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# Libertarian Strategy Gazette

Volume 5 Number 4

April 2005

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## How almost any Libertarian who is reasonably presentable can get into public office, and what to do when you get there.

...Willy Star Marshall

I sometimes give speeches at state LP conventions. My speech is titled above. It's about an hour (quite humorous by all accounts), with Q&A. I've also spoken on this at National LP conventions. Basically, I think there are 3 rules to getting into office...

### SUIT UP

SHOW UP, and

### PLAY THE GAME

SUIT UP means to dress the part. LOOK like a politician. Wear a dress shirt and tie everywhere you go in your official capacity. Get a haircut, if needed. It is not a sellout on principle to shave one's beard or get a haircut. You can BE a pothead or whatever and get elected, you just can't LOOK like one and get elected. Don't let your appearance be a reason for people to vote against you. A nice moustache is fine. Beards are a minus, as is long hair. (By the way, I have nothing against beards, I love them and think they look terrific! But they do not help one to get elected, they kind of hurt.)

SHOW UP means to show up in your community. Get involved in civic organizations, Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, etc. It wouldn't hurt to... GO TO CHURCH! Even if you don't believe in God, you can at least go to the Unitarians! Like it or not, church attendance is something that many Americans think important, even if you don't go to their particular church. And at church you will meet nice people who will vote for you BECAUSE they know you! You go to their church, after all! Besides don't we Libertarians believe that voluntary organizations are a good way to help people in need, etc? Therefore, we should show by our own example that we do what we say.

PLAY THE GAME means to get out and campaign. Meet as many people as you possibly can. I went to every single door in my town. Ask every person to vote for you. Say "CAN I COUNT ON YOUR VOTE?" They will either say yes, in which case they probably will vote for you! Or they may say no. Or they will say maybe. But the YES answers have made a verbal commitment to you, a verbal investment in your winning. Then you can ask them to put up a yard sign or for a donation or whatever. Don't be shy. Be polite and NICE to everyone, even your opponents and people you

despise who are in office. Politics makes strange bedfellows so you should be polite and nice, because you never know who you will be sleeping with tomorrow! I've done some good things with people that I never would have thought I'd have a civil conversation with, much less get any help from them. I believe that most people will vote for you in a local race if they LIKE you and think you are a good guy. Smile at everybody sincerely and as much as you can. (If you aren't naturally cheerful you may need to work on that.) They really don't care so much about issues or where you stand, not nearly as much as if they feel like they know you and like you. This doesn't mean that issues aren't important, but IF PEOPLE DON'T LIKE YOU, THEY WON'T VOTE FOR YOU! If they DO like you, they will probably vote for you even if they don't agree with you on some things, or even if they don't know what you stand for. Their votes count just as much as someone who agrees with you 100%.

Pick ONE or TWO issues (no more) and make them your own. You do not have to talk about the entire Libertarian program in your race, even if you are asked. Stick to your one or two issues and hammer them home. If they (or the media) ask you about drugs or abortion or something that is not relevant to your office, say "I'm running to cut taxes, THAT is my big issue..." You don't have to talk about what they want to talk about, especially if they are just trying to bait you. In my mayor's race I had 2 issues: I promised to cut taxes, and that I would not take a salary. My opponent, the incumbent, voted herself a \$13,000/year salary. Towns this small do NOT usually have paid mayors. So my first act when I took office was to repeal my own salary. That made some headlines. Then when it came budget time, I cut taxes by 50%. How did I do it? Well, I prepared the budget! I find that cutting taxes is really easy, because there is so much needless spending and also revenues naturally go up each year due to growth and appreciation. So if you just DON'T take on any NEW projects and budget the same amount in each category as you did last year, well you end up with a lot of slack. The previous town treasurer predicted that if I cut taxes that much (I was talking about a 38% cut then), the town would go bankrupt! Well, I cut them by 50% and we have done just fine. In fact, we have done more with less money. And we basically decriminalized marijuana too, but that is another story...

Put lots of photos on your website, and if you do a flyer, put LOTS of photos, very little text and make it TO THE POINT! People are NOT going to read a lot of stuff, you will be lucky if they give it much more than a glance. So in that glance let them see your smiling face, maybe with your family and pet if you have one, and some big words that say YOUR NAME and LOWER TAXES or something like that. You might want to make your topics into very short statements, like LOWER TAXES NOT BIGGER GOVT or BETTER SCHOOLS THRU CHOICE. But don't give them too much to digest, and don't give them any more reasons to turn off than you have to. I think this is true even if you aren't running to win. Educating people on even one or two Libertarian points is super. You don't have to convert the world to ALL the LP platform TODAY.

*(Continued from page 1)* [How to Get Elected]

Oh, one more thing. Just because you don't win doesn't mean you won't get into office. Remember about being polite and nice to everybody, even politicians you don't agree with? If you can find something you like in some other politicians record, tell him so and compliment him on it. If he thinks you are a good guy, you may be able to get him to appoint you to some board, even if he doesn't agree with you on issues. As mayor I have to appoint a lot of people to offices and boards and I try to appoint people with similar views to mine but if I can't find any I appoint people that I think are nicer rather than those who are not. To get appointed to a board, ASK!

Are you active in your community, church, etc? Are you known as a real nice friendly guy? I hope so. If not, well, you can become one! I highly recommend that all Libertarians (whether running for office or not) read HOW TO WIN FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE by Dale Carnegie. I'm serious.

Well, that's it in a nutshell. Good luck.

I'd be happy to answer any questions you have, or talk with you on the phone. Also, I'm happy to come speak at state LP conventions!

In Liberty,

Willy Marshall

### From the Trenches: Libertarian School Board Member

...Don Gorman

A day in a School Board Member's duties.

Today, May 22nd, 2003 I had the opportunity to attend a meeting with 17 school teachers from grades K-3 in Deerfield. The theme was to discuss situations confronting the primary grade teachers which might help or inhibit their best performance. I listened! One of the teachers commented that at professional workshops there is usually a great philosophical theorist with three PhDs in childhood education who is droning on about God knows what. What the teacher really wanted was methods that would help her be a better teacher at this grade level. I said I could appreciate the problem, as I put on political seminars for Libertarians (yes, folks, I did use that word in front of the teachers) and that I am constantly dealing with the philosophic versus the pragmatic approach.

At the end of the meeting, a teacher asked for more information about the Libertarian Party. I was more than glad to provide literature. I then asked the reading specialties teacher "Would you care for some Libertarian books written at a fifth-grade level?" (Somebody get me fifth-grade reading material on Libertarianism !)

GRASSROOTS! One does not notice one blade of grass. But if you nurture one blade of grass, you may wake up one day to a hillside covered in grass, clover and dandelions. Today I planted two seeds. Methinks I like being on the School Board.

