

California Activist '83

Bulletin of the Libertarian Party of California

401 E. Taylor Street, San Jose, CA 95112

Volume 2 #3 June 1983

HOW TO INTRODUCE LIBERTARIANISM TO YOUR FRIENDS WITHOUT APPEARING TO BE A FOOL

Marshall William Fritz

As a novice libertarian in 1981, how was I to know how difficult it is for people to see the logic of our ways?

So in January of that year I invited 8 friends and acquaintances over to a 2.5 hour "INTRODUCTION TO LIBERTARIANISM".

This philosophy made so much sense to me that I knew if I just "splained it good" I could have a whole bunch of converts in one evening. In fact, I was doubly sure of myself because my whole sales career had been in explaining new and bold concepts for computer and insurance companies.

I got my comeuppance. Nobody rushed to join the party. While none of their objections shook my belief in the free market, correspondingly, none of my responses were so convincing that the audience gained the confidence I have in the market.

FIRST BREAKTHROUGH

Every month or two I would invite a new crew to hear my introduction, and I modified it each time to overcome the inadequacies of the prior month. A major breakthrough was caused by a minister who belligerently/jokingly proclaimed early in one meeting: "You are not going to convince me to be a libertarian!!"

It was one of those rare times when the right response occurred to me at the right time: "I am not trying to convince you to become a libertarian...I'm trying to find out if you already are one." We all laughed, and the meeting proceeded smoothly. (By the way, he scored 100% on the libertarian quiz I gave later that night, and he stayed an extra hour to help me improve the presentation.)

PURPOSE CLARIFIED

So after a lot of trial and error, I finally decided which objectives are suitable for this session, and I share them with the audience in the early minutes of the evening:

1. If your political philosophy is already libertarian, but you don't use that word to describe it, my objective is to help you discover there are a lot of people who agree with you: libertarians.
2. If your political philosophy is not libertarian, my objective is to pique your curiosity enough that you want to learn more.

These objectives are worthwhile, obtainable and measurable. They are measurable because at the end of the evening I offer to sell a bit of literature. If they are willing to invest a dollar to learn more, I have met my objective.

Of course, the person who finds he already is a slibertarian is encouraged to re-register and join the party on the spot!

In the first year I recruited the audience myself. I invited people I knew and even some I didn't know; I asked if they had time for some fun...specifically, an introduction to libertarianism.

Almost half say yes, and I log the name & phone number on a prospect list. Then 7-10 days before the event I phone & confirm that it is on their schedule. And then the day before or the very day I call again to remind them and make sure they have the address & directions.

Now other libertarians invite their friends too, so it is easier.

FORMAT, TIMING, & FACILITY

We do the introduction in the home of a doctor whose living room comfortably seats 15. Because of his "M.D." and nice location, the invitee feels a sense of security.

We ask people to arrive at 7:15pm, tell them we will start at 7:30 and finish at 9:45. And we do adjourn on time. We use nametags. The chairs are arranged in a circle, about 3 fewer than I expect. (If all come we bring more chairs; if we are short some people, which is the norm, we don't have empty chairs staring at us all night.)

I do the evening in a sit down mode without a podium or table.

CONTENT

After much trial and error, the best approach I have found is the 5 P's presentation:

PURPOSE
POLITICAL POSITION
PRINCIPLES
POLITICS
PRACTICALITIES

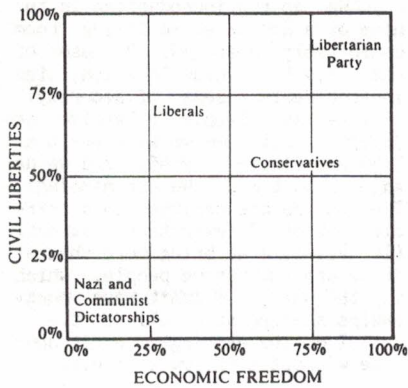
PURPOSE...I use the Tonie Nathan approach: "We libertarians have the same purposes as Republicans and Democrats; ie, we would like to live in a world where children are fed and educated, people can walk in the cities without fear of attack, roads are paved and drivers obey the traffic lights and other rules of the road, etc.

"While we want the same things, the difference is that libertarians do not believe in forcing others to pay for what we want."

This "Purpose" section takes just 2-3 minutes, but anyone who thinks we aspire to chaos starts to have his fears alleviated.

continued p. 2

POLITICAL POSITION...I draw the left/right political spectrum on a small blackboard and ask the audience to volunteer names of left-wing and right-wing politicians, groups or philosophies. I write each one in its approximate location and after 8-10 have been mentioned I ask the rhetorical question "Just what is being measured on the left-right scale?" Of course there is no answer, because unlike baby scales, yard sticks and barometers (which have real numbers and measure something), the left-right scale is a nonsensical myth. It measures nothing. Next I present the Nolan model.



The "Political Position" section takes about 15 minutes to present. By its completion, the prospects have a pretty good fix that libertarians are not conservatives, not liberals, and certainly not communists.

PRINCIPLE...In introducing an individual to our political philosophy, I find it helpful to first discover if the person already agrees with us on major items of principle. Only if there is agreement on certain principles does it make sense to get into the difficult practical issues. To find out if a person's political philosophy is congruent with ours, these questions probe:

1. Belief in right and wrong.
2. Belief in private property.
3. Belief in respecting rights of others.
4. Belief that "might" does not make "right".
5. Unwillingness to compromise principles.

These are the questions:

1. Are murder and slavery wrong?
2. Do you "own" any property (eg., wristwatch, shirt, home, cattle ranch) in the sense that if someone were to take it from you by force (eg, extortion, robbery, arson), their action would be "wrong"?
3. Do you advocate the initiation of physical force in order to achieve your business, social or political goals?
4. When individuals form a government, does "wrong" become "right" if the majority agrees to it?
5. If you became convinced that a society based on force (eg, communism, socialism or fascism) would produce more goods for everybody (say 18.2% more GNP per capita), would you want to live in that society?

If an individual has answered YES, YES, NO, NO, NO, he certainly agrees with us in principle. The next great task is for the prospective libertarian to try to apply these principles to everyday concerns that all of us have: education, national defense, internal order, medical and other care for the underprivileged, etc.

It often makes sense to expand on some questions by giving examples. In question 3, you may need to clarify that "initiate force" means that self-defense is OK, and that by "force" we mean physical force.

When using the questions with a group, you may wish to poll them at each question to verify agreement. If there is a person who disagrees, I find it best to simply acknowledge the disagreement but not to try to dissuade. (The most common place for disagreement is Q4; in those cases I simply point out that the person is of the majoritarian persuasion, and that there are many people who share this opinion.) The "Principles" section takes 20-30 minutes. Avoid answering heavy questions (eg, the origin of natural rights). Simply ask the questioner to defer until break.

BREAK...A 10 minute break gives people a chance to stretch, get a cup of coffee and a piece of cake.

POLITICS...I first point out that the Libertarian Party is one of 51 organizations in the libertarian movement and has no special position of authority or influence.

Next I mention some of the better known forefathers of the movement (Adam Smith, Jefferson, Thoreau, Mencken, R. Taft) and some of the better known quasi libertarian events of our history (American Revolution, anti-slavery movement, anti-Viet Nam war movement).

Finally, I describe the founding of the party in 1971 and the vote history:

OF AMERICANS VOTING FOR A LIBERTARIAN

| | |
|------|-----------|
| 1972 | 5,000 |
| 1976 | 175,000 |
| 1980 | 2,500,000 |

As the last political item, I point out that no one knows whether the Libertarian Party will become a mass party and win many elections, or whether it will simply lead the way and the two main parties will coopt our positions and implement our programs. This whole section is quite short, about 10 minutes.

PRACTICALITIES...At this point I open the evening to discuss how the libertarian principles would work when applied to practical issues we are facing today. The audience enjoys asking questions of the "what about the roads?" ilk, and I respond with 2-10 minute answers.

To end this section, I point out that I became comfortable with libertarianism only after I understood the principles are practical and work in the real world.

THE CLOSE

At about 9:40 I begin to close the evening by showing the audience what literature they get for \$1.00. I usually include the Q&A, a couple of LP Position Papers, a reprint or two I like, a membership application and a back issue of Caliber.

Their next step is to read the literature and attend a supperclub or business meeting.

THREE MORE SUGGESTIONS

1. Do the introduction your way, not my way; use this write-up as a guide, not as a rulebook.
2. If any libertarian activists are coming, ask them in advance to remain silent during the session.
3. Be sure to finish on time.

Marshall Fritz is the Executive Director of the Libertarian Party of California.

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR
Mary Gingell

The Libertarian Party of California Executive Committee met over the weekend of May 21-22 in Fresno.

I would like to thank all those present throughout the weekend for their hard work and cooperation in making the meeting very successful and productive.

In particular, I am grateful to budget committee members Sam Treynor and Sharon Ayres and executive director advisory committee members Dave Bergland and Carolyn Treynor for their efforts all day Saturday in preparation for the Sunday meeting of the entire Executive Committee. Many thanks are also in order to Karen Huffman and Marshall Fritz, our two contractors, who worked hard and long for many weeks before the meeting, and finally, to statewide officers Melinda Pillsbury-Foster, Eric Garris, Carolyn Treynor and Sam Treynor for their support and assistance during the meeting.

We are all grateful to the Fresno County LP for hosting this event.

I feel that the meeting was a great success. Highlights include adoption of the budget for the remainder of the 1983-84 fiscal year, and agreement in principle to negotiate a contract with Marshall Fritz to continue his work as executive director of the LPC. In addition, a new committee structure was developed that I am sure will serve the party well. (See list of committees elsewhere in this issue.) Finally, I think that Sunday's full committee meeting reflected a heartening desire on the part of all those present to work together and do their best to move the LPC forward.

Better a bottle in
front of me than a
frontal lobotomy. *
BURT BLUMERT

* NOTE: this is a highly condensed synthesis of Mr. Blumert's extensive thoughts on the subjects of state power being used to suppress alcohol and other drugs, and his Szasz-like position on the abuses done by state supported "mental health" practitioners.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The following committees are now in place within the LPC:

Literature Committee: Jeff Hummel, Gloria Rotunno, Mary Gingell. To review all literature published in the name of the LPC to insure high quality and compliance with the LPC platform.

Fundraising Committee: Mike Hall, Mary Gingell, Bill Evers, Jeff Mandel, Jack Dean, Dena Cornett, Marshall Fritz, Karen Huffman, Sam Treynor. To oversee the fundraising efforts of the Executive Director through February, 1984, and to improve the efficiency of current pledge reminder and record-keeping procedures.

Executive Director Advisory Committee: Mary Gingell, Dave Bergland, Carolyn Treynor, Howard Creighton, Colin Hunter. To negotiate a contract with the Executive Director and oversee evaluation of his work.

Membership Committee: Mark Hinkle, Susan Downes, Jack Dean, Sharon Ayres, Perry Willis. To work with the Executive Director to design and implement a membership program in 1983-84.

Caliber Editor: Less Antman.

Development Committee: Ed Clark, Jack Dean, others to be added. To develop a long-range plan for the LPC which will ultimately be discussed at the 1984 LPC convention.

Internal Education Chair: Corby Somerville. "Looking for ideas."

Budget Committee: Sam Treynor, Sharon Ayres, Lou Villadsen, Ray Strong, Hank James. Prepared 1983-84 budget, now addressing current issues with budgetary impact.

Initiative Committee: Corby Somerville, Eric Garris, Dick Rider. To report to the Executive Committee possible statewide initiatives ripe for Libertarian involvement.

Standing Committee on Conventions: Jack Dean, Scott Olmstead, Burt Blumert, Thea McLean, Dave Nichols. To oversee preparation for the 1984 LPC convention to be held in Los Angeles.

NATIONAL CONVENTION

Update on the 1983 LP Convention to be held August 29 to September 4 in New York City: libertarian travel agent Glenda Bull is putting together a low-priced travel and hotel package for attendees from California. See the application-information blank elsewhere in this issue.

The officer and candidate races to be decided at the national convention are taking shape, with the following candidates declared so far:

President: Gene Burns, Florida
Col. Ed Norwood, Texas
Chair: Paul Grant, Colorado
Verne Etzel, Delaware
Secretary: Our own Sharon Ayres
Treasurer: Dave Walter, Penn.

Northern and Southern California delegate caucuses are being organized by LPC vice-chairs Eric Garris and Melinda Pillsbury-Foster. The caucuses will be held some time in August to give California delegates a chance to meet with and hear the candidates. Specifics will be published in next month's California Activist.

| | | | |
|---|---------|---|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to reserve my 7 day package. Enclosed is my check for \$ _____. | | <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to pay by credit card. My number and expiration date are: _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want more information on: | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel | | <input type="checkbox"/> Hotel accommodations | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Please send information on FREE-HOLD TRAVEL CLUB. | | | |
| name | address | city | zip |
| DEPARTURE POINT | DATE | RETURNING FROM NY | DATE |
| Make checks payable to: Bradford Travel 4411 Laurel Cyn. Hollywood, CA 91607 | | | |

Gene Burns, announced candidate for the Libertarian Party presidential nomination, has a campaign address:

PO Box 310
Orlando, FL 32802
(305) 894-0397

NEWSLETTER SWAP

Your regional newsletter has features that editors of other newsletters would like to see. And vice versa. The easiest way to learn from each other is for our each region to send its newsletter to many or all other regions.

4TH OF JULY SUPPLIES

The National LP can provide you special literature at cost; the design was done by Carol Sanders and Janet Colby of San Diego.

Invitations...Red & Blue graphics on white paper, 8.5x11", \$.02 each.

Brochures...Red & Blue graphics on white slick paper, 8.5x11" open, 3-way fold; very nice first impression piece. \$.08 each.

Posters...Red, white & blue graphics on heavy paper; call re. size, price and availability.

Audio Tape...Patriotic 25 minute speech by Gene Burns; \$2.00 each.

National LP
2139 Wisconsin Ave NW
Washington D.C., 20007
(202) 333-8209

VOICE OF LIBERTY

John Wickham
PO 99198
Stockton, CA 95209

CAPITOL LIBERTY

Jim McClarin
7244 Almond Ave.
Orangevale, CA 95662

ADVANCE TO LIBERTY

Bob Gaede
709 Huskey Drive
Bakersfield, CA 93308

TIME FOR LIBERTY

Martha Gustafson
PO 5039
Fresno, CA 93727

FREEDOM'S FORUM

Ron Foster
1550 Westwood Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90024

SECOND TUESDAY

Sharon Ayres
695 Town Center Drive #800
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

LIBERTARIAN ALTERNATIVE

Sara Baase
PO 15011
San Diego, CA 92115

WEST LOS ANGELES LIBERTARIAN

Neal Donner
2550 1/2 Centinela Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90064

SANTA CRUZ LIBERTARIAN

Bill Anderson
PO 736
Aptos, CA 95003

LIBERTARIAN LIFELINE

Mike Tejada
c/o 3960 East 14th St.
Oakland, CA 94601

SANTA CLARA LIBERTARIAN

Jeff Smith
4515 Hamilton Ave.
San Jose, CA 95130

FREE MARKET MARIN

Dan Dougherty
PO 367
Kentfield, CA 94904

CHANNEL COUNTIES LIBERTARIAN

Saul Rackauskas
1631 Ave. del Manzano
Camarillo, CA 93010

LIBERAL

Michael Macaulay
PO 75241
Los Angeles, CA 90075

CONTRA COSTA LIBERTARIAN

Thea McLean
1746 Lexington #4
El Cerrito, CA 94530

SONOMA LIBERTARIAN

James Oglesby
PO 3742
Santa Rosa, CA 95402

LPC OFFICERS & STAFF

Chair Mary Gingell
933 Colorado
Palo Alto, CA 94303
415-494-0140R

Southern Vice-Chair Melinda Pillsbury-Foster
7019 Chimineas
Reseda, CA 91335
213-342-9716R

Northern Vice-Chair Eric Garris
1800 Market St.
San Francisco, CA 94102
415-864-0952M

Secretary Carolyn Treynor
629 19th St.
Manhattan Beach 90266
213-546-2846R

Treasurer Sam Treynor
629 19th St.
Manhattan Beach 90266
213-546-2846R

Office Manager Karen Huffman
401 E. Taylor
San Jose, CA 95112
408-279-3733W

Executive Director Marshall Fritz
5533 E. Swift
Fresno, CA 93727
209-292-6700WR

R=Residence; W=Work; M=Message

Libertarian Headquarters

401 East Taylor Street
San Jose, California 95112

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



I am proud to be an American taxpayer. I could be just as proud for half the money.
Arthur Godfrey

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
San Jose, CA
Permit No 4040