
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 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)

They never came close to needing it.

They calculated how much money needed to be raised, and they raised it. They calculated how many signatures were needed from how many petitioners, and they hired petitioners -- mainly Libertarians who had participated in 1980 ballot drives in neighboring states -- sufficient to do the job. When the smoke cleared, the North Carolina party submitted over 15,000 signatures (they needed 10,000 valid) comfortably before the date that the new law changed. They now have ballot status for two election years.

The Wisconsin Experience

In 1979, in preparation for the 1980 election, Wisconsin Libertarians faced another quirky legal situation affecting their ballot status. They had a choice: they could either wait for 1980 and qualify each Libertarian candidate as an Independent with a low number of signatures, or they could start early and qualify the entire party for a higher number of signatures. The catch was, in order to do the latter, they had to collect a certain number of signatures in each of ten counties. They had their choice of any ten, but to reduce the total number of signatures, they chose to petition in the least populated, and therefore most remote, counties in the state.

The Wisconsin party in this case did ask for and receive outside assistance in the form of money and petitioners, but the clear majority of the work they did themselves. They selected the ten target counties and organized "petitioning caravans" of Libertarians on

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Editorial

A Republican foe of the Libertarian Party wrote Richard Rider, saying:

"Show me proof (examples) of your party's "No Compromise" legislative successes. Show me where a Libertarian has swayed a legislative body to his/her position resulting in a significant piece of legislation being signed into law with "No Compromise" to get there. You can't do it, pal."

Richard Rider responds, with successes based on local organization and activism:

While legislative examples of "no compromise" success are indeed few, the reason is obvious -- we have little or no representation in legislative bodies, so we have no ability to influence the outcome of legislative votes. It is a silly call for "proof" of our success where we have no influence. The classic "cart before the horse" fallacy.

But there are examples of "no compromise" success where Libertarians have some say -- such as in lawsuits against taxes. Principles do work.

For instance, when three San Diego Libertarian activists (Richard Rider, Steve Currie and Pat Wright) filed a lawsuit against an illegally passed county sales tax in 1989, we received several offers of compromise while the issue was very much in doubt. We held out for total repeal and full return of all previously collected taxes and interest.

The lawsuit was against all odds. We insisted that such a vote for a tax increase required a 2/3 vote, while this tax had passed by 50.7%. Numerous such simple majority taxes had been imposed in the past throughout the state. Few pundits thought we could win.

We won at the Superior Court level (only because we got a change of venue out of the county), but lost 3-0 at the appellate level. We stunned the politicians by winning in the California State Supreme Court (5-2). But even after that victory, we had another year of opposition and bureaucratic intransigence blocking the government giving the taxpayers all their money back.

Several times the opposition (and even Re-

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weekends to blitz them. They systematically polished off one county after another, carefully keeping track of the signatures collected and directing the most effective use of the outside help. By January of 1980 they had collected the necessary signatures with plenty of time to spare, and thus qualified the Libertarian Party in Wisconsin. And the benefit of this action became clear after the November election, when Ed Clark's vote percentage was high enough for the party to maintain its ballot status automatically in 1982 -something which would have been impossible had they decided to go the easier, later route.

Summary and Conclusions

North Carolina and Wisconsin are hundreds of miles apart, and their ballot access laws are unusual as these things go. But it was in fact the unusual nature of the laws which impelled the Libertarians in each state to take the steps which any state or local organization is capable of taking to help achieve ballot status:

* They were thoroughly familiar with their state's legal requirements, and kept careful track of any proposed changes.

They had their plan mapped out well in advance, and a key element in their planning was simple arithmetic: knowing how many days they had, how many signatures per day it took to meet their numerical goal, and how many petitioners were required to get the number per day they needed.

* They consciously imposed on themselves standards, such as early deadlines, which were more demanding than the law actually required. In North

Carolina, for example, the party could have decided not to run candidates in 1982, and conserve resources for 1984. In Wisconsin, they always had the option of qualifying their candidates as Independents. Instead, they chose to take the more difficult, and more rewarding route, instead of putting the decision off indefinitely.

* They knew exactly what was going to be required in terms of outside assistance. In North Carolina's case, what was required was nothing. In Wisconsin, they knew they needed a certain amount of money and a certain number of petitioners from outside, and they requested them well in advance. In both cases, communications between the state and the National office was regular and complete.

Whether the state requires 3,000 signatures or 60,000; whether the law is simple and straightforward, or Byzantine and complex; these same steps can be followed by any party organization to facilitate the ballot access process.

KEY POINTS ON GETTING ON THE BALLOT

1. Have a plan drawn up well ahead of the actual ballot access drive. Calculate how much money and how many petitioners you will need, as well as how much outside assistance.

2. Be thoroughly familiar with all applicable legal requirements -- have one person take responsibility for this. Read the actual law involved, don't rely on verbal information from officials.

3. Simple mathematics is essential in calculating what you will need. Determine the number of days in the drive' the number of signatures required, and the number of petitioners you will need to collect those signatures in that number of days.

4. If there's any chance you will need outside assistance, communicate this potential need to whomever you will need help from as early as possible.

5. If possible, set goals which are more difficult than those set by the law. Start early, finish early, and collect more signatures than you think you'll need.

REACHING THE NEWS MEDIA

"The media doesn't pay any attention to us." That unfortunately, has been an all-too-common belief of Libertarians who feel, Justifiably, that their hard work goes unrecognized by the public at large. In the years between elections, the problem can become acute, for the media may cover a candidate but it will rarely go out of its way to cover a relatively small party with no visible activity.

The trick, of course., is to be active and visible at

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.pvla.net> 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 building the Party up from the Grass Roots. The Grass Roots philosophy appears in George Phillis eBook "Stand Up for Liberty!" (<http://3mpub.com>).

The PVLA and CMLC web sites are hosted by Excell.net (<http://www.excell.net>) a locally-owned and operated internet service provider with solutions for people and businesses in the Pioneer Valley. Why not patronize a fellow Libertarian? www.excell.net for internet service?

all times, whether or not it's an election year. "Visibility" in the news media requires a systematic effort, based on experience gained during election campaigns which pays off later. The most difficult part of the overall effort comes at the beginning, when the party and the news media are unknown to each other. Once that hurdle is cleared, it then becomes possible to attract regular, ongoing news coverage.

The Ohio Experience

During the 1980 presidential campaign, one of the most consistently productive cities for good news coverage was Columbus, Ohio -- a city where, prior to the campaign, coverage of Libertarian activities had been sparse at best. When a local Libertarian volunteered to be the media coordinator for the campaign, she decided that to be successful she had to accomplish two things: first, to organize her task properly, and second, to develop a personal relationship with the individuals in the news media.

She created a media list simply by copying down addresses of newspapers and broadcast stations from the yellow pages of the telephone book. Instead of relying exclusively on that list, she took the extra step of finding out the name of the person to whom she should send news releases, and then making personal contact through a phone call or visit with each person. Her real goal was to develop relationships with them such that, when she had a news story she thought should be covered, they would know her and she would know them.

By taking this extra step -- that is, by treating reporters and editors as people -- she found them to be receptive, friendly, and cooperative. They were even willing to give her advice on how best to attract coverage. For example, she asked one reporter whether it was better to hold a scheduled news conference downtown or at the airport, and his advice (downtown in this case) resulted in a news conference with 20 reporters attending.

She also decided to be creative about generating news coverage. During the presidential campaign, she could have waited for the one or two instances when Ed Clark was in town, but she decided that coverage of local Libertarian events was every bit as important. For example, she took advantage of a First Amendment dispute between a local TV station and a judge over the station's right to keep material confidential, and she organized a public demonstration by Libertarians in support of the TV station - which, of course, earned considerable coverage.

By concentrating on the "personal relations" aspect of media coordination, she set the stage for positive, regular coverage of party activities after the cam-

paign. Because she knows many of the reporters on a friendly basis, she is able to call them up periodically, even if nothing in particular is going on at the moment.

But when events do occur -- such as an April 15 tax protest demonstration -- she is virtually assured of coverage (the most recent tax protest event was covered live by one TV station). And, because people in the news media tend to watch each other to see what they find newsworthy, her efforts have had a ripple effect outside of Columbus. A reporter from an Akron daily, for instance, wrote a feature story on the Libertarian Party after the election; his angle was that, unlike John Anderson and other third party efforts, it appeared certain that the Libertarian Party was here to stay.

The Iowa Experience

Libertarians in Iowa have provided a classic example of seeing a need and filling it, generating positive local news coverage for themselves in the process. Iowa has many small rural communities served by weekly or semi-weekly papers, most of which are eager for any local news angle they can get. The Iowa party, perceiving this need, began a program of preparing short, simple, standard-format news releases for use in these local papers, and they added a special feature: photographs.

It worked this way. At every party gathering -- a convention, a Clark campaign appearance, etc. -- attendees who lived in small towns would have their photographs taken and be given the standard news release to take back to their paper. For example, John Jones and Suzy Smith from Boonesville would be photographed with the state party chair (a Polaroid is adequate for some small town papers, but is not recommended for larger papers). The release would read, "Boonesville residents John Jones and Suzy Smith recently attended the Libertarian Party state convention in Des Moines," and then go on to describe what happened at the convention. The accompanying photo would be captioned to identify the subjects.

Response from the local newspapers was excellent, and this simple, inexpensive technique became a mainstay of the Iowa party's efforts to generate regular news coverage.

To Be Continued....

Summary and Conclusions

The examples here are only two of many successful instances of positive relations between local party organizations and the news media. And, of

Local Organization—Path to Victory

In a release I received today from LibertyWire Perry Willis says that one the major obstacles we face as a party is what he calls "political tribalism. People who have chosen a political tribe, whether Democrat or Republican, rarely switch tribes."

I agree. From there Mr. Willis proves he has little to offer and does not understand how things really get done. He gives us a long list of what he sees needs to be done, etc. Not once does he state anything about local affiliates and bottom up success. As is said by many "he who does not learn from history is bound to repeat the same mistakes again and again" "he who does the same thing over and over again expecting different results is insane".

What we need to be is "a smart monkey with a twist".

Every organization that has ever grown from an idea to a movement that made a difference started and grew from the grass roots not from the top down.

Lets look at a recent group that grew from one leader and damn few followers to taking over a nation.

The country was/is Iran. They had a few followers in Paris.....not even the same country. He taught them and his talks were taped and the tapes sent to the followers family and friends in Iran. The movement grew and as they say the rest is history.

Every group in history had the same pattern.

A strong leader with a vision and the ability to communicate that vision to others. He/she recruited a small group of followers.....

Trained them.....imparted his/her message (vision).....taught them how to duplicate themselves.....

So what do we need to do?

Build the party county by county !!!

How does this address "political tribalism"?

- 1) it offers them a different tribe in their own local turf
- 2) it brings the tribe to them
- 3) It provides them something they can touch, smell.....

4) it makes the tribe real

5) they can see who else is part of the tribe

6) allows us to create relationships with local media (these are the people people really listen to)

7) grow candidates and get them elected which prepares them for higher offices and gives pride to the tribe

8) provides a platform to teach people to people

Shall I go on?

When will we ever learn?

If you want to see this happen.....

1) vote for state leadership that gives more than verbal blessings to building local affiliates

2) same at national level

3) Build your affiliate and help start one new one (Yes, this means you have to be active)

4) refuse to fund LP and state level activities that do not support local affiliates

PS: Remember tribes need symbols....like flags,songs etc. Tribal members need to build bonds through social events.

...Richard M. Ask ask@gtii.com

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Local Organization Wins!

[Chillicothe MO, 4/3/01] - Jeff Foli has won reelection for mayor by running as a Libertarian. Although his opponent out spent him by 10 to 1, Foli still received 60% of the vote in a two-way race.

Foli was elected mayor in 1999 as a Republican, but this time he decided to run for reelection as a Libertarian. "It was clear to me the I would have difficulty winning Republican primary" Foli said. "The Libertarian Party was the logical choice for me."

Foli has proven that you can fight city hall and win. Several years ago a house that Foli owned was bulldozed by the city. Foli felt he was the victim of government abuse and now he is the mayor. "With me as mayor the city will treat all its citizens with respect and fairness"

Foli said.

National Party Strategy

Given that the strategy sessions of the LNC seem to be tending toward the so-called "membership" model....that is, the LNC ought to continue to function primarily to build its own membership,....

What, pray tell, are the supposed benefits to the members???

Is it the 12 issues of 'LP News' each year...which devote most space to touting the accomplishments of individuals and organization which are NOT the national LP?

Since a maximum of fewer than 1,500 are eligible to attend LP national conventions as delegates, what is the benefit of membership to the other 30,000 current members?

National LP conventions are held only every other year... so what is the membership benefit in a non-convention year?

Is it for the frequently more-humorous-than-principled press releases?

Is it for the steady stream of fundraising letters for projects which so seldom seem to be funded well enough to achieve their goals?

In short, if the LNC is serious about strategic planning, it must ascribe and define sufficient benefits to its operation as a membership organization to justify the belief that an ever-growing number of individuals will invest in membership.

If there is one lesson we should have learned from Project Archimedes, but apparently have not, is that asking people to spend money on memberships solely for the purpose of being able to ask them for money for campaigns does not motivate huge numbers of individuals to write even the first check.

As of 31 Mar 2001, LP national membership was at the same level it was at some point back in 1999....BOTH because of and despite all of the LP campaigns during the interim. The current model based on membership as a cash cow has not worked. It is time for the LNC to give it up.

Gnats Attack!

The following was forwarded us by a reliably placed anonymous source, as a conversation within the so called Republican Libertarian Caucus, a group that believes there are many fine opportunities for Libertarians to work together with the party of the Defense of Marriage Act, the War on Drugs, the Brady Bill, the Communications Decency Act...

RLC Member #1, speaking of the LP:

"We could deal them a fatal blow."

RLC Member#2, in response:

"Could." That is the subjunctive form of the verb "can."

Why would you use "could."

Please reform your comments. The proper verbage which should be utilized in this instance is "must," as in "we must deal the Libertarian Party a fatal blow."

We are now in a state of all-out war with the LP. Though it could be argued that we, Chuck, a couple others and I, might have provoked them. They have declared war on the Republican Party with this latest salvo.

It's time for the weak of heart amongst us, (don't read these following names - Phil Blumel, Paul Jacob, that guy in New Jersey who is always talking about "cooperating with LPers"), to step aside.

The bombastic corps will now lead. We need to fatally strike the LP where it hurts. They are the enemy. Much more so than the Democrats or Moderate Republicans.

Let's kick their asses, Braveheart style!"

The author of the above, on learning he has been caught out, now claims that he was joking. Darn, and he hadn't even seen the new Liberty Congressional PAC fundraiser, the one targeting Liberal Democrats, the one that starts "Help Stop the Radical Right!" and reminds Liberal Democrats "If Harry Brown had only captured another few thousand votes in Florida, we'd have Al Gore in the White House."

Michigan State Convention

Eric Dubiel writes... The main event I attended at the Illinois State Convention was Bob Redfern's speech about how we should organize our Party (he was Tobin's campaign manager in his '98 Gubernatorial run). I was also present at our business meeting for voting purposes... The rest of the time I attended and videotaped Irwin Schiff's fascinating seminar.

I'm working with Ken Prazak and others to set up the LPI's office again. We've had a complete

refreshing of leadership, and a new "Executive Director" starting soon. I'll be setting up their computer resources and helping with the LPI website, maybe the database too, in addition to all my other media/communications responsibilities. Other elected Illini were:

Chair Austin Hough 630/378-4593 houghfamily4@msn.com

Executive Director Scott Kohlhaas 847/836-5618 Dobie1214@aol.com

Vice Chair - David Kelley 815/874-6345 KEL-LYD@prs205.com

Campaigns and Electoral Organizations

Vice Chair Membership Development- Matt Beauchamp 773/528-7463

chairman@lpchicago.org

Vice Chair Media and Communications - Eric DuBiel 847/438-7776

libertyforall@mindspring.com

Secretary Jack Van Noord 847/428-5924 julieand-jack@netzero.net

Treasurer Bill Stephens 847/551-1930

wstephen60@aol.com

LPI Counsel Andy Spiegel 847/755-9780 lpigc@ync.net

Region 1 Chicago Matt Lonegran 773/404-4637 samurai80@yahoo.com

Region 2 NW Suburbs Sue Schell 847/439-5786 none

Region 3 West Suburbs Ken Prazak 847/426-1974 liberty1@megsinet.net

Region 4 Western Illinois John Huwe 815/637-1028 jvhuwe@execpc.com

Region 5 Central Illinois Jeff Trigg 309/693-3402

Jeff@randomactofkindness.com

Region 6 Southern Illinois Currently Vacant

Director of Activism Ken Prazak 847/426-1974 liberty1@megsinet.net

Director of School Groups Matt Lonegran 773/404-4637 samurai80@yahoo.com

Newsletter Editor Brady Frey 847/746-9470

brady.frey@fricknet.com

Director of Speakers Bureau Currently Vacant

Special Events Coordinator Julie Fox (temp.) 847/836-0531 Dobie1214@aol.com

In liberty,
Eric Dubiel

Maternity Notes

We hear from long-time Libertarian Activist Jackie Bradbury and husband Kevin: Katherine Rebecca Bradbury, born 2:56 pm on July 8, 2000, at 8 lbs 2.8 oz. Now, Kate's almost nine months old, almost 19 pounds (!!!) and is completely incredibly cool. Babbling, crawling, getting into everything - such a smart and physically active little girl, and she does not resemble me physically in the slightest (she is the near-spitting image of her Dad, Kevin). I never thought I'd have a blond-haired, pale-skinned baby!

...Jackie B.

A sample candidate flier that worked. This newspaper insert was the core of the campaign. Al got 19% of the vote, and 36% in **6** the towns of Wales and Monson.

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publican "allies") approached us with "realistic" compromises that would give us a "victory" without winning it all. We said no! And, ultimately, we prevailed. San Diegans had their sales tax reduced back 1/2%, saving over 100 million dollars a year. In addition we forced the return of over 400 million dollars of previously collected sales tax plus interest. Finally, and most important, our complete victory established a legal precedent that rocked the Establishment of California. If we had compromised, we probably would not have set this crucial precedent.

CALIFORNIA LAWYER magazine listed "Rider vs. County of San Diego" as the "blockbuster case of the year (1992)," and over nine billion dollars of taxes were either blocked or repealed. Show me where Republican "compromise" in the California legislature this past decade has gained anywhere near nine billion dollars of savings.

In fact, PAL, you'll find that (in the early 1990's) when the Republicans controlled both the governor's office and both houses of the California state legislature, they raised taxes fourteen billion dollars.

RichardRider@EconomyTelcom.com

Stand Up for Liberty!

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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.

Libertarian Strategy Gazette

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Grassroots Libertarians

dedicated to fixing the Libertarian Party from the bottom up. Now on the web at www.grassroots-libertarians.org. The Grassroots-Libertarians are a self-organizing group of libertarian activists whose message is "Just Be Active! Run for Office! Campaign! Help!"



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