

# The Libertarian Volunteer

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

## Those “difficult” Libertarians

■ How to recognize problem personality types — and deal with them effectively

**L**ibertarians — difficult to deal with? Say it isn't so!

Well, it can be. The same traits that make Libertarians *Libertarians* — a rugged individualism, above-average intelligence, and in-born distrust of authority — may also make them less effective as team players . . . and perhaps even somewhat more difficult than the average person to interact with.

Not that Libertarians are unique in their irascibility. As Robert M. Bramson, Ph.D.



points out in his book *Coping With Difficult People*, we've all come into contact with "hostile customers and co-workers, indecisive vacillating bosses, and overagreeable (but do nothing) subordinates."

They are, he writes, "what I

call 'Difficult People.' Although their numbers are small, their impact is large. They frustrate and demoralize those unlucky enough to have to work with them, and they are difficult to understand. Worst of all, they seem immune to all the usual methods of communication and persuasion designed to convince them or help them change their ways."

Bramson hastens to add that all of us can be "difficult" at times. But the genuinely "Difficult People are seen as

problems by most of the people around them, not just those who are incompetent, overly sensitive, or weak."

**T**his problem of Difficult People is especially critical for Libertarians. As a cash-poor organization, the Libertarian Party is highly dependent on human resources. Dangerously flawed people in leadership or critical volunteer positions can cause an entire organization to grind to a halt

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## National LP finds success with “Challenge to the Republicans”

**L**ists. That's one secret of a successful press release.

"The media—especially talk radio — loves lists," said Bill Winter, LP Director of Communications. "For example, I've heard radio shows discuss the 10 worst foods to eat, 10 ways to be more romantic, and

so on. That's why our Challenge to the Republicans press release, with its 21-item hit list, was a natural for talk radio."

The LP sent the Challenge to several hundred radio talk show hosts around the USA, and scheduled appearances on more than a dozen stations.

Because several of the programs were syndicated, more than 50 radio stations ended up publicizing the party's demand that the GOP "drastically reduce the size of the federal government" and eliminate 21 specific programs, agencies, and policies.

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**An LP mayor's advice on local political success**

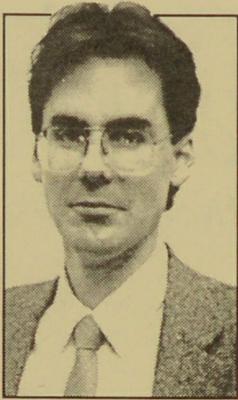
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**Readers react: "Liberty" versus "Libertarian"**

■ From the Editor

# Local success, people skills... & a new look

**W**elcome to a new year of the *Libertarian Volunteer*... and to a new look for 1995. We've redesigned this newsletter to gain more flexibility in how we present stories, and to make it more visually interesting. Hope you like it. (Don't worry — we didn't change the content!)



**Bill Winter, Editor**

1995 is also a new opportunity to succeed politically. Over the past few years, there has been a shift in LP strategic thinking — away from (mostly) unwinnable federal offices and toward success at the local level. In this issue, we present *blueprints* for local success from two folks who have been there: An LP mayor and a recently appointed Libertarian. Listen to their advice! They're right; they've done it; it works.

Finally, 1995 is a new opportunity to build a better, more successful Libertarian Party in your area. What's the basic building block of any productive, achievement-oriented organization? An effective working relationship with your fellow Libertarians. We've got two pieces on that topic — a front page story about dealing with "difficult Libertarians" (difficult Libertarians? Hard to imagine!) and a piece from National Director Perry Willis on effective communications. Sure, it will take more than two articles to usher in a new era of total harmony in the LP... but it's a start!

1995 is here. Let's work together to make it the year of *more* political success, *more* harmony, and *more* constructive, positive, and satisfying Libertarian activity.

**The Libertarian Volunteer**

A newsletter for LP volunteers, activists, officers, and candidates  
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*The Libertarian Volunteer* is a publication of the Libertarian Party. Its goal is to provide proven advice, timely news, political resources, strategic suggestions, and accurate information for Libertarian volunteers. Letters, comments, articles, and suggestions are welcome!  
**Editor:** Bill Winter

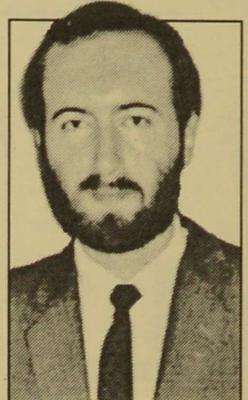
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■ From the National Director

# Eight tips for better communications

**B**ill Winter asked me for my best 400 words on the subject of personal communications with both Libertarians and the general public. Here they are...

■ Marshall Fritz taught me that **both parties to a communication are each responsible for 100% of the success or failure of that communication.** The math may seem a little strange, but it's a valid insight. The best way to be a 100% responsible communicator is to listen closely and then repeat back what you've heard in your own words. Your partner will let you know if you got it right or if you missed something. And, on the other side of the dialogue, if what you're saying is really important you can make sure you were heard and understood by asking your partner to do the same for you. Ask them if what you said made sense. Better still, ask for help — if they were trying to explain the same issue to someone else, how would they do it?



**Perry Willis, National Director**

■ Michael Emerling taught me to **identify the person's underlying concern and deal with it.** The exact meaning of each word in an individual's question or statement may not necessarily represent what they're trying to communicate. If someone asks you about gun control they may just be trying to determine whether you agree with them, or they may really be asking you to allay their concerns about violent crime. Be sensitive to each person's real interests.

Here are my own communication rules:

- **Don't make bald statements.** It isn't sufficient to say that "we support this or oppose that." You must also say why our position is good, both morally and practically. Explain the benefits.
- **The person you're talking to may not be your only audience.** If others are listening, try to anticipate their concerns too.
- **Be parsimonious.** If someone asks you what time it is, don't tell them how to build a clock. Don't be boring. Work to make your answers shorter, but richer in information. Learn the crucial facts that prove your point. Evidence is worth more than opinion, even when it comes to ethics.
- **Don't be intimidated by your own ignorance.** Just remember, if someone states something negative about the way the world works, or about Libertarianism, you can rest assured that they have made an incorrect assumption. Identify that assumption and you're half way to answering it. But if you don't know the answer it's always wisest just to say that, "I think that assumption is incorrect, but I can't cite the facts and figures to prove it."

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# How to cope with “difficult” Libertarians

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... or explode into poisonous strife. Indeed, the history of the Libertarian Party is rife with examples of such counter-productive activities.

Again, though, the Libertarian Party is not unique in this regard. As Bramson writes, “As a management consultant I have found that my clients spend more time talking about how to cope with problem employees, bosses, customers, and co-workers than about anything else.”

To solve this problem, Bramson first divided those Difficult People into six major categories (all quotes taken from *Coping With Difficult People*):

## ■ Hostile-Aggressives:

“These are the people who try to bully and overwhelm by bombarding others, making cutting remarks, or throwing tantrums when things don’t go the way they are certain they should.”

■ **Complainers:** “Individuals who gripe incessantly but who never try to do anything about what they are complaining about, either because they feel powerless to do so or because they refuse to bear any responsibility.”

■ **Super-Agreeables:** “Often very personable, funny, and outgoing individuals, Super-Agreeables are always very reasonable, sincere, and supportive in your presence but don’t produce what they say they will, or act contrary to the way they have led you to expect.”

■ **Negativists:** “When a project is proposed, the negativists are bound to object with ‘It won’t work’ or ‘It’s im-



**“Hostile-Aggressives try to bully and overwhelm by making cutting remarks, or throwing tantrums.”**

possible.’ All too often they effectively deflate any optimism you might have.”

## ■ Know-It-All Experts:

“These are ‘superior’ people who believe, and want you to recognize, that they know everything there is to know about anything worth knowing. They’re condescending, imposing (if they really do know what they’re talking about), or pompous (if they don’t), and they will likely make you feel like an idiot.”

■ **Indecisives:** “They will stall major decisions until the decision is made for them, those who can’t let go of anything until it is perfect – which means never.”

**D**o you recognize any of these types in your Libertarian organization? Don’t worry – there is a way to effectively deal with these people. Or rather, in Bramson’s word, to “cope” with them.

An important warning: Don’t expect to change these Difficult People. You can’t. They act the way they do because it works; it is a deeply ingrained system of behavior that gives them control over other people.

That’s where coping comes

into play. It does not mean ignoring, accepting, or even mimicking their destructive behavior. Instead, coping consists of actions you can take to minimize the impact of other’s difficult behavior, and “get on with the business at hand.”

Here, in greater detail, are Bramson’s six major types of Difficult People, and his strategies for coping with them.

## 1) Hostile-Aggressives

According to Bramson, there are two kinds of Hostile-Aggressive people:

■ **Sherman Tanks** try to get their way by attacking, insulting, and yelling. They are “abusive, intimidating, and most important, overwhelming. They are arbitrary and often arrogant in tone. When criticizing something you’ve said or done, they seem to attack not just the particular behavior but you, and they do so in an accusing way. They are contemptuous of their victims, considering them to be inferior people who deserve to be bullied and disparaged. Sherman Tanks have a strong need to prove to themselves, and others, that their view of the world is always right.

Tasks to be done seem clear

and concrete to them, and the way to perform them straightforward and simple. They get impatient with those who don’t see what to them is plainly there. When resistance to their plans is perceived or anticipated, impatience turns quickly to irritation, righteous indignation, or outright anger.”

## Coping with a Sherman Tank:

> In a nutshell: “Stand up to them without fighting. If you let yourself be pushed around by aggressive people, you simply fade into the scenery for them. That is, they will not see you as someone to whom attention should be paid.”

> “Give them a little time to run down.

> “Get their attention, perhaps by [forcefully] calling them by their name or sitting or standing deliberately. Don’t worry about being polite; get [back into the conversation] any way you can.

> “If possible, get them to sit down.

> “State your opinions and perceptions forcefully. Do not imply a direct attack on anything the other person has said.

> “Don’t argue with what the other person says or try to cut him or her down. Instead, [signal] that you are expressing your own views, feelings, or perceptions about whatever is being considered.

> “Be prepared to be friendly [afterward]. This curious turn of events has long been recognized in folk wisdom as ‘stand up to a bully and he’ll become your friend.’”

■ **Snipers** show disapproval through barbed com-

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# Difficult People

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ments, subtle digs, not-very-funny jokes at your expense, and *sotto voce* remarks. But they don't attack directly, like Sherman Tanks; they "maintain a cover [of humor], if often thin, from behind which they take pot shots at you. The chosen recipients are struck by well-placed missiles, high-powered enough to hurt. But the attack is accompanied by nonverbal signals that say, 'Pretend what I'm doing is nice or neutral, or that you don't even hear me.' "

## **Coping with a Sniper:**

> "Smoke them out. Don't let social convention stop you. If you are the target, refuse to be attacked indirectly. Ask questions like: 'That sounded like [an insult], did you mean it that way?' If your Sniper responds by ridiculing you further, put words to that, too: 'Sounds like you're ridiculing me, are you?'"

> "Provide the Sniper with an alternative to a direct confrontation." That's why you question their behavior, rather than make assertions. "Usually the Sniper will flatly deny an attack was intended, [but] he or she will be far less likely to snipe in the future."

> "Don't capitulate to the Sniper's view of the situation. Get others' point of view." Snipers attack because you're not doing things their way. "Be ready to discuss the underlying problem." For example, ask the rest of the group: 'Does anyone else see [this alleged problem] this way?'

> "Move to try to solve any problems that are uncovered."

**2) Complainers** are "the Difficult People who manage

to find fault with everything, malcontents who gripe ad nauseam about everything. The disguised message behind all these gripes is that 'someone,' usually meaning you, should be doing something about them."

Complainers are "irksome, irritating, and very exhausting. Complaining can be understood as the only kind of active behavior that seems possible to those who feel powerless to determine their own fate."

## **Coping with Complainers:**

> "Listen attentively to their



complaints, even if you feel guilty or impatient." It's an "opportunity for the Complainer to let off steam. Complainers feel passive anger. Without an opportunity to relieve this pressure, they cannot move to more constructive problem solving."

> "Acknowledge what they're saying by paraphrasing and checking out your perception of how they feel about it. Let them know that you have understood what they've said to you, that you know how they feel, and that you take them seriously."

> "Don't agree with or apologize for their allegations

even if, for the moment, you accept them as true. Acknowledgement is useful; agreement is not. [If you agree or apologize], you validate for them the fact that indeed it's all your fault, and they are blameless."

> "State and acknowledge facts without comment." Don't defend or explain; just lay out the facts of the situation on the table."

> Move to a problem solving mode by: 1) asking specific, informational questions; 2) assigning limited, fact-finding tasks; 3) asking for the complaints in writing. Problem solving focuses on what's to be done to make things better in the future. Pose concrete, descriptive questions that characterize the future-oriented problem-solving mode. For example: 'When does the

**"Indecisives do not simply prolong the decision-making process, they avoid it, sometimes to absurd limits."**

problem occur? At what time is it better or worse? Who are the particular people involved?'"

> "If all else fails, ask the Complainer: 'How do you want this conversation to end?'"

## **3) Super-Agreeables**

"always tell you things that are satisfying to hear. They are Difficult People precisely because they leave you believing they are in agreement with your plans, only to let you down." Their psychological motivation: "They need to be liked or accepted by every single person all of the time. Rather than directly risk losing your friend-

ship or approval, Super-Agreeables will commit themselves to actions on which they cannot or will not follow through."

## **Coping with Super-Agreeables:**

> "The Super-Agreeable manipulates the presentation of reality in order to gain your approval. Your strategy is to reassure the Super-Agreeable so that it does not appear to him or her that there is any conflict between [expressing doubts about a plan or declining to participate in a project] and retaining your approval."

> "You must work hard to surface the underlying facts and issues that prevent Super-Agreeables from taking action." For example, don't ask: "What part of this project is bad?" Ask: "What part of this project is good but not outstanding?" They will find that question easier to answer."

> "Don't allow Super-Agreeables to make unrealistic commitments."

> Listen to a Super-Agreeable's humor. "There may be hidden messages in those quips or teasing remarks" that they are hesitant to state."

**4) Negativists** "respond to everyone else's productive suggestion with 'It won't work' or 'It's no use trying.' Negativists are people who have a deep-seated conviction that any task not in their own hands will fail. Their negativism is elicited by other's attempts to solve a problem or improve a situation. [They] often have a profoundly detrimental impact on work groups, [and], like Complainers, are convinced that they have little power over their own lives."

## **Coping with Negativists:**

> "Be alert to the potential, in yourself and others in

the group, for being dragged down to despair.

➤ “Don’t try to argue Negativists out of their pessimism. The dissuasion can easily degenerate into a ‘You’re wrong, I’m right’ argument. Instead, your strategy should be one of showing the Negativist that some alternatives are worth trying.

➤ “Make optimistic but realistic statements about past successes solving similar problems.

➤ “Do not offer solution-alternatives yourself until the problem has been thoroughly discussed. [Be prepared] to quickly raise the question yourself of any negative events that might occur.” That can take the wind out of a Negativist’s sails.

➤ If necessary, “be ready to take action on your own. Announce your plans to do this without equivocation. By taking the initiative, you show an active, informed optimism that might spread to the other members of the group.”

**5) Know-It-All Experts** “are people who want you to recognize that they know everything.” They “do, indeed, know a great deal.” But they “leave little room for anyone else’s judgment, creativity, or resourcefulness [and] convey a belief in their own superiority that often leaves [others] feeling humiliated, immobilized, and helplessly angry. They see little need to listen to anyone’s facts or knowledge. They respond with irritation, outright anger, or withdrawal to differing opinions.”

**Coping with Know-It-All Experts:**

➤ Before any confrontation, “make sure you have done a thorough job of preparing yourself; carefully review all pertinent materials and check

**WHO ARE THE GENUINELY “DIFFICULT”?**

**H**ow do you tell the difference between a genuinely “difficult person” — and someone with whom you’re caught up in a troubling but *temporary* situation?

Writing in *Coping with Difficult People*, Robert Bramson, Ph.D. says: “The Difficult Person is one who acts *chronically* in a difficult manner. This is the litmus test of whether we are faced with a genuinely Difficult Person, [or] with a situation that is temporarily bringing out the worst in an ordinarily nondifficult person. If coping is to be effective, we need some realistic measures to judge whether someone is truly a Difficult Person.”

To take Bramson’s test, answers these questions:

1) Has the person acted the same in three previous *similar* situations? Or is this the first time the problem has happened? (Or one of just a few, random times?)

2) Am I reacting out of proportion to what the situation warrants? “If you find yourself reacting negatively to practically everything a particular individual does, it may be that you are responding to something about that individual, not a systemic pattern of difficult behavior.”

3) Will direct, open discussion relieve the situation? You may “suspect that you’re faced with a relationship gone sour rather than a Difficult Person. In that case attempting to untangle the problem through direct discussion with the other person is a useful next step.”

them for accuracy. You must, *must* do your homework. Experts will not take you seriously as a competent person worthy of respect if you seem to them to be unprepared or inaccurate. They won’t even argue with you; they’ll simply dismiss you as incompetent.

➤ “Experts usually doubt that their great wisdom has made its way into your poor weak mind. Let them know you comprehend what they say [by listening] attentively to them. Then, paraphrase back to them the main points of their plan.”

➤ If you have to “point out that something is wrong or missing [from their plan], use the questioning form to raise problems. Although you shouldn’t challenge your [Know-It-All Expert] directly, do your best to raise questions fully, firmly, and without equivocation.”

➤ Don’t get locked into a battle of the experts. This can end in a “futile, sometimes catastrophic, struggle.”

**6) Indecisives** are “individuals who can’t make up their minds,” and can cause an organization’s progress to grind to a halt. They are frequently “super-helpful people who postpone decisions that might distress someone. [They] do not simply prolong the decision-making process, they avoid it, sometimes to absurd and unproductive limits.” They hope that if they “simply stall everyone long enough, the need for any decision disappears.”

**Coping with Indecisives:**

➤ “Make it easy for [them] to tell you about conflicts or reservations that prevent the decision. The indispensable first step to coping is to find out the real reason why your

nemesis is stalling. Only then can you do some productive problem solving, with them or for them. Stallers are afraid to make important decisions because they may hurt someone. You can help them be candid by letting them know that you won’t be wounded by learning their possible reservations.

➤ “When you have surfaced the problem, help [them] solve their problems with the decision. Help [them] examine facts. Use the facts to place alternative solutions in priority order.” This will help them to “limit the number of alternatives to be considered.

➤ “Give support when the decision seems to be made. Don’t relax. The moment you leave the field, questions and doubts may arise in your Staller’s mind. It pays to plan some person-to-person follow-up contacts. It’s the agreement and support from another person that helps an [indecisive] remain steadfast.”

**D**ifficult people: They be-devil every organization — Libertarian and otherwise. But if you learn to identify these people, and master the techniques to effectively cope with these human obstacles, you can eliminate the headaches, frustrations, and lack of progress.

As Bramson wrote in *Coping With Difficult People*: “Let your confidence to cope rest securely on the knowledge that many people just like you have found that coping with Difficult People is possible. Like a cold shower, it may be awful in anticipation, but it feels great when it’s over.” ■

*Coping With Difficult People*  
Robert M. Bramson, Ph.D.  
© 1981. Anchor Books, 226 pages

# The realities of local politics: An LP mayor's inside story

■ How to get on the fast track for local public awareness, credibility, and media attention — from someone who's done it

BY BOB PATCHIN

**Editor's note:** *This essay was written in response to Daniel Walker's "A newly elected Libertarian asks: What next?," which appeared in the November/December 1994 issue of the Libertarian Volunteer.*

**M**y November/December *Libertarian Volunteer* came today, and I am dropping everything this New Year's Eve to respond to the centerpiece article by Daniel Walker. I couldn't agree with him more. I have been amused and amazed to watch Libertarians tilt at windmills, with straws instead of lances, as they waste their time and resources filing, and running, for offices for which they have neither the qualifications nor a prayer of winning. He is absolutely right. You have to start somewhere — and it isn't at, or near, the top of the ladder.

Walker tells how we concluded that Libertarians are not going to be trusted with what the polls call "higher office" until they have proven themselves — and pacified the voters with demonstrated performance in a minor office. He shows how he successfully located an obscure office with

little voter visibility; ran for it; won it; and intends to use it as a stepping stone to the next rung — a seat on the city council. Good for him! He's on the right track.

I'd like to tell you what I think Libertarians are going to have to do if they want to catch the wave that is forming, which can carry those ready for it into office.

First, what you don't do. You don't wait until Spring of 1996, look around, and in the back room deal out the offices and candidates as some kind of demonstration that there really is a Libertarian Party.

**Y**ou don't file for an office out of ego, out of frustration, or out of a desire to show the colors. You aren't going to have the money to make a dent. The media is going to ignore you as an unknown. You won't attract anyone but true believers. No one is going to pay any attention, and you will not garner enough votes to make the effort worth the time. Worse, you will help continue the Libertarian track record of also-rans, perpetual losers, and candidates safely ignored by the media.

What you do, is get involved. Now! A thankless and



■ Mayor Robert Patchin

time-consuming thing that only the "public spirited" usually do. If your target is a water board or city council — go to the meetings. Radical thought! I was elected in a six-way race for two seats against two incumbents, two years ago. I got the top vote count, and was just made mayor by my peers. I had been to every council meeting for nearly three years, and participated in the discussions in most of them. Our sessions are on cable TV, and have become the best show in town on council nights. In contrast, the other three "outsiders" had never been to more than one or two sessions, and had never taken an active role in any of them. They were unknowns in the voting booth.

Once you start going, volunteer for those ad hoc committees that are always popping up. I started with one that blocked a new Civic Center that the old guard wanted for a "mini-monument" (words from their documents) to themselves. The votes on the committee were mostly nine or 10 to one, and the best I ever got was seven to two against me. But, when we went to the citizens with a questionnaire, they came back with a resounding 89.6% vote against the proposition. The moral of the story is that if you are right, and you are persistent, and you get your story out — you will become visible, and accepted, and a winner.

**T**he next one was a contentious recreational trails committee. Our city is gentrifying from "semi-rural" to an upscale suburb of L.A. Naturally, the town is split between those few who have horses and those that would just as soon barbecue them. Moving to the co-chairmanship, I was on my feet at a half-dozen council sessions reporting on the progress, and standing down the hotheads on both sides. More visibility, and "Hmmm — this guy knows how to handle hot situations."

The old guard decided that they had to heal the city after the Civic Center mess, so they chose to hold a summer con-

cert. You guessed it. I got involved, and did all the behind-the-scenes organizing, and made some of them look like heroes. More kudos. Enough that it became a yearly event. An event like that takes 200-300 unpaid hours of my time for each outing — and makes me the best organizer in town.

Another place to start is the lowly neighborhood watch program. Become a block captain, and I'll wager you can propel yourself into coordinator for a big area, if not the whole city, within six months. It is a task that can be energized by someone who wants to make a splash, who wants to build credibility, and a following. Someone who wants to fight crime and be on the right side of the law! Believe me, you'll be riding with the cops, and they can be big boosters.

**G**ot the message? You generally get elected to an office only after you've done your work in the trenches. Why would anyone vote to elect you to lead the charge to the hilltop before you have proven yourself in the trenches? That only happens on a fluke — or to a Kennedy, or someone with the same kind of local name recognition.

And that is what it is all about. You aren't going anywhere without name recognition; without pre-filing acceptance by at least a good share of the electorate, and a passing acquaintance by the media that covers your venue.

Ah, yes — the media. How



**"If you want the great middle class to take you seriously, to vote for you, you doggone better look like them."**

can you become known to them as a player, instead of an oddity? By demonstrating that you have the community's interest at heart. By preparing your remarks ahead of time, with copies to them to be sure you get quoted accurately. By always being factual, truthful, and accurate in your statements. By schmoozing with them, and by treating them as trusted sources as well as conduits. By biting your lip when you are misquoted, and by spending time cultivating them. It helps if you learn to think and talk in sound-bites, or quotable quotes. They love the terse sentence that sums up a position. (Better you say it, than that they mangle it.) I've found that they'll treat you kindly if you at least act like you understand their problems. Problems of deadlines, little understanding on their part of most of what goes on, and a harassing editor that is more interested in controversy than illumination.

The opposite is a Water Board member I know of that won't answer the phone, and

brags that only the president will talk to the press — and then only with a lawyer at his elbow. Guess how much favorable ink he gets?

**O**n the other hand, I have two big city papers, a TV station, and three local papers that usually call me first. Why? Because I am available, because I am known as a square-shooter, and because I will take the time to give them off-the-record background information. That, folks, is called spin control.

I live in Orange County. (The one that declared bankruptcy.) They have 80% of our city's financial reserves in that mess, and I was the first mayor or politician to say publicly, "We made a mistake." That was so revolutionary that I had editors calling me to ask how come I wasn't like all the others — blaming someone/anyone? I told 'em they could print that I was "an engineer, and engineers were taught to deal in facts — good, bad, or indifferent. I don't intend to bamboozle the constituents, the media, or anyone else."

And here is where I will alienate some of you. Dress the part. If you want the great middle class to take you seriously, to vote for you, you doggone better look like them. Shave off the scruffy beard, whack off the pony tail, lose the wirerims, forget the leather biker duds. Dress like they do and talk like they do. If you are grandstanding as a free-spirit, they'll categorize

you before you open your mouth — and you'll never get more than a handful of votes. Meet them on their turf if you want to impress them that you can be trusted with the office you are headed for. Coming to your turf is what they will do after they see you in action.

**A**nd now for the last explosive suggestion. Don't wave the banner of libertarianism. They don't dig it. They'll think you are saying libertine or liberal. You aren't going to solve the world's problems from a water board or city council seat. You can't do anything about pot, or abortion, or killing off the IRS. You are going to have subtle opportunities to act against intrusions on property rights and tax increases. You can act to reduce restrictive laws here and there, and you may be able to slow down the harassment of business.

You will be a thousand times more effective living Libertarianism, and demonstrating in every statement and vote, than arguing about it before you ever get in the saddle. Leave the missionary work to those who can take the arrows. As an aspiring local office candidate you can't, and shouldn't even try. Like Daniel Walker, I'd rather be fighting the good fight in Washington, DC over earth-shaking issues — but I also know (like him) that you gotta crawl before you can walk. ■

*Bob Patchin is the mayor of Villa Park, California.*

## **Tips!** Effective Leadership

■ Want to be a more effective leader? **"Follow the golden rule.** Treat your followers the way you enjoy being treated. An abusive leader attracts few loyal followers."

—*The Toastmaster*

# New "third-party coalition" faces dubious political future

## ■ Can fledgling "constitutionalist" group overcome their own political naivete?

Several political groups are planning to form a coalition to run a "unified" third-party candidate for president in 1996 — but they are probably too inexperienced and are starting too late to succeed, says a Libertarian Party member who attended their recent organizing convention.

Former LP National Committee member Steve Givot was at the December 1994 meeting of a fledgling "constitutionalist," third-party coalition in Kansas City, Missouri, as an observer for the Libertarian Party.

The conference drew approximately 25 representatives from the American Party, the Constitution Party, United We Stand, Citizens for an Alternative Tax System (CATS), the Committee of 50 States, and the Constitutionalist Networking Center (CNC).

"I would characterize the group (as a whole) as constitutionalist, religious, and conservative," said Givot.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss ways to redirect the United States "within the limits of the Constitution" by unifying third parties and other political organizations "in a coalition to elect one outstanding candidate to the office of President."

In general, Givot said he was surprised by many of the participant's lack of political savvy.

"Their goal for 1996 as originally envisioned was impossible to achieve," said Givot. "They planned to run an 'independent' candidate rather than establish a political party. They planned on selecting that candidate in the second quarter of 1996. They didn't seem to recognize that those two parameters alone assured that they had almost zero chance of ballot access in most states!"

Givot said they also seemed unaware of FEC campaign finance laws.

"They planned on massive fundraising between now and the nomination," he said. "However, they had not stopped to consider that there was no vehicle into which massive funds could be funneled [so they could] legally spend them on a campaign."

The organizers invited the LP to join their coalition, but Givot made it clear that this was unlikely to happen.

"I told them that the LP is 'run' by its National Convention. The National Convention will be in July 1996. The LP leadership, including the Chair, the Executive Committee, and

## THE COALITION STRATEGY: TRY, TRY AGAIN

Been there, done that: That's the recent history of "third-party" coalitions in America.

The new CURE effort is at least the *second* attempt in the past few years to cobble together a third party alliance. The first effort was led by Lenora Fulani and her quasi-socialist New Alliance Party (NAP), which wooed LP activists around the country in 1992 and 1993 to join her so-called Federation of Independent Parties.

Fulani was dismally unsuccessful, so she turned her attention to the Patriot Party, the Ross Perot spin-off party. In mid-1994, the NAP merged into the Patriot Party, forming America's oddest political alliance; Perot's "radical middle" of fed-up, generally white middle-class voters and Fulani's cultish "rainbow coalition" of America's disenfranchised — blacks, gays, the poor, and other angry urban minorities.

"Fulani's experience points out the obstacles to successful coalitions — and, by comparison, why the Libertarian Party has lasted as long as it has," said LP Director of Communications Bill Winter. "Unless the party is firmly rooted in a shared philosophy, it's bound to collapse. I can't imagine that this bizarre NAP-Patriot alliance will last long when Perot's shocked followers discover who they've climbed into bed with."

Has Fulani given up on her dream of ruling a "third party" empire? Not yet. Latest reports show her promoting a "Committee for a Unified Independent Party" — with the stated goal of making "a dent" in America's "two-party consciousness." There is no indication that her coalition is coalescing with the CURE coalition.

the LNC, were powerless to commit the party to anything in terms of a candidate or a coalition. I hope that they also understood from my comments that it would be unlikely that the current membership of the LP would support their candidate."

Previously, National LP

Chair Steve Dasbach had gone on record opposing any kind of political alliance: "We have no interest in joining an 'alliance' third party under any other name. When you consider elections at all levels, most Americans who support new party candidates vote Libertarian," said Dasbach.

## BALLOT STATUS: WHERE THEY STAND

**H**ow does the LP compare to America's other nationally organized political groups in the area of ballot status? (That is, the number of states where each group has *already* earned ballot status for the 1996 election?)

| PARTY                                | '96 BALLOT STATUS IN |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| ■ Libertarian Party                  | 24 states            |
| ■ Patriot Party                      | 7 states             |
| ■ Green Party                        | 5 states             |
| ■ Taxpayer's Party                   | 5 states             |
| ■ Natural Law Party                  | 2 states             |
| ■ New Party                          | 1 state              |
| ■ Grassroots Party                   | 1 state              |
| ■ Constitution Party                 | 0 states             |
| ■ C.U.R.E. [Not technically a party] | 0 states             |

(Figures from the January 12, 1995 issue of *Ballot Access News*.)

In turn, Givot invited members of the coalition to join the Libertarian Party — but few seemed receptive. "Nonetheless, we were treated warmly, and we were encouraged to participate and contribute to their planning process. We established a good working relationship and trust with these folks," he said.

By the end of the meeting, Givot said the coalition had reached a few strategy decisions.

"They intend to have a National Convention for the pur-

pose of forming a coalition of interested parties (not necessarily political parties) in the third quarter of 1995. At this convention they have three objectives: forming their basic coalition (which others can join later), selecting a presidential and vice-presidential candidate, and adopting as their platform the Constitution of the United States of America," said Givot.

Givot cited the plan to use the Constitution as their platform as a sign of their lack of

political sophistication.

"They feel that no one can attack them if they do that. I attempted to explain that the liberals and the conservatives [have radically different views about the Constitution and] that the 'conventional wisdom' has plenty of room for all under the constitutional tent. They disagreed. [They think] if your message is 'right,' then neither the media nor your opponents can attack you successfully," he said.

**W**hat should the LP do about such potential political competition?

Recommended Givot: "I believe that it is worthwhile to keep in touch with these people, to know what they are doing. It is my sense that after they experience voter reaction to their efforts in 1996, they may be more willing to buy into an existing structure such as the Libertarian Party. That would be to our great advantage."

According to subsequent reports, a second conference was held in Kansas City in early January and the group adopted a name: CURE (Constitutionally Unified Republic for Everyone). Additional attendees included the Ameri-



**"Starting a new political party is easy, but maintaining and building a party is very difficult."**

can Independent Party, United Independents, and the Taxpayer's Party. Committees were set up to begin researching ballot access, financing, and possible candidates.

"It seems like these folks are 24 years behind the Libertarian Party; they're at the stage where they are still researching basic issues like ballot access," said LP Director of Communications Bill Winter.

"It will be very interesting to see if they can overcome these hurdles, recruit a credible candidate, raise money, and decide what issues they plan to focus on. It just goes to show: Starting a new political party is easy, but maintaining and building a party is very difficult," Winter said. ■

# Communications

> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

I'll have to get back to you." Don't try to be a know-it-all.

Be heard by listening well. The best way to gain a fair hearing for your own views is to grant the same to others first.

One of my favorite opening lines is, "That's an interesting idea. I'd really appreciate it if you could tell me why you believe that."

■ Which leads to my next point — **questions are more powerful than statements.** I've questioned many a person into accepting my own views without my having to make a single assertion.

The trick is to know what to ask. I call them "invincible questions," questions that the other person can only answer in a certain way, but which

lead him or her inevitably to your position.

■ Finally, **learn to criticize well** (this one too comes from Marshall Fritz). Criticizing poorly seems to be a congenital Libertarian weakness. Most of us seem more interested in what is wrong than with what is right. Doesn't this reflect a certain amount of insecurity—a need to prove self-worth by pointing out the failure of others?

Discipline yourself. Point out one thing that's right for every

one thing that's wrong and you'll actually obtain more of what you're looking for.

The person you're criticizing will admire your fine perception when it comes to the things you applaud, and will listen more closely to your advice concerning the things that you don't like.

There, just like I promised Bill, my best 686 words about personal communications.

Oh, and I almost forgot, try to follow directions! ■

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# An elected Libertarian's secrets of grassroots political success

BY MARK SEILER

**Editor's Note:** *This essay was written in response to Daniel Walker's "A newly elected Libertarian asks: What next?," which appeared in the November/December 1994 issue of the Libertarian Volunteer.*

**C**ongratulations to Daniel Walker on his election to the Ochlockonee River Soil & Water Conservation Board. I support his excellent case for local (grassroots) activism. There are, however, even more ways to get involved locally.

First, you need to get involved in "non" libertarian groups and inject a libertarian viewpoint. Tax groups such as Citizens Against Government Waste and unaffiliated groups are a natural. These groups can also be a good source of government machinations that go unreported in the media.

Second, decide whether you want to be more involved in city or county government and start going to meetings regularly. Arrive early for meetings dressed for a business function. This will give you a chance to chat with your representatives. As with any sales presentation, start with the general and work towards the specific. Talk about frugal government *then* privatized roads. You may, on your first meeting, just want to intro-

duce yourself as someone who wants to get more involved in your community. (How altruistic of you!)

After you have gotten to know them, and vice versa, let them know you would be willing to serve on an appointed board. These positions come up regularly and are often vacant due to the lack of people willing to serve. If you have an area of interest, let your representative know that, too. Get what appointment you can and get seriously involved.

Third, most meetings have a time when citizens can address elected bodies on any issue. Sometimes comments are limited to agenda items and/or you must schedule your presentation in advance. Use this time to weigh in on current issues and hone your public speaking skills. You may want to join Toastmasters to expand your local contacts.

**R**ecently, the county health and school boards were trying to implement school-based health clinics with private (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation) grant money that would have increased county spending by \$5 to \$20 million annually. While addressing the board on my concerns about these agencies obligating the county in this way, a board member interrupted me. He instructed the county manager to draw up a resolution to



**"Get involved in non-libertarian groups and inject a libertarian viewpoint."**

force bureaucrats and others to come before the board for approval — with the stipulation that once the grant money runs out, "that's it." This effectively shot down socialized medicine for our schools, and should have a nice "chilling effect" on future bureaucratic growth.

Fourth, get to know the recording clerk. They can be very helpful in running the government maze, and are a wealth of information.

Also, get to know the folks in the media. They will remember you (it's their job), despite what may appear in print or on the air.

Don't be shy about praising the random acts of libertarianism that are committed by Republicrats. If we encourage that type of behavior, we will see more of it.

I see real opportunity in the 1998 and 2000 U.S. House races. The GOP will have had several years of control of two of the three branches of government, and will have shown their inability to stop the growth of government. We must be ready with a network of people that mean it when they say they vote for the individual, not the party. They are legion. ■

*Mark Seiler is a member of the Gaston Planning & Zoning Board and the LP of North Carolina Executive Committee.*

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## Presidential Candidates

**W**e have received requests from state organizations for information about the candidates for the LP 1996 presidential nomination. As of mid-February, we only know of two candidates who have *formally* announced: Harry Browne and Irwin Schiff. Here is contact information for both candidates:

**Harry Browne for President**  
1500 Adams Avenue, Suite 105  
Costa Mesa CA 92626  
(714) 437-7911  
Fax: (714) 432-1468

**Irwin Schiff for President**  
P.O. Box 221440  
Beachwood OH 44122  
216-248-9995  
Fax: 216-248-9994

# “Liberty” versus “Libertarian.” Which is better for the party?

## ■ **Libertarian: A word just for the intelligentsia . . . or a word whose time has finally come?**

**S**hould the Libertarian Party change its name to the Liberty Party? That was the question raised in the last issue of the *Libertarian Volunteer* by **Dan Walker** of Florida, who wrote: “Hundreds of thousands [of voters] might be more willing to cast a vote for someone from the Liberty Party (after all, people know the word liberty) than someone from the Libertarian Party (‘Is that a kind of liberal?’).”

He continued: “We will be Libertarian, we’ll define ourselves and our policies as libertarian, but let’s roll out a new brand name. Let’s replace a brand name and ballot label which, after 20 years, unfortunately is associated with (a) losers (b) from the political fringe.”

Reaction to his suggestion was mixed.

**L**ibertarian fundraising expert **Sam Edelston** weighed in on the “Libertarian” side:

“I’m sort of mixed. My gut says we have a certain amount of brand equity built up in the current name and changing it means we would

have to get all the mild sympathizers familiar with us all over again. My brain says nobody thinks about the meaning of Republican or Democrat.

“A little voice in the back of my head says that all of a sudden, people are starting to use the adjective ‘libertarian.’ A few years ago, it was an incomprehensible five-syllable word. Today, libertarianism is being cited by the press as a hot trend. Liberty isn’t.

“[Plus], changing the name of the party isn’t going to win massive numbers of votes and catapult us into offices all across the land. We get into office by building legitimacy. That means things like serving

in local community organizations and local boards, waging credible lobbying or grass-roots campaigns for winnable causes, and running credible races for winnable political offices.

[So], my considerations seem to be adding up toward keeping Libertarian.”

**V**oting for the change to “Liberty” was **Carl Vassar**, State Chair of Connecticut: “People have told me the same thing — our name isn’t helping us. We ought to look at a name change. Negatives with the present name:

“1) Too long: five syllables. As you may know, consumer marketing experts will tell you

that’s a no-no. (Think about it. How many successful consumer products with five-syllable names can you find?) With ‘Democrat’ at three and ‘Republican’ at four, we’ve made a built-in disadvantage for ourselves.

“2) Means nothing by itself to the average voter; and confuses with ‘liberal.’ But a name like ‘Liberty’ Party or ‘Freedom’ Party immediately defines itself; creates its own image.

“I agree that there’s no silver bullet to LP growth and success. Our name alone probably won’t make or break us — it’ll be our ideas and actions. But wouldn’t it make sense to at least maximize the factors that we control?” ■

## “Challenge” Secrets

➤ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“It was one of our most successful media campaigns ever,” said Winter — and illustrated several rules for successful press releases.

**1) It must be topical.** “Nothing’s older than yesterday’s news, or last week’s media sensation. We put our Challenge press release out during the first, frenzied weeks of the new Congress. The media smelled blood in the water. Who knew what the Republicans might actually cut? Our Challenge played into that perfectly.”

**2) It must be reasonable.**

“If we put out a press release urging Republicans to immediately abolish every government agency, policy, and project, how much attention would we have gotten?” asked Winter. “It would have been dismissed out of hand. But, by focusing on just 21 items, it was doable.”

In fact, each of the 21 items were selected to be practical, said Winter. As National LP Chair Steve Dasbach explained: “There were worse examples of government waste and bigger ticket government programs

we could have selected [for the Challenge]. But we didn’t want the GOP to be able to dismiss this as a frivolous wish list. Our criteria was simple: Was legislation introduced in the House or Senate within the past two years to abolish, reduce, or defund this program?”

“We put the GOP into the position of having to explain why they haven’t already cut these programs!” said Winter.

**3) Make specific policy proposals.** “The media isn’t interested in abstract ideas. They want to hear how ideas translate into public policy,” said Winter. “So we gave them specifics in our Challenge.” ■

# Notices

■ **State LP Officers:** LP state convention season is kicking into high gear. If your state recently elected new officers, please send a complete, updated list to the National HQ, Attn: Bill Winter.

■ **Privacy:** Libertarian Joseph Schreiner is interested in "working with LP members on the issue of protecting personal privacy from government intrusion." Contact him at 3023 North Clark, #149, Chicago, IL 60657. Or call: (312) 929-9538.

■ **Proofreader Needed:** LP Director of Communications Bill

Winter is looking for a volunteer proofreader to help with party projects. Requirements: A fax machine and spelling, grammar, and punctuation skills. "There's no pay, but you do get the satisfaction of helping the party — and a sneak preview of new LP projects," said Winter. If you're interested, please call Winter at (202) 543-1988.

■ **Gun Rights Holiday:** The LP of South Carolina is pushing an effort to make April 19th a national holiday for the Second Amendment. They say this will "promote the LP as the only political party which promotes gun owners' rights 100%." The Second Amendment Day Committee has been formed to work on this project, and has an "ideas packet" of local activities. Send \$4.00 to: **Mary Lou Seymour**, Drawer Q, Bath SC 29816. ■

## LP Headquarters Move?

**T**he National LP is in the final stage of negotiations to move its headquarters from one of Washington's less desirable neighborhoods to one of the most prestigious addresses in the nation's capital — the Watergate Office Building.

"That's the building where Richard Nixon almost toppled the Republican Party. We'll be proud to move in there and complete the job," quipped LP National Director Perry Willis.

However, the move is not yet a "done deal," cautioned Willis. "We're still engaged in the lease negotiations, and then we will have to meet with an architect to design the office space and floor plans. But, if everything goes as planned, we hope to move in by May 1, 1995," he said.

The Watergate Office Building borders a pleasant, tree-lined neighborhood on Virginia Avenue, and is just blocks away from the Kennedy Center and historic Georgetown, noted Willis.

"This is an office to which we would be proud to bring visitors, VIPs, contributors, and party members. It will also fulfill a promise the party made to members several years ago to move out of our current, inadequate headquarters," he said.

*The Wall Street Journal* called the planned move "a sign of the times" that the Libertarian Party's fortunes are on the upswing. "It would mark a major step up for the LP," agreed Willis. ■

## The Libertarian Volunteer

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