

The Libertarian Volunteer

A newsletter for LP volunteers, activists, officers, and candidates

Advice from the media

■ A collection of “here’s-what-ya-oughta-do’s” from journalists. Should Libertarians listen?

BY BILL WINTER

LP Director of Communications

Ask Libertarians what advice they’d give to the media, and the answer will most likely be: “Give us more coverage!”

But ask the media what advice they have for Libertarians, and their answers range widely — everything from “stay away from militias” to “recruit a famous leader” to “elect people to lower office first.”

For the past several years, I’ve been collecting “here’s-what-ya-oughta-do’s” from newspapers around the country. Most of this advice was triggered by specific campaigns, and most was offered by non-Libertarian writers who were either neutral or supportive of libertarian ideas or the LP.

So, the advice — some of it strongly phrased — was usually offered as a way to help the party succeed. *Constructive*, rather than destructive, criticism.

But is advice from the

media useful or insightful?

Yes and no. On one hand, most newspaper journalists have spent years observing politics close-up, and understand what factors make the difference between political success and failure. On the other hand, they are experts on “major” party politics. They frequently don’t understand the unique challenges that third parties face.

But the media’s special perspective makes their advice at least worth considering. After all, we’ve all gotten lots of advice

from other Libertarians. But advice from the media can give us a fresh perspective about what we should do, and how we should do it.

Here, then, is advice from the media. In some cases, where somewhat derogatory statements have been made about individual Libertarians, the names have been deleted (and the location not identified).

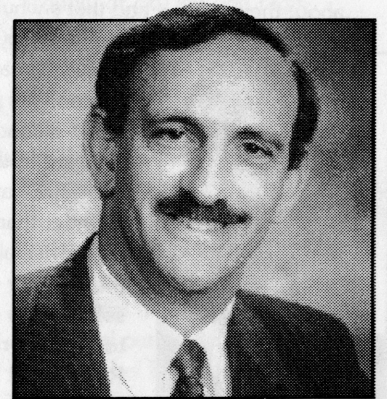
Following each nugget of advice, I’ll give my comments on the merits of that suggestion — based on LP experience or history, current LP strategy, or political wisdom.

Running to win?

■ In 1994, Steve Winter ran an excellent, aggressive campaign for governor of New Hampshire and won 4% of the vote — enough to maintain the LP’s “major party” status. But after the race, the *Manchester Union Leader*, in an unsigned editorial, chastised Winter for a “silly” campaign strategy.

The paper wrote:

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■ Richard Rider

Write all about it!

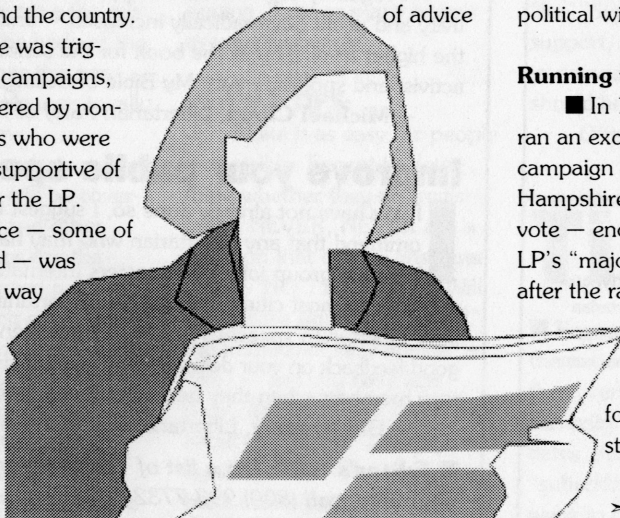
■ How to write perfect letters to the editor

BY RICHARD RIDER

Libertarian Party of California

Short, concise letters are always more likely to be published than long, meandering ones; try to keep them under 200 words max. The longer letters are also more likely to be edited — it’s better that you do your own editing. Ever notice how you read letters to the editor in the paper? Most people read the shorter letters first and

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■ From the Editor

Obsession: Pursuing our great white whale

Call me Ishmael. OK, don't call me Ishmael, but you can call me *determined*. Determined, as so many other Libertarians are, to get the Libertarian Party mentioned in newspapers, on the radio, and on television.

That's why this issue of the *Volunteer* has several features about the media — and that's why I'm quoting *Moby Dick* . . .



Bill Winter, Editor

In a way, the media is the Libertarian Party's "great white whale" — it's our obsession. We pursue it; we try to understand it and second-guess it, and, occasionally, we want to throw a harpoon at it!

Fortunately for Libertarians, the pen is mightier than the harpoon. And this issue has advice about how to put your pen (or, rather, your computer and word-processing software) to good use: A feature from letter-to-the-editor writer extraordinaire Richard Rider about how to write the "perfect" 200-word letter, and suggestions from Mark Thompson-Kolar (assistant managing editor at a major newspaper) about how to help

yourself by helping print journalists.

And speaking of advice, we've also got Part One of a feature on advice that the media has given to Libertarians. I think you'll be intrigued by what journalists think we should do.

Plus, this issue includes: Information on fundraising; advice for candidates; petitioning "how-to;" and a new batch of "What Works" items. I hope you find it all useful — and I hope you keep sending me news about what's working in your state, so I can share it with other Libertarian activists. Working together, we'll make the LP the "big fish" in America's political waters!

The Libertarian **Volunteer**

A newsletter for LP volunteers, activists, officers, and candidates
Volume 9 ♦ Issue 2 ♦ March/April 1998

The Libertarian Volunteer is a publication of the Libertarian Party, and provides news, political resources, and strategic suggestions for Libertarian volunteers. Permission is granted to reprint articles if credit is given to the author, *The Libertarian Volunteer*, and the Libertarian Party. Letters, comments, articles, and suggestions are welcome! **Editor:** Bill Winter

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♦ Phone: (202) 333-0008 Ext. 226 ♦ Fax: (202) 333-0072
♦ E-mail: 73163.3063@compuserve.com

What Works

Whom to talk to at C-SPAN

Does your state or local party have an upcoming event that you think C-SPAN may be interested in broadcasting to a nationwide audience? They are willing to cover LP events — over the past several months, they broadcast from both the Massachusetts and California LP conventions — but will generally *only* cover prominent speakers. If you've got a big-name guest or high-powered panel discussion that may qualify, here's whom to talk to:

"The person at C-SPAN in Washington DC who is a key decision-maker (which events to cover) is Alan Speck at (202) 626-4366. Fax: (202) 737-6226. To get him to consider an LP event, fax a cover page to his attention with description/schedule/details attached — preferably in one page."

— **Carla Howell**, State Chair, LP of Massachusetts

Secrets of successful selling

Want to become a better Libertarian "salesperson"? According to LP super-salesman Michael Cloud, here are the two best books on selling — each containing "field-tested, performance-enhancing" approaches:

"1. *No Bull Selling* by Hank Trisler (© 1983, Bantam Books; reprinted 1995 or 1996). This is short, readable, funny, salesperson/customer-gentle, and appeals to the self-interest of the customer. This is a general interest/popular book. If you read only one book on selling, make it *No Bull Selling*.

"2. *SPIN Selling* by Neil Rackham (© 1988 by McGraw-Hill). This book documents the most thoroughly tested, empirically verified sales approach. SPIN is an acronym: Situation, Problem, Implication, and Need-Payoff. Dr. Rackham's approach helps the user uncover and discover what the prospect's problem is, what are the consequences and costs of the problem, and how to lead the prospect 'to tell you the benefits that your solution could offer.'

"I regularly use Rackham's approach — and my productivity and profit have radically increased — and endured at the higher level. This is *the* book for the serious Libertarian activist and spokesperson. My Bible of Selling."

— **Michael Cloud**, Libertarian Party of Nevada

Improve your public speaking

If you have not already done so, I suggest that you recommend that any Libertarian who may have to speak before a group join Toastmasters International. There are clubs in most cities. You get an opportunity to practice your Libertarian speeches before a live audience and you get good feedback on your delivery. Also you just might gain a few new members when they hear about what you have to say.

— **Bill Bradley**, Libertarian Party of Connecticut

■ **Editor's note:** For a list of Toastmasters meetings in your area, call (800) 993-7732.

Secrets of high-volume petitioning

■ It's never fun — but here are ways to make it more efficient

BY DANA JOHANSEN
Libertarian Party of Virginia

What's the purpose of petitioning? Proselytizing? No. Membership Growth? No. Ballot Access? Yes! Here's how to make that petitioning process as painless and efficient as possible.

PREPARATION:

1. Prepare as many petition boards as you can handle. I like to use 10" x 15" pieces of foam board. It is available in (usually) 30" x 40" sheets at most office supply stores or craft stores. Some large grocery stores may have it. You get eight boards from each sheet. Cost is about 50¢ per board. I can handle about five or six of these, but only about two or three of the store-bought clipboards. Mine are lighter, and don't have that mechanism that sticks out at the top. Convenient!

2. Onto each board, on the upper right hand side, securely tape the cap of a good quality ballpoint pen. I find it works best if you tape the tab first, then tape the body of the cap. This becomes the penholder, and people won't walk off with your pens.

3. Determine how many jurisdictions you will be covering. Presidential and other statewide petitions are the worst. You will need a different sheet for each city or county you cover, and within each county/city, a separate one for each Congressional district. For example, when I petition for President inside the beltway in Virginia, I need

10 different sheets! I also need several blank ones in case I run out of space or find someone from an even further jurisdiction. Yes, it is a pain.

4. I use "Post-It" tabs and write the district/name on each one. These I place at the bottom of the petition sheets in staggered order.

5. I then use a heavy duty stapler to staple the sheets to the top of the foam board. I use a stop block between the two halves of the stapler to prevent it from crushing the foam too much.

STRATEGY:

Most registered voters are willing to be led into signing the petition. Act friendly and confident. Smile and look them in the eyes. People are VERY gregarious. People will do what the person before them did. Therefore you want to have as many boards as you can handle. If you run out of boards, then someone will walk away without signing. Having started, others will walk away without signing. Take as many boards as you can handle.

VERBAL TIPS:

Make it as easy for people as possible. Except to determine whether they are registered; NEVER, NEVER ask a question that can be answered with a "NO"! If you ask, "Will you please sign my petition?", the immediate easy answer is "No" — and you have lost them. Instead, make statements about your need: "I need your signature." Or "Please sign this ballot access petition . . ." At this

point, they either have to think of a reason not to help you, or they can sign. About one-third find it easier just to sign.

PHYSICAL TIPS:

Place the board in their hands. Hand it to them, make them take it. Get the board in their hands. They seem much more likely to sign if they are already holding the board. Do this while you are telling them that you need their signature. I try to hand it to them as I am saying ". . . this petition."

BASIC SCRIPT:

"Good afternoon (or whatever). Are you a registered voter in Virginia?" (If no, thank them; go to the next person.)

If yes. . . "Great! I need your signature on (or "your help with") this ballot access petition." Place the board in their hands. I can't stress this enough. Give them the board, get it in their hands, hand it to them so that they take it.

They will usually ask what it is for. Say something like: "We are collecting signatures to put XYZ on the ballot in November." I say something like: "Signing does not indicate support, it just says you believe in democracy and think they should be allowed on the ballot."

Often they will ask some-

thing like: "Who are these candidates?" I say: "XYZ is running for office on the Libertarian Party ticket." (If I see a bad reaction to the word Libertarian I say, "No, not LaRouche!")

Before they can ask too many questions, I ask: "What county or city are you registered in?" They will usually answer that question truthfully. Immediately turn to that page on the board THEY ARE HOLDING, show them the pen, and begin the line about ". . . please sign the first line, print your full name under your signature, put your full residential address here, date here and put your Social Security number here if you please." If necessary, reassure them: "No, we won't send you any mail unless you ask for it."

As soon as you see them start writing, get the next board in the next pair of hands. The next person is far more likely to sign if someone is already signing. Keep the boards busy.

■ *Editor's note: Petitioning laws and requirements may be different in your state; check with the Secretary of State or state election department before beginning any petitioning drive. Dana Johansen is the State Chair of the Libertarian Party of Virginia.*

Tips! Candidates: Using LP News Releases

■ **For candidates:** If you are not signed up to receive directly the national LP press releases, you should do so. You will find them very well written, with good factoids you might use in your campaign. These are particularly good for Congressional candidates. Just e-mail to <announce-request@lp.org> with the word "subscribe" in the subject line, or use the WWW form at www.lp.org.

— Richard Rider, California

Clinton conspiracies, address correcx, & getting more publicity in *LP News*

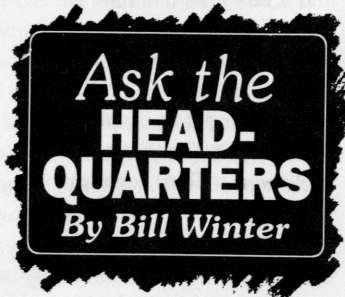
Q When I access the Internet for information about Mena, Arkansas, I get referenced to a great deal of documentation regarding the Iran-Contra affair and affidavits linking Bill Clinton to money laundering for the drug dealers involved. Inquiries about Al Gore lead me to info linking the Gore family to the Armand Hammer family. Hammer, we know, supported the Russian despots' American investment and money-laundering schemes.

What's going on, and how do we alert the public? — B.M., Connecticut

Most Libertarians, knowing the kind of people that Bill Clinton and Al Gore are, would cheerfully believe almost any accusation made against them — up to and including conspiring with Russian despots!

However, the Libertarian Party doesn't exist to research and publicize Clinton's or Gore's alleged shadowy crimes, or to put them in jail for running drugs (however appealing that thought may be!). We exist to elect Libertarians to public office, so we can reduce the size, cost, and intrusiveness of government. The best way to accomplish that is by building the size of the party — not by reinventing ourselves as the "1-800-CONSPIRACY Party."

The fact is, we don't exist to prove conspiracies, whether it's Clinton's Mena drug-runner connections, or Gore's money-laundering, or black helicopters,



or the "fact" that the government really blew up the Federal Building in Oklahoma City.

Instead, the Libertarian Party is more interested in the crimes that politicians commit on the floor of Congress and then brag about on the nightly news — outrages such as raising taxes, censoring the Internet, expanding wiretapping, supporting unconstitutional terrorist legislation, sending American troops to die in foreign nations, or restricting the Second Amendment — than we are in the cybergossip that floats around on the Internet.

QUESTIONS?

Have a question about party-building, media relations, campaigning, newsletters, fundraising — or any other area of LP political activity? Or questions about national LP policies or plans? Mail them to: Libertarian Party, Libertarian Volunteer / Ask HQ, 2600 Virginia Avenue, NW, Suite 100, Washington DC 20037. Fax: (202) 333-0072. E-mail: 73163,3063@compuserve.com

Remember: We've got a more important task — fighting for liberty. And we shouldn't let any "conspiracy," no matter how entertaining, distract us from that job.

Q What should state parties do with address corrections (for new members or prospects)? — S.D., Alabama

Send them to us at the national HQ! We want to keep our database as up-to-date as possible, and welcome address corrections from state parties.

What's the best way to send them? However is most convenient for you: We'll take 'em via mail; fax; or e-mail.

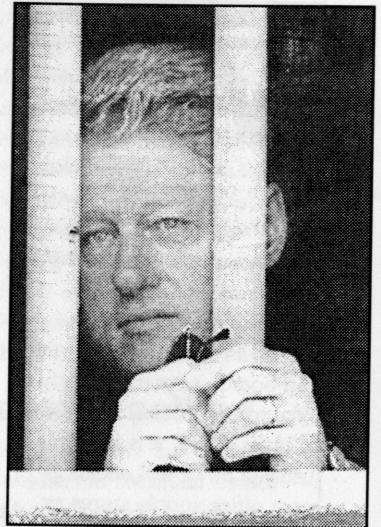
By mail: Libertarian Party, ATTN: Office Manager Nick Dunbar, 2600 Virginia Avenue, NW, Suite 100, Washington DC 20037.

Via fax: (202) 333-0072, again to Nick's attention.

Or e-mail them to Nick at 110112,301@compuserve.com. Subject line: Address Corrections.

Q The people of Michigan have noticed that the affiliates section [of *LP News*] has recently had no news concerning MI. I suggested to our Executive Committee that they find someone to facilitate more frequent inclusion by putting together a few hundred words every month about Michigan. If you find the above helpful, just let me know when the newspaper deadline is.

— D.M., Michigan



■ As tempting as it may be, the Libertarian Party doesn't exist to try to put Bill Clinton behind bars.

I've gotten questions from several state party activists about how to get more coverage for their state parties in *LP News*. I'm always looking for good stories, so I'll take a moment to explain some *LP News* editorial policies.

As editor, I'm trying to make *LP News* a more interesting and inspiring newspaper for our members, so I like to focus on political activities and political success. This means stories about . . .

■ Election victories.

Remember, we exist to get Libertarians elected! Also: I like to hear about political appointments, if it is a relatively important position.

■ Political success —

whether it's through lobbying, referendums, repealing local laws, and so on. I'm especially interested in victories that illus-

trate important Libertarian principles: Like the defeat of a new tax, or a civil liberties victory. Keep in mind: This activity doesn't have to be an "official" activity of the state party. I'm also interested in local party activity — and even good work from *individual* Libertarians. And I'm especially interested in achievements from elected Libertarians.

■ **Political activity** — even if it hasn't resulted in a victory yet (or even if we happened to lose that particular battle). We want to show folks that the Libertarian Party is an *active* party, and is out there *working* for their liberty.

■ **Effective political strategy:** If you're doing something interesting and innovative (that is also successful!), I want to hear about it — whether it's lobbying, membership recruitment, generating media, or whatever. I want *LP News* to be a forum to share success stories with all our members. (Some of these kinds of stories also appear in the *Libertarian Volunteer*.)

■ **High-profile defections:** Did someone who used to be a "big deal" Republican or Democrat switch to the Libertarian Party? That's big news, and I want to hear about it!

■ **Major media coverage:** "Major" usually means *national* coverage (when it's a neutral news story). However, I'm also interested in *positive* local coverage that specifically endorses the Libertarian Party or our political positions.

What I'm not looking for: There are also certain kinds of stories I *avoid* for *LP News* — namely, routine news that is better reported in your state newsletter. The kinds of stories that I usually decline are:

■ Yearly election of party officers, and appointments to party positions (like press secretary, for example).

"If you're doing something innovative, I want to hear about it!"

■ The opening of a party office, the formation of new county/local LP organizations, and "routine" outreach events.

■ Annual state conventions. (Although these are listed in our "Upcoming Events.") Also: Most speeches given at conventions, or county and state meetings — unless the speaker

is nationally prominent, or says something fascinating or unusual, or joins the party.

■ Most campaigns. No disrespect to our many fine candidates, but we had 800+ of them in 1996! So, we simply don't have the space to cover most campaigns, unless they have national implications (like the Sabrin campaign in New Jersey in 1997); or are a potentially winnable race; or have something else unique to recommend them.

LP News Deadlines:

Try to get information to me by the first of the month for the next month's issue. (Example: The deadline for the June issue is May 1st.) Of course, I have flexibility with that deadline, but the earlier, the better!

Finally, I'll put in a pitch for photos: Black & white are best, but color is OK

if the image in the photo is prominent (people standing 20 feet away will print as small gray blobs!); and if the colors are crisp and there is a nice range of tones (the photo is printed in black & white in the newspaper, so a photo of someone wearing a dark red shirt against a dark green background will appear as one big gray blob).

Action photos are best: Show a Libertarian *doing* something interesting.

For the "Affiliate News" section, I'm happy to use photos of outreach events, campaign activities, convention activities, and so on.

So, if you plan some kind of political activity, please have someone there to take pictures! You can not only use them in your state newsletter, but it can also get your state party national publicity in *LP News*.

"Ask the Campaign Pro"

Editor's note: David Kamioner, a professional campaign consultant with his own company (*Kamioner & Associates*) has started a new column in the *New Jersey Libertarian newsletter*: "Ask the Campaign Pro." In it, he fields a variety of campaign-related questions. Here are a few recent ones:

Q: What should a candidate be concerned about in a well-run campaign?

A: Only two things: Raising money and effectively communicating his message to the voters. Everything else is handled by staff. A thoroughbred horse cannot win the Kentucky Derby if it is worrying about what color its livery is.

Q: How important is a candidate's appearance?

A: In this day and age,

massively. Now, you don't have to have a Venus or an Adonis as a candidate (though it would really help), but you've got to be at least presentable, well-groomed, professional looking, and dressed in the professional style of the area you're running in.

Some mistakes for men: Long hair, no coat or tie, polyester *anything*, too many rings (two max: college and wedding) or any earrings, loud ties, facial hair, anything but oxblood or black shoes.

Some mistakes for women: Tight clothes, non-styled hair, spike heels, too much jewelry, pant suits, jeans (outside of rural areas), weird shiny fabric, too much makeup.

Women will generally vote for men they think are attractive and who agree with them on most issues; men will vote

for women they want to sleep with and who agree with them on a couple of issues.

Q: How much attention should you pay to voters who probably won't vote for you?

A: Generally, very little. Voters can be broken into three categories: Saints (your definite supporters), Savables (voters who might vote for you), and Sinners (voters you don't have much of a shot with). Usually, you ignore the sinners and concentrate on the saints and savables, especially in low voter turnout elections. But, as Libertarians, the savables are our only chance for victory, so go for them in a big way.

■ *Reprinted from the February and March (1998) issues of the New Jersey Libertarian.*

Helping the print media help you

■ If LP candidates understand a few simple rules about print media, everyone benefits

BY MARK THOMPSON-KOLAR
Libertarian Party of Indiana

Nothing is an absolute when media are involved. Nothing is a given when elections come along. However, candidates can really help themselves out before election day by following a few mostly common-sense steps in their dealings with print (and other) media.

■ **DO** realize that media organizations are made up of individuals. It's important to learn who needs your press releases and who needs your photos; they may be different people.

■ **DON'T** assume the Editorial Page department is connected to the News Department. At most papers, they have nothing to do with each other, so feeding your news-related releases to the Editorial Page doesn't do you much good. (At Fort Wayne's papers, the departments are totally separate.)

■ **DO** make sure everything you send the paper(s) is typed. Unfair as it might be, handwritten releases don't get top priority. The people who have to type them in dislike having to decipher.

■ **DO** have nice color and black-and-white photos made. This becomes more important with less visible offices, which are less likely to involve debates or public appearances. A decent-quality publicity photo lends credibility. Make sure the appropriate person at the paper has at least one copy in color and in black and white. More than one copy never hurts.

■ **DO** get a Web page, and put on it the important things you want people to see: Your views on major issues, background details, a photo. Links to other sites sponsored by your party. Make sure the Web address is prominent on any materials you hand out.

■ **DO** be available for interviews.

■ **DON'T** delay returning phone calls from reporters. Stories usually are turned around in two days or less, so if a reporter can't reach you fairly quickly, your view might not get in.

■ **DON'T** badger journalists about coverage. They don't mind taking a call asking legitimate questions, or announcing real news, but anything less gets bothersome. (Editors and reporters take many calls a day, and they still have to get a lot of writing done, too.)

■ **DO** be patient during an interview when reporters mix up who you are, which of office you are seeking, or some other detail. That same reporter probably is covering five or six small and large races, each with two or three candidates, many of whom he or she likely spoke with just hours or minutes before speaking with you. (However, make sure the reporter has the detail correct before the interview is over.)

■ **DON'T** try to trick, dazzle, impress, or belittle the reporter. Be yourself, talking to someone just trying to do a job well. Speak clearly and directly. Reporters (the vast majority of the time, anyway) aren't trying to unearth some

terrible secret when they interview you about the race; they just want good, concise answers that they can relay in print. That said, if a reporter does ask hard questions, remember that's part of his job, too.

■ **DON'T** make assumptions about the political persuasions of the News Depart-

ment(s). Editorial Page departments are supposed to have a political bias. But News Departments aim to remain as neutral as possible. Individual reporters do belong to political parties, but they aren't supposed to favor one view over another.

■ *Mark Thompson-Kolar is the Assistant Managing Editor at the News-Sentinel in Fort Wayne, Indiana.*

What Works

"How-To" Fundraising Book

Want to write better fundraising letters for your state or local party? Or want to write fundraising letters yourself, instead of farming them out to overpriced "experts"? Now you can, thanks to a new book: *The Complete Book of Model Fundraising Letters*, by Roland Kuniholm.

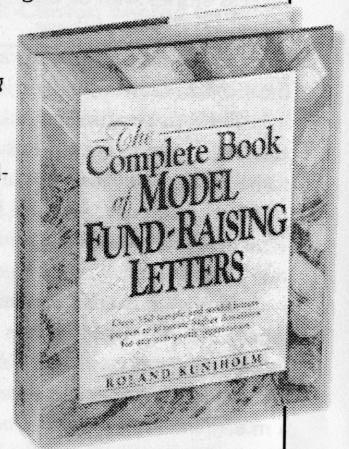
The book, published by Prentice Hall (and available in hardcover for \$39.95) is a collection of 350 sample and model letters — actual letters successfully used by organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Covenant House, the national Wildlife Federation, and the Smithsonian Institution.

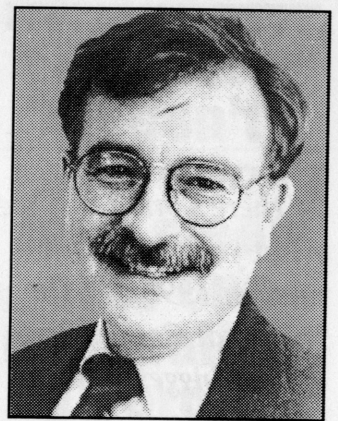
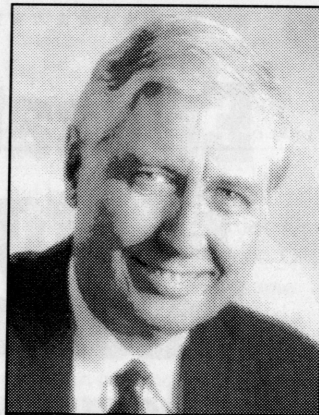
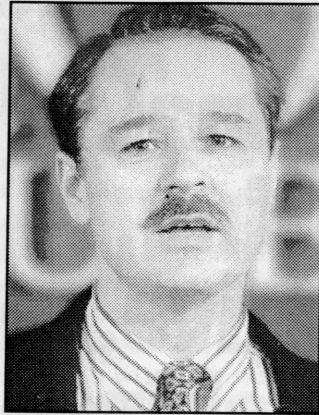
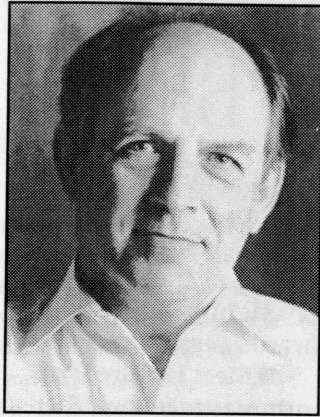
It features all kinds of letters: Fundraising, membership renewal, protests & petitions, lapsed donor reactivation, and special appeals. It also includes direct-mail advice, including:

- 25 effective opening lines for fund-raising letters.
- A secret "4th paragraph rule" that strengthens letters.
- 51 different ways to ask for a contribution.
- How to achieve a "personal" look on envelopes.
- Rules for when to use brochures in addition to letters.
- Five tips to help determine the size of the contribution you should request.

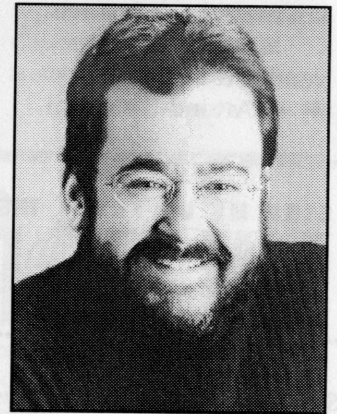
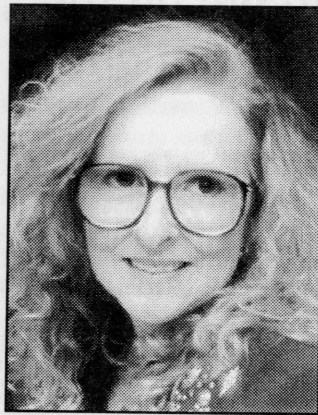
■ Sample "teasers" to get your envelope opened.

The Complete Book of Model Fundraising Letters can be ordered directly from Prentice Hall's web site at www.phdirect.com.





**The best minds
in the libertarian
movement want
to talk to you...**



At the 1998 National Convention.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

CHARLES MURRAY

Author of *What It Means
To Be A Libertarian*

DAVID BOAZ

Author of *Libertarianism: A Primer*

HARRY BROWNE

1996 LP Presidential Candidate

WALKER CHANDLER

Libertarian Attorney

SHELLEY DAVIS

Author of *Unbridled Power*

**THE
ROAD
TO**

VICTORY



LIBERTARIAN NATIONAL CONVENTION

"LIONEL"

Top-rated NYC Talk Show Host

ROY INNIS

President of C.O.R.E.

SHARON HARRIS

President, Advocates for
Self-Government

JACOB HORNBERGER

Future of Freedom Foundation

TANYA METAKSA

Executive Director, NRA's Institute for
Legislative Action



If there's one LP event you shouldn't miss in 1998, it's the National Convention — the biggest, most exciting political bash of the decade!

More than 1,000 delegates will be at Convention '98 in Washington DC (July 2-5). Will you be one of them? If not, you'll miss the chance to . . .

- Vote on changes to the LP Platform.
- Select LP leadership for the next two years.
- Hear a fascinating all-star line-up of libertarian speakers and panels.
- Enjoy the huge vendor & exhibitor area.
- Attend the candi-

Educational. Energizing. Informative. History-making. Exciting. Course-setting. Stimulating.

C'mon — do you need any more reasons to attend the National LP Convention?

date & activist training sessions.

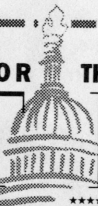
■ Celebrate the LP's success at the gala Saturday night banquet & awards ceremony.

■ Meet hundreds of enthusiastic fellow Libertarian activists.

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Media advice

> **Continued From Page 1**

"Rather than take the Libertarian case to the people, Winter's main thrust was to concede that Republican Gov. Merrill was going to win, so voters could afford to send Merrill a 'message' by voting for Winter. If he hadn't conceded the race before it began, he might have been more newsworthy."

GOOD ADVICE? As a general rule, yes. An LP candidate should almost never suggest that he or she is in the campaign to do anything but win, or they will run the risk (as happened to Winter) of being dismissed by the media.

Why? Because the media judges elections not so much as a clash of ideas, but as a *horse race*. They tend to cover the "horse" that is ahead, or closing fast. Any "horse" that concedes that he can't win the race will be largely excluded from the race coverage.

What should LP candidates do? Never let the words "*I know I can't win*" pass your lips! If pressed, acknowledge: "Yes, the odds are long. But I'm in this to win, and am eager to serve." Or say: "If everyone who supports libertarian ideas voted for me, I'd win by a landslide. My challenge is to get the message out."

Your goal (if you really can't win) is to get the media to focus as much as possible on your Libertarian ideas — not on your "concession speech" before the campaign is over.

Cult of personality

■ In 1994, while much of the media was already speculating about Ross Perot's plans for the 1996 election, the *Oakland Press* (Michigan)

noted in an unsigned editorial that "a much more coherent alternative is quietly taking shape." After listing the LP's achievements — such as the four million total votes the party received in 1992 — the newspaper wrote: "The suspicion is that all Libertarians need to gain major party status is a well-known and respected leader to spread the word."

GOOD ADVICE? Superficially, yes. In the long run, no.

Why? It's ironic that the *Tribune* was inspired by Ross Perot to write that editorial; with a few extra years of hindsight, the pint-sized billionaire is now a case study in the dangers of a personality-based party. Since his disappointing performance in 1996, his Reform Party has barely been a blip on the political radar — and much of what we've heard has been the acrimonious struggle of party members to shed the "Perot Party" label. As the Reform Party shows, a political party can live and die by the actions of its egocentric, homily-spouting Sugar Daddy.

But the LP is different. Not only is the party not a cult of personality, it is almost a cult of *anti-personality*, never even having run the same presidential candidate twice.

In politics, that strategy can have its drawbacks: Ordinary voters tend to let one dominant politician personify a political party; hence "FDR Democrats" and "Reagan Republicans." Personality merges with policy, and creates a more human "brand image" for a political party.

But resisting that "cult of the omnipotent personality" also has its advantages: Not

being dependent on one personality to transmit its message (or to fill its bank account), the Libertarian Party doesn't have to lose sleep over one man "pulling a Perot," and becoming the butt of jokes. Or switching parties. Or turning off the cash spigot. Or becoming enmeshed in some sordid scandal. If any of those scenarios occur, a brand-name politician can suddenly become as popular as the brand name "Edsel" on a car.

Need proof? Heard anyone calling themselves a "Clinton Democrat" lately?

Local victories

■ In 1994, North Dakota LP gubernatorial candidate Nathan Barton expressed frustration because his campaign was "overlooked by some news organizations."

In response, the *Capitol Journal* (Pierre) wrote: "Barton knows exactly what Libertarians, or any political party, must do to be successful — start at the bottom. Libertarians have to start winning

"The party doesn't have to lose sleep over one man pulling a Perot."

school board, city commission, county commission, and legislative elections before voters are going to take them seriously when they field a candidate for governor. Until third parties show more credibility, we don't see any reason why news organizations should start apologizing for their election coverage."

GOOD ADVICE? Yes.

Why? In its editorial, the *Capitol Journal* danced around — but did not specify

> **Continued On Page 10**

Tidbits

Noting that 80% of Americans believe that the Republicans and Democrats are corrupt, and 85% believe that government is "out of control," LP of South Carolina Vice Chair **Chuck Williams** wondered: Why don't Libertarian Party candidates do better? His theory:

"I suggest that some among us spend far too much time and energy accusing others of not being 'true' Libertarians. Several in our party are so busy insulting each other over the Internet that they have no time left over to help potentially successful candidates campaign. They apparently feel that it is more important to settle their doctrinal differences with public spectacles than to support our common interests.

"While there is nothing wrong with a knockdown, drag-out doctrinal disagreement in a libertarian debating society, when it is done under the auspices of the Libertarian Party, the result is to diminish our political fortunes. A paranoid could almost question whether the aim of some in the party is to sabotage any political opportunities we might have with such public squabbles."

(Reprinted from the South Carolina Libertarian, Winter 1998)

Media advice

> Continued From Page 9

cally spell out — the two words guaranteed to make Libertarians grit their teeth: “Wasted vote.” But its point was clear: Most voters will not vote for Libertarians until they think Libertarians can win, lest they “waste their vote.” And the only way Libertarians will prove they can win is . . . by winning.

It sounds like a Catch-22, but it is simple political reality. Most voters don’t vote for the best candidate; they vote for the *best candidate who can win*. In their political calculations, it’s better for their vote to help propel into office a candidate who agrees with them 75% of the time than to “waste” their vote on a 100%er who can’t win.

It’s no good to berate voters about those calculations; it’s better to change their formula, and make the calculations produce a different result.

How? By making the Libertarian candidate the “best candidate who can win.” And the way to do that is by making sure that voters hear about lots of other Libertarian candidates who have *already* won.

Currently, there are 251 names on the list of LP candidates who have won. And as that number climbs to 500, then 1,000, and then to 10,000, voters will be forced to, as the *Capitol Journal* recommends, take Libertarian candidates “more seriously.”

Friends of the militia?

■ In 1995, an LP candidate spoke to a gathering of militia leaders. A local newspaper wondered: “Does that mean Libertarians now think along the same lines as militia leaders?” After commending Libertarians for “advocating

less government [which is] a defensible, even popular opinion,” the newspaper asked: “But does the official Libertarian position now embrace belief in dark conspiracies hatched in secret government plots to impose a new world order on an unsuspecting citizenry?” We hope not, the newspaper wrote, since “Libertarians have some good ideas. Sending one of their own to make common cause with these militia leaders isn’t one of them.”

GOOD ADVICE? Yes, yes, and not completely.

Yes, because Libertarians shouldn’t succumb to the lure of wild conspiracy theories. And why should we? When Bill Clinton goes on national TV to propose a \$20 billion child care program, and Newt Gingrich proposes a new offensive on the War on Drugs, we don’t need to search for hidden plots that increase the size and power of government. Libertarians should spend far more time fighting the Big Government “plots” emblazoned in the headlines than searching for plots in the shadows.

And yes, because the Libertarian Party is not the militia movement. The LP is a partisan political party. Its function is to elect Libertarians to office, so we can move America in a Libertarian direction through the legislative process. Period.

There are a number of organizations that share one or more of our specific political goals. But, despite some shared goals, the LP is not the NRA. Or the ACLU. Or the Electronic Freedom Foundation. Or FIJA. Or the National Taxpayer’s Union. And the LP is not the militia movement.

Again, these various organizations may overlap ideologically with the LP. But they are *not* the LP — and LP candidates should not confuse the goals and tactics of those organizations with the goals and tactics of the Libertarian Party. And LP candidates should be careful not to blur our differences with those groups — especially with the militias, who are viewed with a great deal of suspicion and fear by most Americans.

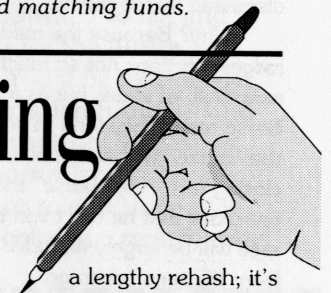
(Is that a fair perception of the militia movement? That’s irrelevant; the fact is that this perception exists. And LP candidates would be foolish to take on the added burden of serving as an unpaid “image improvement consultant”, for militias — because the challenge of winning elections as a Libertarian is daunting enough.)

But, finally, *not completely*. Whether or not we Libertarians share the militias’ apocalyptic views, the fact is those views are Constitutionally protected. If asked about militias, LP candidates should make it clear that we defend the right of militia members to hold unpopular views and to peacefully assemble, and their Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms. We shouldn’t back down on defending anyone’s legitimate rights, ever.

But be sure to point out that, unlike the militias, the LP exists to *peacefully* work through the *political process* to increase freedom.

■ **End of Part I.** Next issue: *Advice about Howard Stern, “anti-everything” parties, and matching funds.*

Letter-writing



> Continued From Page 1

then perhaps later read the longer ones. Thus your shorter letter has a better chance of being read.

What to write?

Unlike single-issue or special-interest groups, Libertarians can select from an enormous range of subjects. Replying to editorials, agree or disagree, is very effective. Every day the news offers us all too many topics on which to comment.

Be timely; try to respond within two days of the article’s publication. Pick an issue of particular importance to you — don’t be afraid to let some passion show through.

Stylistic considerations

1. State the argument you’re rebutting or responding to, as briefly as possible, in the letter’s introduction. Don’t do

a lengthy rehash; it’s a waste of valuable space and boring to boot.

2. Stick to a single subject. Deal with one issue per letter.

3. Don’t be shrill or abusive. Editors tend to discard letters containing personal attacks. Even though you’re dying to call Jesse Jackson a preachy parasite, stifle the urge.

4. Your letter should be logically organized. First a brief recitation of the argument you are opposing, followed by a statement of your own position. Then present your evidence. Close with a short restatement of your position or a pithy comment: “Jimmy Breslin says possession of firearms should be limited to law enforcement officers. I say when only the police have guns, the police state is just

around the corner.”

5. Use facts, figures and expert testimony whenever possible. This raises your letters above the “sez you, sez me” category.

For instance: “Anthony Lewis calls for taxing the rich as a way to balance the budget. Is he aware of the fact that if we confiscated the *entire* income of the top wage earners in this country (those with income above \$200,000), this would run the federal government for exactly eight days?”

Readers respect the opinions of people with special knowledge or expertise. Use expert testimony to bolster your case (“George F. Will claims we need to draft to defend America. But General Edward C. Meyer, Army Chief of Staff, recently stated . . .”).

6. Proofread your letter carefully for errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Newspapers will usually edit to correct these mistakes, but

your piece is more likely to be published if it is “clean” to begin with. Read your letter to a friend, for objective input.

(Another suggestion: Don’t mail your letter the same day it is written. Write, proofread, and edit the piece. Then put it aside until the next day. Re-reading your letter in a fresh light often helps you to spot errors in reasoning, stilted language, and the like. On the other hand, don’t let the letter sit too long.)

7. Try to view the letter from the reader’s perspective. Will the arguments make sense to someone without a special background on this issue? Did you use technical terms not familiar to the average reader?

8. Should your letter be typed? Definitely, in this day and age. Double or triple space the letter if it is short. For faxing purposes, we appreciate it if the letter is all on one page, so single spacing might be the only option available.

9. Direct your missives to “Letters to the Editor,” or some similar sounding title.

10. Most important — WRITE! Do not try to create a perfect letter. Just give it a good effort and send it off. Letter writing is the one thing that any one of us can do on our own without the need to work through a group. No committees are necessary. Just do it!

Finally, don’t be discouraged if your letter isn’t published. The editor may have received more responses on that issue than he feels he can handle. Just try again next time.

■ Besides being an industrious letter-to-the-editor writer, Richard Rider is perhaps best known for his legal challenges of new taxes in California. He is currently a candidate for San Diego County Treasurer/Tax Collector.

Talking Politics

A column of random political news, statistics, quotes, opinions, advice, and suggestions.

Not a dime’s worth of difference

A national public opinion poll by Rasmussen Research (January 12, 1998) found that only one in four Americans (27%) believe that Republicans and Democrats offer voters a “clear choice between opposing political philosophies.” Among Independent voters, only 14% believe that the major parties offer such a choice.

If you can’t say anything bad . . .

Guess who recently complemented the Libertarian Party for its willingness to “debate, articulate, defend and champion the great principles of personal liberty”? None other than the Los Angeles City Council — apparently oblivious to the fact that the LP wants to put politicians like them out of business, even if they do flatter us. The occasion? The California LP’s annual convention in that city (February 14-16). The council issued a welcoming proclamation, which also complemented the state LP for focusing “unwaveringly upon the specific impact on the individual of any governmental presence or action, thereby enabling a fundamental civic discussion across our land that enriches our society.”

People unclear about the concept

The January 28, 1998 issue of TYN (a Miami-area weekly newspaper) included an interview with Rich Tafel, the executive director of the Log Cabin Republicans, in which he describes himself as “fiscally conservative” and “close to libertarian.” Mr. Tafel then boasted that his organization successfully lobbied Congress for a \$118 million increase in AIDS funding . . . which, apparently, makes him part of the *federal-government-should-spend-more-on-my-favorite-causes* wing of the libertarian movement. And the March 4, 1998 issue of the *Wall Street Journal* reported that Scott McNealy, the head of Sun Microsystems — a “self-described libertarian” — was in Washington DC to urge the Justice Department to prosecute Microsoft for alleged anti-trust violations. Yes, that’s the *use-the-federal-government-to-get-your-competition* wing of the libertarian movement.

A sign of the times: In 1916, John D. Rockefeller had enough money to single-handedly pay off the entire American national debt. In 1997, Bill Gates and Warren Buffett put together don’t have enough money to pay for two months’ interest on it. — *CoffeeBreak* (March 1998).

First Issue?

Wondering why you got this issue of the *Libertarian Volunteer*? You’ve probably been added to our complimentary mailing list because:

■ You’re a new state, county, or local LP officer, or executive committee member.

■ You’re an important “activist” in your state, as designated by your State Chair.

■ You’re a delegate to the 1998 National Convention.

■ You’re a ’98 candidate for public office.

Notices

■ **Tee-shirt:** Want to strike a sartorial blow against property forfeiture? You can with the new "Forfeiture Endangers American Rights" (FEAR) tee-shirt, from America's leading anti-forfeiture organization. According to FEAR, "There's a great painting on the front with our name and toll-free number printed under it. Our website is printed on the back." The shirt is black, 100% cotton, and comes in M, L, and XL. Cost: \$15.00 plus \$3.00 shipping (Priority Mail) and handling. To order, visit the FEAR website: www.fear.org.

■ **Hotline:** Congressman Ron Paul (R-TX) — 1998 LP

presidential candidate and now back in Congress as a Republican — has started a toll-free legislative alert hot-line. Updated each Monday, the alert provides callers with news of upcoming legislation, updates on Paul sponsored bills, and a look at the "inner workings" of Congress. Call: (888) 322-1414.

■ **Publications:** Is reading newsletters and magazines about libertarianism your favorite pastime? Then you're in luck: A *Directory of Libertarian Publications* listing 150 titles — "all believed to be currently publishing" — with address and other information is available from Jim Strumm for \$3.00. Send to: Box 29, Hiler Branch, Buffalo NY 14223.

■ **Get help:** The Mackinac Center for Public Policy, a free-market research institute,

is offering "expert help based on modern economic scholarship" for college students, via a 24-hour web site. The site — www.mackinac.org — offers "free help for your toughest social studies questions" via e-mail for students, promising "the free enterprise perspective on today's current events and a fresh, cutting-edge viewpoint." Students can also "Ask an Economist;" an interactive site feature to help guide students around economic fallacies.

■ **Defeat the fascists:** Noting that "those of us who recognize so-called 'campaign finance reform' is a fraud have no specific advocacy group available to constantly fight for our side of this issue," Michael J. Rollins, the Vice Chair of the LP of Rhode Island, is interested in starting such an organization. "Our only sure

hope of defeating the attempted fascist takeover of 'all political speech is to get organized,' he said. "I propose the name 'Campaign Freedom Coalition.' How might we go about setting up such a group? Let me know your thoughts. The liberty you save will be your own." Contact Rollins at: mjr@conan.ids.net. Or call: (401) 353-9243.

■ **World Conference:** The 1998 International Society for Individual Liberty's 1998 World Conference will be held in Berlin, Germany, from August 23-28. The event will feature libertarian speakers from around the world, including Barbara Branden (USA), Stefan Blankertz (Germany), and Bertrand Lemennicier (France). Cost: \$760. For more information, contact ISIL at isil@isil.org. Or call: (707) 746-8796.

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