

# Libertarian Strategy Gazette

Volume 5 Number 5

May 2005

## The Basis of Victory

*Greetings to Libertarians across the United States!* *Libertarian Strategy Gazette*, now in its fifth year of publication, is produced by the oldest continuously-existing libertarian organization in Massachusetts, the Pioneer Valley Libertarian Association (John Brickner, Founder).

### **The *Libertarian Strategy Gazette* has one mission!**

We are here to build a strong Libertarian movement across the United States. There is one road to the Libertarian Millennium, but only if we find it and take it. The *Libertarian Strategy Gazette* is here to help you find that road, to chart its shoals and obstacles, to show you how that road will lead to Libertarian victories in your town, your county, your school district, and finally in from sea to shining sea!

### **What is that road?**

The one sure path to Libertarian victory is through *Local Organization*. It is *Local Organization* that will give us the network of candidates and staffers and volunteers and supporters, and finally the tens of millions of Americans who will choose to *Vote Libertarian!*, who will bring us the victories we so deeply desire.

It is *Local Organization* that will get us the tools we need for success. What are those tools? They are the *Alphabet*, the *Numbers*, and the *V's of Victory*.

The Alphabet A-B-C-D-E gives us:

- Activists
- Ballot Status
- Candidates
- Dollars
- Enrolled Libertarians.

A-B-C-D-E: Activists and Specialists do the party's heavy lifting. Ballot Status, different in each state, lets us run people for office. Running people for office requires Candidates (people who win elections) and Dollars for campaigning and party-building. Enrolled Libertarians are our supporters, the people who register Libertarian, join local, state, or national Libertarian Party organizations, or Stand Up for Liberty! by supporting Libertarian campaigns and special-interest groups.

Through the *Alphabet*, we'll get the *Numbers*.

The *Numbers* are the bricks and mortar from which victory is built. Before we win, before we put Libertarian policies into effect, we need the numbers:

- hundreds of Libertarian campaign consultants
- thousands of Libertarian PACs and Libertarian-principled special interest groups.

[*The Basis of Victory*] (Continued on page 2)

## Opinion

### Build a Party from the Ground Up

There is an alternative that we have not explored in an organized way. That alternative is to build a party from the ground up, training precinct-level and other local candidates to infiltrate local governments and win elections locally, building an army of trained and knowledgeable Libertarian activists, from and upon which our future will be built.

I do not mean this figuratively. If we do what Ralph Nader and Jesse Ventura are talking about doing (with other parties), we will attract more activists who will recognize that we are serious about politics, and not just telling other people "the way things ought to be".

We complain about the federal and even state governments, but now many of us know what is going on in our local government and school boards? If we don't follow them, who will? The other parties!

We have an enormous opportunity all across America, in localities dominated by one party, where the other for all intents and purposes doesn't even exist, and to create a second alternative for our neighbors at local elections. Maybe it's not as glamorous as national or even statewide politics. So you don't get to go on PCN and debate Tom Ridge. But you do get to make a huge difference in your community, where your voice still does count.

This is where GrassRoots Libertarians can make inroads and build the foundation that will make us be taken seriously for once in the political arena.

If we don't begin to act like a political party, other third parties will come along and fill the void. The opportunity is there if we will take it.

.....Lois Kaneshiki

[*Lois Kaneshiki was State Chair of the Pennsylvania Libertarian Party and an at-large member of the Libertarian National Committee.*]

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- tens of thousands of Libertarians running for Re-election.
- hundreds of thousands of new candidates
- millions of hours of donated volunteer time
- hundreds of millions of dollars of campaign donations, all to capture the
- billions of votes that Americans cast each election cycle.

The *Numbers* are the foundation of a modern party. There are half a million elective and appointive political offices in the United States. Before we can capture them, we need all the *Numbers*.

Through the *Numbers*, we'll get the *V's of Victory*.  
The *V's of Victory* are

- Volunteers
- Voters
- Victories

The *V's of Victory*: Volunteers do the vital work of the party: getting out the vote, stuffing envelopes, collecting petition signatures, distributing signs, and going door-to-door. Voters are the people of all parties who finally choose to Vote Libertarian! and decide that we win. Victories are the token of success, something we need to accumulate as we go along to prove we can win and to keep our supporters with us.

George Phillies  
Political Facilitator, Liberty for Massachusetts  
Chair, Worcester County Libertarian Association

## Doing Politics

An Introduction to Campaigning found on palibernet@yahoo.com as assembled by Timothy Crowley from a wide variety of sources. The introductory column is taken from writings of the late Ron Crickenberger

*"Organize the whole state, so that every Whig can be brought to the polls. . . divide the county into small districts and appoint in each a sub-committee... make a perfect list of voters and ascertain with certainty for whom they will vote.. and on election day see that every Whig is brought to the polls."*

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

*Illinois State Register, February 21, 1840*

Thank You. You have decided to be a warrior for liberty, as a candidate of the Libertarian party. You're ready to pontificate principles, persuade the public, and earn votes. But what's the best way to organize your campaign to achieve your goals? This manual can help answer that question, and start you on the road to being a more effective Libertarian campaigner.

This manual is written with the serious, local level candidate in mind - someone who wants to win a state representative or below seat. But the advice and strategies are applicable to

any level and intensity of campaign. Don't let the amount of material enclosed worry you if you are planning on running primarily an informational campaign. No campaign at any level ever does everything in this book - no matter how well financed or how professionally run. But the more aspects of campaigning that you cover, and cover well, the more credibility you will achieve, the more votes you will receive, and the more potential you'll have to recruit new LP members.

As you read this handbook, remember these points of general advice:

You are not the voter, you are weird.

The average person thinks about politics less than five minutes a week. 33% think about politics less than once a month. 25% never think about politics. By the time you get through reading this manual, you will have used up the average person's quota of political thought for several years. Add to this the fact that as a Libertarian, you are the rarest of rare birds.

This is not to say that the average person does not think about issues. But for most people the issues are how am I going to make the car payment and keep the kids safe on the way to school, not who's in office or some vague concept called liberty. So listen for the music the voters are hearing, not just the song you would like to play for them.

There are many ways to win elections. TV, door to door, radio, or direct mail can all be the "best way" -- it depends on the variables of individual campaigns. What is important is to do whatever you do professionally. Do one thing well, not three things half-way. One good ad repeated three times is much more effective than three mediocre ones seen once.

There are constants to winning campaigns -- they develop a base of support and organization early, they target persuadable voters, they deliver the right message to the persuadables several times, and they identify their supporters and get them to the polls.

And for Libertarians they must include an enormous amount of personal contact with the voters. The campaign's time should be spent in finding those people who are already in substantial agreement, and convincing them to vote for you, not in trying to change the minds of those who are far on the other side of the fence.

Don't be afraid of contrast and controversy. The average person sees over 6,000 ad spots per week You must stand out from your opponents to be noticed by the public. Just make sure that it is in a way that will relate positively to the average voter.

Don't be afraid to take a firm stand on the tough issues. On any controversial issue, about 1/3 of the people will be on one side, 1/3 on the other, and 1/3 in the persuadable middle. By not taking a firm stand, you alienate your supporters, fail to persuade the middle, and you'll never get the other side anyway.

Issues and principles are what you win for, not on! A Republican will believe he will win the race because he will spend the most

money on the campaign. The Democrat will believe he will win because he has more door-to-door volunteers and better phone banks. The Libertarian will believe that he will win because his philosophy is pure, and his opponents are Satan incarnate. Uh-uh. You win elections by out-working, out-thinking, out-organizing, and out-spending your opponents.

And this goes double for a Libertarian candidate, because of the built-in vote that the older parties have. Party ID is the single most powerful force guiding the choices of the average voter.

About 60% of the voting public identifies with one of the two major parties, and about 60% of those vote that way on a fairly consistent basis. This means that some 50% of the electorate has decided who it will vote for before the parties even choose their nominees. Thus a Libertarian candidate must get virtually all the undecided vote, or must change people's minds. This is a much more difficult process than merely persuading the swing vote to come your way.

All this means you must work harder, smarter and with more money than your opponents. But the challenge is worth it. Liberty is on the line. Thank you again for accepting the challenge.

## Organizational Planning for Libertarians

Adam Mayer Chairman, Libertarian Party of Oregon

### Abstract

This report is about how to minimize infighting within a state organization. It will also discuss the four participants in the Libertarian movement: Activists, Intellectuals, Politicians, and Administrators, and how to properly arrange a state party using this organization.

### Libertarian Movement

The Libertarian Party has been growing over the past thirty years. We are now reaching a point where it is necessary for our state parties to become more organized in order to achieve more success. As a state party grows, there are problems that occur when people of different backgrounds and skills try to work together to promote liberty. There are certain factors that must be considered in order to prepare for this growth.

Organization is the essential key for the Libertarian Party to keep growing. A major problem in many state organizations is infighting. The Libertarian Party attracts people from all over the political spectrum into one political party. Social Liberals and Fiscal Conservatives don't always see eye to eye. There are people who want change overnight and those who want change to happen incrementally. And there are people who want to explain our message in long detailed essays and those who want to use sound bytes. The important thing for everyone, however, is to be focused on one goal.

There is one thing that the Democrats and Republicans are good at; they know how to get elected. They have structured organizations that work with their candidates to get them into office. They have people who donate time and money to promote their candidates. They have people who write their speeches and literature. They have people who manage and run their campaigns.

As Libertarians we forget that the average person does not care much about politics. We are a rare breed since we are principled and spend more time doing politics in one year than most people do in a lifetime. People will not wake up one morning and realize that all their freedoms are eroding and then go out and join the Libertarian Party. As long as the newspaper is at the front door in the morning, the refrigerator is full of food and the car is still in the driveway, people will not become political.

The Democrats and Republicans know this and this is why they keep getting elected. The purpose of a political party is to get people elected into office. The Libertarian Party needs to focus its energy on getting candidates elected to office so that we can begin to control legislation. But the Libertarian Party as a political party is only one part of the entire Libertarian Movement.

The Libertarian Movement is made of four parts, activists, intellectuals, politicians and administrators. Each of these parts is necessary to make sure that we succeed in the political arena. The state party is important, but the work of the four parts of the movement is what will help a party grow more organized and minimize infighting. All are equally important; each part of the movement is needed to work together to accomplish goals.

### Activists

Activists are the people who are out in the public arena promoting the Libertarian message. They are the volunteers who collect signatures for ballot measures and get candidates on the ballot. They are the people who show up to public meetings, write letters to the editor and help on campaigns. These are the people who are on the front line promoting the Libertarian message to the public.

Activists guide the direction that the Libertarian Movement should move on a particular issue. Whether it's an economic or social issue, the activists are the ones who are pushing for change. Activists wake up the average person, they make unrest and they want change. It's the job of the intellectuals to put the issue into writing and the politician's job to sell the message to the public.

Most people when they first get involved with the Libertarian Movement are activists; it's a great way to learn about the organization and the philosophy of Libertarianism. Many activists are college students who have the time and energy to help with the movement - even though they generally lack the money that would allow them to become donors. These activists are the lifeblood of the Libertarian Movement.

In Oregon, activists have taken a strong role in promoting the Libertarian Movement. There are activists in Multnomah County who run an informational booth at Saturday Market in downtown Portland during the year. Saturday Market is perhaps the biggest outdoor market in Oregon. It runs for ten months a year and attracts almost 750,000 visitors each year. County parties have set up booths at Gay Pride events, gun shows, county fairs and other public events. This hard work does not go unnoticed; each year at our business convention one person is awarded with the Tonie Nathan Award for outstanding achievement as an activist.

## Intellectuals

Intellectuals are the people who write philosophy, platforms, bylaws, resolutions and editorial pieces for newspapers. They are the ones who know Libertarian philosophy and are good at writing about it. Simply put, they are the word weavers who describe our theories elegantly. They follow the lead of the activists and prepare their ideas in a written format, which is then used by the politicians to present to the public.

Good intellectuals can explain Libertarianism in a way that can be understood and will sway people to our side. Their role is performed behind the scenes: writing speeches for candidates; researching issues and helping the movement present our message. The founders of the Libertarian Party used the intellectuals to write our platform and the books that so many of us have read over the years.

In Oregon there is an organization called Cascade Policy Institute, which is similar to The Cato Institute. The majority of people if not all, who work for Cascade, are Libertarians. Generally in the media they are known as a "Free Market Think Tank", but that is now seen as synonymous with "libertarian." Their purpose is to promote the Libertarian philosophy through the written word. Many on their staff get regularly published in newspapers throughout the country in editorials that offer Libertarian solutions to current problems.

Cascade Policy Institute is not affiliated with the Libertarian Party of Oregon; in fact, they don't call themselves Libertarian, but the media does because they recognize the Libertarian philosophy that our activists and candidates have been promoting over the years. Cascade is also an excellent resource for candidates running for office and has been very supportive of the Libertarian Party of Oregon for many years.

## Politicians

Politicians are the candidates who run and get elected to public office. Their job is to present the Libertarian message into sound bytes through interviews with the media, public speaking events and in one-on-one discussion. When elected, Libertarian politicians work to promote the Libertarian agenda and to make Libertarian policy into law. The politician listens to the activists to learn what issues are the most important and listens to the intellectuals to learn how to

approach them. Where the activist pushes for change, the politician makes the change more comfortable to the average voter. The most important thing is that the politician needs to get elected.

Good politicians speak well in public and look good in front of cameras. They need to appear knowledgeable on the issues and speak with compassion and charisma. They need to win the support of the public, and they have to get people to listen to them and to like them. Again this is one area where the Democrats and Republicans are experts. They don't always have a strong message, but they do get elected.

The politicians are the people who present the Libertarian message to the public in person and in the media. They speak at schools, neighborhood associations and on radio talk shows. They are the ones who do interviews with newspapers and TV stations. It is important that Libertarian politicians get the message out to the public in a quick and simple manner.

When talking to people about Libertarian philosophy, the politician generally has about 15 seconds to get their attention. They don't have two hours to spend discussing how the constitution should work, that is the job of the intellectual. If a politician does not reach people right away the message will be lost. When a politician speaks they need to break down their message into "washer & dryer" payments. This means it must relate to the audience in a way they understand and are comfortable with. This is where the politician differs from the activist.

In Oregon politicians are the spokesmen of the Libertarian Party, they do media interviews and public speaking. There is a Libertarian Toastmasters group that meets weekly in Beaverton. Candidates that run for offices that are not currently winnable, such as statewide offices and congressional seats, do so to promote the Libertarian message to as many people as possible. Partisan elections occur in November of even numbered years, non-partisan elections occur in May of odd numbered years. When these candidates run for local non-partisan races, such as school boards and water districts, they get elected from name recognition and from support from their local communities.

## Administrators

Administrators are the people who run the day-to-day organization. They deal with policy, planning and regulations. Their job is to ensure that the bills are paid, the rules are being followed and the office staff has what it needs to do its job. In the Libertarian Movement, this is the role of the state party organization. Each state party has a chair, officers who serve on the executive committee and usually representatives of the county or regions in the state. The administration is the glue that holds the Libertarian Movement together.

The administrators work with the other three groups; activists, intellectuals and politicians, to help the Libertarian Movement grow. They offer the resources the activists, intellectuals and politicians need. In order for a state party to

be successful, the role of the administrator is to work behind the scenes and not on the front line. When this doesn't occur, a political organization can fall apart which is what happened in Oregon recently.

In Oregon, the chairman of the Republican Party is Kevin Mannix. He is a former state representative who most recently ran for Governor in 2002 and lost. As state chair of the Republican Party he is well known in the media and doesn't work behind the scenes. The state chair of the Democrat Party is Jim Edmunson; he is not known and does work behind the scenes. The Democrat Party holds all of the statewide offices: US Senator, four of the five Congressional seats, the State Senate, and they just picked up two more seats in the State House. The Democrat Party is becoming the strongest party in the state, but the state chair is practically unknown.

The state chair is to work behind the scenes making sure that everything is getting done. It is not a position of glory or fame, it's a job designed to manage the political party. When you have state chairs of a political party, as seen in Oregon, who spend their time trying to promote themselves, their party will suffer. When you spend your time working to grow and build the party organization, you will have success.

The role of the administrator in the Libertarian Party of Oregon has become an important one over the past few years as the party has experienced a tremendous growth. Having an office for activists, intellectuals and politicians to work out of, has increased our efficiency. It has helped us minimize infighting since there is so much to do, each person can focus their energy on doing what they are best at. Our goal is to follow the method of success, like that of the Democrat Party, to gain power and to run an efficient organization. Our hard work has been noticed, Michael Badnarik spoke about our organization during the national convention for almost three minutes during his acceptance speech.

### Minimizing Infighting

Currently in the Libertarian Movement there are conflicts between Libertarians. In some cases the conflict is between Social Liberals who don't want the party to be too Fiscally Conservative or Fiscal Conservatives who don't want the party to be too Socially Liberal. Other times it's between people who want change overnight against those who want change to come gradually. There are also conflicts about how the message should be presented, very detailed or short and sweet.

These conflicts have caused a great deal of infighting within the Libertarian Movement; each camp believes that success means that their goals have to be accomplished. The truth is that all messages and methods are essential for the Libertarian Movement if we are to succeed in a real way. The important thing is that you use the right message and the correct method depending on the situation.

Someone who wants change to happen immediately is better suited as an activist. Someone who wants change to happen

incrementally is better suited as a politician. Activists don't need to worry about image, but the politician does. Image is everything when running for office. An activist is someone who doesn't need to wear a suit and tie to present his message, but a politician has to since this is what the public is used to and expects.

Someone who believes that the Libertarian message needs to be explained in full all the time is better suited as an intellectual. Someone who wants to use sound bytes and explain the Libertarian message in simple "washer & dryer" payments is better suited as a politician. An intellectual can produce the necessary detailed papers explaining our philosophy without using sound bytes. The average voter usually doesn't have the time, patience or understanding to listen to the detailed message of the Libertarian Movement. The politician can present the message that people will quickly understand and make them feel good about our philosophy. This is what the public is familiar with. People don't always elect the best candidate, they generally vote for the one they feel comfortable with.

In Oregon problems occurred back during the 1990's because people were not applying their skills in the proper role. Intellectuals were trying to be politicians, activists were trying to be administrators and politicians were trying to be activists. There were constant fights at meetings and public events because each side believed it knew the best method. As a result many people left the organization. Thankfully many have come back since things have become better organized.

The main goal is to minimize infighting within a state organization. The enemies are the Democrats and Republicans, not other Libertarians. Factionalism will always exist in a political party. It is necessary and can help the party grow, but it can also be destructive. An example of bad factionalism is when a state organization spends all of its time fighting over meaningless issues such as who voted for a certain resolution ten years ago or when people have personal animosity toward specific party members.

An example of good factionalism is having a faction of social liberals and fiscal conservatives. The social liberals will be pushing for more involvement in social issues such as drug legalization and gay marriage. The fiscal conservatives will be pushing for more involvement in fiscal issues such as lowering taxes and reducing government spending. An administrator's job is to work with these factions and take advantage of what issue is important to the public.

It is very important to separate politics from personalities, otherwise factionalism will grow and your membership will drop. Being involved with the Libertarian Movement should not be thought of as a hobby; it needs to be looked at as a job. When you are at work, you may have to deal with people you don't like personally but have to work with them professionally. The same attitude must be applied to your state organization; your state party needs to be run like a small corporation.

## How to make it work

It's important to realize that activists, intellectuals, politicians and administrators can work together, but first individuals need to know where their strengths are. Someone who is a great activist may not make a good politician. Someone who is a great politician may not make a good administrator. Someone who is a great administrator may not make a good intellectual. Someone who is a great intellectual may not make a good activist.

The best thing is to be honest with yourself. If you are currently the state chair and realize that you are not an administrator but more of an intellectual, then you need to look for someone who can do the job better when your term ends. If you are good as an administrator and not a good politician, then don't resign and run for US Senate. If you focus your strengths where they are best suited, then other people in your state will follow your example.

This is also the most difficult aspect of organization, being honest with yourself and trying to motivate people into changing their role in your state Libertarian Movement. When the organization is small people will wear many hats and take on some or all of the roles. As an organization grows it is hard to have people give up the control that they have held for the past few years.

It's important to remember that the state party is not the most important thing; it is just one part of the entire Libertarian Movement.

The best first step is to group people according to their skills and abilities. This can be done simply with as few as two people. One needs to be a person who comes up with big ideas, the other needs to be a person who is good at getting things done. Combining these two styles of thinking will help you accomplish any task you work at.

In 1998 a change occurred in the LPO. Richard Burke was nominated to run as the Libertarian candidate for governor by beating none of the above by two votes, and I was named his campaign manager. Richard is great at coming up with strategy; I am great at covering the small details. By combining our skills we decided that the campaign would run differently than any other statewide campaign before it. The strategy was to travel the entire state promoting the campaign and the Libertarian message. Since there was no structure of how to do this type of campaign, one had to be invented.

**What We Did..to be continued**

