

# Libertarian Strategy Gazette

## Short Ideas

### Attract More Non-Voters?

In discussions about campaign strategy, I'm always presented with the question of how to get the people who vote to vote for Libertarians. But, I believe that we are wasting our efforts to get active voters to vote for us. And, so long as we continue to try, we will continue to lose elections.

Twenty percent of those who vote will always vote Republican; 20% will always vote Democrat. Of the remaining 60% "swing" vote, 80% will always vote for either a Republican or a Democrat. That means 88% of those who vote will vote R or D, but not L. Only 12% will even consider us. And, even if we can draw the entire 12%, we won't win. 12% doesn't win, unless it's a plurality vote with 15 candidates and five positions.

About half the people who are eligible to vote take the time to register. (With Motor-Voter, that might be a little higher now.) But, only about half of those who register actually vote. (And, with Motor-Voter, that might be a little lower now.) The result is that when votes are cast, only about 25% of the eligible voters go out and vote.

And that's the good news. Perot polled 19% in 1992. But, as we are pointing out in our open debate campaign, he motivated an additional 12 million new voters to come out. That's where his 19% came from. Not from a draw from the Republicans or the Democrats.

Study the Jesse Ventura campaign. Ventura didn't win by drawing R and D votes; he motivated non-voters to get out. Of course, he turned out to be no different than the Rs and the Ds. But, don't lose the point: His success was in drawing new voters, just like Perot.

That's the key for Libertarian success. The Republicans talk about gun rights, and then introduce and push the biggest anti-gun legislation since 1968. Tom Daschle, on the floor of the Senate, says that there is really no difference between the Republicans and the Democrats.

Bob Dole, in his retirement speech, says his biggest accomplishment was the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program.

I don't wonder why people don't vote. It's clear. At a recent candidates forum in which I participated, one member of the audience told me that, for the most part, he couldn't tell what party each candidate was running with, because they all sounded the same. Except for my call to end property tax and land use planning (which are both inconsistent with private property rights), nothing stood out as different from the other candidates.

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## Editorial

The following letter was distributed to delegates to the 2001 Libertarian Party of Illinois State Convention.

### TAX ACCOUNTABILITY 2001

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To the LPI Delegates:

Tomorrow, you will be voting for LPI officers, who will be responsible for the direction the Libertarian Party takes in Illinois over the next two years. It is important that we begin to build a more successful grassroots organization, with greater financial and organizational support for candidates at the local and state levels. To that end, I urge you to ask the candidates for LPI officer if they will support the following:

1. *Work to change our financial dependence on the National LP.* Under the Unified Member Plan (UMP), a Libertarian welfare system typical of the National party's misguided top-down strategy, the National LP raises money from the LPI mailing list, then gives only a portion to the LPI. If the LPI wants to ask its own members for money under this system, it must compete with the National, and members receive appeals for funds up to every three weeks.

UMP's defenders say that 50 percent of the money that flows into the National from Illinois comes back to the LPI, but this is only partially right. Half of the money from the lowest membership rate (\$25/year) is paid out to the LPI. State organizations receive much lower percentages from higher levels of donations, however. If a member pays \$1,000 for the top level of membership, the LPI receives 6 percent (\$60), and the National keeps 94 percent (\$940). Overall, the LPI only receives about 25 or 30 percent of the total funds raised from Illinois Libertarians.

To improve fundraising opportunities for the more important and more winnable local and state elections, we need to pressure the National LP to change this system, and we may need to get out of UMP altogether.

2. *Hire a full-time or part-time fundraiser.* This person should be responsible for writing and forwarding a fundraising letter to major donors on the LPI mailing

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list every four to six weeks. He or she should also regularly call anyone who has donated \$100 or more in the past.

3. *Solicit new members.* Your paid fundraiser should draft and send out an introductory letter to lists of prospective new members. You can request mailing lists from the Heartland Institute, NTUI, Illinois members of the National Taxpayers Union, and the CATO Institute. These letters should request donations to find and elect LPI candidates.

4. *Cut wasteful spending.* Instead of publishing the Illinois Libertarian monthly, publish four to six times per year. The volume of LPI-related news does not warrant a monthly newsletter. Stop holding annual state conventions. No other political party does this in Illinois, nor does the

national LP. A state convention every two years should be sufficient. If you need to review the by-laws annually, hold a small-scale meeting on a Saturday in 2003 and 2005 with only those people who need to be there, and hold the fundraising dinner that evening. Or you could always change the LPI constitution to eliminate the need to go over the by-laws every year. Libertarians should want to eliminate excessive bureaucracy in their own organization.

5. *Donate the extra funds from enhanced fundraising and cost-cutting directly to LPI candidates and efforts to reform the Illinois election code.* If donors can see the results of their donations, they will be more likely to contribute.

There are only eight Libertarian candidates running in the April 3 election this year, as far as I know, and several of them are barely campaigning. As has been the norm during the last 15 years, they have had no support from the state organization. Several of them have been distracted planning for this convention. LPI activists, instead of working on the candidates' campaigns, have also been planning this convention.

We need to *decide whether the Libertarian Party of Illinois is a social club or a political party.* If you really want to make some changes in Illinois politics, we must first make some changes within the LPI. I hope you will consider these ideas seriously. Thank you.

### Who Are We?

The Pioneer Valley Libertarian Association is Massachusetts' oldest local Libertarian organization, with regular meetings since 1995. The PVLA and its sister Central Massachusetts Liberty Coalition work to advance freedom across Massachusetts' 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Congressional Districts, stretching from Williamstown to Dartmouth. Read about the PVLA and CMLC at <http://www.wmlp.org> and <http://www.cmlc.org>. The Pioneer Valley Libertarian Association meets the Second Wednesday of the month, 7 PM, at Bickfords Family Restaurant, Old Boston Road, Springfield.

Grassroots Libertarians is the National Libertarian Organization dedicated to bringing Libertarian Victory by

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That's what most voters (75%) hear, too. They listened for a while, and found that the choice was a Republican who wanted to expand government and raise taxes, or a Democrat who wanted to expand government and raise taxes.

That's our challenge. Libertarians have got to get across to non-voters. Without the added participation, we're doomed. We have got to learn the lesson of Perot and Ventura. The key to success is a message that rises above the noise of traditional politics, and sets us apart.

That's the advantage of advocating an end to the War on Drugs, Social Security, public education, and the income tax. It won't hit home with the 22% who won't consider us anyway. But, it will strike a chord with the remainder. And, ultimately, that's our success.

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### LMC ACTIVIST SUGGESTIONS The Libertarian Street Team

The tools of success are around us everywhere. Many try to invent their own methods of attracting success but fail miserably. Libertarians are certainly no different. Instead of buying into the mental trap that "we are so much different, our methods of outreach must reflect that", why not simply adopt what already works? Perhaps that is much too simple and obvious for a political party which has a habit of over-analyzing!

For our first activist suggestion, let's look at a publicity tactic used in the music industry: the street team:

For people who have either attended major rock concerts or have some dealings with the music industry, you may be familiar with the concept of "street teams", a group of people promoting a band, record label or upcoming music event. One of my favorite yearly music events is OZZFEST and you will always find people passing our flyers or free music samplers there.

How does it work?

A group of people (4, 5 or 6) gather at a predetermined place and time when they have the best access to a crowd, usually before or after an event. The materials are then doled out to the street team members and then each team member proceeds to distribute their materials.

Simple, isn't it?

Libertarians should (locally or regionally) establish a core group of activists who like to mingle and meet people as their "street team". The street team would be responsible for distributing literature (hopefully short in length with catchy graphics and titles) at targeted events like concerts, street fairs, sporting events, parades and the like. Each event could have a piece of literature targeted to that specific group. For example: a hard rock concert would be appropriate for anti-censor-

ship and legalize marijuana messages.

Within an hour, your street team could be responsible for personally placing the Libertarian message in the hands of hundreds of people who would be most receptive to it!

Although not as flashy as staging protests as a means of communicating our message, street teams have the opportunity of meeting our target audience face to face. That makes the concept of street teams much more efficient.

I realize that this technique is utilized to some extent by Libertarians, but not on a regular basis. Establishing formal street teams professionalizes your outreach and creates an expectation of activity. Why not give it a shot?

*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 changed, 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)

### **The California Experience**

As in Pennsylvania, strenuous efforts were made in late 1979 and 1980 to recruit Libertarians to run for office. Over 100 were found; but the significant point about many of their races was the effort put into developing them as candidates after they agreed to run.

In the San Francisco area, for example, a handful of party members with previous political experience decided to hold weekly "workshops" for area candidates, each session focusing on a particular campaign technique -- precinct analysis, media contacts, fundraising, etc. Through these sessions, the candidates developed a team spirit and a common understanding that they would help each other as much as possible. Many shared a common headquarters, and most, when covering their districts door-to-door, handed out not only their own literature but also that of other Libertarians running in the same area for a different office. The result was that the media and the voters perceived that the Libertarian Party was a broad-based, aggressive movement, not merely a collection of people trying to out-shout each other.

### **Finding the "Perfect" Candidate**

Many state and local party organizations have experienced the desire to run a candidate for a particular office, with the feeling that an especially good or well-qualified individual would be the best candidate. But they immediately figure, "He (or she) would be a terrific candidate, but he (or she) would never agree to run."

This was the situation facing California Libertarians **3** in late 1977, when they hoped to convince Ed Clark to run for Governor. When they asked him, he declined; but they weren't willing to give up yet. They decided that Clark might change his decision if he were convinced not only that he would significantly help the party, but also if the party was able to give him solid support based on a careful understanding of what that would entail.

To that end, a small number of Californians prepared a "Clark for Governor" booklet which identified the achievable goals of the campaign and specified what would be needed in terms of money and people, and when they would be needed. In other words, they "sold"

Clark on the idea that the people supporting him knew what they were doing and were willing to do the hard work necessary for his candidacy to be a success. On this basis, Clark changed his mind and agreed to run; and his election results were greater than anyone expected, propelling him toward the presidential nomination, and setting the stage for Libertarian permanent ballot status in California within a year.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

The history of the party shows that there are two competing theories for getting Libertarian candidates. One theory holds that the party organization should wait until the "right" candidate comes along to volunteer to run. The other theory says that most Libertarians are potentially good candidates, and that they should be solicited, recruited, developed, and supported on a systematic-basis. It's clear that, of the two theories, the second results in more Libertarian candidates within a given area to spread the libertarian message and build political credibility and support. The instances mentioned here had the following points in common:

\* The party organization, through its leadership, made candidate recruitment a conscious goal, integral with party building.

\* All sorts of complex "screening" processes were avoided; rather, the individual judgement of those soliciting candidates was relied upon to determine whether the prospective candidates were good spokespersons for the party. The attitude was that it was preferable to have many candidates, even if a few were bad, rather than to set up complex screening procedures and therefore insure only a few candidates.

\* A great deal of forethought went into demonstrating to the prospective candidates that they would get tangible support from the party; and the promised support was given.

\* It was important to develop a "team spirit" among the candidates, in which they all thought of themselves as-part of the same effort and had a common understanding of the kinds of activities they would engage in.

It should be noted that "Paper" candidates, or "line holders" -that is, candidates who are willing to do no more than have their names on the ballot -- were not discouraged, although the first priority was always to recruit active candidates. Many of the people who initially intended only to be line holders in fact became active

candidates after the team spirit took hold and became contagious. Those who did not at least helped convey the impression that the party was broad-based and credible.

### **KEY POINTS ON RECRUITING AND DEVELOPING LIBERTARIAN CANDIDATES**

1. Develop a consensus among party activists that running candidates is an important and integral part of party activities.
2. All potential candidates should be asked to run; comparatively few will volunteer, but many will agree if approached.
3. Avoid complex screening procedures for candidates, at least at this point in party development. One or two objectively bad candidates will be outshone by many good ones, and most potentially bad candidates will give themselves away before they are recruited.
4. Demonstrate to potential candidates that the party is willing to support their efforts with volunteers, money, advice, headquarters, etc. Develop a written plan if necessary to prove your commitment.
5. Hold training sessions for all of the candidates in the area. Not only will this impart useful information, but it will also develop a "team spirit" and increased cooperation among the candidates.
6. Candidates who are willing to be active should be the top priority, but don't reject "lineholders." They often evolve into active candidates once the campaign gets going.

### **GETTING ON THE BALLOT**

At this point, of course, Libertarians in every state have participated in the experience of successfully qualifying one or more of their candidates for the ballot. It should be acknowledged, however, that some state party organizations have been more successful at this than others in terms of demonstrating their capacity to qualify for the ballot without massive assistance from outside, usually the national office. Achieving a level of strength which allows a state party to qualify for the ballot with little or no help from outside should be an ultimate goal for everyone.

No state party, of course, should hesitate to ask for or accept ballot drive assistance from outside if it's necessary to get the job done. But even when outside assistance is necessary, the state organization can do a lot to carry the burden on its own, by understanding exactly what is required and taking the trouble to do some simple, but critically important, advance planning. The examples given here illustrate this point.

### **The North Carolina Experience**

North Carolina has a unique law for new parties: a party which qualifies for the ballot on or before a non-presidential election year automatically holds ballot status in the presidential year. Therefore, when the Liber-

tarian Party of North Carolina qualified for the ballot in 1978, 1980 ballot status was assured. **4**

The North Carolina party lost its ballot status after the 1980 election -- Ed Clark's percentage of the vote wasn't high enough -- so it resolved to regain it as quickly as possible. Within a few weeks of the 1980 elections, the party made plans to qualify for the 1982 and 1984 ballot in early 1981. Their primary reason was to get it out of the way; but events soon proved that they had another, more pressing reason: the state legislature was about to pass a bill changing for the worse ballot status requirements for new parties. The effective deadline for submitting signatures was mid-year.

The party decided that the most effective way to assure the signatures they needed was to hire paid petitioners. Their goal, then, became twofold: first to raise enough money to pay for the necessary 15,000 signatures, and second to hire reliable paid Petitioners -- and of course, to get all of this done before the deadline. North Carolina ballot status had required significant assistance from National in 1978, but North Carolinians made it a point

### **The power of SMOKE.**

I had to come up with a way to explain to my 4 children (11-15) what the power of being libertarian was when all they ever hear in school is the 5-12% most of our efforts bring (many higher in Arizona, but I don't want others to be discouraged - the free soap box is the benefit of a campaign at this time :) I told them that libertarian philosophy is like smoke.

I took a screen from a window and had the edge facing us. I then took a match, struck it and then blew it out by the screen. The smoke passed right through the screen with no change in its shape as if the screen wasn't even there. I explained that the fire of freedom always produces smoke as a byproduct. The smoke particles are individuals and the smell is the influence that we have on our environment. The screen represents all of the barriers and efforts to control the fire and even the smoke. The screen is made up of government regulations & laws that wish to control and even block the smoke. The screen is also representative of those that even think that smoke can be contained.

One of my children (smarts :) said, "What if they used glass?" I thought for a second and said, Let's find out. By now we're into a family project (lecture) that my children protest heavily. The other 3 children always chastise the one that asks a question that prolongs the lesson.

I took a transparent plate and did the same thing. This time the smoke went over and around the glass. I asked what they thought that that meant. "It didn't go through", was their reply. "You are correct, sir", I said in my best Ed McMahon impersonation. Then my youngest

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College Recruiting  
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Courtesy WPI Libertarians



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looked at me and smiled, "it went around it". "Yes it did. Around & over and even away to somewhere else, right?" Then my other son says, "What if the smoke is trapped in a glass?" I'm now thinking, 'Man, these guys are tough', "I don't know, let's find out". I knew what I was going to do but had to find a quick method around the house to de-menstruate my point without too much of a mess to clean up. I took a cheap drinking glass (the last of a couple left from a large batch that had its numbers dwindled from a few short weeks of exposure to a family of six) and walked out into the backyard where we had our large garbage cans (in Phoenix they are large 70+ gallon plastic containers). When the lid is opened it'll stay open and creates a small ledge at the inside base of the lid (good as a backstop for low powered bb guns - which I thought to bring out but didn't want to start a trend for my boys to follow, and you know they would). I took the 6-8 oz clear glass, turned it upside down, lit another match and held it under the glass until it was smothered out and the glass was filled with smoke and placed the glass inside the garbage can on the back edge with the lid supporting from the back.

While I did this I said, "Yeah, some have tried to smother out freedom", I put my arms out to my side and motioned them back a few steps, reached down and picked up small stone that helped decorate an area around our pool and threw it at the glass (which I luckily hit from about 6 feet away). It shattered and the kids were looking at me with puzzled looks as if I had gone

over the edge. I smiled and said, "look" as I pointed to the small puff of smoke rising into the air. "And that's why Libertarians are so concerned about the right to keep and bear rocks". They always hope that the payoff is worth the attention they have to give me :) I just said, "that's enough for today, go play".

Controlling real libertarians is like trying to control smoke,... and why would you try? Arizona is about trying to create as much smoke as we can,... not controlling it and putting out the flame in the process.

That's enough for now, go play.

...Ernest Hancock

**Stand Up for Liberty!**

George Phillies exciting new book of Libertarian Party strategy is now available as an ebook in multiple formats from Third Millenium Publishing, <http://3mpub.com>, for only \$3.95.

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