The Libertarian Party has launched a nationwide campaign to encourage Americans to "boycott nosy Census questions" — and the effort has generated unprecedented television coverage, public interest, and even a scolding from the Census Bureau.

In mid-March — as 120 million Census forms were landing in people's mailboxes — the party issued a press release encouraging Americans to answer the only Census question required by the Constitution: How many people live in your home?

Patriotic duty
"Census bureaucrats say it's your civic duty to answer all the questions," said Steve Dasbach, LP national director. "But it's actually your patriotic duty to refuse to answer nosy Census questions that the federal government has no business asking in the first place."

The press release generated a firestorm of media requests, including:
- An appearance by Dasbach on Fox News's O'Reilly Factor on March 24.
- An interview with LP Press Secretary George Getz on the Fox News Channel appeared on March 20.
- An appearance on Court TV's DC Insider show by Dasbach on March 17.
- A call by ABC News's John Stossel for a possible segment on his "Gimmie a Break" feature on 20/20.
- Twenty-two radio interviews in eight days.

"We haven't been this busy media-wise since the Know Your Customer campaign," said Getz.

The campaign also ruffled some feathers at the Census Bureau, he said.

On March 20, Getz got a call from the bureau's communications director, Steve Jost, who noted, "You Libertarians are really stirring up the pot!"

"I'll take that as a compliment," said Getz. "And we'll keep stirring the pot until the Census Bureau stops asking people nosy questions about their race, income, and disabilities — and returns to its Constitutional function of simply counting the population."

The Advocates for Self-Government has created a "one-stop shopping" option for libertarian publications, and is offering instant subscriptions at the "lowest prices" anywhere on the Internet.

The new feature — "The Libertarian Newsstand" — was launched in early March, and can be found at the Advocates' popular website, www.self-gov.org.

"We think this will be a big boost for the libertarian movement," said Sharon Harris, Advocates president. "It's a way to offer these publications to people who are just discovering libertarian ideas — and who want to learn more."

Libertarian Press offers the new feature — "One of our primary goals has been to make the libertarian movement larger. [The Libertarian Newsstand] will help do that," said Harris.

The Libertarian Party joins religious freedom coalition

The Libertarian Party has joined a national coalition that is working to pass religious freedom laws in every state and protect religious Americans from government harassment, National Director Steve Dasbach announced.

The Libertarian Party formally joined the Coalition for the Free Exercise of Religion (CFER) — which consists of 70 religious faith and civil rights groups — on January 20 at a strategy meeting in Washington, DC.

Proud to be part
"The Coalition is working to expand the boundaries of the First Amendment’s protection of religious freedom against government encroachment, and we're proud to be a part of it," said Dasbach.

Currently, CFER is spearheading the campaign for the adoption of Religious Freedom Restoration Acts (RFRAs) in each state. The bills would restore the "compelling interest" test — which the Supreme Court threw out in 1990 — whenever the government attempts to infringe on religious freedom.
Libertarian Party builds steam at local, state levels

BY JULIE HANSON

When Libertarian Patrick El-Azem of Chelmsford announced his candidacy for state representative last month, he already had plenty of company. Carla Howell, also a Libertarian, is making a run for Democrat Ted Kennedy’s United States Senate seat and Republican incumbent U.S. Senator Susan Fargo. Just last week James D. Millon of Billerica announced he would run against state Rep. Bill Greene, D-Billerica.

In all, the Libertarian party nationally has 25 candidates running for state representative seats and five for state senate in the 2000 elections.

“We’ve managed to double our size in each of the last two election cycles,” said Elias Israel, chair of the Libertarian Party of Massachusetts.

There are 11,358 registered Libertarians in Massachusetts. Israel receives 300 to 500 new registrations a month. He attributes the growth to the recent popular appeal of the Libertarian “hands-off” philosophy — 30 percent of Americans say they’d prefer less government involvement in their lives.

Such views are especially popular with younger voters, Israel said. The average age of a registered Libertarian is 35. Republicans report an average age of 51 and Democrats are 55.

“We expect to be a growing influence this year, and the year after that,” Israel said. Libertarian Marketing Director Elaine Berchin attributes the growth to several factors.

“A number of people are dis- gusted by the status quo,” Berchin said.

The number of unenrolled and independent voters in Massachusetts is larger than the number of Democrats and Republicans combined. Berchin says many voters are now turning to the Libertarian party as an alternative. She believes the success of third-party candidates such as Gov. Jesse Ventura of Minnesota have paved the way for others and people are ready to listen to the fresh ideas of small parties.

In brief, the Libertarian Party stands for individual liberty, personal responsibility and a small constitutionally-limited government,” said Laura El-Azem, press relations secretary for the Chelmsford Libertarian Committee.

The Libertarians held their first national convention in 1972, nominating philosophy professor John Hospers for president, back-to-basics platform revolved around a free-market economy, a dedication to civil liberties and personal freedom and a foreign policy of non-intervention, peace and free trade. Also that year, Libertarian vice-president candidate Terie Nathan became the first woman in U.S. history to receive an electoral vote. The Libertarians have fielded a presidential candidate in every election since that time.

The Libertarians have historically been strong in New Hampshire, according to George Getz of the National Libertarian Party. The party’s first national convention to date occurred in Davieville, N.H., the first town in the nation to vote during the 1992 presidential primary. Presidential incumbent George Bush was defeated. 13.5 percent to 9 percent by the Libertarian candidate Andre Marrou. That same year Libertarian legislators Cal Warburton and Findlay Rothaus were re-elected and newcomers Don Gorman and Andy Borsa were elected to the state legislature for the first time.

In 1996 more than 20,000 Massachusetts voters backed Libertarian presidential candidate Harry Browne. The Libertarian party retains ballot status in 34 states including Massachusetts.

Membership is growing in New England.

“The trend is up,” said David Roscoe, the local membership secretary.

Roscoe said rising taxes and an overall dissatisfaction with the government is bringing more people to the Libertarian Party. He has 854 people on his mailing list. Massachusetts has 750 party members who have signed the Libertarian Pledge of Non-Aggression. The pledge is a cornerstone of the party’s beliefs. It states that no person, group or form of government has the right to initiate force against any other person, group or form of government. Aggres- sion is simply defined as forcing anyone to take an action against his or her will. In this context taxes are an act of aggression.

The party’s focus on personal responsibility requires that criminals pay the price for violating others’ rights. The Libertarian crime policy seeks to protect victim’s rights by requir- ing that criminals fully compensate their victims for property and medical costs as well as pain and suffering. Convicted crimi- nals would serve all of their time without parole.

Libertarians tend to favor less government involvement in just about everything. In order to make American companies com- petitive, Libertarians believe the government must put an end to trade barriers and tariffs. The party has also spoken against minimum wage laws.

Libertarians have taken controversial stands in their fight for personal freedom, among them the weakening of gun control and the legalization of drugs.

The party supports the push to privatize many government departments, such as the Department of Education. If the DOE were eliminated, the Libertarians would push for such measures as tax credits to give parents the financial ability to choose among schools. Financial incentives would be considered for busi- nesses and individuals, to help fund the educational system.

Privatization also plays a part in the party’s health care plan.

Libertarian candidate says state government should back off

By the East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Mitch Shults says he wants to be state treasurer for a couple of reasons: it would be good for Oregon and good for the Libertarian Party.

“First a Democrat and then a disillusioned Republican, Shults became a Libertarian after he became convinced both major parties approached problem solving the assumption that government intervention was necessary,” he said during a recent campaign stop in Pendleton.

“I think government is the problem,” he said. “I think government intervention is an appropriate role for government to play, but in many ways today it’s inappropriate.”

If elected treasurer, Shults said he would try to bring free-market principles into each debate. For instance, he said, private industry, not state agencies, should manage state lands.

State parks are just one example of an area that could be managed more efficiently and productively through private enterprise, he said. Public agencies such as Georgia. Since the money raised from state-owned lands goes directly to the state’s general fund, improving the return on state lands would benefit public education, he noted.

Shults would also like to see private-practice principles be used to reform the Oregon Public Employees Retirement System and the Public Employees Retirement Fund that supports it.

He said he would like to make PERS “look like the defined-contribution 401K plans that most of the private employers in the state currently offer. Give the beneficiaries real choices for their investments. Make them responsible for those choices. And get the taxpayers out of the position of hold- ing the bag if the market takes a dive.”

Shults admitted such a proposal would make unions “squelch,” but he thinks “the majority of their members who are working for the Public Employees Retirement Fund who supports it.”

He contends his background is well-suited to such challenges. He’s worked at Intel since 1992, and before that worked several years for Arthur Andersen and Arthur Andersen Consulting and then started his own consulting firm; he has a degree in economics and political science from Rice University; and his Arthur Anderson training included programs in auditing, man- agement consulting, financial accounting and project management.

Those credentials, and a campaign budget that will allow him to compete head-on with the other candidates, makes this race a prime one for giving the Libertarian Party real credibility, Shults said.

“Conventional political wisdom says the electorate is perfectly happy with the status quo — I think that conventional wisdom is wrong,” he said.

For the Wes#inyt Eagle, The East Oregonian, The Oregonian

PENDLETON, Oregon, February 11, 2000

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Libertarian on the air

Max Robinson premiers as the host of a one-hour public access cable TV talk show.

BY JASON THOMAS
Times Staff Writer

HAMMOND — Watch out, Tom Brokaw. Heads up, Peter Jennings. Howard Stern who?

Clear the way for Max “Madd Maxx” Robinson, the newest face in television.

Robinson, known for his outspoken personality and Libertarian Party affiliation, is the host of his own public access cable talk show. The hour-long show, “They’re Stealing Your Country, Take It Back!” debuted Wednesday on AT&T Cable Channel 16.

Donning a gray suit, blue shirt and a patterned tie, Robinson tackled topics ranging from the drug war to the New World Order. The only problem Robinson had was knowing when his allotted hour was over.

“The next time, I’m bringing a clock,” he said with a laugh after the inaugural show. “I didn’t know when it was a half hour, an hour or more.”

The hour went by too quickly for Robinson, who promises to cover more topics and even do investigative pieces outside of the studio.

“I’m in attack mode,” he said. 

Local politics are a hot issue for the self-proclaimed activist. Robinson ran for Hammond mayor on the Libertarian ticket in last year’s election after running for Lake County sheriff in 1998. Robinson said he will not limit his show, which currently runs live at 5 p.m. on alternate Wednesdays, to Libertarian Party issues.

“It’s my show,” he said. “It’s my time. Of course, Libertarian views will be expressed. I don’t want to have to go by someone else’s guidelines. I want complete control over what I’m doing.”

Viewers are urged to call the studio to chat with Robinson.

“I’d like for them to join in,” he said. “It’s a lot of fun.”

Mark Brickman, a fellow Libertarian who helped Robinson with his show, said the time is ripe for Robinson to hit the airwaves.

“In my opinion, there is no other voice like Max’s out there right now,” he said. “He’s living what he’s saying. He knows firsthand what’s going on. He’s been doing it for 16 years.”

Robinson, who also runs a Web site (http://listen.to/maddmaxx), joked about dabbling in other media. “I’m looking into a small radio station,” he said.

For now, Robinson has a whole hour where he can speak his mind.

“I was worried about running out of stuff to say,” he said. “Now, I will run the hour with a mix of stuff. I ended up with not enough time.”

▪ Jason Thomas can be reached by e-mail at jthomas@howpubs.com or by phone at (219) 933-3267.

LOCAL Report

Former candidate becomes a Libertarian

VIRGINIA CITY — Former candidate Jessi Winchester has switched to the Libertarian Party, she announced Monday.

Winchester was a Democrat in 1996 when she ran for U.S. Congress. Then she was a Republican in 1998 while running for lieutenant governor.

She said she does not have any plans to run for office in 2000, but she has not ruled out future possibilities.

Former gubernatorial candidate Aaron Russo joined the Libertarian Party in August.

Local Libertarians gearing up for precinct convention

By EMILY MORRIS
Sentinel Staff

While Republicans and Democrats are gearing up for party primaries March 14, members of the local Libertarian Party are also preparing for their precinct convention, which will be held the same day.

The Libertarian convention is scheduled for 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 14, at Dr. Brad Wilson’s office located at 1326 North University Drive.

There are currently two Libertarians seeking office in Nacogdoches County.

Jocelyn Winter is running for the position of commissioner, Precinct 1, and R. Paty is running for the position of county weigher.

Nacogdoches County has not had a public weigher since 1934, according to the elections office.

The purpose of the office at that time was to weigh produce at the farmers market.

Paty has said he will try to have the position abolished if he is elected.

The chairman of the local Libertarian Party, Joe Allport, said Libertarian conventions are not tax funded.

“We have conventions rather than primaries,” he said. “And Libertarian candidates must meet the same criteria for filing to run for office as candidates in the Republican and Democratic primaries. The difference is that we don’t have a filing fee.”

Allport said people who vote in either the Republican or Democratic primary may not vote at the Libertarian convention.

“If they intend to vote Libertarian, they must sign an oath of affiliation to show they are not voting anywhere else,” he said. “Our district convention will be held a week after the county convention.”

Allport said the Libertarian Party’s districts are the same as senatorial districts.

“We will make our nominations for state offices at the district convention,” he said. “The state convention will be held in June.”
Libertarians more about ideas than successful candidates

The best example over the long years of my life is the Socialist Party under the state leadership of Norman Thomas, a nameunknown to most of you. He and his party knew they would never win, or did they? In the arena of ideas, the Socialist Party won big by the time Thomas died in 1948. Eight of their 10 basic premises were incorporated to some degree in this country by forces set in motion under the New Deal in 1933. The elements of a welfare state such as redistribution of wealth through taxation, entitlement programs for the poor, the sick and the elderly, plus the price regulation of individuals rather than political movements. Their guiding logic is that ideas, not people, guide the course of history. Any historian knows the truth of that. Ideas have consequences.

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