

LIBERTY PLEDGE

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newsletter

CALIFORNIA RECALL RACE ...

Libertarian Ned Roscoe appears in debate

Ned Roscoe, the California LP's endorsed candidate for governor, appeared in a five-candidate debate on September 5 sponsored by an Oakland, California-based magazine.

The wealthy owner of the Cigarettes Cheaper chain of tobacco stores used the public forum as an opportunity to call for an end to "stupid laws" and to denounce "abusive taxation of cigarette smokers."

The debate was open to all candidates on the ballot in the October 7 recall election, though higher-profile candidates such as actor Arnold Schwarzenegger, Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante and former baseball commissioner Peter Ueberroth snubbed the invitation.

The 90-minute forum was held at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Oakland and sponsored by Family Digest, a magazine owned by Darryl Mobley, an independent candidate for governor. Other participants in addition to Roscoe and Mobley included Republican Jon Zellhoefer and Democrats Jonathon Miller and Cheryl Bly-Chester.

An *Oakland Tribune* report on the debate said the "underdog candidates" presented "diverse strategies on how to fix economic, energy, and government-related problems in California."

"Californians all pay too much in taxes," Roscoe told the crowd. "They want no new, stupid laws. They want somebody to get the work done."

The Libertarian entrepreneur, who spearheaded the effort to repeal the state's 50-cent-per-pack tax on cigarettes in 2000, called for ending "abusive taxes" on smokers and said his attributes of optimism, trustworthiness, and practicality set him apart from most of the leaders in Sacramento.

Most of the other candidates focused on government waste and energy or educational issues.

Roscoe was endorsed via e-mail ballot of the California LP's executive committee on August 16.

"It was the sense of the committee that Roscoe will run a more active campaign" than the other two candidates on the ballot under the Libertarian label, said State Chair Aaron Starr. "Accordingly, Ned Roscoe is the Libertarian Party of California endorsed candidate for governor."

Also on the ballot will be Libertarians Jack Hickey, Ken Hamidi and 132 other candidates.

CITY COUNCIL VICTORY ...

Michigan residents win right to sell their own cars

A Libertarian on the Hazel Park City Council has restored residents' right to sell their own cars.

On July 21, the council unanimously approved Andy LeCureaux's amendment to a city ordinance that prohibited anyone from placing a "For Sale" sign on a car, even if it was parked in the owner's driveway.

"Like other Libertarians before him, LeCureaux has shown that even one Libertarian on a city council can have a significant effect," said Leonard Schwartz, Secretary of the Libertarian Party of Oakland County, Michigan. "A sole Libertarian can not only stop government from growing, but can eliminate foolish and unfair laws."

LeCureaux, who was elected to the five-member council in 2001, maintained that the restriction served no proper government interest and was an abuse of personal liberty and property rights.

Several council members agreed to back his amendment only if it also required the owner to get a permit and pay a fee. But LeCureaux refused to budge, and ultimately persuaded every member to approve the measure. The new ordinance takes effect on August 1.

LeCureaux, a self-employed appliance installer and technician, is running for re-election in November.

AL LP halts \$1.3 billion tax

Alabama Libertarians have played a key role in defeating a \$1.3 billion-a-year tax hike proposed by Republican Governor Bob Riley.

In a statewide referendum on September 9, voters rejected the 23-part "tax reform" measure on a 68 percent to 32 percent vote. The LP issued press releases, handed out literature and formed alliances with a dozen anti-tax groups to defeat the measure.

"We received about 50 percent of our money from traditional GOP sources," said Alabama LP administrator Mike Rster. "Folks in Alabama realized that real fiscal conservatives cannot trust the Republicans; one must look to the Libertarians," he said.

Recall candidate's campaign smokin'

By Paul Burgarino

LIVERMORE -- "Hi ... I'm running for governor."

Although the recall election already has changed the scope of state politics, some local residents were surprised to hear this phrase while picking up Marlboro Lights at a local cigarette store.

Ned Roscoe, a **Libertarian** candidate for governor and president of the Benicia-based Cigarettes Cheaper retail tobacco chain, stopped at the store on 863 E. Stanley Blvd. Wednesday as part of a campaign tour throughout the state. Earlier in the day, Roscoe visited a Cigarettes Cheaper in Tracy to share his campaign message with his smoking constituency. Roscoe has visited 41 stores statewide in the past five days.

"My campaign platform is pretty simple: no new taxes, no stupid new laws, and step up to get the work of the government done," Roscoe said.

Roscoe has deemed himself the "Smoker's Candidate for Governor."

"About 4 million potential California voters smoke. Even half those votes are enough to win the race for governor," Roscoe said.

Roscoe said he believes that to win, he either has to receive the most votes, push his platform through the state Legislature or increase word-of-mouth from his stores. That is what he was doing in Livermore, sharing his message with store owners, so they can inform customers and use the store as a campaign headquarters.

"We don't have to win the race for the message to get across," Roscoe said. "We are trying to bring awareness to Sacramento that the government cannot just frontload so many regulations on one group, regardless of the group."

State taxes account for 66 percent of the cost of a pack of cigarettes, according to the company flier.

"Our main constituency are smokers, those who follow politics strongly and agree in our principles and Libertarians," Roscoe said. "The recall election gives us an unprecedented chance to advocate smokers' rights and less regulations."

California needs to become competitive with other states once again and look into making cuts to fix the state budget, Roscoe said.

"If businesses in the state are thinking they should move to Vegas or Eugene for better costs and opportunities, that is a problem we need to address," he said.

Roscoe also said he would repeal the vehicle registration tax, and negotiate with Republicans and Democrats to pass a reasonable budget.

"Hopefully being a third-party candidate would give me a negotiating advantage," Roscoe said. "My top priority is to improve the prosperity of Californians without expanding the burdens of government."

(Left) *Oakland Tribune*,
Oakland, California -- August 28, 2003

(Below) *Providence Journal*,
Providence, Rhode Island -- August 15,
2003

Ballot question could boost clout of third parties

Associated Press

BOSTON -- A proposed ballot question that backers say could boost the influence of smaller political parties is meeting opposition from third-party activists who say the question would actually undermine efforts to field alternatives to Democratic and Republican candidates.

The proposed initiative would allow what's known as "cross endorsement" -- allowing one political party to endorse the candidate from another party. The candidate's name would appear twice on the ballot as the nominee for both parties.

Supporters of the process -- also known as "fusion" voting -- say it could make third parties legitimate players on Beacon Hill by allowing them to flex their muscles and deliver votes without siphoning votes from major party candidates.

But leaders from two of the state's smaller political parties -- the Greens and the **Libertarians** -- say the plan would only boost the power of Democrats and Republicans and hurt efforts to give voters a true alternative.

"Fusion voting encourages back-room deals between parties," said former Green Party gubernatorial candidate Jill Stein, who won about 3.5 percent of the vote in last year's election. "It's not the parties that need more power, it's the people who need a bigger voice."

A better alternative, Stein said, is "instant run-off" elections, which allow voters to cast ballots for more than one candidate. If their first choice doesn't win, the vote transfers to their second choice.

Former Libertarian gubernatorial candidate Carla Howell, who won about 1 percent of the vote last year, said allowing cross nomination or fusion voting would destroy third parties.

"These laws starve and suffocate new and innovative political proposals," said Howell, who called the ballot question "an attempt by progressives and socialists to hijack the agenda and control of the Democratic Party."

Rand Wilson, a spokesman for the ballot campaign, said the new system could help smaller parties spread their message without inflicting harm on the major party candidate who best reflects their views.

To qualify for the ballot, supporters need to collect the signatures of at least 65,825 Massachusetts voters, a daunting challenge that typically requires activists to gather thousands of additional signatures to guarantee they can survive a challenge by opponents.

Political issues keep fair booths busy

By Amanda Bohman

At the Alaska Libertarian Party fair booth on Wednesday, Scott Jensen took a test to determine his political leanings. The 10-question exam asked whether drug laws should be repealed and whether foreign aid should be privately funded. Results tagged Jensen as a lefty liberal.

"That makes me cringe a little," said the University of Alaska-Fairbanks history major.

Jensen, who looked over booth literature and chatted with an attendant, said he planned to visit most of the Tanana Valley State Fair's political booths.

The booths are a staple at the fair and this year is no exception. Among the nine political organizations to pay the \$375 to \$450 fee for a fair booth are Republicans, Democrats, taxpayers, abortion opponents and candidates for Fairbanks North Star Borough mayor.

At the Interior Taxpayers Association booth, members are gathering signatures for two ballot question initiatives.

One asks voters to repeal the borough's vehicle inspection and maintenance program. The other asks voters whether they want to tax sulfur-containing fuel.

"We're getting an overwhelming response," said initiative sponsor Merrick Peirce.

Also gathering signatures are the AARP, Alaska Right To Life-Interior and Fairbanks Republican Women.

The AARP is shoring up to reinstate the Longevity Bonus Program. The Right-to-Lifers are gathering signatures to pressure the owner of the Northern Lights Medical Center to oust the Planned Parenthood of Alaska-Fairbanks Clinic.

The Republican Women's petition will be mailed to the White House.

"It's time to show the president our support," said Joyce Brownlow, spokeswoman for the group. Brownlow said the thrust of the booth this year is to tout the large number of elected officials who are Republican. Photographs of local, state and national officials hang on the booth's back wall.

The No. 1 issue brought to the booth is U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski's appointment to the seat by her father, Frank Murkowski, who left the Senate after being elected governor, Brownlow said. "They want to talk about her. They want to know how we feel about her," Brownlow said.

Across the midway at the Interior Democrats booth, the big issue is next year's presidential race.

"We're trying to gear up for it," said Marcella Hill, vice chairwoman of the local arm of the party.

The booth boasts information about Democratic presidential hopefuls Howard Dean, Dennis Kucinich, John Kerry and Dick Gephardt. Hill said the booth is attracting people who don't like President Bush.

Fairgoer Sam Woodke, a retired chief financial officer, said he enjoys stopping at the political booths because he knows most of the operators.

"I like to see what they're pushing," he said.

(Left) *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, Fairbanks, Alaska -- August 8, 2003

(Below) *New Britain Herald*, New Britain, Connecticut -- August 10, 2003

Libertarian files for council

By Marah Block

NEWINGTON -- A self-described "reluctant politician," Dawn Lincoln plans to take her first stab at politics this fall as a petitioning Libertarian candidate for Town Council.

"Politicians tend to have a bad rap," she said. "The common stereotype is that they're going to lie and be in it for personal gain. I'm not looking for anything personal, just empowerment for everyone, not just those politically connected."

Lincoln joined the Libertarian Party a few years ago and currently serves as vice chairman of the State Central Committee for the Libertarian Party of Connecticut. Politics, however, were not always a source of interest to the homemaker and mother of two, she said.

"Prior to (my involvement), I was totally apolitical," she said. "I didn't care about the process at all. I thought it was a fruitless endeavor. Now I see the only way to make changes in the community is to get involved."

Lincoln said she is most interested in alleviating what she called the "tax burden on Newington citizens."

"In government at all levels, spending is outpacing the rate of inflation," she said. "Government at all levels needs to put the brakes on."

Lincoln described her campaign as "grassroots and low key" and said she won't accept any political contributions. "I don't think money should be a factor in elections," she said.

Lincoln has already begun preparing for the election by attending Town Council meetings and familiarizing herself with the responsibilities of the governing body.

"I plan to regularly attend the meetings so I can have a good grasp of what the Town Council faces so I'll be ready for action," she said.

Lincoln said she won't let her status as a rookie politician get in the way of accomplishing her goals.

"You have to start somewhere," she said. "You can't let lack of experience stop you from doing what you want to do."

According to Town Clerk Tanya Lane, while Newington's major political parties endorsed their candidates last month, state guidelines required candidates without the backing of a major party to submit a petition to her office by Wednesday.

Lane said she then forwards the petitions to the secretary of the state's office for approval before placing such candidates on the November ballot. Lincoln submitted her petition Monday.

(Right) *Wallowa County Chieftain*,
Enterprise, Oregon -- August 18, 2003

(Below) *Naples Daily News*,
Naples, Florida -- August 11, 2003

Libertarian executive director opposes Sept. 16 ballot measure

By Rocky Wilson

The executive director of the **Libertarian Party** of Oregon is stumping around the state again, this time in opposition to Ballot Measure 29, which is the sole subject of a Sept. 16 statewide special election. Measure 29 would change Oregon's Constitution to allow general obligation bonding to finance public pension debt.

Executive Director Richard Burke, who was in town earlier while running for governor and promoting another Libertarian candidate running for a statewide office, was in Enterprise last Thursday morning, sharing his thoughts in opposition to the upcoming ballot measure both to KWVR radio and the Chieftain.

He calls Measure 29 "a tax trap."

The Oregon Legislature has placed the measure before the voters in an attempt to correct the state's Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) debt that Burke says is now between \$16 and \$20 billion. "That is \$10,000 in debt for every man, woman and child in the state," says the Libertarian official.

General obligation bonds, which offer the lowest interest rates to the borrower, would require an amendment to the state Constitution before they could be implemented to pay PERS claims, said Burke. He went on to say that such a constitutional change could save the state \$45 million in the first year, but went on to raise a series of red flags.

"Refinancing debt is a good idea, but this measure is fraught with problems," Burke said.

One argument he makes is the Legislature did not limit the borrowing authority to curing the PERS debt. Calling it one of several "loopholes," Burke said that the wording in the bill could be translated to, in the future, include pension liabilities for veterans and other subgroups.

He specifically argued against wording in the measure that said, "The amount of indebtedness authorized by this section and outstanding at any time may not exceed one percent of the real market value of all property in the state." The Libertarian executive director countered that there is no cap on the indebtedness because of the steadily rising real market value of properties. He also questioned whether the value of property in the state would include federal and state holdings.

Unknowns could dramatically increase how much indebtedness could be realized and, says Burke, there is no sunset clause on the measure. He foresees a debt which will be handed on for generations.

[Burke] further contends that Ballot Measure 29 "is a subtle tax increase." He likens the Legislature's approach to the problem to giving the Legislature a credit card to parlay the PERS debt. "Debt service payments on bonds are like minimum payments on your credit cards -- a bad and expensive idea," said Burke.

Lee commission asked to oppose Patriot Act

By Charlie Whitehead

Virtually every American is anti-terrorism. Several groups, and some local governments, however, are convinced the federal government is going too far in the fight against terrorists.

Lee County commissioners are being asked to add their voice to the more than 100 communities the American Civil Liberties Union says now oppose the so-called Patriot Act, the sweeping Congressional reform that broadened federal investigative powers in the wake of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

"You can be arrested without being able to see an attorney," said Tom Clark, an officer with both the ACLU and the **Libertarian Party** in Lee County. "It circumvents the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. It circumvents the court system. With no warrant they can search your home or bug your home."

The Libertarians, the ACLU, People for the American Way, the American Library Association and the Unitarian Church have all taken positions against portions of the act. Many libraries have posted notices to patrons that what they look at and check out may be examined by federal investigators without their knowledge.

The American Library Association, in a resolution adopted in January, says the act threatens civil rights that the Constitution guarantees.

Clark said the local effort has gathered a number of signatures calling for the repeal of the act, but didn't see the need to pass them along to commissioners. "We're giving them the opportunity to do the right thing."

That's an opportunity commissioners aren't jumping to take advantage of. "The president, the vice president and Congressman (Porter) Goss all say we need it," Commissioner Andy Coy said. "I am not going to be bringing it up, and I am not going to be voting against the Patriot Act."

Clark said he thought Commissioner Bob Janes would bring the issue to commissioners, but Janes said no. "There's absolutely no support that I know of," he said. "It's useless to bring it up without a second."

Janes said he shares some of the ACLU's concerns.

"I don't normally agree with them a lot, but I think they may be right on this one," he said. "I do have some concerns about the implementation of that bill, and I do think they have some valid points, but I don't want to bring up something I know's not going to pass."