

The Libertarian Volunteer

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

“I read the news today...oh boy”

■ Is your state or local newsletter helping your party's success — or undermining it?

Lying on his deathbed in 1959, the story goes, actor Edmund Gwenn was asked how he felt about his imminent demise.

“Dying is easy,” he rasped. “Comedy is difficult.”

Gwenn was wrong. Comedy is easy — newsletters are difficult.

Especially Libertarian Party newsletters.

Around the nation, while hard-working LP activists struggle to build the influence

and credibility of their state organizations, some newsletters are subtly working to undermine that progress.

Not intentionally. But through a series of inappropriate articles, vitriolic essays, personal obsessions, inept “humor,” and flawed strategy proposals, some Libertarian newsletters have become actual roadblocks to progress.

Unthinkingly, these newsletters can paint pictures of Libertarian organizations that are corrupt, obsessed with peripheral issues, resigned to failure, wracked with internal strife, and confused about the merits of political action.

Don't believe it? Here are real examples from Libertarian newsletters across the country. To avoid any finger-pointing, we won't mention names. It isn't necessary — and besides, it would be cruel. These authors didn't sit down to write stories to harm the LP. But, unfortunately, that's what they may have accomplished.



■ Some LP newsletters are positive and professional. Some are actual roadblocks to our continued progress. Here's how you can tell the difference.

We'll print a direct quote from an LP newsletter and then explain the destructive (and unintended) “message” that is conveyed to the reader. Then we'll suggest a more positive alternative.

Remember: Comedy is easy. Newsletters are difficult.

Here's proof . . .

✓ **EXAMPLE:** A newsletter promoted a speaker for an upcoming LP meeting. The topic: “An Argument Against Political Action: Why You Shouldn't Vote.” The article smirked:

“Only Libertarians would schedule this talk right before an election.”

MESSAGE: The Libertarian Party — a partisan political organization specifically devoted to getting people elected to public office — has not yet decided if voting is a virtue. Indeed, they are so ambivalent about voting that they invite guest experts to argue against it.

SUGGESTION: LP newsletters should relentlessly encourage people to vote for Libertarian candidates. The party is

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■ From the Editor

Is the LP ready for political prime time?

This issue of the *Libertarian Volunteer* is a month late. That's the bad news. The good news is that we have the best excuse in the world: Too darn much media attention. (It's exciting, yes, but time-consuming!) Since April, when this issue was scheduled to be published, the National LP headquarters has been bombarded by media calls.

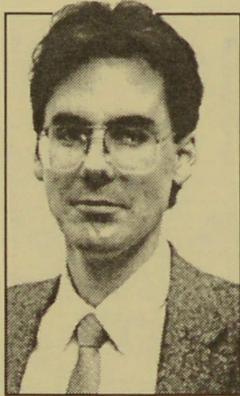
In fact, the amount of media coverage the LP has received is staggering — we've been on CNN, the CBS Radio Network, NewsTalk Cable TV, the *New Republic*, the *Los Angeles Times*, Paul Harvey News, *Rolling Stone*, C-SPAN, the Montel Williams Show . . . the list goes on and on.

What does it mean? Just this: That the LP is inexorably climbing towards the Big Time in American politics. It's exciting, yes, but dangerous. Why? Because as we grow, and get more Libertarians elected — we will come under increasing scrutiny as a political party. Are we prepared? Are we ready for the

media's microscope? *Is the LP ready for political "prime time?"*

In 1995, that's one of the most profound questions facing the LP. And it's a question we'll examine in several articles in this issue of the *Libertarian Volunteer*. (See the front-page article on newsletters, and Perry's comments on our "oddball" image.)

After all, if this issue of the *Volunteer* is a little late, we can catch up next month. But if the LP is not ready for our moment when it comes, if we haven't smoothed off our rough edges, and tempered our adolescent quirks . . . what will our excuse be? ■



Bill Winter, Editor

■ From the National Director

How do we alter the LP's "oddball" image?

After we made the front page of the *Wall Street Journal* there was much e-mail discussion of the LP membership figures used in that story. You know, which numbers best represent our true strength — votes, registrations, contributors, or actual dues-paying members? Frankly, I thought this was one of the least important aspects of the story. What concerned me was the following quote:

"The party still suffers from an oddball image."

And what disturbed me even more was that my fellow Libertarians didn't even seem to notice this statement, or care about it. Do we have an oddball image? And if so, why, and how can we fix it?

In the weeks that followed I heard no mention or discussion of these questions. Instead, Libertarians debated various ways to play with the membership numbers so that we could make ourselves look bigger than we actually are. And when Bill Winter sent out a survey to State Chairs about the source of our "oddball image" he got almost no responses.

We have met the enemy and he is us. We seem not to care about our image, which may explain why we've developed such a bad one. Those of our members who are oddballs naturally do oddball things, while the rest of us demonstrate little interest in stopping or countering their behavior. Just consider . . .

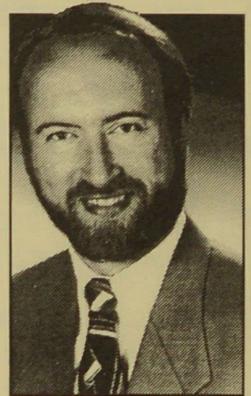
■ All of the nonsense that's published in ours newsletters, which Bill Winter has so ably cataloged elsewhere in this issue.

■ The knots into which the LP of New York tied itself in its mad dash to assist "shock jock" Howard Stern in packing its convention, violating proper convention procedure, and embarrassing the entire party on a national scale.

(Yes, Howard Stern was one of the things the *Wall Street Journal* reporter sarcastically noted in asking us about our image. Not a week goes by without someone citing this episode as the reason why they are either not joining the Party or not renewing their membership.)

■ The number of local groups that have sponsored appearances by Linda Thompson and her deluded video tape: "Waco, the Big Lie." It isn't enough that Waco was a tragedy and an unimpeachable example of the arrogance of government, some Libertarians also insist on trivializing and invalidating the significance of that event by mixing it up with delusional conspiracy theories and wild assertions based on nothing.

■ The number of local groups that sponsor so-called "tax



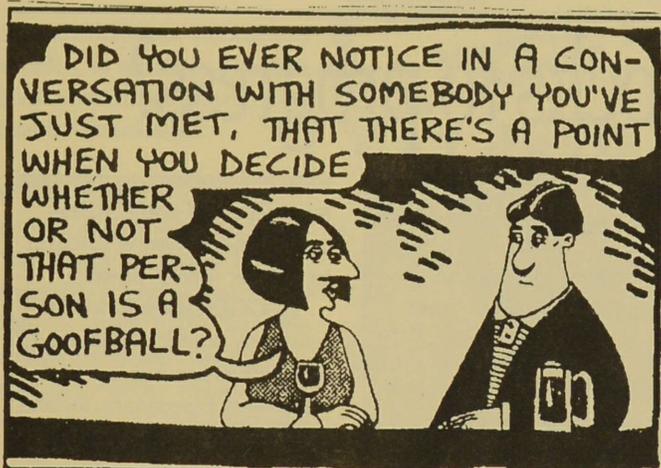
Perry Willis, National Director

The Libertarian Volunteer

A newsletter for LP volunteers, activists, officers, and candidates
Volume 6 ♦ Issue 2 ♦ March/April 1995

The Libertarian Volunteer is a publication of the Libertarian Party. Its goal is to provide proven advice, timely news, political resources, strategic suggestions, and accurate information for Libertarian volunteers. Letters, comments, articles, and suggestions are welcome!
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seminars" which promote theories that are questionable at best, and which have, in practice, landed most of their adherents in jail. Have they forgotten that we are a partisan political party, devoted to making changes *through the political process* — not a social protest movement, or a tax advice group?

■ The disappointing number of our members who cannot understand the difference between Libertarian tolerance of certain practices and public advocacy thereof. Even the party Platform recognizes this, and states: "Members of the Libertarian Party do not necessarily advocate or condone any of the practices our policies would make legal."

But individual Libertarians continue to promote their pet obsessions — frequently in the guise of party spokesperson. If we are going to speak radically about liberty and tolerance (as we should and must) then it is so important that we dress and act conservatively, so our message will be heard.

Those of you who revel in your pose as rebels and iconoclasts will doubtless be offended by what I have written here, but that's okay. I'm writing to those activists who care more about the success of the party than they do about opportunities for macho-flash preening.

"And I'm also writing to get your attention. When next you see one of your local oddballs misbehaving in public, please ask him or her to stop. And when next you see your fellow activists about to engage in some activity which would result in questionable publicity, urge caution. Ask your colleagues, "Is this publicity we would be willing to pay for if it were advertising we had designed ourselves? Indeed, would we even have considered designing this kind of advertising?" If not, don't do it.

It's up to those of you who understand the dynamics of public opinion and the importance of effective marketing to recreate the Libertarian Party in your own image.

Remember Gresham's law of people: bad folks drive out good folks. I urge you to break this law — by being the good person who sticks it out and works to counter the bad works of the oddball contingent.

Now is a time of opportunity for the Libertarian Party, but to realize that opportunity we most grow, both in quantity of members, and quality. ■

HQ announces new "profit-sharing" plan for LP brochures

Good news — the National LP office wants to send money to your state party!

Why? "It's part of a new program we've just implemented to give state parties a percentage of the money we receive from people who join the National LP through one of our brochures," explained National Director Perry Willis.

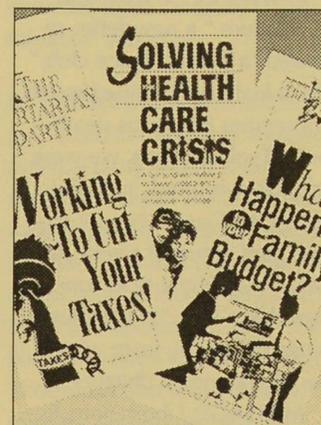
"For years, our state and local parties (and individual activists) have been distributing literature with a response form addressed to the National LP. We sent them all the prospect names we got, of course, but we kept the entire membership payment," said Willis. "That's changed now. We are now sending state parties a check for one-half of all the money we get from new members from their state — if they join via our literature. It's our way of saying 'thank-you' for buying and distributing our literature."

According to Willis, the first "refund" checks were mailed to state parties in April, and future checks will be mailed out automatically every three months.

"Of course, if no one from a state joins the National LP via a brochure during that three-month period, no check will be sent," he said.

The following literature will earn "refunds:"

□ "Is This the New Political Party You've Been Looking



For?" brochure

□ "Working to Cut Your Taxes!" brochure

□ "What Happened To Your Family Budget?" brochure

□ "Solving the Health Care Crisis" brochure

□ "Equal Rights for America's Gun Owners" brochure

□ "Making Your Neighborhood Safe Again" brochure

□ "Towards A More Sensible Drug Policy" brochure

□ "Which Political Party Is 100% Pro-Gun Rights?" flyer

The following literature is not part of this new program. "We send these items out in our information packages, so we have no way of knowing if we recruited the new members, or if you did," said Willis.

✗ The "Slick" brochure (three-color introductory piece)

✗ *Liberty Today* newspaper

✗ 1994 LP Program

"We hope LP activists like this new program," said Willis. "Again, it's our way of saying thanks for all your efforts to recruit new members!" ■

LP newsletters: Roadblocks to progress?

> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

long past the point where the merits of voting is an appropriate topic for debate.

✓ **EXAMPLE:** In a section on "Culture," a newsletter reviewed "a Gothic dance club," which featured a style of music "sometimes known as death-rock." Typical bands, we were helpfully informed, included Dead Can Dance, Nine Inch Nails, and Sisters of Mercy. This dance club, the article concluded, is a way "to experience things differently from what the official media dictates."

MESSAGE: Libertarians belong to some "alternative" culture with a morbid preoccupation with death. Libertarians, like the psychedelic counterculture of the 1960's, are looking for ways to experience life "differently," and are revolting against some vague conformity dictated by the "official media."

SUGGESTION: The LP takes no political position on dance clubs or musical genres. The party takes no political position on the merits of experiencing life "differently." Cultural issues have no place in an LP newsletter unless they comment on, or explain, Libertarian *political* positions or goals.

✓ **EXAMPLE:** A newsletter reported that the syndicated Gene Burns radio program had been picked up in a local city. The instructions: "Listen in, then we can all get together and debate his positions."

MESSAGE: The LP is a debating society. It exists to discuss and debate the political philosophy of radio talk show hosts.

SUGGESTION: LP newslet-

WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE NEWSLETTER?

OK, now you know how to create damaging, counter-productive Libertarian newsletters. But how do you produce an *effective* newsletter? Here are seven tips:

- 1) **Publish on a regular schedule.**
- 2) **Decide on the purpose of your newsletter. One good suggestion: To convince prospects to join the party, and to convince members to become more active. How? By portraying your party as an active, successful, professional political organization.**
- 3) **Report the news. Stress the positive political activities and accomplishments of your state party. Avoid boring philosophical debates, internal disputes, whining about lack of progress, etc.**
- 4) **Make it interesting! Play up human interest angles, interviews, and personalities. Consider including some humor, regular columns, and so on. Use photographs.**
- 5) **Make it easy to read. Avoid tiny print, crummy xeroxes, and dot matrix printers. Leave generous amounts of "white space" — don't fill up every page with blocks of dense, gray text.**
- 6) **Write as professionally as possible. Report news in a journalistic style. Avoid obscenity, shrill extremism, and rambling, stream-of-consciousness writing.**
- 7) **Make it look professional. Imitate the design of professional publications like newspapers and magazines.**

Remember: We are competing in the marketplace of ideas. The better newsletters Libertarians produce, the more effectively we will communicate our ideas, and the more successful we will be.

ters should not encourage aimless debate; they should advocate political *action*. A better suggestion would have been: "Listen in, and then we can all get together and discuss how to use the Gene Burns show to *advance the LP's political agenda*."

✓ **EXAMPLE:** A party member was annoyed by the state Executive Committee. So he wrote: "The state committee has a history of inactivism. Several members have not deigned to appear for months at a time.

Some show up, eat, and leave. This is the Libertarian Party, not a dinner party. [One officer] is not a Libertarian, has no interest in politics, and is apparently incapable of hearing and understanding simple English statements. [The newsletter editor] did not produce a single issue in six months. Or maybe it was just being printed in invisible ink on weightless, transparent paper."

MESSAGE: The LP has utterly incompetent leaders, dooming it to failure. Worse, there exists no method to

solve this problem, so members must resort to public name-calling and withering sarcasm to register their protests.

SUGGESTION: Don't air your dirty laundry in public; LP newsletters are not forums to insult other Libertarians. Instead, use your newsletter to paint a *positive*, optimistic picture of your organization. If party leaders are ineffective, recruit better leaders, or run for office yourself. Or, if individuals are not doing their jobs well, discuss this at a private meeting, and work towards a positive solution.

✓ **EXAMPLE:** A newsletter editor printed his own (non-political) sex poems. Readers were regaled with the following doggerel:

"Lifelike orgasmic presence
wilderness contained
to vigorous pleasuring
panting from desire fulfilled
togetherness
actualization."

MESSAGE: The Libertarian Party is not a political organization, but some kind of bohemian poetry circle, preoccupied with sex. Or, alternately, there is so little political activity and news that the newsletter must fill up space with verse.

SUGGESTION: LP newsletters are not poetry magazines. There are a hundred publications people can buy if they want to read poetry. There is only *one* publication on the planet exclusively devoted to news about *your* state LP. Libertarian newsletters should feature stories about political activities, progress, and accomplishments. If there is little "hard" news to report, feature inspiring profiles of party lead-

ers, candidates, or Libertarians in office, or discuss a local political problem and present the Libertarian solution.

✓ **EXAMPLE:** A newsletter printed an article entitled: "The Frugal Psychotic: How to Assemble a Street-Legal Assault Rifle for Under \$300." In it, the author explained how to use the "gray market" to bring legal weapons up to "full automatic status." After disparaging one weapon because it wasn't lethal enough ("What use do you have for a .22 rifle that won't kill anybody?"), the author also ruled out the Heckler & Koch HK9 because it was too expensive: "After your rampage against society, your expensive gun will probably be confiscated. This can put a big dent in your pocketbook when you will need every penny to purchase the aid of a good lawyer and a psychiatrist that will testify that you are insane, but essentially harmless."

MESSAGE: Libertarians have, at best, a ghoulish sense of humor, and, at worst, utter indifference for human life. Further, Libertarians support the Second Amendment because it gives them access to powerful weapons for their planned "rampage against society."

SUGGESTION: There is no place in the LP for murdering psychotics — or for people who think that chortling about bloodshed makes for "clever," satirical writing. Any defense of the right to keep and bear arms — like the defense of any other basic civil liberty — should be presented in a reasoned, sensible tone. It should also stress the *advantages* of any civil liberty . . . not any possible nightmarish worst-case scenarios.

✓ **EXAMPLE:** A newsletter editorialized: "Why join [the



"Libertarians oppose 'victimless crime' laws because they wallow in vice. They are less interested in defending civil liberties than they are in protecting their supply of smut."

Libertarian Party]? Actually, it doesn't matter to me if you join or not. You may have some very good reasons for not joining."

MESSAGE: The LP — an organization substantially funded by membership dues and energized by the committed volunteers who join the party — does not think people should bother joining the party.

SUGGESTION: A growing membership base is the *cornerstone* of LP success. LP newsletters should strongly, persistently, and persuasively encourage people to join the party.

✓ **EXAMPLE:** A newsletter printed a report of a recent Executive Committee meeting: "[The State Chair] brought up allegations (with little evidence to date) . . . that moneys spent [by members of an affiliated Libertarian organization] were deliberately recorded in inappropriate budget categories."

MESSAGE: The Libertarian Party is rife with corruption and dishonesty. Indeed, the situation is so bad, and Libertarians are presumed to be so dishon-

est, that there is an immediate presumption of guilt — even if there is "little evidence" of wrongdoing.

SUGGESTION: LP newsletters should not be forums for printing unsubstantiated gossip about other Libertarians — especially if "little evidence" of wrongdoing exists. Genuine suspicions of wrongdoing should be reported to the appropriate body for investigation and action.

✓ **EXAMPLE:** A newsletter printed an essay defending the First Amendment and objecting to pornography laws. The author wrote: ". . . In the last half decade or so I have viewed dozens of X-rated programs [and] I have produced a small variety of pornographic works of my own . . ."

MESSAGE: Libertarians oppose "victimless crime" laws because they wallow in vice. They are less interested in defending civil liberties than they are in protecting their supply of smut.

SUGGESTION: The LP, as

a political entity, does not condone pornography, or endorse it, or take a position on its merits. The party merely argues that the government has no right to prohibit it. Arguments to explain this political position are not generally enhanced by first-hand accounts of what many readers might consider to be "morally objectionable" activities.

✓ **EXAMPLE:** A newsletter publicized the launch of another political party which shares some Libertarian beliefs. The author gushed: "The bad news (for the LP) is that [this rival party] is off to a booming start. Since its launching . . . [this rival party] has been inundated with 'thousands and thousands' of phone calls and requests for information . . . [soon], the LP's standing as 'America's third largest party' could be in for a serious challenge."

MESSAGE: If you're thinking about joining the Libertarian Party — *don't*. Another party has come along that's better. Indeed, this rival party is so impressive that the LP is devoting space in its newsletters to publicize it.

SUGGESTION: Republicans don't publicize Democrats. Chrysler doesn't promote General Motors. The LP should not champion other rival, partisan political parties. Individuals are active in the LP because they believe it presents the best political hope for America's future. If they no longer think that — or if they think that role has been assumed by a different political party — they should join that party, and write for its newsletter.

✓ **EXAMPLE:** A newsletter printed a rating guide to political radio talk show hosts. Not objectionable — until the author

decided that it would be helpful for readers to understand the phenomenon of AM radio wave "skip." Pointing to an accompanying illustration, the author lectured: "... But to reach C the ray would have to encounter the E layer at too high an angle to be bent back sufficiently; instead it escapes to outer space (S). C is too close to R to receive its sky wave ..."

MESSAGE: The Libertarian Party is some sort of high school science club, and if you join the party, you will be expected to be interested in such scientific ephemera. Or, alternately, there is so little political activity and news that the newsletter must fill up space with leftover articles from *Science* magazine.

SUGGESTION: LP newsletters should not bombard people with useless information unrelated to the political goals of the party.

✓ **EXAMPLE:** A newsletter editorialized about Howard Stern running for governor [in New York in 1994]: "Regardless of how you feel about Stern, the last time the LP made the news was Ron Paul's campaign embezzlement scandal, so relatively speaking this is good coverage." [For those who missed that "scandal," a member of the Ron Paul campaign staff was accused of misappropriating funds in 1988.]

MESSAGE: The LP is an organization so riddled with scandal that every new scandal must be ranked on a "scandal-intensity scale," and compared to previous scandals. Or, alternately, the LP receives so little publicity that the media only pays attention to it when yet another crooked Libertarian is exposed.

SUGGESTION: LP newsletters should not dredge up old



A state party Chairman wrote: "I don't believe our future success should be sought in the political arena."

"scandals." Instead, newsletters should focus on current, *positive* news.

✓ **EXAMPLE:** A state party Chairman wrote: "I don't believe our immediate political future success should be sought in the political arena." Instead, the party decided to "have an essay contest for high school seniors" and "get involved in [the state's] 'Adopt-a-Highway' program."

MESSAGE: The LP, a partisan *political* party, has given up on succeeding politically, and has decided to spend its time, money, and energy on non-political activities.

SUGGESTION: The LP should be long past any uncertainty about its partisan political mission. The LP exists to *do politics*. This means getting on the ballot, running candidates, getting people elected, educating voters, legislative lobbying, and so on. Newsletters should explain and *promote* that agenda. (Yes, there is a place for *occasional* non-political activities in the LP's arsenal of tactics — but *only* if it supports the principal, ongoing *political* goals of the party.)

✓ **EXAMPLE:** A newsletter editor wrote about an LP candi-

date of whom he disapproved. During this person's campaign, he wrote, voters would come into contact with "... a grinning wild man, complete with waving arms and a saliva shower, hollering at the top of his lungs that he's a 'Libertarian' and wants you to vote for him!"

MESSAGE: The LP runs freaks for public office. No one in their right mind would ever vote for a Libertarian candidate.

SUGGESTION: Don't insult Libertarian candidates in print. Inappropriate or ineffective candidates should be counseled in private, sent to campaign workshops, or gently steered away from active campaigning.

✓ **EXAMPLE:** A newsletter wrote about an upcoming Tax Day rally and listed the first goal of the event: "Raise the consciousness of the 'sheeple' who have never thought about the issue."

MESSAGE: Libertarians have utter contempt for most Americans, considering them a pathetic hybrid of docile sheep and ignorant people. Clearly,

anyone who does not yet share Libertarian beliefs is stupid, and deserves to be scorned.

SUGGESTION: Treat — and write about — voters with respect. Unless you make a sincere effort to understand why people don't agree with us on certain issues, or why they may not have thought about certain political issues, you will not be able to persuade them of the merits of our positions. Every American, even the most uninformed, is a potential future LP voter or member.

Summary: Libertarian newsletters can be a positive force for growth, outreach, explaining Libertarian ideas, and progress — or a negative force for divisiveness, strife, confusion, and despair.

Remember: *Every* article, every choice of subject matter, every choice of words, sends a message to members and prospects about the culture, organization, people, and goals of your state Libertarian Party.

Choose them carefully. ■

Tidbits

■ In a recent issue of the *Libertarian Volunteer*, we reported that in US House races, the person who spends the most money almost always wins. But the 1994 elections seemed to contradict that; many Republicans beat Democrats who outspent them. Is the "money = victory" rule no longer valid? Not completely.

According to the April 1995 *Campaigns & Elections*, the 74 winning Republican Congressional candidates still spent considerable money — an average of \$591,000 per race (compared to the Democrats' average of \$711,000). More importantly, in the final 20 days before the elections, surging Republicans spend a total of \$14.2 million in those 74 races, compared to \$14.1 for the Democrats.

The lesson: Even during times of political realignment, with public opinion swinging in your party's direction, you still need more than half a million dollars to be competitive in a Congressional race — and you need to achieve *fiscal parity* during the last three weeks of the campaign if you plan to win. For most Libertarian candidates, those are goals that are still out of reach.

Tomorrow's first Libertarian President — is he (or she) already in *local* office today?

Want to start getting Libertarians elected tomorrow to Congress, the U.S. Senate, and eventually even the presidency?

Start working *today* on city and town races, county offices, and state legislative races.

One man's opinion? No — the advice of experts, and the lessons of American history.

Need proof?

In a recent fundraising letter to party members, Ron Crickenberger, chairman of the LP's Campaign Committee, revealed Step One in the party's long-range strategy to get partisan Libertarians elected to high office: "Continue to expand our 'Farm Team' of local elected Libertarians."

Crickenberger went on to explain: "I was talking to a Republican 'insider' the other day, and he explained how the Republican Party grooms their candidates for Congress. His surprising secret: They start 10 to 15 years early! [This Republican] explained: 'We help promising candidates run for local office — school boards and City Council. We then send them to candidate's schools, to smooth off the rough edges. Next, we encourage them to run for County Commissioner, and, a few years later, for State House and State Senate. Finally, after 10 or 15 years, they are ready for Congress.'

But don't take the word of a Republican! Look at the record.

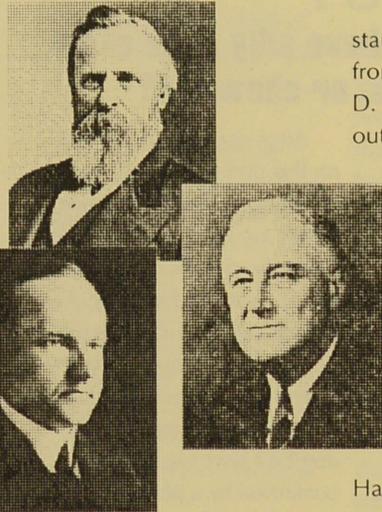
According to an article in the March 1995 issue of *Campaigns & Elections*, out of the 99 first-time U.S. House and U.S. Senate members of the 104th Congress, 38 are former state legislators. All told, 48% of the entire House and Senate are former legislators (256 out of 535).

Every state has at least one former state lawmaker serving in the House or Senate. In fact, 100% of the Wyoming Congressional delegation are former state legislators; 88% of the Colorado delegation are.

"State legislatures are incubators for statewide and national leaders. Today's state legislators are tomorrow's Congressmen and U.S. Senators," notes *Campaigns & Election*.

American political history confirms this strategy.

And author Robert Heinlein, in his 1946 "how-to" book on American politics, *Take*



Rutherford B. Hayes: City solicitor

Calvin Coolidge: City councilman

Franklin D. Roosevelt: State legislator

Back Your Government, offers the irrefutable proof.

He writes: "Minor elections [at the city and county level] are a major part of the process which produces a president each four years . . .

" 'Minor' candidates have a way of becoming presidents. Fourteen of our presidents

started in the state legislature, from John Adams to Franklin D. Roosevelt. [Others started out in elected and appointed city offices.] Rutherford B. Hayes was a city solicitor; Grover Cleveland and Taft were assistant prosecutors; Abraham Lincoln was a village postmaster; Calvin Coolidge was a city councilman; Harry Truman was a county judge; Benjamin Harrison was a court reporter, and Andrew Johnson started as an Alderman.

"Nor is the time from 'minor' office to the presidency very long; par for the course seems to be 26 years — some made it in less than 20."

Heinlein concludes with some advice that applies to Libertarians: "The president 20 years from now may be in your district; you may urge him to run for his first political office.

"In any case the chances are better than one in two that any future president will make his start in one of the *minor, local offices* which the politically naive hold in contempt."

Tidbits

■ In the February 1995 issue of *Modern Gun* magazine, executive editor Jim Schults, in his editorial column, wrote the following advice to the Libertarian Party. It was in response to letters he received after a previous column, urging readers not to "waste their vote" in national elections on third parties.

"The Libertarians need to go after grassroots offices to prove their worth and then set up a chain of promotion for national office. Until Libertarians prove themselves by winning mayoral, city council, state representative and senatorial offices, they will never be taken seriously for national office. In this country, whether it's business, education, or life in general, you have to begin at the beginning, and it's never too late. So quit your bitching; let's see what you can offer at local office first."

Noted Crickenberger: "We've got more than 140 Libertarians already in office, learning the ropes, building credibility, and moving up through the political ranks."

And the *more* Libertarians in local and state office, the greater chance that in five, or 10, or 20 years, one of them will get elected to Congress, the U.S. Senate . . . and maybe even the presidency. ■

A terrific PR opportunity for LP groups: Publicizing your state's top 10 stupidest laws

■ Does your state have silly laws about margarine, shingles, or showmen?

One of the jobs of the Libertarian Party is to change bad laws — stupid, pointless, irritating governmental rules and regulations that restrict people's freedom.

And, as an added bonus, doing that job can bring your state or local party positive publicity.

At least, that's the experience of the Libertarian Party of New Hampshire, which used a list of the state's "stupidest laws" to garner favorable articles and newspaper editorials last year — almost accidentally.

The project was the brainchild of long-time LPNH activist Brad Dorsey. He explained: "[The plan was to] identify the stupidest law on the books in New Hampshire and try to get it repealed."

What kind of stupid law? "I didn't want to find laws that Libertarians would find stupid; I wanted to find laws that everyone (or at least 95%) would find ridiculous," he explained. "I realized that the laws we came up with probably wouldn't be terribly significant in the overall scheme; they would probably just be stupid little things.

"Now in New Hampshire," he continued, "this idea has the additional attractiveness that we have Libertarians in the legislature, so we can introduce bills to repeal laws. My thought was to come up with a bill that a Libertarian could sponsor that would actually pass."

After deciding to embark on this project, Dorsey started his research: "Sets of NH statute books are readily available in many libraries, municipal offices, etc. The total verbiage is equivalent to a small encyclopedia, so actually reading every law was clearly out of the question.

"So how do we find the dumbest law? My strategy, confirmed by a phone call to a Libertarian attorney, was to read through the index to the statutes, looking for strange entries that would make one stop and wonder, 'Now, why would there be a law about that?' and look up the statute referred to in the index," he said.

The scope of the job initially daunted him, Dorsey admitted, but he persevered. "The index alone is almost 1200 pages long, two columns to a page. It took about 20 hours to go through it."

But the research paid off, with an impressive list of preposterous, or outdated, or pernickety laws.

"Some of the candidates for the stupidest law we came up with were: a law making it illegal for restaurants (among other businesses) to open on Sundays; a prohibition on the serving of colored oleomargarine; a requirement that all shingles be four inches wide (not four inches or wider — four inches!); a law requiring that people walk on the right hand side of crosswalks; and a law

requiring the licensing of ventriloquists, rope dancers (!) and other showmen," he said.

At the same time, Libertarian House leader Don Gorman decided to follow-up on the idea, too.

"[Gorman] liked the idea, and asked the legislative services office in the state house to give him a list of the stupidest laws," recounted Dorsey. "But . . . the office didn't know how to handle Gorman's request, and while he was waiting for their response the deadline for filing bills passed."

Dorsey put the project on hold, and decided to wait until the next legislative session before doing anything.

But fate intervened at an LPNH monthly meeting in mid-1994, when Dorsey presented his preliminary list to the assembled Libertarians — and a reporter from the state's largest newspaper, the *Manchester Union Leader*, who was there to report on the guest speaker.

The law requiring that "showmen" be registered sparked the reporter's interest, and led to several newspaper articles, including one about a professional magician who had been performing for 20 years without the required license.

In the articles, Dorsey was



"To have too many laws, especially stupid little laws like these, is simply . . . well, stupid."

extensively quoted: "To have too many laws, especially stupid little laws like these, is simply . . . well, stupid."

The newspaper's editorial board also weighed in on the matter, agreeing that such "outrageously silly laws" deserved to be repealed.

In all, it was a small bonanza of positive publicity for the LP, said Dorsey later.

Could other state party garner the same publicity with the same project?

Certainly, said Dorsey.

"Any state's LP could gain media exposure by publicizing what it came up with as the dumbest law, or maybe the top ten or whatever, and thereby demonstrating how stupid government can be," he said. ■

Tidbits

■ There is now one officially announced candidate seeking the Libertarian Party's Vice Presidential nomination. Here's how to contact her: Jo Jorgensen for Vice President, 1270 Woodruff Road, Suite 101, Greenville, SC 29607. (803) 242-0753

Should the Libertarian Party try to run 218 candidates for U.S. Congress in 1996?

Richard Winger, the nationally renowned ballot access expert, thinks the Libertarian Party has a unique political opportunity in 1996 — and he's urging state parties across the country to take advantage of it.

His suggestion: Run at least 218 candidates for Congress — a majority of seats — and have them sign a Libertarian "Contract with America."

"We need to have at least 218 candidates, so that we can call on the American voters to elect a

Libertarian majority to the U.S. House," said Winger, the editor of *Ballot Access News*. "It's a theoretical barrier which we must surmount, to have any

logic in our appeal. In theory, if we don't even have 218 candidates, it is literally impossible for the voters to vote in a Libertarian majority into the U.S. House."

On a historical note, Winger said that since 1920 no third party has had candidates for the U.S. House on the ballot in even half the districts.

To draw attention to the Libertarian "Contract," Winger recommended taking a tip from the Republicans.

"Remember, the Republicans launched their own "Contract" by having about 320 of their congressional candidates on the U.S. Capitol steps, on September 27, 1994," he said. "They all

signed an enormous piece of paper on which were their 10 promises, if they got a majority.

"We are having our national convention in July 1996 in Washington, D.C. We could also have our U.S. House candidates on the steps of the Capitol, at that time.

"For those candidates who couldn't be there, surely each non-attendee candidate could designate someone from his state who could serve as his or her proxy."

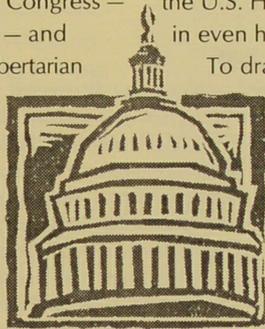
Because of the LP's strong ballot access position coming out of the 1994 elections, Winger said it wouldn't present any great additional logistical hurdles for the party to get 218 Congressional candidates on the ballot.

"We can do this with no extra petitioning except for some minimum petitions — [and] I define 150 or fewer signatures to be minimum," he said. "Our biggest hurdle will be to find people willing to be candidates.

"Remember, anyone who runs for Congress who raises less than \$5,000, and spends less than \$5,000, need not report campaign finance information to the FEC. Paper candidates are OK for this purpose."

Winger's recommendation for Libertarians: "Let's try for this! We need something new. If you agree, pass the idea on, [and] start now to find candidates."

The previous high for Libertarians running for U.S. House was 154, in 1982. ■



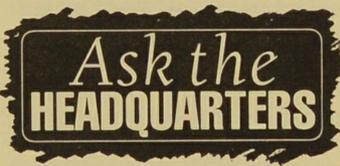
Why hold the National Convention in '96?

Q I understand that the nominating convention for the 1996 LP presidential candidate won't be held until July, 1996. I am concerned that this could jeopardize our chances at 50-state ballot status. Wouldn't it be better to nominate the candidate this fall?
— P.H., Idaho

A The short explanation is that this is an attempt to change some unfair laws, and should not affect our 50-state ballot status (hopefully!).

Background: The reason that we have traditionally held our nominating convention 14 months before the election is because some states require that we list the names of our Presidential candidates on the ballot access petitions when we circulate them.

Because some of these states have very onerous petitioning requirements and/or early deadlines, we nominated our candidates early, put their names on the ballot petitions as required, and still had time to collect enough signatures.



However, this strategy meant that we couldn't challenge these laws in court. (In order to file a lawsuit, you have to have suffered some harm.) According to the court's logic, since we nominated so early, collected our signatures, and then actually got onto the ballot, we weren't harmed by these restrictive laws! So, we have to put ourselves in

"harm's way" — and run the risk of not being able to get on the ballot — in order to challenge the laws.

However, this strategy should not affect our 50-state ballot status. The reason is because most of these states allow us to use "place-holder" names on our petitions. So we're going to put Ed Clark and David Bergland's names (they agreed to this) on the ballot access petitions, collect enough signatures, and then, once we nominate our real

➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

There are 7,687,142 libertarians in America (And most of them don't even know they're libertarian.)

- TIMES/MIRROR 1994 NATIONWIDE SURVEY

Gallup Polls disagree. They say there are over 36,879,934 libertarians in America. At least one out of every 25 people you meet are already libertarians — and don't even know it.

These people don't need to be convinced or argued with or converted. They just have to be shown they have a political home.

How do we reach these libertarians? Good news! We have a tool. It's effective, easy and proven. It's even fun! And now it's more powerful than ever before.

Operation Politically Homeless is the fastest, easiest, most effective way to quickly reach large numbers of libertarian-minded people. It works like a dream, even if you're shy. Just set up Operation Politically Homeless in any area where there are lots of people — festivals, street fairs, gun shows, concerts, conventions — and watch it happen.

Here's how it works. An Operation Politically Homeless booth is staffed by a few libertarians. They simply ask passers-by to take the "World's Smallest Political Quiz." Most people are glad you asked. Those who score libertarian — typically 20-40% — are then asked if they would like more information about libertarian ideas. They leave you their names and addresses.

Yes, it's that easy.

And not only easy — it's actually fun. Over and over again, that's what booth operators and Quiz-takers alike tell us.

But does it work?

Yes — amazingly well! Check out these results:

- 344 names and addresses collected in one day at a music festival by Texas Libertarian Party members!
- 97 hot prospects gathered in just 4 hours by Cincinnati libertarians at a tax protest!
- 798 libertarian contacts gathered by Florida Libertarian Party volunteers at a three-day arts festival!

Operation Politically Homeless guarantees you'll collect at least a few dozen names anywhere there are people gathered. You'll quickly find people eager to know more about liberty — guaranteed!

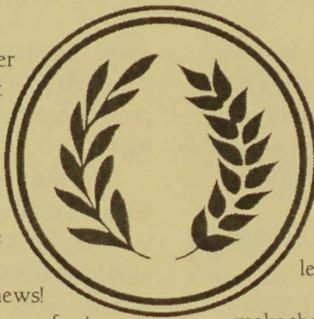
What's In It For You?

Operation Politically Homeless is the most powerful libertarian recruiting tool ever invented. You quickly and easily identify lots of potential local supporters, so you can rapidly build your organization. An Operation Politically Homeless booth is also a great way to energize an organization. You will instantly see concrete results from your efforts. You'll see faces light up over and over again as people realize, for the first time, that they're really libertarians — that they do have a political home.

The biggest benefit of all, of course, is that there will be lots more libertarians as a result of your efforts. More people who share our ideals, our values, our vision. Thousands more people who are part of the solution instead of the problem. And isn't that what we all want?

We've Made This Powerful Tool Even More Effective.

We've just added a whole new dimension to Operation Politically Homeless — a way to make sure that the thousands of new libertarians contacted receive a strong, effective follow-through.



We can now guarantee that every name you gather will hear from the finest organizations and publications in the libertarian movement.

Here's the plan. Using Operation Politically Homeless, you and your local libertarian organization gather dozens or hundreds of prospect names. You use these names in the most effective way you can to build your local or state organization: send them your newsletter or invite them to meetings.

Then: send those names to the Advocates. We'll in turn make them available to America's leading libertarian organizations and publications.

Remember How You Felt?

Remember how you felt when you discovered you weren't the only libertarian in the world? When you learned there were other people who shared your political views? How would you like for one out of every 25 people you encounter to experience that same feeling?

Imagine: tens of thousands of liberty-hungry people receiving catalogs, subscription offers, sample publications, candidate brochures and other professionally-produced material — all from the leading organizations and publications. Magazines like *Reason* and *Liberty*. Groups and organizations like The Libertarian Party, Laissez Faire Books, Liberty Tree Books and Tapes, The Foundation for Economic Education. What will the effect be? (Hint: imagine a country-wide Dixville Notch, New Hampshire!)

Every good salesperson knows that prospects often have to be exposed to an idea several times before they begin to accept it. Now we can do that — we can show each and every fledgling libertarian a world of libertarian activities, ideas, and organizations.

This new addition to the Operation Politically Homeless program greatly leverages your outreach efforts — at no additional cost or effort to you!

A Movement Bigger Than You Ever Dreamed Possible!

People are hungry for libertarian ideas. We want to reach thousands — tens of thousands — of people with those ideas — fast! We want to quickly build strong libertarian organizations. Operation Politically Homeless is the way.

Excited? So are we. If you or your organization have an Operation Politically Homeless booth, now is the best time ever to put it to use.

Would you like to run an Operation Politically Homeless booth yourself — and discover hundreds of new libertarians? Or would you like to sponsor one for someone else in your city or state?

You can evaluate the benefits yourself — at no cost! Just call us — at our expense, please — or fax us, and we'll rush you a FREE information kit packed with facts and figures about the world's finest libertarian outreach tool.

No Risk — No Obligation.

Call today for your free "Operation Politically Homeless" Information Kit: 1-800-932-1776. Please call now — hundreds of libertarians in your town are waiting!

ADVOCATES FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT, INC.,

3955 Pleasantdale Rd. #106A, Atlanta, GA 30340

Selecting your state party's delegates for the '96 Convention: When, where, who, and how

■ Deadlines for the 1996 convention may be coming quicker than you expect

Yes, it's already time to start thinking about our 1996 Presidential nominating convention, which will be held over the July 4th weekend in 1996 in Washington, DC.

Two early warnings for all state parties:

First, The delegate allocation deadline is December 31, 1995. This is several months earlier than usual, due to the convention being in July, not September. [See related article on page nine.]

This means that the number of National LP members in your state as of *December 31, 1995*, will determine the number of convention delegates your state gets.

The system is explained in the National LP Bylaws, Section 13:

4. Affiliate Party Delegate

WHO CAN BE A STATE PARTY DELEGATE?

Who can be a state delegate, and how should your state party select them? The Bylaws explain:

ARTICLE 13: CONVENTIONS. Section 3. Delegates:

a. Delegates shall be required to be members of either the Party or an affiliate party. At all Regular Conventions delegates shall be those so accredited who have registered at the Convention. At all Non-Regular Conventions, any person who wishes to attend may do so.

b. Any federal or state law to the contrary notwithstanding, delegates to a Regular Convention shall be selected by a method adopted by each affiliate party; provided however, that only members of the Party as defined in these Bylaws, or members of the affiliate party as defined in the constitution or bylaws of such affiliate party, shall be eligible to vote for the selection of delegates to a Regular Convention.

Entitlements:

Each affiliate party shall be entitled to send delegates to each Regular Convention on the following basis:

- a. one delegate for each 20 members or fraction thereof, of the National Party (at least one such delegate must be a resident of that state); plus
- b. one additional delegate

for each one percent (1%) (rounded) of the total vote cast for President in that state or district which was received by the Party's most recent candidate for President.

6. Delegate Allocation:

In order to be counted for delegate allocation, membership applications must be sent to the National Headquarters by either the individual member or the affiliate party and received or postmarked no later than the last day of the seventh month prior to the Regular Convention.

The Secretary shall make a count of the members qualified under the requirements set forth here and shall compute the delegate allocations for the affiliate parties. Notification of the membership totals and allocation totals shall be sent by the Secretary to the Chair of each affiliate

party no later than the last day of the sixth month prior to a Regular Convention.

Second, the list of your delegates must be received by the National LP Secretary John Famularo one month prior to the start of the first Convention business session. (This is important, since it may affect your 1996 state convention dates.) The Bylaws state:

6. Delegate Allocation:

A list of the names and addresses of all delegates and alternates chosen by each affiliate party shall be sent to the Secretary no later than one month prior to start of the first general session of the Regular Convention.

Amendments to such lists may be made by the affiliate parties until the close of the Credentials Committee meeting preceding the Convention. The number of alternates' names submitted shall not exceed the greater of 50 or the number of delegates allocated.

Failure to submit a listing of delegate/alternate names and addresses, as prescribed within these Bylaws, shall cause no delegation to be registered from that affiliate party.

"Of course, we will send every state further reminders of this as the Convention gets closer," said LP Director of Communications Bill Winter. "And if you have any questions about this procedure, please feel free to give John Famularo a call at (215) 735-6426." ■

Tidbits

■ Some "Tactical Reflections" on politics from L. Neil Smith, noted science fiction author and head of the Libertarian Second Amendment Caucus:

✓ "Conservatives are accustomed to being called fascists and are well prepared to defend themselves on that ground. Liberals are used to being called socialists. These labels can be switched, however, and remain valid and instructive. It also catches them completely unprepared."

✓ "You may never convince the other guy, but it's often worthwhile to keep arguing for the effect it has on bystanders, especially his allies."

Notices

■ **LNC Shuffle:** There have been several changes on the LP National Committee. A summary: Region 1 Alternate Gus Hercules resigned, and was replaced by Lynn House of Alaska. Region 6 Alternate Pamela Haberkorn moved, and was replaced by Steve Winter of New Hampshire. Joe Barnett resigned as Region 8 Representative, and Alternate Tom Paswater (from Arizona) took his place. The Region 8 Alternate spot is now vacant.

■ **Gene Burns:** Ever wonder what happened to Libertarian talkmeister Gene Burns? After leaving his nationally syndicated show on WOR (New York) in

October 1994, he has landed at KGO radio in San Francisco, according to the March issue of *Inside Radio/News*. No word of a new syndication deal.

■ **Gun Rally:** The Committee of 1776 will sponsor a Gun Rights Rally in Washington, DC, on June 4, 1996. (They're the same folks who did this last year.) They are inviting all Second Amendment supporters to attend. For more information call (508) 939-4867.

■ **New Staff:** There's a new staff member at the National LP office: Cynthia Fellows, formerly the Morris/Essex County LP Chair in New Jersey. Ms. Fellows is the LP's new Project Manager — she'll be working on ballot access and helping the National office with various special political projects.

Why a '96 Convention?

> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Presidential and VP candidates, substitute their names for our place-holders names.

Florida (to cite one example) doesn't allow "place-holders," but our lawyers tell us that legal precedent is on our side, and we should easily win the lawsuit. However, even if worst comes to worst, and we lose this lawsuit, we'll still have a Libertarian presidential candidate on the ballot — just not the correct one . . . in perhaps one or two states.

One other consideration: We are already on the ballot in 24 states for the 1996 elections. That's well ahead of any previous election cycle, and makes the overall ballot ac-

cess burden easier.

Finally, holding our nominating convention at approximately the same time as the Republicans and Democrats is just one more way we can demonstrate our increasing parity with the other two "major" parties.

We also expect that it will attract more national media attention — and the attention of the voters (many of whom don't even start thinking about politics until a few months before the election.)

"Ask the HQ" will be a regular feature in the Libertarian Volunteer. Send any questions to the National LP headquarters, ATTN: Bill Winter. ■

The Libertarian Volunteer

The Libertarian Party

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