

Libertarian Party chairman describes positions on issues

BY NOEL FREEMAN

The Battalion

About 1,450 Libertarian candidates will be running for various offices across the nation in the Nov. 7 elections, including 250 candidates for Congress. That is more than twice the number of candidates from all of the other third parties combined.

Even with the increasing number of candidates, Dr. Jim Lark, chairman of the national Libertarian Party, said the Libertarian Party is ignored, shown by the exclusion of Harry Browne, the party's presidential candidate, from the presidential debates.

Lark, director of the Financial Engineering Research Group at the University of Virginia, spoke at the Memorial Student Center (MSC) Monday night to discuss the doctrine of the Libertarian Party as well as challenges that have plagued the party since its inception in 1971.

Lark was the guest speaker at a forum hosted by the MSC Current Issues Awareness Committee and aimed at educating the student body on issues not widely covered by the media. This forum was the second in a series that hosted the American Socialist Party in mid-September and will host the Green Party Nov. 1.

The discussion focused on the

doctrine of the Libertarian Party, which says that the rights of Americans should be based on individual liberty and personal responsibility.

"You should have the right to live your life as you see fit, provided you don't violate the like rights of others," Lark said, summing up the doctrine.

He continued by applying the doctrine to some of the major issues of this year's election, including Social Security, foreign affairs and campaign finance reform.

Lark said that Libertarians tend not to like politics and prefer voluntary means to political means. "I don't believe I have the right

to force [someone] to provide for the retirement of others," he said. "The bonds of the community are being broken down by state-provided welfare."

Exploring the realm of foreign policy, a much more conservative approach was taken, chastising the current administration for what Lark characterized as selective intervention in world affairs.

"The only purpose of government is the protection of life, liberty and property of Americans in America — not to serve as the world's policeman," he said.

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ANDY HANCOCK/THE BATTALION

Jim Lark, chairman of the national Libertarian Party, speaks to a crowd concerning political issues in his presidential race.

Drugs affect federal loans

About 7,000 students denied financial aid

(AP) — Nearly 7,000 college students who applied for financial aid this fall are finding past drug convictions returning to haunt them.

The students are being told they are ineligible for some or all federal financial aid because of a new law. Under the law, which took effect with the 2000-01 academic year, students with drug-related convictions can be ruled ineligible for federal grants or loans.

Of the 8.6 million applications processed through Oct. 15, 1,311 applicants have been ruled ineligible, and an additional 5,617 must complete a waiting period before they become eligible, Karen Freeman, a spokeswoman for the Education Department, said Monday.

The total of the two groups is less than 1 percent of those who applied.

Students can lose one year of federal aid eligibility for a first conviction on a drug-possession charge, and two years for a second conviction. They can be suspended indefinitely for a third conviction.

About 790,000 applicants initially failed to answer the question of

"It denies access to education to those who need it most. It is not a sound anti-drug policy."

— Kristi Ringor
U.S. Students Association
spokeswoman

Clinton signs drunken driving bill

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Clinton signed a bill Monday setting a tough national standard for drunken driving, saying the new legal limit of 0.08 percent will save 500 lives a year and force Americans to take more care when they drink.

States that refuse to impose the standard by 2004 will lose millions of dollars in federal highway construction money. Nineteen states and the District of Columbia have a 0.08 percent limit. Thirty-one states define drunken driving as 0.10 limit blood alcohol content or do not set a specific standard.

"This is a very good day for the United States," Clinton

signed a fierce three-year battle in Congress.

The American Beverage Institute, an association of restaurant operators, called the new law "an attack on social drinkers." It said a 120-pound woman who drinks two 6-ounce glasses of wine over a two-hour period could face arrest and mandatory jail or loss of her license.

"This law will arrest people who are not part of the drunk driving problem," said spokesman John Doyle. "But more, this law in a lot of ways is leaving many Americans to believe that the drunk driving problem has been addressed and nothing could be further from the truth."

Arguing for the law, MADD said a 170-pound man would have to have four drinks in an hour on an empty stomach, and a 137-pound woman three drinks in an hour, to reach 0.08. Both MADD and the American Beverage Institute cited National Highway Traffic Safety Administration studies (NHTSA).

MADD also said that alcohol is just as intoxicating in beer, wine or hard liquor. It said a 12-ounce can of beer, a five-ounce glass of wine and a 1.2-ounce wine cooler all contain the same amount of alcohol and have the same intoxicating potential as 1 1/2 ounces of hard liquor.

NHTSA cautioned that factors such as sleep and food consumption could affect blood alcohol levels.

Clinton called efforts to pass national drunken-driving standards an uphill battle. It was approved 344-50 by the House and 78-10 by the Senate. The provision was part of a \$58 billion transportation spending bill loaded with pre-emption highway, mass transit and aviation projects for every state.

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— John Doyle
The American Beverage
Institute spokesman

son said. He called the new standard "the biggest step to toughen drunk driving laws and reduce alcohol-related crashes since a national minimum drinking age was established a generation ago."

Clinton was joined in a Rose Garden ceremony by Millie Webb, national president of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), and MADD members who have lost relatives in alcohol-related crashes. Webb lost her 4 1/2-year-old daughter and 19-month-old nephew and suffered a broken neck and burns over 75 percent of her body 28 years ago in an accident caused by a drunken driver.

The bill signing climaxed

Age-old wining



STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

Manuel Martinez pumps red wine out of 59 barrels at the Messina Hof Winery in Bryan on Monday. The wine has been aging in these barrels for the last two years. After it is drained, it will be filtered and bottled to be sold across the state.

Storms dump foot of rain on Southwest Texas, spawn twisters

DALLAS (AP) — Thunderstorms swelled rivers and flooded roads in the Hill Country west of San Antonio as a complex of severe weather lumbered its way across Texas on Monday.

The storms brought pingpong ball-sized hail and at least two tornadoes to the Panhandle, while five counties northwest of San Antonio were flooded with as much as 6 1/2 inches of rain Sunday and Monday.

In Edwards County, torrential rains prompted officials to close roads countywide, said Traci Meeks, a dispatcher with the Edwards County Sheriff's Office in Rocksprings.

"All roads are closed, we are stuck in," Meeks said.

Meeks said most residents had hun-

tered down to wait out the storms, which were expected to continue until Wednesday.

Roads in Real County also were closed Monday afternoon.

"It has quit raining. It moves fast and leaves lots of destruction," said Real County Sheriff's dispatcher Jan Tolleson.

Flood watches also were issued for Bandera, Edwards, Kerr, Real and Val Verde counties.

The rain also swelled the Guadalupe River in Kerr County to 20 feet, 8 feet above flood stage, prompting the weather service to issue a major flood warning for Hunt and Kerrville.

In San Antonio, two children and the driver of a day care van had to be

rescued when the van they were in was swept into Leon Creek on Monday afternoon.

The unidentified driver, a 5-year-old girl and an 8-year-old boy were treated for minor injuries at the scene and released.

Schools in Boerne and Comfort in Kendall County canceled classes after thunderstorms flooded out low-lying county roads and water crossings.

Flood waters in some locations in Boerne were seven feet deep, trapping some residents, said Boerne police Lt. Jim Kohler.

One person had driven around a police barricade and got caught in a swollen creek running across central Boerne.

Bomb threat evacuates Bryan Wal-Mart SuperCenter

BY ANDY HANCOCK

The Battalion

At about 5:37 p.m. Monday, the Wal-Mart SuperCenter in Bryan received a bomb threat, resulting in the immediate evacuation of the store.

With customers and employees waiting in the parking lot, Bryan police officers searched the store for anything suspicious.

Officer Albert Neveu of the Bryan Police Department said a Wal-Mart employee was warned by a woman that a bomb was set to explode somewhere in the building.

"The suspect called the store and reached a clerk, informing the clerk of a bomb in the building that was set to explode in 20 minutes, and to take this very seriously," Neveu said. "The suspect is a female, suspected to be in her mid-20s."

At 6:37 p.m. employees were allowed to re-enter and prepare to re-open the store. Wal-Mart co-manager Charlie May had no comment on the matter due to the ongoing investigation.

The bomb squad was not called in for assistance, nor was Bryan Utilities.

Neveu said the next step in the investigation will be for the security division of GTE to work with detectives to trace the call.

"If the threat had been more specific in nature, then the bomb squad would have been called in," he said.

The crime is classified as a "false alarm" and is a Class A misdemeanor. If the bomb squad or Bryan Utilities had been called in, the charge would have been raised to a felony.

After the incident, shopping and business resumed as usual.

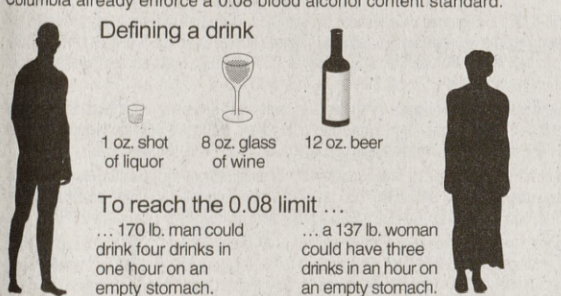


STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

Wal-Mart SuperCenter employees stand outside after being evacuated because of a bomb threat on Monday.

New rule of the road

Under a bill signed Monday by President Clinton, states failing to implement a tougher standard for drunken driving by 2004 will lose millions of dollars each year in federal highway funds. Nineteen states and the District of Columbia already enforce a 0.08 blood alcohol content standard.



Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

AP