

# VOX POP Newsletter

*of Political Organizations and Parties*

An official section of the American Political Science Association  
Produced by the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics, The University of Akron

**\*ISSUE THEME: NETWORKS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

## Churches as Precincts in Party Politics: The Legacy of Pat Robertson and Jesse Jackson

Allen D. Hertzke  
Carl Albert Center, University of Oklahoma

During the 1992 presidential campaign Pat Robertson's followers achieved great prominence in the Republican Party, much to chagrin of some party regulars. Christian Coalition supporters dominated platform proceedings at the Republican National Convention and Robertson was a featured speaker. Since then a vigorous debate has occurred within the party over the role of the Christian Right, sparked by the perception that its influence hurt the GOP in the November elections. Moderates formed the Republican Majority Coalition, seeking to blunt the conservative evangelical agenda on abortion, homosexuality, and religion in the public schools. Meanwhile, the Christian Coalition commissioned its own voter surveys as evidence that the social agenda did not hurt the party and indeed, that abandoning it would alienate a critical Republican constituency. Other Republican strategists acknowledge that the party cannot abandon conservative evangelicals and pro-life Catholics, but hope that the "family values" message can be presented in a more adroit manner than was the case in 1992.

Though some were surprised by Robertson's influence in 1992 (he earned barely a hundred delegates in 1988), his quest for the presidency five years ago was as much an ongoing social movement as a presidential campaign. Long after Bush won the nomination in 1988, Robertson's charismatic followers continued flooding party meetings from the precinct up to elect their own as party leaders and to defend the conservative social planks in the platform. After the 1988 election, Robertson quickly worked to harness this movement, forming the Christian Coalition with the explicit objective of

organizing Christians at the grassroots. And unlike Jesse Jackson, who remains the heart and soul of the Rainbow Coalition, Robertson consciously moved into the background by hiring Ralph Reed, an articulate and aggressive political activist (with a Ph.D. in history to boot), to serve as Executive Director for the Christian Coalition. Reed's approach is simple: set up state and local organizations, identify sympathetic voters, get them to the polls. In some places the Christian Coalition seems better equipped to mobilize voters than the local Republican Party, especially in low turnout elections where intensity is magnified. Moreover, the organization is attempting

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**"Political Parties in a Changing Age"**

The Foundational Volume  
*American Review of Politics* and  
The Political Organization and Parties Section  
of the American Political Science Association

Fall 1993

William J. Crotty  
Guest Editor

William J. Crotty  
Introduction

Leon D. Epstein  
Intellectual Themes and  
Questions in the Study of  
Political Parties

Joseph A. Schlesinger  
Understanding Political  
Parties: Back to Basics

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Adaption and Change in Peter  
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Political Parties in the Third  
World

Ian Budge  
Parties, Programmes, and  
Policies: A Theoretical  
Perspective

**NOTICE:**

Marjorie Hershey of Indiana University has been recommended by the Executive Council to serve as POP Program Chair for the 1994 national meeting.

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to perform functions once done by parties -- recruiting and grooming local candidates, training grass roots political organizers, and establishing get-out-the-vote mechanisms. To be sure, we do not yet have a good read on how far this capability reaches. It is probably less extensive than the organization claims or its foes fear. Nonetheless, the effort is notable.

In many ways the Robertson movement in 1992 achieved a status within the Republican Party similar to what Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition achieved in 1988 among Democrats. Jackson began in 1984 and attained his greatest clout in 1988; Robertson began in 1988 and saw his movement's influence grow in 1992. So the question is, how and why have these movements achieved their influence? Three major factors explain their success: 1) the discontent of the constituency, 2) the availability of church-based resources, and 3) the permeable nature of American parties.

The followers of Pat Robertson and Jesse Jackson were ripe for mobilization because they were, and are, the most discontented constituencies within their

respective parties. Jackson's African-American supporters often express a sense of crisis, noting lagging economic achievement, poor educational attainment, and family breakdown among many of their brothers and sisters in the African-American community. Robertson's followers, in turn, look at the nation and see evidence of deep cultural pathology -- broken families, disrespect for life, hostility to faith, and contempt in popular culture for timeless ethical and moral truths. NES surveys in 1988 confirmed that the Jackson and Robertson supporters, heavily female and religious, were the most discontented of the groups of candidate backers in 1988 -- the most likely to say they were ignored by elites and that the nation was on the wrong course.

But as a number of theorists have shown, grievances alone do not produce social movements. Resources must be marshalled -- money raised, leaders developed, and followers liberated from debilitating habits of fatalistic thought. Thus we note how churches often provided the tangible resources and elan that sustained both movements.

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## BOOK REVIEW

Gregg W. Smith  
University of Tasmania, Australia

Schlesinger, Joseph A. 1991. *Political Parties and the Winning of Office*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Schwartz, Mildred A. 1990. *The Party Network: The Robust Organization of Illinois Republicans*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.

Both books are important contributions to the study of party organization. Schlesinger's is a synthesis of his previously published work over the last 28 years. The result is a cohesive theory of political parties in democracies. Although most of the data relate to parties in the United States, parties in Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, and France are also discussed within the context of a general theory. Schwartz presents an intensive examination of the relationships between 23 types of Illinois Republican affiliates which she calls "actors," and these include local, state, and national party committee members and officeholders as well as financial contributors, advisors, and interest groups. Her core data are interviews with 200 informants, who provided information on Republican actors from roughly 1950 to 1980. By limiting the study to one party within one state, she is able to eliminate inter-state and inter-party factors. This is essential for her research design since she, like Schlesinger, emphasizes that the study of party organization involves an examination of what motivates the relevant actors. As such, party activity is best understood by considering the political environment within which it occurs. In this sense, both books can be placed in the genre of social science inspired by Max Weber.

Both authors implicitly and explicitly reject the paradigmatic conceptualization of party as consisting of loyal voters, officeholders, and formal organization. Consequently, they are dissatisfied with the literature on party decline, the thesis of which is based on the traditional three element paradigm.

Schlesinger draws heavily on the familiar work of Anthony Downs and defines party as "a team that seeks to control government by winning elective office" (p. 10). He adds to this approach by introducing the concept of individual ambition within the team and types of ambition which he classifies as discrete, static, or progressive. This team resembles the types of actors identified by Schwartz. For both authors, voters are excluded from the concept of party. Schlesinger's party competes in electoral markets against other teams to win elections which grant them authority to formulate public policy, namely collective benefits, and the opportunity to compensate the team with indirect benefits. The genesis of party organization is the ambition of the individual office-seeker who realizes that unlike other professions, it is advantageous in a democracy to join with others to get the necessary votes to win. If parties did not exist, office-seekers would create them. If they do exist, it is convenient to maintain them.

Schlesinger provides an interesting discussion of the concept of winning (chapter 6) within the rational choice literature which pits the strategy of vote maximization (Downs) against seeking to win by the smallest possible margin (Riker). He concludes that for the candidate, vote maximization is preferable in relation to the goal of winning and maintaining office because the officeholder is then less dependent on the loyalty of any subset of his or her supporters. For the voter and Schwartz's non-candidate actors, the goal is benefits, e.g, policies that are responsive to interest groups or patronage, (and Schwartz has identified many forms of patronage); hence, the smaller the victory, the larger the potential benefit to the activist and voters of a winning candidate.

Although party organization can be thought of as a team (Schlesinger) or as a network (Schwartz), both authors stress that an organization is a collection of individuals who have goals, and these goals are the driving force that shape the organization. Schlesinger speaks at length about how the structure of political opportunities and electoral competition affect political ambitions, which in turn, affect party organization. Since political opportunities and electoral competition vary from place to place and time to time, it is expected that party organization will exist and change as it adapts to relevant electoral conditions. The current literature concerning the thesis of party decline or party resurgence, then, becomes problematic because it assumes normative or historical standards by which party organization can be evaluated independent of the existing political environment. Or as Schwartz rhetorically asks, is there an ideal party?

As Schlesinger uses economics, rational choice, and positive theory to illuminate the nature of party organization, Schwartz draws heavily on sociology, especially organizational theory, and specifically, network analysis. Schlesinger stresses the uniqueness of political ambition in relation to ambition in other professions while Schwartz points to the uniqueness of party organization compared to other organizations, e.g, parties do not exhibit the degree of oligarchy found in other organizations, such as labor unions and corporations.

Network analysis is used by Schwartz to examine the Illinois Republican Party as a system of actors who are linked together in relationships that are mutually beneficial. Some of these relationships are formal (political parties in Illinois

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are heavily regulated by state law) and some are informal. The concept of a "relationship" refers to the transmission of information and influence among actors. Her dependent variables are the structure and pattern of these relationships with a view toward investigating what establishes and what limits the connections among actors. The independent variables are power, patronage, ideology, and money.

She concludes that although power is the most important determinant, it "was essentially a medium of control, limiting links among party actors, exploiting dependency and either challenging those enjoying stable positions or parrying such challenges" (p. 145). The "rampant" conservatism of the Illinois Republicans is also a medium of exchange that limits rather than builds links among party actors. Although the conservative values of the party serve to rationalize its existence, a negative consequence is the need to impose sanctions against actors that stray from the party line. In contrast, the general effect of patronage and money is to maintain existing relationships and establish new ones. Schwartz found forms of patronage that are mostly absent in the literature and notes that the availability of patronage creates mutual dependency between "patrons" and their "clients."

Both authors address the problem of evaluating the effectiveness of party organization. For Schlesinger "In organizing through trial and error, a party makes none of the usual distinctions we find important in other organizations. It does not favor old over new faces, professionals over amateurs, the loyal over the disloyal, or even leaders over followers...such concepts as 'effectiveness' and 'organizational strength' have no meaning beyond the electoral test" (p. 22). The standard of effectiveness, then, is winning.

For Schwartz, there is no absolute standard of effectiveness. "Instead, we must make out judgements within the context of two opposing models (*strong and weak*). Models of strong and weak parties are conceptions of the desirable, not descriptions of real parties" (p. 256). The strong party model is related to the idea of responsible party government and concerns the question of what parties should be like. The weak party model is consistent with the literature on party decline and concerns the question of what parties are like. In the final chapter, she proposes a third model, the adaptive party, which concerns the question of what parties can be and uses this model to evaluate the effectiveness of the Illinois Republican network. The adaptive party has four characteristics. It is "loosely coupled" which allows actors to flow in and out. It is "rational and goal directed." It is a "cultural system" which uses ideology and symbols to distinguish itself from other parties. Lastly, "an adaptive party is a system of power, directed to achieving control over uncertainty" (p. 283). Schwartz concludes that the Illinois Republicans are not an adaptive party, but they could be because the party is sturdy, vigorous, and robust.

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## POP WORKSHOP

### 1993 APSA ANNUAL MEETING

"The Politics of Ideas:  
Intellectual Challenges to the Parties After 1992"

John K. White and Eric Uslaner  
Workshop Organizers

Wednesday, September 1, 1993

#### Scholarly Perspective

10:00 - 12:00 a.m.

Stephen F. Schneck

Catholic University of America

"Political Parties and Citizenship:

Civic Virtue for Participatory Government."

Everett C. Ladd

The Roper Center, University of Connecticut

"American Ideology and the Parties:

'Great' Parties or 'Small' Ones?"

Elaine Kamarck

Progressive Policy Institute

"Clinton's Challenge: Defining the 'New Democrats'."

A. James Reichley

Georgetown University

"The Republicans: Intellectual Challenges  
to Party Building."

————— Lunch Break —————

#### Discussion

1:30 - 4:00 p.m.

Richard B. Wirthlin

The Wirthlin Group

Karlyn H. Keene

American Enterprise Institute

Linda Williams

University of Maryland

William Crotty

Northwestern University

E. J. Dionne

*The Washington Post*

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**(202) 319-5128**



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## **\*FROM THE FIELD**

### **WOMEN AT THE 1992 CONVENTIONS**

The full text of Jo Freeman's article "Feminism vs. Family Values: Women at the 1992 Democratic and Republican Conventions" (*PS March 1993:21-27*) is available from the author on computer diskette. Please send a 3 1/2" or 5 1/4" diskette formatted for your computer to Jo Freeman, 410 E 8th St., Brooklyn, NY 11218. The diskette will be returned with a DOS copy of the article in WordPerfect 5.0. In exchange, the author would appreciate any comments or corrections from readers.

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### **A CONFERENCE ON PAC PARTICIPATION IN 1992 CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS**

The Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area is sponsoring a one day conference on PAC decision making in the 1992 congressional elections.

The Conference will be held on **April 30, 1993 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** at the University of Maryland, College Park Center for Adult Education.

Participants will include scholars who have been examining the decision-making processes of PACs throughout the course of the 1991-92 election cycle. The PACs studied include lead PACs, such as BIPAC, the AFL-CIO's COPE, and the National Committee for an Effective Congress, and large institutionalized PACs such as AT&T's PAC, the Realtor's PAC, and the NEA's PAC. Several small PACs such as The Fund for a Conservative Majority and The National Federation of Federal Employees' PAC are also included. PAC Directors from these and other PACs have been invited to participate.

The conference will explore the strategies used by PACs in the 1992 campaign. Topics for discussion include:

- Where did PACs get their information about the '92 campaigns?
- What rules did they use in deciding whom to support?
- How did their thinking change as the campaign proceeded?
- What effect do they think they had on the '92 Congressional elections?
- What does the future hold of these organizations?

There is no charge for conference attendance. For more information contact Michael Gusmano at (301) 405-4184.

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### ***THE AMERICAN REVIEW OF POLITICS*** **SEEKS CO-EDITOR**

*The American Review of Politics* is accepting applications for a new co-editor to replace Gary Wekkin, University of Central Arkansas, who will become managing editor of the journal. The individual(s) chosen will work closely with co-editor Michael Maggiotto, Bowling Green State University, for an indeterminate transition period, and should be ready to begin reviewing manuscripts in January 1994. Application should consist of a resume and complete list of publications, a letter of interest, and should specify as fully as possible the expected amount of institutional support available to them. Applications should be sent both to Gary Wekkin, Dept. of Political Science, University of Central Arkansas, Conway, AR 72035, and to Michael Maggiotto, College of Arts and Sciences, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH 43403.

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## FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION DIRECT ACCESS PROGRAM

## ON-LINE ACCESS TO CAMPAIGN FINANCE DATA

**INTRODUCTION.** The Direct Access Program (DAP) allows personal computer users on-line access to Federal Election Commission data. You can receive reports and data on campaign finance activity without leaving your home or office.

The Federal Election Commission is the depository of campaign finance reports filed by all political committees participating in Federal elections. Data from these reports are entered into the FEC computer that is linked, via a national telecommunications system, to personal computers.

**WHAT EQUIPMENT DO I NEED?** DAP works on virtually any PC equipped with a modem and communications software. The system supports transmission speeds of 1200, 2400, or 9600 BAUD, and the use of a national telecommunications network means most users can dial a local phone number to make the connection.

**HOW MUCH DOES DAP COST?** The cost of the service is \$25.00 per hour which is a flat fee. Subscribers order service in advance, with a minimum of one hour per request. The system is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**HOW DIFFICULT IS IT TO USE?** DAP is totally "menu driven," which means that all you need to do is follow the instructions printed on the screen and in the notebook provided by the FEC. Should at any point you become unsure of yourself, you can simply telephone us, DATA SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT DIVISION, at 1-800-424-9530 or (202) 219-3730 and our staff will be happy to assist you.

**HOW CAN I USE THE INFORMATION?** The information is provided in two formats. The "report" options available in each menu present the material

formatted for PC screens with headings and descriptions of the information included.

"Data" options are also available. This format enables subscribers to load the information into a database or spreadsheet program of their choice for further analysis.

**WHAT TYPE OF INFORMATION CAN I LOOK UP?** The system contains information on individual candidates, including their general financial status (how much they have raised and spent), as well as more detailed listings of who contributes to their campaigns and how much money they receive. The same material is available for political action committees and political parties. And if you already know the particular report that you need, you can look up the report directly.

DAP also allows you to access recent releases of the Commission. For example, you can look up the latest statistics on which House members spent the most on their election efforts.

The system also provides access to Advisory Opinions of the Commission as well as FEC Court Abstracts. This is a good way to find out what regulatory issues the FEC is dealing with. You may also find it useful to view the press releases prepared by the Commission's Press Office.

If you are interested in DAP you can receive more information about the program, or find out how to open an account by contacting the Direct Access Representative in the Commission's Data Systems Division at 1-800-424-9530 or (202) 219-3730. Or you can write to: Direct Access Representative, Federal Election, Commission, 999 E Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20463.

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Jesse Jackson, even more than Pat Robertson, transformed churches into the precincts of his national political mobilization. What is often forgot is that Jackson was not the favored candidate of most Civil Rights and African-American elected officials in 1984. But Reverend Jackson circumvented the established African-American leadership by rejuvenating the church network that had served as the springboard of African-American politics in the 1960's. In both 1984 and 1988 he campaigned in African-American churches, drew his leadership from them, did most fundraising in them, organized advance work through them, and was sustained spiritually by them. In 1988, a group of churches even provided his family with steady monthly income while he ran for president. Probably the most dramatic example of the church's role occurred in Michigan, where Jackson scored a 2-1 victory over

Michael Dukakis. The Michigan caucuses placed a premium on local organization because the boundaries had been redrawn and the process was confusing. As one Dukakis aide ruefully noted, the parish was an ideal unit for local organization because churches are dispersed throughout neighborhoods, almost along precinct lines. So African-American ministers hosted pre-caucus coffees at local churches, then led busses and car caravans of the faithful to the polls. In Detroit alone there are some 500 African-American parishes with a combined membership of several hundred thousand, a formidable resource.

If Jackson's base was a diverse set of African-American churches and denominations, Robertson's was a more narrow cluster of large charismatic churches, many affiliated with the Assemblies of God. A number

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of these were “super churches” with several thousand members. Though not extensive enough to enable Robertson to overcome his handicaps with a broad electorate, these churches were potent in low turnout environments -- caucuses and local party meetings. Parishioners in these local congregations could be persuaded, educated, mobilized, and transported to participate. Many attended coffees at a local church before making their way to the caucus site. As one Bush lieutenant noted, in some communities there are five super churches, “any one of which could take over the local party organization.” Inside these tight-knit churches, as with African-American parishes, members experience the solidarity that may lead to what Doug McAdam calls “cognitive liberation,” the sense that common people can make a difference in the mysterious world of power politics.

One of Robertson’s greatest achievements, of course, was fundraising. Indeed, he raised more money than anyone in 1988, including George Bush (though he admitted spending much of it unwisely). Capitalizing on a “parachurch” network of religious broadcasting and direct mail appeals, Robertson thus established the base on which he could maintain his long run organization. Intriguingly, Jesse Jackson depends in part upon a continuous flow of “love offerings” from African-American churches to keep the Rainbow Coalition afloat.

The third reason for the influence of the outsiders is the nature of American political parties. Though always subject to the winds of social movements, parties today are particularly porous, as Leon Epstein notes, making them vulnerable even if putative party leaders or office holders object. As Robertson himself said, “We’ve been telling the Republican Party, let us in or we will beat down the door.” The penetrable nature of American parties means that there is no imaginable way that a caucus or precinct party meeting can keep well-organized and fervent identifiers out. Complaints by party regulars that the Robertson backers had not “paid their dues” only confirms this fact. Indeed, as we saw in Michigan, even a Republican system designed specifically to reward the party faithful was momentarily captured by Robertson minions, sparking one of the most chaotic and contentious battles in recent GOP history. Robertson went on to win in four caucus states and place second in most others. Therefore, even if Robertson’s following was not large enough to win primaries, it was organized and disciplined enough to pack party caucuses. Once the campaign was over, indeed, it was relatively easy for his fervent following to move on to capture party machinery in a number of places. Because the movement combines intense discontent with a resource base of churches, activist ministers, and broadcast ministries, it will not go away.

With the precinct caucus so vulnerable to outsider takeover, the presidential primary turned out to be the mechanism that blunted the extremes. Both Jackson and

Robertson magnified their clout dramatically in caucus states, while the eventual nominees won most of the primaries. Perhaps because “regulars” in both parties sensed the unique penetrability of the caucus, legislatures in several states, notably Michigan, adopted presidential primaries in place of caucuses in the wake of the 1988 election.

As Republicans now discuss how to deal with the Robertson contingent, it is instructive to see what transpired this year in the Democratic Party. Though Democratic strategists welcomed the expanding African-American electorate, the mercurial Jackson was often viewed as a problem. Only by marginalizing Jackson, it was felt, could a centrist Democrat win the White House in 1992. So the dilemma was how to retain a strong African-American vote without caving in to Jackson’s leftist demands? Bill Clinton came up with the formula, in part, by following Jackson’s trek through the African-American church. With Jackson out of the race, Clinton campaigned independently for the African-American vote by utilizing the African-American church network more extensively than any other national white politician before. Clinton met with ministers, spoke at national denominational conventions, and campaigned frequently in African-American churches. A Southern Baptist who had attended Pentecostal camps as a youth, Clinton was unusually comfortable with the worship style commonly found in African-American churches; he often sang gospel music with the choirs. Clinton also demonstrated that a “centrist” Democrat could successfully campaign among African-American voters by combining a progressive program on economics and civil rights with a more moderate platform on crime and welfare dependency.

So, Republicans must hope that a “Republican Clinton” can surface who will articulate a program appealing to conservative Christians without turning off other voters. Right now, activists of all stripes are groping for a *modus vivendi*. Christian Coalition leader Ralph Reed, for example, conceded that language in the Republican platform on abortion would likely change from advocating a human life amendment to a plank proposing restrictions (though not an outright ban). By saying this publicly, Reed seemed to imply that conservative Christians could live with such compromise language, even if they felt obliged to oppose it. Republican leaders, such as Jack Kemp and William Bennett, in turn, hope to synthesize a culturally conservative program with an economic agenda of limited government and entrepreneurship. Though tensions clearly exist in such a synthesis, it might allow the GOP to avoid bitter factional fights in the coming years.

Allen Hertzke is Assistant Director of the Carl Albert Congressional Research Center at the University of Oklahoma and author of the recently published *Echoes of Discontent: Jesse Jackson, Pat Robertson, and the Resurgence of Populism* (CQ Press, 1993), from which much of this material was taken.

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## **\*Special Interests**

### **"The State of the Parties: 1992 and Beyond"**

The Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics at The University of Akron is sponsoring a conference on "The State of the Parties" on September 23 and 24, 1993. The purpose of the conference is twofold: to assess the state of American party organizations after the 1992 elections and to foster communication between party scholars and practitioners of party politics.

Conference sessions will cover a broad range of topics on the health of national, state, and local party organizations as well as party activity in the 1992 congressional and presidential elections. Scholars presenting papers include James Reichley, Ralph Goldman, Paul Herrnson, Jon Hale, Alan Gitelson, John Frendeis, Michael Margolis, Phil Klinkner, and Barbara Burrell among others. National and local regional practitioners will be in attendance and serve as session discussants. The conference keynote address will be delivered Thursday, September 23, by Ed Rollins, political strategist and initial manager for Ross Perot's presidential campaign.

Political scientists and graduate students interested in party politics are invited to attend (there is no registration fee). To register or for further information please contact Holly Harris Bane, Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics, The University of Akron, Akron, Ohio 44325-1904, telephone (216) 972-5182.

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