

— Double Convention Issue — THE Libertarian Forum

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Up From Chaos

Total Victory: How Sweet It Is!

On Saturday, September 3, H-Hour of Armageddon Day in the four-year war against the Crane Machine finally arrived. Out of a chaotic, confused, wild, hectic, crazy, convention, in the closest, murkiest, most exciting all-out contest in Libertarian Party history, David P. Bergland of California won the nomination for President on the fourth ballot. Despite the narrowness of the race, it is the consensus of all the Political Mavens that the victory of the faction of principle over the "pragmatists", as the *Washington Post* aptly called the two sides, was smashing and complete. The Crane Machine is dead, finished, *kaput*. In the words of Emil Franzi The Magnificent, our Military Maven, and the chief architect of the glorious victory: "it is the most decisive and total victory since the British took out the French at the Battle of Trafalgar (1805), and *that* lasted for 109 years." The Crane Machine (CM), routed, fled the field, and hopefully will never be heard from again.

(Yes it is indeed Franzi who has been our Military Maven, often cited in these pages. It was Franzi who gave me hope in the dark days after the Denver convention of 1981, and it was Franzi who called all the shots with stunning accuracy during the great NatCom struggles of 1981-83.)

I The Lull Before the Hurricane

It wasn't *supposed* to be an exciting convention. Since January, radio talk show host Gene Burns of Orlando, Florida had been campaigning hard for the Presidential nomination. No one was in the field to oppose him. The desperate Crane Machine, trying hard for a "big name" candidate, sought for months to induce Republican Representative Ron Paul to run against Burns, but without success. After several similar failures, it looked very much as if the CM had decided to give up, surrender their power without a struggle, support the Burns campaign as best they could, and bide their time for another few years, hoping that the rest of the Party would fall on its face and come begging to them for aid. Similarly, Paul Grant of Colorado, head of the "Majority

Caucus" on NatCom and a leader of the Grand Coalition for the Party of Principle, was unopposed in his race for national chair. It all looked like a pleasant, serene, harmonious, and even boring convention—a consummation devoutly to be wished. As Franzi put it, "all we have to do now is cross the Rhine and take their bunker."

For the naturally wary, in fact, it all looked *too* good. In the speeches to state and local LPs I made this summer I urged everyone to attend the convention, and promised them that somewhere, somehow there would *be* a contest. Little did I know its extent. I was worried that not many of our impoverished Libertarians would foot the expense to travel to New York to attend a no-contest convention. Furthermore, there was evidence that the CM was deliberately trying to hold down the attendance by delegates. The Northeast, particularly New York, is the stronghold of the Crane Machine, and the convention was being held on CM turf, while virtually the entire West (except Alaska), the heartland of our Party, was pro-Coalition. The fewer Westerners that showed up, the more it would be possible for the CM to pull a fast one. Apart from that one small nagging worry, all seemed secure.

In fact, the attendance of delegates and others, despite a frenzied last-minute spurt, was way down from previous conventions. The last Presidential convention at L.A. in 1979 amassed an attendance of over 1400 people. In 1981 at Denver, there were 900 persons; at this year's PresCon in New York, total attendance was in the 700s. And while there were 719 authorized delegates this year, a maximum of only 540 appeared on the floor—and this included an unprecedented number of "ringers" for the Presidential vote (see below). The following day, after the Crane Machine had given up and the ringers gone home, total delegates on the floor fell to about 440.

II What Happened to Burns?

The peaceful lull, and all hopes for a serene convention, ended abruptly on Thursday, August 25, when I and a few

others received a lengthy mailgram from Gene Burns announcing his withdrawal from the race, this announcement coming a mere four days before the convention. Burns made the mailgram public that afternoon, declaring that not enough funds had been raised for his race. Following a pattern that he had established in early and mid-June, Burns, when faced with a financial problem, dropped out of the race without consulting any of his LP friends and supporters, then promptly made himself *incommunicado* for many days, going fishing, and answering no calls.

From January until late May, it seemed to his LP supporters that the Burns campaign was in seagoing shape. Zipping around the country with several aides to virtually every state LP convention, tireless and indefatigable, the Burns campaign seemed problem-free. But the home staff in Orlando was not experienced in the LP, or apparently, in campaigning or simple accounting, since a piled-up debt shocked Burns and led him to withdraw from the race for the Presidency in early June. That time, however, he did not make a public announcement of withdrawal, and so his supporters were able to talk him back into the race by working out and presenting him with a campaign structure, a Master Plan, and arrangements for fund-raising. Everything seemed hunky-dory, certainly until the convention, after which a full structure and staff could be established. Some of us argued vociferously for an experienced LP campaign manager to go posthaste to Orlando and stay there until the convention. An Orlando manager could communicate constantly and directly with Burns, get the feel for problems as they develop, and make sure that he did not go off half-cocked again. We were overruled, however, partly because there was no obvious person ready to go to Orlando, and partly because we were assured that there was no problem, and that the campaign could be successfully decentralized with no man on the spot in Orlando. The fact that the more cautious of us were proved right when Gene pulled a Burns on August 25 gave us no comfort.

What was the problem with Burns? Deeper than the financial issue which was already in the process of being overcome when Gene pulled out, was the fact that we and Burns didn't really know each other very well. Burns, for example, had been under the delusion that we are much stronger than we really are, and he became deeply discouraged when he would attend a state convention, expecting to see 100 people and only 25 would show up. Clearly, the great lesson of the Burns episode was that from now on, we must no longer buy a pig in a poke; from now on, especially for the key, vital nomination for the Presidency, we must nominate someone who is tried and true, a proven quantity, a hard-core principled libertarian, someone whom we know in our heart and in our gut will neither drop out nor sell out. But now we only had two or three days to find that someone.

III Into Chaos: The Unity Scam

We were in turmoil and chaos, and I would hate to see the phone bills for the top party and Coalition leaders for that three-day period. The great danger, as Bill Evers pointed out, was that a one-man-ruled "professional" machine such as the CM may not be able to do well in the *long-run*, when it will be outvoted by the Party majority. But in chaotic short-run crises, such as brought about by the disappearance of Burns, the Crane Machine could do very well. In brief, short-run

forays, the CM could pour in a lot of money, quickly mobilize its troops, communicate orders swiftly, maneuver, advance, or retreat, while the principled majority of the party, confused, rudderless, slow to react, might well be conquered at the convention. In short, the sudden withdrawal of Burns provided a golden moment for the CM to attempt a mighty comeback, to fish in troubled waters. And that is precisely what it did, coming within a hair's breadth of victory.

It became vitally important, then, for one of the Good Guys, for one of the leaders of the coalition for principle, to enter the race, and *pronto*. Fortunately, David P. Bergland, a California attorney, a hard-core and principled radical libertarian, needed no coaxing. He saw that the Libertarian Party needed a candidate, and a principled one, desperately, and so he threw his hat promptly and enthusiastically into the race. Specifically, Bergland became a candidate on Friday, August 26, the day after Burns's withdrawal, with the following caveat to his supporters: "If you can find someone better, do it, but do it *quickly*." By noon on Saturday, Bergland was permanently committed to the race. The former Burns supporters now became ardent Berglandians, and the old Gene Burns buttons were quickly recycled into buttons for Bergland. Bergland was a veteran campaigner, a known quantity, a man who had run successful campaigns for Vice President in 1976, and for U.S. Senate from California in 1980, where he amassed 200,000 votes, more than Ed Clark got from the same state that year for President. Great; we had Bergland in place; now, what would the Crane Machine do?

The situation was now hopelessly confused by a new and unexpected factor: it so happened that Roger MacBride, presidential candidate in 1976, who had displayed no interest whatever in the LP since his man Bill Hunscher was defeated by Ed Clark for the nomination in 1979, was holding a social gathering for friends of his in the LP the weekend before the convention at his summer home in Biddeford, Maine. In fact, MacBride and his Maine neighbor Hunscher were joint hosts at what I soon came to call Camp MacBride. The best evidence is that Roger had no devious political ends in mind when the social gathering was originally called. At any rate, the Burns withdrawal came only a day or two before the MacBride party, and Roger quickly seized the opportunity to come roaring back into the LP as unifier, harmonizer, and kingmaker of the Libertarian Party. Originally, and before the Bergland announcement, MacBride's unity pitch was probably sincere enough albeit misguided; his first thought was to invite leaders of a broad spectrum of the party, including Dick Randolph, Ed Crane, Ed Clark and myself to decide what to do and to pick a candidate.

In politics, whenever I hear the word "unity", to paraphrase the famous words of a German politico of the 1930's, "I reach for my revolver". For almost always, "unity" is a scam, a call to abandon principle and follow the leader into some form of tyranny or sellout. Indeed, one of the best statements uttered at this convention was that of Tonie Nathan (Ore.) when she announced her race for the Presidential nomination: "This used to be the party of principle. Now it is the party of 'unity' ". Or, to put it another way, genuine unity is only viable in a context of shared values and premises. Unity is only proper within a framework of Justice. Anything else is a hoax, a scam, and an implicit call for the betrayal of principle.

When MacBride called me, before the weekend, he made it clear that his first choice for the Presidency was Dick Randolph. I made equally clear my lack of enthusiasm for Randolph, a top Craniac politico, who had run a disastrous campaign for governor of Alaska in 1982. Approximately twenty-four hours later, after Dave Bergland had entered the race, MacBride gave Bergland his enthusiastic endorsement. Two days after that, MacBride had become chairman of the campaign Committee for Earl Ravenal for President. This is indeed a fast-moving world.

In between MacBride's endorsements for Bergland and for Ravenal, Bergland received a conference call from the guests assembled at Camp MacBride. Randolph, Chris Hocker (emissary from Crane, who could not attend), MacBride, and Hunscher asked Bergland pointed questions about his campaign. The key question of course was: What would be the role of Crane and Hocker, leaders of the Crane Machine, in a Bergland campaign? Bergland replied that since they controlled a lot of magazines, he would be happy for those magazines' enthusiastic support. He also declared, and repeated this intention in his Master Plan, released during the convention, that he would ask Crane to help in fund-raising, Howie Rich to work on Eastern ballot drives, and to ask various Machiners such as David Boaz, Sheldon Richman, Chris Hocker, and Tom Palmer to help in research and writing for the Bergland campaign. In sharp contrast, MacBride claimed that Bergland planned to deny Rich and Hocker any active role in his campaign.

The Biddeford group began to wax impatient. They were not interested in any of this. They were interested in only one thing: "What would be the managerial roles of Crane and Hocker in your campaign?" Bergland was firm. "Absolutely none", and proceeded to explain why. It was at that point, so the story goes, that MacBride decided to turn to another candidate, a "unity" candidate for the presidential race. But curiously enough, Earl Ravenal, the Crane Machine candidate for the nomination, made precisely that same pledge, publicly and privately, during the convention: That since Crane and Hocker, though good friends of his, are considered divisive, they have agreed to play no managerial role whatever in his campaign. Since the Bergland and Ravenal positions on Crane/Hocker were supposedly identical, MacBride's turn to Ravenal on the basis of superior "unity" looked slightly odd, to say the least.

Ironically, Earl's statement on Crane and Hocker proved to be counter-productive. Most of the delegates, in their lack of savvy, had had no idea that Ravenal was a close friend of theirs. The reaction of many of them to his statement was: "What? He's a good friend of *those* two? I'm voting for Bergland."

In fact, there was no excuse for Roger to continue the unity line after Bergland, a perfectly good candidate, had entered the race. It was one thing for MacBride to look around desperately for a nominee when we had no candidate. It was quite another to *continue* to look around after Bergland had announced. Such action was patently sowing *disunity* rather than unity.

Indeed, it is absurd to speak of the nominee of one of two factions as the "unity" candidate. When Alicia Clark made a late entry into the national chair race in 1981, she sincerely believed that she was the unity candidate, come to harmonize

and integrate the two previous warring factions (Crane Machine, and the Coalition for a Party of Principle.) Soon after her election, she came to learn that the two factions were not simply pointless personality squabbles but profoundly clashing groups warring over ideology and strategy: the principled versus the opportunistic "pragmatists." When she came to realize this profound fact, there occurred during the last two years, a virtual amalgam of the old Alicia Clark and Mason forces into one Grand Coalition for Principle. There were now two factions and two candidates, Bergland and Ravenal, so on what basis could a CM candidate call for "unity"? In a few days, to our horror, we were to find out.

When Roger MacBride and Bill Hunscher endorsed Earl Ravenal for President, I asked our Political Mavens (see below) what the value of such endorsements might be. The unanimous consensus was that MacBride's endorsement was worth about 5 votes. "Hell," said one, "half the delegates out there have never *heard* of Roger MacBride." As for Hunscher, his very presence angered many delegates profoundly. After being routed by Clark for the Presidential nomination in 1980. Hunscher fled the party and joined the Republican Party, virtually wrecking the New Hampshire LP in the process. Now here he was, four years later, having the arrant *chutzpah* to pop up again and counsel us on what candidate to select. Indeed, as Hunscher fled the field once again, after the Ravenal defeat, my old friend Judith Blumert (California) got in the best single zinger of the convention. "So long, Bill," she called out loudly, "see you in four years!"

Out of Camp MacBride, riding the unity theme, came the pretentious Biddeford Statement, which the reader should hold in mind until the end of this story. Unpleasantly reminiscent of standard ploys of Republicans and Democrats, the Biddeford Statement, signed by all the participants, pledged everyone's best effort to support whoever was nominated for President by the Libertarian Party.

IV Building Bergland Central

It was a long, bloody long convention, starting on Monday, August 29, and building to a stunning climax on the morning of Saturday, the 3rd. On Sunday the 4th the election of officers was to take place. The official business proceedings of the convention, the keynote, bylaw and platform debates were to begin on Thursday. The delegates therefore came in spurts, some on Monday, and a lot more on Thursday. On Friday came the "ringers", and others interested only in the Presidential vote.

On Sunday, August 28, the day before the opening of the convention, my old friend Burt S. Blumert (CA), for many years an unsung and neglected hero of the Libertarian Party and movement, decided that since the Bergland forces would benefit enormously from a central headquarters suite at the convention, that he would rent such a suite. Reserving a suite on Sunday, Burt went down the next day to the Sheraton Centre, headquarters of the convention, to case the various suites and select one. I tagged along as friend and kibitzer. After hassling at length with the labyrinthine Sheraton bureaucracy, Bery finally rented a large two-room suite for the week and also installed a rented photocopier. When the top Bergland people came into town that day and the next, they were dazzled to find a fully equipped suite already in place. Room 4501, what I came to call Bergland Central, then became for the rest

of the week the nerve center, the communications, network, message and planning center for the Bergland for President Committee. The suite was also used to give parties for the delegates almost every night, and to feature Bergland speeches to groups of delegates.

Bergland Central was particularly necessary at the New York PresCon because, as our unhappy Political Mavens pointed out, the Sheraton Centre was not really built as a convention hotel. It has no central place to communicate with delegates. Other large hotels typically have restaurants and bars which, along with the floor and corridors, serve as places to "work" and communicate with the delegates. But here there was virtually nothing; no real restaurant or bar, and only a small combination that was open only a few hours a day. Besides, there were so many restaurants and bars nearby that there could be no central gathering places for Libertarians.

Another word about the hotel. Overpriced, underqualified, it was one of the shlockiest hotels in LP convention history. Outside the hotel is the raunch and sleaze of Times Square. Hookers, dope addicts, and other street folk hang around the outside of the hotel at night, and the taxi drivers in front of the Sheraton are the scuzziest in New York, disreputable and scruffy oafs who would only take you to a few locations, and who fought among themselves for fare, sometimes almost running over the would-be passengers in the process. Furthermore, in an outrageous ripoff that scarcely made friends for the FLP in the other state parties, if Joe doakes called up the hotel and asked for the "Big Apple Weekend" rate at the Sheraton, he would be charged \$65 per night for single or double, whereas if he called and said "Hey, I'm with the LP convention!", he would be charged \$82 per night—a \$17 "surtax" for proclaiming oneself a Libertarian! (The Monday through Thursday, "Value Line Special" rate was \$76 a night, a \$6 Libertarian premium.) Usually, of course, conventioners reap a *discount* from regular rates, not a surtax.

In a day or two, Bergland Central was in full-scale, impressive, and seagoing operation. Room 4501 was occupied twenty-four hours a day, with someone always there to receive and send messages and to answer the phone, "Bergland for President." Head honcho and floor manager, Franzi the Magnificent, arrived on Tuesday, and was promptly installed in the suite as resident. Also sleeping in the suite were other top Berglandians, including John Mason, and our indispensable gofer, Mark Pickens, of the Radical Caucus and the San Francisco Party, who stayed in the suite virtually every minute of the week, and in the words of an admirer "thought, ate, slept, and lived Bergland." Emil Franzi dubbed Pickens admiringly, "the Rookie of the Year." Tom Shook (Arizona), a powerfully built ex-SDSer turned proud "redneck", was the official "smuggler" for the suite, bringing in cases of beer under the vigilant eyes of the hotel *polizei*.

Featured at the suite were the Political Mavens, the floor manager and his assistants who were the nerve center of the Bergland campaign. Floor manager was Franzi the Magnificent; top assistants were the savvy Steve Davis (Ga.), who ran the computerized count of delegates; Richard W. Suter (Ill.), a bubbling, witty and highly knowledgeable Maven; John Mason (Co.), the heroic standard-bearer of the Coalition for Principle forces in the 1981 struggle at Denver; and Bill Evers (Calif.), tireless scholar and organizer, and my veteran com-

rade in the four-year struggle against the Crane Machine. Other highly effective regional floor leaders for Bergland were young Christopher Winter (Hawaii), the Hawaii state chair; Jim Lewis (CT), who would later gain the Vice-Presidential nomination; Geoff Steinberg (PA); and Dave Saum (VA). Another key person in the Bergland suite was Davis's wife, Dr. Heide Hartmann, who ran the computer, which gave continuing printouts on which delegates were firmly for Bergland, leaning to Bergland, undecided, leaning to Ravenal, or firmly for Ravenal. Characteristically, when asked by Davis and Hartmann whether we should have a computerized "count" of the delegates, Franzi answered: "Sure. It will be very helpful." "And besides," he added, grinning happily, "The computer will scare the s- out of them."

It should be added that "counting" is a crucial function of floor managers. Counting of course does not simply mean adding up the numbers of delegates. It means that the floor manager and his assistants are constantly "working" the floor and the delegations, getting a feel for the "count" of who is for whom, who is undecided, etc. During the actual balloting, they move constantly around the floor, taking samples of delegates from various representative states, getting the feel of the ever-changing situation. In addition, the Mavens perceive the impact of different moves by themselves and by the opposition, decide what counter moves will be made, etc. Especially in a close race, the floor managers must take their readings and make their moves rapidly and be ever ready to meet new situations and the moves of the enemy. Decisions must be swift, and correct most of the time, and ability at this craft depends on experience as well as innate talent.

As I got to know our Mavens during the week, I concluded that they are surely the best in the LP. In the midst of an amorphous, highly difficult and ever exploding situation, Franzi, Suter and the others kept their cool and were able to keep on top of the morass with amazing accuracy.

I also discovered that the Mavens on both sides keep in continual touch with each other, discussing the various moves, feeling each other out, making suggestions, and hoping to pick up stray bits of important information from the other. Also each side generally has too much respect for the other's ability as managers to try to con the other. The Crane Machine honchos might spread Disinformation among the delegates, but they don't presume to try to con the Mavens on the other side. Each side respects the ability of the other as craftsmen. Thus, in a post-victory analysis, our Mavens all agreed that the CM almost beat us because they had the smarts to put in Dick Randolph, their only real pro, as floor manager. "If Howie Rich (who ran the Guida campaign in 1981) had been their floor manager," they said, "we would have won easily on the second ballot. And if Crane himself had been their manager, we would have beaten them on the first." "How is Howie as a counter?" one of us asked. "Pah," replied one of our Mavens, "Howie can't count his change."

Our Mavens were worried from the first day of the convention. As Franzi concluded when it was all over, "This was the most difficult, hardest-to-read, most uncontrollable convention I have ever been to, of any party." From the very beginning, all the Mavens agreed that there were "an enormous number of undecideds, of wimps and mushheads out there, even more than at Denver." How do you figure out where the undecideds will jump? And information was at a minimum.

As Franzi reported during the middle of the week, "there are still lots of delegates out there coming in asking, 'Where's Burns?'" By Thursday, it was the general consensus, concurred in by the Machine's Mavens, that we were definitely ahead. "If the vote were taken now," they agreed, "the vote would be about 180-190 for us, 120-130 for them, with about 250 needed to elect." But the Machine vowed that they would overtake us by the time of the voting on Saturday. For one thing, they knew they had several aces up their sleeves.

V Enter Earl Ravenal

Earl Ravenal, professor of international relations at Georgetown University, entered shortly after Bergland as the Crane Machine candidate. It is true that very few of the delegates had ever heard of Ravenal, but in this chaotic situation the lack of knowledge worked for him, for he seemed a charming and knowledgeable gentleman of stature, which indeed he certainly is. To the delegates, he appeared simply to be the candidate of the MacBride Unity Faction; Ed Crane kept a very low profile all week, in evidence only on the actual day of the balloting.

Bill Evers and I were two of the very few who knew Ravenal, from our days at the Cato Institute, where he has served for many years as a Board member. My first, instinctive reaction when I heard the news that the Machine had entered Ravenal as candidate was the same as that of a number of my friends, all of whom liked and admired the man whom Ed Crane affectionately refers to as "Earl the Pearl." That first instinctive reaction of each of us was: "But he's not a libertarian!" A libsyp (libertarian sympathizer) for sure; a man generally in agreement with libertarian concerns. But a hardcore principled libertarian? Certainly not. The sort of man a presidential candidate might ask for scholarly advice on foreign affairs, but not the sort of man whom the LP should make its presidential candidate. I knew that Earl had told me several years ago that some day he might like to run for President on the LP ticket, but that before that its platform would have to become far less extreme. I also knew that in several Cato summer seminars in recent years, Ravenal had told the participants that he was *not* a Libertarian, but a sympathizer. In addition, many recalled that in the past, at least, Ravenal had been hesitant about the full right of women to have abortions. How to research Ravenal's views in the almost zero time available, and to get those views to the delegates?

Several intellectuals in the Bergland camp swung instantly into action, looking up articles by Ravenal in *Reason* and elsewhere in 1978 expounding a raft of important deviations from libertarian principle. Furthermore, interviews with Ravenal on his current views elicited a number of problems, including softness toward the draft in wartime or other emergency, great reluctance to abolish the welfare state, apologia for the illegal CIA-run Phoenix assassination program in Vietnam—and in general a utilitarian cost-benefit analysis toward issues rather than basing his views on a solid groundwork of moral principle and natural rights. Under hard-hitting questioning at a Radical Caucus (RC) candidates' meeting Wednesday night, Ravenal insisted that he now admired the consistency of the LP platform and that he now opposed the draft root and branch. His reply to a question eliciting specifics of what government programs he would *not* abolish at this time was unsatisfactory, however; and he

continued to justify the Phoenix program, given the hard choices faced by the Defense Department in a war we should have pulled out of. In general, it was disquieting to find an LP candidate thinking from the point of view of a Defense Department official, which he himself had been for three years, rather than from the point of view of someone outside of, and opposed to, the government.

Furthermore, Ravenal got angry quickly under the rigorous questioning, proclaiming that he would never apologize for his work in the Defense Department. This gave rise to widespread speculation on whether he would lose his cool under far more hostile questioning by journalists and others during the heat of a long, grueling Presidential campaign.

Ravenal's continuing support in interviews for compulsory vaccination revealed his troubling utilitarian rather than rights orientation. And even in his area of expertise, foreign policy, his strong suit according to his supporters, Ravenal continued to deviate sharply from the libertarian principle of non-intervention. Even in convention week, Earl Ravenal continued to justify in retrospect his position on Iran during the hostage crisis. His excessively legalistic view—to put it mildly—was that the U.S. Embassy in Tehran was legally sovereign U.S. soil; that therefore the attack on the embassy was equivalent to an attack on the U.S. and an act of war; and that military attack on Iran by the U.S. was therefore justified. Whatever that is, it is certainly *not* a creed of non-intervention.

Apart from the RC questioning, how to get this vital information on Ravenal out to the delegates? The Radical Caucus Central Committee, then still pro-Bergland, issued a blue sheet of facts on Ravenal, and I wrote a widely distributed Open Letter to the delegates, a rather gently written letter not in my usual rip-roaring style. The letter had the positive effect of alerting undecided delegates and others, who knew little about Ravenal, about the grave ideological problem with Ravenal's candidacy. The brunt of the letter was that, after the Burns episode, it is vitally important to nominate a tried and true hard-core Libertarian for President, and that meant Dave Bergland, a man we could trust without reservation. Perhaps the most effective sentence in my letter was a cry from the heart: "Never do we want to wake up one morning next March, June, or September and say 'My God, did he say *that*?'"

Each nominee was entitled to a nominator and two seconders. Ed Clark was the obvious choice to nominate Bergland. I was originally supposed to be one of the seconders. My letter had done essential negative work, but now it was important to put in someone with a more positive image among the delegates. Dave Nolan (CO) was a fine choice for my replacement. Although at least as ardent a Bergland partisan as myself, he was perceived by the convention as more of a unifying factor, and he had built a new constituency among the delegates by serving as chairman of the platform committee. Some of them were urging a Nolan draft for president. The other Bergland seconder—an excellent change of pace—was Lori Massie, who was later selected as regional NatCom rep from Florida.

The big argument for Ravenal by the CM/Unity Faction was that he, as a professor at Georgetown, was a candidate of stature. The counter-argument was that stature as a professor does not necessarily mean stature as a candidate, and that the

most "presidential" occupation, after all, in America is that of attorney, which is what Dave Bergland happens to be. Besides, we have had only one Ph.D.-Eastern Establishment professor as President in American history, Woodrow Wilson, and *he* was probably the greatest single disaster in the history of the Presidency. When asked what is Ravenal's "natural constituency", Bill Evers quipped: "One-fifth of the Georgetown faculty."

Another powerful counter-argument was Ravenal's proudly proclaimed past and present membership in the Council on Foreign Relations, the infamous Rockefeller-controlled foreign policy outfit. Ravenal's proclamation that the CFR is a harmless discussion group that gives one the opportunity to have frequent lunches with David Rockefeller to try to influence Rockefeller and others from within, scarcely sat well with the many anti-CFR buffs among the delegates. His further explanation that he had refused an invitation to join the dread Trilateral Commission, which he claimed *is* a policy-making group, hardly helped matters. Many delegates wondered why in heck Ravenal was even *invited* to the Trilaterals, and the indefatigable anti-Rockefeller researcher Howard Katz (Mass.) did spade work among the delegates, pointing out that, technically, the Trilaterals are *also* a discussion group rather than a policy-making body. Many delegates were instantly converted to Bergland when Ravenal's CFR membership was pointed out. "My God," said a prominent LPer, "if Ravenal is nominated, what do I do with all my Trilateral and CFR charts? Then *we'll* be on them!" Another effective point was that a Ravenal nomination meant that we could kiss goodbye to the votes of all disaffected Reaganites, all the tax-rebels, all the anti-tax groups, Birchers, and many others who would never *ever* vote for a CFR Presidential candidate, "discussion group" or no discussion group.

After all the hullabaloo, the question still remains why Earl Ravenal suddenly entered the race. Undoubtedly, the Crane Machine/Unity Faction lied to him, in the inimitable Craniac manner, telling him that his candidacy was desperately needed to save the Libertarian Party. Such an argument might have seemed plausible had no one else entered the race. What arguments they used to convince Earl that a Bergland candidacy still required him to save the Party I do not know, but they must have been lusus. In a sense, Earl Ravenal is the major unfortunate figure of this convention, a good man who was used, abused, lied to, and manipulated by the Machine.

If Earl Ravenal was lied to, what was the motivation for MacBride and Hunscher to suddenly re-enter the party on his behalf? Certainly an intense desire to be kingmaker. But I think there is something else going on here. Emil Franzi, in his typically perceptive way, has engaged in an incisive sociological class analysis of the composition of the Libertarian Party. "There are three groups in the Party," he points out, "the preppies, the rednecks and the hippies." The "preppies" or would-be aspiring preppies are the Crane Machine, the epitome of the three-piece suit Eastern Establishment; the "hippies" are the Radical Caucus, and the "rednecks" are the Alicia Clark supporters of 1981. There is not, of course, a 1-to-1 correlation here, but the broad breakdown provides a remarkably accurate fit of the three factions. The Crane Machine is the "respectable" preppie elite, the opportunistic seekers after power; the rednecks are the unpretentious populist voters, the people of the heartland of America.

Let us then turn to MacBride and Hunscher. Both of them are ultra-preppie. The Preppie Connection extends also to Earl Ravenal, and to the entire Crane Machine, which is uptight, Eastern Establishment, and pretend-intellectual. So that when Roger MacBride, in a dramatic moment at one of the Ravenal open meetings, took off his jacket and dramatically showed his "hatchet" marks from the Crane Machine and proclaimed his own willingness to forgive and forget in the name of the Unity Scam, he was reverting to the preppie Ties that Bind. Besides, the famous breakup between MacBride and his campaign manager Crane in 1976, it turns out, was trivial, petty, and strictly personal, having no ideological components whatever, centering on Crane's opposition to Roger's flying his own private plane on campaign trips around the country. Considering *that* kind of reason for their breakup, the Unity reconciliation of these two Titans in 1983 becomes far less puzzling.

VI Pushing The Unity Scam: Snaring Bob Poole

The Unity Faction had a problem. How could they demonstrate to the delegates that they were truly the "unity" group in the Party? To do so, they had to get some supporters beyond the Crane Machine and Roger MacBride. Specifically, they had to get some leaders of both Left and Right to make their Unity pitch plausible. On the right, they asked John Hospers to be their Vice-Presidential candidate, but Hospers would have none of it. Indeed, the hawkish right-wing of the Party, as mobilized in the small but tightly-knit Libertarian Defense Caucus, were disgusted with both candidates. Bergland they considered a radical, and Ravenal was a CFR member who had long been associated with the Institute for Policy Studies, which all dedicated right-wingers absurdly claim to be *the* KGB agitation and espionage post in the United States. Tonie Nathan was the Defense Caucus candidate, and after she dropped out, the Defense people, with the exception of Robert Poole, Mike Anzis (CA) and some other leaders, went for Bergland as the "lesser of two evils."

But the Craniacs were able to snare one important right-winger, Robert Poole, Jr., editor of *Reason* magazine. Poole, though formerly an enemy of the Machine, and whose now defunct *frontlines* was a leading architect of its overthrow, had long been looking for a less pure, broad-based, big name candidate, Libertarian Party. Besides, he fell hook, line, and sinker for the Unity Scam, trusted a promise in writing from Crane and Hocker that they would play no role in a Ravenal campaign, accepted a future post on a supposedly all-powerful three-man Ravenal Campaign Oversight Committee, and generally fell for the self-same promises that the Crane Machine had broken egregiously only four years before. My reaction was that if Bob had only reread his own *frontlines* he wouldn't have fallen for this hokum. There is a wise saying that if you are cheated once by another person it is *his* fault; but that if you allow yourself to be cheated by the same guy once more, you too are to blame. Or, in the immortal words of Oscar Wilde, "To lose one parent is a misfortune; to lose two, smacks of carelessness."

VII: The Radical Caucus: the Stab-in-the Back

Radicalism was a powerful force at this convention, among RC members and numerous sympathizers. How powerful may be gauged by the fact that Joe Fuhrig, the RC candidate for Vice-President, received 61 votes on the first ballot on

Sunday and 91 votes on the second. The Radical Caucus was founded in early 1979 by Justin Raimondo (San Francisco) to back radical hard-core principle in the LP, the main activity of the RC being the organizing of members of the LP and the publishing of the periodical *Libertarian Vanguard*. In the spring of 1979, Bill Evers and myself, in the process of defecting from the Crane Machine because of its growing opportunism, joined the RC Central Committee. The RCCC is the 7-person governing body of the RC; its membership is not empowered to vote in any elections for officers. Eventually, the RC intends to call a National Conference to regularize its operations and have periodic elections from the membership; but in the meanwhile it is a body governed by a seven-person self-perpetuating body.

For years, there was only a six-man CC, and soon it became apparent that there were two basic factions on the CC: the laughingly but accurately termed "Revolutionary Tendency (RT)", consisting of Raimondo and Eric Garris (San Francisco); and the rest of us, including myself, Evers, and two old Stanford friends of Evers, Scott Olmsted and Colin Hunter. Last year, the flaky and volatile RT relinquished the editorship of *Vanguard* to the more sober rest-of-us. Specifically, the shift from Raimondo to Olmsted-and-Evers meant a shift from pictures of burning police cars and a format aping the *Young Spartacist* of 1968 to a sober, professional-looking newsletter brimming with incisive news and critiques of the libertarian movement as well as analyses and bibliographies of real-world issues. The improvement in *Vanguard* was enormous, and Raimondo seemed perfectly happy to retire and concentrate on his novel-in-progress about AIDS and the CIA.

Evers had been a leading figure in the Burns campaign, a development one would think would be greeted with enthusiasm by his supposed comrades in the Radical Caucus. Instead, Raimondo and Garris were eternally sour and gripey, almost as if they personally envied and resented Evers's prominence in the LP. But of course the RT claimed just the opposite. They began to complain increasingly about the "emphasis on personalities" in Evers's and my attitude toward the malignant domination of the Party by the Crane Machine. Privately and publicly, we pointed out to our RT volatiles that there is no such thing as Platonic ideas floating in some sort of abstract vacuum, that ideas are held, for good or bad, by *people*, and that *people* form machines and try to dominate the Libertarian Party. When such people act badly, sell out principle, and dominate libertarian institutions, it becomes necessary to attack them, their ideas and their actions. All in all, it was a strange position for the RT to take; usually it is the wimps and mushheads in movements who shrink as if from the head of Medusa at any negative criticism. But the RT has never been known for its saintly forbearance.

The Radical Caucus Central Committee came to the PresCon on Monday of convention week supposedly full of enthusiasm for Dave Bergland. And no wonder: He and his campaign manager Sharon Ayres had always been friendly to the RC and the radical cause. And Less Antman, RC member and editor of *Caliber*, the outstanding state LP newsletter from California, had long been an effective and rousing speech-writer for Bergland campaigns. And yet, as the week progressed, a strange and almost lunatic volatility seemed to take possession, not only of Garris and Raimondo, but also of long-time Rocks of Gibraltar, Olmsted and Hunter. Sporting

Bergland buttons and pledging to Bergland and Ayres their all-out enthusiasm for the Bergland campaign, Garris, Raimondo, Olmsted and RCCC member Dianne Pilcher (Florida) fluctuated wildly like yo-yos for three days. One minute enthusiasts for Bergland, three hours later they would start muttering about how Ravenal was "impressive"; three hours after that they were back to hailing Bergland; and so on for three entire days. Talk about your "volatile"; after a while I began to form the impression, in talking with my RCCC comrades, that I was living in a looney bin. For example: on Wednesday night, while subjecting Earl Ravenal to searching questioning, Raimondo was hopping up and down muttering about Ravenal's warmongering and pure evil; twelve hours later, Raimondo officially endorsed Ravenal and the next day spoke at a "Unity" meeting for Earl.

By Wednesday night, all four RCCC comrades were showing a distinct trend toward Ravenal, a trend which to me was incomprehensible. Although volatile, none of these people is stupid, and yet they began to argue on the intellectual level of nine-year olds, and to argue in total opposition to their usual hard-core radical stance. Two examples will suffice:

When, two weeks before he pulled out, an interview with Gene Burns was published by the Libertarian Defense Caucus, Burns took a horrendously hawkish view of what he would do as President if Nicaragua installed short-range missiles. Bill Evers quickly contacted Burns, and showed him the fallacy of his argument, including the fact that such a stance would justify an immediate Soviet invasion of Western Europe. Burns quickly saw the error of his ways and recanted, and he had issued a retraction statement before he withdrew from the race.

Yet for Raimondo, Garris and other radicals in the party, such as the Crane Machiner Sheldon Richman, one slip, even retracted, and you're out. Hard core to the hilt and even beyond. And yet . . . when numerous deviations of Ravenal were pointed out to our self-proclaimed r-r-revolutionaries, suddenly the milk of human kindness took over. "Well, he's getting better"; "he's learning"; "he says he's not a statist", and other utterances so far out of synch with the usual stance of Raimondo, Garris, Olmsted, Richman *et al* that it boggled the mind.

Or take my conversation Wednesday night with Scott Olmsted, a bright young Ph.D. in decision theory. After pointing out the impeccable hard-core radical record of Dave Bergland, and contrasting it to the decidedly leaky and soft-core record of Ravenal, Scott turned to me and said, perfectly soberly, "Well, you can't predict the future." Apart from the fact that this little gem contradicts Olmsted's own decision theory which claims that one *can* predict the future, the answer was so absurd that I could only gape. Otherwise, I would have had to descend to degrading quasi-baby talk, to explain patiently that of course no one can *absolutely* predict the future, but that one goes on the best evidence one has, that the evidence for Bergland's hard-core-ness was far superior, etc. *ad nauseam*.

After these chilling conversations Wednesday night, I concluded that our Gang of Four (Garris, Raimondo, Olmsted, and Hunter) were about to endorse Ravenal, and that, given the absurdity of their arguments, there were only two explanations for this gross betrayal of principle, of friends, of their word, and of honor itself. *Either* they had jointly gone

crazy, in a highly improbable *folie a quatre*; or they had, quite literally, sold out. Being an economist rather than a psychobabbler, I was strongly inclined to the latter explanation.

An RC Central Committee meeting had been called for Thursday noon, to consider possible endorsements, to be followed by an RC membership meeting at 1 p.m. When I got to the floor late Thursday morning, I found that matters were even worse than I had expected. Without even calling a meeting of the CC, the Gang of Four had issued a leaflet proclaiming that the RCCC had endorsed Earl Ravenal for President. I was stunned, pointing out that, (a) no meeting had been called, and (b) only a majority of the RCCC would make such an endorsement. Demanding an immediate meeting of the Central Committee, I pointed out that this unseemly haste and breach of form was relatively minor, since they had the votes and a majority was clearly ready to move for a Ravenal endorsement. I tendered my immediate and irrevocable resignation from the Radical Caucus, and the meeting, to all intents and purposes, was over.

I added a minor but interesting point: that Justin Raimondo, who, with Eric Garris, are the self-proclaimed Leninists on the RCCC, had publicly distributed a leaflet attacking Evers and myself for not being willing to repudiate Gene Burns absolutely after his Nicaragua gaffe. I pointed out that this was not only an arrant breach of Leninist caucus discipline, but also of proper behavior in any other caucus, be it Menshevik, Debsian, redneck, or sewing circle. Namely, you refrain from public criticism of fellow caucus members. If such a rule was not to be followed, there was no point in having a "caucus" at all.

Since I was no longer a member of the RC, I did not go to the open meeting, which I understand was a disaster, with Evers breaking down in tears amidst the emotionalism of the meeting. The reaction of his former friends and comrades in the Gang of Four was revealing: They all accused Evers of faking it, of only pretending to cry for effect. This is highly revealing of the personal character of the Gang of Four, one that I suppose could be called "callous" if one wanted, for some obscure reason, to be very very kind.

The next day, Garris and Raimondo appeared with MacBride, Crane and a bunch of other Unity Factionalists at a Unity meeting. The high point of unconscious humor at the meeting came when Raimondo urged a vote for Ravenal in the name of Party unity, going on to say that when Ravenal was nominated the right-wing would be driven out of the party!

And so the Crane Machine, by Thursday, had built its Unity facade. From the right-wing it had snared Poole, and from the Radicals of the Left came the Gang of Four, who constituted the majority of the RC Central Committee.

What had happened? We don't know for sure, but rumors abounded that my erstwhile friends and comrades had sold out—sold out for promised jobs and especially influence and power in the Ravenal campaign. The Crane Machine was willing to promise a lot to suborn the radicals, and particularly to capture Garris's excellent ability as organizer and vote-getter. When it was all over, our Mavens estimated that Garris's sellout cost Bergland 30 votes. Considering that the eventual Bergland victory was by 40 votes, it is clear that the RC sellout was a powerful weapon, and that without it Bergland would have won handily.

Specifically, the Crane Machine, noticing the argument in *Vanguard* over Leninism between Raimondo and Evers and myself, sensed that there was a rift in the RCCC that they could exploit. David Boaz, Crane underling as Vice President of the Cato Institute, approached the RT, and for three days Raimondo, Garris and the rest dickered with the Crane Machine behind our backs, in the meantime using their sudden volatility and inane arguments as a cover for their secret machinations. The rumored price for which they cut the deal was as follows: Garris and Raimondo got promises of full-time jobs in the Ravenal campaign and of veto power over all other posts in the campaign; and Scott Olmsted obtained a seat on the allegedly all-powerful three-man Campaign Oversight Committee, along with Randolph and Poole. Not only was this a betrayal of principle, of friendship, of personal integrity, and of honor, it was also stupid—for what made these bozos think that the Crane Machine would keep such lavish promises? Especially when very similar promises by the same people in the 1979-80 campaign were broken as soon as the Clark nomination was secured? In fact, a high ranking Crane Machine operative was laughing out loud during the week to one of our top Mavens, chuckling about how, on Sunday night, the entire Gang of Four would have been out on their ear. It *almost*, but only almost, would have been worth a Ravenal nomination to see these renegades, get their just deserts. Clearly, they should have held out for the traditional price: thirty pieces of silver, cash on the barrelhead.

Emil Franz's comment to the Ravenal leaders (Randolph and Howie Rich) on the RC defection was: "Remember—the British never let Benedict Arnold guard one of *their* bridges!"

The RC betrayal was perhaps the single most dramatic event of the convention before the actual voting. People kept coming to me in the corridors, urging me to form a new organization. Among leading radicals, Less Antman promptly quit the RC, Jeff Hummel stuck with Bergland, and Mike Grossberg shifted to Ravenal.

And so we have another powerful argument against Leninism: What happens to the movement if "Lenin" sells out?

VIII: Ideology vs. People: The Importance of Integrity

The RC stab-in-the-back led me to ruminate on the role of ideology as against personal behavior in our movement. When Garris and Raimondo argue for sticking to ideas and against criticizing people it *sounds* nice, cozy, and humanistic. But what does concentrating only on ideology and forgetting about individual persons mean in practice? Let us set aside for a moment the betrayal of radical principle in shifting from Bergland to Ravenal. In practice, holding individual persons of no importance is used to justify betrayal, breaking one's word, and a general pattern of behavior devoid of personal integrity. In a far greater degree, of course, this is what all fanatical ideologues do: the Robespierres who send dissenters to the guillotine; the Communist rulers who are cheerfully willing to slaughter tens of millions in order to advance "the cause". Libertarians, we have found all too starkly, can be the same sort of ideologues. They can possess the same sort of commissar mentality. They will not—one hopes—slaughter millions, but they can justify climbing to influence and power on the backs of former comrades because after all, and what

the hell, people, individuals are not important, only "the cause of liberty." Such people forget, of course, the whole *point* of achieving liberty: to give individual persons the chance to develop their own lives in freedom.

In this connection, Robert Heinlein has written a highly perceptive analysis of the difference between old-fashioned pols, who stress loyalty and integrity, and ideologue "reformers", who are far more dangerous. In *Time Enough for Love* (p. 110), he has Lazarus Long say:

"Reform politicians not only tend to be dishonest but *stupidly* dishonest—whereas the business politician is honest . . .

I don't mean that a business politician won't steal; stealing is his business. But *all* politicians are non-productive. The only commodity any politician has to offer is jawbone. His personal integrity—meaning, if he gives his word, can you rely on it? A successful business politician knows this and guards his reputation for sticking by his commitments—because he wants to stay in business—go on stealing, that is—not only this week but next year and years after that. So if he's smart enough to be successful at this very exacting trade, . . . he performs in such a way as not to jeopardize the only thing he has to sell, his reputation for keeping promises.

But a reform politician has no such lodestone. His devotion is to the welfare of all the people—an abstraction of very high order and therefore capable of endless definitions . . . In consequence your utterly sincere and incorruptible reform politician is capable of breaking his word three times before breakfast—not from personal dishonesty, as he sincerely regrets the necessity and will tell you so—but from unswerving devotion to his ideal.

All it takes to get him to break his word is for someone to get his ear and convince him that it is necessary for the greater good of *all* the peepul. He'll geek.

After he gets hardened to this, he's capable of cheating at solitaire."

But yes, it is true, libertarianism is a strictly political philosophy. As long as one sticks to the non-aggression axiom, one can continue to be a good libertarian. But in all personal relations, including our movement, there are other things as important as being a pure, hard-core libertarian. Sometimes it might be fully as important to be a person of morality, honor, and integrity as it is to Have the Correct Position on the El Salvador Question. In short, one can be a pure and consistent libertarian and still lie, cheat, betray, and be devoid of honor and integrity. You can be a libertarian, all right, but you will not be worth a hell of a lot as a human being.

As usual, the inimitable Franzi expressed this sentiment best: "Hey, this guy, Mike Lewis, a physician from Iowa, is really a great guy. He delivered 5 out of 5 delegates in Iowa, he did exactly what he said he was going to do, he didn't give me any crap, he didn't break his word . . . What the hell is he doing in *this* Party?"

The seething cauldron, the intense pressure-cooker of a Presidential convention, is a fascinating testing-ground of personal character. It is easy to be a good guy when there is no

pressure and events are moving serenely. But at a convention, and especially a Presidential convention, one truly finds out the mettle of one's compatriots: that is when you find out who are the good guys, who are the responsables, who are the wimps, who are the flakes, and who are the whores.

In a little known but revealing crisis at the convention, the mettle of David Bergland was tested and, as far as I am concerned, he came out with flying colors. Richard W. Suter, a superb Political Maven and an old friend of Bergland, and a man who had nominated Bergland for chair years ago, was denounced by many people in the Illinois delegation. Suter had been indicted for "mail fraud", and had plea bargained his way to a guilty verdict. He was then expelled from the Illinois party on the patently absurd charge that he had violated the Pledge that all LP members sign that they oppose the use of violence to achieve political and social ends. First of all, "mail fraud" is scarcely violence, and more important, whatever was done was hardly done for political and social ends. Tremendous pressure arose within the Bergland camp to dump Suter because many Illinois votes would be lost otherwise. Several delegates informed me that out of "principle" they could not vote for Bergland if Suter was kept on. What to do?

Emil Franzi is often scorned by radical ideologues for Not Having the Correct Position on a few issues. But Franzi's "position" on the Suter Affair was crystal-clear: "Suter," he said, "if you were guilty of rape or bank robbery, I'd blow you off. But 'mail fraud'? What kind of a chicken s--- charge is *that*?" To me, his sentiments were more explosive: "If I have to rat --- my friends to pick up a few votes, I might as well go back to the Republicans!"

Dave Bergland's reaction to the Suter Question, by the way, was tough and decisive. After listening to all the evidence and arguments on both sides, he said, "Suter stays". Suter himself ended the crisis by withdrawing from his official role as mid-west coordinator, in order not to embarrass the Bergland campaign and keep it above reproach. However, Suter stayed on as unofficial but influential Maven.

IX: David Koch: The \$300,000 Question

The Crane Machine had three aces up its sleeve at this convention. The first was the suborning of the RC Gang of Four. The second, which appeared toward the end of the week, was the very visible and imposing appearance of multi-millionaire David Koch. Koch, moving around the delegations with Randolph and MacBride, laid it on the line: If Ravenal were nominated, he as prepared to give \$300,000 to the Party for ballot drives. And what this "Unity" spokesman was asked, "if Bergland is nominated" Would you, in the name of unity, then contribute an equal amount to ballot drives?" "Certainly not," David Koch replied, "I only contribute to first-class candidates."

The Koch offer was, as on might expect, highly effective. After Bergland was nominated, Koch's statement to the press was, to say the least, ungracious. Instead of calling for unity behind the winner, he deplored the fact that such a fine candidate as Earl Ravenal had been rejected by the Libertarian Party. What price "Unity" now?

Actually, while all support to the LP is to be welcomed, it will not harm the Party in the long run to be no longer depen-

dent on the Koch family; it will not harm us to make it on our own in the real world. There was getting to be a danger of the Libertarian Party's becoming a perpetual welfare client of the Koch family. It will in the long-run be better for the LP to go out and develop more broadbased sources of funding, and hence more feisty independence.

X Bringing in the Ringers

The third trump card played by the Crane Machine at the PresCon was the pouring in of an enormous amount of money to bring in the ringers, to "paper" the various delegations at the convention. I hasten to emphasize that there is nothing illegal about "papering" delegations with "ringers." There is no residence requirement for membership in any state LP, and, so long as one is a paid-up LP member, any state delegation can make one an alternate to vote in its delegation. The problem is that many delegations do not have their assigned quotas filled at conventions. If a state is allowed, say, 10 delegates at a national convention, it may and usually will elect 10 delegates and other alternates, but often far less than that will appear. If only 7 delegates show up, then the state can "paper" its quota by 3 more delegates.

At the 1983 PresCon, there were huge gaps in many of the Western delegations. But clearly the best place to find "ringers" is the host city. The problem is that most of the Western states were principled while New York City, the local pool for ringers, is a stronghold of the Crane Machine. Most Western states would not add Craniac delegates, but Alaska, another Machine stronghold, was available. Alaska was allowed 36 delegates at the convention, but very few genuine Alaskans showed up. Thus, on the fourth ballot, the Alaska vote was 5 for Bergland, 25 for Ravenal. After Ravenal lost the Presidential nomination, and the Crane Machine surrendered the field, the ringers all trooped home. The next day, on the second ballot for Vice-President, there were nine Alaskan delegates on the floor. Emil Franzi walked over to one Alaskan and asked, "Hey, what happened to all the Alaskans?" "They flew back to Maryland," was the bitter reply.

Bringing in ringers is not illegal, but the Crane Machine operation was shameless, intense, and enormously expensive. Apparently there were not enough New Yorkers to paper the delegations, and so many Craniac ringers were flown in to New York, their airfare paid, and their hotel rooms taken care of. As far as I know, all of the far less numerous Bergland ringers paid their own way. As one of our Mavens said in wonder afterward, "All day Friday buses were coming from the airport loaded with Ravenal delegates. Some of them were walking in already equipped with Ravenal signs." Any and all Crane Machine friends, past, present, and hopefully future, suddenly showed up. Ghosts out of the past who had lost all interest long ago in the LP or in libertarianism suddenly popped up, and they were all delegates from somewhere wearing Ravenal buttons. Ray Cunningham, whose last act in the LP had been to swear up and down at the 1979 convention that he, not Crane, would be running the Clark presidential campaign and then quickly disappeared leaving Crane in charge—Cunningham showed up sporting a Ravenal badge. Bill Burt, pre-Hocker national director, who had left the LP years ago to become a railroad tycoon, suddenly appeared with a Ravenal button. Fran Youngstein, who had run for mayor of New York City in 1973, and had dropped out eight

years ago to become an ESTian, suddenly popped up out of the blue—as an Alaska delegate for Ravenal. Professor Mario Rizzo, old friend and NYU economist who has never had the slightest interest in the LP, suddenly showed at the convention. "What are *you* doing here, Mario," I asked? "Oh, I got bored at home and decided to see what was going on." Three days later this self-proclaimed "value-free" economist was a delegate from Alaska, snake dancing through the hall, carrying a Ravenal placard. Professor Jack Sanders, libertarian philosopher and proto-Voluntaryist who has always scorned the LP, was flown down from Rochester to be a Ravenal delegate along with Victoria Varga, former employee at the old Crane-run Libertarian Review/SLS warehouse in San Francisco.

It was truly bizarre, a *Through the Looking Glass* version of Old Home Week.

Estimates are that the Crane Machine brought in about 75 ringers. Remember that our estimates on Thursday had put Bergland about 180-190 and Ravenal about 120-130. In fact, on the first ballot on Saturday the vote was Bergland 185, Ravenal 190, with about 270 needed to elect. It is not too much to say that the difference was the ringers.

Another way to look at the importance of the ringers is to note that there were 540 delegates on the floor for the Presidential balloting, falling dramatically to about 440 the following day. Virtually the entire difference was the ringers.

Tentative estimates by our Mavens judge that the Crane Machine spent at least \$50,000 on the Ravenal campaign, mostly on the ringers. As one of them said, "I bet they spent more money per vote than on the Randolph campaign" (for governor of Alaska). Since the Bergland forces probably spent about \$10,000 total for the campaign, the inferiority of the Crane Machine in dollars/vote effectiveness once again becomes dramatically clear.

On the other hand, the situation was immeasurably confused by the fact that some ringers on both sides shifted their vote after they were seated. One of our Mavens talked about one state where "they had four Ravenal ringers. But on the ballot, they voted 1 for Bergland, 1 for Ravenal, 1 for (Dick) Siano (of New Jersey), and 1 for None of the Above." On the other hand, some Radical Caucus ringers shifted with the Garris defection to the Ravenal camp.

XI The Ruwart Phenomenon

As the convention opened, there were three announced candidates for the Presidency, Bergland, Ravenal, and James ("Piggi") Norwood, an eccentric retired colonel from Texas who was not himself a Party member or delegate and who got a maximum of two votes in the balloting. Another announced candidate was one Larry Smiley, a favorite son from Wisconsin; just before the balloting, Smiley withdrew and threw his entire delegation to Ravenal. At the last minute, Tonie Nathan was put in nomination. In mid-week, a complete unknown threw her hat into the ring: Mary Ruwart of Michigan, who announced that "you should vote for me because I am a woman." I only heard Mary in the Radical Caucus candidates' meeting, and she could not be heard beyond the first row. I dismissed her candidacy and went on with other pressing concerns. I was dead wrong.

By Friday night, I learned to my astonishment that Mary

Ruwart, though perhaps not audible without a mike in a big room, was very effective in the candidates' debates in the regional delegates caucuses. In a small, living room situation, she was poised and articulate, and she began to accumulate support from the newcomers, the "mush," the undecideds, hungry for a nonexistent unity and increasingly seized by the emotionalism of a Ruwart candidacy. The cry, "Mary, Mary" would redound throughout the hall on Saturday. On Friday night, our Mavens estimated that Ruwart would get 7 to 8 per cent of the vote. Actually, ever they underestimated the Ruwart Phenomenon, although they correctly saw that hers would be the decisive voice at the convention. For on the first ballot, Mary got 77 votes, 15% of the total, and on the second ballot her vote rose to 99.

On Friday night, then, both of the "superpowers" began an intensive effort to woo Mary Ruwart by getting her to drop out in their favor, with a Vice-Presidential nomination as her reward. Neither side had determined on a Vice-Presidential choice, and so both were playing the situation by ear. The Crane Machine tried first, but they struck a snag. Since Bergland promised to be a full-time candidate after January, and Ravenal said he had to teach two graduate courses all year, the Craniacs felt they needed a Vice-Presidential candidate who would be full time; but Mary Ruwart, a biochemist, could also campaign only part-time. That, plus the important fact that Ruwart "liked our side better", as one of our Mavens put it, led her to consider an agreement with the Bergland forces late Friday night: She would drop out Saturday morning before the balloting in return for the Bergland camp's support for the Vice-Presidency. Thinking they had lost Ruwart, the Crane Machine announced their own Dream Ticket early Saturday morning: Ravenal for President, and Roger MacBride (who had sworn up and down his unavailability for running in 1984), for Veep.

XII H-Hour

One of the prime charges—indeed, the *only* charge against Bergland—was that he was not a charismatic speaker. "What kind of criterion is *that* for a Party of Principle?" asked Christopher Winter, chairman of the Hawaii Party and devoted Berglandite, in considerable anguish. Besides, the most perceptive word on the charisma question came from the highly charismatic former Congressman Sam Steiger (AZ), who endorsed Bergland before the convention: "It's easier to make the stable guy a little flashier than to make the flashy guy stable." Actually, Bergland often gives rousing speeches, his most moving being one delivered on behalf of principle and against sellout at the California LP state convention in 1980. Less Antman, who had written that speech, came flying in from California on Friday, and stayed up virtually all night writing a dynamic speech for a special pre-voting speaking session on Saturday morning, featuring Ed Clark, Larry Dodge, a highly popular Montanan, Dave Nolan, and Bergland himself. I thought all the speeches were highly effective, including Dodge, who is such a charming and amiable person that criticism coming from him is especially effective: "I worry about Ravenal. Why does he say 'you' instead of 'our' when he talks about the Party?" Our Mavens tell us, however, that the pre-balloting session swung very few votes.

Our forces had promised a "Special Announcement" at this session, but there was none, because Mary Ruwart had begun the first of several teasers for that day. She decided that she

would not throw her support to Bergland before the balloting, but only at the end of the first ballot. The Bergland forces struck an agreement on that basis.

10:30 A.M. The nominations had started and the voting was about to begin. Mason and Evers were optimistic, the latter on the basis of the loudness of relative applause. I myself had thought that Ravenal's applause was slightly louder, and then I became greatly worried to find that Emil Franzi, for the first time since I had known him, was no longer buoyant and optimistic, "I don't know," he said. "I don't like the feel of this convention. I haven't liked it for two days."

Never let it be said that the working press, at least the top journalists, are not highly astute. Frank Lynn, one of the top political reporters for the *New York Times*, who wrote two lengthy and perceptive articles on the convention, walked over to Bill Evers just before the first ballot began. "You look like one of the leading Bergland people," he said. "I think Bergland's going to take it. How do I get his picture taken?"

Dave Bergland was nominated by Ed Clark, who had announced for Bergland in mid-week in an open letter to the delegates, and who was selected to be Chairman of Bergland's campaign committee.

Franzi had made an excellent decision, which most of the rest of us had disagreed with at the time. He decided not to have any of the banners, placards, boaters, etc. that the Ravenal forces were amassing, and not to have the traditional snake-dance demonstration when Bergland was put into nomination. As a result, when Bergland was nominated, there was great applause, cheering, but nothing else. Then, came the Ravenal demonstration, snaking around the floor. It was at *that* moment that I began to take heart, because peering closely at them, it was evident that (a) there were not very many of them, and (b) they were only the old toadies and hirelings and ringers of the Crane Machine that we had all come to know so well. For me, that was the psychological turning-point of the balloting. It turned out later that Franzi and Mason had precisely the same reaction: the thinness of the Ravenal demonstration was the psychological turning point, and probably influenced the undecided delegates as well. As Franzi the Military Maven put it: "The Ravenal demonstration was when I knew we'd won it. Like Meade watching Pickett at Gettysburg, I knew there weren't enough of them to overrun us."

Franzi later explained his choice for no demonstration. "Look, when both sides do it, it's fun, and everyone looks to see who has more demonstrators. But, among Libertarians particularly, if only one side does it and the other doesn't, then the side that *doesn't* looks serious, while the people doing it look hokey and silly." Hokey and silly is precisely the way the Ravenal demonstrators looked, as the same relatively small number of Craniacs kept it going on and on.

It was now nail-biting time. On the first ballot the result was Ravenal 190, Bergland 185, Ruwart 77, and scattered votes for Nathan, Siano, assorted write-ins, and None of the Above. It was bad to be behind on the first ballot, but it was also clear that we would soon pick up Nathan and Siano votes (both of whom preferred Bergland) and most of the None of the Above. The key was the Ruwart vote.

Mary Ruwart now came to the microphone, on a point of

personal privilege, ready to make her agreed-upon withdrawal statement. She began: "I see now that it is impossible for a woman to be nominated for President today." If she had simply made a withdrawal statement, all would have been over, and she might now be the Vice-Presidential candidate. Instead, roars went up, not only from her own supporters but even more from the Ravenalians, desperately anxious to stop the withdrawal: "Mary, Mary!" Swept up in the tide of emotion and thinking perhaps that she might even win, Mary Ruwart cancelled her agreed-upon announcement.

The second ballot was a cheery development for the Bergland forces. It was obvious that on the second ballot, both sides would pick up a lot of the None of the Above and minor candidate votes. One of our Mavens guessed that each side would pick up 5 or 10 votes on the second ballot. Instead, while Ruwart picked up 22 votes and Ravenal added 8, Bergland picked up 33 votes to spurt ahead of Ravenal by 218 to 198. The excellent showing on the second ballot made things look good for Bergland, but once again La Ruwart was the key. What would she do?

Once again, the fandango started. This time, Mary went to the podium, and milked every minut for what it was worth, playing her hopped-up supporters—and all the rest of us—like an accordion. Stopping and starting, milking every bit of applause, and "No, Mary, Mary", Mary Ruwart finally Did It—she finally not only withdrew from the race but also threw her support to Dave Bergland. It was all over but the shouting.

Yet it was *not* over on the 3rd ballot. Ruwart scarcely delivered to us more than half of her own supporters. Bergland added 51 votes on the third ballot, but Ravenal added almost as many, 45. A particular oddity is that in Mary's own state of Michigan, she only delivered her own vote to Bergland, and not any of her seven supporters. It was now 260 for Bergland and 243 for Ravenal, with 34 None of the Above, and 272 needed to win.

We looked good, but it was still very close. Bill McMillen of New York charged that Gary Greenberg, boss of the New York delegation, was not counting votes correctly, and asked for a polling of the delegation. Greenberg started bellowing that California—whose voting procedures under chairman Mary Gingell were scrupulously fair—should also be polled. For some reason, the chair failed to gavel down Greenberg or insist upon polling the New York delegation. We started putting pressure on the None of the Above Delegates to change their votes, preferably to Bergland, but even to Abstain, since the winner must only have a majority including NOTA but not of Abstainers. One delegate was wringing her hands, virtually in tears. "I can't do it," she said, twisting her handkerchief in agony, "I can't vote for a CFR member." She had been a Ravenal ringer. She changed her vote to Abstain, and then at the last minute on the 4th ballot, changed her vote again to Bergland.

On the climactic fourth ballot, with 270 needed to nominate, Bergland picked up ten votes for 270, while Ravenal lost 13 to 230, with 24 sticking stubbornly to NOTA. We started screaming and shouting in triumph; Bergland was over the top, by one vote, although the flow of the voting made it certain that we would win handily on the next ballot. (Fortunately NOTA cannot hold up things forever; after the fifth ballot the low man—Ravenal—would have had to drop

out and all would have been over.) At that point, the Crane Machine pulled their last tacky and sleazy stunt. They pulled a fast one with the North Carolina delegation, inducing one delegate to get up and announce a shift in his vote on the fourth ballot from "Robert Heinlein" to Ravenal. That would not have changed matters, since we would still have had 270. But somehow he was able to fox the chair into polling the entire North Carolina delegation, which gave an opportunity for one delegate to change—ostensibly on the fourth ballot but actually and illegally *after* the ballot was over—from Bergland to Ravenal. We now only had 269 votes.

Emil Franzi then walked over to Dick Randolph and said: "Look Dick, the question now is not *who* but *when*. The question is whether you go out with class." Randolph scowled a refusal, but at this point Ravenal himself decided to withdraw. Earl went up to the podium and delivered a gracious, even noble, withdrawal speech, saying that the wishes of the delegates were clearly with Dave Bergland. It was over, and now we could shout and sob without hindrance. Armageddon was finished and the Good Guys, the Guys in the White Hats, had triumphed. Despite the money, and the ringers, and the swiftly moving cadres of the Enemy, Justice had finally triumphed. Hallelujah! In the words of the great Christian hymn of James Russell Lowell,

Once to every man and nation
Comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of truth with falsehood,
For the good or evil side . . .

Amidst all the chaos and confusion of the 1983 convention, amidst all the temptations of Power, the Libertarian Party had arrived at its moment of decision, its moment of truth, and it had chosen the side of good and of righteousness. The Libertarian Party is indeed, and shall remain, the Party of Principle.

XIII Aftermath

One of the charming aspects of the Bergland victory is that, since he won a full majority by only one vote, there were an enormous number of Bergland voters each of whom was convinced that it was his or her own vote that had put Bergland over the top. And in a sense, of course, each of them was right. All this gave every Bergland voter an extra stake in the triumph.

Saturday night is traditionally the big banquet after the Presidential nomination, the time when everyone slaps everyone else on the back, pledges unity behind the winner, and opens his or her checkbook for the campaign. And where, at the banquet this Saturday night, were all the Unity-mongers, all the movers and shakers of the Biddeford Accord? The answer is, precisely Nowhere. No MacBride, no Hunscher, no Crane, no Hocker, no Koch, no Herbert. Of the top Craniacs and the Unity crowd, only the Riches and Randolph were there. And Randolph lurked in the wings, sourly refusing to put on a Bergland button and leaving before the fund-raising. Earl Ravenal, however, was there to his great credit, as was Bob Poole, greatly distressed to see the extent to which the cry for unity had proved to be a hoax and a scam. But despite the Craniac-Biddeford walkout, Larry Dodge as fund-raiser at the banquet managed to raise the excellent sum of over \$42,000 to kick off the Bergland for President campaign.

On Sunday, the Crane Machine turned tail and ran; it rolled over and disappeared, gone perhaps forever. No Craniac contested the Vice-Presidency, or any of the national party offices, and no leading Craniac ran for any of the At-Large seats on NatCom. The floor had fortunately defeated ultra-decentralist attempts to eliminate at-large seats or to have each state chair appoint a state rep to NatCom, which would have made NatCom impossibly large and unwieldy. There are only a handful of lesser Craniacs on the new NatCom as regional reps.

One might have expected that, after the fervor of the day before, Mary Ruwart would sweep in to the Vice-Presidential nomination. But the delegates had had a day to think over the Ruwart Phenomenon, and presumably were having second thoughts. The Radical Caucus flew in Joe Fuhrig from California to run for the Vice-Presidency, heedless of the dubious constitutionality of running two candidates from the same state. I nominated my old friend Jim Lewis from Connecticut, stressing that Lewis was a hard-core libertarian and active campaigner, that he particularly emphasized the importance of abolishing the income tax, that he was a member of no faction, and that his job as bookbinding salesman made him particularly qualified to travel, especially among the campuses of the East and Midwest. Dave Nolan was also put into nomination, and the first ballot had Ruwart leading with 140 votes, Lewis second with 117, Nolan third with 84, and Fuhrig fourth with 61, with 224 votes needed to elect.

Dave Nolan then withdrew, throwing his support to Jim Lewis. On the second ballot, Lewis picked up virtually all the Nolan votes, rising to 206, with Fuhrig increasing to 91, and Ruwart holding about the same at 145. Ruwart's failure to pick up votes on the second ballot signalled an imminent Lewis victory. What happened to Ruwart demonstrates the extreme volatility of the convention psyche. Fuhrig then withdrew, and Lewis went over the top on the third and final ballot. We now had a fine Bergland-Lewis ticket.

And so the Crane Machine, at least within the Libertarian Party, rolled over and died. It is no longer a factor; PresCon was indeed another Trafalgar. The Libertarian Party now enjoys a true unity, unity with Justice. A lingering question is whether the CM is finished forever or will someday return. Presumably they would not dare to challenge Franzi on his home turf, for the 1985 convention will be in Phoenix; so the earliest they might possibly be heard from is in four years.

With his flair for the *pomposo*, Craniac Roy Childs, after the Presidential vote, announced his immediate and eternal departure from the Libertarian Party. Some of the drama in this proclamation, however, was punctured by Franzi, who asked: "In what sense has Roy left the Party? All he ever does is come to conventions when he's paid to speak." Whether Roy will continue in his role as Minister of Hate and Disinformation for the Crane Machine, which consisted largely of calling up my friends in the LP and boozily denouncing me at great length as being the quintessence of evil, only time will tell. Chris Hocker has also resigned as publisher of *Inquiry* and from the Crane Machine, and Mike Burch has resigned from the National Taxpayers Legal Fund, in order to rejoin the real world. Is the Old Gang really breaking up?

On the status of the RC Gang of Four in the Party from now on, Franzi summed it up in his inimitable style: "They

have the word WHORE written all over them." He added that his biggest single mistake in the campaign was "to be naive, to think that Libertarians have higher standards of integrity than Democrats or Republicans." Franzi also noted that he had made two other mistakes at the convention. One was that his enormous admiration and respect for Dave Bergland led him to lose his normal convention cool at the stab-in-the-back performed by the Radical Caucus. Another was that as campaign manager, he had not pointed out early enough and forcefully enough to some that campaigns necessarily have only *one* manager.

As for the new NatCom, it overwhelmingly ratified the action of the old one just before the convention in moving the National Headquarters out of Washington, D. C., the heart of the State and what the New Left used to call the Bowels of the Beast, and also and not coincidentally the home of the Crane Machine, and to Houston, Texas, a stronghold of the Party where there are a myriad of eager volunteers.

XIV: Overall Assessments

1. Did It Just Happen, or Was Burns Pushed? The mainstream account of what happened was as I have written above: Burns dropped out, a general scramble occurs, and Bergland and Ravenal enter the race. Our Armageddon, like the classic battles of Gettysburg and Jutland, was a fortuitous accident, planned or expected by neither side. But there is an alternative, "conspiracy" explanation, believed fervently by many leading Berglandians. The conspiracy view holds that the Ravenal forces were too well organized, their buttons and placards too professional, to have been planned for only one week. They also maintain that Burns has a friend and leading supporter in Orlando who has been in contact with the Crane Machine. The hypothesis goes on that the Machine, learning of Burns' Achilles' heel about finances, worked on Burns through the contact, inducing him to leave the race by discouraging his financial expectations about the campaign. We also know that Craniac Chris Hooker was in frequent contact with Burns over the summer. In a sense, then, according to the conspiracy analysis, Burns was "pushed" out of the Presidential race, with Ravenal already prepped, and waiting in the wings.

One counter to the conspiracy view is the fact that Crane and Hocker officially endorsed Burns only two days before he pulled out, so that seemingly his pullout caught them unawares. But of course a counter to that would claim that the official endorsement was a cover for Craniac knowledge of the impending pullout.

So there we have an alternative scenario. While there isn't enough evidence as yet to embrace this view, it certainly cannot be ruled out of court. Perhaps we will one day learn the full story. At any rate, this sort of thinking in the Bergland camp, shows that we, at any rate, have never made the fatal mistake of underestimating the enemy.

2. The Crane Machine Engaged in "Maginot-Line" Strategy, Imitating the Successes of the Last War. The French were smashed in World War II because of their "Maginot Line" thinking, their generals re-fighting the successful battles of World War I. Similarly, the Craniac Unity Scam was a mechanistic aping of the successful unity theme of the victorious Alicia Clark campaign of 1981. The Crane Machine was unimaginatively re-fighting the Guida-Clark struggle at

Denver. Whereas the Bergland forces won on the old Mason theme of 1981; they won on a theme of principle. As Franzi succinctly put it, "The Bergland campaign was the victory of principle over unity." Or, as Bill Evers sardonically suggested, if the Crane Machine should return in 1985 or 1987, they will probably run on a theme of "principle"! Always one convention out of synch.

3. The Crane Machine, As Usual, Underestimated its Opposition. Because of its overall megalomania, because its very being is rooted in the myth of its own unique "competence" and "professionalism", the Crane Machine is inherently doomed to underestimate its enemies. Its preppie orientation also leads it to underrate people of different cultures or lifestyles. It grievously underestimated Alicia Clark for years, and probably still does so, and in this campaign it underrated and continues to misunderstand Dave Bergland. Low-key rather than flamboyant, Bergland is solid as a rock. As Franzi points out, Bergland is "absent the manic-depressive tendencies of most candidates, possessing deep inner convictions, and is one of the most principled people in the entire LP." Franzi adds that, if he were to give a title to Bergland, it would be "The Quiet Fighter."

4. The Bergland Forces Had the Better Mavens, and the Smarter Troops. The Bergland forces turned out to have the better field people as well as the superior Mavens. The troops were also smarter and more knowledgeable. As Franzi notes, "certain hard-core states such as Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Texas—filled with real people, not ringers—held tight, saw through the scams, and made the difference."

5. The Biggest Internal Problem of the Bergland Campaign was a Tendency to Panic and React to the Opposition. Franzi points out that, as often happens at conventions, some Berglandians had a tendency to panic at opposition moves and were impelled to copy or react blindly. Franzi's insistence over opposition on not having the snake-dance demonstration at the nomination is one example. Another was a desire to mimic the favorite CM tactic of putting your candidate in a big room and hyping it up with staged questions and big name LP supporters. Instead, Franzi, seeing that Bergland comes across

better in small groups, successfully insisted that the campaign stress Bergland speaking close-up to several groups a night in Room 4501. When Antman arrived Friday to write Bergland's speeches, the large-room tactic could then be successfully used. Franzi also denounced some supporters' yen to leaflet for Bergland outside Ravenal meetings or parties; as he puts it, "tacky, bad manners, and worth *no votes*."

6. Populism Triumphed over Elitism. Corollary to the victory of principle over "unity" was the fact that the Bergland nomination was a triumph of populism over preppie elitism. As Evers cogently put it, the convention rejected the fundamental Cranian vision of the role of the LP as being socially acceptable and "making liberals like us." Instead, the triumphant vision is that of an LP seeking out principled constituencies, whether they be Right or Left. Or, as Franzi phrased it, "there are still more rednecks than Ivy League graduates!"

7. Whither the Radical Caucus? What happens now to the Radical Caucus? Essentially, the RC, apart from conventions, consists of *Libertarian Vanguard*. But most of the work on *Vanguard* had been done by Olmsted and Evers. Olmsted, however, burnt out, tired of the turmoil, and lacking confidence in the wisdom of his decision at jumping on to a losing ship, has now quit the Radical Caucus and the LP itself. Ironically, the bright young decision theorist has announced that he doesn't want to have to make any more tough decisions. And Evers is likely to be inactive in the RC. This leaves the RC in the hands of a Raimondoite rump, and one can only be dubious at the prospect of Raimondo writing and editing *Vanguard* by himself. If *Vanguard* ever comes out again, it will be ineffective and irrelevant to Party concerns. The best guess is that the RC, having aided in the historic task of overthrowing the Crane Machine and then self-destructing, will sink quietly under the waves.

And so, despite the treachery of the Gang of Four, it was indeed a glorious and magnificent victory. A New Era is dawning for the Libertarian Party, an era of true harmony based on shared principles and common strategic insights. Onward and upward with Bergland and Lewis! ‡

Keeping Low-Tech

By The Old Curmudgeon

I inhabit a movement where nine out of ten activists are—or at least seem to be—computer programmers. And this was in the Neanderthal Era when computers were esoteric and mainframe. In the last year or so, as everyone knows, personal and home computers have hit America like a thunderclap, and of those I know who are writers, I am one of only a tiny handful that remain determinedly low-tech. Conversations at cocktail parties and soirees, which used to be devoted to exquisite analysis of political or social mores, are now redolent with talk of modems, peripherals, hard

disks, Kaypros, and all the rest. Not only that: But I have been bombarded by well-meaning enthusiasts among friends, colleagues, and acquaintances urging me to get a computer, dedicated word processor, et al., along with detailed advice on brands, compatibles, etc. My stubborn insistence on pounding away on my reconditioned IBM-Model D electric (*not electronic*) typewriter tends to send my friends into paroxysms of frenzy at my failure to join the modern epoch.

Well, people, I've finally found the way to shut my

freres up. I didn't plan it that way, but this has been a great serendipity, a *mitzvah*, the unplanned consequence of human action not human design. And for those of you who want to stay peacefully low-tech, happy and undisturbed, I offer you my solution.

I told my friends and colleagues the following: Look, people, I have no, repeat no, interest whatsoever in playing video games, having a computer balance my budget, or keeping a file on the non-existent nails stored in my non-existent garage. I have no interest in "fooling around" on the computer, spending my leisure time at it, etc. I have the sneaking hunch that the alleged time the computer saves you is calculated by overlooking the "fooling around" and learning times, which you guys seem to enjoy but to me is boredom personified, multiplied to the *n*th power. Recently, the university at which I teach tried to nudge all of us into the modern age by giving us a Texas Instrument computer gratis, a computer which, typical of our shop, can do nothing. We were also handed a free instruction booklet which is slightly larger than the computer itself. I have found, my friends, an instant cure for insomnia: Pouring over the computer instruction booklet. By the end of Page 1, my eyes glazeth over, and I'm off to the arms of Morpheus. I can be high-tech too, but it's a different and even *higher* kind of tech, I ween: the kind of tech where I push a button and *it* does all the work. Like my TV set; like my VCR. Like my hand calculator. The kind of tech that I want is the kind of tech where I don't have to have an intimate relationship with the tech in question; where I don't have to know how it works or what are its special needs. Can your much vaunted computer say the same?

Yes, it's true I write a lot, so I would indeed have one, but only one, use for a computer/word processor. Here is what I'm looking for (at this point my listener perks up, for he thinks—a grave error!—that he has me): I want to continue to type my stuff on a typewriter, with old-fashioned paper in the machine, and the paper emerging with the words on it; then, I would also like the typewriter to be hooked up to a computer, so that the same words register on it. But I pay no attention to the computer whatever. Finally, after I do my usual editing of the first draft on my beloved "hard copy" (with naturally *real* letters and not the monstrous collection of dots that cheapo computer printers give out), and I'm ready for final printing, I

go to the computer, redo the mistakes and correct to the final draft, and print the whole thing out on a letter-quality printer. In short, I want to ignore the blasted computer until the time has come for final printing, thus saving money and/or lots of time and effort for my long-suffering spouse.

By this point, my perky friend has grown quiet and thoughtful. Usually, he says, "I don't see why that can't be done," but if he pursues it at all, he reports back, crestfallen, that the thing is impossible. One of my friends, a computer maven to the hilt, said "I know what you want! You want to buy a .44 Magnum, and then use it as a club!" "Precisely," I replied. The Maven ended the conversation with high hopes, but later declared that it was impossible. Another Maven, a professional word processor, also grew thoughtful, and he said: "You know, I'd advise waiting a while. They're coming out with great new advances all the time." Aha! Precisely my view, too. Yes, I will hunker down and wait. After all, I was that way with *all* modern developments. I first got a TV set in 1967, thereby skipping the entire Uncle Miltie-Dagmar era, and I dare say I am little the worse for my loss. I hung on to my sturdy old mechanical Olympia for years after people cut their eye-teeth on electrics, but here I am, a decade or two behind perhaps, but happy at my IBM. So, unless one of my friends or readers can come up with a hot new development, I shall be content to wait it out, escaping the excruciating boredom of the instruction booklet, the eyestrain of peering at the green letters, and all the rest. They tell me, by the way, that there *is* an even better way available to me right now. I can type my stuff on my electric typewriter, take the final corrected hard copy, and place it under a hotshot computer with a photo-method, which can then photograph the copy and thereby implant it in the computer, from which I can correct, print out, etc. Aha! Eureka! Better even than a wire leading from the typewriter. But there is, of course, a catch. The thing apparently costs about 10 grand, and none of my friends is so wealthy that he can, with a straight face, advise me to buy this equipment. But hell, ain't technology wonderful, and maybe in a few years I can buy this photo-computer marvel for the same price that my friends are now putting out for their high-tech systems. Or, better yet, maybe a computer will eventually be *so* high-tech that I can push a button and *it* can do all the work. Like I said, I can wait. ‡

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