Third party tries a 5th campaign

By S.A. Paolantonio

Ron Paul, born in Pittsburgh in 1935, once a flight surgeon in the Air Force and a former member of Congress from Texas, has given up on the Republican Party and its most recent contribution to the presidency — Ronald Reagan — and decided to run for the White House himself.

But voters looking for Paul will not find him elbow-to-elbow with the presidential aspirants of the two major political parties. He does need money, and sure, he would take a few photo opportunities. But Paul does not want delegates. For him, there are no primaries. He has already been nominated.

At a convention last weekend in Seattle, the Libertarian Party, a relatively new third party, handed Paul its fifth presidential nomination. It began putting candidates on the national ballet in 1972.

In 1980, Clark collected 920,859 votes — three times the votes collected by presidential candidate Barry Commoner of the Citizens Party and more than 20 times the total of Communist Gus Hall. After the election, the Libertarians proclaimed themselves the third-party alternative.

A costly split

In 1984, the party split over the nomination of a presidential candidate. David Bergland of California finally won the nomination. But it was expensive. Koch and his money pulled out of the campaign. They spent $3 million, most of it Koch's money, and won 228,000 votes, about a fourth of Clark's total.

A year later, fewer than 300 people attended the Libertarian Party national convention in Phoenix. Nationwide, just 55 Libertarians currently hold elective office, none higher than the county level, Turney said.

But Poole and others say that Clark's campaign in 1980, by depending on Koch's wealth, may have "artificially inflated" the appeal of the Libertarian Party. Now, they say, the party is back on a growth path set during the late 1970s.

Henry Haller, a financial consultant from Pittsburgh who chairs the Pennsylvania Libertarian Party, said there were plenty of local issues to pursue. Libertarians advocate abolishing the state liquor control board and oppose tax-subsidized construction of the Philadelphia convention center.

And with Paul as its presidential candidate, the Libertarians say they can depend on a new infusion of supporters and money. As founder of the Council for Monetary Reform, chairman of the Committee to Abolish the Fed, Paul publishes the Ron Paul Investment Letter and is counting on a network of his associates in investment circles to donate money to the Libertarian effort for 1988.

Paul's goal: Raise at least $55 million and eclipse Clark's totals in the 1980 election. But he also is working to build an organization that can win on the local level and is always preaching the Libertarian message with a current twist: Get Navy ships out of the Persian Gulf. "I am sick of U.S. lives and taxes being expended unconstitutionally on a foreign war," Paul says.

Get back the gold standard for the dollar. "Create a sound money system, define the dollar," he says.

And get rid of big government. "Some people say I want to take a chainsaw to the federal budget," Paul says. "How right they are. Big government is running away with our freedom and our money."
Party, will seek its U.S. Senate nomination, announced candidate for the party's nomination for the seat now held by Republican George Voinovich. Although others may enter the Libertarian Party's June 1988 Senate primary, Dean begins as the favorite because of the recognition and friendships he has developed during more than a decade as a party activist.

Dean, 39, spearheaded the 1979 Orange County campaign for candidate of the party in Orange County and later as state chair. He rejected a plea agreement, Frank Mahady's open devotion to the for Ruby's Chili Parlor in the Winooski office of Sen. Robert Byrd's open devotion to the for Ruby's Chili Parlor in the Winooski office of Sen. Robert 2.3 to 2.4 in 1984 presidential, and served two year stints as chairman of the party in Orange County and later as state chairman. He also was a leader in the campaign of Costa Mesa attorney Mike Nissen, who couldn't tell the truth, and Reagan, who can't tell the truth from peanut butter.

The Libertarian could not do much worse.

Ralph Seeley's column appears Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays.

Appointee proud of libertarian tag

By DANICA KIRKA

During a recent hearing in which the House Committee on Government Operations debated a seating plan for Representatives, Mahady summed up a philosophy that has characterized much of his career as a Vermont District judge. "I'm a civil libertarian," he said, "and proud of it." Following his appointment to the Vermont Supreme Court Thursday, Mahady said he would retain his curbside seat on the state and view their campaigns primarily as vehicles to spread their message of minimizing government by limiting individual freedom through minimizing government and taxes.

Dean said his campaign will oppose U.S. intervention in the affairs of other nations, oppose migration restrictions, tariffs and other trade barriers, mandatory vaccination, TWA norms for drugs or AIDS, and the minimum wage.

The Libertarian Party nominated its candidate for president Saturday at its national convention in Rhode Island. Ralph Nader, who was beaten in the 1992 election, appeared to be the front runner and said that "if not as the RNC will cease to offer vital services to our members..."
Russell Means are the prime contenders in the Libertarian Party's bid for the presidential nomination. Former Republican Rep. Ron Paul, who had spent about $230,000 campaigning for the nomination, got the nod Saturday as the party's presidential nominee in balloting at the national Libertarian convention, which concluded Sunday. Andre Marrou, a former Alaska legislator, will share the ticket as the vice presidential nominee.

Libertarians Look to Restart the Engine

By Tim W. Ferguson

Candidates are still getting in and out of the presidential races of the major parties—in Gary Hart’s case maybe getting out and in—but by the end of next week the Libertarian Party will already have its nominee chosen. First will come a rather colorful showdown within the biggest of the nation’s third parties.

Former Republican Rep. Ron Paul of Texas and American Indian nationalist Russell Means are the prime contenders for the party’s bid at its convention in Seattle beginning Wednesday.

Registration totals aren’t a very helpful indicator because of the vagaries of state election laws, but the Libertarians haven’t been growing of late. For a while, the party’s laissez-faire founders heard Liberty Bells ringing: Its nominees won a fluke Electoral College vote, in 1972, got nearly 6% in the California gubernatorial race in 1978 and had momentum going into the 1980 presidential campaign.

That year, a recent high-water mark for big-government-bashing, the national ticket eventually made the ballot in every state. The party spent $3.7 million, a lot of it for network television ads, to promote an Arco attorney, Ed Clark, for the White House. Mr. Clark got more than 920,000 votes, but not the three million to five million some enthusiasts were shooting for.

Libertarians blame the media fascination with John Anderson’s candidacy that year for siphoning off the discontented. Ronald Reagan helped do them in, too. The man who has played many roles for many audiences over his political career appeared enough of a small-L libertarian the once-called himself that in a Reason magazine interview) to draw waverers from Washington back to the GOP.

Its blood letted in adolescence, the Libertarian Party never fully matured. Disputes worsened among the faithful after the 1980 race. Money from the energy-wealthy Koch family of Wichita, Kan., which had sustained the big drive, was concentrated on other endeavors such as the Cato Institute. Several activities and publications associated with the broader political movement withered or died.

The party has been static since, a few members winning minor offices, but the diehards remain as fractious a lot as they see in any ideological grouping. Alleged deviationists are constantly getting read out of the circle by their opponents. Another split took place even during the sleepy 1984 campaign, when Georgetown Prof. Earl Ravenal, a respectable critic of interventionist U.S. foreign policy, lost the party’s nomination after he was criticized for maintaining ties to the Eastern Establishment, including an incriminating membership in the Council on Foreign Relations. An affable Orange County, Calif., lawyer, David Bergland, got the nod (and 228,000 votes on 39 states’ ballots).

This year poses an opportunity for a comeback of sorts. The Libertarians don’t have the money they had in 1980, but they do enjoy the prospect of a Washington insider atop the Republican ticket and a name of sorts heading their own.

Russell Means, once known more for his Indian militancy at Wounded Knee and elsewhere, is signaling a hybrid agrarian-ethnic populism that plays on fears of centralized, technocratic authority. His candidacy carries with it a hope of branching out from the white and generally comfortable Libertarian core, but some party blue bloods question the sincerity of his conversion to their cause.

Ron Paul, the former Houston-area congressman, sports some of the trappings (e.g., money) of major-party politics. In this race he is considered the right-winger, which he was not when Phil Gramm trounced him in the 1984 GOP Senate primary in Texas. The characterization stems more from the flavor of his rhetoric (pure hard money, anti-State Department) than from the substance—he opposes U.S. government involvement in Nicaragua (and elsewhere) and limits on social liberties, and he favors unsubsidized trade with communist countries. Dr. Paul believes abortion is killing, however, and once voted against “gay rights” for the District of Columbia, so this ob-gyn is not every Libertarian’s brand of medicine.

Some party activists, to whom suits and ties are not daily attire, are sympathetic to the natural rebelliousness that Mr. Means symbolizes, according to Mike Holmes, editor of the newsletter American Libertarian. But Libertarians “doesn’t want to go through another nonexistent campaign,” he says, and Dr. Paul’s more professional operation appeals. The view in the Paul camp, he adds, is that “Libertarians have enough trouble getting people to take us seriously without having a guy show up in turquoise and braids.”

Success magazine published some survey data this spring showing a remarkable number of young business people in the U.S. identifying themselves as libertarian. To date, such sentiment has not had a definable impact on American politics. After the squabbling in Seattle is over, the philosophy’s ostensibly political arm will be due for another market test.

Mr. Ferguson is features editor of the Journal’s editorial page.