Kramer beats Means in news clip ‘contest’

And the winner of the "Most-Publicized Libertarian Celebrity Candidate" contest is . . . Kenny Kramer.

Kramer, the real-life inspiration for the wacky Cosmo Kramer character on the Seinfeld TV show — and now the LP’s candidate for mayor of New York City — generated 49 press clippings over the past few months, according to figures compiled by the LP national office.

That’s a handulf more than the 45 newspaper clips sparked by the New Mexico gubernatorial run of Russell Means, the Indian rights activist turned Hollywood star.

Columnist: ‘I’m a libertarian’

A popular syndicated columnist and television commentator has acknowledged he is a libertarian.

Deroy Murdock, whose “This Opinion Just In” column is printed across the USA, said he is “libertarian” in an e-mail message to a Libertarian Party activist.

“I am a libertarian, not a conservative,” Murdock wrote to San Diego LP activist Richard Rider on July 7 in response to an e-mail message about a recent column.

Elaborating, Murdock wrote: “I would legalize drugs, prostitution, and pornography for adults. The government shouldn’t get out of the marriage business. I also would shut down the Fed.”

But both numbers are impressive, said LP Communications Director Bill Winter. “When you consider that few of our non-presidential candidates receive any national publicity, it’s quite remarkable that these two men collected almost 100 press clippings between them, in just a few months,” he said. “It’s certainly a statement about the value of celebrity in modern culture.”

The LP national office subscribes to the Bacon’s clipping service, which sends in newspaper and magazine articles from around the country that mention the Libertarian Party.

The ‘Quiz’ Appears in the Post

The World’s Smallest Political Quiz has appeared in one of America’s most influential newspapers.

On June 17, the Sunday Washington Post (circulation: 1 million), printed the Quiz in its “Outlook” section. The article noted that the Quiz is a “quick way for you to find your place in the political spectrum.”

The Post article lends credibility to the Quiz and to libertarianism, said LP National Director Steve Dassbach. “Having the Quiz appear in the Washington Post helps legitimize the concept of politics as a four-way quadrant, rather than a Left/Right straight line,” he said.

The Quiz, invented by David Nolan and Marshall Fritz, uses 10 questions to measure a person’s political beliefs on a four-way chart that includes Libertarian, Liberal, Conservative, and Authoritarian.

THE BILL OF RIGHTS: IN TROUBLE?

The Bill of Rights is in trouble, according to a new survey by Wisconsin Libertarians.

Of 232 people surveyed during Green Bay’s Celebrate Americafest, only 11 recognized the Bill of Rights, according to Eric Christianson, vice chair of the Northeast Wisconsin LP.

And only about 40% said they would be willing to sign a petition supporting the 10 Amendments that guarantee the right of free speech, protection against unreasonable search, and other rights.

The results were frightening, said Bob Collison, State Chair of the Wisconsin LP: “They’ll parade in the name of freedom, but ask [people] about these issues, and they don’t come down on the side of freedom.”

Ballot Bill Becomes Law in Oregon

For the second time in a month, an LP-inspired ballot access bill has become law in Oregon.

On July 2, the governor signed a bill that makes it easier for the party to obtain “major” party status. The bill reduces the requirement from 15% of the vote in two consecutive elections to 5% of registered voters.

The bill was written by LP activist Richard Burke, and introduced by Senator Gary George, who became an LP member in January while keeping his GOP registration.

“We’re on a roll here in Oregon,” said Burke. “We’re paving the way to become a major force.”
Libertarian running to make marijuana legal

BY CHRISTINA NUCKOLS
THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

RICHMOND — Last year, 53 Virginians voted to send a ficus tree to Congress. This year’s candidate from the floral kingdom is an outlaw, so it’s using a human stand-in.

Gary A. Reams is running for lieutenant governor in what he calls a “reeferendum.”

Reams wants to legalize the drug. Because Virginia does not allow citizen groups to place referendums on the ballot, he is running for lieutenant governor in what he calls a “reeferendum.”

“This campaign is about ending pot prohibition,” Reams said in a news conference at the state Capitol on Tuesday. “When they vote for me, it is not a vote for Gary Reams the person.”

Reams’ crusade is unrelated to last year’s Ficus 2000 for Congress movement, started by filmmaker Michael Moore to poke fun at politicians across the country who were running unopposed. The tongue-in-cheek campaign generated 53 votes for a ficus tree in a write-in campaign against Rep. Robert W. Goodlatte, R-6th District.

Unlike the ficus tree, Reams hopes to have his name on the ballot in November. He said he filed 19,000 signatures with the State Board of Elections.

State officials will review the petitions to ensure that they include at least 10,000 valid signatures before placing him on the ballot.

Reams is a resident of Fairfax County and a director of quality for a telecommunications firm.

Virginia Libertarians also have nominated William Redpath as their gubernatorial candidate.

Reach Christina Nuckols at (804) 697-1562 or cnuckols@pilotonline.com

Libertarian outrage

Not every motorist is pleased by the national effort over Memorial Day weekend to encourage seat belt use.

Police checkpoints around the country as part of an “America Buckles Up Children” effort is the “largest highway harassment campaign” in history, according to the Libertarian Party.

The Libertarians say since 71 percent of Americans wear seat belts, the checkpoints are harassing “millions of Americans over a victimless crime.”

Of course, seat belt use in Massachusetts, where police can’t make stops solely on that basis, is far lower than the national rate.
Mathias will run for rep

Craig Mathias

By Mitchell Polatin
NEWS STAFF WRITER

ASHLAND — Craig Mathias has tossed his hat into an already crowded ring for the vacant 7th Middlesex District state representative seat.

Although he knows his political affiliation is far different than that of the other four candidates, the staunch Libertarian does not want to be mistaken for an anarchist.

One thing for sure is he will not be confused with the four Democratic candidates who are also hoping to fill John Stiefanini’s place on Beacon Hill.

Stiefanini left his seat, which covers South Framingham and all of Ashland, when he recently accepted the position as House Speaker Thomas Finneran’s chief counsel.

Mathias, who just completed a three-year term on the Ashland Board of Selectmen, said he has witnessed a decline in recent years of individual liberty and personal responsibility.

“It’s time we get back to some basic values that work,” he said.

Some people confuse Libertarian ideals with anarchism, according to Mathias, who hopes to be the first Libertarian on Beacon Hill.

While anarchists fight any form of organized government, Libertarians advocate the least amount of government possible, he said.

Libertarian philosophies are becoming more mainstream in the political realm, according to Mathias, who points out that if the third most populous political affiliation in the state has more than 16,000 members.

Mathias seeks to provide residents with a government that’s so efficient it’s cost-effective.

“I think government is an amazing creation of mankind,” he said.

“But like everything else in human nature, it can get out of control.”

Mathias has not thought much about the four other candidates. He insists he is not running against anyone, but that he is running for the benefit of the state.

“I don’t like the state of politics when the object is to beat the other guy,” he said. “If you are so desperate you have to attack someone to win an office, you don’t deserve it.”

The four Democratic candidates are scheduled to face off in a Sept. 25 primary. They include Framingham School Committee member Suzanne Aymes, Ashland School Committee member Karen Spilka, Ashland Selectman David Teller and Ashland attorney Michael Crowe.

The primary winner will face Mathias in the Oct. 23 general election.

Libertarians support a simple cost-effective government, and Mathias plans to rally around that ideal to build his campaign.

“I will not support tax increases, and I will do everything I can to lower (taxes),” he said.

During his three years on the Ashland Board of Selectmen, Mathias received more complaints about taxes than anything else.

Many residents called to tell him they could not afford to live in their homes because of rising property taxes. Mathias saw people move out of a town they loved, because they did not have the money to stay.

“There’s something wrong,” Mathias said. “I’m outraged at that.”

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Aching for a ‘Republican hangover’ cure

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've never actually been in a riot or a Democratic convention, so I don’t know for sure. But I suspect that I could, if I’m not careful, fall into a really good mob hysteria — such as the one being whipped up by Republicans over the election of Vermont’s new free agent. Jim Jeffords.

Predictably, Democrats are delighted that Jeffords left the GOP. Also predictably, a lot of Republicans feel betrayed; some are so angry that the senator fears for his life. It’s almost as though Reggie Miller went off to play for Boston.

What’s not so predictable is how many Republicans have tired of the game. Obviously, Republicans thought they’d won the long elusive hat trick with Senate, House and presidency wins last November. Despite what the Democratic loyalists say, George W. Bush was chosen by a larger percentage and by more voters than Bill Clinton was in two elections. So when Jeffords fouled the Republican’s apparent public mandate, some NCAA championship-style hysteria was inevitable. Ordinarily, mass hysteria isn’t a good outcome. But this time, unlike the brief public intoxification following Jesse Ventura’s win in Minnesota, may be turning into a mob epiphany.

I’m no longer surprised when some-body turns sides against the old parties with an outpouring of libertarian angst. It happens all the time. But until May 31, I was pretty comfortable that I had the local monopoly on anti-establishment newspaper columns.

On that day, in separate columns by Sheila Suess Kennedy and Andrea Neal, we read organic览bo 眾的 about our nation’s relatively libertarian Founders (slavery certainly isn’t libertarian), and detailed, with very reasonable displeasure, the anti-libertarian profligacy of the New Republicans.

Kennedy’s column invoked the memory of that famously libertarian Republican, Barry Goldwater. She discussed his libertarian philosophy that so admired. She also expressed perfectly reasonable disgust with the Republican Party’s fall from libertarianism. So when she wondered, in essence, what a nice girl like her was doing in the Republican Party, I was encouraged. Where do we go? was rhetorical.

Back in the early 1970s, when Richard Nixon represented the Republicans, a group of Goldwater fans facing the same question started the Libertarian Party. Now that party has been given a bad rap over the years. Some of it was deserved, since a political party that doesn’t have money or power attracts only those who aren’t motivated by money or power. Voters, as an obvious rule, don’t approve of such losers. Yet the game we’ve all been playing is changing fast. Senate Bill 329, yet another attempt to make elections much harder for all the non-Democratic, non-Republican candidates in Indiana, passed through the Indiana General Assembly entirely unopposed; and our governor, ordinarily a nice man, signed it into law.

When the Democrats and Republicans play single team, they’re primarily playing against those of us who’d challenge their game.

Bad news? Hardly. The entrenched parties are worried. Why? We know that the Green Party has shaken Democratic loyalists, and the Reform Party has certainly had its day.

But the Libertarian Party is much bigger, with twice as many registered party members as all the so-called “third parties” combined. At least two Republican former senators, Slade Gorton of Washington and John Ensign of Nevada, lost their seats because Libertarian candidates “stole” a huge percentage of “Republican” votes.

Libertarians are already changing the game of power and powerbrokers in America.

So while I think Jeffords is over-rated as a lightning rod, the time is right to re-establish the libertarian government that made this nation great. Ignore what Goliath is telling you; the principled few have always determined the course of history. A tiny band of libertarians beat a global empire once, and we can do it again.

This time, however, we needn’t take up arms. As long as we have voting booths, let’s remember what they’re for: peaceful revolution. That’s so much more productive than hysteria.

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Horning is a former candidate for office who writes from a Libertarian perspective. Contact him via e-mail at andrewhorning@juno.com
Ax the tax

Thank you, Libertarians

THE MOST useful function of third parties in the American system has been to go where the Big Two won’t, either because the major parties are out of new ideas or in thrall to old, well entrenched interests.

Some third parties, like the Free Solliers and Populists, are now studied the way we do dinosaurs in museums—interesting but dead species. One third party, the Republicans, replaced one of the major parties, the Whigs, who had grown unable to cope with change.

But just because a major party didn’t become a major one doesn’t mean its existence was pointless. On the contrary, the influence of the Populists likely produced a wide range of social, economic and political goods. Mainly, because the Populists were able to reflect a popular discontent with things as they unfairly were in the Gilded Age—and translate that discontent into a reform program so compelling that the major parties paid it the ultimate compliment: They stole it.

Last weekend, Arkansas’ third party took a long-standing grievance in this state, a continuing moral outrage that neither Democrats nor Republicans have the hardiness to address directly, let alone satisfy. Namely, the sales tax on groceries. Surely no one can believe that such a regressive tax is fair. For it weighs heaviest on those least able to pay it.

This is the kind of tax—on the very necessities of life—that has been denounced by the prophets. It grinds the faces of the poor. And every public opinion shows that We the People are concerned about government intrusion into our lives.

Knight agreed that the convention was one of the smoothest he has ever held.

"We like to joke that we calmly and rationally discuss the issues," he said. This time, we did calmly and rationally discuss the issues.

National chairman says he could learn a lot from county’s voter turnout success

By Dave Burge/Staff writer

FARMINGTON — The state Libertarian Party convention held here over the weekend at the Marriott Courtyard was a big success, party officials said Monday.

About 40 delegates from across the state attended the three-day event. Total attendance was about 20 people.

"It was probably the smoothest convention I’ve ever been to in the Libertarian Party," said Joseph Knight, a Flora Vista resident and state chairman for the party.

"There was no bickering, no jockeying for power. Not an unkind word was spoken," said Keynote speaker Peal Means, Congress in District 2, which contains about half of our state.

Means addressed the gathering Thursday and Friday.

"The business meeting was a real pleasure. We didn’t get sidetracked with old, well entrenched interests. The politicians don’t lack ingenuity when it comes to raising revenue, we have a pretty good idea of how to find a way to replace it," he said. This past session again demonstrated that legislators and governors don’t lack ingenuity when it comes to raising revenue, whether the vehicle is another tax on beer or a cruel bed tax on nursing home patients. There is no shortage of taxers at the state Capitol.

Once the people finally kill this most regressive of taxes, the politicians will get serious about replacing it, but not before. Just raising the sales tax on other purchases would be preferable to taxing the bread and milk of the poorest Arkansans. Or even those just scraping by.

That’s why the Libertarian Party’s petition drive to put this issue on the ballot in 2002 deserves every signature it can get. Sometimes the people just have to get the pols’ attention. And if it involves a two-by-four like this petition drive, suddenly it does, then that’s all the more reason to be grateful that third parties exist.

"My friends out here are doing a lot of good things," he said.

Local Libertarian fund-raising director Steve Gresh, who has met Lark before, said he was thrilled again how hard it is to run a national party striving for recognition.

"What I’m learning from him is the enormous amount of responsibility he has to deal with," Gresh said.

"We have about a half dozen groups in the community," she said.

One of the most useful functions of third parties has been to go where the major parties won’t, either because the major parties are out of new ideas or in thrall to old, well entrenched interests.

Some third parties, like the Free Solliers and Populists, are now studied the way we do dinosaurs in museums—interesting but dead species. One third party, the Republicans, replaced one of the major parties, the Whigs, who had grown unable to cope with change.

But just because a major party didn’t become a major one doesn’t mean its existence was pointless. On the contrary, the influence of the Populists likely produced a wide range of social, economic and political goods. Mainly, because the Populists were able to reflect a popular discontent with things as they unfairly were in the Gilded Age—and translate that discontent into a reform program so compelling that the major parties paid it the ultimate compliment: They stole it.

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