

POLITICS - ITS TWO BRANCHES

By William Haworth

Politics, with a few exceptions, is a volunteer endeavor. Those exceptions refer to paid office holders, their staffs, and private consultants, and a few state and national party officials.

The concept of party politics is really no different than many volunteer organizations, ie, Boy's Club, American Cancer Society. There is a purpose to electing individuals to governmental positions, as well as a plan of action, which includes utilizing individuals as volunteers. The plan of action is identical to most volunteer organizations, ie, Junior Achievement or Heart Fund. Although the purpose differs from one organization to another, their existence is dependent on it.

The word "politics" has become a general term for more than the simple act of electing individuals to public office. It often refers to the operation of local, state and national government. To differentiate between these two separate functions, the word "politics" in this paper will refer to the process of electing individuals to public office. However, it won't refer to re-electing current office holders. "Government", on the other hand, will refer to the operation of all three levels of government, local, state and national by elected office holders and civil service employees.

This paper will attempt to illustrate how an individual can become involved in politics as a volunteer.

As stated above, politics is a volunteer organization. Nationally, only about three percent of the general public ever volunteer for a political campaign or a party office, ie, precinct committeeman.

Watergate has inflicted a partly justified but overly critical image of government and politics. Politics is an exercise in human relations and involves issues of power and influence. Only 3% of the general population are motivated to participate in the determination of these issues; the other 97% simply prefer to stay out of the political arena and criticize the efforts of the participants. Unfortunately, this criticism is no different than can be found in everyday life outside the realm of politics and government. In other words, the critics fail to realize that they may have done the same act, on a personal scale, in their own daily lives. One cannot reasonably criticize the individuals involved in politics if one is not willing to participate himself.

Politics has been defined as the process of electing an individual to public office. This can be divided into two units, party politics and campaign politics. The former applies to the activities of both major parties at the county level. Campaign politics, on the other hand, pertains to the activities undertaken by a group of individuals to elect one candidate for a specific office.

#### PARTY POLITICS

Illustrated below is an outline of the party structure for both parties in Indiana. There are some minor sections excluded but this presents a typical situation.

Voters in the May Primary	elect	Precinct Committeeman
Precinct Committeeman	appoints	Precinct Vice Committeeman
Precinct Committeemen Precinct Vice Committeemen	make up	County Central Committee
County Central Committee	elects	County Chairman County Vice Chairman

The precinct committeeman appoints a vice committeeman of the opposite sex, and these individuals donate their time as volunteers.

Both parties are concerned with five crucial tasks: 1) Polling the precincts; 2) Voter registration; 3) Absentee ballots; 4) Election day and 5) Fund raising. All five offer a newcomer the opportunity to become involved in party politics. The first four are nearly always the responsibility of the precinct committeemen.

This clearly illustrates the importance of a precinct in party politics. It is a geographic area decreed by state law whose boundaries are drawn by the county election board. Every two years additional precincts may be added, due to population growth or shifts. When necessary, new precincts are formed from existing ones. Normally, the election board tries to maintain each precinct at 500-600 registered voters. On occasion, precincts are merged due to losses in registered voters.

All four functions require considerable manpower. Committeemen will enlist the services of anyone willing to assist them. Often they will break down their precinct by block and/or apartment complexes. On each block they will have someone responsible for polling/absentee ballots and registering. These captains may delegate tasks to other volunteers. Rarely will a committeeman have too many workers. For this reason, any individual who desires to do volunteer work, perhaps on a limited basis at first, will find an opportunity at the precinct level. Both party's county chairmen can put one in contact with their precinct committeeman.

**POLLING:** Authorized by state law, this vehicle enables the political party to contact every voter on a personal, one-to-one basis generally in their homes. Those polling will contact every dwelling in their

designated area, ie, precinct, block.

Both parties use a printed polling card which is filled out by the volunteer for every eligible voter. These cards will be kept for use on election day.

Some of the main reasons for polling are as follows:

1. To locate eligible voters who are not registered.
2. To locate eligible voters who are registered but will be unable to vote and therefore will need an absentee ballot.
3. To locate party supporters (Republican or Democrat) and favorable independents for the "get out the vote" campaign on election day.
4. To locate party supporters (Republican or Democrat) and favorable independents who will need a ride to the polls, a babysitter, or other form of assistance on election day.
5. To recruit volunteers who are willing to donate their time and efforts on behalf of the party (Republican or Democrat) and its candidates.
6. To accumulate mailing lists for campaign and finance direct mailings.

**REGISTRATION:** To be eligible to vote in any primary, city or general election a person must be properly registered in the precinct in which he lives. The only exception to this requirement is that a person who is properly registered and moves within 29 days of an election at which there is voting for the offices of President and Vice President, may vote in the precinct of former residence, and in which he is registered, for President and Vice President only. This exception does not apply to Federal offices other than President and Vice President.

Under Indiana Election law, each party is allowed four Deputy Registrars per precinct. Normally, the committeeman and vice are deputized. The other two may be anyone willing to perform the duties.

Registration normally follows polling. The polling card will indicate which voters are not registered. These individuals are then personally contacted in their homes by the deputy registrars.

State law allows for registration from the first secular day in December following a General Election up to and including the 29th day before a Primary Election, and then from May 15th following a Primary Election up to and including the 29th day before a General Election.

ABSENTEE BALLOT: Any voter who cannot vote physically at his/her precinct voting place on election day must qualify under one of the three provisions listed below to be eligible for an absentee ballot.

1. Any voter who is sick or confined within their county of residence but physically unable to vote in person at their precinct voting place.
2. Any voter who will be a member of the State, County or Precinct Election Board on Election day and be serving outside their legal voting precinct.
3. Any voter who is in temporary residence outside the county of their legal residence or has reason to believe that on election day they will be outside the county of their legal residence and unable to physically vote, in person, at their precinct voting place.

Polling discloses the voters who need absentee ballots. These ballots often are hand delivered to them by party volunteers and picked up later. This is another way to volunteer one's time for a political party, doing

an activity that does not require very much time.

ELECTION DAY: By state law the party casting the highest number of votes in the county for the preceding Secretary of State election names the inspector, one clerk, one sheriff and one judge for each precinct. Although the appointments are the responsibility of the County Chairman, he often allows the committeemen to actually select the personnel.

The other party selects one judge, one clerk, and one sheriff from their ranks.

Together, each precinct has seven officials. These people are volunteers, but on this occasion are paid for their services by the local Election Board.

The law also allows the two parties to appoint one challenger and one poll book holder (watcher) per precinct. Again, this task is the County chairman's responsibility.

Each official has specific assigned tasks.

Inspector - Chairman and spokesperson for the precinct election board (the board consists of the inspector and the two judges), obtains ballots, supplies, arranges the election equipment and files the returns.

Judges - Works with the inspector in determining the validity of any challenges and assists voters when needed.

Clerks - They keep the records, handle the ballot cards and tally the votes.

Sheriffs - Preserves the peace from the election room to a 50 foot radius outside and makes arrests for election law violations.

The other half of a committeeman's duties on election day boils down to one objective - "Get the favorable voters of his party to the polls". To accomplish this task several activities must be done that require

volunteer manpower. Each activity may require only one individual at a time but several are needed to rotate throughout the day.

1. Poll watcher - Designated as a watcher and carrying the "Watcher" card, they are allowed free access to any place within the Polling Place. He/she may observe any part of the election process at any time during the Election Day. Often the Precinct Committeeman designates him/herself as the Watcher.
2. Poll Challenger - Allowed by law, this individual has a list of his/her precinct's registered voters. Each precinct committeeman should have previously marked any person(s) that, in his/her opinion, should be "Challenged" when and if they appear to vote or if their vote appears in the Absentee ballots delivered to the precinct.
3. Poll Challenger's Assistant - Self explanatory.
4. Telephone Callers - These are individuals who will call the registered voters in their precinct that have not voted by a certain hour on election day. Their purpose is to remind the voter to vote and ask if they need a ride or a babysitter.
5. Drivers - Working in conjunction with the telephone callers, they are available to transport voters to and from the polling place.
6. Babysitters - Women who are available to serve in this capacity for voters who need this assistance in order to vote.
7. Runner - This individual will take from the poll watcher, names of people who haven't voted by certain hours of day and phone this information to the centralized phone bank. Unless your telephone callers are located at a central location, this

position isn't really needed.

As can be seen from this brief survey, party politics offers an individual several avenues to serve as a volunteer, some are limited and on a short term basis, while others are major in scope, requiring a time commitment of several days or weeks.

#### CAMPAIGN POLITICS

Every campaign has five basic units:

- Volunteer program
- Scheduling
- Fund raising
- Research
- Public Relations

These may vary in intensity from campaign to campaign and the office being sought, ie, Congress vs. County Council.

Each unit requires volunteer workers in a local campaign. For a state wide or Congressional campaign, public relations and scheduling may be handled by a paid individual. However, this may not always be true, particularly in the early stages of a campaign.

These five units are administered by a campaign manager, who may either be a volunteer or paid. Illustrated on the chart (page 117 ) is a typical campaign structure incorporating the five units.

Most campaigns will have a person in charge of each of the four units. It is their responsibility to staff with volunteers, the various projects and activities required for a successful campaign. In many cases, particularly under the Volunteer Unit, an unlimited number of individuals are needed.

Those who want to become heavily involved with a campaign need to select a candidate and offer their services when he/she publicly announces their intentions to run in the primary, if not before. Normally, a candidate will have his/her unit chairman and possibly some project chairmen, ie, blitzing, selected by their announcement date.

For those interested in a minor role your timing isn't as important. Whether it's early or late in a campaign, minor roles are always available.

To learn who has filed for candidacy, contact the local Election Board. Anyone who intends to run in the primary must file their candidacy with the local Election Board. If you are interested in knowing who might run but has not announced, consult your party's county chairman. They will normally be aware of individuals contemplating a candidacy. The Election Board should know who the two party chairmen are and how to contact them.

Currently, there are only six offices not covered by Indiana's primary law - Secretary of State, Treasurer, Auditor, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Clerk and Reporter of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals. Both parties hold their respective state conventions in Indianapolis with delegates, elected by the voters in the Spring Primary, selecting their party's candidate for those six offices.

To learn who are the announced and unannounced candidates, the respective county party chairmen are the best sources of information.

Describing the duties and scope of many of the projects listed under all five units is beyond the realm of this paper. Indeed, many of them will vary in style but not necessarily their basic approach, from campaign to campaign. No one campaign will normally utilize all of these projects. Many are lucky to have a good blitzing program or any of the other projects under Volunteers. Due to a lack of planning or the nature of

CAMPAIGN MANAGER

Volunteer Programs

1. Blitzing (door to door)
2. Drop leaflet (house to house)
3. Coffee/teas
4. Yard signs
5. Dumper stickers
6. Mailings
7. Telephoning
8. Special projects
9. Headquarter's work
10. Special Voter groups
11. Letters to the Editor

Scheduling

1. Keep the appointment book

Fund Raising

1. Dinners/breakfasts
2. Receptions
3. Direct mail
4. Telephone solicitation
5. Door to door
6. Special projects

Research

1. Issues
2. Voter Analysis
3. Opposition Research

Public Relations

1. Layout/Printing
2. Newspaper/Radio
3. Free Advertising
4. News releases
5. Prepare news kits
6. Vertical media
7. Paid advertising

the candidate's district and/or race, some projects are impractical or impossible. By no means are these five lists complete. Each campaign often creates a new project tailored to its own needs. However, these are the common ones often found in a campaign.

Politics, whether campaign or party, is no different than any other volunteer organization, it can't be appreciated until one participates with an open mind. It has been the intention of this paper to describe the skeletal structure of politics' two main branches; and by doing so, explain how and to whom an individual could volunteer their time for a campaign or party activity. It is hoped that by now, politics no longer seems like an unknown mirage where only a few become involved but a volunteer organization desperately seeking individuals who will become involved to whatever degree they can in one of the many activities available. Now that you know the structure and how to enter, the next step is yours to initiate.