

On the Fringe **Tired of the Democrats and Republicans? Educate yourself about other political options.**

By Kathleen Beman

You hear a lot of rhetoric, particularly from the Independent Party, about how America needs a third party for variety and to re-focus on our nation's core values. I'm a big supporter of that "more variety, less predictability" thing. But who is really able to articulate what our nation's "core values" should or shouldn't be in the year 2000?

"Fringe" candidates challenge the status quo, think outside the box, and run to see if maybe, just maybe, the majority of Americans are ready for their ideology. This year's alternative candidates push the

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envelope further than traditional parties. Here's a rundown of the other candidates you could be looking at.

Independent Party

The Independents are running little-known Howard Phillips (aipca.org/Candidates/candidates.html), a hardcore adherent to the Constitution whose main priorities as President would include returning certain lands to corporations and the U.S. government, and "a significant reduction in Federal intervention in the economy."

Green Party

Ralph Nader (votnader.com) is arguably the most famous Green candidate (greenparty.org). An aggressive proponent of more variety in the American political system and staunch defender of Green values such as grassroots political discussion, Nader's campaign platform focuses on "looming problems" caused by "concentrated corporate power." These include ecological decline, urban poverty and the increased power of commercialism.

Libertarian Party

The Libertarian Party, one of the more fringe of the fringe, was founded in late 1971. Harry Browne (harrybrowne2000.org) is running because "No one but a Libertarian will reduce your taxes dramatically, allow you to live your life as a free American, and restrict the federal government." He also, though, wants to "end the nightmare of drug Prohibition," which seems like an, um, interesting angle.

Peace and Freedom Party

If you're a crunchy Californian, you might choose to vote for a candidate from the Peace and Freedom (peaceandfreedom.org) Party, California's answer to socialism.

Reform Party

The Reform Party (reformparty.org) spun off from the Republican Party in 1992 under the direction of Ross Perot. The party is running Pat Buchanan (gopatgo.com) in 2000. If the Republicans aren't conservative enough for you, this is your party.

For cause-focused activists, watchdog group Common Cause (commoncause.org) includes financial information on their site. Human Rights Watch (hrw.org) looks out for candidates with good voting records on human rights. The National Organization for Women (now.org) touts itself as a nonpartisan organization devoted to analysis of voting related to women.

If you're interested in articles and analysis about the election in general, voter.com



Not your father's candidates (clockwise from top left): Nader (fight corporate power); Buchanan (can't get farther right); Howard Phillips ("significant reduction in Federal intervention in the economy"); and Harry Browne ("end the nightmare of drug Prohibition").

and Election Search 2000 (election-search2000.org) are easy to search. Portal news tracker services like Yahoo! and Excite offer more mainstream campaign news. •

To learn more about third-party candidates, go to steamtunnels.net and search using keyword "Third."

Beyond the fringe...

Alan Caruba (New Jersey)

Caruba (pictured at right), head of the "Boring Institute," is running a humorous campaign for President. He promises that his campaign will be "far less boring than" the other campaigns. Caruba said he is prepared to "campaign vigorously so long as it doesn't involve leaving home too much." He wants to be President for the perks and the "chance to drive the members of Congress nuts."

boringinstitute.com/recentevents/campaign2000.htm

Bruce Muckian (Washington)

Muckian's campaign is entirely facetious and—he concedes—his chances of winning are "somewhere between astronomical and totally outrageous!" He's really running for the fun of it and, he claims, to raise money for a family trip to Ireland on the Concorde. With his cousin Mike as a running mate, he has several clever campaign slogans including: "At least they're not the Clintons," "You've Done Worse" and "Vote for Muck —The Others Suck!" members.aol.com/bmuckian/

Jack Grimes (Delaware)

Grimes bills himself as the "Leader and Director of the United Fascist Union." His definition of "Fascist"? To restore a New World Order based upon the governmental style of Imperial Rome. And it gets weirder: his platform addresses "the dilemmas now facing America: Democracy, Christianity, UFOs, government cover-ups and others." Grimes predicts that "the United States will be reduced to a small triangular-shaped land mass through the loss of its coastal states." geocities.com/Area51/Chamber/7344

