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# APC NEWS

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Newsletter of the Libertarian Party Affiliate Parties Committee

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Volume 2, Number 7 • July 1991

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## Affiliate Campaign Committee To Host

# Candidate Training Seminar Planned for Convention

Prospective 1992 LP candidates will want to attend the all-day Candidate Training Seminar Wednesday, August 28 at the LP National Convention in Chicago.

Featuring elected Libertarians and experienced outreach campaigners, the seminar will help candidates get the most out of their campaigns, including getting elected! The seminar is free to those registered for a convention package (activist level or above); \$20 to anyone else. Please contact APC Chair Steve Dasbach to reserve a spot.

### **Morning Session: Running for Outreach (8:00am-12:00 noon)**

**Steve Dasbach**—former Affiliate Campaign Chair (1988-1991): Steve has talked with countless candidates over the past 3 1/2 years, studying their campaign successes and failures. He will share some observations and interpretations.

**Don Ernsberger**—candidate for Congress (1988): Don's campaign was characterized by setting measurable goals (all of which were achieved), a plan of action for achieving those goals, and projections of what his campaign team thought would result. One goal dealt with newspaper coverage; over 200 articles resulted. Don will discuss setting and achieving goals, as well as some surprising results of his campaign.

**Toby Nixon**—candidate for State Legislature (1990) & **Ron Crickenberger**—Affiliate Campaign Chair & Toby Nixon's campaign manager: You'd like to use television in your campaign but think you can't afford it? Think again! Toby and Ron were able to produce clever, quality ads for less than \$300, allowing most of their campaign

funds to be used to air the commercials. They'll explain how to produce low-cost ads, raise money to get them on the air, and what TV can do for your campaign.

**Tonie Nathan**—former LP Media Relations Director & five-time candidate: Some say the best media coverage is free media. Tonie will discuss what makes an event (or campaign) newsworthy, how to get on radio and TV talk shows, and how to get the most from interviews and appearances.

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### **LUNCH—Informal Discussion w/ Speakers and Other Candidates (12:00 noon-1:00pm)**

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### **Afternoon Session: Getting Elected! (1:00pm-5:00pm)**

**Andre Marrou**—elected to Alaska legislature (1984-86), candidate for vice-president (1988), current candidate for LP presidential nomination: Andre is one of only three Libertarians elected to a state legislature. He'll describe how he got elected, as well as what he learned from his prior 1982 campaign which he didn't win. He'll also discuss the importance of television in today's campaigns.

**Sandi Webb**—elected to the Simi Valley City Council (1990), **Aaron Starr**—Sandy Webb's campaign manager & **Dan Weiner**—helped develop Sandy's campaign strategy & telephone polling: Sandi went from zero name recognition to winning a seat on the city council in a city of over 100,000 people. Sandi, Aaron, and Dan will show you how they used television to build Sandi's name recognition and image with the voters, as well as how they used telephone polling to track the success of their campaign plan. These strategies can help you get elected, too!



# Our Not-So-Secret Weapon—Letters to the Editor Coupled with Our High Tech Options

by Dick Rider

Without a doubt, the most cost effective way of reaching the most people for the least money is a letter to the editor. We cannot overemphasize the importance of such letters in influencing both the general population and the decision makers.

Some people vent their spleen by writing their political representatives. We feel that this approach is of limited value. The letter is simply tallied as to which side of an issue the writer favors, and a form letter reply is sent back from their sophisticated word processor. The eloquence of the arguments is wasted on some staffer; it is almost never read by the politician.

Advertising on TV, radio and in newspapers can also cost too much for the results it yields.

In contrast, studies indicate that letters to the editor are the most widely read part of a newspaper—surpassing the funnies, sports or even the

front page! Those who favor new government spending programs have long used this section to advance their agenda. It is high time we Libertarians intensified our efforts in this area.

What makes this approach exciting is the advent of the computer and the fax machine. With these innovations we can replicate a letter to numerous papers (along with radio and TV stations, politicians and interested parties) for nominal cost.

We have been doing mass letters in San Diego for some time, although we need to further expand this effort. We feel that this tactic is a contributing factor to our success (we are the largest chapter in the nation).

We have a county media mailing list available to those who favor most of our positions and are interested in writing to the papers directly. A form letter is acceptable, but using the personalized mail merge option on word processors allows one to prepare a letter addressed to each paper, thus somewhat increasing the chance of publication. Unfortunately the postage bill can be a problem, not to mention the time spent printing, signing, folding, stuffing, sealing, addressing, stamping and mailing.

Computers with word processing are great, but the latest wrinkle is the explosion of fax machines and computer fax boards, and the new opportunity for mass communication they offer. In San Diego we think we have developed this media tool to a fine art.

We use a regular fax machine, plus two fax boards within a computer hooked to phone lines. A fax board is simply a fax machine that sends and receives faxes via the computer. It has the advantage that it can hold thousands of fax phone numbers, calling whatever subgroups the sender designates at whatever hour desired.

A fax board with the requisite software is also becoming quite inexpensive. A fully functional

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## Interstate Networking

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**CONGRATULATIONS TO NEW STATE CHAIRS...** New State Chairs include W. Gary Johnson (NY), Stephen Lonardo (RI), G. Michael Neligh (AK), and Ralph Swanson (FL). Many thanks, as always, to out-going chairs: Kevin Delaney (NY), Rick Henderson (RI), Chuck House (AK), Charles Manhart (FL).

**C-SPAN ADS PLANNED...** Jim Parker, Central Region representative of the LP of Ohio, reports that the Columbus LP plans to run ads in their local TV guide promoting C-SPAN's coverage of the Libertarian Party convention in Chicago. If you are interested in running similar ads in your state and would like to help develop masters for the ads, contact Jim Parker as soon as possible.: 2834 Kingsrowe Ct., Columbus, OH 43209, 614-236-0573.

**NEW TELEPHONE TREE MANAGER NAMED...** LNC member Toni Black has been appointed the new system manager of the LP's telephone tree. The tree is used to provide time-sensitive information to all 50 states within 48 hours. Please check your telephone tree listing in the LP Directory and notify Kathleen Richman at MKR Associates of any changes for your state.

**COUNCIL OF STATE CHAIRS TO MEET...** Alicia Clark is organizing a meeting of the Council of State Chairs during the national convention, Wednesday, August 28. The Council will meet from 9am-Noon, with a two-hour box lunch break, and a final session from 2-5pm. There will be no speakers, allowing state chairs a chance to share their experiences, problems, and concerns.

**PRESS RELEASE LEADS TO TALK SHOW APPEARANCE...** Don Ernsberger appeared on a WNIS Radio talk show in Norfolk, VA, recently to detail the LP's position on the recent Supreme Court ruling on federal funding of family planning clinics that offer abortion counseling. The LP put out a press release following the ruling, calling it a perfect example of why federal funding is inherently flawed. "...[E]ven though we agree that it is unfair to force anti-abortion taxpayers to fund clinics that recommend abortions, continued funding of these clinics—under the court approved restrictions—forces pro-choice taxpayers to fund clinics that are legal prohibited from giving what these taxpayers believe to be accurate and important information," LNC Chair Dave Walter said in the release.

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### Tax Cut Action! Sponsors Chicago Rally to Hold Gov. to Pledge

The LP's newest project, Tax Cut Action!, recently led angry taxpayers in downtown Chicago at a rally insisting that Gov. Jim Edgar honor his campaign pledge to abide by the terms of the Tax Accountability Amendment.

Tax Cut Action! Director Jim Tobin was chairman of the campaign for the amendment, which would have required 60 percent approval of the state legislature for passage of any increase in state taxes or user fees. The amendment's tremendous public support forced both Edgar and his Democratic opponent to endorse the measure. The amendment was thrown off the ballot last October by Illinois courts, and the

resulting public outcry led to Gov. Edgar's pledge to abide by the amendment's terms, despite its failure to be enacted.

Now in office, Edgar is reconsidering. A "temporary" 20% surcharge on the state income tax is due to expire June 30, and Edgar has told media he is considering signing a bill to extend the increase, even if it receives only a majority.

Rally participants were armed with postcards which they passed out to the public—addressed to Edgar and making it clear that the voters *expect* him to honor his pledge.

If there is tax issue in your state that Tax Cut Action! could help with, contact MKR Associates.



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## Computers, FAXs Give New Life to Letters-to-the-Editor

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MS DOS fax board and software goes for as little as \$130 (the cost of a one minute commercial on a major radio station)! Make sure it has 9600 baud fax speed and can both send and receive; there are limited models out there.

The big disadvantage of the fax board is that it will not directly accept hard copy for faxing the way a fax machine will. If the fax is produced by your computer, the text can be converted internally by the fax board. Otherwise you need to either copy the hardcopy image into the computer with some scanning device or send yourself the hardcopy image from another fax machine. We use our fax machine to send to our fax board by simply calling out on one phone line and receiving the fax back into the computer fax board on another line.

Signatures can be faxed into the computer and kept on file. When needed they can be merged with letter faxes. This saves valuable time getting the hardcopy delivered with a signature.

In sum, the fax machine is easier to use for sending and receiving individual faxes, but is ill-suited for broadcasting faxes to a list of numbers. The computer fax board is much cheaper, prints to plain paper vs. thermal fax paper (albeit much slower), will operate in background mode while the computer does other tasks, and better controls time and selection of fax numbers to call.

We have loaded up the fax numbers for about 120 newspapers, 290 radio stations and 60 TV stations (almost all in California). In addition, we have many of the fax numbers of allied libertarian/free market/tax fighting organizations and some Libertarian VIP's. Also we have gathered by hook or by crook the fax numbers for all the county's city councils and most of the state and federal representatives in our area. Finally we have a local network of libertarians and allies who can be reached by fax.

If someone wants to inexpensively send a letter to local media (including radio and TV),

they send us a fax or hard copy of that letter and we will re-fax it to all county media for "free," (although party contributions are encouraged). Our only cost is whatever local area tolls we pay the phone company. The letter must be generic. By having the author not put a date on it, we can have some latitude as to which day we send it.

A fax machine or fax board has an option to put a time/date stamp and originator title at the very top of each fax sent out. This option must be deleted so as to not give away the fact that a single fax machine is sending a variety of letters from different authors. We mix formats, type styles, salutations, etc., on the letters so they do not seem to come from a single mastermind.

The letter must be reasonably libertarian in content, a subjective judgment left solely to me (no time for committee review). We are particularly interested in letters that include the word "libertarian" in some manner, but this can be overdone. We encourage our officers to write with their titles as sometimes that title is included in the paper (and all good letter writers can have a title of some sort!).

We offer our fax service to non-libertarians who are allied with us on a particular issue such as taxes. In fact, we have made friends and a few new members by sending a complimentary form letter to letter writers expressing libertarian sentiments and offering to disseminate future letters for them.

To date we have not had a single paper complain because we send the same letter to many media locations. This largely baseless fear has caused some Libertarians to refrain from using the multi-submission approach. As for faxing versus mailing, many papers now advertise that they accept letters via fax. As this is still rather a novel method of submission, we feel that the timely faxed letter may get even higher priority. For a major paper, we might fax a customized letter with their address at the top (essentially a "mailmerge" approach), while sending a generic

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## High Tech Letters-to-the-Editor

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letter to the other media. This customization could increase the chance of publication somewhat.

We also fax the whole state with letters or press releases for the state party. In an evening after 11pm, with two fax boards we can send a one page fax to almost 700 locations. The cost for a fax to our 470 media locations is about \$80.

The Libertarian Party bureaucracy at all levels naturally likes to send out press releases. In San Diego we have found that the value of a press release pales into insignificance compared to a letter to the editor. The main purpose of a press release is to let the media know we are out there. Seldom will the release lead to any coverage unless the slant is uniquely interesting. Normally a press release can be modified into a letter and sent under some officer's name with significantly superior results.

Frequently a letter is in response to an editorial or story in a particular newspaper. We suggest that one personalized letter should be sent to that paper, with a second generic letter sent to us for faxing. By replacing the first sentence referencing a specific article with a more generic phrase such as "recent calls for..." or "media reports of..." will allow us to send the letter to other papers as well.

After all, the hard part is writing the letter. It is a shame to use all that effort for only one paper that may or may not run the letter. Our method almost assures publication somewhere. In addition, the letters are sometimes read on the air or otherwise referred to by broadcasters. Furthermore, politicians get to hear our views as well.

Any letter should give the author's name, address and phone number as some papers like to check the validity of authorship. If a friend would be willing to sign the letter, it is perfectly okay to do so provided the person signing the letter agrees with it's contents. After all, politicians have speech writers, don't they?

One minor disadvantage is that you will not likely know all the papers where your letter is printed. Attempts to set up local volunteer clipping arrangements have been only sporadically successful.

We maintain a party letters scrapbook, bringing that to meetings to show others. It is good ego feedback to the writers and stimulates the writing instincts in others.

By the way, for those of you who have personal or business long distance phone bills exceeding \$60 a month, consider getting an outgoing WATTS line. Competitive pressures have made them remarkably inexpensive even for the small operator. There are numerous carriers offering sweet deals well worth investigating. With our skimpy budgets, this is an avenue of savings well worth pursuing.

Try our approach. We think you'll love the results. Let's start making our voices heard without spending a fortune.

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*Dick Rider is Chairman Emeritus of the San Diego Libertarian Party and runs the California LP's 800# outreach program.*

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## LP Supports Boy Scouts

The LP issued a press release last month defending the Boy Scouts of America's right to set membership criteria. An atheist boy and his father are now in court, contending that, as a public group, the Boy Scouts should be prohibited from discriminating on the basis of religious beliefs. The release said, in part, "While the Libertarian Party opposes any such discrimination by government or other publicly-funded operations, Walter said the party believes that private organizations and individuals must be free to associate or not associate with people of their choice. Walter said the attempt to classify private groups or enterprises as public simply because they are for the most part open to the public distorts the term, which Libertarians define strictly as funded or otherwise subsidized by government."



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☆ DIRECTORY UPDATES ☆

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**NOTE:** Beginning with this issue, this column will include Directory Updates only. Contact information for the APC Chair, APC contractors, and the LP Headquarters will be listed monthly in the box on page 2.

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