



Virginia Liberty

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The Official Newsletter of the Libertarian Party of Virginia

Inside this Issue...

Ax the Tax1
Chuck Eby

Bikes, BCRA, and a Budget2
Kevin Rollins

BAC News3
Shelley Tamres

Ouch!4
Dr. Carl S. Midsted, Jr.

Opinions and Letters5

VSOT Long Term Plan6
Shelley Tamres

Chairman's Report6
Marianne Volpe

Ax the Tax

by *Chuck Eby*

Responding to Governor Warner's challenge to offer an alternate solution to the Tidewater area's transportation woes, the Norfolk Libertarian Party in concert with several other organizations has sent a letter to Warner with a call for privatization.

Warner's challenge was issued to voters who overwhelmingly defeated last month's referendum 63%-37% to raise the area's sales tax by one cent or 22% to pay for road construction projects.

Almost thirty organizations banded together and formed the "Ax the Tax Coalition" to oppose the increase. Member organizations included the National Taxpayer's Union, Virginia Beach Taxpayer's Alliance, Citizens Action Coalition, Inc., as well as the Libertarian Party of Virginia and three of its local affiliate parties: the Norfolk Libertarian Party, the Virginia Beach Libertarian Party, and the Peninsula Libertarian Club.

"We know how much money our legislators have wasted in the past and knew that they were just going to waste this tax, too," said Brian Babb of the Norfolk Libertarian Party.

Coalition members met on December 14th to begin a plan of action to assist state legislators and the governor with coming up with a viable transportation plan. At that meeting, they founded the Hampton Roads Taxpayer Coalition, a regional non-partisan organization pledged to continue to oppose any new taxes by requiring government to prioritize their spending focused on essential needs, staying within their budget, seeking innovative solutions for reducing the citizen's tax burden, improving efficiencies and productivity and requiring transparency in the process.

One of their first actions was to co-sign a letter, written by Richmond attorney Patrick McSweeney, to Governor Warner to address the transportation issue. "In this letter, the individuals and organizations that banded together to defeat the sales tax referendum are requesting that Gov. Warner look into throwing out the old mentality that has wasted so much taxpayer money and look into private sector road construction solutions", said Babb.

"The people who signed the letter came from all political persuasions and backgrounds, but they all know that a market-based solution is the cheapest, and most efficient way to solve this problem. Personally, as a Libertarian, it was really motivating to see such diverse political opinions come together over an issue and for everyone to choose a free-market kind of solution."

"We write to urge you to make a bold break with the past on transportation policy," begins the letter. "New transportation projects should be funded, wherever possible, by user fees and contributions from adjacent landowners and businesses that will benefit from their construction."

The letter's signatories include several members of the Libertarian Party who worked hard over the past months to defeat the tax increase. Libertarian Party of Virginia chairman, Marianne Volpe, signed for the LPVA saying, "I cannot express how happy I am with the level of activism of the Tidewater groups."

VIRGINIA LIBERTY

January - February 2003

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2003: Year for LP Candidates

by Marianne Volpe

Our mission is to recruit, support and elect Libertarians to office. We have completed a Vision, Strategy, Operations & Tactics (VSOT) process, and adopted its goals and interim objectives at our October 12 2002 SCC meeting. I am working with Vice Chair, Shelley Tamres, on the motions that we will submit for the January 25, 2003, SCC meeting to start us on the road to freedom.

This is a political party, not an educational organization, and our many years of failure at the ballot box are ending.

Despite the loss of members in Virginia and nationally, the LP is in fact great shape, with more candidates winning more offices than ever before, with more Libertarians appointed to positions than ever before, and many vigorous and committed state affiliates advancing liberty at the state and local level.

See "Candidates", continued on page 8

Bikes, BCRA, and a Budget

by Kevin Rollins

Virginia Libertarians welcomed the Libertarian National Committee over the weekend in Arlington. The LNC worked through a new budget, discussed the implications of the Bi-partisan Campaign Reform Act, and heard a proposal for sponsoring a Libertarian Party motorcycle team.

The Budget Crunch

The national party's financial condition deteriorated through 2002, but is likely to rebound in spring 2003. Staff cuts, a focus on fundraising at the national office, and delayed UMP payments are measures the LNC is taking to put the LP back into the black.

Reacting to the budget crisis, state Chair Marianne Volpe said, "The national leadership is committed to solving this problem, and they're doing it in a very professional way. They clearly have a map and they're following it. We can trust them to do the right thing."

LPVA is doing its part to help alleviate national's pain. "Our overall financial condition is superb...we are not in dire straits," said Volpe. She said the party will forgo full UMP payments until June and has made a personal pledge to make fundraising calls at national headquarters.

Ron Crickenberger, national political director, hoped that more Libertarians would volunteer at national to make up for the staff cuts. "We've had to devote a lot of time just to juggling things, more time on fundraising, than on core activities, and shut down media outreach. George Getz is spending time on the phone trying to raise money, and much of my time is devoted to that".

"There are always [volunteer] opportunities, if [volunteers] help take something else off of us, that's just as much of a benefit," said Crickenberger, explaining that a volunteer, "doesn't have to be sitting on the phone making phone calls."

BCRA

The Bi-Partisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA), the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill that passed by Congress in March has left party leadership unsure whether the LP's operational structure has been declared illegal.

"We don't have a lot of answers. We've submitted questions to the FEC. But they haven't responded. Hopefully in the next few weeks we'll get an answer," said Fred Childress, LNC alternate and LPVA member who participated in the meeting. "What it seems to have done is tie our hands."

The Republican National Committee has "expressed interest in filing a brief in support" of the LP's FEC questions, suggested a memo from LP's legal counsel that was provided to the LNC at the meeting.

The Supreme Court may hear the legal challenge to the law, McConnell vs. FEC, in June.

Motorcycle Racing

Dave Goree and Ben Smith waited the whole weekend to get the LNC's ear on their proposal for a Libertarian Party motorcycle team.

"Libertarian Party racing will place our message in front of a million racefans at the tracks in 2003," they said in their presentation brochure. Their plan would put a Ducati 748RS01 and rider (both covered in Libertarian advertising) on the track in 14 races throughout next year in the WERA National Endurance Championship.

See "BCRA", continued on page 3

BCRA

continued from Page 2

There was interest in the project. "I think it is an excellent idea, personally. It's a targeted audience of people who tend to be libertarian in nature," said Fred Childress.

National Chairman Geoff Neale, expressed support for the project, but said he wanted to get more information before he got behind funding it. The meeting adjourned without a vote on the issue.

BAC NEWS

by Shelley Tamres

Delegate Vince Callahan has once again agreed to sponsor a bill for us. If it passes, it will remove the "contiguous district" language from the Election Code and allow petitioners to circulate statewide candidate petitions in all congressional districts.

The bill has not yet been assigned a bill number. I'll let you know what it is as soon as possible via our announce@lpva.com email list. All of my legislative alerts will be sent over that list.

I hope you will all help with lobbying this winter. It's easier than ever since standardized email addresses and phone numbers have been created for all the legislators. The 2003 legislative session begins on January 8, so be on the lookout! *[Editor's Note: You can use HRLP's two email addresses of vahouse@hrlp.org and vasenate@hrlp.org to contact all members of the Virginia General Assembly with the exception of Johnny Joannou, who choses not to use email.]*

If you've not subscribed to the Announce list, please go to lpva.com and subscribe. It's a low volume list. If you don't have internet access and want to help with lobbying, just call me at 703-450-0218, and we'll arrange an alternative.

**Is your
Delegate
running
unopposed?**

GMU Student Senator Raises Controversy Over Marijuana Bill

by Chuck Eby

Libertarian Party member and George Mason University student Nathan Larson has raised a tempest in the GMU student senate by introducing a resolution declaring that the General Assembly should decriminalize marijuana. Student Senator Sarah Nashif responded with an email asking Larson to withdraw the bill.

"We believe that this is a seriously inappropriate bill to come to the student senate floor," said Nashif. "It would undermine our legitimacy as representatives of the George Mason population," she continued.

The bill has three co-sponsors; however, Nashif's request for the bill's withdrawal was signed by eight Senators.

Rob Russell, speaker pro tem of the Senate, had a different view. "I disagree with those that would like to disallow this from being heard on the floor of the Senate," said Russell. "[He is] not promoting an illegal activity."

The bill, S.B. 6, citing at least nineteen reasons, calls on the General Assembly to "eliminate all criminal penalties for possession of marijuana." At the November 21st meeting of the senate, it was tabled until the next meeting.

"We looked at the draft again and again, and the resolution is not calling for illegal action," said Mark Kidd, director of Student Activities. "As long as it is not calling for anything illegal or in violation of University Policy, it is okay," he continued.

Larson is a Senior representing the School of Management in the student senate. During his run for the office, his plan to introduce this bill was part of his platform. In response to the question on his online candidate profile, "Why did you decide to run for this position?" his response included, "I propose lobbying the General Assembly to legalize hemp."

Larson won his seat with 127 votes – more than any other candidate representing the School of Management.

"The School of Management encourages responsible and reasonable discussion about societal issues," said Amanda Adolph, Director of Communications and Public Relations for the School of Management. "We support student engagement in meaningful dialogue that reflects the range of opinions in our diverse academic community."

Larson is a member of the newly formed campus organization called "Students for Individual Liberty," affiliated with the Libertarian Party of Virginia.

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Ouch!

An Essay by Dr. Carl S. Milsted, Jr.

Well, another election, and another reinforcement of the Losertarian brand. According to the LP mailing, we have 21 victories, none above sheriff or city council. Unless I missed something, there was not a single partisan victory that wasn't a reelection. We do not need a political party to win non-partisan offices.

"...buoyed by a flurry of local wins" – my @\$\$. If this is all we are able to do as a political party, it is time to hang it up.

Note that I have not turned in my LP membership card and I am still active. The reason is I think we can do much better. However, I do not think we can do that much better by simply working harder or donating more. And much as I support Geoffrey Neale's efforts to make LPHQ run more efficiently, I don't think that will suffice either. Given that we have lost about a third of our peak membership and budget, a 50% improvement in efficiency is needed just to make up for lost ground.

We need to have some fundamental changes in strategy.

The Current Strategy

At least at the national level, the strategy has been:

- Take a stance that the non-initiation of force is the only moral value relevant to politics.
- Focus a great deal of effort on getting press hits from the national office (the expensive Watergate location is a significant part of this).
- Raise money and solicit new members using fundraising letters with unrealistic expectations.
- Total quantity management in the recruitment of candidates.
- Publish a newspaper whose primary purpose appears to be to develop LP celebrities. Technical articles on how to build up the party at the grass roots are a no-no.
- Focus fundraising on clearly unwinnable statewide and nationwide campaigns.

For the majority of these strategies, it appears that the primary goal of the national LP has been to generate press hits seen by the largest number of people.

If that were truly our goal, we would not need a political party with all its expensive overhead. The purpose of a political party is to win elections. Any other pro-freedom goals can be more efficiently carried out by non-profit corporations (or even for-profit corporations).

Other Options

We have other options available. Here are just a few:

Realistic races. Third party races go in at a disadvantage. Deal with it. In any partisan race, the legacy parties can count on a certain number of regular voters to vote partisan regardless of the candidate. This means we should expect to spend more dollars per vote to win. Ed Thompson is a great guy who put in a heroic effort, but the Libertarian Party just does not have the donor base to finance a governor's race. We do have enough to fund multiple state house races in the smaller states.

Focus dollars. This is the strategy of the Libertarian Victory Fund. They have some past successes to demonstrate that this can work. Methinks it is time to do more. For the price of one USA Today ad criticizing the drug czar, we could finance one or more competitive efforts at the state house level. Message to all big donors: Virginia has its state house races in the odd numbered years, and they have no limitations for individual donors.

Focus activists. This is the strategy of the Free State Project. I support the concept. Indeed, I moved from Northern Virginia to Western Carolina to live in an area with a low population density and high Libertarian density. However, getting 20,000 Libertarians to agree on a state strikes me as, shall we say, challenging. It might be good to prove that such a density of Libertarians will in fact result in victory by having a smaller scale "Free County Project" before committing such a huge number of activists.

See "Ouch!", continued on page 9

Opinion & Letters

To the Editor:

I read Dr. Carl Milsted's article in the November-December 2002 issue of *Virginia Liberty* (titled "A coherent Vision of Freedom") with great interest. Dr. Milsted makes a superb case for restricting the powers of corporations.

However, I would go further. I believe the mere existence of corporations is the single biggest instance of government interference in a free market economy.

What is a corporation? It is a legal entity recognized by the state and granted rights. It is a business whose owners have been graced with a lack of legal liability for the actions of said business.

Since libertarians believe that government should only exist to protect the rights of individuals, it is apparent that recognizing a fictitious entity as having legal rights and existence is beyond the proper scope of government. Furthermore, business owners should be responsible for what they own. We as a society have gone so far in the opposite direction that corporate owners have been given their own name that absolves them of responsibility: *investors*.

We have all been raised on the paradigm that corporations are a good idea since otherwise we could not accumulate capital for large projects. I no longer buy this reasoning. Of course people will take advantage of limiting their legal liability if a way to do so is available. But I believe people naturally want to make things bigger and better and will continue to do so even if liability is restored.

But if not, I think the costs to society of limiting liability of ownership outweigh the benefits.

It's time to change the paradigm. It's time for us to add a plank to the National LP Platform to call for abolishing the governmental recognition of those fictitious entities we call corporations.

Shelley Tamres
Sterling

Run in 2003!

As the Communications Director for the Libertarian Party of Virginia, I wanted to take a few minutes of your time to express my thanks and gratitude to several people within the LPVA and generally toward our entire membership. I happen to believe that we in the Party are among the most-enlightened of Virginia's voting population and there are many activists that have educated and enlightened me to the ideals of our Party.

A combination of the actions of the Division of Child Support Enforcement and the Prince William County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court and, to a greater degree, the tenacious efforts of Glenn Loucks, 6th CD representative and a high school friend are to thank for having caused me to leave the Republican Party. When I think of Libertarianism, my thoughts always go to Glenn. Most who know me, know the problems I've had with DCSE. If you'd like to know more, email me and we'll chat about it over a case of beer.

Thanks also goes to our former National Chairman, Dr. James Lark, for his unwavering and enthusiastic support in my position as Communications Director and, more importantly, in the efforts to create the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Libertarian Party.

As I had never held the position of Communications Director prior to my appointment by our current Chairman, Marianne Volpe, I must thank her for her confidence (and her patience during my busy year of 2002) as I have worked toward the development of *Virginia Liberty* essentially from the ground up, and I will endeavor in 2003, to fully develop our pathways of communications from the Chairman to every single member of the state Party.

Chuck Eby, our webmaster, is to be thanked for his work in the design and maintenance of lpva.com. His redesign of the site using the new LPVA logo, his rapid writing and posting of stories, etc. to the website, his creation of three forums for use by the LPVA membership and SCC members, and his input on new ways to bring the message of the Libertarian Party on a state level from us to you have made Chuck an invaluable part of the Communications team.

With the help of Kevin Rollins, we now have advertising rates for advertisements in *Virginia Liberty*. As such, I will make *Virginia Liberty* actually pay for itself within the first six months of this year, allowing the Party to increase our communications with you and potential new members.

As you can see, I have many people to thank for my being in the Party and the role I play within it. All of these people have one thing in common: *they are all volunteers*. Volunteerism within the Party is the only way we get things done. The Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, members of the State Central Committee, those staffing the local affiliates and myself provide the Party with *free labor*. Our labor for you takes time away from our families and other activities to further our ideals. I don't want you to feel sorry or to pity any of us because we're doing this because we believe in it.

What I would like you to do in 2003, is to step up to the plate and volunteer.

Create a local affiliate in your city/county. We have some affiliates that are dormant, we'd like affiliates ideally in every county, if not every jurisdiction, in the Commonwealth. Email Dr. Lark at affiliates@lpva.com and he'll provide you with what you need to do this or contact the CD representative for your area.

Seek out organizations you know to be sympathetic to Libertarian ideals. Those of us who are members or are active within other groups, might introduce others who are members to the Party. We have many LP members who are also members of the VCDL (the *Virginia Citizens Defense League*) and there is no reason I can think of why we can't potentially welcome every single member of that organization into the LPVA. To use sales lingo, there are many "vertical" groups that could properly be in our Party.

See "Thanks!", continued on page 8

LONG TERM PLAN

by Shelley Tamres

Party activists spent several months of 2002 engaged in a long-term planning process known as VSOT (Vision, Strategy, Operations, Tactics). The resulting plan was formally approved for implementation at the October meeting of the LPVA State Central Committee.

The plan consists of 3 Goals to be achieved in a 5 to 10 year timeframe. The Goals are:

1. Balance of Power - Hold a sufficient number of seats in at least one of the houses in the Virginia General Assembly so that no party may implement policy unilaterally (i.e., no party has a legislative majority).
2. Growth of Affiliates - Have at least 50 recognized and active LPVA local affiliates in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
3. Recognized Party - Meet the criteria of the Commonwealth of Virginia for being a recognized political party (currently, 10% of the vote for a statewide candidate).

Interim objectives to help attain the goals have been defined and broken down into tasks. I am now in the process of prioritizing and assigning the tasks.

By the time you read this, a summary of the goals, interim objectives, and tasks should be available on our website, lpva.com. If you have an interest in helping out with any of the tasks, please contact me at vicechair@lpva.com or 703-450-0218.

Candidate training with Don Gorman coming soon... check lpva.com for upcoming dates!

Chairman's Report

by Marianne Volpe, LPVA chair

This has been an incredible year for Virginia Libertarians. The Libertarian Party of Virginia adopted as policy the results of the Vision, Strategy, Operations and Tactics (VSOT) meetings. The leadership is committed to fulfilling these goals in the next 5 to 10 years: hold the balance of power in at least one of the state houses; have at least 50 recognized affiliates; become a recognized political party.

These are ambitious goals, and we will have to stretch to meet them, but we can do it. Already this year I have seen a number of volunteers step up their activism, and others become involved who were not previously active, to get the basic work of the LPVA done. I would like to recognize the efforts of Ballot Access Chair Shelley Tamres, Treasurer Kevin McKenna, Secretary Scott Wakeman, Communications Director David Briggman, Development Chairman Donny Ferguson, Webmaster Chuck Eby, Renewals Coordinator Mimi South, Local Affiliates Party Chair & Campus Coordinator Jim Lark, Database Manager Scott Mikell, Business Services Manager/Bookkeeper Dana Johansen, SCC member Leonard Harris, and Address Corrections/Audit Committee volunteer Jim Turbett.

We need more volunteers to achieve our goals and elect Libertarians to office in Virginia. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you want to help, by email (chair@lpva.com) or by phone (703-960-2973).

Our challenges for 2003 will be greater, given the financial crunch that the National LP is experiencing. Although the crunch is expected to last only a few months, the LPVA and other state affiliates are being asked to postpone receipt of our monthly payment under the Unified Membership Plan (UMP) from National. The LPVA received only half the normal payment in November, and no payment in December. I will be in contact in the coming days with National Chair Geoff Neale to talk about the UMP arrearage, and will report as soon as possible to the SCC.

Virginia Libertarians will be called upon more than ever to give of their time and money to support our efforts to grow our membership and recruit, support and elect Libertarians to office. I know I can count on Libertarians to meet these challenges, and I am looking forward to a very prosperous and politically successful 2003.

I have a short summary by department listed, and I welcome questions. Please feel free to contact me by email at chair@lpva.com or by phone at 703-960-2973.

ADMINISTRATION

BOOKKEEPING

Data entry and deposit duties were transferred to Dana Johansen in May. Kevin McKenna now handles the treasury bookkeeping. They have performed the work on a volunteer basis, saving the Party much-needed funds. If anyone has questions about the books, please contact Dana or Kevin with your questions. Dana's email is 8cd@lpva.com, and Kevin's is treasurer@lpva.com

PLEDGE PROGRAM

The pledge program was restarted this year by Dana Johansen, and so far we have more than 10 pledgers. Dana will report on this in detail before the next SCC meeting. Rance Edwards told me recently that he has the old pledge forms, and will be sending them to me shortly. Dana and I met with Mimi South recently to discuss the pledge program and renewals, and she has drafted an excellent letter to pledgers.

COMPUTERS, SOFTWARE and PROPERTY

Kevin McKenna has sent a letter to former Chair Marc Montoni to request the return of the LPVA software. As soon as that has been returned, the software can be installed on the LPVA computer, and that can be made available to the Secretary to use.

See "Chairman's Report", continued on page 7

Chairman's Report

continued from Page 6

With the recent addition of the computer list provided by Robert McBride, Computer Committee, we have a more complete list of LPVA property.

DATABASE

Scott Mikell has done a wonderful job as our DB manager. We will improve the database for next year, and we will work to provide our activists and candidates with the best possible lists. We are still working with Democracy Data to sort out the question of data due to the LPVA and/or reimbursement for last year. Once Kevin McKenna sorts this out with Democracy Data, Scott will receive newer, better districting data. Jim Turbett, our address corrections volunteer, has worked many long hours on corrections, and the results should be in the next data dump. If you have questions about your membership list, or need the list for your area, please contact me at chair@lpva.com, and we will help you. Scott can be contacted at ecash@verizon.net or database@lpva.com.

LOCAL AFFILIATE PARTY CHAIR

Jim Lark is working with many affiliates, formed and in formation, around the state. To effect the vision and strategy policy we adopted in October, Jim will work to form as many affiliates as possible in major population centers. If you would like to start a local, or have questions about affiliates, please contact him at affiliates@lpva.com.

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

MEMBERSHIP GENERATION & RENEWALS

Mimi South is developing ideas for mailings to inquiries and for members who need to renew or have expired. The crisis at National means that more than ever we will rely on vigorous activity by local affiliates to contact inquiries and urge members to renew. For more information, or to help Mimi contact members, please email her at renewals@lpva.com.

STATE CONVENTION

As of last night I had not received a response to the RFP published in the last two issues of Virginia Liberty and on the website. The Campaign Committee will undertake to manage the event in 2004, and will start with the selection by the SCC of a date for the Convention. The Committee is in need of many volunteers, so please contact the Chair at chair@lpva.com, or by phone at 703-960-2973 if you want to help. Suggestions for locations, speakers, topics etc. are welcome!

FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT

FUNDRAISING

The fundraiser that went out between October 30 and November 4 has raised over \$1600 to date, and cost \$673.50 to print and mail. We must improve our fundraising ability, and I have discussed fundraising with activist Kevin Rollins. Kevin will be working with Development Chairman Donny Ferguson on a fundraising plan for the LPVA. Kevin was the former Executive Director of the North Carolina LP, and has had experience in fundraising.

A second fundraiser will be geared toward support of our candidates for 2003, and Donny is working on that draft now.

CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT

CANDIDATE DEVELOPMENT, RECRUITMENT AND SUPPORT

Candidate recruitment for 2003 and 2004 continues, and I have already talked to half a dozen potential candidates for 2003 and two announced/soon to announce candidates. Our recently adopted strategy Do you have past campaign or political experience? Please consider running for office, or helping another candidate's campaign. No experience, but you want to learn and make a difference? We are working on a plan to bring Don Gorman to Virginia in 2003 to provide campaign management and candidate training – are you interested? Would you rather work on the committee, creating the programs and recruiting the candidates? Please contact me at chair@lpva.com, or call me at 703-960-2973.

BALLOT ACCESS

Ms. Shelley Tamres is preparing legislation, and working with legislators to track favorable legislation this year. The next session of the General Assembly is January 8, and I will attend the session and the protest planned by the coalition of anti-sales tax groups. Ballot access is the third of our recently adopted policy goals, and I will work with Shelley to personally contact as many of the legislators as possible. The Ballot Access Committee is in need of more members, so please consider volunteering. Contact Shelley at vicechair@lpva.com to help.

See "Chairman's Report", continued on page 8

Chairman's Report

continued from Page 7

COMMUNICATIONS

NEWSLETTER

Dave Briggman and Chuck Eby have done a superb job this year to create a new look for the newsletter and website. In the case of the newsletter, Dave had to rebuild it from the bottom up, but the result is fantastic. To save printing costs and provide content the way many people prefer, Dave instituted a version of the newsletter in .pdf that is emailed to subscribers. The next issue deadline is February 15, 2003. Please forward any articles or letters to the editor that you have to Dave at communications@lpva.com.

WEBMASTER

Thanks to Chuck Eby's hard work, the LPVA website has a new look. Check out the website at www.lpva.com if you haven't seen the new background. Chuck redrafted the site to include the new logo, and changed the background color – excellent improvements. Chuck has kept the site up-to-date and filled with interesting stories. Please email him your content, saved as a webpage if possible, at webmaster@lpva.com.

CAMPUS COORDINATOR

Jim Lark continues to do an outstanding job working with diverse groups throughout Virginia. He is organizing more campus groups by focusing on areas where there are universities and colleges where county affiliates are or are being formed. In 2002 we welcomed a new libertarian group, Students for Individual Liberty (SIL) at George Mason University, to the list of recognized campus groups. If you are interested in working with Jim to form a group, please contact him at campus@lpva.com.

Candidates

continued from Page 2

I am recruiting for 2003 and 2004 offices, with the emphasis on local races and House of Delegate and State Senate. All political parties grow from the bottom up, and we will succeed

Thanks!

continued from Page 5

Work with us to help “market” the Party by spending a Saturday or Sunday at one of the many gun shows held nearly every weekend somewhere in Virginia. The *only* political Party that is 100% pro-2nd Amendment is ours. Gun owners are an “easy sale”. Simply ask Jacob Hornberger about how receptive gun owners were to his message during his candidacy for the United States Senate. Market the Party on talk radio. We spoke about the Libertarian Party so much on our local talk radio station, that we can now sit back and hear others talk about Libertarian ideals. Having Neal Boortz on the station certainly doesn't hurt.

Go to your local city council or county board of supervisors meeting. Involvement in your local government can be a little inconvenient -- especially if you have politicians that enjoy waxing poetic if the local media is around. Hopefully, local government in your jurisdiction doesn't begin their meetings at 3:00PM, like the Rockingham County Board of Supervisors. If you can't go to their meetings, get a copy of your local government's budget. Make your government justify their waste. I was the first person in memory to request the budgets of both the City of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. Both jurisdictions donate over \$200,000 a year to non-profit organizations and in northern Virginia, Richmond and in the tidewater area, I'm sure the numbers are much more than that.

Run for office. The entire House of Delegates are up for re-election this year as are many of the Constitutional Offices within your jurisdiction such as Commonwealth Attorney, Sheriff, Commissioner of the Revenue, etc. If you've been active in local politics by attending your local governmental body meetings and have more than an idea as to what's happening in your community, at least consider a run. If a run doesn't appeal to you, perhaps consider soliciting for an appointment to a local board, such as your Board of Zoning Appeals, Community Services Board, etc. That is a good way to get people used to the idea of Libertarians in local government. On a personal note, when running for local office, or any office for that matter, consider avoiding a one-issue campaign -- especially the drug decriminalization issue. We are too closely identified with this issue, in my opinion, and local and statewide office holders cannot control what are largely federal laws. Aside from that drug use is down and we have larger, more important differences that distinguish Libertarians from the Republicans and the Democrats and should you not be able to deliver on your one issue, you have lost all credibility with the voters.

In closing, a large body of thanks needs to go to the membership of the LPVA. Without your support, we cannot act in furtherance of our common goals. In 2003, please resolve to do *at least your part*. If you have time to help at a greater level, we have jobs that need to be filled. Email Marianne Volpe at chair@lpva.com for more information on these positions.

David Briggman
Communications Director

when we recruit 1) people who actually want to run and serve in the office, 2) people who have the time, 3) people who have the money and/or will raise the money to run a good race, and 4) people with past campaign or elective office experience.

When we offer the voters candidates who have the resume they expect in a candidate we will win races. What do I mean by resume? Simple: the background necessary to hold the office. For local races, the background or resume necessary may be only community involvement and associated education. I urge all would-be candidates to first consider those offices, and to assist other campaigns as a most excellent way to learn about the process. By the time you get to House of Delegate and State Senate, voters are looking for candidates who have already held the lower elective offices.

We are changing things in Virginia, and it doesn't take a different mission statement or another 1/2 year of VSOT meetings to get us there. It takes committed, hardworking people who will do the work - not just talk about it. If you can't help with your hands, you can help with your wallet - open it, and give and give and give, because next year the sky's the limit. Are you ready to help? Please contact me at chair@lpva.com, or call me at 703-960-2973.

Ouch!

continued from Page 4

Better tools. This has been one of my favorite tweaks: have wittier radio ads, glossier brochures, catchier bumper stickers, and so forth. I even started a small business to produce such after growing impatient with LPHQ's progress on upgrading their propaganda (but I do like their new brochures). However, I think this is just a tweak; worth doing but not enough to produce a real turnaround.

Better training. What is the point in recruiting hundreds of candidates who do not know how to conduct a campaign? What is the point of starting affiliates if no one knows what to do once they have one? During my tenure on the LNC I lobbied hard to get The Libertarian Volunteer and other "technical" articles put in LP News, and I have thrown several temper tantrums over the tepid and skimpy technical content that has finally made it into LP News. More training is needed. Alas, I have a caveat: some people are getting trained, and I know of some who have taken and followed the training and still got clobbered. It is not enough to train more people; we need to figure out what to train them to do. It is my hope that some of these essays will be part of an improved set of training materials – after testing has been done to determine which of these ideas actually work.

A better message. I know this is going to hurt, but it is time to admit it: the Libertarian message does not "have legs." I have recently been reading a book on marketing that was the result of a large amount of empirical study. The author claims that the medium is truly not the message. A good idea sells; a bad idea doesn't. TV vs. radio vs. newspapers is largely irrelevant. Wit may be attention getting, but it still does not sell product. It may be time to really review our platform and make a few compromises. Freedom is valuable, but it is not the only value.

So Which is it?

So which of the proposed strategies should we adopt? The answer is: I don't know. But I *do* know how to find out: **experiment!** And I suggest we perform experiments on a small scale before committing to a national strategy. We can evaluate strategies based on the bottleneck diagrams presented in a previous essay. The three bottlenecks are: **A.** Awareness of LP candidates and their message, **B.** Belief in the LP message, **C.** Credibility.

The focus strategies and the realistic race strategy take care of Bottleneck A. If enough money and/or volunteer time goes into a small-scale race, then name and issue recognition are guaranteed. However, victory is not guaranteed. If people do not like the message and/or candidate, they will not vote for her regardless of amount of advertising. Also, the pro-freedom vote can get split between the LP candidate and the RP candidate. Many libertarians will vote Republican because the Republicans mimic our message to an extent and thereby become "the lesser of two evils." (Bottleneck C).

We can take out Bottleneck C by doing our experiments on two-way races. This takes the "lesser of two evils" argument out of consideration. The LP vote totals reflect this fact. Note how many Libertarians broke 20% in two-way races and how few broke 10% in three-way races.

So, we can rule out the need for the last strategy by finding some major donors to get behind a candidate for Virginia state house next year. There will be many two-way opportunities (in 1999 it was 60% of the races) and I know quite a few presentable candidates in that state. If we can win some races by putting \$50K into the campaign treasuries of a few state house candidates next year, then we know the LP message is viable, and all we need to do is concentrate resources to produce further wins. If such a test fails, then some serious soul searching is in order.

Here is a cheaper experiment. Walk your neighborhood, or talk to people at a bar, or somehow put together a semi-random focus group. Explain to them the Libertarian message in ten minutes or less. This is about the level of explanation you will be able to muster in a well-financed campaign. Count the number of people who 1. Dislike the message, 2. Are neutral, 3. Like the message, 4. Are enthusiastic. If one third are enthusiastic, then a Libertarian victory in a three-way race is possible. If half at least like the message then a Libertarian victory in a two-way race is viable, given enough funds. If less than half dislike the message, then victory is still possible with a well-funded charismatic candidate in a two-way race.

Here is the catch: the message you explain to the people must include the controversial parts of the LP platform: open immigration, a retreat on foreign policy, and legal crack cocaine. Even if you intend for your candidate to downplay these issues, it is nearly guaranteed that the Demopublican candidate will bring up such issues if faced with a real campaign.

Now take those poll numbers. Can we win with our stark message? If not, which is better: to win with half of what we want, or to eternally lose going for everything? Do we keep buying lottery tickets, or opt for a steady job? It is for this reason that I originally developed Quiz2D. If incrementalism is the way to go, then it is important to know which increments are currently politically viable and which increments should be postponed. I have gathered a fair amount of data; however, my sample is certainly not random. I can say with a fair amount of confidence that marijuana legalization is several times more popular than legalizing all drugs. However, I was not persuasive in this assessment, so LPHQ has proceeded with a campaign against the entire drug war at the federal level. I leave it as an exercise for the audience to determine who was right.

My current experiment is to develop a left-libertarian platform and coalition, based not on the Nolan Chart, but on the chart in my previous essay. Results to date are promising, but far more data is needed before I can declare that I am onto something.

I encourage you all to do your own experiments. Science beats philosophy.

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