

The Advocates for Self-Government Presents

OPERATION POLITICALLY HOMELESS



OPH Checklists and Sample Documents

FIFTH EDITION

By Scott A. Kjar

About the OPH Manuals

This is the Operation Politically Homeless (OPH) "Checklists and Sample Documents" file. It contains expanded information about some OPH-related functions, including press releases, checklists, and so on. It can be used with either the OPH Maxi-Manual or the OPH Mini-Manual, or alone.

The OPH Maxi-Manual is the comprehensive How-To manual that tells you everything you could possibly need to know about how to run a successful Operation Politically Homeless booth. It offers extensive background, explanations, examples, and options.

The OPH Mini-Manual is the short, get-right-to-the-point version of the OPH manual. It has fewer details, and quickly jumps to the How-To portions. The Mini-Manual is drawn from the OPH Maxi-Manual.

Both manuals, along with the Checklists and Sample Documents, are available online at www.TheAdvocates.org.

Feel free to use whichever manual best suits your own needs. For some items, you may want to read more information in a particular area, and can refer to the Maxi-Manual. For other items, you may want to get right to the heart of the matter, and can rely on the Mini-Manual.

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The Mini-Manual, the Maxi-Manual, and the Checklists and Sample Documents together comprise the Fifth Edition of the Operation Politically Homeless Manual.
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Appendix A1: Building a Press List

In order to notify the news media about your events, you will need to put together a press list. In Appendix A, you will learn a simple, step-by-step method for doing this. This checklist provides a handy and simple means for doing so.

1 Make several photocopies of the Press List form (on the next page of this manual).

2 Grab your local Yellow Pages.

3 Grab a pen and some scratch paper.

4 Look up “Newspapers.”

- On the scratch paper, write down the name, address, and phone number of every newspaper listed, whether daily or weekly.
- Call each one and ask for the fax number for press releases.
- After asking for the fax number, ask for the names of the following individuals: political reporter, news editor, editorial page editor, and metro editor. (Not all newspapers will have all of these positions.)
- Ask if these separate individuals have their own separate fax numbers, or if you should use the main fax number for each of them.
- Ask if these separate individuals have their own separate e-mail addresses at which they receive news and press releases.
- Ask what the address is for sending letters to the editor.
- Ask if there is a separate fax number for letters to the editor.
- Ask if there is a separate e-mail address for letters to the editor.
- Fill in the information on the Press List. Make a separate entry for each individual person that you identify.

5 Look up “Television Stations.”

- On the scratch paper, write down the name, address, and phone number of every TV

station listed, whether network or independent. (You need not include your local cable company unless — and this would be very unusual — they have their own local news show.)

- Call each one and ask for the fax number for press releases.
- After asking for the fax number, ask for the names of the following individuals: political reporter, news producer, assignment editor. (Not all stations will have all of these positions.)
- Ask if these separate individuals have their own separate fax numbers, or if you should use the main fax number for each of them.
- Ask if these separate individuals have their own separate e-mail addresses at which they receive news and press releases.
- Fill in the information on the Press List. Make a separate entry for each individual person that you identify.

6 Look up “Radio Stations.”

- On the scratch paper, write down the name, address, and phone number of every radio station listed, whether FM or AM.
- Call each one and ask for the fax number for press releases. Write this number on your scratch paper.
- After asking for the fax number, ask for the name of the news director. At most radio stations, there will be only one or two staff people who are in the news department.
- Ask if this person (or these people) have their own separate e-mail addresses at which they receive news and press releases.
- Fill in the information on the Press List. Make a separate entry for each individual person that you identify.

Appendix A2: Press List Sample Form

NAME OF MEDIA OUTLET	TITLE	PERSON'S NAME	
PHONE	FAX	E-MAIL	

ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
---------	------	-------	-----

NAME OF MEDIA OUTLET	TITLE	PERSON'S NAME	
PHONE	FAX	E-MAIL	

ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
---------	------	-------	-----

NAME OF MEDIA OUTLET	TITLE	PERSON'S NAME	
PHONE	FAX	E-MAIL	

ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
---------	------	-------	-----

NAME OF MEDIA OUTLET	TITLE	PERSON'S NAME	
PHONE	FAX	E-MAIL	

ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
---------	------	-------	-----

NAME OF MEDIA OUTLET	TITLE	PERSON'S NAME	
PHONE	FAX	E-MAIL	

ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
---------	------	-------	-----

NAME OF MEDIA OUTLET	TITLE	PERSON'S NAME	
PHONE	FAX	E-MAIL	

ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	ZIP
---------	------	-------	-----

Appendix A3: Your Database

In the movement for liberty, we are often overworked, understaffed, and underfunded. However, there is one area where we consistently have abundance: computer knowledge. Chances are pretty good that someone in your group is a computer programmer, network manager, web page designer, or some other computer-related occupation. The best thing to do is find those people and let them do what they do best. Still, if you have to do it yourself, here are a few tips.

1 Acquire a database program.

There are many applications capable of handling data on a computer. Some of them are explicitly designed to handle databases and mailing lists, such as FileMaker or Access. Others are designed to track dates, deadlines, equipment, costs, people, and other project-related activities, such as Fast Track. Still others are set up as spreadsheet programs, such as Excel or 1-2-3.

Many are merely word processing applications, such as Microsoft Word or Word Perfect. Some may be attached to online programs, such as Yahoo Groups. Any of these can be used for the basic database you need to construct.

Rather than go out and invest in expensive new software, check to see what you already have. You can probably already put together a simple database with what is on your computer desktop. (When in doubt, read your software manual. Just look up “database” in the table of contents or index.)

2 Input your data.

Type in the information you acquired from your media phone calls. (You might want another database for the contacts you gain at OPH, too). Refer to your manual to learn how to do this with your software. (Each application is different, so I can't tell you more.) Depending

on your skill, you may want to apply particular codes to indicate that a particular entry is a newspaper, radio station, or television station, or the frequency of publication or of news broadcasts, etc. If you don't have the skill yet to add codes, don't worry about it.

3 Learn how to mail merge, print merge, print labels, or design forms.

Merely getting the data into the database is not the point of this exercise. You want to be able to use the information to generate mailing labels for your press releases. Using the capabilities of your program, you should be able to easily generate mailing labels for use in your mailings.

If you get fancy, you can even generate personalized letters to each person listed in your database. (A personal letter goes farther than a mass-faxed press release — even if it is otherwise the same item!)

4 Enter the fax info in your fax machine.

Most fax machines are capable of remembering several commonly used numbers. You may want to go ahead and enter the fax numbers from your press list into your fax machine. That way, you won't have to enter each number by hand every time you send a fax.

Some fax machines have their own fax list capabilities. Rather than merely entering an individual fax number, you can enter all of the numbers from a fax list. Then, when you send your press release via fax, your fax machine will automatically send it to all of the pre-programmed numbers.

5 Other tips and techniques.

You may have a few other ideas up your sleeve, or you may learn some convenient shortcuts along the way. If so, please share them with us. Maybe we'll include your idea in the next edition of this manual!

Appendix B1: Writing a Press Release

While the key purpose of OPH is to identify prospective libertarians, a secondary benefit is that it's a great opportunity to garner some positive media exposure. However, in order to get media exposure, you must first notify the media. *If you don't tell them, who will?*

Using the 5W method (who, what, when, where, why), you can write simple and effective press releases in very little time.

For OPH, you will actually have two separate press releases: one before the OPH, and the other one after the event. By sending a press release before the OPH, you are informing the media that your group will be taking this action. With a little luck, they might come out and cover you.

After the event, you will send out a press release informing the media of the results of your OPH, including how many people scored in each of the respective sections. This may pique the interest of a reporter who originally thought that your event wasn't worth covering; the results may draw new interest.

But before you get to the actual writing of the release, you need to know some basics.

1 Elements of the press release.

For starters, you will want to put your press release on your own local group's stationery. With a computer, it is no problem to create some stationery, drop in a simple graphic, put the organization's name in clear readable type across the top, and you are on your way.

Second, you will want to include a "release date." For most press releases you write, you will simply put "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE." You want the media to act on your release immediately.

Third, you have to include a "contact name" (and that person's phone number). This is someone who can be contacted for additional information. If a reporter gets your press release and wants to follow up, the reporter needs to be

able to contact someone by telephone. Thus, your contact person should be someone who is easily accessible (ideally, he or she has a cell phone), as well as being personable and articulate.

Fourth, put a simple headline at the top of the press release. Pick something simple and informative. One example: "Anytown libertarians conduct political survey at county fair."

2 Writing the press release.

Finally, you get to the body of your press release. That's where the 5W method comes in.

Start by identifying your group — that's the "who" portion of the release. Even though your group's name is already on the letterhead, you should put it at the beginning of the press release. In some smaller newspapers, your press release may be run exactly as you submit it.

Next, explain "what" you are doing (Operation Politically Homeless!), "when" you are doing it (date and time), "where" you are doing it (at the local fair, at a campus, at a mall, or wherever), and "why" you are doing it (to raise awareness of your group, to replace the outmoded left-right political spectrum, etc.).

If you have a couple of suitable quotations from you or your members, include them. Don't go crazy with quotations, but a pithy and clever quotation to help identify the issue or to clarify your position can be helpful.

3 Using the sample press releases.

Of course, easy as that sounds, there are still many people who simply can't write a press release. In that case, we have a handy solution: our pre-written sample press releases. (See the next two pages.) If you like them, take and personalize them for your group.

4 Timing your press release.

A good rule of thumb is to send your press release about a week before the event. Follow-up with phone calls to the media outlets the day before the event. Remind them of the time of your event, and ask them to attend.

Appendix B2: Sample Press Release for Before Your OPH Event



OPH Club of Fritzville

123 Nolan Street • Fritzville, USA 12345

For Immediate Release: (PUT DATE HERE)

Contact: (NAME & PHONE NUMBER)

OPH Club of Fritzville Sponsors "Operation Politically Homeless" Political Survey

The OPH Club of Fritzville will conduct "Operation Politically Homeless," or OPH, on (DATE) at (TIME). The event will be held at (LOCATION).

The OPH will be followed by (NAME OF SPEAKER) giving an "Introduction to Libertarianism" seminar to be held on (DATE) at (TIME) at (LOCATION).

"Over one-third of all Americans now call themselves independents, or otherwise claim that the labels 'conservative' or 'liberal' no longer describe them," said (NAME OF GROUP LEADER). "These people have no political home — they are politically homeless."

At OPH, passersby are given a short 10-question political survey. The questions cover personal liberties and economic issues. After the 10 questions are answered, the results are plotted on "The Diamond Chart," a two-dimensional graphical representation of the political spectrum.

"The old Left-Right spectrum just doesn't describe too many people," said (NAME OF GROUP LEADER). "With this two-dimensional Diamond Chart, we can provide a more accurate understanding of politics and the range of political views that people hold."

The Diamond Chart has both a left-right axis, which evaluates what sorts of things government should do, and also a top-bottom axis, which explores how much government there should be. By studying both axes together, a richer political map can be drawn.

The OPH Club of Fritzville will be administering the Quizzes for two reasons. "First, we want to educate the public about this richer view of politics," said (NAME OF GROUP LEADER). "And, of course, we are hoping to find some new members, especially among those people who are already libertarians but don't know it yet."

While the Introductory seminar is designed for those individuals identified as libertarians by the OPH, the event is free and open to the public.

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Appendix B3: Sample Press Release for After Your OPH Event



OPH Club of Fritzville

123 Nolan Street • Fritzville, USA 12345

For Immediate Release: (PUT DATE HERE)

Contact: (NAME & PHONE NUMBER)

OPH Club of Fritzville Identifies Liberals, Conservatives, and Libertarians

At the OPH Club of Fritzville’s recent “Operation Politically Homeless,” the club administered “The World’s Smallest Political Quiz” to (HOW MANY) people.

The event was held at (WHERE) on (DATE AND TIME).

The purpose of the event was to identify where local residents stand politically on “The Diamond Chart,” a two-dimensional graphical representation of the political spectrum.

“The old Left–Right chart just doesn’t describe too many people,” said (NAME OF GROUP LEADER). “The Diamond Chart is a much more accurate representation.”

A total of (NUMBER) people took the survey and were evaluated by volunteers (NAME OR NAMES OF VOLUNTEERS HERE). The results were:

- (#), or (%), were Libertarians
- (#), or (%), were Conservatives
- (#), or (%), were Liberals
- (#), or (%), were Centrists
- (#), or (%), were Statists

“Thanks to the World’s Smallest Political Quiz, local residents are no longer politically homeless,” said (NAME OF GROUP LEADER). “And our survey shows that a surprising number of local residents are libertarians, but may not have used that word to describe their political beliefs.”

#

Appendix C1: Lights of Liberty Awards

The *Advocates for Self-Government*, the organization that sponsors OPH (and provided this manual to you), offers awards for libertarian outreach and communication. Called the “Lights of Liberty,” these annual awards are given to individuals who accomplish any of the following items in a calendar year.

1 OPH Booths

Any person who works at least three shifts (of two hours or more) at an OPH booth(s) in a year earns a Light of Liberty award.

2 Speeches

Any person who gives three libertarian speeches to non-libertarian audiences during a calendar year earns a Light of Liberty award. These speeches can be introductory presentations, talks on specific issues, or other speeches as long as they present libertarianism in a positive fashion. Appropriate groups might include the Rotary Club, veterans’ group, high school or college classes, business organization, etc.

3 Letters to the Editor

Any person who gets three letters-to-the-editor about libertarianism printed in a non-libertarian publication in a single calendar year earns a Light of Liberty. These letters must use the words “libertarian” or “libertarianism” in a positive fashion. The person can get three separate letters published in a single newspaper, the same letter published in three separate newspapers, or some combination thereof.

Spread the word about libertarianism

These three outreach activities are recognized because each is an effective way to spread the word about libertarianism. At an OPH booth, you will see hundreds of people each day, and give them a fun and interesting way to understand what libertarianism is all about.

Speeches are given to smaller groups, but

they are more in-depth, thus providing a more solid introduction to our ideas. And letters to the editor are one of the most-read sections of a newspaper, reaching thousands of people in a single day.

Thus, each of these three tasks has a great potential to reach prospective libertarians, and to show everyone that libertarianism is a vital and dynamic political ideology with common-sense solutions to modern political issues.

The Advocates for Self-Government first presented the Lights of Liberty awards in 1998. Since then, there have been *thousands* of winners in each of the three categories, as well as a growing number of “Triathlon” winners — those who won in all three categories in a single year. (I am pleased to report that I have been a Lights winner for OPH each year since the awards were announced, and even joined the comparatively rare Triathlon club in 2003.)

Good for local libertarian organizations

These awards are good not only for the individuals who earn them, but also for their local libertarian organizations. You might want to think about forming a local letters-to-the-editor brigade to get together once each week to write letters to area newspapers.

Likewise, you may want to consider holding an OPH every three months. That way, you continually have a set of new names of prospective libertarians, and you can focus on continual growth for your organization.

If you have regular letters and regular OPH, you may want to combine these with regular Introductory presentations, in order to give a richer taste of libertarianism to your newest inquiries. That way, they will get more information, and also meet more people who believe as they do.

All in all, the Lights of Liberty awards are designed to encourage us all to be better libertarian communicators, and then to reward us when we do so.

Appendix D1: OPH Checklist

Conducting an OPH simply means following the game plan and executing your role. Remember that several of these items are optional, and you are free to pick and choose according to what works best for you. After all, you are the one doing the OPH. You might want to make photocopies of this checklist, and use a photocopy each time you do an OPH until you are familiar with the process.

1 Create the event.

- Location or activity (e.g., gun show, trade show, music festival, college, fair, other):

- Day, date, and time:

- OPH organizer name:

- Event contact (e.g., the name and phone or e-mail of the person at the fair, campus, etc., through whom you got permission):

- Payment amount:

2 Recruit some assistance.

- Create a schedule (such as 2-hour time blocks, or 4-hour time blocks).
- Get a list of names and phone numbers of your group members.
- Jot down some ideas about what you will say. You don't need a formal script, but you do need to have the relevant details handy. (Use the info from the above portion of the checklist!) That way, when you call people, you can be sure that you get your point

across without wasting their time or yours.

- Make the calls. Confirm those who will be working. Keep track of the shifts that each will work.

3 Determine what materials you will need, and then acquire them!

- If you have this Manual, you presumably already have the complete OPH kit from the Advocates. If not, buy one immediately at www.TheAdvocates.org or 1-800-932-1776. The Kit includes copies of the Quiz and the Diamond Chart, which are the centerpieces of your activity.
- Make sure you have plenty of copies of the Quiz! You would rather have too many Quizzes than not enough. For a one-day event, make sure that you have 1,000 copies. You may not go through that many, but you will be ready for the busiest possible day. As you become experienced at doing OPH, you will be able to estimate for yourself how many Quizzes you will use in a single day at a particular type of event.

You may want to have two different styles of the Quiz: the 1/4-page size for use at the table, and the business-card size for handing out to people. The business-card size is a great giveaway, but it is too small to be effective in volume at the table. Thus, after each person takes the Quiz and is placed on the Diamond Chart, hand that person two copies of the business-card size to take with them to think about later, or to share with their friends. (Occasionally, someone may even want to take a stack back to the office. Encourage them to do so!)

- Put the Quiz into stacks of 25 each, and put a rubber band around each stack.

I find that 25 Quizzes is the ideal amount to have on the clipboard at any given time. If you put more than 25 Quizzes on the clipboard, they slide around, fall off, and generally are problematic. With fewer than

25, you end up reloading the clipboards over and over and over. Start with 25 on each clipboard, and when a clipboard runs out, just grab another stack of 25 and put it on the clipboard.

- Make sure you have plenty of clipboards. I use about seven clipboards when I work alone, and about 10 clipboards when I work with groups of 2-4 people. Since I use a 1/4-page Quiz, I use small clipboards. (Buy them for about a buck each!)
- Make sure you have plenty of pens. I buy the blue Bic pens that are priced at about 10 for \$1. Since pens walk away from the table all day long, you want a lot of them, and you don't want to pay too much.

I start the day with about 20 new pens, with 10 on the table and 10 kept under the table in reserve. When you open the bag of new pens, take a moment to make sure that each one writes, because people quickly get frustrated when a pen doesn't work.

One good hint is to remove all pen caps from the pens. People don't accidentally walk away with an uncapped pen nearly as often as they do with a pen with a cap.

- Do you have a tripod, easel, or other means of displaying the Diamond Chart?

If you can't acquire such a thing, you can always simply put the Chart on the table, but that takes a big chunk of space, and isn't the same effective visual attention-grabber that it is when displayed upright.

- Did you get a frame and plastic cover for your Diamond Chart?

You can pick up a poster frame at Wal-Mart or K-Mart for a few dollars. These will keep your Chart looking professional much longer, and therefore will save you the price of replacing your Chart over and over.

- Do you have plenty of colored stick-on dots for attaching to the Chart?

I generally use a single color for a single day. (White dots are okay, but I like the look of orange, or light blue, or yellow, etc.)

If I will be at the same location two days in a row, I leave all the first day's dots on the Chart, and then put the second day's dots in a different color. Then I can point out to people the differences (if any) in the

scores over the two days.

You can't let the dots build up for more than a couple of days, because they will simply swamp the entire Chart, and people will not be able to see anything except a big blob of spots. At that time, the Chart loses all of its effectiveness as an outreach tool and as an educational tool. (I usually pick off the dots while I watch television.)

- Do you have a table?
- Do you have a table cloth?
- Do you have a plastic bag (I use a grocery bag) where you will put the used Quizzes?

I always use clear tape and attach this bag to the back of the table. Whenever I am through talking with a person, I drop his or her Quiz into the bag, to be sorted out later.

(Occasionally, someone comes up with the idea of trying to sort these Quizzes as we go, by keeping separate bags or stacks for libertarians, conservatives, liberals, statisticians, etc. This is a nice idea, but unworkable. When the table gets busy, you won't be able to maintain such a system. Also, if you have people working 2-hour shifts, you will end up training them all day long in that system, and it only takes one person who doesn't get it to totally ruin the system. Just shove them all together, and sort them out later.)

HEY: These are *not* garbage! You will use this to track how many people you see, and you will also have all of your new names in this bag (assuming that you have the space for contact information on the back of the 1/4-page Quiz, which is what I do).

- Do you have a garbage container (to be kept hidden under the table)?
- Do you have the banner you plan to use? Do you know how you will be attaching the banner to your booth or display? (Bring tape, pins, nails, rope, etc.)
- Do you have a tent or other overhead covering, if you will be outside?
- Do you have sun screen? Bug spray? Drinking water?
- Do you have plenty of clear tape? (NOT duct tape! NOT masking tape! CLEAR tape!)
- Do you have plenty of flyers for your "Introduction to Libertarianism" presen-

tation that you will be conducting in conjunction with the OPH?

- Do you have other materials, brochures, flyers, handouts, and information for people?
- Do you have a designated spokesperson in case the media arrive?

Does your designated spokesperson have a prepared statement? It need not be long, since you won't get more than a minute of coverage, and probably not more than six seconds of actual on-camera speaking time, so be sure to have some catchy, quotable statements for the reporter.

4 If you are using the Harris 5-Jar method.

- Do you have five clear 1/2-gallon jars? Are they clean? (The Advocates for Self-Government does not supply these jars.)
- Did you put the five labels (Always, Usually, About Half, Sometimes, Never) on them?
- Do you have a little seed money to put in the jars? A few coins and a couple of bucks is a good start.

5 Send out a press release.

- Create a press list. (See Appendix A1.)
- Write a press release. Feel free to customize the sample in this Manual (see Appendix B2), or write your own. Remember, keep it short and sweet.
- Distribute your press release. Whether by fax, e-mail, or regular mail, be sure you get the word out.

6 Dress for success.

- Remember, it is generally okay at OPH to be casual, as long as you are clean and well-groomed.

This isn't about how you normally look, it is about how your *audience* will react to how you look. You are there as a representative of your organization, so look and act in a way that brings respect to your group.

- Don't wear t-shirts, don't wear jeans, don't wear clothes with holes, don't wear buttons and pins with profanity, and don't wear too much make-up or cologne.
- Do you have nice-looking name tags? If you use tags that just stick onto your shirt, you should periodically put on a new one, since

such tags become grungy and dog-eared fairly quickly. Remember, you want to look good.

7 After the event...

- Count up the number of people who fell into each of the five categories.
- Count the number who gave you additional contact information.
- Issue a press release immediately (that night!) giving these details. Feel free to use the sample release in this manual (see Appendix B3), or write your own.
- Get the new contact names to the person in your group who handles the database. If this is you, make sure that you enter these names into your list immediately.
- Do a mailing *immediately* to all of your new contacts. Remind them that they took the Quiz, scored in the libertarian section, and asked to be informed about upcoming events. Thus, you are informing them about the next one or two activities, meetings, or speakers that your group is undertaking.

I strongly advise that one of these should be an "Introduction" presentation designed specifically for newcomers or for people who are interested in learning more in a general way.

- Get the new contact names to the Advocates for Self-Government. The Advocates will, in turn, share them with other libertarian-minded organizations. Also, get the new contact names to other organizations that are involved with your group, such as a political party, an advocacy group, a student club, or whomever your umbrella group is.
- Personally thank all of your volunteers. A phone call, a card, or even a special night out for pizza are all greatly appreciated by folks. It doesn't have to be much, but a little recognition goes a long way.
- Write an article for your group's newsletter about the event, your results, and how much fun it was. (If you didn't have fun doing OPH, you weren't doing it right!)

8 Start planning your next OPH event!

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The authors of the New Jersey Libertarian Party's "How to Run a Successful Operation Politically Homeless Booth" article on their Web site.

The author of the OPH FAQ on the Advocates for Self-Government Web site.

The dozens of people who have worked at OPH booths with me over the years — and the thousands of people to whom I have administered the Quiz.



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