
Libertarian Strategy Gazette

Libertarian Strategy Gazette believes that we should try to learn from the past. Sometimes, when we look at the past, we realize that the more things change, the more things remain the same. Sometimes we look and we see that 20 years after the fact the world has not changed, and many of the same points are being discussed.

In 1981, Kent Guida ran for National Chair of the Libertarian Party. Here are his actual proposals for what the party should do, taken from his open letter to delegates to the forthcoming Libertarian National Convention.

Libertarian Strategy Proposals

(continued from the previous issue)

5. They are planning to sponsor two statewide initiative petitions, one to abolish the state Milk Price Control Board, the other to change the state's restrictive liquor licensing law. These initiatives will build credibility for the party and will also give activists the opportunity to attract support from constituencies who would be benefited by the proposed law changes.

Members of the Montana Party believe it's important to create opportunities for action such as these during non-election years, and they believe that multiple activities are beneficial to attract a wide range of activists. This model can be considered by any state or local party when deciding the kinds of activities needed to keep their organization going and growing.

General Note: Running a Successful Meeting

Once you've enticed a number of Libertarians, through your newsletter or phone calls, to your meeting, it's obviously of critical importance that the meeting be enjoyable and productive, so that your attendees will want to come back and bring their friends.

(The reference here is not to meetings which are exclusively for party business, but rather those set up to keep the party going. In most local party organizations, business meetings would be held quarterly at most, and the routine business taken care of by an executive committee.)

Scheduled meetings need not be of the full-blown dinner type, but instead can be gatherings to hear an interesting speaker or discussion. It should be noted, though, that most people are perfectly happy to pay 12 or 15 dollars for a dinner event if they think that they're getting their money's worth. In either case, certain basic rules apply for a successful meeting:

1. Have a fixed time schedule, announced ahead of time, and stick to it as closely as possible. Example: cocktails at 6:30, dinner at 7:15, announcements and introduction at 8:00, main speaker at 8:15, Q and A and wrap-up at 9:00, event concludes at 9:30.
2. Tell the speaker how much time he or she has, and suggest a topic if necessary.
3. Select topics and speakers on the basis of the widest possible interest in the group. Ask yourself, if a stranger walked in off the street

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Editorial

If you ask for ideas for improving the party, that is separate and distinct from strategic planning.

There are many good ideas out there for improving the way we do things. All that will not much matter without a strategy behind it that has the best chance of success.

Strategy deals with what how we best utilize our resources and capitalize on the current political climate and conditions to make our party effective and advance our mission.

For example, what do we expect to accomplish for our party-building efforts by running a presidential candidate? Are we only trying to effect the short-term outcome of any given election? Are we using that campaign to advance the campaigns of local candidates? Are we using it to increase membership? The answers to these questions and perhaps others determine who best can fill that candidacy and how the campaign ought to be run and to what degree we encourage members to allocate their resources to it.

What is the purpose of having a national staff, office, and even national membership? Are we making our states weaker by encouraging them to be dependent on a central office? The role of state and national organizations must be clearly defined in a strategic plan.

Are we trying to get Libertarians elected to office and involved in government, or are we trying to convert voters to become libertarian in their thinking, or some combination of the two? Can we do both effectively at the same time at this point in our development? Is it feasible? Do we do that through newsletters, or is one-on-one communication more effective?

What is our unique role in the broader libertarian movement? How should we be partnering with other libertarian organizations to make our work more effective?

These are the big questions that must be addressed in a strategic planning discussion, not saving money on postage and how best to utilize your database.

....Lois Kaneshiki

Short Ideas

A Libertarian Shadow Government

It would be very educational to "the public" and should generate significant publicity for the LP if the LP were to implement a "shadow government", a la the ones that opposition parties in Britain have been known to establish, such that for each *salient* government action, order or piece of legislation passed, the shadow government would register the version of it that libertarians would have executed (or would have withheld from execution, as the case would doubtless often be).

(Continued from page 1) [Short Ideas]

These could then be submitted for public scrutiny through press releases and via a navigable section of the LP website.

There should be no shortage of activists who would be willing to participate in an exercise so poised to contribute significantly to the cause of libertarian outreach and public notice.

At the very least, such a rich source of comparative politics would no doubt find its way into the curriculum of many university political science departments.

This may, in fact, preferentially overlap what should be a major target audience for libertarian messages, namely, future legislators and other wielders of influence

...Derek Meador
meador@forgecorp.com

A By-Laws Change

My pet idea involves a structural (i.e. bylaws) change to help avoid or mitigate the negative effects of disputes within affiliates. In the past, such disputes have involved:

1. Individual LP members who believe that the affiliate in the state where they reside has acted contrary to Libertarian principles, has dealt with the member unfairly (including, but not limited to, wrongful expulsion from the affiliate), has violated the national by-laws or has committed some other behavior worthy of punishment. These individuals have sporadically "appealed" to the LNC for help in redressing their grievances and suggested a wide range of remedies including, in extreme cases, disaffiliation. Generally speaking, the LNC has ignored such appeals and done nothing.

2. Affiliates who believe that the conduct of an individual LP member is so inappropriate that the member should be disciplined or expelled from either or both the state affiliate and the LP. The affiliates have sporadically "appealed" to the LNC for help in dealing with such individuals. Generally speaking, these requests have been ignored.

3. Groups within a state who have urged that because of state law or some other justification the recognized affiliate should be disaffiliated and their group recognized instead. This circumstance is rare, but extremely disruptive and potentially harmful both on a national and local scale. In the one known instance where the LNC came to grips with this issue the outcome was less than satisfying.

I believe that the current method of dealing with these situations inadvertently encourages wasteful, expensive and ultimately destructive lawsuits. I could provide ample detail to support that statement should it prove controversial. Simply put, the government courts are not the best place for such matters to be resolved. As Libertarians, we should be embracing private dispute resolution systems wherever possible and appropriate. I think our own internal disputes are a good place to start.

Therefore, I propose that we seriously consider an LP bylaws change which will ensure that the kind of disputes outlined above will, to the fullest extent possible, be arbitrated before the LP Judicial Committee (or some other newly created group). I am not sure if this consideration should begin under the rubric of the "strategic planning" effort. I leave that for the strategic planners to decide, but your invitation prompted me to put the issue on the table to see what others think about it.

John Buttrick

John Buttrick is a former member of the Libertarian National Com-

Other Ideas for PACs

Open Seat PAC - support Libertarian candidates that are running for office without an incumbent at the local level. Only candidates that can demonstrate a firm campaign is in place without the PAC's support would receive our support. The idea is to put them over the top.

Libertarian Women's PAC - (remember Early Money is Like Yeast) Provide seed money to female Libertarian candidates. Idea behind this is that 1.) it encourages more female Libertarians to run for office (the first \$200 you need to do a fundraising mailing and even get started is on us) and 2.)

more female Libertarians running means we can increase support among female electors and look more diverse.

Libertarian Education PAC - Support Libertarian candidates for school board. Many school board seats are nonpartisan so we have an increased chance to win, but it also serves as a platform to implement our, well, platform on education. Also provides a forum for expressing fixes and ways of persuading other board members to accept libertarian ideas.

I am a Libertarian in appointed public office (the youngest Libertarian in public office, for the record) and plan on being elected this June to the local, non-partisan school board. So I'm definitely up for this re-election PAC. I think the idea should be that money is taken out and given to a candidate in an almost unofficial loan format. We ask (don't require) that they help organize fundraisers to replace it. Libertarians in public office make good speakers for fundraisers and good organizers.

I must say that I'm surprised you're starting a congressional PAC. Isn't that not exactly a grassroots campaign (though I guess a congressional candidate could wage a grassroots campaign, office at that level is won by big money and big media.

...Jason Miller

Get Active on Other-Party Email Lists

Libertarians need to get on the Republican and Democratic email lists and get revenge for them sending us [a notorious Republican-baiter on LPUS list]. All you Libertarians who love to argue—go get on Republican and Democratic lists and give them hell for all their lies. And when they stage "public" meetings, be sure and go there too.

...Mark Selzer

Southern Vice Chair California LP.

Libertarian Mainstream Caucus Special Announcement

Web: <http://users.ez2.net/freedom/lmc.htm>

E-mail: lmc@ez2.net

This past November, the James Dan for Nevada State Assembly candidacy demonstrated what could be accomplished when Libertarians run serious, professional campaigns with the intent to WIN. <http://www.lp.org/lpnews/0012/campaign2000.html>

Today, I received an e-mail from Chris Azzaro, James Dan's campaign manager, with some exciting news that I

would like to share. Excerpted below is a portion of this e-mail:

"As you know, I was the campaign manager for James Dan's race for State Assembly and former Mayor Art Olivier's winning primary campaign for VP. I've also been the state director of the Libertarian Party of Nevada for the past two years.

I've stepped down as state director to start a new Libertarian PAC called the "Libertarian Victory Fund." The PAC is designed to target, train, and support local Libertarian candidates around the country who are running in winnable races. I believe that if we were to run campaigns as professional as the James Dan campaign all over the country, we would have a lot more success electing Libertarians and growing the party."

This is certainly good news! I encourage all LMC members to contact Chris and offer your help in this endeavor. These are exactly the types of building blocks we need as a party in order to grow and succeed. It going to be tough, but we must begin somewhere.

To contact Chris Azzaro, you can e-mail him at: NVdirector@aol.com or by the following:

Libertarian Victory Fund
1306 West Craig Rd, #158
North Las Vegas, NV 89032
Phone: 702-657-6573

Yours for a victorious Libertarian Party,
....Gene Trosper

Local Activism That Worked Guerrilla Warfare in Virginia

The Loudoun County, Virginia, Libertarian Party has recently waged a successful campaign of guerrilla warfare against the political establishment in the state of Virginia. I would like to share with you that experience because I believe it serves as a model for the future success of advancing liberty and libertarianism, not just in the Libertarian Party but in the libertarian movement as well.

The issue involved the Commonwealth of Virginia's much-hated tax on currently owned automobiles. A couple of years ago, the governor and legislature enacted a gradual repeal of the tax. But this year, the legislature is balking and is trying to suspend the scheduled repeal of the tax, arguing that the oncoming recession is going to hurt the state government with reduced tax revenues.

Time was of the essence because the legislative session was about to run out. The Loudoun County LP, led by a young man named Jason Willency and the county chairman, Paul Minor, went into action with a guerrilla campaign that would have made Virginian John Mosby of Civil War fame proud. Through their leadership, the Loudoun LP initiated a "Keep Your Word" campaign that called on the governor and legislature to keep their word and proceed on schedule with the repeal of the car tax.

Step one in the campaign was an email to all Loudoun LP members that included: (1) A request that they send letters to the editors of the local newspapers asking the governor and the legislature to "keep their word"; (2) A model letter, but a request that they rewrite it in their own words. Members were reminded to include after their name "Member, Loudoun County LP (www.lploudoun.org)"; (3) The email links to each of the newspapers, to make it easy to send the letters; (4) A reminder to send the letters to the

editor separately rather than as a group email, on the assumption that a newspaper would be more likely to publish it if it doesn't know that another newspaper has it also.

Step 2 was a demonstration at the courthouse in downtown Leesburg, Virginia, which was organized and coordinated by Willency. Emails were sent to Loudoun LP members asking them to participate in the demonstration. Willency sent out a press release announcing the demonstration to all of the local media.

On the appointed day, seven Loudoun LP members showed up, along with several members of the local press. Willency brought with him the "Keep Your Word" protest signs (which he himself created) that had "Loudoun LP" on the back of them. Many people driving by honked their horns and gave us "thumbs up."

Step 3 was a "Keep Your Word" resolution of the Loudoun County LP that was signed by Minor and sent to the governor and to our local elected representatives and to the governor.

The results of the campaign are listed below in an email from Willency to Loudoun LP members.

This type of strategy obviously requires swift "hit-and-run" action. The advantage of it is that it enables a political party or a libertarian organization with limited resources to raise its profile in the community in a positive way and possibly even sway the outcome of a public-policy debate -- and at minimal cost. I am convinced that this type of guerrilla warfare is the political strategy that is most likely to bring prestige and success to the Libertarian Party and the libertarian movement in the future.

If you would like more information about the Loudoun County Libertarian Party's "Keep Your Word" guerrilla campaign, you can contact Willency at: jawillency@mindspring.com

...Jacob G. Hornberger

The Results of the Loudoun Libertarian Party's "Keep Your Word" Campaign

1. One resolution adopted by LPLC and sent to local media and to Governor Gilmore.
2. Nine published letters to the editor, including Loudoun County Sunday insert in the Washington Post. Would have been higher had one paper not had problems with its e-mail system.
3. Seven Libertarians and one canine at our Monday demonstration in downtown Leesburg.
4. One TV news report near the top of Loudoun Channel 3 newscast.
5. Other news accounts in local media, including WAGE Radio, Leesburg Today and Loudoun Times-Mirror.
6. E-mails from Delegate Black and Supervisor Delgaudio lauding our efforts and reaffirming their support for the scheduled repeal of car tax.
7. Partial retreat by Senator Mims on his previous vote to extend the car tax rebate from 47.5 percent to 50 percent this year. Now he is on record for a 55 percent rebate, and insisted that he opposes budget bill on grounds of "insufficient car tax relief." Keep the heat on folks!!!
8. Increase in attendance at Loudoun LP monthly meeting from 6 to 15.
9. Total cost: \$36 for materials used to make signs for demon-

and heard this speaker, would the topic make sense, or would it sound weird and obscure?

4. Don't hesitate to import speakers from out of town, and pay all reasonable costs. The novelty of an out-of-town speaker will attract a bigger audience.

5. Select a Master of Ceremonies for the event whose responsibility it is to make the announcements, introduce the speaker, keep things moving on time, and wrap everything up at the end.

Summary and Conclusions

"Keeping It Going" has required the application of much of the same points covered in "Party Development." The most important point, as with getting an organization started, has been:

* People have been asked to stay involved: asked to attend meetings, asked to be the Master of Ceremonies or to be the featured speaker, asked to help produce the newsletter or to organize work parties, asked to become candidates. And not only have the "old reliables" been asked but everyone, whether they've been known for very long or not.

Other important points in successfully "keeping it going" have been:

* To have a regular internal communications device, usually a newsletter, which lets people know what's going on.

* To vary and diversify the activities so that the broadest possible range of libertarians will be attracted to participate. Even the people who have taken visible roles are varied so that people don't start dreading "the same old faces" doing everything.

* To take advantage of election campaigns, especially local elections occurring in odd-numbered years. If running candidates has been inappropriate, to try sponsoring an initiative petition or organizing to defeat a proposed tax increase, etc.

KEY POINTS ON "KEEPING IT GOING"

1. Meetings and events should be held regularly and should combine social aspects with political education or activity.

2. Notice of events should be mailed to the entire mailing list in the area, preferably in a regular newsletter, and should be followed up with telephone calls.

3. Don't hesitate to spend a little extra money to increase interest in and attendance at your events. People don't mind paying if they think they're getting value in exchange.

4. Create as many opportunities as you can for activity: candidates, initiatives, fair booths, speakers bureaus, etc., etc. -- the more, the better.

5. Involve new party members by making it a point to ask them to take on specific responsibilities.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Keeping activists, party members, and interested people informed about party activities on a regular basis is closely related to successfully keeping a party organization going and growing. Some system of internal communication is essential to maintaining enthusiasm and awareness; it is asking too much to expect people to drop everything and get together every six months for a purposeful activity if they haven't been informed of what's been happening in the interim. Motivated activists are those who feel that they are part of a growing organization; regular communication does much to impart this feeling.

The Michigan Experience

Many state and local organizations have good, informative newsletters. Recent issues of the Michigan Libertarian are as close as any to a "model" of a good Libertarian Party newsletter.

The Michigan Libertarian is an eight-page publication which is typeset and printed on an offset press. It follows a regular monthly schedule, and maintains a continuity of features and departments which readers have come to be familiar with and look forward to.

The front page typically covers the most important current activity of the party for that month -- an election, the state convention, proposals for party involvement in a statewide issue. Another "activity" article will also appear on the front page, along with a listing of the items covered inside the newsletter.

Inside pages are devoted to local party news and announcement as well as regular reports from various permanent committees of the state party. For example, if an out-of-state libertarian is scheduled to speak in the state, his or her appearance is noted. There are regular departments for "Committee Reports," "Meetings and Events," and "Key Libertarians to Contact." Then there are such features as "Hot Spots," discussions of political issues in the state of interest to Libertarians, and "News Brief" short news items which are written to make some relevant libertarian point. Finally, there is space devoted to editorials and a "guest column," in which various writers are invited to express their opinions each month on political topics of interest to libertarians. The format stays basically the same for each issue.

For the most part, all of the items are kept brief, and are separated by prominent headlines, subheads and captions. Articles and reports are confined to a journalistic style of writing, with a minimum of overt editorializing. The overall effect of the newsletter is one of professionalism and interest in party activity and real-world issues -- yet with a touch of lightness and personality which adds variation and diversity.

Newsletters With An External Appeal

At least four state parties -- those in California, Colorado, New York and Texas -- publish tabloid-newspapers which not only cover internal party activities but also discuss libertarian theoretical issues and try to appeal to an outside, non-party audience. Their distribution goes beyond just the party membership.

These publications -- Caliber in California, Colorado Liberty, New York Libertarian and Free Texas -- represent a commitment on the part of their organizations to reach out and influence state residents who may be interested in or sympathetic to what Libertarians have to say.

The combination of news, opinions, and analysis is a challenging package to bring off appealingly to a large cross-section of people, but these publications appear capable of doing it. Free Texas, for example, is published every two months and is sent to a list of nearly 7,000 people.

These publications were a natural outgrowth of what had been good, regular internal party newsletters. In each case the party decided that the time, money, and effort required to go to the expanded format would result in a wider audience, more members and contributors, and a tangible asset that the party could be proud of.

The Illinois Experience

There are other forms of internal communications aside from party newsletters. One of the most successful of these is a working telephone network, that is, a system whereby a large number of members, activists, and prospects can be contacted by telephone in a very short time. Such a system takes a considerable amount, of preparation and organization, and one of the best illustrations of how it can work effectively comes from the Liber-

tarian Party of Illinois.

When the need for this system was first recognized in Illinois, steps were taken to identify locations which contained multiple phone lines -- essentially, phone "banks" where ten-or-so volunteers could gather and make calls. Party leaders identified members who might be willing to make their offices available periodically for this purpose, and asked them to do so. (Real estate, insurance, and brokerage businesses are typically the kind of offices used, turned over to the party by members who work there.)

The basic system has been in place for several years, but within the past few months efforts have been made to expand it to the point where there are three available phone banks and as many as 35 available volunteers to staff them. According to the State Chair, it takes about a week and a half to organize a three-bank phone-calling operation -- to line up both the banks and the callers -- but that the entire list of about 2,000 names in Illinois can be reached by this method during three nights of calling.

Purposes for the phone bank operation include fundraising and notification of such events as conventions and candidate appearances, urging members to turn out. It could also be used in the case of a special project such as barraging a state legislator with postcards regarding an important piece of legislation.

Illinois party members have found that these phone banks are far superior to asking individuals to make calls from their homes. The distractions and disincentives which often occur at home are removed, and more important, a spirit of camaraderie and purpose develops within the phone bank. Each phone bank operation has a supervisor, a party volunteer who is there to assign tasks and answer questions. All calls are made between 7:30 and 10:00 in the evening. And the existence of the phone network has attracted many volunteers who are outside of the "inner hard core" of the party.

Summary and Conclusions

All party organizations, even if they consist of only two people, already have a system of internal communications whether they realize it or not. In concept, internal communications is no more complex than members of the organization talking to each other. But for organizations with more people than can conveniently talk with each other on a regular basis, some sort of formal communications vehicle is required, and creating and perpetuating this vehicle requires forethought and organization. The experiences related above are hardly unique, but they do illustrate good examples of simple, yet effective, internal communications vehicles designed to maintain the size and enthusiasm of the party and to broaden its base.

* The Michigan newsletter, as with all effective newsletters, relies on the party, not the personality of its editor and staff, to communicate important facts about party activities. The editor's job is to provide information, and this creates a snowball effect, for once the activists come to understand that what they do is newsworthy to the party, they are motivated to keep doing it and reporting on it.

* Both the Michigan newsletter and the Illinois phone network have the advantage of being considered by party members to be natural and important party affairs. Newsletters which appear regularly and have a standard format are treated with more respect and interest than those which appear every so often and which look radically different from issue to issue. In the instance of the phone network, party members know that it exists and that, if they receive a call, it means something important is happening.

Internal communications devices such as these are a good means of involving other people in an active way in party affairs. They create a wide-variety of opportunities to ask people to participate -- to make 20 phone calls, for example, or to take charge of a particular section of the newsletter.

* Internal communications devices, when done professionally and competently, add an air of credibility to party activities which tends to attract those who are new to the party and possibly not quite sure how much to get involved. By the same token, they are a visible demonstration that an ongoing party organization is worthwhile, and tend to help raise the general level of financial support from both newcomers and veterans.

KEY POINTS ON INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

1. Newsletters are the one essential internal communication device for any party organization at any level. They generate interest and involvement in a way that nothing else can.

2. Internal communications devices should come to be perceived as integral components of the party organization. In particular, newsletters should be published regularly and have a standard format.

3. Newsletters should rely on party activities, not personalities, to generate interest and involvement.

4. Internal communications, particularly newsletters, should be intelligible to non-Libertarians. Ask yourself if the material presented would mystify or turn off a non-Libertarian.

5. Internal communications such as newsletters or phone banks are opportunities to ask party members to get involved in party affairs by assigning responsibility for small aspects of the overall project.

6. Don't hesitate to use the newsletter to solicit funds and memberships, perhaps by enclosing a reply envelope.

RECRUITING AND DEVELOPING LIBERTARIAN CANDIDATES

It's obvious to the point of being simplistic to say that one of the major purposes of a political party is to run candidates for office. Yet in a small, growing party where ballot status is not automatic and the chances of losing the election are great, finding people willing to run as Libertarians is often a serious problem. It takes courage for a person to understand that his or her effort may bring little or no immediate reward, but is instead a stepping stone toward long run success.

But, of course, it is a vitally important stepping stone. The party needs thousands of credible, energetic, articulate candidates each year both to spread our message in a political context, and to set the stage for future electoral victories by convincing voters that the Libertarian alternative belongs in the mainstream of political discussion.

Many of the candidates the party has fielded at all levels would never have run at all, left to themselves; and many who were willing to have their names on the ballot would never have run active campaigns. But in these cases, the candidates were recruited and developed. They were truly supported by their fellow Libertarians, and this support made the difference between mediocre campaigns and effective campaigns.

The Pennsylvania Experience

In 1979, Pennsylvania's Libertarian Party was quite small in proportion to the size and population of the state. Virtually all of the activity had been in the Philadelphia area, and only three Libertarians had ever run for office before.

Two of these, with the support of other party members, decided

that 1980 was going to be different. They decided that for the party to grow and start to become influential statewide, it was important to organize small groups of Libertarians wherever possible and to convince as many members as possible to run for local, state, and federal office. Thus, candidate recruitment became an integral part of their organizational effort.

If party leaders took an organizational trip to Pittsburgh, for example, they would meet with the handful of Libertarians there, explain the basic points of building an organizational structure, state that an important party goal was to run candidates, and almost immediately begin to solicit potential candidates. When new members joined, often one of the first questions asked of them was whether they were willing to be candidates.

The people asked to run were Libertarians who were articulate and knowledgeable about the area where they were running. But there was little concern about the length of time the individual had been a member of the party. -

According to the Pennsylvanians who organized the 1980 candidate-recruitment effort, achieving their goal of running as many candidates as possible had several benefits. Gaining ballot status was easier, since so many had a personal stake in the effort. Local activists were more enthusiastic because they had their own "local favorite" to cheer for. And the news media took note of the fact that many candidates were running, treating the party as a whole with greater respect.

When the field of candidates had been assembled, the party helped further by developing a standard-format brochure which all candidates could use, varying photographs and details according to the candidate and the office, but leaving the basic design and general message about the Libertarian Party the same. This approach not only saved money, but

Who Are We?

The Grassroots Libertarians are organized into self-organizing caucuses: Chair — George Phillies
Steering Caucus: Gene Cisewski Lorenzo Gaztenaga
Don Gorman Lois Kaneshiki Charles Wilhoite
Activist Caucus: (just be active) Led by Gail Lightfoot
John Famularo
Public Officials Caucus (you must have been one to belong): Don Gorman — Chair pro tempore

Stand Up for Liberty!

George Phillies exciting new book of Libertarian Party strategy is now available as an ebook in multiple formats from Third Millennium Publishing, <http://3mpub.com>, for only \$3.95.

Let Freedom Ring! Libertarian Strategy Gazette

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First Class Mail