A Texas Libertarian In Queen Oprah’s Court

A Libertarian who appeared on the Oprah Winfrey Show said the experience was frustrating — but worthwhile. “It was a fun adventure,” said Richard King, the Chairman of the Lubbock County (Texas) LP.

King was invited onto the #1 rated syndicated talk show on February 27th to debate the author of a proposed Texas law prohibiting children from riding in the back of pick-up trucks.

King’s appearance was scheduled by the National LP office, in response to a request from one of Oprah’s producers to furnish “a Libertarian in Texas who drives a pick-up truck.” But before the show, Oprah’s producer told King they had decided against the “Libertarian angle.” “In fact, she said don’t even mention [the word] Libertarian,” he said.

But that was just the first of many surprises. Although only one other guest had been mentioned, King found himself sharing the stage with more than a dozen people. And the topic of the show? “Victims of Accidents Who Want More Government Regulation.”

“There were at least eight people who had been involved in tragedies,” said King. “[For example], there was a woman who wanted to ban iguanas because her kid caught some rare disease from it. [The show] was making heroes out of people who [wanted] more regulation.”

Because of the glut of guests, King said, “I got to say three sentences.” When the topic turned to pick-up trucks, he was able to say, “Risk is part of life. All the laws in the world can’t keep these things from happening. Sooner or later, you have to take personal responsibility.”

But Oprah immediately shot back: “But how can you justify kids dying?”

King wanted to respond, but “they just wouldn’t let me get going!” he said. The show quickly moved on to the next victim, and King was left to ruminate over the principal lesson he learned: “You gotta say what you need to say in your first two sentences. You can’t dilly-dally!”

Was the show worth doing?

“Overall it was a good experience” said King. In fact, he said, Libertarians need to do more programs like Oprah.

“It’s a fertile field,” he said, “These talk shows are filled with so much junk. We can use them to hammer out the issue [less government]. More of us need to get out and do this kind of stuff.”

Harry Browne wins first six LP presidential primaries

Harry Browne has racked up a perfect record in Libertarian Party presidential primaries so far — winning all six of the non-binding contests by lop-sided margins.

Browne won the March 26 California primary with 50% of the vote, beating Rick Tompkins (21%), Irwin Schiff (15%), and Doug Ohmen (11%). Other results:

- Illinois (March 19): Browne, 75%. Schiff, 27%.
- Massachusetts (March 5): Browne, 41%. Other, 40% (Write-ins, no preference.) Tompkins, 12%. Schiff, 7%.
- South Dakota (Feb. 27): Browne, 65.4%. Schiff, 54.6%.
- North Dakota (Feb. 27): Browne, 100%.
- New Hampshire (Feb. 20): Browne, 40.3%. Other, 58.8% (Write-ins.) Schiff, 20.9%.

“Harry’s resounding victories in the presidential primaries confirm what his campaign staff has known since the beginning of the campaign: Harry Browne is the right candidate, with the right message, at the right time,” said Browne campaign manager Sharon Ayres.

Schiff campaign manager Jeff Kantor said, “The vote totals were good in some instances, disappointing in others.”

Tompkins said, “It’s obvious from the primaries that no candidate has a solid majority of support. Along with many other indications, the primary results show our steadily increasing support.”

Two more talk show hosts join LP

Two more high-profile radio talk show hosts became official “card-carrying” Libertarians last month.

Irv Homer in Philadelphia and Dr. Roger Libby in Atlanta have both signed up as contributing LP members.

Homer, a 19-year veteran of the radio business on WWDB, joined the party on March 2nd at the LP state convention in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania.

“[Homer] has for years promoted the Libertarian cause,” said Don Ernsberger, Libertarian National Committee member from Pennsylvania, citing Homer’s on-air endorsements and numerous appearances at Libertarian Party meetings, rallies, and candidate events.

Meanwhile, in Atlanta, Dr. Roger Libby of WNNX radio joined the party on March 26th, after speaking to an LP dinner group. “There certainly appears to be a Libertarian virus in the Atlanta airwaves,” quipped LNC member Ron Crickenberger, noting that Libby joined the LP just seven weeks after fellow Atlanta host Neal Boortz.
Libertarians challenge new law that limits election inspectors

By SUSAN L. OPPAT
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

The Libertarian Party of Michigan has filed a lawsuit in Washtenaw County Circuit Court challenging a new law that requires election inspectors to be Democrats or Republicans.

The suit requests the Michigan Secretary of State and Gov. John Engler to show cause why Public Act 261 of 1995, which takes effect March 28, does not violate the Michigan Constitution's purity of elections and civil rights clauses.

The suit asks for an emergency restraining order to keep the law from going into effect, but no hearing date has been set, said party spokeswoman Emily Salvette. Staff in the office of Judge Patrick Sanders said they have not yet reviewed the suit.

J. Conlin said they were unaware of the suit.

Local election commissions will be required to appoint election inspectors from only the two major parties. Applicants for inspectors will need to state that they are not members or advocates of political parties other than the GOP or Democratic parties, the Libertarians say in the suit.

David Raflaub, attorney for the Libertarian Party, said minor party members will have to find someone to ensure a fair election as any other type of voter.

"If only Democrats and Republicans can work at the polls, how will the election process be fair for independents, Libertarians and other minor parties as the Michigan Constitution's purity of elections clause requires," he said in a press release.

Salvette said the party filed suit in Washtenaw County simply because party activists are challenging the law, not because they failed the suit who live here in Ann Arbor.

"I'm just not one of these real confrontational people," she said. "Our job is to run candidates, not to kill the state."

"But, got I've got three people who are just begging me to do something about this, because they like to work on elections. They do it because it's their civic duty, it makes them feel good. And they're out, they cannot work, because they cannot sign the application forms because they are not Republicans or Democrats."

"It's just incredible to me that, in a time when a lot of people are more interested in independent candidates and other options besides the Democrats and Republicans, the party would clamp down on this, and starting taking more control."

Alan Robertson of Ann Arbor, who said he has been an election inspector since 1981, was affected by the new law.

"Now, just because I'm a Libertarian, the Lansing politicians say I can't be trusted," he said in a press release. "I suppose the city clerk will send someone else."

I wish she didn't have to wait."

Ann Arbor City Clerk Winfried Norcross said this morning Robert Jorgensen's run for governor is "just not good enough."

Norcross said the bill could affect as many as one-third to one-half of her election hires later this year.

"It's a major headache," Norcross said. "We don't like it at all. We're just at a loss to understand the thinking, the reasoning, we don't understand why this has happened. We have never had a problem with someone's political party preference, in terms of their ability to work as a poll worker. That's not a non-issue. For this to now be a qualification, is ridiculous. What's the point, what is the purpose of it?"

Just don't get it.

"A person's political party has never impacted on the quality of their work. This just seems very unfair. It's just supposed to be a democratic society, inclusive. It's about freedom of choice. People have the right to work for whoever party they want, or to adhere to whatever philosophy or whatever political party they wish. That's a very personal, individual thing. That's the individual's right."

Norcross also said she believes city clerk offices across the state have received the same notice from the Secretary of State office in Lansing with complaints about the new bill.

Local Libertarian looks forward to July

Ken Sturzenacker sees voter frustration turning to success for his party.

By PETE LEFFLER
The Post and Courier
March 7, 1996

WASHINGTON — Ken Sturzenacker watches Republican presidential candidates leapfrog across America, hears complaints about Democrat Bill Clinton, and looks forward to July.

That's when the Libertarian Party gathers in Washington, D.C., to choose its own presidential nominee.

And Sturzenacker, Libertarian Party chairman in Pennsylvania and a North Calcasieu councilman, envisions frustrated voters turning to a Libertarian as the best alternative to the major party picks.

"We are the only party that will be on the ballot in enough states to win the Electoral College, party leaders point out. But analysts counter that ballot access does not guarantee popular success.

Local Libertarian Andre Marrou got just 202,028 votes in both of the two major parties during the 1992 presidential race. That put him a distant fourth behind Clinton, Republican George Bush and independent Ross Perot, but ahead of a score of other long-shots.

But that's for another day. Today, Sturzenacker opens the annual convention of the state Libertarian party. Tomorrow the party selects the 50 delegates it will send to Washington this summer.

And that has attracted the party's presidential wannabes to the weekend event, held at the Valley Forge Hilton on Route 202 in King of Prussia.

The candidates will be feted at an 8 p.m. reception and are expected to stay into Saturday. The candidates are:

- Liberty Pledge News • April 1996

By ROBERT BEHR
Of The Post and Courier
March 7, 1996

Libertarian Party vice presidential hopeful Jo Jorgensen of Greenville, S.C., figures she has something to prove.

"We're just at a loss to understand why this has happened. We have never had a problem with someone's political party preference, in terms of their ability to work on elections. They do it because it's their civic duty, it makes them feel good. And they're out, they cannot work, because they cannot sign the application forms because they are not Republicans or Democrats," she said.

"That's not a revolution," she said.

Jorgensen said Libertarians would seek to cut federal spending — currently about $1.6 trillion a year — at least in half.

"We believe government's only legitimate function is to protect people from force and fraud. We need to protect people from foreign invasions and from people within," she said. Other than a national military, police and court system, Jorgensen said she would favor doing away with most other spending.

She is president and 38 percent owner of DigiTech Inc., a software duplication company. She has two daughters who live with her ex-husband. The bulk of her time is spent at work or on the campaign trail.

Jorgensen said she began her campaign Jorgensen in 1994 and already has visited 25 states.

Unlike the Republican and Democratic parties, where the presidential candidate chooses his own running mates, Libertarian conventioneers pick both slots themselves.

To reach these convention delegates, Jorgensen has spent about $18,000, including $3,000 of her own money, so far, and she expects her total bid will cost about $50,000.

A (Top)
Ann Arbor News
Ann Arbor, Michigan
March 7, 1996

A (Center)
The Post & Courier
Charleston, SC
March 19, 1996

The Morning Call
Allentown, Pennsylvania
March 1, 1996

Local Libertarian looks forward to July

Ken Sturzenacker sees voter frustration turning to success for his party.

By PETE LEFFLER
Carl Washington

WASHINGTON — Ken Sturzenacker watches Republican presidential candidates leapfrog across America, hears complaints about Democrat Bill Clinton, and looks forward to July.

That's when the Libertarian Party gathers in Washington, D.C., to choose its own presidential nominee.

And Sturzenacker, Libertarian Party chairman in Pennsylvania and a North Calcasieu councilman, envisions frustrated voters turning to a Libertarian as the best alternative to the major party picks.

"We are the only party that will be on the ballot in enough states to win the Electoral College, party leaders point out. But analysts counter that ballot access does not guarantee popular success.

Local Libertarian Andre Marrou got just 202,028 votes in both of the two major parties during the 1992 presidential race. That put him a distant fourth behind Clinton, Republican George Bush and independent Ross Perot, but ahead of a score of other long-shots.

But that's for another day. Today, Sturzenacker opens the annual convention of the state Libertarian party. Tomorrow the party selects the 50 delegates it will send to Washington this summer.

And that has attracted the party's presidential wannabes to the weekend event, held at the Valley Forge Hilton on Route 202 in King of Prussia.

The candidates will be feted at an 8 p.m. reception and are expected to stay into Saturday. The candidates are:

- Liberty Pledge News • April 1996

By ROBERT BEHR
Of The Post and Courier
March 7, 1996

Libertarian Party vice presidential hopeful Jo Jorgensen of Greenville, S.C., figures she has something to prove.

"We're just at a loss to understand why this has happened. We have never had a problem with someone's political party preference, in terms of their ability to work on elections. They do it because it's their civic duty, it makes them feel good. And they're out, they cannot work, because they cannot sign the application forms because they are not Republicans or Democrats," she said.

"That's not a revolution," she said.

Jorgensen said Libertarians would seek to cut federal spending — currently about $1.6 trillion a year — at least in half.

"We believe government's only legitimate function is to protect people from force and fraud. We need to protect people from foreign invasions and from people within," she said. Other than a national military, police and court system, Jorgensen said she would favor doing away with most other spending.

She is president and 38 percent owner of DigiTech Inc., a software duplication company. She has two daughters who live with her ex-husband. The bulk of her time is spent at work or on the campaign trail.

Jorgensen said she began her campaign Jorgensen in 1994 and already has visited 25 states.

Unlike the Republican and Democratic parties, where the presidential candidate chooses his own running mates, Libertarian conventioneers pick both slots themselves.

To reach these convention delegates, Jorgensen has spent about $18,000, including $3,000 of her own money, so far, and she expects her total bid will cost about $50,000.

A (Top)
Ann Arbor News
Ann Arbor, Michigan
March 7, 1996

A (Center)
The Post & Courier
Charleston, SC
March 19, 1996

The Morning Call
Allentown, Pennsylvania
March 1, 1996

Local Libertarian looks forward to July

Ken Sturzenacker sees voter frustration turning to success for his party.
In Other Voices

Libertarian membership up

By RICHARD GRIMES

System greatly overstepped its bounds, says author at Freedom Foundation

The Libertarian Party of West Virginia was the fastest growing state party percentage-wise in 1995, according to membership figures released by The Libertarian National Committee.

Paid membership in the West Virginia party increased by 167 percent, while the Libertarian itself grew by only 28 percent in 1995.

Roger Fritz, a party spokesman, said when the party formally started in West Virginia in November 1994 it had 24 dues-paying members. On March 15, 1996, it had 83 members who paid a fee to join the party formally.

State Party Chairman John Brown credits the growing disenchantment with government for the party's growth.

"We're getting disgruntled Democrats who are tired of their former party continuously raising taxes. And we're getting disgruntled Republicans who are scared of their former party's move towards becoming the morality police," Brown said. "We are the home for people who want economic and personal freedom."

Brown said the Libertarian Party of West Virginia's membership even outdistanced successful affiliate parties in such places as the District of Columbia, which grew by 124 percent; Rhode Island, 77 percent; and Nebraska, 74 percent.

He said early membership figures indicate the Libertarian Party of West Virginia will double its membership in 1996.

He said the party is gathering signatures to put its candidates for president, governor, and state Senate in the 9th District on the ballot.

The presidential candidate will be determined at the national party convention in July.

Dr. Wallace Johnson of Glenville is the gubernatorial candidate and will be on the November ballot. Dr. Joseph Whalen of Beckley will also be on the November ballot representing the 9th District.

Party officials also announced the Libertarian Party will have a presence on the Internet system. Its page is: http://home.aol.com/LPWV.

High court ruling violates Fifth

From The Libertarian Party News on the recent Supreme Court property forfeiture ruling:

"Private property? Thanks to the Supreme Court it's an 'endangered species' in America...."

"The Supreme Court's ruling (last) week on property forfeiture means the government can seize your property whenever it wants, even if you're innocent of any crime," said Steve Dasbach, Chairman of America's third largest political party.

"Cops have become the robbers with a license to steal, under this new ruling," he said.

"The Supreme Court ruled on Monday (March 4) that the government can seize property robbed to commit a crime, even if the owner was innocent of any wrongdoing.

"The case involved a Michigan woman whose family car was confiscated when her husband used it for sex with a prostitute. The Court rejected her argument that as an 'innocent owner' she was entitled to compensation, "and demolishes the 14th Amendment, which adds "neither shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law," he said.

Libertarians take aim at U.S. government

by T.J. MILLING

Houston Chronicle

James Bovard looks like an absent-minded professor and comes off like a stand-up comedian.

But his is a dark comedy, a comedy of errors by an American system of government that he says has vastly overstepped its bounds.

Bovard, the author of books such as How the Government Screws You From A to Z, begins with seizure laws, that little legal wink that allows police to seize property suspected of being used in illicit activities. There was the case in Georgia where the FBI grabbed three Mercedes because the owner's husband made a sports bet on one of the cars' phones.

"I think the FBI likes Mercedes," Bovard quips from the podium at The Forum of Freedom Foundation's Saturday program, Libertarianism: The Hope for America.

Then there are apartment buildings seized by cities because the owners allegedly did not do enough to stop drug trafficking on their properties, when it was the owners who complained to the cities that the trafficking was a problem and it was the cities who failed to stop the trafficking.

Under this rationale, every federal housing project, which he says are drug dens, could be confiscated, Bovard said, but who would confiscate them?

Then there is the federal Drug Enforcement Administration's policy of questioning of airline passengers who pay for their tickets in cash, or the policy of stopping one carrying large amounts of cash. A drug dog is trotted out to sniff the money. If the dog alerts, the money is confiscated, Bovard said. That may sound reasonable, except for the fact that the majority of paper money, at one time or another, has picked up the taint of illegal drugs, Bovard said.

Before even allowing a person to protest his innocence and retrieve his property, the government requires a bond of 10 percent of the property's value to cover the government's legal expenses.

"These are laws that turn law enforcement officers into public enemies," he said. "There is no proof, no evidence. It's time for us to rise up and put government back in its place.

Patterson government in its place was a recurring theme of the forum, and for Libertarians that place isn't the one we have.

Eliminate welfare, Social Security, the Food and Drug Administration, government health care, public housing, public schools, affirmative action, the Postal Service and gun control and slash taxes, and you are well on your way to the Libertarian ideal.

Many of these ideas are why Libertarians are characterized as arch-conservatives. But they also support an end to the draft, the repeal of all immigration and emigration laws, legalization of drugs and many other things that sound decidedly liberal in a contemporary context.

Their rousing cry is individual liberty and responsibility, and their buzz words are "market forces." End welfare, and people will be more likely to voluntarily help the poor. End affirmative action programs, and those who insist on racist policies will lose out in open competition with more open-minded employers. End public schooling.

See FORUM on Page 13A.
Bucks Libertarians see a surge in membership

By Ginger Livingston
Staff Writer

EDENTON — The Libertarian Party, champions of "individual responsibility and maximum individual liberty," is making a stand in Chowan County. John Sams, a retired Navy commander and former Chowan County Commission candidate, is organizing a branch of the party in Chowan County. Sams says he was encouraged to form a branch of the Libertarian Party in Chowan County by the building of a freeholder commission, which he is running against Commissioner A. Large A. "Jerry" Downum in 1992.

Running as a Libertarian candidate, Sams didn't win but received nearly 20 percent of the vote — a significant number of votes for someone who had lived in the county only six months. "I think it showed people wanted a choice," he said. "I was hoping the Libertarian Party would be organized enough to give the voters a choice." Sams said the Chowan County Libertarian Party will focus on local issues deemed most important by its members. The emphasis will be on minimal, efficient government and the lowest possible property taxes.

Sams says the party will be parading attention to the process of reevaluating property values in Chowan County, which is underway this year. Running as a Libertarian candidate in 1990, Sams said he was "an honest devoting attention," that he is the party's philosophy. The emphasis on the ballot as "individual responsibility and freedom," Sams said. "We also get a lot more information. Interested individuals should call Sams at 241-4555 for more information.

Bucks Libertarians see a surge in membership

By Rick Martinez

In this primary season of Bill, Bob, Pat, Steve and Lamar, few people are all about hard work.

Harry Brown, the front-runner in the race for the Libertarian Party's presidential nomination, is familiar to few voters. This anonymity exists despite the Libertarians' status as the third largest political party in the country. It is the smallest government party, boasting what most polls show is the spirit of the current political climate.

The reasons, locals Libertarians say, may be due to the rules and unfair election laws than with the candidates and candidates. In most cases, a Democrat or Republican running for Pennsylvania governor must get 1,000 signatures on his petition, and the number will total about 5,000 signatures. Therefore, a Libertarian, because the party does not have at least 5 percent of the state's registered voters, may need 30,000 signatures for election. "We have to spend all the money just to get access to the ballot," said Don Ernsberger, chairman of the Bucks County Libertarian Party. "The Democrats and Republicans don't have to spend money because they're automatically registered."

Ernsberger was not whining, however, for better part of Libertarian officials are upbeat about their party's recent fortune.

Some 25 years after its founding, the party is entering a surge in membership, loggin a 13 percent increase from fall 1994 to fall 1995, the number of Bucks Count Libertarians grew by 15 percent to 1,113 voters. By last month those numbers had increased to 2,900.

Not only was this the first Pennsylvania county to have more than 1,000 party members, Bucks has the state's highest percentage of registered Libertarians. Nationally, Pennsylvania has the second highest percentage of registered Libertarians, after California.

"I suspect in 12 years we'll be as big as the Democratic and Republican parties," said Matthew Steverson, the party's southern Bucks chair. "I believe the party's mounting popularity can be seen in Brown. He's running against the state's fourth Libertarian candidate running for president to qualify for federal matching funds. That Brown will not accept the funds — Libertarians don't support funding political parties with tax money — is beside the point.

In fact, if given a chance to hold the reins of office, a lot of people change their views. Foremost would be easier access to the ballot for third-party candidates. If nobody knows we're running, how can we win?" he asked.

"The Libertarian Party is not subject to being covered in short stories. The party's four presidential candidates all appeared on ballots. At the convention, the party's four presidential candidates all appeared on ballots. At the convention, the party's four presidential candidates all appeared on ballots.

Not surprisingly, all three men are Republicans. Rich Piotrowski, who will run for Congress in Bucks County this fall, said Libertarians are often mislabeled as "radical Republicans."

"More political parties are Republicans. We get them from both parties," he said. "We also get a lot of people who never registered with any party before."

Libertarian Party, Piotrowski said, believes in love between government and the economy and business issues.

Republicans are usually much more willing to let government act as a social worker, Sams said. Something Libertarians are loath to do.

Libertarians see the sale of county office site

By Patty Paugh

Four Sussex County Libertarians have gone to court in their bid to scuttle freeholder plans to sell the county administration building to Sussex County Community College.

In a lawsuit filed in Newton earlier this week, Robert Heitner, Ed Wissmann, Tony Federici and Don Imbriaco, all freeholders, violated state law by failing to hold public hearings before approving a sales contract. The freeholders sanctioned the $2.6 million agreement in a 3-2 vote Feb. 14.

The plaintiffs, who are representing themselves in the lawsuit, are seeking a court order voiding the contract. Heitner and Wissmann previously ran unsuccessfully for freeholder. Freeholder Director John Warren and a colleague, Clark, Freeholder Erna Gormley all favor the college's growth. But Freeholders Jeff Baple and Richard Durina are opposed to the plan, citing the overall cost to the county.

State funds will pay for the college's purchase of the building. As part of the overall project, however, the county must pay for half of the $3.7 million renovation to the campus. The state will pay for the remainder.

In addition, the county also must find a new home for county government and the freeholders have been unable to agree on a location after months of discussions.

Buck and Durina contend it would be cheaper for the county to stay put and renovate existing offices, while their colleagues argue the building is not right for the job. That approach also would thwart the college's expansion, the major agreement.

Suit claims Sussex acted illegally, cites failure to hold public hearings

By Patty Paugh

Four Sussex County Libertarians have gone to court in their bid to scuttle freeholder plans to sell the county administration building to Sussex County Community College.

In a lawsuit filed in Newton earlier this week, Robert Heitner, Ed Wissmann, Tony Federici and Don Imbriaco, all freeholders, violated state law by failing to hold public hearings before approving a sales contract. The freeholders sanctioned the $2.6 million agreement in a 3-2 vote Feb. 14.

The plaintiffs, who are representing themselves in the lawsuit, are seeking a court order voiding the contract. Heitner and Wissmann previously ran unsuccessfully for freeholder. Freeholder Director John Warren and a colleague, Clark, Freeholder Erna Gormley all favor the college's growth. But Freeholders Jeff Baple and Richard Durina are opposed to the plan, citing the overall cost to the county.

State funds will pay for the college's purchase of the building. As part of the overall project, however, the county must pay for half of the $3.7 million renovation to the campus. The state will pay for the remainder.

In addition, the county also must find a new home for county government and the freeholders have been unable to agree on a location after months of discussions.

Buck and Durina contend it would be cheaper for the county to stay put and renovate existing offices, while their colleagues argue the building is not right for the job. That approach also would thwart the college's expansion, the major agreement.