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# Newsletter from Boston

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## Paul Tsongas for President

Wow! What an incredible ride. As most of your know, I worked this past winter as the mid-Atlantic Coordinator for the Paul Tsongas for President Campaign. Thank you Paul Rosenberg! (whose help allowed me to get this position). It was like nothing else I have ever done; I learned so much; the pressure and intensity was incredible. It was like taking a drink from a fire hose. I learned so much about so many different aspects of campaigning. My hope here is to write of a few things that I have learned.

First off, I learned how a presidential campaign is organized. There is fund raising, field organization, issues, press, advance, finance, delegate tracking and general office management (there is also commercials and polling, but I saw very little of these efforts). Fund raising is exactly what you think it is, namely, raising money to run the campaign. I have never previously contributed to a presidential campaign. I discovered that contributing to a candidate is much more important than voting for a candidate; a modest contribution (\$100) will have more

effect on the electoral process than voting. I think most people assume that contributing to a presidential campaign is something done only by wealthy people. In fact, it is one of the most democratic parts of our electoral process and something we should all do more of (for candidates we like, of course).

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Identifying target groups is a key element of fund raising (for Paul Tsongas, these were peace corp volunteers, master swimmers, Dartmouth graduates, and or course, the Greeks) Fund raising organizations are setup in each state (interestingly, the fund raising organization can be quite separate from the field organization -- see below); fund raising events are important trips to the states by the candidates in the early parts of the campaign. Compliance with FEC regulations on fund raising and the details of receiving matching funds is another important aspect of fund raising.

Field organization is where I worked at. I was the "desk person" in charge of the states of Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland,

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Delaware, New Jersey, West Virginia and D.C. In each state, we put together an organization of both volunteers and elected officials, including an official representative of the campaign in that state (the State Contact Person) and honorary positions like State Chairman. Many of these people were identified by the letters they wrote to the candidate or by phone calls to the campaign; financial contributors were also contacted. Among the most important early tasks is to gather delegate candidates who will run to get elected to go to the Democratic National Convention and vote for our candidate (it is particularly difficult to get people to sign up to be delegates early in the race). We also needed to gather signatures to put the presidential candidate on the ballot (in most primary states) and also for the delegate candidates; New York is a major disaster in terms of its requirements for signatures (10,000 signatures with a specified geographic distribution around the state of New York). Local press contacts were made and preparations completed for upcoming primary or caucuses (running a caucus is quite an experience; I did this in Delaware and found it fascinating). Appearances in the state by the candidate also need to be carefully coordinated.

Issues is perhaps less than we all might think; most issues are pretty well-defined before a candidate starts to run for office. What is interesting though, is that in so far as a candidate has not yet made a decision on a particular issue, letters to the candidate can

make a substantial difference, **provided they are received very early in the campaign** (i.e. before January of the year of the election). So if you have something to tell a candidate, tell him or her very early. The issues group is also responsible for opposition research (looking for dirt, sources of support, voting records, etc.) and briefings before debates. They also produce all of the white papers (position papers) for the campaign. The Tsongas idea of a booklet outlining Paul's views was clever and an important part of our campaign strategy; unfortunately, we could not get the books printed fast enough. The issues group must also be able to respond quickly if the other campaigns attacks on some particular issue: we were poorly prepared when Clinton attacked us in Florida on Paul Tsongas' position on Jewish issues (Clinton's attack was totally misleading which he later acknowledged). This was largely responsible for our loss in that primary.

Early in the race, the people in the press office are the only major contact with the media (except for the candidate, of course). Thus this office is quite important in the early going of the campaign. As the campaign progresses, the field organization (more in the individual states than at the national level) begins to have contact with the press as does the group travelling with the candidate. The press office is responsible for press releases, arranging for commercials to be broadcast, videotaping of candidate appearance on TV, and answering questions by the press; they update the press on the day to day movements

of the candidate. It is interesting that when you read a quote from a candidate in the newspaper, it is rare that the candidate ever said the quote attributed to him or her. For example, a press release might read: "A full slate of delegates was filed today by the Tsongas campaign in the state of New Jersey, 'The issues of economic truthfulness and reestablishment of America's industrial base is important to the people of New Jersey,' Tsongas said, 'and I'm sure that my message will resonate in the Garden state'." Such a statement would typically have been written by member of the national field office, modified and approved by the press office and then released; the candidate would never see the quote attributed to him or her.

Advance is a fascinating and fun area, appropriate for a young individual recently out of school. While early in the campaign, it is run out of the national office, the advance organization quickly takes on a life of its own. These are the people that prepare the locations for appearances by the candidate, that travel with the candidate, and that interact with the people out in the field that are going to meet with the candidate. It is a wild life style but one with little time for anything but work. In the Tsongas campaign, it was unfortunate that we ended up spending a great deal of money on advance (frequently on nice hotel rooms and room service, but also on luxuries like private jets). There is a tendency for the advance teams to become detached from the national organization and thereby becomes disorganized. This certainly happened to the

Tsongas campaign. A disorganized advance team can make the most organized campaign look lost in the wind.

Finance is, of course, crucial. It was sad that in the Tsongas campaign, we never had a budget. We just spent what we thought we might be able to afford; sometime we spent way too much, other times we were much too tight instead of acquiring needed resources. This was particular a problem for the field organization in many of the states where they did not receive the needed resources (campaign booklets, brochures, bumper stickers, phone lines for phone banks, lists of voters to contact, etc.) until just shortly before the primary in that state (by which time it was too late: e.g. Florida, Illinois, Michigan).

Delegate Tracking: This is a somewhat technical area in which we keep track of Tsongas delegates that have been elected in the primaries and caucuses. In some states, we have to follow their progress through state conventions that follow the primaries or caucuses. There are also special state-wide delegates in each state and of course the superdelegates (Democratic governors, senators, congressmen) that must be tracked. In all cases, we want to make sure that our delegates remain committed to our candidate, convince uncommitted delegates to join us, and make projections of what we need to accomplish in the different states to be successful.

Within the national office itself, other important tasks include mailings; answering phone calls from potential supporters, volunteers and those wanting more information (and of course, those with “suggestions”); data base entry; and volunteer coordination. Also crucial is a computer network; ours was poorly done. There needs to be a single computer system, that is user-friendly, allows trivial access but is continually updated with information from all sources: fund raising, field, issues (names of people that call in and the issue they are concerned about), etc.; a VAX is a bad example of a solution, but Macintoshes need to be networked to some kind of powerful database management system. A person needs to be designated as responsible for data base construction and computer system management.

**Why didn't Paul Tsongas win?** I think there are several answers, but the first thing to recall is that he certainly had his chance. While we were dismissed as a serious campaign until the middle of February, we were given extensive press coverage when the race became a clearly two man race. The glib answer that Paul Tsongas is too boring of a speaker to be President, or that he doesn't look presidential misses the point that he won primaries or caucuses in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Maryland, Arizona, Washington State, Delaware, and Utah; he also had won both Minnesota and Maine but lost these in the end because after he had dropped out of the race (state conventions

occurred where we lost delegates that we originally had won). The support was there; several mistakes were made, both as to political strategy but also in the message that Paul was delivering.

As regards political strategy, we made a terrible error when we accepted the designation of front runner put on us by the press after we won New Hampshire. Instead of jetting around in two private jets (one for the Tsongas team, the other for the press), we should have conserved our resources realizing that we were not going to quickly knock Bill Clinton out of the race (believe it or not, the strategy was to knock Bill Clinton out of the race by New York).

We spread our resources much too thin. We tried to have respectable showings in South Dakota (why??), Georgia, Texas, Tennessee, and South Carolina ... these were clearly wasted efforts, draining our precious resources. Instead our strategy should have been to focus on about one major primary per week: Feb 18<sup>th</sup>: New Hampshire; March 3<sup>rd</sup>: Maryland, Washington State, Colorado; March 10<sup>th</sup>: Florida (ignore all other southern states on Super Tuesday); March 17<sup>th</sup>: Illinois (ignore Michigan); March 24<sup>th</sup>: Connecticut; April 7<sup>th</sup>: New York; April 21<sup>st</sup>: Pennsylvania. Not that we could not have done well in some of the others states, but we simply did not have the resources to run a nation-wide campaign this early. We also were in the middle of tremendous growth, and we desperately needed time to organize: we went

from being a regional campaign before New Hampshire to a national campaign in the one week following New Hampshire: the growth was simply too fast.

We started off correctly in New Hampshire and Maryland; but then we got carried away. Most importantly, we had to survive until the three primary-free weeks between New York and Pennsylvania. By then we should have had maybe 10 big wins under our belt, fund raising would have caught up with our expenses, and we should have been strong enough to go for all remaining primaries. We would be growing in stature from one primary to the next, growing in strength, and managing our growth; Pennsylvania would be an ideal state for a major battle, setting the stage for Paul Tsongas to become the front runner.

But there was also a problem with the message. Paul Tsongas became the candidate of the middle class white voters. He did not reach out to black voters, and he could not explain to the unemployed and underemployed factory workers how his policies would help them. Paul was focusing all of this efforts on his message of economic honesty and the terrible legacy of the deficit to the children of America. This was very important, but he also needed to reach out and deal with the important problems of ethnic division and a widening gap between rich and poor in our country. This is one area where Bill Clinton appeared to be ahead of the other candidates.

My personal feeling is that Paul Tsongas could have easily prevented Bill Clinton from getting the nomination (assuming that the above mentioned errors did not occur); however, it is unlikely that he would have had nearly enough delegates himself to get the nomination on the first ballot. This would have led to a very divisive convention at which Paul Tsongas might have become the nominee depending on how much momentum he had coming into the convention. But, it is likely that a divided democratic party would have left the convention for the fall campaign.

If I might mention one last thing I learned during the campaign, I would have to mention the press. My respect for the press has never been lower. I could tell 10 stories of how the press underplayed the story (Florida), distorted the story (Pennsylvania), or missed the whole story entirely (Maryland: recall that the press picked this as a 'test' state for Paul Tsongas; no reporter took the time to check that we had a better organization there than any other state other than New Hampshire). The problem is that there is no investigative press; no one comes snooping around campaigns or checking our field organizations (other than the occasional random phone call); the press is just plain lazy.

## **Nuclear Energy Policy**

Through a strange combination of my work on the Tsongas campaign and my work in the area of ophthalmology, I have been consulting

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with a Democratic candidate for the U.S. Congress from Wyoming (Dr. Jonathan Herschler). He is a Republican that switched parties because he was excited about Paul Tsongas. He gave a speech nominating Paul at the Wyoming caucuses; his speech was extremely well received and has ended up running for congress (his last name is the same as a former very popular governor of Wyoming; this has been helpful as you might imagine.) Jonathan's view of nuclear energy is very different than that of the Paul Tsongas, and thus I ended up writing him a note explaining my/our position in a little more detail. I thought you all might find the details of interest.

"First, let me make it clear that we did not support the immediate building of new nuclear power plants; we well understood the problems of waste disposal and that our nation does not immediately need new nuclear power sources (although we need to keep the already licensed plants still running -- they provided 10% of our energy) . However, we must prepare for the future. Even if we could somehow constrain the growth of the energy needs of the United States, the world hunger for energy will grow explosively early in the next century as Third World countries industrialize. During this same period, the world oil supplies will begin to contract (although they will probably last through nearly the middle of the next century). The question is, how do we handle growth of world energy needs at a time when the oil supply cannot be expanded and may indeed

begin to contract?

Solutions such as wind and solar power are local solutions, and even if they could make a dent in the our nations energy needs, they can only replace our dependence on foreign oil rather than serve as a basis for growth. One answer that can truly produce the quantities of energy that we need is the burning of coal; however, it has two major problems: (i) forecasts indicate that coal, in the large quantities needed, is much more difficult to transport than oil, and that world growth in energy needs will far outstrip our ability to ship the coal where needed, and (ii) environmental pollution and the greenhouse effect: the burning of coal on a massive scale is nothing short of an environmental catastrophe.

Nuclear power is a second answer that has two forms: (i) smaller, safer designs (using a single design for all plants), and (ii) fusion power. Both of these options are feasible although waste disposal remains a difficulty. It was Paul Tsongas' feeling that we need an active research program expanding these options to allow us to make the proper choice early in the next century. Paul also emphasized that we just recently fought a war over foreign oil; without the nuclear plants we already have, we would be even more dependent on foreign oil.

Now it may be possible for the United States, with its superpower status and powerful

economic base, to provide for the energy needs of our country without using the nuclear option. We are the most powerful country in the world and one of the richest countries, and thus we may be able to use these assets to take an increasing share of the world's oil supply ; however, other countries, especially the less developed countries, do not have our resources. Neither through do they have the trained labor force to research, build and maintain the next generation of nuclear power plants. Yet we will be usurping the "simpler" energy resources (oil and coal), if we bypass the nuclear option. This is a recipe for conflict. We must save the "simpler" energy resources for countries not yet capable of the high technology solutions. We have the talent and knowledge here to use the more sophisticated energy resources, and we have a responsibility as an international leader to use our abilities in alternate energy technologies (wind, solar and nuclear (fission and fusion)) rather than compete for the world increasing scarce resources with far less developed countries. Note here that both the French and the Japanese have already come to this conclusion and are aggressively moving in this direction.

Thus, the Paul Tsongas plan for active research into nuclear options was based on environment stewardship, recognition of the reality of world-wide economic growth (and thereby the need for greater energy resources in an environment of decreasing resources), and finally a responsibility to the world community to decrease the world-wide

dependence on fossil fuels thereby increasing international stability."

### **Topics for Next Newsletter**

This letter has gotten a bit long, but there are a few more political issues I would like to touch on in the next letter. Specifically, (i) the reasons why I think our long, drawn-out primary process is a good idea, but why I think we need to change the ordering of the primaries; (ii) changes in the Democratic party, (iii) the rise of nationalism in the world, and (iv) a different way to deal with negative campaigning. Later!