
Libertarian Strategy Gazette

Libertarian Strategy Gazette believes that we should try to learn from the past. Sometimes, when we look at the past, we realize that the more things change, the more things remain the same. Sometimes we look and we see that 20 years after the fact the world has not changes, and many of the same points are being discussed.

In 1981, Kent Guida ran for National Chair of the Libertarian Party. Here are his actual proposals for what the party should do, taken from his open letter to delegates to the forthcoming Libertarian National Convention.

Libertarian Strategy Proposals

(continued from the previous issue)

Not only did the candidate use the existing mailing list, he asked neighbors, friends, co-workers -- everyone he thought might be willing to participate -- to become involved in the campaign in some way, either by contributing money, or attending a work party, or distributing literature door-to-door, or accompanying him on a "Candidate's Night" appearance. Between these efforts and the natural result of public exposure, a mailing list of several hundred was built, virtually from scratch, within a few months.

After the campaign was over, a campaign worker independently mailed a Libertarian Party membership application, and a voter registration card, to every name on the list, along with a letter requesting each person to join the Libertarian Party and change his or her party affiliation to Libertarian. The result: Party membership in San Francisco shot to over one hundred, and Libertarian registration increased by a similar percentage. Many of those initially attracted by this mayoral campaign have gone on to become key activists in California Libertarian efforts.

The Alaska Experience

In Alaska, prior to Dick Randolph's first successful race for state legislature, the prime technique for building party membership and support was a "house parties" project, whereby Libertarian Party members would invite friends and neighbors to their homes for the express purpose of introducing them to libertarianism and the Libertarian Party. There, in a friendly social setting, those who attended heard an introductory explanation of the philosophy, and were invited to join and participate. A high percentage did, right on the spot in many instances. This technique increased the mailing list, the membership roster, the-number of people exposed to libertarianism -- and it also raised money from those willing to write out a membership dues check.

The New York Experience

The Free Libertarian Party of New York has adopted a goal of having party organizations in all regions of the state in time for the 1982 elections, and one of their early success stories has been in the Binghamton area. Each time a new name in a previously unorganized area

(Continued on page 4)

On Burnout

Regarding burnout--

Burnout and lack of volunteers is part of a larger problem of organization. We must organize ourselves in the most efficient way to accomplish our goals. We must **have** goals. And each state committee should have a strategy for success that makes sense in the context of that state's situation -- geographically, in terms of ballot access law, and the resources immediately available.

This is why I have contended our biggest problem is **not** money. It is **not** lack of money to hire paid staff to do things. (There are too many things that need to be done for us **ever** to have enough money to hire people to do them all -- including ballot access.)

Our biggest problem is lack of human resources -- volunteers to get things done. It is lack of communication between state leadership and the "membership" regarding what our needs are, what are the important things to get done.

This lack of human resources results from a membership-driven strategy from the top, where newsletter subscribers are "recruited", not individuals with a proven record of volunteerism and activism

Burnout by the best and most committed is a natural fall-out of the strategy pursued up until now and at the present time still. The strategy must change, and we must become more focused in our purpose.

State leadership should spend a significant percentage of their time recruiting others to do things, and moving away from the tendency to "do it all". Make your newsletters and all communication with the membership focused on volunteerism -- what is needed for your state to be efficient, effective, and successful.

I would be interested in creating an email listserv for state committee people to share experiences and help cope with these issues. We must become self-sufficient and not rely on the national hq for ultimate success and/or direction. We must stand together and serve as a source of support for each other.

...Lois Kaneshiki

Chair, LPPa

[Your Editor is here reminded of the fine lecture that LPNH Chair Danielle Donovan gave her members at the 2000 LPNH state convention. Her theme was simple: DO you want to prevent activist burnout? **Run for Party Office!** Run against someone who is doing a good job, to take it away from them and given them a break, so that they will not burn out. Variety is the spice of many people's lives. If they are the perpet-

Libertarian Strategy Gazette is here to bring you articles on strategy for the Libertarian Party. Some of these are opinions we support. Some of these are opinions we believe to be mistaken. All of them are opinions that we think you will find to be worth considering. Here courtesy of Gail Lightfoot is a new article by long-time libertarian activist Robert Bakhaus

Libertarian Strategy Proposals

Civics Lesson 2000

CONTINUED

The two most frequent complaints I hear are that we need more people to divide the labor and more dollars to fund the effort. Both of these miss the really most important point: that we need to do much more with whatever we have. When you are doing reform politics, of any persuasion, the funding problem is endemic, never ending. We can never have too many people, too much money, or too much ability to get things done. But keeping these things in perspective lets us focus on what should come first, and which way is forward.

Consider the two major ways the libertarian movement currently raises money (tax deferral many millions annually and regulated campaign donations a few million), and what they imply for minor party politics.

If you follow the "mothers milk of politics" you will find that libertarianism today is funded primarily by IRS tax deductions for charitable contributions to 501(c)(3) foundations such as libertarian think tanks. Secondarily, LP causes and campaigns are funded by FPPC reported and generally capped contributions that are NOT tax deductible.

These two major funding sources have significant impact on the kind of libertarian activism they subsidize. IRS tax exempt donations cannot be used to advocate ballot status candidates and/or issues (except some state's petition or initiative causes). FPPC regulated campaign contributions generally cannot exceed federal and state size limits. Thus, both major forms of libertarian activist funding are largely regulated by the very government they intend to reform. Given that libertarianism is dedicated to separating economics and state, to abolishing all controls over money except fraud and contract enforcement, the irony of present day libertarian fund raising easily turns vicious. To state that another way, if and whenever libertarians are perceived to be a real threat, the establishment can "cut off their water" almost effortlessly. As it is, libertarian think tanks already endure regular, annual audits by the IRS as a matter of course! No procedural slack for libertarians. But the real payoff is when it gets worse.

Thus it becomes of strategic importance to realize that our greatest fundraising option is not directly monetary, as it is secondarily so. That is, we need to realize that our greatest assets are not monetary at all. They are establishment monopolized assets, in which even more remote investors (usually taxpayers) have done the actual funding. Perhaps our single most elaborate asset currently is the electoral system, from county courthouse elections of offices all the way to the federal election system's media circus.

Currently we reach out with our rhetoric and strive to persuade people of our perspective's value. People then register LP and the government goes to great lengths to make that information available to us. If we fail to pick it up at the courthouse and fail to follow through with "Welcome Wagon" postcards and free email list-serve subscriptions, that's our fault. But the government has given us a million dollar networking tool, a retail sales network, and they maintain it for us at comparatively little cost. Mentioning the ballot slots, statements, arguments and the vote counting, all virtually free to us because it's paid for by taxpayers, merely reinforces the point. Our biggest asset is not money raised from our supporters, but money stolen from taxpayers and converted to our resistance effort! Capturing stolen tax money and converting it into resistance assets is our most strategic fund raising technique. Like any guerilla army unable to afford expensive armaments, but able to find and seize establishment munitions, the LP is most effectively funded by "legal conversion" on a cultural scale.

FUNDING THE REFORMATION WITH CULTURAL CONVERSION

Taking over universities, broadcast studios, major media outlets, and so on, is the broadest way to build upon our present access to electoral process assets.

Converting the establishment's power into our tools, finding ways to convert existing establishment assets into libertarian tools. Just as Christians converted pagan holidays into Christian ones, we need to turn statist holidays into libertarian ones. Libertarian pennies must be leveraged into libertarian mileage by capturing government facilities.

This strategic topic of funding the reformation by cultural conversion is so important that it merits an exhaustive analysis by all LPers informed about local conditions. I can only scratch the surface here with some prime examples. The first thing that perhaps needs admitting is how self blinded libertarians are to the topic of converting tax loot to resistance advantage.

As a movement we don't seem very focused about how to regard the public sector.

True, we want to privatize it.

On that we're clear.

But what about returning stolen loot? Isn't that privatization as well? Apparently not as clearly. I still read emails almost daily where libertarians are complaining about the immoral hypocrisy of using government roads to travel, using public libraries to hold LP meetings, see-king and/or accepting "public funds" for campus events on major universities, or eating, breathing government regulated air, food, water, or accepting government campaign matching funds. Even this election cycle LP candidate Harry Browne refused to accept campaign matching funds.

CAMPAIGN MATCHING FUNDS

Can there be any question that unaccepted campaign matching funds are an "idle asset" (assets that are under-utilized), especially since the media largely ignores such a "virtuous" gesture as refusing all such funds? It can be argued that the question of accepting matching funds is too divisive internally and too controversial (seemingly hypocritical) externally, or even just plain immoral receipt of stolen goods. Such objections are easily crushed by observing that it is a libertarian's duty, obligation, role to *return stolen property* to its rightful owners as expeditiously as possible, that leaving campaign matching funds in the government treasury is abetting theft by letting thieves keep loot.

The way the loot is taken and restituted to the tax victims can be a very visible and stimulating public relations exercise. Should \$100,000 in matching funds be returned \$1 at a time to random citizens hurt by sales taxes? Or should it be returned to registered LPers first? Or should we create a refund to the most productive people who were robbed the worst by income taxes? A San Francisco LP group that won a lawsuit against local government distributed the settlement funds to the public, accompanied by much media fanfare. Whatever formula is devised, the activity of returning the money is a public relations bonanza waiting to be exploited, but currently matching funds are a totally wasted (idled) asset.

ENDLESS IDLE ASSETS

AND HOW TO EXPLOIT THEM

That idle assets exist and need to be identified can hardly be doubted. What needs clarification is how many idle assets there are. Even more importantly, the main point is that what is and is not an "idle" asset depends on how you look at it. Almost anything is an "idle" asset waiting to be exploited if you have the vision, competence, and/or motivation to use it better than is presently the case.

Moving from most obvious idle asset (campaign matching funds) to more portentous idle assets, consider that the tens of thousands of voters registered to the Libertarian Party in California are currently a hugely idle asset. At one time it was imperative that the California LP have as many voters registered LP as possible in order to gain permanent ballot status, and massively expensive petition drives were mounted to achieve that goal. But nowadays the California LP does not need any registered voters (The California LP does not conduct registration drives any more.), since it maintains ballot status by gaining simply 2% of the vote in a statewide race every few years. This goal is achieved fairly easily by several statewide candidates each election. And while the registration lists are useful, they are mostly idle.

How could such lists be exploited more productively? In a phrase, a new libertarian party. In a word: competition. My own recommendation is the formation of a Tolerant Party, premised upon legalization of vice, prioritized on abolishing the War On Drugs. For much more detail, see my website devoted to the topic at www.silcom.com/~taxabo/vice.htm

Moving from most obvious and most portentous, the

next step might be most widely dispersed, that is, idle assets available to all LPers that are currently under-utilized. The value of an "idle asset" perspective can be seen in how LPers let themselves be limited by conventional wisdom about "running to win", when in fact most LP candidates are capable only of running to publicize. Candidates with no funds, no incumbency, no popular partisan support are not only self deceptive to claim to the media that they're truly "running to win", they're sadly self limiting. If you're "running to win" you don't want to dilute your assets by encouraging competition in your primary and/or your general election. But, if you're consciously running to publicize the LP's views to the public and educate your followers through constructive experience, then you can clearly profit by encouraging competition within your own ranks. The more LPers running for the same office, the more energy, excitement, insight and production occurs. To say this another way, it's counter-productive to delude ourselves in order to delude the media that we're "running to win" when we can do so much better "running to publicize" and honestly admitting it, even bragging about and exploiting it. If we're "running to publicize" we can encourage multiple competitive candidates within our own ranks, exploit multiple free coverage of all our competing candidates by the media, and enjoy the fruits of "victory" when we achieve our own goals rather than the vanity goals set by a predominantly indifferent society.

Consider the "idle asset" of LP ballot status. Since we seldom have enough candidates to fill all the offices up for election, the ease of ballot access gained by being LPers is not being fully utilized. But, if we invite LOSERS in Republican, Democrat, Green, etc. primaries to then place their names on the general ballot as Libertarian Party candidates, these "also rans" get a second chance, and a chance to avenge themselves on the party whose primary contest they lost. This is not as insane as it sounds. Running a pro "victimless criminals" campaign in a Democrat primary where there is an incumbent who will win hands down and losing to that incumbent will gain you about 30% of the Democrat vote in California. If you then run in the general election as a Libertarian Prater, because there's no LP candidate, bringing 30% of the Democrat vote with you all that adds up to an interesting diminution of the Democrats and an incremental reinforcement of the Libertarian Party!

IDLE ASSETS OUTSIDE THE ELECTORAL ARENA

In listing exemplary "idle assets" I must at some point venture into broader contexts than mere electoral assets. By definition there are far more "idle assets" outside the electoral arena than within it. Consider the singular cultural asset of public access television. There are thousands of public access studios across the country financed by special fees on cable subscribers because local political jurisdictions such as cities and counties are required by federal law to require such facilities from private companies to whom they are giving franchise monopolies.

As a well seasoned television producer myself these past few years, I can attest to the incredible leverage in community outreach from having your own television show weekly, or even monthly. In my home town in southern California I have become a celebrity with my distinctive facial features and sharp mind being displayed every few days on local television. It takes only a few volunteers crewing the cameras and considerable libertarian ideological moxie to have guests appear with you to discuss current events. A truism about guests is that "Nobody says no to a chance to be on t.v." And once you've recorded a show, the cable station will repeatedly play it during the following week(s) because they are all starved for locally originated programming.

Most LPers are familiar with government subsidized campuses. While youth may be rather indifferent to LP ideas outside of legalizing drugs, sex and rock & roll, it takes very few students to form a campus chapter. Once three or so students have obtained the signature of a faculty or staff member and formed a campus chapter, there are usually considerable assets to be exploited for free. Common assets are access to empty classrooms for regular meetings and multi-media facilities for special events, letters to editors of the campus paper, candidacies in campus elections, radio station shows, even television facilities at some campuses. The assets are there for the asking if LPers have made the minimal effort to organize the few signatures required. Usually student initiative will be met with faculty response from sympathetic professors who otherwise can't justify taking the time themselves to lead a student group.

LITIGATING

An incredibly huge cultural asset little used by libertarians so far is the judicial system. All it takes is a well connected LP chapter to bring lawyers, victims and disgruntled government employees (whistle blowers) together to launch lawsuits that can win. This is very different territory than the electoral arena. Most lawsuits require a year or two to wind their way through the courts. And it's not enough just to have an injustice in your sights. You also have to be able to PROVE the injustice, meaning documentation and witnesses who can convince third parties like judges and juries. Further, there are no "paper" lawsuits. Once litigation has been launched it has to be kept up until settled out of court or won in court. As the winner of four lawsuits and a litigator who has never lost a case, I can attest to the value of LP groups in pulling together the resources and holding everybody to the goal of punishing public officials who violate term limits, abuse their office by electioneer-

(Continued from page 1) [The Guida Plan]

is found, the party contacts that person and asks if he or she would be willing to serve as a contact point for other people in the area. As new names come in, they are given to the contact people in the various areas, who are encouraged to begin organizing. State party officers, such as the Chair, will make it a point to visit these developing areas to meet with the Libertarians there.

In the Binghamton case, there was only one name -- a man who was initially attracted through the 1978 Greenberg for Governor campaign -- but he gradually built up a list of twenty or so others. Thanks to the systematic encouragement of the state party leadership, this handful of local activists has already been highly successful, having nominated candidates for mayor and county legislature, attracted considerable local media attention, and won the bid to host the Nylon's next state convention. According to the state chair, the key to building local organizations is to focus would-be activists on continuous preparation for election campaigns. These preparations include making contacts in the news media, recruiting candidates, writing position papers, and researching issues.

Letters to the Editor

As an outreach technique, letters to the editors of newspapers is simple, inexpensive, and effective -- both in terms of writing them, and in monitoring the letters of others. Activists in various parts of the country have found that making a point of writing one letter per week, or one per month, is a surefire way to keep the Libertarian Party visible, particularly in non-election years. Writing letters can be a project for party members who may be unable to do other things; in New York, for instance, a member who is physically disabled keeps up a steady stream of letters in his local papers. He makes it a point always to find a way to mention the Libertarian Party. The letters are short -- one or two paragraphs at most -- and give a concise Libertarian view on a particular issue.

The other side of this coin is monitoring letters to the editor for those which express, usually unwittingly, a libertarian sentiment. A volunteer responsible for this project will scan the letters each day, note those which appear sympathetic to the party position, and send a thank-you note and packet of party material to the writer. Not only does this project reach Politically-aware people with the Libertarian message, but it also serves to involve volunteers who may otherwise be unwilling or unable to participate in other activities.

Summary and Conclusions

The experiences described in this section have differed significantly in specific details. Some have been in connection with campaigns, others with more general activities; some have relied on available media while others have not. But all have certain universally applicable points in common:

* Libertarians were willing to ask people to participate, and the requests were personal and specific. Even in the Minnesota example, where leafleting and advertising were major elements, personal solicitation was the key: first, of the original party member in each outlying town, second, of the people who attended the introductory meeting.

* They didn't spend time "qualifying their customers." In sales, it's a standard maxim never to prejudge a customer according to appearance or manner, because you never know who will be a buyer. The same applies to successful outreach efforts. They usu-

ally were directed to a wide audience without much worry about whether or not the new recruits were more or less likely to become 100 per cent immediate plumb-line libertarians.

* After being asked to join and participate, a certain percentage of those contacted said Yes, and a certain percentage said No -- and the percentage which said Yes was always higher than expected. The people involved in the outreach project were not afraid of rejection.

* Once a successful contact had been made, and a positive response obtained, the new people were kept active. Work parties, social events, or special projects were organized, announced, and regularly scheduled. The new members were encouraged to set up their own structures, then followed up periodically by activists at the state level.

* The best resource for party development has been the existing mailing list. In many parties, the names on the list have never been contacted by phone, and sometimes not even by mail, and in other parties, the contacts are irregular and infrequent at best. People who never hear from the organization will tend to lose interest and understandably assume that no party with dynamic people in it exists.

* Successful activists have recognized that most new members come to an increased understanding of libertarianism through contact with other party members, gradually over a period of time. It's extremely important, of course, to educate new recruits in terms of principles and issues, but it's clear that those party organizations which have been most successful in growing outside of the "inner circle" have not demanded any sort of "Purity test" from their new people. Instead, they have assumed correctly that the more experienced libertarians will take care of explaining philosophical points to newcomers in the natural course of social events and political activities.

KEY POINTS ON PARTY DEVELOPMENT

1. The mailing list of party members and prospects is your most important tool. Everyone on it should be contacted in person and asked to participate in party activities.

2. Keep building your list by entering the names of everyone who expresses an interest in the party.

3. Friends, neighbors, co-workers -- they, too, should be invited to participate in or attend party events.

4. Accept the fact that a certain percentage of the people you contact will say "No."

5. Use news releases., flyers, and ads to support your public recruitment efforts.

6. Provide a structure and specific activities for newcomers both at the initial meeting and at subsequent events.

7. Don't prejudge newcomers. Remember that most people become increasingly libertarian through contact with other libertarians, so plan events to mingle new People with "veterans."

KEEPING IT GOING

Once a party organization has started, or has branched out to satellite areas, the critical problem becomes keeping, it going successfully. Far too many initially successful organizational efforts have fallen apart because of lack of follow through. But many party groups, once they've taken shape have not only continued but grown because of a conscious program put in motion for this purpose.

The question to be addressed is how to keep relatively new party members active and interested -- in fact, how to move them

away from thinking of themselves as "newcomers" at all.

The Rochester Experience

Perhaps one of the most consistently successful local party organizations in the country has been the one in Rochester, N.Y., a relatively small city which is not adjacent to other population centers, but which nevertheless has been able both to attract and keep the interest of old and new Libertarian activists.

Rochester Libertarians employ two major tools: a good internal communication device., their newsletter; and frequent meetings which combine philosophical, political and social elements. Actually, they use these tools in duplicate. There is an active chapter of the Society for Individual Liberty in the Rochester area, and an active LP organization, each of which has a newsletter and meetings. The overlap in membership is considerable, but the SIL chapter activities focus on philosophy, while LP activities concentrate on politics and activism. In this way, a broad cross-section of libertarians, regardless of their primary interest, are consistently brought into contact with other libertarians.

Meetings typically are dinners served at a hotel or restaurant which have been publicized well ahead of time through the newsletter. After dinner, routine announcements are dispensed with, and the floor is given over to the featured speaker, who is often from out of town and has had his or her transportation and lodging arranged and paid for by the organizers of the event. This program has meant that Rochester-area libertarians have frequent opportunities to hear outside speakers on a wide range of topics, to keep abreast of libertarian activities in the area, and to be in the friendly company of other libertarians. They have come to look forward to these events; typically at least 50 paying people attend. At one such dinner, for Alaskan legislator Dick Randolph, organized with only four days notice, 70 people were willing to come out.

Rochester Libertarians' ability to keep the organization going and growing doesn't just stop with dinner meetings. They take advantage of each election campaign opportunity, even of local elections which are held in odd-numbered years, and do their utmost to recruit candidates as an almost-perpetual focus for party activism. The candidates are recruited simply because certain activists make it a point to ask other libertarians to run. One Rochester party leader identified 15 people he thought would be good candidates, asked them all, and ended up with six enthusiastic local campaigners (that would be a .400 average if it were baseball).

Attempts are consistently made to involve all members, especially newcomers, in basic party activities. In the case of one dinner meeting, for example, the organization's Chair had no hesitation in asking a couple who were brand-new to the party to lodge the out-of-town speaker overnight; they were delighted to accept, and felt much more "part of things." The Chair views this process of involving all members as routine. Of this instance he said, "It just made sense to ask them because they lived close to the airport. If they had said " No" , I would have asked someone else." Simple and obvious, of course; but in how many other organizations does the party leadership rely exclusively on a small circle of longtime activists, afraid that asking newcomers to participate would be interpreted as being "too pushy"?

The Montana Experience

Montana is an immense state, with a number of small to mid-size cities scattered far apart. It was not until less than two years ago that Libertarians were able to set up effective organizations in

many states have successfully used one or more Montana's activities to keep the party growing. The Montana party has simply been able to combine them all at once, as follows:

1. Immediately after the election, the party tackled the project of trying to change the state's ballot access law in their favor. Previously, Libertarians could only qualify for the ballot on separate petitions, but the party wanted to be able to qualify the entire party with one petition. They identified some sympathetic legislators, explained the problem and what they wanted, and asked if a bill effecting the change could be written and sponsored. The legislators agreed and, several months later, the bill was passed overwhelmingly by both houses of the legislature.

2. After the bill had passed, the party decided to start its ballot drive early, more than a year before the signatures were due. They now have ten coordinators around the state and planned activities for fundraising and volunteer petitioning.

3. The Montana Party, like many party organizations, participates in an activity which always promotes visibility, credibility, and outreach: staffing booths at major county fairs, around the state. In at least one instance, their booth appeared where the Republicans did not -- a fact duly noted by the local newspaper.

4. They have already recruited a candidate for U.S. Senate who

Who Are We?

The Grassroots Libertarians are organized into self-organizing caucuses:

Chair — George Phillies

Steering Caucus: Gene Cisewski]

Lorenzo Gaztenaga

Don Gorman

Lois Kaneshiki

Charles Wilhoite

Activist Caucus: (just be active) Led by

Gail Lightfoot

John Famularo

Public Officials Caucus (you must have been one to belong): Don Gorman — Chair pro tempore

Let Freedom Ring

CMLC Liberator

Libertarian Strategy Gazette

Published by the Pioneer Valley Libertarian Association, Carol McMahon (Treasurer) and George Phillies (Editor and Chair) Subscriptions are \$10 per year, payable to Pioneer Valley Libertarian Association, 87-6 Park Avenue, Worcester MA 01605. Contributions of articles are always welcome.

REPRINT PERMISSION

Libertarian organizations across the United States and elsewhere in the world are hereby authorized to reproduce in their own state, county, and local newsletters articles and complete sections from the *Libertarian Strategy Gazette*.



First Class Mail