

# The Libertarian Volunteer

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

## 'Workers and Peasants of Brooklyn!'

■ Sixty years ago, another small American third party made a bid for the political big leagues. They failed. Will the LP learn from that failure — or repeat it?

It is a small political party, considered by many political pundits to be outside the "mainstream" of American politics.

It demands strict adherence to party doctrine, and is regularly torn apart by internal feuding over strategy, personalities, and ideology. A number of its members are unusual by middle class standards, and its political rhetoric is viewed by many voters as confrontational and

odd. There is an uneasy tension between the average working member and the party's intellectuals.

After more than a decade in existence, its paid membership stubbornly hovers just over the 10,000 mark.

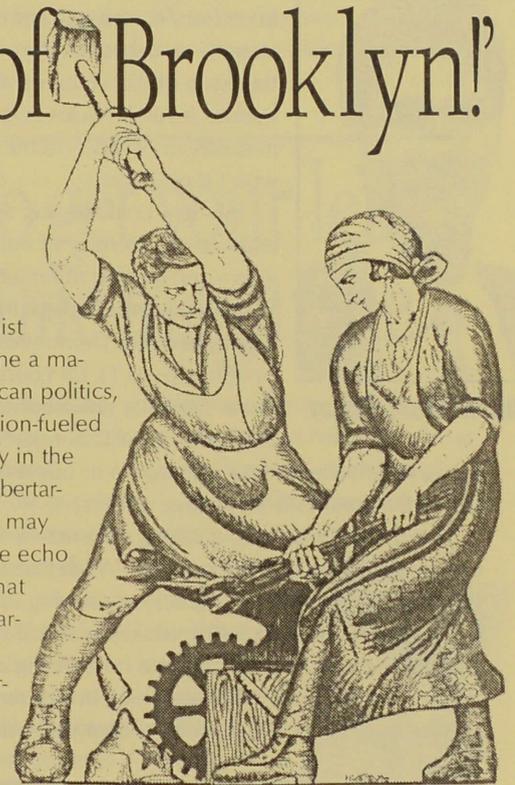
The Libertarian Party in 1995? No — the Communist Party of America in 1931.

In his book *The Cause That Failed*, author Guenter Lewy discusses some of the reasons

why the Communist Party never became a major force in American politics, despite a Depression-fueled surge of popularity in the 1930s. To many Libertarians, those reasons may sound like an eerie echo of the problems that bedevil the Libertarian Party.

Of course, Liber-

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**Getting the media to notice the LP**

■ PAGE 8  
**How to keep your volunteers volunteering**

## Questions & Answers about the HQ's move to the Watergate Bldg.

It's official — the Libertarian Party headquarters is now located in the Watergate Office Building. Here are some of the most commonly asked questions about the headquarters move, and how it will affect our activists and affiliate organizations.

**Q How do we contact you at the Watergate?**

Our new mailing address is: Libertarian National Committee, Inc. Watergate Office Building 2600 Virginia Avenue, NW, Suite 100 Washington, DC 20037

■ Our new phone number is: (202) 333-0008.

■ Our new fax number is: (202) 333-0072.

(Note to state and county affiliates: Please be sure to pass on this new address to your Membership Director, so any

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■ From the Editor

# Making sure 'flat tires' are, ahem, Left behind

**A** joke among activists in the Libertarian Party is that we're constantly "reinventing the flat tire." It's funny — but it isn't. Whatever the reason, we Libertarians *do* tend to make many of the same basic political mistakes over and over again.

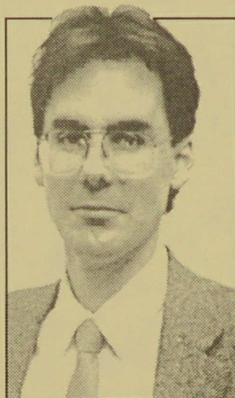
One way to end this vicious cycle is to *learn* from mistakes — not only our own, but also the mistakes of others. And that's what this issue of the *Volunteer* focuses on. We feature several articles that scrutinize the mistakes of others — in the hope that we won't repeat them.

By mere coincidence, the lessons in this issue come courtesy of our political opposites — left-leaning members of the Nuclear Freeze movement (page 8) and the virulently pro-statist Communist Party of America (page 1). Of course, we couldn't be more dissimilar philosophically, but the nuts and bolts of political organizing are the

same, whether your goal is freedom or oppression. Either way, ineffective politics is ineffective politics.

Besides, there's another saying: "No man is totally useless; he can always serve as a bad example." With that in mind, we should thank our Leftist friends for graciously serving as *our* bad example.

So, let's learn from their mistakes — and leave our "flat tires" behind! Instead, let's concentrate on building a better, faster political "race car" — while watching in amusement as the Left continues to curse the flat tires of *their* discredited ideology. ■



**Bill Winter, Editor**

■ From the National Director

# Attracting the media: The rules don't change

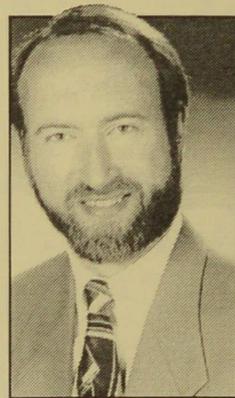
**L**ast month, as I was reading the cover story about the Libertarian Party in *Insight* magazine and the front-page story in *USA Today*, I was reminded of an article I wrote for the Andre Marrou campaign in 1992.

My topic: How the LP can attract more media attention.

I wondered: Was the article still relevant? Did the advice I gave three years ago still apply in 1995?

I pulled the article out of my old, dusty file boxes, and read it. And I was pleased to see that the article is *more* pertinent now than it was in 1992. In fact, if Libertarian activists all over the country followed this advice, I'll bet they could generate more press coverage for their state, county, and local parties — just as we have at the National level.

Why don't you read it (ignoring some slightly dated political references) and see if you agree with me . . .



**Perry Willis, National Director**

**T**o acquire something someone has, you must offer something they seek. This idea is central to the Libertarian view of trade.

I assert, on the basis of this, the "media blackout" is *our* fault!

Don't be shocked. Think about it. Do journalists mistreat us because they're malevolent? Sometimes, yes, but mostly no. If malevolence were really their true nature then we couldn't hope to change it. At best, we could limit the damage. Nothing more.

I have higher aims.

Journalists are people. I know that's hard to believe, but it's true. Many, maybe most, have ideas opposed to ours, but then so do many non-journalists. I could easily, in the next 20 seconds, list 10 libertarian reporters. I could also list another 10 who aren't, but who have covered us as well or better than those who are. Journalists are just people — a mixed bag.

Our job is to provide journalists, both good and bad, something they want. If we aren't willing to do so, we won't achieve our goals. Whining and name calling won't cut it. No one wants to hear how bad they are, including journalists.

We can't control what they do. But we can control what we do. The key is in ourselves, or nowhere.

I assert that we have something journalists want. All journalists. By changing our behavior and considering their needs and wants, we can/will get what we want. We, by our own actions, and only our own actions, can end the media blackout.

Let's look at this problem step by step:

1) **We must remove the chip from our collective shoulder.**

## The Libertarian Volunteer

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*The Libertarian Volunteer* is a publication of the Libertarian Party, and provides news, political resources, and strategic suggestions for Libertarian volunteers. Permission is granted to reprint articles if credit is given to the author, *The Libertarian Volunteer*, and the Libertarian Party. Letters, comments, articles, and suggestions are welcome! **Editor:** Bill Winter

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It's obvious we feel sorry for ourselves. "Why won't they cover us?" we whine. "It's so unfair," we whimper.

This looks ugly. We appear to lack the courage of our convictions. Better to appear convinced (and to convince ourselves) that we can do the job without their coverage.

Maybe we've spent too much time wondering when-whether-and-how the media will do our job for us, and too little time doing outreach.

By doing our job we take the first step toward gaining their help. To be worthy of coverage we must look worthy. Communication confidence, not complaint. Build a party and *become* newsworthy.

## 2) We must understand the journalist's business.

*It isn't politics.* It isn't building a new party or starting an ideological revolution. Yes, reporters are biased (like everyone), and yes, they cozy up to the powerful (human nature strikes again!), but we should grant that they try to do their jobs. If we aren't willing to respect them, why should they respect us?

Exchanging respect is the second step toward the more meaningful transaction we wish to conduct. Offer respect, receive respect. Make news, receive coverage.

Again, we must understand the journalist's role; it is to report the news. Our job, by contrast, is to make the news. If we do what we should, then we can supply journalists with product. If we don't do it, but claim that we do, we look foolish. We annoy.

**COROLLARY:** We do not own the media companies. We have no right to coverage, no right to promote our message at their expense. Again, we must give them something they want in order to get what we want.

Journalists desire what all human beings desire. Understanding and respect. They're just like us. They do the best they can. We must help them improve, not demand that they do so.

## 3) We must excel as news providers.

Talk's cheap. Every two-bit group in America claims it deserves coverage. How do reporters decide?

Look at it from their point of view. To take just one example, there were 63 candidates in the 1992 New Hampshire presidential primary. Did all deserve equal time? Is it to each according to his need, from each according to his ability? Do we have a Marxist view of media coverage, or should campaigns and candidates and parties make the front page the old fashioned way? You know — *earn* it?

We know we're the hottest thing since nuclear fusion, but journalists don't know it. How could they? Why should they? Ignorance *is* an excuse. Saying you're such-and-such doesn't mean you are. They're right to ask, "Where's your proof? Let's see you walk your talk. You claim you're America's fastest growing party. How about some numbers?"

## 4) We must understand what the news is.

We don't decide what news is, the reporters do. We don't tell them, they tell us. We have to get with their program, and/or provide damned good reasons why they should adjust to ours.

*Ideas are not news.* They may adorn the news, like frosting on the cake, but they are not the cake. Actions are news. Opinions are for the op-ed page, achievements for the front page.

Look at the coverage we get. It's mostly op-ed material. The

word "libertarian" appears 10 times in that section for every single mention it gets in the news page. This reflects the philosophical nature of our party.

Don't misunderstand me—this isn't bad, it just isn't sufficient.

Now let's look at the coverage we got in New Hampshire [in 1992], and notice the change. We converted a legislator [Finlay Rothhaus] and got coverage. Andre Marrou spoke to the House of Representatives and we got coverage. We won in Dixville Notch and got more coverage.

*Actions and tactics, not opinions.*

### Let's review and elaborate:

■ Journalists want respect and understanding. If we provide it, we're more likely to receive it.

■ Reporters, being people, like to help their friends. Make friends with journalists, and your news may make the news.

■ Personal relationships, not cold press releases.

■ Promote your political *tactics*, and your political *issues* will go along for the ride. ■

# How to get your letter into *Time* magazine

**W**ant *Time* magazine's 4.1 million readers to read your letter to the editor?

It won't be easy. The popular weekly news magazine receives 1,500 letters per week — but prints only 20 to 30.

But if you follow Betty Satterwhite's advice (she's *Time*'s Letters Editor), you have a much better chance of getting printed. Here are her tips (via *Issues & Policy* newsletter, a trade publication of the PR industry):

**Don't flatter:** Letters that say "I loved your story" almost never make the cut. She's not looking for valentines — she's scoping for "different viewpoints" that don't necessarily mirror those of *Time*, or for a "personal take" on an article.

**Keep it short:** Keep letters under about 100 words. "We do a lot of editing."

**Don't be boring:** "Missives from advocacy groups tend to be dull. Because they have an ax to grind, they tend to be

formulaic. The writer simply points out that his or her group is involved in a given issue."

**Use statistics or quotes:** Be aware, though, that they will fact-check all info in your letter. If they can't confirm your data, they'll call to ask for sources.

**Be quick:** Mail, fax, or e-mail your letter within ten days after *Time* hits the newsstands.

**Be accurate:** If you quote from the piece, make sure you do so correctly. "Take a second look at the story and make sure we said what you *think* we said."

**Be reachable:** Attach home and business phones in case they need to confirm facts or editing. Don't sign letters with only first initials — *Time* likes to use the full name of the author. ■



# Communist Lessons

> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

tarians utterly reject the politics of the Communist Party, and could argue it was Communist ideology that ensured its failure. True enough.

But it's also undeniable that organizational flaws — and self-inflicted wounds — drastically curtailed the Communists' ability to overcome their warped ideology and succeed politically in America.

Can the failures of the Communist Party be educational for Libertarians? Are there lessons we can learn from our ideological arch-enemies to help the LP grow into the cause that succeeds?

Perhaps. Here are some of the problems with the Communist Party that Guenter Lewy diagnosed in *The Cause That Failed*, and some parallels to the Libertarian Party:



**Communists:** "Internal bickering and factional fighting continued to be a hallmark of the Communist Party for much of its early history. Unable to establish any real rapport with the masses of American workers, the Party turned its best energies inward and exhausted itself in internal feuds and factional strife. The ideological differences involved in [these] struggles were often murky, and the relevance to the situation of the American Communist Party was hard to discern."



**Libertarians:** The Libertarian Party, at the state and national levels, has an embarrassingly long history of the same kind of petty squabbles — usually

about issues the public cares nothing about.

Since the founding of the LP in 1971, there have been several major splits and dramatic resignations — as well as innumerable ideological brawls, personality-driven flare-ups, and tactical feuds. The most recent examples: 1993's CLM vs. PLEDGE fight over the membership "certification" and platform, and 1994's wave of resignations over the Howard Stern debacle.

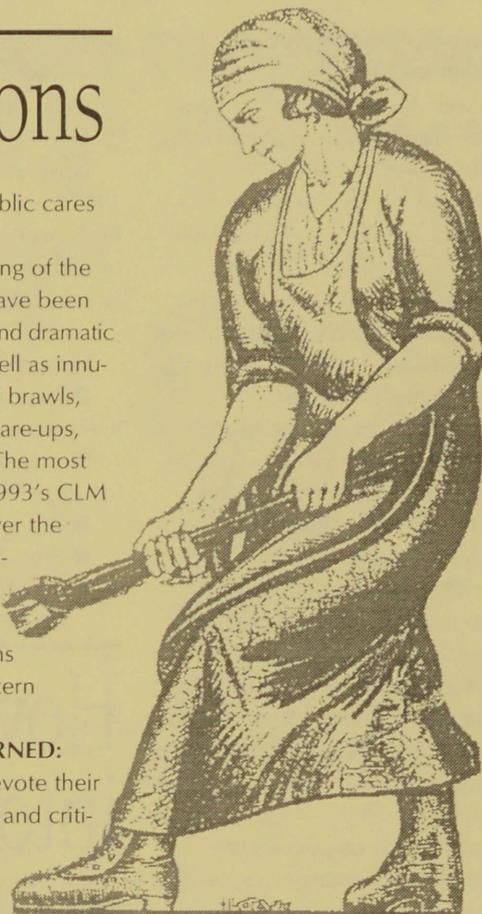
## ■ LESSON LEARNED:

Libertarians who devote their energies to fighting and criticizing each other — instead of searching for ways to work together — do more to hurt the Libertarian Party than any Big Government politician ever could. Every time a Libertarian turns his rhetorical guns on another Libertarian, Janet Reno, Jesse Helms, and Hillary Clinton cheer.

(The good news: In 1995, the LP seems to have largely cleaned up its act. The party at the national level is refreshingly harmonious. And at the state level, there are only a handful of hot-spots around the country where Libertarians are still busy whacking away at each other — instead of focusing on the R's & D's who continue to build the walls of statism ever higher.)



**Communists:** "The Party's mindless imitation of rhetoric developed in the Russian environment alienated many followers. There is the well-known



and Ayn Rand *übermensch* rhetoric. Also, try to resist the urge to promise a theoretical (and, frankly, unbelievable) Libertarian utopia; instead, stress the immediate, positive benefits of real-world Libertarian proposals.



**Communists:** "Another source of weakness was the foreign image projected by the Communist Party. The fact that a majority of the membership was composed of relatively recent immigrants still speaking their native tongue further reinforced the Party's foreign appearance."



**Libertarians:** Foreign members aren't an obstacle — but the fact that some Libertarians dress like immigrants from the Land Of Tie-Dye & Polyester is a continuing problem. *Image counts* — and Libertarians are still learning this lesson. Too many Libertarian public gatherings (and candidate forums) look like a summit conference of Grateful Dead fans, bikers, and computer programmers.



**Libertarians:** Be grateful for small favors: Libertarians rarely refer to voters as "peasants." However, they are not adverse to scorning Americans as "sheeple," prattling on endlessly about the bio-wonders of hemp, and muttering dark warnings about black helicopters and UN invasions.

**■ LESSON LEARNED:** Talk like an ordinary person. American "workers and peasants" tune out political language that doesn't sound normal — as the befuddled Comrade cited above eventually learned.

For LP members, this means avoiding pet Libertarian buzzwords, Von Mises references, "Smash the State!" bombast,



**Communists:** "The tension between the 'professional proletarians' [ordinary workers] and

the 'college boys' [the intellectuals] was a constant problem."



**Libertarians:** Here, Communists and Libertarians are mirror opposites. In the Communist Party, "proletarians" were considered the more *genuine* party members; intellectuals were suspect. (After all, intellectuals had never shoveled coal or worked on an assembly line. What did they know about suffering under the heartless capitalist lash?) In the LP, non-intellectuals are viewed with suspicion. After all, many of them haven't read *Anarchy, State and Utopia!* What do they know about the lofty philosophical underpinnings of liberty?

■ **LESSON LEARNED:** Will Rogers said: "God must have loved the common man; he made so darned many of them." Libertarians desperately need those common folks on our side — as voters and members. Don't scorn people because they support libertarian principles on an *emotional*, rather than *intellectual*, level.



**Communists:** "The Communist Party demanded strict discipline and complete adherence to all aspects of its program. Relatively few men and women were prepared to make this kind of total commitment."



**Libertarians:** For many Libertarians, 99% isn't enough — ideologically, it's everything or nothing. If they find a Libertarian who wavers on one issue, they will relentlessly zero on it, ignoring all areas where they agree.

The result? A pugnacious and off-putting devotion to absolute "purity," constant internal ideological debates, and a

hostile environment for newcomers who are still moving towards libertarianism.

■ **LESSON LEARNED:** Radio talk show host Gene Burns talks about the "Freedom Train." We agree on the direction we must travel, he says, but some of us may want to ride that train farther than others.

His advice: Let's concentrate on our *direction* and, for the time being, focus less on the exact distance. Communists rejected this metaphor — and were left standing on the platform as the train pulled away.

**Summary:** Libertarians ignore the lessons of the Communists at their own risk. More than 60 years ago, the



**"The Communists managed to make just about every bone-headed mistake a political organization can make."**

Communist Party set out to accomplish the exact same political goal the Libertarian Party aspires to today: Grow from third party to major party. The Communists failed.

They managed to make just about every bone-headed mistake a political organization can make — thus sparing our great-grandparents (and, eventually, us) from their poisonous, blood-soaked ideology.

The Libertarian Party can't afford to fail. As our nation creeps ever closer towards the kind of total statism that the Communists advocated 60 years ago, we may offer the last, best hope to restore the noble Jeffersonian principles of self-government to America.

Wouldn't it be the ultimate political irony if the mistakes and blunders of the Communist Party echoed down six decades of history . . . and helped provide the guidance we need to succeed? ■

## Details about Convention '96?

**Q** Are there any details available yet about the 1996 Presidential Nominating Convention?—R.S., California

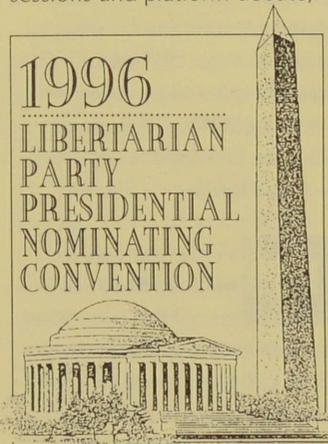
**A** Yes. The convention will be held Wednesday, July 3rd to Sunday, July 7th at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Washington, DC. Three days of continuous C-SPAN coverage is scheduled.

According to Convention organizer Don Ennsberger, early registration packages for the convention will go on sale as soon as September 1, 1995. "This special price will be lower than either the Salt Lake City ['93] or Chicago ['91] package," he said. "It will include entry to all events, speakers and sessions; three breakfasts with speakers; the Presidential banquet; transportation to the July 4th fireworks display; the

'Happy Birthday LP' party; and C-SPAN coverage tapes."

Scheduled events include:  
**July 3rd:** Platform and Credential Committee meetings; a candidate training seminar; the LP National Committee meeting; and the "Liberty In Words and Music" event at the Jefferson memorial.

**July 4th:** Convention Opening Ceremony; business sessions and platform debate;



**Ask the HEADQUARTERS**

speakers; a college workshop; and special reserved viewing at the 4th of July fireworks.

**July 5th:** Business sessions and platform debate; candidate training; panels and speakers; Presidential candidates debate; and the "Happy Birthday LP Party."

**July 6th:** Business sessions and presidential nominations; speakers and workshops; and the Presidential Banquet.

**July 7th:** Business sessions and election of LP officers; and LP National Committee meeting.

"During the summer we will be scheduling our speakers and announcing other events," said Ennsberger. ■

# Feedback: "Oddballs" and LP newsletters

## ■ Libertarian activists had strong opinions — pro and con — about the advice in the last issue of the *Libertarian Volunteer*

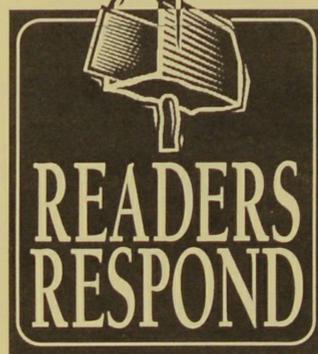
**T**wo articles in the last issue of the *Libertarian Volunteer* generated an unprecedented amount of reader response.

"I read the news today . . . oh boy," which discussed common mistakes in Libertarian newsletters, and "How do we alter the LP's 'oddball' image?," about the LP's public image, sparked more letters and e-mail than any previous articles. Overall, the response was about six or seven to one in support of the articles. Here is a sampling of what Libertarians around the country had to say:

 Many thanks for the tenor of the articles in the March/April issue of the *Volunteer*. I am sure that you are taking a great deal of "flack" for writing some of the things that you did, but they need to be said. Shedding the "oddball" image is critical to our future success.  
—J.B., North Carolina

 I was heartened by my first issue of the *Volunteer* and the clear message to the troops: Let's work consistently to close our credibility gap. Let's overcome the "hell no, we won't grow" attitude some activists tend to communicate. Let's put real Libertarians in office!  
—W.T., California

 I must take exception to your critique of [the] article on the Constitution Party. The fact that the national LP wants to to-



tally ignore the Constitution Party shouldn't be held against a state affiliate that wants to keep its members informed about significant political "news."  
—L.H., Colorado

 Great issue of the *Libertarian Volunteer*! It was refreshing to read such a strong disavowal of the Stern fiasco. If you receive flack on this, stand firm because you're right.  
—B.A., New York

 I just finished reading the April/May *Volunteer*, and I just wanted to say, "Well done!" I was very encouraged by the overall tone and your clear signal that the party is learning to be mainstream/respectable. And I was most heartened by the piece by Perry Willis, "How do we alter the LP's 'oddball' image?"  
—J.A., Florida

 I have just finished reading the latest issue of the *Libertarian Volunteer* and found some of your criticisms laughable. The first concerns the "conspiracy theories." I must tell you that

the literature that supports the conspiracy viewpoint is extremely large and scholarly. Your criticism of the use of the term "sheeple" was also humorous. "Sheeple" means apathetic voters who blindly follow leaders without examining the evidence.  
—J.D., Louisiana

 The remarks in the *Libertarian Volunteer* about keeping newsletters positive seem to me to be important and to the point.  
—R.C., Maine

 I read the March/April issue of the *Libertarian Volunteer*. The article "How do we alter the LP's 'oddball' image?" has me confused. First you condemn Howard Stern for "embarrassing the entire party on a national scale." I did not know I was supposed to be embarrassed by Howard Stern. In Philadelphia it was the number one news feature for over 24 hours — more exposure than the Libertarian Party had gotten in the previous 20 years combined.  
—J.H., New Jersey

 Kudos on another excellent issue of the *Libertarian Volunteer*. Especially your article on problems with (all too many) state newsletters. This is an issue I feel strongly about, and I agree with you wholeheartedly. The quality of our newsletters is at least as important as the quality of our candidates. It all gets down to image. Just as a bad

candidate can hurt us with the public, a bad newsletter can hurt us with our members.

—C.S., Idaho

 Thanks so much for the current edition of the *Libertarian Volunteer*. I am comforted to discover other LP members with similar thoughts regarding our newsletters and other "outreach" activities which verge on the counterproductive.

—D.H., Missouri

 I think it was unfair to publish a newsletter horror story file without giving people a chance to respond. I was especially surprised [that you criticized the newsletter which printed] "An Argument Against Political Action: Why You Shouldn't Vote." The thinking behind it was that the local Libertarians are secure enough to hear an opposing view. After all, the anarchist viewpoint and Libertarian viewpoint do overlap.

Please remove me from your mailing list.

—P.W., California

 You bent my ego a bit with your criticism of [my state's] newsletter. However, I think it's a credit to our party that [the National LP headquarters] offers such valuable advice to its troops.

—W.P., Louisiana

 Another strong issue. I hope the people on the "front lines" are taking to heart the things you are writing.

—S.E., Connecticut ■

# DC "coalition" conference of Leftist groups is enlightening for Libertarian participants

## Better outreach — yes; coalition — no, say Libertarians at Socialist conference

First it was the far Right, now it's the far Left.

Their common obsession: Cobbling together a coalition of third parties to take a run at the Republicans and Democrats in 1996.

Nineteen months after a conference of minor right-wing parties in 1994 in Kansas City, a gathering of small left-wing parties took place in June at George Washington University in Washington, DC.

Once again, Libertarian Party observers were present to monitor their progress — and to see if any common areas of agreement existed.

Virginia LP State Chair Rick Sincere and Maryland LP State Chair Jesse Markowitz were featured speakers at the "National Conference for Political Activists," which included representatives from the Democratic Socialists of America, the Green Party, the Commu-

nist Party and the New Party.

Although they departed before any potential "coalition" agreement was finalized, both Markowitz and Sincere said they came away from the conference with some interesting lessons:

■ **Libertarians need to do a better job of reaching Left-leaning voters.**

"It was clear from my brief participation that Libertarians need to work harder at finding the rhetoric that appeals to the Left," said Sincere, who spoke at a panel discussion entitled Building New Coalitions. "Too much of our literature and training is based on appealing to disaffected Republicans, with little to appeal to Socialists and Greens."

Markowitz agreed: "I had no material, literature, newsletters . . . which was appropriate to hand out to this group.

A brochure, white paper, something on environmental concerns would have been great. Also, emphasis on helping displaced workers released as part of a defense [reduction] will help blunt much of the opposition to our call to 'downsize the government.' "

■ **When presented properly, even the far Left agrees with some Libertarian positions and ideas.**

"Practical arguments worked — philosophical arguments failed," said Markowitz. "When we explained how minimum wage laws hurt the poor, there was some receptivity. When we talked about how people should be free to work for whatever wages they wanted to, the impression was one of trying to take advantage of poor people."

However, Markowitz continued: "Our presence there allowed some of them to realize that not all Libertarians are cold heartless capital pigs . . . They realized that we are merely opposed to government mandating everything. Several even commented to me that if they (Greens) do not run a national campaign for President, maybe they could support the Libertarian candidate."

"I talked about the background of the LP and emphasized our view that individuals should be empowered to control their own lives, which seemed to be well-received," said Sincere.

■ **Despite an unrelenting historical record of failure,**



**"Libertarians need to work harder at finding the rhetoric that appeals to the Left"**

**socialist ideas might still resonate with voters.**

"Their message could have great appeal to the mass of 'unchurched' voters — that is, voters with no party affiliation," predicted Sincere. "We are competing for the same group of undecideds and we must be aware of that."

■ **Any new socialist coalition probably wouldn't pose a danger to the LP.**

"One heartening aspect was that it appears that these people are miles behind us in organizing," said Sincere.

Whatever eventual "coalition" decision is reached by the socialist groups, National LP Chair Steve Dasbach repeated that the LP is not interested in being part of any third-party alliance.

"We have no interest in joining an 'alliance' third party under any other name. When you consider elections at all levels, most Americans who support new party candidates vote Libertarian," he said. ■

## Update

■ According to *LP News*, Rick Tompkins, former LP of Arizona State Chair, has officially announced his campaign for the LP presidential nomination. You can reach him at:

### **Rick Tompkins for President**

8129 North 35th Avenue, #2-262, Phoenix AZ 85051  
(602) 930-1268 ★ Fax: (602) 930-1739

■ The Harry Browne for President campaign has a new office:

### **Harry Browne for President**

1500 Adams Avenue, Suite 105  
Costa Mesa CA 92626  
Phone: (714) 437-7911 ★ Fax: (714) 432-1468

# Twelve steps to keep your LP volunteers from quitting in frustration, boredom, or overload

**Plagued by "here today, gone tomorrow" volunteers? You must focus on *their* needs, urges one volunteer expert**

"volunteer!" Those two words are guaranteed to bring a smile to any Libertarian Party leader. As a small, grassroots organization, the LP was built by — and is still largely powered by — the volunteer spirit of its members.

But the words "I volunteer" merely begin the process. After that first rush of enthusiasm dissipates, LP leaders notice that many volunteers stop volunteering—or simply stop showing up for LP events.

How can we change that?

According to Dr. Peter M. Sandman, a professor at Rutgers University, the secret is to focus on the needs of the *volunteers*.

In the late 1980's, Dr. Sandman was a volunteer coordinator for the Nuclear Freeze movement, and wrote an article entitled, "Holding Your Volunteers." His advice applies not just to the Freeze movement, but to any group that relies on volunteer support.

Sandman wrote: "I want to list for you the 12 most common reasons why volunteers quit their organizations — or, more often, simply disappear. Most of the 12 can be dealt with — if we are paying attention to organizational maintenance. None of the 12 reasons for quitting, by the way, is people changing their minds about the issues. Note also that none of the 12 is 'not enough time.' That's what many former volunteers will *tell* you if you ask why

they left, but it's a cover story. Their day didn't get shorter, after all; they just decided to reallocate the part of it that used to go to [you]."

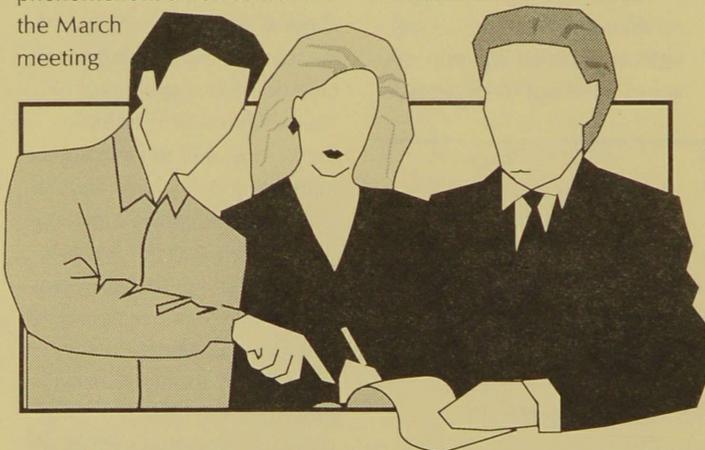
Instead, noted Sandman, volunteers leave because the volunteer work "no longer satisfies their own needs. Holding volunteers, in other words, is more a matter of maintaining their *joy* than of maintaining their *conviction*."

Here are Dr. Sandman's 12 reasons (slightly edited). Do any of them mirror the difficulties that your Libertarian Party organization may be having with *your* volunteers?

**1. BURN OUT.** People often leave organizations when they are asked to do too much too fast. We are all familiar with the phenomenon: a newcomer at the March meeting

speaks up at the April meeting, is appointed committee chair at the May meeting, and doesn't show for the June meeting. To avoid burn out, we should try to offer volunteers a series of slowly increasing responsibilities.

**2. COOL OUT.** The opposite of asking people to do too much too fast is not asking them to do anything at all. In many groups this is the number one reason for leaving: no one invited me to the workshop, no one asked me to help with the [neighborhood] canvass, no one told me they needed me. The solution to cool out is straight-forward. Don't be diffident about asking, and don't lose track of people. Be especially careful to touch base with volunteers who missed



**"Consciously reach out to newcomers. In larger groups, you can even institutionalize a buddy system."**

the last meeting, so the lack of a role doesn't become a reason to miss the next one as well.

**3. KEEP OUT.** We oldtimers inevitably gravitate to each other at gatherings, especially when we've been through tough times together, or when we have work to transact and gossip to transmit. This leaves newcomers sitting painfully alone, watching the inner circle and pondering the invisible "Keep Out" signs. You can't stop the formation of cliques, and you can't stop wanting time with your friends. But you can consciously reach out to newcomers. In larger groups you can even institutionalize a buddy system. Pair each newcomer with another newcomer to compare notes with, and with an oldtimer to go to for basic information.

**4. PULL OUT.** Newcomers may become oldtimers, but they don't want to feel that they must. That is, people are more likely to participate when the extent of their participation is safely under their control. Organizational commitments are like personal commitments in this way: no one likes to feel trapped, and so the sense that a person or group is clutching desperately provokes a strong impulse to escape while there's still time. Part of the solution is to project desire but not desperation. The rest of it is to let the volunteer control the commitment; when a volunteer sets explicit limits, respect them.

**5. CAN'T WIN.** Nothing scares volunteers away faster than the sense of futility—either the feeling that the work is doomed to defeat or the feeling that the goals are unclear, that defeat and victory hardly apply. To forestall this “can’t win” feeling, try to build instead a sense of efficacy, a sense that the goals are worth achieving, that the group can achieve them, and that the volunteer is contributing significantly to their achievement. This means defining explicit short-term objectives as well as the long-term vision, and it means making a fuss each time an objective is achieved.

**6. CAN'T LOSE.** As many front-running political candidates have learned to their dismay, working for a sure thing strikes most people as just as pointless as working for a futile longshot. For purposes of volunteer morale, the ideal probability of success is about 40%: we’re a little behind but with your help we’re going to pull into the lead. Be especially alert for the anticlimax that follows a victory. You need to celebrate the success, of course, but be sure to connect it in advance to the next step and the step after that, so the pause to celebrate is always followed by a reason to keep working.

**7. NO GROWTH.** Alienated labor is bad enough when you’re paid for it; it’s intolerable when you’re not. Volunteer work should be interesting; it should offer variety, change, a chance for personal growth. There is boring work to be done, of course. But spread it around (officers too); make it fun where you can; and alternate it with more interesting work, volunteer training, and other plums. Note, however,

**THE CRUCIAL VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR**

**W**ant to make sure your group’s work gets done? Find a Volunteer Coordinator, suggests the Sierra Club. The environmental group writes: “The cornerstone of an effective system [of volunteer action] is the Volunteer Coordinator. The Coordinator’s role is simple and essential. Working with your group’s leaders, the Coordinator identifies tasks to be done by volunteers, recruits a pool of volunteers, and matches the volunteers’ skills, time, and interest to the tasks.

“Choose your Volunteer Coordinator carefully. You should look for someone who is patient, friendly, enthusiastic, and an aggressive recruiter. Before you start recruiting, develop a job description, and make sure your prospective Coordinator has the time and skills necessary. This person is *crucial* to your success.”

that boredom is in the eye of the beholder. Some of your volunteers may prefer an envelope-stuffing party to the tension of a congressional lobbying visit. But most do not; though they may not complain (until they quit), they expect a chance to grow. Look around for volunteers who may be in a no-growth rut, and offer them a spicy new challenge.

**8. NO APPRECIATION.** Volunteers don’t just enjoy being appreciated. They *need* it and they *deserve* it. At a minimum, appreciating volunteers has three components. The most obvious is “thank you”: We are grateful for what you have done. But just as important—and far more often neglected—is “please”: We are not taking for granted that you will do more. And perhaps the most crucial aspect of appreciation is meticulous attention to logistics: returning phone calls, answering notes, passing along information, scheduling meetings at times the volunteer can make. Organizations that really know how to appreciate volunteers—the American Cancer Society comes to mind—use everything from newsletters

to awards banquets to endless desktop pen sets to make the point.

**9. EXTERNAL OPPOSITION.** If family and friends are opposed to a volunteer’s volunteering, odds are you’ll eventually lose that volunteer. The obvious solution is to avoid external opposition in the first place. Family and friends are in a real sense “contributing” some of their time with the volunteer; find ways and occasions to thank them. Better still, lessen the contribution by involving them directly. Even family members who do not want to volunteer themselves may still want to meet the people and get a sense of what goes on during all those [volunteer] hours.

**10. EXTERNAL CONFLICT.** Personality conflicts, tensions, and even quarrels may be acceptable at home or at a pay-

ing job, but *not* at a volunteer job—especially not a political one. Part of the problem is imagining that people who share political values always like each other. Part of the solution is accepting that we may *not* like each other. Once the conflict is acknowledged, the rest of the solution depends on the style of your group. Some groups mediate the battle, some encourage the battlers to duke it out, some urge them to make up, and some reorganize the work so they won’t have to deal with each other so much.

**11. POLICY DISPUTES.** Sometimes—though less often than we imagine—the conflict is genuinely over policies rather than personalities. A consensus decision-making process will help here. Though it takes forever, it leads to better decisions, and unlike voting, it doesn’t produce disgruntled minorities. Even if your group decides things by vote, the crucial need is to listen to the losing side. Volunteers who quit over a policy disagreement almost always report that the majority didn’t understand their position. If you can summarize the minority viewpoint respectfully, the minority will usually accept the decision.

**12. NOT ENOUGH FUN.** Yes, of course you’re engaged in serious work. But we mere humans need parties and picnics and softball teams. “If I can’t dance, I don’t want to be part of your revolution.” ■

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## Quote

■ From **Jim McClarin**, campaign strategist for the Libertarian Party of New Hampshire: “Our most desperate need in the next two years is membership growth, dues-paying members. You can’t fire a cannonball from a rowboat.”

# The HQ's move to the Watergate Building

> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

new membership and renewal forms will reach us promptly. And please ask your newsletter editor to update their database with our new address, so we can receive your newsletter at our new location.)

**Q Why "Libertarian National Committee"? I thought we were the Libertarian Party.**

We are. But "Libertarian National Committee, Inc." is our official business name, since we incorporated earlier in 1995. Of course, any mail sent to "The Libertarian Party" will still reach us.

**Q What will happen to mail sent to your old address?**

Our mail will be forwarded from the old Pennsylvania Avenue address for at least a year. So, any mail sent to the old address *will* reach us—although it may take a few extra days.

**Q What will happen to your old phone number and fax number?**

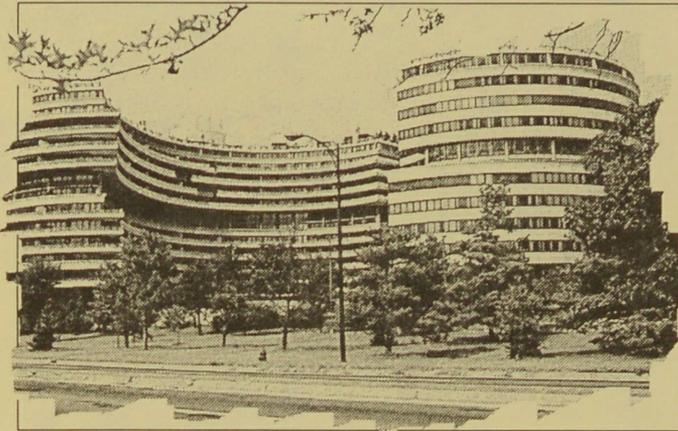
If you call the old phone number, you'll get a recorded message giving our new number. If you send a fax to the old fax number, it will be automatically routed to our new fax number for the next six months. (After that, the old fax number will be disconnected.)

**Q How does the move affect your toll-free 800#?**

It doesn't. It remains the same: (800) 682-1776.

**Q What about your e-mail address?**

No change. The party's Internet address remains:



■ The Libertarian Party's national headquarters is now located in one of Washington DC's most prestigious addresses — the Watergate Office Building. Here's how the move will affect our activists and affiliate parties.

"lphq@digex.net". Personal e-mail addresses for HQ staff remain the same.

**Q What are you going to do with all the National LP literature with the old address?**

We will continue to use it. We're gradually running down our supplies of material with the old address, and, as it runs out, we'll get it reprinted with the new address. (This includes brochures, platforms, *Liberty Today*, bumperstickers, Project Healthy Choice packages, Operation Safe Streets packages, and so on.)

In the meantime, you can keep distributing all our literature, since all mail sent to our old address will be forwarded to us. (We have tens of thousands of pieces of literature in circulation, so we're doing everything we can to make sure it will continue to reach us.)

**Q Are you going to have a "close-out" sale to get rid of any of your old literature?**

Probably — but only for

those brochures we have in over-abundant quantities. Any special discount prices will be advertised in future issues of *LP News*.

**Q What about old Business Reply Envelopes [BREs]?**

Any old National LP BREs are still usable. Again, we're

running down our current inventory. We have in stock a number of pre-stuffed packages (such as prospect info packages, fundraising letters, and membership renewal packages) with the old return envelopes. So, don't be surprised if you see our old BREs in circulation for another six months or so.

**Q Does this move affect the Bulk Rate or BRE permits (or permit numbers) that many of the state parties use?**

No. They are unchanged.

**Q What are your office hours at the new HQ?**

Same as at the old location. We're open from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm EST, Monday to Friday.

**Q Does this move affect LP News at all?**

No. The address and phone number for *LP News* remains unchanged. (Our *LP News* offices are located in Georgia.)

## Tidbits

■ The fledgling political party touted by some as the Libertarian Party's major political competitor for the "freedom vote" in 1996 (and beyond) may already be out of business.

The Constitution Party is broke and in turmoil, according to William Cooper, the right-wing/conspiracy radio talk-show host who was appointed head of the party in late 1994.

In a radio broadcast last month, Cooper reported that the party's founder, Hollywood mogul Aaron Russo, had "pulled out" of the Constitution Party and "taken all his money with him." Cooper also reported there was a "purge" in the party and some kind of an embezzlement scandal.

Russo started the Constitution Party in 1994. Although his "less government/more freedom" political positions strongly echoed the LP platform, the flamboyant film producer frequently criticized the Libertarian Party for not being politically "effective." Despite this, however, Russo had not managed to get his party on the ballot in even a single state by mid-1995.

**Q Am I going to receive a new LP membership card with the new address?**

No. Next January we will mail the 1996 membership cards, and those cards will include the new address. In the meantime, new members joining the party will continue to get cards with the old address until our supplies are used up.

**Q When will you have the Open House for the new headquarters?**

We were planning it for September, but it looks now like it might get pushed back to early October. We wanted to give ourselves plenty of time to get settled, to get the office functioning completely back to normal, and to plan the event. We'll send out invitations, well in advance, to everyone who contributed to the move. (We'll also be sending out invitations to all State Chairs, party VIPs, and National Committee members.)

**Q Can I stop by the new office to visit?**

Sure, we'd be delighted to see you. We only ask that you remember that you keep us pretty busy, so we can't spend as much time with all our visitors as we'd like!

**Q Where is the office physically located in the Watergate Building?**

That's a legitimate question, since the Watergate is a sprawling structure, covering most of a city block, and including offices, apartments, shops, restaurants, and a hotel.

Here's how to find us: We are located directly across from a Howard Johnson's hotel on Virginia Avenue, directly under the Riggs Bank. There's a sign outside our front entrance that says 'WATERGATE OFFICE

BUILDING." Take the elevator down to B1. (We are at semi-ground level, with office windows that look up to street level.)

To get here via Metro, take the Orange or Blue line to the Foggy Bottom/GWU stop, and walk down New Hampshire Avenue. We're a six to seven minute walk from the Metro.

If coming by car, parking is

limited, but is sometimes available at metered spaces on the street, or in the underground parking garages at the Watergate or the nearby Kennedy Center. (Parking costs more than at the old office, but is safer.)

**Q One final question: How does the staff like the new office?**

We love it! It's clean, pro-

fessional, and respectable. It's also more efficiently laid out than the old office, with more usable space.

It is also, as we promised, the kind of credible and professional office that we can confidently invite the media to visit. In fact, we've already had our first visit from a journalist — a TV documentary producer on July 10th. ■

## Available for state & local parties: The 3rd Project Times|Two package

**T**he third Project Times|Two membership-building package — the "Each One/Reach One Project" — is now available for local and county LP groups.

"This project uses your current membership to 'reach out' to new prospects," said LP Director of Communications Bill Winter. "It is an ideal project for parties with limited resources. It uses tools you (probably) already have — a newsletter, monthly meetings, members, prospect information packages — and leverages them into membership growth."

State and local parties can request free copies of this package — or can be placed on the regular Project Times|Two mailing list — by contacting Winter at (202) 333-0008, or via CompuServe at 73163,3063.

Project Times|Two is a series of 'how-to' membership growth packages produced by the National HQ.

Winter also announced the results of a recent Project Times|Two survey, in which 33 states responded to a series of questions about prospects, membership, and outreach.

### Times|Two Survey Results

- 30 states have a paid LP membership; 3 states do not.
- Cost of state party's yearly dues: \$10: 6 states ★ \$15: 10 states ★ \$20: 4 states: \$25: 9 states ★ \$35-\$50: 1 state.
- 16 states require members to sign the "initiation of force" membership statement. 16 states do not.
- 26 states offer combined state/National membership as an option. Three states *only* offer combined state/National membership. Four states do *not* offer combined membership.
- Seven states have done membership solicitation mailings to registered Libertarians. The success rate for these mailings was: Unknown: 4 states ★ "Poor:" 3 states ★ 1%: 1 state ★ 3-5%: 1 state.
- 25 states currently have a prospect information package. Five states do not.
- The most successful methods of getting new prospect names are: **Word of mouth:** 16 states ★ **fairs and rallies:** 11 states ★ **#800 number:** 8 states ★ **National HQ:** 7 states ★ **campaign and publicity rallies:** 5 states ★ **OPH Booths:** 5 states ★ **advertising:** 4 states ★ **media appearances:** 2 states. Other responses included letter-to-the-editor campaigns, radio, college literature table, press releases, registration lists and voter pamphlets.
- Prospect "conversation" rates were described as: Unknown: 6 states ★ "Poor:" 1 state ★ 1% to 2%: 4 states ★ 3% to 5%: 6 states ★ 4% to 6%: 1 state ★ 10% to 15%: 9 states ★ 25%: 1 state ★ 60%: 1 state.
- 23 states send membership renewal notices on a regular basis. Six states do not and 3 states plan to start doing so.

(Note: Totals do not always add up to 33 because some states did not respond to some questions)

# Notices

■ **Photos Needed:** The National HQ is working on a new version of the three-color introductory brochure (printed on "slick" paper), which focuses on LP political action. Needed: Good black and white photographs of state and local LP candidates in action — at press conferences, meeting voters, giving speeches, and so on. (All photographs will be returned.) Please mail to: Libertarian Party, Attn: Bill Winter, 2600 Virginia Avenue, NW, Suite 100, Washington DC 20037. Or call (202) 333-0008 for more details.

■ **Essays Wanted:** The editor of *Iridescence* — described as

a "free thought" newsletter, distributed for free in Maryland — is looking for articles and essays from a Libertarian perspective. Mail to: Brian Gordon, P.O. Box 292, Davidson, MD 21035.

■ **Flags & Banners:** Need a banner for your LP group? CJ Flag & Banner, Inc. in Lindenhurst, NY offers "custom flags and banners" in various colors and sizes on nylon, felt, rayon, satin, or canvas. Call (800) 832-3580 for information and price quotes.

■ **1995 Candidates?** Ron Crickenberger, Chair of the LP Campaign Committee, is compiling a list of 1995 LP candidates. Please send your state's list of candidates as soon as possible to: Ron Crickenberger, 5143 Rosestone Drive, Lilburn

GA 30247. He also has money available for winnable races. For information about funding criteria, or to apply, call: (404) 717-9287.

■ **Press releases:** Want to receive National LP press releases the day they are issued? We'll be happy to add you to our e-mail distribution list. Just send your request (with your full name and e-mail address) to: 73163,3063 (at CompuServe). State and local LP groups can also be added to our regular fax release list. Call Bill Winter at (202) 333-0008 for details.

■ **Presidential Video:** A videotape entitled "The Evening With the Presidents" is available for sale, with the proceeds going to Project Flex, a libertarian PAC "dedicated to promoting the growth of the LP." The one-

hour video features five of the six past LP presidential candidates — John Hospers ('72), Ed Clark ('80), David Bergland ('84), Ron Paul ('88), and Andre Marrou ('92) — and was recorded in October 1994 in California. Moderator: Richard Boddie.

California LP Chair Gail Lightfoot described the video as "Very well done, very professional, excellent content."

A Project Flex spokesman said, "One of the best ways to promote the LP is to get this video aired on every public access station in America."

**Cost:** \$24.95 for the VHS format; \$39.95 for larger broadcast format. Add \$3.00 for shipping and handling.

Send orders to (and make checks payable to): Project Flex, 18627 Brookhurst Street, #114, Fountain Valley, CA 92708. Or call: (714) 454-9098.

## The Libertarian Volunteer

Libertarian National Committee, Inc.  
2600 Virginia Avenue, NW, Suite 100  
Washington, DC 20037

Can We Learn From the Left?

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