

## "Most of Livingston County is Libertarian, they just don't know it yet."

Livingston County Libertarian Party  
background information sheet

# Libertarians may locate state office in Brighton

By Fred Menko  
STAFF WRITER

A background sheet prepared by the Livingston County Libertarian Party states way down at the bottom, "Most of Livingston County is Libertarian, they just don't know it yet."

Three hundred county residents knew it enough to get together earlier this year and organize a county committee.

And those numbers might strike some fear into the county's dominant political party. The Livingston County Republicans boast a mailing list of approximately 400 people, but local party chair Dan Garber is quick to point out many more voters identify with the party.

"Based on votes in the county, we'd say there are more (Republicans) than that," Garber said.

Garber supports the Libertarian's efforts to form a party in the county.

"I encourage it," Garber said. "I think the Libertarian philosophy is similar to the Republican philosophy on many issues. I think it creates more interest and provides a different perspective on some issues."

Supporting the party's efforts are easy for Garber, who doesn't believe the party is in a position to steal any county seats real soon.

"I don't believe (the Libertarians can win,)" Garber said. "But, I think they are certainly going to be in position to give the voters a way to express their dissatisfaction with the two major parties."

And Libertarians believe their

Although, the Libertarians are a relatively new party to Michigan's political scene, said Doug MacDonald, the party's first county chair, the party's success is the result of the disenchantment voters have had in recent years with Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives.

"One of the main issues behind the disenchantment of voters is this loss of identity," MacDonald said. "There are many people who consider themselves liberal, but don't agree with what liberals say. The word 'liberal' doesn't mean what it meant when they made it part of their identity."

And government continues to grow bigger every year and the country's two biggest parties don't seem to offer a change.

"Next year, we will spend more money, we will have more rules and regulations," MacDonald said. "Government will keep getting bigger. When '96 comes around, we will not see real change. This is why there is a need for a third party."

On Sunday, Aug. 6, the Libertarians threw a state party picnic at the Silver Fox Estates Homeowners Association Pavilion in Brighton.

The county's move toward the Libertarian party has been noticed by the party's state organization, which has named Brighton its first pick for the location of a state office.

"The reason Livingston County was chosen was because of the growth and because of the support Jon Coon got here, as well as the fact that it's near the metro area

### Libertarians posturing to win elections at the local level

Livingston County voters can expect to find the Libertarians on their ballots in upcoming years.

Although the county party won't be supporting its local candidates while it invests in its infrastructure, local party chair Doug MacDonald said, the Libertarians are watching many of the issues in the local government units.

"We watch all of the recall drives that are going on and we think this represents the need for the Libertarian Party in Livingston County," MacDonald

Last year, the Libertarian party recorded 3,224 votes in Livingston County — the second largest percentage of the popular vote in any county in Michigan. Macomb County had a 7.11 percent Libertarian vote, while 6.94 percent of Livingston County voters cast votes for Libertarians.

The party's philosophy supports a low level of social and economic control or restraints, MacDonald said.

"There're a lot of different ways you can sum it up," MacDonald said. "The way I like to sum it up is we believe that people should be free to live their lives however they wish as long as they hurt nobody else."

said. "We intend to run people for the local races and for the 66th House seat."

A platform sub-committee has been formed, MacDonald said, but has not been active yet.

MacDonald said for the first few years the Libertarians may only affect campaigns by stealing votes from Republicans and Democrats. But, he hopes it will be only short-term.

"My goal is not to be election spoiler," MacDonald said. "It is to win. If we have to cross a few elections as election spoilers we will, but our goal is to win."

run for U.S. Senate.

"What's really fascinating is that I was a Libertarian philosophically to begin with," MacDonald said. "Before I found the Libertarian party I voted for one party more than the other, but was never really satisfied."

The problem for MacDonald was discovering to which party he really belonged.

"I followed politics more closely than most and I didn't know much about the Libertarian Party," MacDonald said. "Frankly, I didn't know how too many of the voters can know what they're about when they don't get to speak and share their platform."

The libertarians began holding

was Monday at Mexican Jones, 675 W. Grand River Avenue, in Brighton.

The group's discussion topic was "Is the U.S. Government violating the second amendment?"

The group has already held two meetings this year. The first topic was first amendment violations by the government and the second topic was the raid on Waco.

Although the topics, like the raid at Waco, are also rallying points for groups like the Michigan Militia, MacDonald said, members of the party don't necessarily agree with the militant group.

"This is not a militia issue," MacDonald said. "One of the problems with the current Waco investigation is that it seems to be political."

"It seems to be one party pointing the finger at the other. We see a pattern starting of more and more government intrusion. Some of it seems to be illegal."

MacDonald believes the federal government should only provide a military, a criminal court system and a civil court system.

"Police duties should be left to the state or local government units, he added.

"I think the vast majority of what the government is doing it shouldn't be doing," MacDonald said.

One of the things the Libertarian Party feels is that the federal government shouldn't be policing the use and trafficking of drugs, MacDonald said.

"It's also one of the issues the voter can't stomach or dislikes for any number of reasons," MacDon-

**"Overall, Libertarians believe that we are all responsible for ourselves. Libertarians want to go back to the constitutional form of government that our forefathers intended."**

Theresa Pollock  
Secretary, Livingston  
County Libertarian Party

**"A Libertarian is a person who believes in freedom of action and thought."**

American Heritage  
Dictionary

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But, like every political group, not all Libertarians agree on every issue.

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And Libertarians believe their timing is good because of the growing disenchantment with the major parties.

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"The reason Livingston County was chosen was because of the growth and because of the support Jon Coon got here, as well as the fact that it's near the metro area and on the way to Lansing — which is where we all hope to be going," MacDonald said.

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"There're a lot of different ways you can sum it up," MacDonald said. "The way I like to sum it up is we believe that people should be free to live their lives however they wish as long as they hurt nobody else."

MacDonald is relatively new to the party having only discovered the group during Jon Coon's 1994

run for U.S. Senate.

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The problem for MacDonald was discovering to which party he really belonged.

"I followed politics more closely than most and I didn't know much about the Libertarian Party," MacDonald said. "Frankly, I didn't know how too many of the voters can know what they're about when they don't get to speak and share their platform."

The libertarians began holding monthly meetings on the second Monday of every month at 6:30 p.m. Their most recent meeting

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But, Libertarians believe the legalization of narcotics will result

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American Heritage Dictionary

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But, like every political group not all Libertarians agree on every issue.

"We have differences," MacDonald said. "We don't 100 percent agree on every thing."

## Two long-time Libertarians haven't rushed to join local party

By Fred Menko  
STAFF WRITER

Mike Marotta's connection with the Libertarians goes back 25 years.

Marotta ran as a Libertarian against Bob Carr and Dick Chrysler in 1992 when Carr won re-election to his seat in the U.S. Congress.

Dick Haviland, owner of Haviland Printers in Howell, has believed in Libertarian thought for 30 years.

Although both are long time fans of Libertarian thought, neither has rushed to join the local Livingston County party.

"Most of the people in the Libertarian Party have come to it in the last five years," Marotta said.

Haviland hasn't joined the party because he believes in the philosophy of Libertarianism.

"It's the philosophy that formerly

would have been called classic Liberalism," Haviland said.

The beliefs are very similar to those of Thomas Jefferson, who supported the reduction of government's intrusion on private lives, but they are not similar to the Democratic Party which Jefferson is credited with founding, Haviland said.

"The present day Democratic Party has beliefs that are pretty much opposite of what Jefferson believed," Haviland said.

Haviland hasn't joined the Libertarians because he votes for people.

"I'm not a member of the party, but I'm sympathetic to their ideas of less government," Haviland said. "I will vote for the person. I support whoever would advocate less government interference in our lives."

However, Haviland wouldn't hesitate to "waste" a vote on a Liber-

LIVINGSTON COUNTY LIBERTARIANS	
Chairperson:	Doug MacDonald
Secretary:	Teresa Pollok
Membership:	About 300, not all are card carrying members.
Meetings:	The second Monday of every month.
Contacts:	MacDonald at 331-3137; Pollok at 229-0737.

arian if the vote would make a difference in major political policy.

"I'm sure when Jon Coon took 5 percent, someone, somewhere looked at that and said 'There's a lot of support for something there,'" Haviland said. "Some of those ideas get picked up and advocated."

Libertarian meetings in the

county may be sparsely attended, but they should still be a source of concern for the major parties.

"They're a very small number of people who attend, but then I don't think that has any meaning," Haviland said. "It takes a very few people to spread ideas."

In coming elections, Haviland doesn't expect to hear much from

the party.

"I don't think the office holders in the county need to shudder," Haviland said. "I don't think the Libertarians are going to win an election."

However, Marotta disagrees. He believes at the local level the Libertarians have some very good opportunities.

"That's where their ideas are strongest," Marotta said. "Libertarians have been very successful at the local level. You can't swing Congress, you can't swing the nation, but you can win 20, 25, 100 people. If they want it, they could have the seat vacated by Susan Grimes-Munsell."

However, Libertarians aren't concerned about winning elections as much as influencing them.

"The important thing is ideas," Marotta said. "Libertarians are driven by ideas. Other parties aren't driven by ideas, they're driv-

en by power."

To Marotta, the difference between Libertarians and Republicans or Democrats is principles.

"The slogan of the Libertarians is the 'party of principles,'" Marotta said. "All other parties are coalitions."

The formation of a local party committee should help Libertarian candidates in future elections, Marotta said.

"The party is a focal point for activity," Marotta said. "They bring in volunteers. Six people can make a difference in 20 different elections."

Like Haviland, Marotta votes for people.

"I never vote for the party," Marotta said. "Winning elections is important, but it's the proof of the pudding — it's not the goal. Winning proves that your ideas had influence, but it's the ideas that have influence."