

Libertarian Party County Organizing Manual

Second Edition

By Gene A. Cisewski



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County Structure

The County Committees are elected in their LP county caucus. The Chair, 1st Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer and other such members are selected to serve as the local Constitution may provide. The state Libertarian Party carries on Party business through an organizational setup of committees (organizations) in all counties of the state. Some degree of control is exercised over county committees since each county is granted a charter by the state executive committee. This may be suspended or revoked if officers or members of that county fail or refuse to carry out their responsibilities.

Each county unit must have a chair, vice chair, secretary, and a treasurer as mentioned. In addition, most committees should have a finance chair. The committees meet regularly to promote membership, carry on candidate recruitment and campaign activities, fulfill requirements for proper election procedures, and cooperate with the state organization through its officers. Committees may have other officers to carry on fund raising projects, campaigns, and other activities at their own option.

The organizational setup in large, metropolitan counties may be different due to the population and size of the metropolitan area. In these highly populated localities, the county may have an entire set of lower units based upon practical geographic divisions, such as congressional districts, legislative districts, commissioner districts, or wards.

Generally, a county caucus is an event held once a year or once every two years. All party members in good standing residing within the county elect a county executive committee and officers at this time. The executive committee is made up of the officers outlined above as well as additional representatives to reflect the entire county's population and membership.

DUTIES OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The county executive committee serves as the "board of directors" of the party organization. They have the authority to transact any necessary business between meetings and caucuses. The executive committee should make recommendations for appointments from their county and advise the chair.

These people have the responsibility to fill vacancies in their Party organization that occur between elections. The county executive committee completes the slate of delegates and alternates to the state and congressional district conventions as appropriate, (as we grow large enough to govern, the day will come, when we cannot expect all members to attend state conventions).

CARRY OUT LIBERTARIAN POLICIES

1. Assume leadership in getting qualified Libertarians to run for office.
2. Maintain a county headquarters during campaigns and, where facilities and finances allow, on a year-round basis.
3. Work with auxiliary groups, for instance College Libertarians, in coordinating projects and activities in your county.
4. Know the Libertarian "makeup" of your county (how many workers are needed to get out the vote, where the greatest campaign effort should be concentrated, and vote analysis by precinct), and the overall political makeup of your county, including *knowing all elected officials*.
5. Where applicable by law, make sure that a Libertarian is on the ballot for election district committee positions elected during primaries.
6. Where applicable by law, submit names of electors for appointment as elections inspectors, clerks and ballot clerks by the appropriate deadlines to the appropriate officials.
7. Where applicable by law, submit nominees for the Board of Canvassers.
8. Attend congressional district caucuses and state convention meetings.
9. Answer all requests for information and other pertinent correspondence from the Libertarian State Party as soon as

1. Appoint chairs for special committees as the party needs require (membership, campaign, finance, publicity, special events, etc.).
2. In lining up your team, remember it is essential to delegate authority.
3. Be sure that the people appointed are competent and capable for their positions.
4. See that there are no conflicts of interest in the appointments. A chair on your board should not hold office in another organization whose policies or philosophy conflicts with that of the Libertarian Party.
5. Keep in close touch with your committee chairs. As county chair, you will receive material from the state party. Be sure to follow through and pass things back and forth as needed.
6. To develop future leadership, encourage appointment of vice chairs.
7. At the very beginning of the term, the county chair and board members, meeting together, should determine the goals for the year and how every officer or committee chair fits into the overall plan to achieve those goals.
8. Every person has some talent. It's up to the leadership to find that talent and use it.
9. A chair does not impose his or her thinking on the board or party, nor does he or she commit the party to any action without its consent.
10. Be alert that your party is not used to promote the self-interest of any individual, individuals, or any other organization.
11. Give credit where credit is due. Praise those who are doing a good job. Remember again that success is the result of good team work.
12. A party usually grows and flourishes in direct proportion to its leadership. A thoughtful, fair-minded, well-organized chair with a strong board can reach the heights of political effectiveness.

DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY

The secretary is responsible for keeping the records of the proceedings of the party. The minutes are the official record of the organization; they should never be destroyed. A secretary should be accurate, prompt, and attend all meetings.

SPECIFIC DUTIES

1. Keep all records of the party.
2. Keep accurate minutes of all meetings.
3. Prepare agendas for the executive committee and county meetings, in consultation with the chair.
4. Issue membership cards.
5. Keep a file of names and addresses of county members.
6. Notify members of meetings at least 10 days prior to the meeting. Send a copy of the notice to the state party.

MATERIALS NEEDED AT A MEETING

1. Permanently bound minute book.
2. Copies of bylaws, standing rules, and constitutions from all Libertarian levels.
3. List of officers and chairs.
4. Current calendar.
5. A copy of the chair's agenda for current meeting.

DUTIES DURING A MEETING

When reading the minutes, stand and address the chair, "Mister/Madam Chair," and remain standing until thanked by the chair. You are addressing your report to the chair. The reading of the minutes is often dispensed in most organizations if they are distributed to members well ahead of time (such as in the meeting announcement or before the meeting starts if they are brief).

1. Record minutes of every meeting and compile in a permanently bound book. As soon as minutes are written after each meeting, send a copy to the chair.
2. Read clearly the minutes of the previous meeting (if necessary). If approved, the word "approved," the date, and signature of the secretary should be written at the end of the minutes of each meeting. If corrected, circle error in red ink — never erase — write correction in left margin, date and sign.
3. Send necessary materials to chair if unable to attend meeting.

RECORDING MINUTES

1. Minutes are the permanent record of the organization and are written in ink, or typed and affixed, in a permanently bound book, leaving a wide margin on the left side of the page for corrections.
2. Must include kind of meeting (regular, special, executive committee, etc.), full name of the organization, date, time, place, if quorum present, name and title of presiding officer and secretary.
3. If an executive committee meeting, it is advisable to list members present and may include names of guests.
4. Statement that minutes of previous meeting were read and approved or corrected.
5. Minutes should include the financial statement:
 - Beginning balance (date)
 - Total receipts
 - Total disbursements
 - Ending balance (date)

Itemize all bills presented and approved. The treasurer should give the secretary a copy of his or her report.

DUTIES OF THE TREASURER

The bylaws of a party usually outline financial procedures and policy. Duties of the treasurer will vary in different counties. However, the usual procedure is to:

1. Make the treasurer sole custodian of all funds belonging to the party.
 - Bank all money received, disburse it, and account for it. Whether the sums are large or small is immaterial; the records must be in order.
 - The treasurer's books must be accurate and up to date. The form used can be simple but whatever system it should be balanced each month and checked with the bank statements to be certain that the entries are correct and that no errors appear either in the treasurer's ledgers or in the bank account.
 - Be prompt in remitting funds, depositing funds, in balancing the bank statement, and making reports.
2. The books and records of the treasurer should always be audited before a new treasurer takes over. The adoption of the auditor's report indicating that the financial records are correct relieves the retiring officers of the responsibility for the period covered by the report.
3. When a new treasurer takes office, it is necessary to contact the bank approved by the executive committee and complete the required signature cards, making certain necessary signatures of authorized officers are recorded at the bank before checks are written.
 - Arrangements should be made at the bank to have the bank statements sent to the treasurer's home.
 - Banking is done in the name of the party.
 - The party name (but NO address) should be printed on the checks. If the bank should require an address, c/o the treasurer's address may be used, and a limited number of checks should be printed at that time; only that number which would be used during the incumbent treasurer's tenure.
4. The treasurer's report should be a part of every business meeting.
5. The treasurer and secretary or membership chair should coordinate to keep membership records accurate.
 - A membership file showing the name, address, phone number of each member, the date dues were paid, along with the amount, should be kept by the treasurer. This is the master file, in alphabetical order, and can either be a card file or data base.
 - The treasurer should keep the secretary or membership chair informed of additions or drops in the list.
6. The treasurer should be a member of the budget and finance committees.
7. The treasurer preserves all records pertaining to the office of treasurer and delivers them to his or her successor.
8. The treasurer should keep a procedure book containing up-to-date copies of the budget, bylaws, reports given, and any other information concerning the duties of the treasurer.
9. The treasurer is responsible for preparing and filing all forms required by law regarding campaign finance.

The treasurer's report of the financial condition of the organization should be a part of every business meeting. The treasurer should always provide the secretary with a copy. Such reports are not acted upon at the meeting. The report is read as information and filed for audit. No treasurer's report is verified until examined and approved by an auditor or auditing committee. The treasurer's report becomes official when members of the organization (or some authority duly designated by them) have adopted or rejected the auditor's report.

SAMPLE COUNTY PARTY CONSTITUTION

CONSTITUTION

Libertarian Party of _____ County

Article I Name

The name of this organization shall be "The Libertarian Party of _____ County."

Article II Purpose

The purpose of this organization shall be to advance in every honorable way fundamental Libertarian principles and policies. As a voluntary organization, we shall cooperate and assist in all county, state, and national elections to the end that our Constitutional form of limited government for the United States and our state be preserved for all of the people.

As a part of the Libertarian state voluntary organization, this organization shall direct, manage, supervise and control the business and the funds of the Libertarian Party of _____ County.

Article III Membership

Membership in this organization shall be open to all _____ County citizens who believe in the above objectives, purposes and principles of the Libertarian Party.

Qualified and voting members of this organization shall be those Libertarians in good standing who have been recorded by the Secretary/Treasure of this organization for at least 10 days prior to any meeting.

Article IV Officers and Executive Committee

Section 1: The officers of this organization shall consist of a Chair, a First Vice Chair, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, and such other officers as shall be provided for in the bylaws.

Section 2: Duties of the Officers

- The **chair** shall preside at all meetings or caucuses of the party and of the executive committee, and shall have general supervision of the work of the organization.
- The **vice chair**, in the absence of the chair, shall perform the duties of the chair (as outlined in the bylaws).
- The **secretary** shall keep and read minutes of meetings or caucuses and shall promptly issue membership cards to all qualifying members.
- The **treasurer** shall receive and be custodian of all funds of the party and shall pay all bills. The treasurer shall keep an account of all monies received and disbursed and shall report in full, as required by the chair, to the executive committee. The treasurer shall file all proper reports as required by law.

Section 3: The term of office for the officers and executive committee shall be two years, and until their successors are elected and installed.

Section 4: All officers and members of the executive committee shall be elected in a duly constituted county caucus or meeting.

Section 5: The executive committee shall be made up of the officers and those additional individuals as set forth in the bylaws.

Article V Meetings, Caucuses

Section 1: Meetings or caucuses shall be held under proper notice, at the call of the chair.

Section 2: A regular county meeting or caucus shall be held each year, at which time delegates and alternates shall be elected to attend the congressional district caucus and the state convention, and for the election of officers as needed.

Section 3: The executive committee shall hold meetings at such times as are determined by the executive committee.

DEVELOPING YOUR COUNTY ORGANIZATION

Membership

The party is only as strong as its membership. Beyond recruiting members, the chair should assist in the development of affinity groups like College Libertarians, women's libertarian groups, study groups and other such groups. The county party should coordinate efforts and information between these branches of the Libertarian Party. If this sounds like a tall order, it is, indeed. It is also an enormous satisfaction to know that you may have made the difference in finding and electing really qualified Libertarian candidates.

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

The membership chair must possess administrative ability to initiate the plans for increasing membership and maintaining accurate, up-to-date records of the membership. This person must be enthusiastic so that co-workers catch the spark and prospective members are attracted by their warmth.

The membership committee serves as a vital liaison between a stranger and the Libertarian Party and must recognize the importance of this function. As in every phase of human relationships, which in our case is known as public relations, there is no substitute for the personal approach: meeting other people, being interested in them, being kind and friendly.

THE MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

The membership drive should be launched and on its way in January with a well-organized plan to double your membership; a plan with a goal that will not only renew membership but will stimulate interest and obtain new members. This means an enthusiastic, working membership chair and committee with a membership program to tie in with any Libertarian functions. Where do you look for members? You should try the following areas:

Previous year's members — members who paid last year but not yet this year have to be contacted. This can be in the form of a mailed renewal notice with dues to be returned to you in a reply envelope. Some parties use a voucher and find people just look for the annual "bill." A follow-up phone call, placed at least twice if you don't reach the member on the first try, should be used as a reminder.

Past members — Libertarians who have previously belonged but for some reason failed to renew their membership. They should be made aware of upcoming projects and programs that might increase their interest in joining.

Campaign workers — ask all recent Libertarian candidates for their list of volunteers and workers. Contact them and invite them to your next meeting.

Spouses of candidates — these people should probably receive "top priority" on your membership invitation list. Don't forget to include other members of their families.

Senior Citizens or Older Americans — Our older citizens do love to be part of a mixed age group. We need to show these citizens that as members of a Libertarian organization they will have a larger voice than as individuals. These people also have free time to volunteer, *when asked!*

Members of other organizations — Kiwanis, Jaycees, Lions, NRA Chapters, any other group where you belong and can invite friends to join.

3. GRASS ROOTS DRIVE

Obtain a map of your county and a list of last year's members and precinct\ward committee people. Plot on the map where each individual is located. Then select a "team captain" within a given ward, village or township who will be responsible for contacting last year's members and will seek out new members. Each "team captain" is assigned a reasonable goal depending upon the number of members currently residing in a given area.

You may also have each "team captain" compile a list of prospective members and have the party mail a "Won't you join our Party" letter and follow up with a telephone call.

Your membership drive may prove fun if you reward the person or "team captain" with the largest number of memberships.

4. THREE I'S PROJECT — INVITE, INFORM, INVOLVE

How does it work?

An informed leader *INVITES* a small group of Libertarians into their home for some refreshments and conversation on politics. This leader will *INFORM* the guests about the importance of a third party and the broad principles of the Libertarian Party and how they offer practical solutions to today's specific problems. The host encourages questions and input from the guests. Guests should then be encouraged to become *INVOLVED* in the Libertarian Party.

Where do you begin?

The number of leaders for this project will vary with the size of your group. It could be from two to 20 leaders. Be sure you include leaders from all areas in your county. Also, do not forget your minorities, whether by race, ethnic group, religious affiliation, gender situation, or special interest with libertarian overtones. This is very important as we want to be all-inclusive, not exclusive.

Conduct a workshop for your leaders. They need to be informed in order to sell our product. If possible, conduct this workshop at two different times to accommodate busy schedules. Generate enthusiasm among your leaders, because they will be your sales people! Some leaders may need some assistance in recruiting people for their meeting. Suggest various groups such as neighborhood friends, bowling teams, church groups, etc.

Ask your leaders to keep records of whom they invite and what type of response they receive. This information could be presented at a "Final Report Meeting" of all your leaders. A good critique session will be very beneficial. You can work out the bugs, so the project will be even more successful in the future.

A SUCCESSFUL MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

- Increases interest and participation in politics.
- Broadens the scope of the party's operation by enabling it to have more and varied activities.
- Increases the party's stature and prestige within the community.
- Will bring more experience into the party through acquisition of new members.
- Creates a greater channel of knowledge on which any one member can draw.
- Makes it possible to raise the maximum funds for party work and for Libertarian campaigns.

Volunteers

What is a volunteer? A volunteer is "one who enters into or offers himself or herself for any service of his or her own free will." All have the same motivation to willingly perform a service without pay. Their activities are the mortar and cement of politics. Volunteers are the strength, the hope, the pulse of the Libertarian Party — a vital source of enthusiasm and fervor. Volunteers sustain a campaign. The role of the volunteer is the most significant contribution force in any political campaign. To keep this volunteer force vibrant in an election campaign, recruitment must be effective, extensive, and efficiently administered — for ultimately, millions of volunteers are needed nationwide for us to become the dominant force in American politics.

Volunteers are motivated, first and foremost, by the conviction that the Libertarian Party provides the best candidates for office and deserve their support and hard work. Other motivations may include:

- A desire to see the political process in action.
- Seeking the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to their community and country.
- Experiencing fulfillment in new associations.

VOLUNTEER CHAIRS

The selection of the Volunteer Chair is the first critical step in launching a successful recruitment program. This key position should be filled with an individual who is enthusiastic, highly motivated, and who works well with others. An enthusiastic person can inspire others to action and motivate them to come back time and time again to tackle the burgeoning jobs as a campaign moves ahead. The volunteer chair will need a committee to help. In addition, the volunteer chair should be a person with a wide range of contacts to recruit from among community resources. This chair should make every effort to assess the talents and capabilities of the volunteer and match these with the campaign assignment whenever possible. Recruit the leadership for your volunteers from Libertarian groups or among people who have proven themselves in the campaign of previous candidates.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

The biggest demand for volunteers comes with organizing campaigns for your candidates. The task of seeking out volunteers appears, at first thought, an awesome assignment. Take a positive approach. Hundreds of volunteers are out there awaiting an occasion to help. Many have never taken part in a political campaign — not because they lacked the desire — but rather because they did not know how to offer their services. There are two phases of a volunteer operation. First to *FIND THEM*, and even more important, to *KEEP THEM*:

FIND THEM

1. Do not be discouraged when attempting to recruit. If one in ten accepts, you are lucky.
2. Be sure you have the right person recruiting — *attitudes are contagious*.
3. Leave no stone unturned in tapping potential sources of volunteers. A primary corps of volunteers can be found among those individuals whom you encounter daily or weekly: friends, neighbors, relatives, teachers, the butcher, the baker, banker, beautician. Don't forget your lawyer, doctor and insurance agent.
4. Make a list of all your family and friends. Use your holiday card list, membership list of your church, PTA, civic and social groups.
5. An enthusiastic cadre of volunteers will be found among friends and volunteers of past and present candidates. Former candidates themselves will often pitch in where needed.
6. Letters to Libertarian primary voters will often yield volunteers. Enclose a card to be returned to you with their name, address, phone number and field of interest. List some options for them.
7. Coffees are excellent techniques for recruiting. Try to have one in each ward in your district. The yield may be only about 10% of the guests, but those who come are excellent potential workers.
8. Another source of volunteers lies in the membership lists of service clubs, fraternal, professional and women's

Program Committee/Chair

A program chair should be a good organizer, enthusiastic, innovative, and willing to devote the necessary time to the leadership role. A small committee should help the program chair in planning and responding to new ideas. The committee should bring experience and knowledge in government processes and rules and traditions to the Libertarian Party. The chair and committee should structure a calendar year of programs around a theme. An annual calendar of events provides continuity in programming.

One essential aspect of programming is to establish early in the schedule a reputation for interesting and substantial presentations. Some speakers may require reimbursement; therefore, establish a budget to accommodate these necessities.

The political scene changes rapidly and some may feel it is difficult to outline a program plan for an entire year. The calendar of events can be changed and the unexpected should always be anticipated.

SETTING YOUR CALENDAR

Before planning the yearly calendar, eliminate days you cannot meet due to predetermined events. Then list all dates that are legally fixed by law:

- Primary and general elections.
- Close of registration for the primary and general elections.

Dates established by the national, state and local party that are important to the members of your organization: County and congressional district caucuses.

- State convention.
- Dates of county and state executive committee meetings.
- Dates of planned auxiliary meetings.
- Dates of fund raising.
- Dates of public events that are of interest to the members of your party: opening dates of legislative sessions, county or city governmental meetings, major festivals and fairs.

A calendar that includes the types of dates listed above is a vital tool to the successful management of your organization. Involve the committee while developing the calendar.

Once you have the knowledge of the fixed dates, you can go on to set up a yearly calendar.

PLANNING PROGRAMS

Plan your events well and early. Work with your county executive committee in setting up a calendar of programs and events. When planning meetings, there are only two things to consider:

1. The purpose for which you are arranging the meeting; and,
2. The kind and type of audience you plan to reach.

When planning the meetings, there are six purposes for meetings. At least one must be present to justify calling the meetings. If it has more than three, it should be made into separate meetings:

1. To conduct general business
2. To hear a prominent speaker
3. To learn about an important issue
4. To teach political action
5. To perform political activity
6. To entertain

The best possible combinations are:

2 and 6, or 1, 2 and 6
5 alone

3 and 6, or 1, 3 and 6
6 alone

4 and 6, or 1, 4 and 6
5 and 6 together

- Circulating nomination papers
- A telephone campaign
- How to organize Wards
- Registering voters
- Election laws
- Absentee voting
- Campaigning in rural areas
- Public relations
- Poll watchers
- Fund raising
- A membership drive
- Candidate recruitment
- How to conduct a meeting
- Literature distribution
- Presenting the party's record
- Analyzing election results
- Letters to the editor campaign

5. MEETING TO PERFORM POLITICAL ACTIVITY

The activity which you might want to perform may be suggested from some of the subjects in the above list. To explain the format of the meeting, let's use as example the first item on that list, circulating nomination papers.

- Five-minute summary of relevant election laws.
- Names, offices and qualifications of candidates for whom you are circulating papers.
- Mechanics of signing papers.
- Assign cars and areas.
- Meet back at central location with notary present.
- Dispatch papers to candidate or headquarters.

6. A MEETING TO ENTERTAIN

All work and no play . . . Our final purpose in party programming is to provide the fellowship between members. Picnics, dances, outings, should play and important, though not dominant, part in your organization's program. Coffee hours with the candidates serve a social as well as informative function. Dinner or luncheon meetings with a good speaker inform as well as raise money. A first voters' party with dancing, entertainment and cake will allow your party members to meet new persons, who, if they have a good time, will wish to join your party organization.

SPECIAL PROJECTS — DINNERS

Dinners are used for two main purposes:

- As a kickoff or rallying point to engender enthusiasm, as at the beginning of a campaign, or to get people together in the fall of an off-election year;
- OR as a fund raising event.

For a kickoff dinner, a convenient rather than a swanky location is desirable. A good, inexpensive meal rather than ice carvings and a flaming desert. Keep the cost as low as possible to get maximum participation. Make the program one with a general air of enthusiasm. Forget the "name" speaker and instead go in for surprise attractions, local jokes — any means of inspiring the diners with a feeling of belonging to a joint effort.

For a fund raising dinner, on the other hand, you will aim for an air of prosperity, with a nicer menu, better service, more "flair." Use a name speaker as a drawing card and have events that will appeal to people other than the standard "party faithful."

Decide whether you want to make a larger profit on fewer plates sold or a smaller profit on more plates. You will have

PROTOCOL

Protocol is the simple application of good manners to people, especially those in official positions. There are no rules that are not simple, common sense. A breach of the rules is not a "hanging offense" if it is done by accident and if rules of simple, polite behavior have been used.

Dates and Times

There is a great deal of competition for the spare time of both the general public and your own party members. This fact should be considered in setting the date for any Libertarian meeting. Make certain that the date of your political meeting will not conflict with any other major event scheduled for your community by some other organization. In many cases, the local Chamber of Commerce or some other civic group maintains a calendar of events in your community. Your local newspaper editor also may be helpful in checking for possible conflicts.

The time for meetings will be guided by local custom. When the audience includes people from rural areas, bear in mind that sufficient time must be allowed for them to finish their work and travel to the meeting.

Location

The "atmosphere" of your meeting is affected by the surroundings in which it is held. Participants will form a definite subconscious opinion of your organization (and its philosophies) from their impressions of your meetings.

A meeting place should meet the following general requirements:

- It should be cheerful and well lighted. A drab, dimly-lighted hall will tend to depress your audience.
- It should be clean and well ventilated. This latter requirement is especially important during warm weather.
- It should be adequate in size, but never too large for the expected attendance. One hundred people in a hall large enough for 1,000 will give the distinct impression of a poorly-attended meeting.
- It should be conveniently located for most of your expected audience, with adequate parking places. Wherever there are several large population centers within a county, consider rotating your meeting among several communities.
- Avoid "exclusive" meeting places.
- Make certain that you have the facilities you need, such as a lectern, public address system, sufficient microphones, American flag, water, etc.

Remember, through these meetings you are attempting to "sell" the Libertarian Party, its principles, and its candidates.

The public impression of your meeting will have a definite effect upon their attitudes about all for which the Party stands.

Showing a Speaker the Proper Courtesy

1. INVITATION

Invite your speaker in writing at least three weeks in advance.

Include all information as to when, where, formal or informal, name and size of group, type of audience (men, women, mixed, old, young, etc.).

Make sure all financial arrangements are understood in advance.

Two or three paragraphs outlining the local situation and topics to be stressed or avoided, sent well in advance, are helpful.

When you receive acceptance, follow up with information as to hotel (or home) accommodations you are providing, who will meet the plane, time of news conference if you have arranged one, and any helpful hints as to transportation schedules in and out of your town.

Request an 8 x 10 glossy and biography for each news media outlet.

2. ARRIVAL

Alert the press, radio and TV on time of arrival. They may wish to cover it.

Be sure to meet, or have your speaker met, at the plane and be ON TIME.

Attend to getting baggage as you would for any guest.

Drive your guest directly to the hotel where he or she can freshen up.

Brief the speaker on late local events or problems.

Allow the speakers time to be themselves. Arrange to pick them up for news conferences, TV or radio appearances, the meeting and any other engagements you may have made.

If your event is a luncheon or dinner, your speaker and spouse *are your guests*. Never ask your guests to pay for their own meals. If it is not a meal function, be sure to invite them to lunch or to dine with you and perhaps a small group of leaders.

Leave a written schedule with your speakers so that they can plan personal calls to friends without interfering with your arrangements.

Don't wear your speakers out before the meeting. Some like to sightsee, others prefer to rest and collect their thoughts. If your locality boasts some special attraction, and time permits, ask them frankly if they would be interested in being taken to see it.

ORDER OF SEATING

1. Always seat the toastmaster or other presiding officer in the middle, or, if a lectern is used, to the right of the lectern.
2. The principal speaker sits to the presiding officer's right.
3. A second speaker sits to the left of the presiding officer and to the left of the vice chair.
4. Elected officials are seated ahead of appointed ones and the rank of officials is national, state, county, city and then town.
5. Any spouse holds the same rank as the official and usually sits on the opposite side of the table.
6. Be sure to include a city official who has been invited to extend a word of welcome to either the guest speaker or the guests at large.
7. Whenever the state chair and/or your national committee representative are present, they should be seated at the head table.

Even where ample head table space is available and especially where it is not, a second head table, (1) placed directly in front of the main table but on a lower level, or (2) facing the head table from the opposite side of the room, or (3) joining the head table in a "T" shape might well be considered. Or use a reserved table just in front of the speaker's table. The advantage is in increasing the number of people who may be honored by special seating.

A room should be set aside for the gathering of the honored guests. Know where it is to be and advise your guests of it when the invitation is extended. Lining up a head table to enter the hall as a group is probably one of the most difficult tasks you will have at a dinner function. It seems to be some law of nature that the minute you place them correctly they tend to wander off and have to be rounded up again. It may seem childish, but it is well worth the effort to have a series of chairs lined up with numbers or names on each seat and have each guest sit in a chair in the appropriate order. People seem to sit in a line much better than they will stand in one. If corsages are to be given to any of the ladies who will be present, now is the proper time to make the presentation (and be sure they are securely attached — extra pins are handy).

WHAT IS NEWS?

Everything you do is NOT news. The following are typical newsworthy events:

1. Libertarian Party meeting with speaker and important business. This may be released before the event as an announcement, and the next day to report the results of the meeting.
2. Announcement of a project.
3. Libertarian leader makes a statement or replies to one — but it's usually not covered unless it's presented before some sort of group.
4. Resolutions passed on topics of political or local interest.

ONE EVENT — MUCH PUBLICITY

Suppose your organization is planning a dinner with a speaker. That one event can result in as many as seven different stories in the newspaper. The trick is to start your public relations early. Avoid the one massive news release detailing all the plans — a story that the editor may well trim to half the length you've submitted and then never run another follow-up.

Instead, write a series of shorter news releases to be released on different days, submitting them one at a time. From the single event, you can publicize:

1. Announcement of dinner with name of chair.
2. Main speaker named.
3. Plans for dinner with names of other chairs and committee members.
4. Picture and biography of speaker.
5. Reminder story of dinner.
6. "Dinner to be held tonight" story, recapping plans.
7. Follow up story.

Of course, it has to be a pretty big event to get that kind of attention. But often you can get three, four or more stories out of it.

WRITING A NEWS RELEASE

The criteria for getting a story used is its news content, not the fancy preparation. Still, if your release looks good, adheres approximately to some journalistic guidelines, and arrives before deadline, you've increased its chances for making print or grabbing some air time.

There are a few rules to keep in mind in preparing a release:

1. Include a name, address, and phone number on your release in case any media person might have questions or need clarification. These items are usually typed in the upper left-hand corner of a release.
2. Always double space!
3. At the top right side give the release date and time. If you wish to mail the releases in advance, say Monday morning, but want them used Tuesday evening, you might say, "For Release, 1:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 1." In this way, radio, TV and evening papers will be likely to use the release at the same time. Usually "For Immediate Release" is proper.
4. Leave plenty of white space on your release; editors need room for instructions and rewrites. Go down at least two inches from the top before beginning your release and leave about 1½ inch margins on each side.
5. At the end of the page, if your release is to be continued (not recommended!), center "more." Then, in the upper left-hand corner of the second page, use "Add 1." At the end of the release, skip a line or two and put "###" or "-30-" in the center of the page.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE MEDIA

Candid pictures are best. Have the people involved "discussing" an issue, "looking" at a map, "inspecting" a situation. Write a "cut line" identifying those people who are pictured and briefly explain what's taking place. Local papers will usually print pictures of local people. That is news and builds readership.

Candidates and Party leadership should consider providing local papers with glossy black & whites — 5" x 7".

Television stations prefer 35mm color slides — several head-on positions — that will project the subject to the left of the newscaster when on the screen to their rear; it will put the subject on the viewer's right.

REMEMBER: One picture is worth a thousand words!

SOME FINAL HINTS

No one expects each local organization to be thoroughly professional in media relations. But in politics, nothing is more important than letting people know you exist.

Find a person interested in doing a lot of phoning, writing and follow-up work to be Public Relations Chair. Keep track of the talk shows and newspapers in your area, make sure scrap books and thorough records are kept on what happens.

Always treat members of the competing news media equally. Cooperate fully with reporters. If one asks you for details on a story, answer the question without beating around the bush. If you don't know the answer, find out. Don't be forever talking to reporters "off the record." If you don't want something published, don't tell it.

Always be accurate! Make sure names, statistics and dates are accurate.

Finally, never let the media get under your skin!

###

3. New people are attracted into the party through the activity generated (of course this will increase your membership and expand your organization).

The finance committee should review past fund raising events and retain those that have proven successful in past years. Questions the committee might ask when determining the success of an event are:

1. How much money did the event raise before expenses?
2. How much money did it raise after expenses?
3. How much volunteer-power and time did the event require?
4. How could the event have been made more successful?

Once a review of past events has been conducted, it's time to plan an aggressive calendar for the coming year. Remember, your calendar should not conflict with major state or national fund raising events, if at all possible. Nor should it conflict with major civic events or fund raising drives if you want to succeed. Avoid soliciting members simultaneously during drives sponsored by organizations such as the Community Chest or United Way.

HOW TO PLAN A FUND RAISING DINNER

The fund raising dinner is one of the best ideas ever conceived, because it combines fun and work, glamour and dollars. The primary advantage of the fund raising dinner is that it has a deadline. Tomorrow is always a better day for most of us, especially when it comes to making contributions. A dinner can generate a substantial amount of money, strengthen the party organization, raise morale and gain publicity if it combines:

1. GOOD ADVANCE PLANNING

This really means that one of the finance committee members should take on the responsibility of dinner chair. This should be an individual with the time and energy to handle the myriad of details inevitably involved in a dinner (see Special Projects in the Development section for more details about dinner planning and the public relations section).

2. THE RIGHT TICKET PRICE

This is usually the most difficult question one must answer in planning a dinner. The problem is this: how to raise as much money as possible without offending those who cannot afford to attend or generate bad publicity. As a general guideline, the answer is to charge as much as the Libertarians in your community can afford. But keep in mind that the idea of having a dinner is to raise money. Don't undercharge for the dinner tickets.

3. THE RIGHT SPEAKER

There are never enough truly outstanding speakers to go around. Therefore, it is important that you start your search for a speaker at least three to four months in advance. Remember, most outstanding speakers get hundreds of invitations annually. You'll have to ask early and offer a persuasive reason for a speaker to appear at your dinner.

4. THE RIGHT TIMING

Picking the proper date for your dinner can mean the difference between a roaring success and a dismal failure. Be sure to avoid other events scheduled in your community, especially those that will attract Libertarians. Avoid the summer vacation season and major holidays. If possible, schedule your dinner around the availability of an outstanding speaker.

Remember, a fund raising dinner can be your most successful county event of the year if it is well planned and fully organized.

CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT

If you are a Libertarian Party, your primary function is the election of Libertarian candidates to public office. If all somebody wants to do is complain about the system and talk about what the parties in power today should do to change things, then they should form a Libertarian Club. There's a big difference between a Party and a Club. A significant focus of the function of a political party is candidate recruitment.

Good candidates are critical to successful elections. Without them, even the best organized and financed campaigns will not succeed. Recruiting, preparing, and supporting such candidates are fundamental responsibilities of the Libertarian Party. If the Libertarian party is to build itself and gain elected offices, candidate recruitment must be conducted in an organized, aggressive manner.

At this stage in our development, we have to consider informational campaigns as a way of getting our start in the political arena. One potentially effective approach for running candidates is to take quality people with no political experience and have them run for bigger offices (i.e., Congress when you do not have an otherwise qualified candidate for that office) to get their feet wet and help fill out the Libertarian ticket while developing some name recognition. Few resources would be spent on this type of race, but the party and campaign would take advantage of free media to help build the party. This type of candidate should have a commitment to then running a more serious race for county or state legislative office in the next cycle to take advantage of the experience and name recognition.

Other people in your party will be known in the community and have some experience. They should be encouraged to run for an office that fits their qualifications and where they would have a chance at winning. These priority campaigns are where you would target your primary campaign resources.

The remainder of this manual suggests a plan of action for Libertarian units to develop an effective candidate recruitment mechanism for all levels of partisan races. While this plan may not be all-inclusive in its techniques and approaches, it will help stimulate new recruitment efforts to prevent offices from being given to the Democrats and Republicans through the lack of Libertarian candidates.

The other purpose of this section is to encourage active party involvement in the process of candidate development once they have committed to run. Providing resources to the candidate and helping him or her gain valuable community visibility are key factors in enhancing the chances for victory and should be regarded by party committees as important as recruiting the candidates.

Basic Rules for Recruitment

The County Party organization is responsible for recruiting candidates to run for every public office in the county and state legislature. Whatever method a county party uses, there are some basic suggestions to follow in recruiting candidates.

1. Start early. Do not wait until the last minute so you will have to settle for mediocre candidates or not have the time to develop good ones properly. Develop a calendar of planned deadlines well in advance so the various phases of activity can proceed in an orderly manner. Then adhere to these deadlines.
2. Know what to look for. Research the district's characteristics (socioeconomic, issue, voting behavior, and political complexion, population distribution, dominant groups, etc.). This should suggest from where the candidate should come, what community groups the candidate should belong, etc., in order to appeal to the broadest segment of the constituency. It should also indicate where and how the campaign should be waged. In addition, decide what personality traits, public service record, and political presentation would be advantageous in waging the type of campaign that will be necessary to win.
3. Know where to look. Once you know what characteristics the candidate should have, choose the possible candidate source groups most likely to produce such an individual. Do not limit yourself in this respect; develop as many contacts as you can in as many groups as possible. These will be helpful not only in recruiting a candidate but also in providing volunteers and other assistance later.

3. Assign committee members to contact source groups.
4. Develop a list of potential candidates.
5. Obtain data on prospective candidates.

December & January

1. Interview and screen prospects.
2. Evaluate the prospects.
3. Make commitments to the candidates.

February

1. Train candidates in campaigning and issues.
2. Assist in campaign organization.

As soon as a candidate is recruited, every effort should be made to:

1. Assist in improving candidate visibility.
2. Get the candidate training materials and a campaign manager.

Candidate Development

A good candidate must have a number of qualities that can be perceived by the electorate: willingness to run and drive to win, good physical traits, the ability to meet people, the ability to perform in an office, high moral character, concern for the community, and others. In addition, the candidate should have as many demographic characteristics in common with the majority of the constituency as possible. Recruiting committees should keep all these qualities in mind so they know exactly what kind of persons they seek.

Ideally, candidates committed to run should be recruited well ahead of the actual campaign. Often it is necessary and desirable that they be "groomed" over a period of years to run for a specific office and have the best possible chance of getting it or keeping it in Libertarian hands. The following is a series of development activities that can be conducted over different lengths of time — preferably one to three years, but when necessary, for a shorter period. While these activities should be directed by party units, they are also the responsibility of the candidates themselves. If they are reluctant or refuse to undertake them, the party should seek another candidate.

1. COMMUNITY GROUP INVOLVEMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICE

If candidates are weak in the area of prior public service, they should be encouraged to join a few community groups and participate in some of their activities. This will increase visibility and identity in the community, give them experience in working with others, improve their records of public service, and expand the base on which they can draw for campaign organization and finances. However, a word of caution: no one should join a group unless they truly believe in its program and purpose. Joining for the sake of joining and being able to list another activity on a campaign brochure or resume is artificial and will be perceived as insincere. There are enough different groups and projects available to generate just about anyone's genuine interest.

2. APPOINTMENT TO PARTY AND PUBLIC POSITIONS

Very helpful in increasing candidate visibility in non-election years are appointments to party or government positions that can be given appropriate publicity. Party units can establish study committees or advisory groups to which the prospective candidates can be appointed. These can be used effectively to promote a candidate, educate them on issues, acquaint them with regular party members, and give publicity to Libertarian positions and events. Libertarian office holders — where we have mayors, county board members, etc. — can use the appointive powers they have for the same objective.

3. CONTACT WITH COMMUNITY OPINION-MAKERS

Party leaders should arrange for meetings of the candidates with influential community leaders and opinion makers (*and get to know them yourself if you don't already have friendly relations*). The candidates can get acquainted, present some of their ideas, and seek the advice and help of these people, preferably in a social situation initially. Such

APPENDIX A

How often do you hear the phrase, "You know what you should do . . ."? Rather than discourage ideas, tell a potential volunteer that the plan might work, but that you have to have this information to better understand the scope of the project. If that individual comes back with a solid plan on this basis, super. You may have a great project, now complete with a road map to success. If it was just somebody with ideas, but no commitment to doing anything themselves, they may just stop nagging you once they know that you expect more than a list of tasks from your fellow volunteers.

PROJECT CHAIR'S PLANNING GUIDE (CPG)

1. **Title your project.**
2. **Primary purpose.** The primary purpose of the project should state what this project will do and should be no longer than one sentence.
3. **Description.** Give a brief description of the proposed project and background information. Then list at least three *specific* goals, in order of importance, that relate directly to the project. These should be *measurable* goals. Any other goals that do not relate directly to the purpose should be listed after the first three goals.
4. **Human power.** What are the specific task assignments? You should list everyone involved and their duties, including:
 - a. The project chair.
 - b. Committee people.
 - c. A member of the executive committee who serves to act as a liaison and informs you about the party policies that relate to the project.
 - d. The vice chair (?) Who makes certain the project meets goals as stated in the overall organizational plan.
 - e. The party chair who makes sure the project meets goals as stated and signs contracts.
5. **Resources.** What specific materials, supplies and resources will be required. List resources, addresses, phone numbers, and contact people.
6. **Problems and solutions.** List at least three potential problems with solutions in order of importance.
7. **Budget.** Complete a proposed budget indicating all anticipated income and expenses. Make certain the proposed budget equals the budget approved at planning sessions and that the budget balances.
8. **Action.** List the specific steps to bring this project to a successful completion, showing planned activities for each step. Make certain steps are in the future tense — these are steps you will take. Include all steps from start to finish. Make sure to include the following: at least quarterly updates to the executive committee, newsletter deadlines, committee meetings, event dates, and all other pertinent steps.

APPENDIX B

HOW TO WRITE EFFECTIVE NEWS RELEASES

Learning to develop and manage effective media relations is one of the most important skills a person working in the political arena can master. This includes knowledge of the two general types of media coverage your organization can consider when developing an overall media strategy. The two types are earned media and paid media. Earned media is defined as news coverage earned through news releases, news conferences, interviews, and events. Paid media refers to advertising that you buy, and in which you control the message 100%

Earned media has two major advantages over paid media for political organizations. First, earned media almost always costs less than paid media — often, nothing at all. Secondly, a message transmitted to the public through earned media carries more credibility than a message the public receives through paid ads because earned media is perceived to be part of “objective” news coverage.

There are two steps to success in acquiring earned media. They are: physically transmitting your message to the media, and packaging your message so the media will note it and share it with the public. This appendix will examine in detail how these two steps can be accomplished using the most common tool of public relations: the news release.

NEWS RELEASES: AN OVERVIEW

A news release is simply a statement designed to effectively and efficiently transmit information from you to journalists. You can issue them for many purposes: to announce the formation of a new organization, a new project, a new appointment, a position on a public policy issue, and activity, or anything else that resembles news.

Using news releases to get your message to journalists requires two steps: knowing where the journalists are and writing your news release properly so that it conveys information.

DEVELOPING A MEDIA LIST

For step one, you have to acquire media lists. These lists should be maintained in a manner that makes it easy to make address changes and recopy them. Typing the list on copier label sheets or keeping the list on a computer database are two ways of accomplishing this. You should also distinguish, via label or data codes or by compiling separate lists, between different types of journalists and media (i.e. radio, newspaper, magazine, and television reporters; also distinguish between editors, reporters, and columnists; between reporters covering world news, state and local news, politics, human interest feature stories, sports, finance, and so forth).

There are several ways to develop media lists. Usually organizations that share views similar to your own will give you a copy of their list. You may wish to request a copy of the media lists of several organization and combine them. For a new Libertarian Party county organization, one of the quickest and most practical methods is to develop your own. Use a telephone book to identify all news organizations that serve your county (including those media outlets that lie outside your county but broadcast into or circulate within your county). Call them and ask for the name(s) and FAX numbers of the journalist(s) who cover the topics on which you work.

After you have developed your media list, and mailed or Faxed to it, be sure to keep your records updated. Make a note of all address changes, title changes, and keep your list current.

BEGINNING YOUR NEWS RELEASE

There are very specific formats for writing news releases, and you should learn them and use them. If you do not follow the proper format, there is a good chance that journalists will not read your release. Besides that, as the news release format is designed to efficiently transmit information, you have every motive to use the proper format in order to get your job done well. The format is easy to learn and simple to use.

LETTERHEAD

To start, you should develop news release letterhead. Although styles vary, a typical news release contains the name of your organization, your address, and your phone number on the top left and the words “News”, “News Release”, or Media Release” on the top right.

Typically, news release letterhead in the United States in on 8½” x 11” paper, and legal size (8½” x 14”) is considered acceptable.

A #10 (standard business size) carrier envelope will also be necessary. It should match your news release letterhead in both style,

In these instances, you can write “News Advisory” or “Media Advisory” on your letterhead and carrier envelope in place of the standard “News Release.” This tells journalists that the information in the release is information useful to them, not necessarily something you want them to file in their stories. If you do not wish to purchase and/or design new letterhead, it is perfectly acceptable for you to type Advisory” just over the “For Release” section on the top left of the page.

INCLUDING PHOTOGRAPHS WITH YOUR RELEASE

In some cases you may want to enclose a photograph with your release. Examples of this include: a professional “head shot” of a candidate or speaker, a candidate and key supporter in announcing the endorsement of the key supporter, etc. Use a black and white glossy photograph. Type a caption describing what the photograph is and the date and glue the caption on the back of the photo.

AFTER YOU HAVE MAILED (OR FAXED) THE RELEASE

The first rule is: be available to answer questions. The second rule is: treat reporters with courtesy. The individual or individuals you have listed under “Contact” on the release should be easy to reach on the days following the mailing of the release. They should be briefed on the answers to likely questions. If they do not know the answer to a reasonable question, they should be prepared to find out the answer and get back to the reporter before their deadline. It is not considered rude to ask a reporter doing a story what his or her deadline is for having their story completed and filed (turned in). Reporters’ questions should be answered as soon as possible, and reporters’ telephone calls should be returned ASAP as well. A couple of hours can frequently make the difference between getting in a story and not getting in a story.

GETTING ON THE DAY BOOK

Media wire services, such as the Associated Press, Reuters, the United Press International, and others maintain what are called day books. These are not books at all, but lists of all events occurring on a certain day. If your news release advertises an event, mail a release well in advance of that date to all the news wires in your area and you will be listed on the day book. You should, however, telephone each wire service the night before or very, very early in the morning of the event to make certain that they received your release and you are listed. If they did not receive it, you can get listed by giving the wire service your information over the telephone. Journalists and assignment editors from newspapers, radio, and television all refer to the news wires’ day books frequently as they determine what news they cover. A day book listing costs you nothing and is very useful in getting the word out about your event to journalists.

CONCLUSION

There’s nothing difficult about using news releases to acquire plenty of free, earned media for your Party. There are, however, established techniques and formats that should be used to make your releases and your overall media program as effective as possible. Use these techniques and formats, and as long as you have something worthwhile to say, you will receive the credibility and the exposure an effective earned media program can give you.

Also, you will note that this appendix uses the word “news” or “media” instead of “press.” “Press Release” is commonly used and you can make that decision if you like. However, there are those broadcast journalists out there who will tell you “we don’t have any presses here.” Calling something a “news release” has the slight advantage of not irritating those occasional reporters from the Fifth Estate who take everything personally.

against South Africa hurt black South Africans by focusing on the specifics of two individual black citizens in that nation. In showing how these policies caused suffering for specific individuals that the author had interviewed, he was effectively able to make his point — and get published.

- **Solutions.** Many editorial writers can clearly identify and elaborate on problems in public policy, but very few offer coherent solutions to those problems. Your article has a better chance of being published if you suggest at least one solution (preferably more) to the problem addressed in your essay . . . particularly if it is unconventional and innovative. Using the Libertarian National Committee's *Operation Safe Streets* as a foundation to present the Libertarian solution to violent crime within your community's specific circumstances would work great in this regard.

TIMING

It may be an overused cliché, but “timing is everything” when it comes to getting your newspaper editorial published. If your article is no longer timely, interesting or relevant by the time it is read by a newspaper editor, it will not be published. This is something you should bear in mind when you are selecting your topic and your angle.

Some helpful hints on timing:

- **Do not submit an article that has a shelf life of less than two weeks.** Most op/ed editors have a backlog of submissions to read and it is unlikely that yours will be read immediately. Unless you have a commitment from a newspaper editor to read your piece and make a decision on it right away, try to submit articles that will still be current in three weeks time. For example, an article on your local elections should not be submitted five days before those elections.
- **Avoid sending editorials during the major holidays.** Like many other businesses, newspapers slow down during the holidays. Some editors may go on vacation while others may simply reduce their work loads to participate in office celebrations. Most likely, decisions on articles to be published during the holiday period have already been made weeks in advance. One exception to this rule: it is appropriate to submit an editorial during a holiday if the editorial responds to extraordinary, late-breaking events. For instance, submitting an article in late December 1989 on Panama following the U.S. invasion there would have been entirely proper.
- **Try to select topics and angles that relate to current news stories.** Most often, news items covered by television and newspapers have a snowball effect. Each day, a new development is discovered in the previous day's story. Writers should learn to identify these trends early and capitalize on them in their own editorials before they are yesterday's news.

TARGETING

The process of identifying the newspapers or magazines to which you want to submit your editorial is called targeting. There are four elements of targeting:

- **Objective.** You must begin the targeting process by defining your objective. The number of people you hope to reach with your message and the amount of time and money you are willing to invest in copying and mailing out your article will be important factors in defining your objective. If you are interested in writing about local concerns only, for instance, you probably won't wish to send your editorials to newspapers outside of your area.
- **Subject compatibility.** The subject of your article should be compatible with the editorial policies of the publications to which it is sent. Some newspapers restrict their opinion pages to local issues. If you have written an article on the last U.S. elections, unless you have a very good local tie-in, you should avoid sending it to such newspapers.
- **Procedures.** The standard procedures of newspapers are another important factor in determining where to send your editorials. For instance, some newspapers insist on exclusivity of all submissions. That means that the editorial did not and will not appear in any other publication (usually for a period of 90 days after publication). If a

2.) Sending your articles . . .

- Use a highly personalized cover letter. An editorial package that looks mass mailed is less likely to be printed. Also, this is where you can establish your credentials.
- Send your submission directly to the individual who makes the decision to publish. Learn his or her name and address your cover letter to that person directly.
- Try to write and submit new editorials regularly. If editors become familiar with your name, they are more likely to use your work. At the same time, avoid submitting your essays so often that they pile up on an editor's desk. As a rule of thumb, avoid writing articles more than once in a 10-14 day period.

3.) Be prepared for calls. Occasionally newspaper editors have questions about submissions or want updated information, particularly if there have been late-breaking developments on your topic.

4.) Perseverance! Don't be discouraged by rejections. Undoubtedly, you will receive many of them. No matter how good your writing may be, you will not be able to anticipate the needs of newspapers at a given point 100% of the time. If you have trouble placing a particular article, you may wish to consider adapting it for the "Letters to the Editor" section.

FINALLY

. You don't have to be famous to be a successful editorial writer. You need only possess sufficient writing and research skills and follow the simple guidelines outlined in this appendix.

2.) **Write to the host or producer of the show.** When writing to a talk show host or producer, you should use one of the following two approaches:

- Indicate that you have noticed that their program has not covered a particular issue recently and that you have some special insights on the issue. If the particular issue is taxes, for instance, perhaps you can tell the host/producer that you are a successful local business person, that you have written published articles on the subject, or that you are a member of a community group that is involved with the issue.
- Indicate that you would like to provide a point-of-view different from that expressed by previous guests, or provide information not provided by previous guests. Perhaps, if you believe it is true, you may wish to say that your view has not been given equal time.

Be courteous and friendly and provide full information on your expertise in the subject area. If you have previous experience as a guest on talk shows, include that information. Be certain to make it apparent to the host/producer that your appearance would make for an interesting show that would appeal to his or her listeners.

Follow up your letter with a telephone call to find out if you can schedule a specific time for an interview. If you cannot arrange a specific interview time, but the host/producer promises to get back to you, give him or her your telephone number. If appropriate, offer to mail copies of articles on the issue that you've had published, including letters to the editor sent to your local paper. After you send this information, wait a few days. If you do not hear from the show, call again to see if an interview can be scheduled. Remember, you are helping the host/producer by agreeing to be on the talk show. Unless the talk show has guests booked well in advance or is biased, you will most likely be scheduled for an interview. Do not call the host/producer every day! Just make sure that you follow up on your initial contact.

Finally, be sure you are timely. You are much more likely to get on a talk show if the issue you are talking about is in the news.

3.) **How to prepare for the interview.** Remember, the purpose of the talk show is to provide interesting, stimulating, topical discussion (which in turn attracts listeners, which increase revenue to the station). You will be more interesting if you are well prepared for the talk show. Your assertions during the show are open to challenge, if not within the interview itself, then possibly in a balancing interview.

Talk shows run anywhere from 10 minutes to three hours, but any one guest is rarely on more than one hour. The interview can either be in person (at the studio) or over the telephone. When possible, hosts usually prefer to have you come to the studio. Some shows are pre-recorded while others are live. Be sure you know the specifics of how your interview is going to be conducted. You have to know the time, place, format, context, and duration of the interview in order to adequately prepare.

Once you know the specifics of the talk show, choose the two or three most important points you want to discuss. These are the key points which you believe you should make — *irrespective of the questions asked*. If the host and you share a similar point of view, these points will be likely to come up naturally. If not, make sure that you include them where *you* feel it is appropriate.

Review current developments in the subject area. Make sure you are fully up-to-date on the issue or news story by reviewing the most current newspaper and magazine articles and watching the television news on the topic. You have to be prepared to respond to developments occurring even the day of the interview. Guests who demonstrate that they are in full possession of the facts are more likely to gain the respect and confidence of the listener.

Many talk shows have a pre-interview, usually conducted by the producer or an assistant just before the show begins. The pre-interview is an opportunity to suggest specific issues you would like to discuss. It also affords a chance to get an idea as to what direction the host is likely to steer the interview.

Be prepared for any possible counter-argument that might be put to you. Realize the the listener is more likely to be influenced by a rational, reasoned argument than by political dogma.

Whenever possible, use anecdotes to underline your points. Draw from your own experiences and build mental pictures through vivid and descriptive words that evoke specific images. Your examples should be brief, factual, recent and relevant. Most effective anecdotes have been thought of in advance.

GUIDE TO HOSTING SUCCESSFUL NEWS CONFERENCES

An effective media relations program can be the cornerstone of a successful, growing Libertarian Party and political campaign. There are two types of media coverage, covered in Appendix B — earned media and paid media. To capture additional earned media through the news conference method, you must first know why news conferences are held, and when it is appropriate to call one.

THE PURPOSE OF A NEWS CONFERENCE

The purpose of a news conference (also called a Press Conference, but that choice sometimes alienates broadcast journalists) is to announce a newsworthy event at a suitable time. Examples of reasons to call a news conference include: announcing the filing of a public-interest law suit, announcing a new or updated stand on an issue by your elected Libertarians or the organization as a whole, announcing the introduction of a piece of legislation, announcing a major award, calling for specific actions by a government body or official, etc. It is appropriate to call a news conference when you have satisfied two criteria: the event is important enough to warrant news coverage, and it is timely enough to warrant news coverage on that date.

THE FORMAT OF A NEWS CONFERENCE

News conferences typically follow a set format. Journalists will be seated, usually auditorium-style, facing a podium. The sponsor of the news conference will begin the proceedings by introducing themselves and by either reading a short statement or by introducing one or more others who will read short (1-2 minutes is common) statements. The reporters will then have the opportunity to ask questions of all those who have spoken, with the initial speaker acting as emcee. At a certain point, the reporters will either run out of questions or the emcee will call the news conference to a close. Nearby there will be a table containing press kits, which are written copies of prepared remarks and supplemental material supplied by the sponsors and/or speakers. The entire news conference should probably take less than thirty minutes.

If you are considering calling a news conference but have never attended one yourself, you might find it useful to attend one. Most news conferences are open to the public, although you may wish to forgo asking questions if you are not a journalist. Attending a news conference will show you how they are structured and improve your confidence about organizing one yourself. You can learn about the news conferences in your area from your local newspapers, which nearly always carry a calendar section listing important local events, their locations, and times. If it is available to you, you may also wish to watch the cable public affairs network C_SPAN, which covers a great many news conferences on a wide variety of topics.

THE THREE CRITICAL ELEMENTS

Once a purpose has been established, there are three critical elements to a news conference. They are: a location, journalists, and a spokesperson(s).

When selecting the location for a news conference, seek one that will be convenient to the journalists you want to attract. If you are located outside a city but seek coverage from electronic media and newspaper journalists who are headquartered downtown, it is usually best to hold your conference downtown near the journalists rather than convenient only to you. There are exceptions, of course, such as a news conference announcing the opening of a new headquarters.

For indoor news conferences not held in your own offices (which is your likely situation) determine if there is a place in town where news conferences are frequently held. If so, consider renting a space there yourself, since many journalists will be familiar with the location. Another excellent location is a conference room in a well-known hotel that is convenient for journalists. Conference rooms can be rented at a reasonable rate for several hours. An added plus for renting a hotel conference room is that hotels will provide a podium and a microphone.

It is also possible for you to hold a news conference outdoors, but you should do so only for a very good reason. Occasionally, impromptu news conferences are held outside by prominent policy makers and other celebrities. This is

may cover a dozen stories on a dozen different topics in a week, and therefore know very little. If your subject is complicated, it is a good idea to have plenty of useful, but easy to read, background information in your press kits.

6.) **Do your homework.** If you are not up-to-date on the subject, thoroughly review the facts before the news conference. When you agree to speak at a news conference, you imply that you are an expert on the subject in question. Do not insult the media by expecting them to travel to your event to hear your opinion only to have them learn that you have not made an effort to be fully informed.

7.) **Admit it if you do not know an answer to a question.** Even the best-prepared expert will sometimes be asked a question that they cannot answer. If you have done your homework, this will be a rare occurrence, and probably an understandable one. The question may be extremely specific, or there may not be an answer available. On these occasions, do not hesitate to admit that you do not know. It is far better for you to admit that you do not know an answer to a question than for you to try to fake it with a lot of empty words, or worse, a false answer. Simply say, "I'm sorry, I don't have the answer to your question." If you think you can find out, invite the journalist to telephone you later for an answer or take their name and phone number and get back to them promptly with an answer. If there is a good reason (a reason, not an excuse) that you do not know, you can say that. For example: "I cannot tell you how many people in the county have AIDS, because the government agencies' estimates differ greatly and I do not want to give you a figure that may not be accurate."

8.) **If you state a personal opinion, identify it as such.** If it is appropriate for you to state a personal opinion during a news conference, make certain that reporters understand that the opinion is your own and not that of the Party, government agency, or organization that you may be representing at the news conference. If it is not appropriate for you to express a personal opinion, don't do it — no matter how tempted you may be.

9.) **Maintain control of the subject matter.** Do not let the media change the subject if you do not want the subject changed. Some news conferences, such as a typical televised White House news conference, are designed to address a broad array of topics. However, single-issue news conferences are also common, and sometimes necessary. For example, if a group of political action committees representing the entire political spectrum joins together in a coalition to advocate, say, changes to improve ballot access laws, and this coalition holds a news conference, it is key to the success of the event that only that one topic be addressed. Otherwise, some speakers may say things that other speakers don't agree with, and an argument overshadowing the main statement could result. Similarly, if a politician struggling to overcome a financial scandal calls a news conference on state adoption policies as a means of getting some constructive news coverage, the last thing he or she may want is questions about the scandal. In these instances it is appropriate for the person handling questions to retain control of the subject matter by saying to the reporter who asked the extraneous question something along the lines of "That is an important matter, but today we are here to discuss . . ." If it is appropriate to do so, you may wish to soften that answer by saying something like (for the first example) "if you wish, however, to stay a few minutes after the news conference, some of our speakers may be willing to answer questions on other topics" or (for the second example) "questions about campaign finances should be addressed to the Senator's campaign manager, who can be reached by phone at the campaign office."

10.) **Give straightforward, succinct, quotable answers.** Radio and television reporters will be looking for sound bites. That is, short and succinct encapsulations of your point. The electronic media rarely has more than seconds to devote to airing tape of any one individual, so they are forced to seek snappy quotes that make a point in just a few seconds. Since it can be difficult to speak in sound bites off-the-cuff (such as during a question-and-answer session) it is a good idea to do so in your prepared remarks.

11.) **Be natural when responding to questions.** Think of the encounter between you and the reporters (*even if the question was hostile*) as a conversation. This tactic has two benefits: first, it relieves some of your stress, because even if you have had little experience at news conferences, you undoubtedly have quite a bit of experience at conversation; second, it helps you keep your answers reasonable and pleasant, and stops any hostility from escalating. **Keep in mind that television viewers watching your answer to a hostile question will probably not see the question being asked. If you act as hostile as the questioner, therefore, you will seem nasty and defensive, and the audience will not know why.**

12.) **Never lie to a reporter.** Ethics is one good reason, getting caught is another. As noted above, if you don't

- 22.) **Start on time.** It is an insult to reporters if you start late. All speakers should arrive at least a few minutes before the news conference is to begin and the announced schedule should be followed. Otherwise some reporters may leave, or leave early. This is true even if your news conference is very interesting, as reporters are busy people and they have deadlines.
- 23.) **Hold most news conferences in the morning.** Most news conferences are held before noon because very many reporters have late afternoon deadlines. Morning news conferences allow journalists a few hours to use the information and still file stories in time for the evening news or the next morning's newspaper.
- 24.) **Don't say "No comment", unless it is with a smile or you are dealing with matters of national security.** This comment sounds pretentious if it is used inappropriately. As noted earlier, if you can't answer a question, be truthful and say why you can't answer.
- 25.) **Enlighten, don't debate!** If a reporter attempts to debate you on the point, do not give up the moral authority your place at the podium affords you by engaging in a debate. Simply enlighten the reporter (*without sounding condescending!*) as to why you believe that way you do and move on.
- 26.) **Make sure that you are either tall enough or elevated enough to see over the podium.** If necessary, bring something stable to stand on. A speaker who cannot be seen is unlikely to appear on television. And a speaker who seems to be struggling to peer over the podium will lack authority. If you are not sure if you have to stand on a platform, bring one just in case. Then arrive early and check. Two cinder blocks, laid side-by-side, work well as an inexpensive and easy-to-make platform. If you choose another option, make sure it is stable and that it is not so small that you are in danger of falling from it.
- 27.) **Check the morning newspapers and other news sources the morning of your news conference.** You should be aware of any late-breaking developments on your issue so you can decide if you wish to comment upon them, and so you will be prepared to handle questions about them.
- 28.) **Speak with energy.** You should appear to be interested in what you are saying, because if you are not, why should the reporters be? Too often speakers at news conferences read their statements in a monotone. This is not only likely to bore the reporters, but, as it makes for terrible television, it will decrease your chances of coverage on electronic media. Practice speaking if necessary; underline words you wish to emphasize. Above all, be interested in what you are saying. Some of that interest will be apparent.
- 29.) **Consider offering coffee and donuts at your morning news conference.** While offering food is strictly optional, and fewer news conferences offer food than don't offer it, it can be a nice touch. Some reporters and or participants may not have had time to eat that morning, and be more alert and attentive to your presentations after they have had something to eat and drink.
- 30.) **If you think you could benefit from practice and/or more confidence, watch interview shows on subjects that interest you and answer questions to yourself as if you were the guest.** Compare your answers with those of the real guest. You will improve your skills and gain confidence.

CONCLUSION

A news conference is held to make a newsworthy and timely announcement. They are an excellent way to acquire earned media, as they are neither complicated nor expensive. Many techniques exist to help you present yourself and your views effectively.