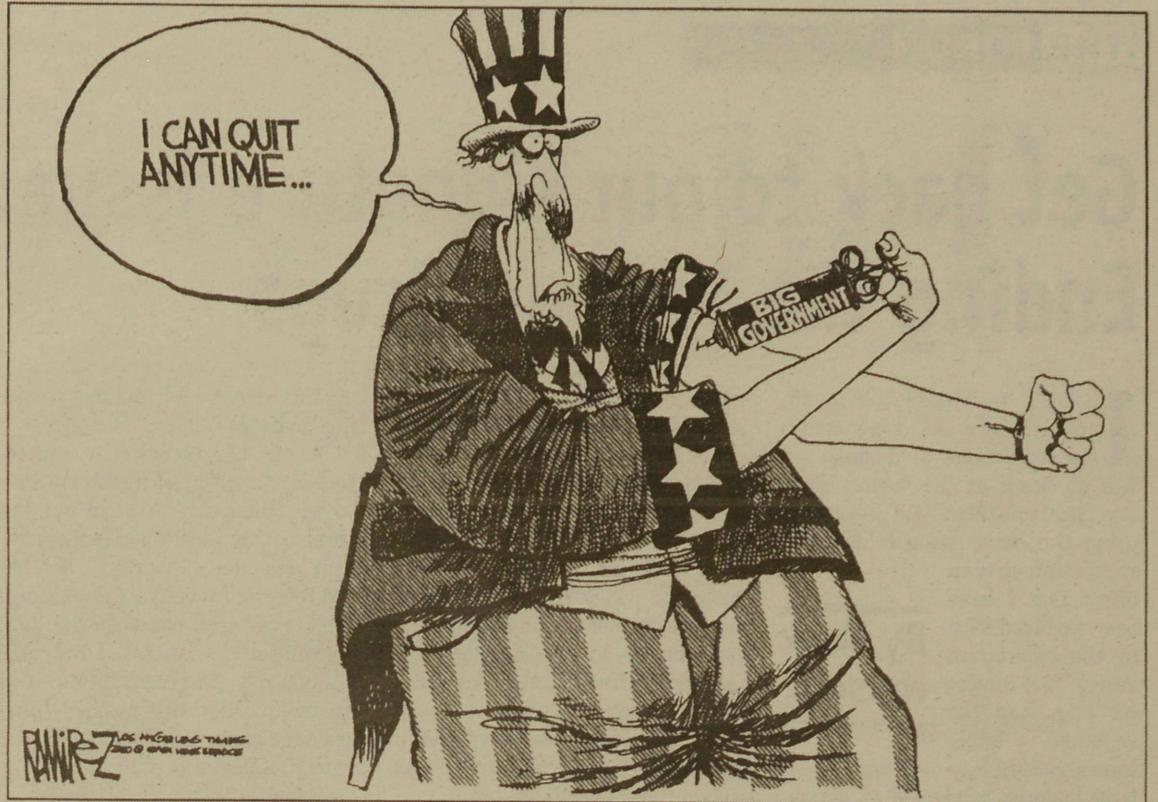
With the end of the Unified Membership Program most of our state affiliates are finding that they must develop new and innovative mechanisms for funding their regular programming. Some of our affiliates are approaching the situation with efforts to develop their own membership plans. Others are generating innovative solutions to their funding needs through events, or direct mail campaigns.

I hope that each of you reading this will take the initiative to get in touch with your local organization and see if they could use your help in building some momentum in their new effort.

While all of this change is exciting, it does not quite match my own enthusiasm for one more specific event on the calendar — the 2006 national convention in Portland, Ore.

On July 1 we will convene as a party and celebrate our success and prepare for the challenges of the future. We will address party business by renewing our efforts to reform our platform, as well as addressing needed changes to our bylaws.

And we will all have a chance to visit one of the finest cities in the country and enjoy a long weekend of fun and fellowship. I hope you are planning to join us.



[This cartoon appeared in the October 2000 edition of LP News. It is, unfortunately, as applicable now as it was then. — LP News Editor J. Daniel Cloud]

THE MAILBOX



■ Congratulations

It's good to hear Dade County, Ga.'s county manager, Libertarian Ben Brandon, has brought about voluntary school taxes for residents 65 and older. Libertarian critics whining about him playing politics by giving a tax break to only one group need to re-think.

As long as a body of government has elected Republicrats next to elected Libertarians, no Libertarian principle will be without their influence or interference. Therefore, as long as an elected Libertarian can bring about solutions toward the "northern" direction of the political compass, let's call it a win, shall we?

Hats off, Ben!
—GREG CALLAWAY
Middletown, Delaware

■ Political quiz

It's well-known that Internet users are disproportionately libertarian — as may well be eBay sellers! During the process of moving and cleaning out closets, and selling the items on eBay, I include a "World's Smallest Political Quiz" with every eBay item I sell.

As a matter of fact, I slip one in almost every envelope that I mail, including bills and surveys. It adds negligible weight to the package or envelope, and what a great way to get people (with whom you've established even a minor relationship) thinking about their politics in earnest.

I encourage everyone to keep a stack next to their envelopes and stamps.

—PAOLO SICA
Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania

■ Fair Tax

I would like to add to the letter from Walt Thiessen concerning the Unfair Fair Tax (MailBox, Nov. 2005 LP News). I agree with Walt that this is indeed an unfair proposal.

If they were serious about simplifying the tax code, they would adopt [a flat tax] system.

No matter how you make your money or how much money you make, you pay a specific percentage. No deductions for anything. This way there would be no tax favoritism.

**AS LONG AS
an elected Libertarian
can bring about
solutions ... let's
call it a win.**

—GREG CALLAWAY

But remember, our tax code was designed to buy votes, to keep the super rich from paying income tax and to keep the little guy from formulating capital to compete with the big boys.

Do you think our established, entrenched power structure is actually going to free us from this? No way. I'm real leery of anything short of real tax reform that is not really as simple as the aforementioned flat tax (with a low rate) or a complete repeal of the income tax all together, including the repeal of the 16th amendment.

—DAVID IRDE
Steamboat Springs, Colorado

■ Fair Tax II

[RE: MailBox, Nov. 2005 LP News]

Mr. Replogle is ill-informed on several aspects. First, he presumes to state that many retirees "don't realize how much tax they are still paying, on investments and social security..." I can't speak for all, but I assure all readers that I have a fair understanding thereof. I hold an MBA from a top business school.

Next, he reveals his ignorance by writing that, "Social Security checks are currently taxed." False.

Then, he rambles about taxable capital investments whereas I referred to tax-paid savings, upon which no further tax is currently levied. As I stated in my original letter, [MailBox, Oct. 2005 LP News] I am referring to "return of capital," which the IRS recognizes as being tax-exempt.

Finally, he drifts into talking the praises of his views, with the same tale that the two major parties use: "something for everybody, and it won't cost you any more." This sort of drivel is why most people do not take us Libertarians seriously.

—WILLIAM A. SAMUEL
Oceanside, California

■ A step further

[RE: "There shouldn't be a law," The Editor, Nov. 2005 LP News]

I agree with your sentiment wholeheartedly, but I'd like to carry the thought a step further. One of the reasons we have so many laws is that we actually hire people to get together and dream up more laws. It's their main job! We even honor these people and reinforce that perception by calling them "legislators"

THE MAILBOX

and "lawmakers."

Why don't we stop calling them either of those names and substitute something more accurate, such as "Unrepresentatives"?

The ones I've had any contact with are elitists, far removed from the ordinary taxpaying citizens they're supposed to represent. Some of them actually believe that taxes are a good thing, we should have more of them, and anyone who disagrees is un-American or worse.

—RICHARD B. CRAWFORD
Roy, Washington

Live sex shows

Conservatives have their panties in a bunch because Oregon's Supreme Court legalized live sex acts as free speech. Why shouldn't live sex be legal? Ribald theater is. Sodomy is. Prostitution is in Nevada.

A theater or bar where the sex show takes place is not really "public" like a billboard, town square or park. It's more like a bar.

Title to the property is held in private hands. Owners have the right to refuse service to anyone. Government can't seize the property without compensation and what goes on inside is not visible to the public and patrons enter knowing what they're going in to see.

Just like the social Neanderthals that opposed interracial marriage (1960's) or sodomy (1990's) — both of which are now legal — conservatives can't handle true freedom. Keep your hands off private business property and people's bodies and let consenting adults do what they want behind closed doors.

Three cheers for Oregon.
—JEFF E. JARED
Kirkland, Washington

Conservative?

I'm writing to express my concern about the article published on the LP Web site on Oct. 25 entitled, "Conservative Movement Crumbles Under Bush Administration."

In particular, I'm concerned about the subtitle, "True Conservatives Turn to Libertarian Party" since I have never seen a comparable article that says, "True Liberals Turn to Libertarian Party."

There is a disturbing trend in the LP to equate conservatism with libertarianism, and this trend is showing up in our leadership. This same trend obliterates the historical connection of liberalism (often called Classical Liberalism) to libertarianism.

Instead, it pretends that only conservatives would be interested in our movement, despite the fact that there is only one short period in history (during the Depression years in particular) when conservatism (known then as "isolationism") was consistently and truly equated with free market principles and individual rights. Even the Reagan era was, at best, only spottily supportive of libertarian values.

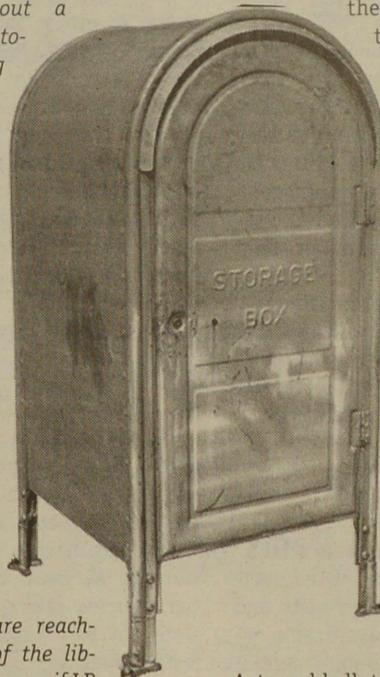
For those who have forgotten, the Nolan Chart shows quite clearly that libertarians are in a separate quadrant from both conservatives and liberals. We are philosophically no closer to one than we are to the other. Why, then, is the LP acting as if conservatives are potential good guys, potential recruits, while liberals are usually bad guys who should only be reviled?

This is a very disturbing bias, and if it continues unabated, we could very well see the Libertarian Party turn into the new Conserva-

tive Party and away from its more "liberal" social policies within our lifetimes.

—WALT THIESSEN
Warrenton, Virginia

[Editor's note: A few others have complained about a perceived slant toward reaching out to conservatives. But look again. Articles in LP News and on LP.org consistently deal with the War on Drugs, the PATRIOT Act and the war in Iraq — all issues on which "liberals" are more likely to be on the LP's side than are "conservatives." In these instances, we are reaching out those of the liberal persuasion, even if LP News and LP.org don't run stories about this as "outreach."]



with quality of merchandise, service, and general upkeep of the store.

I could see no reason for the original article's passionate defense of Wal-Mart.

One reader even labeled my words a "liberal rant". That's not the case at all; I don't think they should be "stopped" and I don't care how much they pay their employees (which would be liberal rants). Employment there, as anywhere, is voluntary.

I simply place a higher value on quality and on competence than on saving a dollar.

So you shop at Wal-Mart, I'll go elsewhere, and we can get on to more pressing topics like eminent domain, the PATRIOT

Act, and ballot access.

—STEVE BAIER
Norwalk, Iowa

Wal-Mart

To close the Wal-Mart topic, I think my observations were misunderstood [MailBox, Oct. 2005 LP News].

When I said "no one should shop there", I was not talking about being forced not to go.

I was talking about making the conscious decision to shop there, what with so many superior retailers available such as Target, Costco, or Home Depot.

I don't deny Wal-Mart's right to exist. I simply do not like the store; I've had many bad experiences there

Revenue neutral

In all these letters pro and con about the "Fair Tax" I have never noted any mention of the concept of revenue neutrality.

Revenue neutrality isn't stressed in public discussions, but it's a big selling point among legislators who wouldn't otherwise vote for change. Stripped of excess verbiage, this means we recognize that the government "needs" \$2.5 trillion of our money every year.

If they can't use the increasingly unpopular IRS to get it, then whatever scheme they install in its place will have to bring in just as much money.

Supporters of the "Fair Tax" are just hoping to shift some of that burden to someone else. That's neither a principled nor a Libertarian stance.

Getting rid of the IRS and its 60,000 pages of fine print is a noble

goal, but only if it means actually reducing the tax burden.

—RICHARD B. CRAWFORD
Roy, Washington

Iraq Exit Strategy

I agree wholeheartedly with those who reject the LP's Iraq Exit Strategy. It seems that the strategy's "compromise" is based on the desires of LP leadership and many members who have come to regard market share as more important than principle.

I get the feeling many Libertarians think that we'll get a bunch of Libertarians elected, and then at some point, when the opposition least expects it, our Libertarian officials will start instituting libertarian principles in government.

It can't work. By that time the "Libertarian" politicians will long have forgotten what the principles were, as the Republicans have.

I view it from the other side: What good is market share and getting elected if we compromise our principles and begin selling the same crap the Republicans are?

For years I bounced between political parties and persuasions, at one point even considering myself a communist.

After thinking and rethinking justification for government, I found the only just and fair reason for government is to be the ultimate arbiter of force. I was thrilled the find an organization — a political party — of like-minded people.

I joined the Libertarian Party, not based on its ability to win elections, but because it was the only political party that advocates a political world that is fair and just.

If the Libertarian party fails in supporting principles of fairness and justice, I won't care whether Libertarians get elected or not.

I will look for a political party with principles.

—PATRIC R. BROCK
Kihei, Hawaii

Immigration

As a small farm employer, I take issue and umbrage at the implication that immigration from Mexico is driven by our galloping welfare state.

When my neighbors have a day or two without work their Mexican employees are asking for a days work till their regular job is open again. My "white" neighbors are running for the unemployment line!

My Spanish-speaking neighbors and employees have not yet forgotten the value of honor, a strong work ethic and a desire to place their family and children ahead.

Rather than complaining about "freeloaders" from Mexico, Libertarians should be welcoming those who still remember the benefits of hard work.

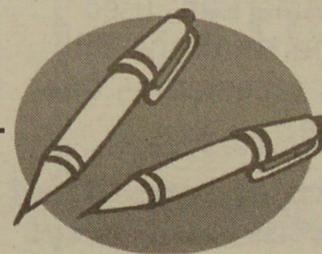
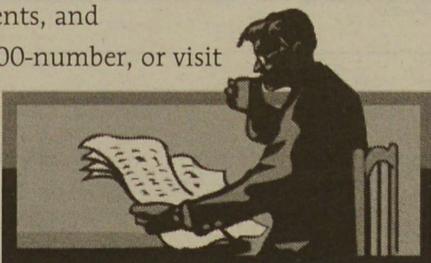
The LP attitude should be to tear down the fence and remember a couple generations back when our forebears got here and helped build our nation.

—BILL WOOD
Pateros, Washington

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■ Consumption tax

I read with interest the comments on the "Fair Tax", both pro and con. I happen to believe that a consumption tax is the best option for eliminating all other taxes and the IRS in a single step.

However, I fail to understand how the pre-payment of a rebate, or prebate as it is being called, is anything more than yet another "entitlement", that wonderful tool for creating and maintaining a greater dependency on government.

Isn't a tax rebate also a strong indicator that too much was collected in the first place, at least from some payers? What is wrong or unfair about exempting certain basic necessities of life from taxation?

Such necessities being basic housing, un-prepared foods, medicines and health care. Many states already exempt some of these essentials.

What is unfair with everyone getting the exemption on such necessities? Why tax these necessities and then return it in the form of a rebate? Unless of course, we really need yet another means of wealth redistribution.

Is anyone giving any serious thought to the abuse that the so-called "Fair Tax" will attract and

accommodate as a result of this prebate incentive? How about the costs of administration? Whose rebate check ends up paying these costs?

If "Fair Tax" becomes a reality, will we simply change the acronym IRS to FTARA (Fair Tax Administration and Rebate Authority) and lay claim to having eliminated a much disliked government bureaucracy?

And finally and maybe most importantly, what is Libertarian about this proposal?

Can't we have a consumption tax, exempt life's necessities from that tax, forego the undesirable complexities and burden of a pre-paid rebate and still have a fair tax?

—D. GLENN
Roswell, New Mexico

■ Pro-terrorist Dems

Recently the Senate voted overwhelmingly to deny terrorists and foreign combatants a citizen's access to our court system. A certain hard core of the farthest left in the Democrat Party voted pro terrorist and declared al Qaeda as a constituency. There is no other way to view their action.

Chuck Schumer, Teddy Kennedy and their ilk sided with terrorists. This is actually predictable and reasonable when you think back.

During the previous administration, Democrats were asked if there was any action that they could imagine that would rise to the level of an impeachable offense (in relation to Clinton) and we found that they were totally amoral.

Literally anything including terrorism is within their moral range because they have no moral scruples. The words are "totally unscrupulous".

What is it going to take to wake up the country as to how dangerous the leadership of the Democrat party really is to the country? They openly declare allegiance to terrorists and no one blinks!

—JAMES FOLEY
Belmont, Michigan

■ Eminent domain

As of Aug. 3, the first state of the United States had responded to the Kelo v. New London case decided by the Supreme Court in June 2005.

The law-making branches of the state of Alabama acted to reduce the coercive taking powers of the state. In the legislature 102 representatives and 35 senators made legislation that governmental bodies "may not condemn property for the purpose of retail, office, commercial, industrial, or residential development."

The governor signed this into law without hesitation. It is worth noting that Alabama has nearly a million more citizens than Connecticut

so that this law reduces coercion in many more lives.

When I registered as a Libertarian 30 years ago, reducing the coercive power of government in individuals' lives was, to me, the focus of the Libertarian Party, and it still is.

Though the people who acted in Alabama would probably say that they acted to be loyal to the original meaning of the Constitution of the United States of America, their work in this regard I believe is profoundly libertarian and worthy of recognition.

I petition the national Libertarian Party to recognize publicly as soon as possible this libertarian act of the 2005 Alabama lawmakers with a special award.

—R.G. WILLIAMS
Auburn, California

■ Conscience

[RE: A blog entry about a church's tax-exempt status being yanked because of a minister's anti-war statements.]

While I do not agree with those churches and religions that are taking an anti-war stand when it comes to Iraq and the overall War on Terror, I do agree with what Martin Luther King stated many years ago — that the church is "the conscience of the state."

What that means is when the state commits errors, when the state screws up, it is up to the churches and its members to raise their voices

and say so.

No church, whatever they may preach or speak out for or against, should have their voices stifled by government.

—ALEX PUGLIESE
Kenilworth, New Jersey

■ Gun control

Well, the people of San Francisco have proven, once again, they are the biggest morons on the face of the earth.

By a vote of 58 percent to 42 percent they enacted a total firearms prohibition and confiscation. All firearms and ammunition must be surrendered by April 1, 2006. Sadly, that is not an April Fool joke.

In my humble opinion, all these morons that voted for this should, for their open contempt of the Constitution, and general stupidity, should be permanently stripped of their citizenship and forever barred from jury duty, voting, holding office and all the rest.

On further consideration, I will amend my comment about "biggest morons on the face of the earth" to cover just that 58 percent who voted for that travesty. If I were part of the 42 percent, I would seriously consider moving out of the Bay area.

Just needed to get that rant out of me. Please don't mind all my wishful thinking. :)

—MARK B.
Via the blog at LP.org

The Power of Just One Signature

Do you think our government has gotten too big and too powerful? Do you think bureaucrats and politicians are slowly eliminating the freedoms Americans used to take for granted? Do you think the Bill of Rights is being silently repealed — one precious freedom at a time?

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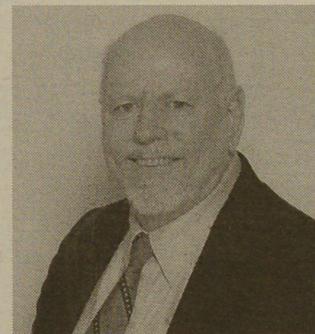
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UPCOMING

■ **January 21, 2006**
Manhattan LP Convention, at the Ukranian East Village Restaurant. Speakers to include author James Bovard, author Fred Cookinham, and NYC Councilmember Letitia James. For more information, call (212) 252-3449 or e-mail info@manhattanlp.org.

■ **January 28-29, 2006**
Libertarian State Leadership Conference, at the Phoenix Airport Hilton in Phoenix, Ariz. Conference to focus on governing as Libertarians. Featuring a panel discussion about eminent domain. Speakers to include Adrian Moore of the Reason Foundation, Arizona House Rep. Russell Pierce, and Libertarian judge John Buttrick. Other details to be announced.



■ Buttrick

■ **February 24-27, 2006**
Liberty at Sea '06, Three-day cruise hosted by the California LP, aboard Royal Caribbean's Monarch of the Seas. For details, call (727) 525-9696 or go to www.CA.LP.org/libertyatsea06.

■ **March 24-26, 2006**
Florida LP Convention, at the Boca Raton Embassy Suites Hotel. Speakers to include Jim Babka of DownsizeDC; Philip Blumel, elected Libertarian and Florida LP activist; author Bob Burg; and David Wood, president of the Second Amendment Coalition of Florida. For details, call (800) 478-0555, or go to <http://lpf2006.org>.



■ Babka

■ **April 6, 2006**
Alabama LP Convention, to be held in Montgomery. For details when available, go to www.LPAlabama.org.

■ **April 8-9, 2006**
Washington LP Convention, "Building Tomorrow Together," at the Kitsap Conference Center in Bremerton. Presentations focusing on five subjects: education, the environment, healthcare, property rights and transportation. Speakers to be announced. For details when available, call (425) 641-8247, e-mail officemanager@lpwa.org, or visit www.lpwa.org.

■ **April 28-30, 2006**
South Carolina LP Convention, to be held at the Avista Resort in North Myrtle Beach. Convention on Saturday, April 29, followed by South Carolina's State Leadership Conference on Sunday, April 30. For details, call (843) 267-0045, e-mail chairman@sclibertarians.org, or visit www.sclibertarians.org.

■ **June 30-July 3, 2006**
2006 National Libertarian Party Convention, to be held at the Portland Hilton and Executive Tower in Portland, Ore. Details to come. Visit www.LP.org often to keep up with plans for the 2006 convention.

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INSIDE

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FIRST WORD

"The Republicans are equally as greedy as the Democrats when it comes to manipulating the federal tax code. That's why I'm a Libertarian."
— DORI MONSON, 710 KIRO-AM in Seattle, November 3, 2005

"Libertarians favor rolling back the size and cost of government, and limiting laws that stifle the economy and control people's personal choices."
— LEAH SIMS, Saddleback College's *The Lariat*, October 25, 2005

"Many people who once aligned themselves with the Republican Party are now finding it more and more difficult to do so."
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"While still small, the Libertarian Party is slowly gaining speed [and] ... it's clear to see the tide is turning.

"There are plenty of reasons why the American government could use a viable third party, and there's plenty of Americans out there searching for a party that fits them better than the Republicans or Democrats.

"For many, that party is the Libertarians. That may not be the answer for you, but now is the time to learn about these third parties."
— BRET CLEVENGER, Northern Illinois University's *Northern Star*, November 14, 2005