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Major Gift Meeting**

**The Zen of
Grant Writing**

**26 Ideas for
Multiple Appeals**

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The Grassroots Fundraising Journal is happy to consider articles for publication. Please submit copy typed, double-spaced. If computer-generated, please submit highest quality printing possible (no dot matrix print-outs, please). Please do not submit material typed in all capital letters.

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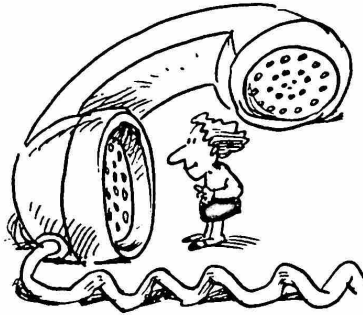
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Dialing for Dollars

Setting Up the Major Gift Meeting

by Kim Klein

When we created the *Grassroot Fundraising Journal*, one of the needs we saw was to explain details about fundraising that other books and magazines assumed you would know. For example: What do you wear to meet a major donor? If you go to a restaurant, who pays? How do you know how much to ask somebody for? In reading other fundraising materials, we noticed long explanations of some aspects and no explanations of others, giving people a distorted sense of what is involved in any particular strategy. There are very few places where this is more true than in the descriptions of approaching people in person for large gifts. Much time is spent on identifying the prospects, planning the campaign, and what to say in the meeting with the prospect. This is all very useful, but leaves out the lynchpin item, which is the telephone call to set up the meeting. Thousands of gifts are lost at the phone call, where the solicitor gives up too soon or misinterprets the donor's response. This article explores the initial telephone contact of a major gift solicitation.

Prepare for the Call

Once you have identified your prospect and either written a letter saying you will be calling or simply decided to call to set up a meeting, you are ready to call. Before you make your phone call, sit down and think through two things: 1) What are the issues and complications of doing business by phone? And 2) What might this person say and how could you respond?

The Many Faces of Politeness

Every culture places a great deal of importance on

politeness and has developed its own definition of what characterizes polite interactions. What is considered polite or impolite behavior varies from country to country and culture to culture. Within the United States, there are strong cultural differences in behavioral etiquette between New York City and Birmingham, or Minneapolis and San Francisco. Add to that the standards of politeness recent immigrants bring from their cultures, and we have a hodgepodge of customs that signify polite behavior.

Politeness is useful. It protects feelings, shields privacy, gives people standardized ways to relate to each other in social settings, and provides methods for strangers to interact.

For the purpose of this article, we will focus on one major aspect of what passes for politeness in many contexts: saying one thing while meaning another. For example, "How are you?" is an expanded version of the simple greeting, "Hello." The person asking is usually not actually interested in finding out details of how you are, but it is considered polite to ask. It is not considered polite, however, to answer the question at length.

Problems arise from more ambiguous statements, such as, "We'll have to get together sometime." That statement could mean just what it says, or it could be a way for one person to indicate interest without inviting open rejection, since a solid invitation will depend on how the other person responds. If the person says, "That would be great—call me," one generally proceeds to set up further interaction. On the other hand, the original statement could also mean, "We'll probably never see each other again."

Certain kinds of politeness involve obligation, and so must be exercised carefully. Asking to "borrow" con-

In our anxiety about asking for money and our desire to be polite, we often wind up hearing things that aren't actually being said.

sumable items (a Kleenex, a cup of sugar) may or may not imply a promise to replace the item used. This obligates the borrower (taker) to be prepared to be the lender (giver) next time.

Misunderstandings often occur when the obligation is not clear, or when it is not clear what must be returned and what can be kept. Most people will "borrow" a quarter without feeling obligated to repay it, whereas few will ask to borrow \$20 unless they mean to pay it back. "May I borrow this book?" implies this book will be returned, but books rarely are returned, leading people who are loaning books to wish that people wouldn't ask to borrow them. In our lexicon of politeness, it is considered rude to turn down someone's request to borrow something, so the asker must learn the boundaries of what is polite to ask for. If someone asks to borrow your book, you are supposed to lend it, even if you would rather not. If you don't want to lend it, it would be considered more polite to tell a lie—"I promised it just yes-



The Voice of Panic Gives Advice

Prospect

— "Hello"

Solicitor

(Sounds grumpy.)

"I don't imagine you ———
would want to meet . . ."

. (They must not have time to meet with everyone, so I'll just say I'm too busy.)

— "I love your group but I'm busy . . ."

(She hates our group because of me and this phone call, if I hadn't called she would have given . . .)

terday to someone else"—than simply to say, "No, I'm sorry."

In fundraising interactions we see close up the difficulties that the two-tiered levels of politeness force us into, when one means one thing, but says another. So a request to give \$250 is turned down not with a simple "No," but with "I can't afford it," "I'll think about it," or some other evasion.

For accuracy in interpretation, politeness depends on knowing the rules that tell you how to read between the lines. When the rules themselves are ambiguous or unformed, serious misunderstandings can arise. This is the gist of the problem with the telephone: there are few developed standards of politeness for being on the telephone. The telephone and its accompanying technology (call waiting, answering machines, computer phoning) are recent developments, and we haven't had time to evolve standards of politeness to keep up with our inventions. Besides the basic idea that you don't call people in the middle of the night unless it is an emergency, everything else is open to personal opinion.

The true absurdity of how we have imposed notions of politeness on telephone behavior and the false sense of obligation the mere presence of the telephone engenders can be seen in two common expressions: "I had to answer the phone." Unless your paid job is answering the phone, this is simply not true. There are no phone police, no laws against letting the phone ring. Every time you answer the phone you choose to do so. Your choices may be determined by circumstances, such as if you have children and want to see if the caller is one of them, or if you have promised someone you would be available by phone. Nevertheless, you still choose to answer the phone. "S/he kept me on the phone." Again, no one can keep you on the phone. The telephone is not voice activated and does not chase you around the house as long as someone is talking on it. You can be kept in a cage, a prison, an airplane, a locked room, but you cannot be kept on the phone.

The Fundraising Phone Call

The point of this discussion is to prepare solicitors for making their fundraising phone call. Making the call is one of those areas of fundraising rarely explored in depth. However, after consulting to and running dozens of major gifts campaigns, I have concluded that much of the money is lost in the initial phone call. At one extreme, campaigners are too timid to make their calls at all or call at times they know the person won't be available. (A recent example is a man who can only call after 5 p.m. because of his job, but will only call people at their work, and so is always getting a machine or no answer.) At the other extreme, the solicitor's own anxiety allows the prospect to get away without giving any answer (yes, no, or maybe).

Getting Ready for the Phone Call

Phone calls to prospects are not something to do when you have five minutes between appointments. They need to be thoughtfully prepared for and carried out. First, get a pad of paper and think through two questions: 1) What reasonable question might this prospect ask, that you hope they won't? And 2) What might the prospect say that will sound like a put-off?

Reasonable Questions

Here are some examples of reasonable questions a prospect might ask, with suggestions of possible responses. Notice that the solicitor responds to the actual question, not to any implied message he might infer based on the rules of politeness.

Prospect: Your group wants to raise \$50,000. What will you do if you fall short of your goal?

Solicitor: That's a very good question. When we meet, I'll show you our plan, which we think is failsafe. I'd be interested in your reaction. How is next Wednesday?

Prospect: Aren't you the group that had to fire your director for embezzlement?

Solicitor: I'm embarrassed to say we are. That's partly why we want to meet with everyone we are asking for large gifts. I'd like to bring the new director for you to meet, and tell you about the systems we have in place to insure that can never happen again. Is Tuesday morning good for you?

Prospect: You work on some issues that I am interested in, but I am very concerned about your work on XYZ Highly Controversial Issue, and so it may be a waste of time for us to meet. I just feel so strongly about this issue and disagree with your position on it.

Solicitor: It would not be a waste of my time to meet. I'd like to have a chance to hear your viewpoint on this issue and to tell you how we came to take the position we did. As you know, it is very complicated and many people are upset with us. Let's talk more. How's Thursday?

The Lesson: Notice that the solicitor always validates the prospect's objections but brings the conversation back to the purpose of the phone call, which is to set up a meeting. All hard questions are leads to get the meeting. Use a strategy called "the assumption of yes," which means that every request for a meeting is framed under the assumption that the person will say yes, and it is just a question of logistics. Don't ask "Can we meet?," ask "When can we meet?" Or better yet, "I'm on your side of town next Tuesday. Do you have time then?" "Is Tuesday or Wednesday better?" "Do you prefer morning or afternoon, because I can do either?"

Prepare for the difficult questions, and if the pros-

pect asks them, write them down and be prepared to answer them at the meeting. It is impressive to prospects if you bring to the meeting some response to the question they asked on the phone. For example, at your meeting,

*Use a strategy called
"the assumption of yes."*

say, "I brought the numbers you were asking about when we talked last week." The prospect may well have forgotten s/he asked anything about that, and will be pleased you respected them enough to bring the answer.

Put-Offs

Hard questions are easier to respond to than put-offs because the hard question provides a reason to have the meeting.

Put-offs are those statements that could be literally true or could be polite ways for the prospect to avoid meeting in order to avoid giving. Here are some examples:

Solicitor: Hello, this is Solicitor from Good Group. Do you have a minute to talk?

Prospect: No, I'm rushing out.

Solicitor: Oh, sorry to catch you at a bad time. When can I call you back?

Prospect: I didn't get your letter.

Solicitor: That's OK. Basically the letter said (ten-second summary), and requested a meeting. So, if we could meet in the next couple of weeks, I could fill you in on what we are doing and see if you want to be included in our major gifts campaign.

Prospect: How much do you want?

Solicitor: \$_____. Because that is such a large amount, I'd like to talk with you about it before you make a decision.

Prospect: I know you want money, but I never make this kind of decision without talking to my wife/husband/lover/partner.

Solicitor: That makes sense. When can I meet with you both?

Prospect: I get letters from so many groups. I can only bleed from so many veins. Why don't you guys get together. Everybody needs money. . . ."

Solicitor: I would imagine that you do get asked a lot because you are a very generous person. At the risk of being pushy, I would like to meet with you to discuss how our group is different from others with a similar agenda/client base/name, and to tell you about our coali-

tion efforts (note: only say this if it is true.) How's Tuesday?

The secret of responding to statements that seem to be put-offs is to act as if what the prospect is saying is literally true, and that nothing else is true. This is the opposite of the form of politeness in which anything could be true except what was literally said. If you respond directly to the prospect's concerns, they will not perceive this as rude. If they are determined to put you off, they will simply come back with another excuse, or they may tell you the literal truth, such as, "You know, I only give to five groups every year, and that hasn't changed for ten years, and won't change. So, I wish you well, but I won't be giving."

Suppose the prospect keeps up with a series of put-offs—I'm so busy; my child is sick; I'm going on vacation; all my stocks crashed; I have to have a life-threatening operation; etc. After three or four, you as the solicitor will have calmed down enough to decide whether or not to pursue this person. Some people will not say no when they mean no. Their understanding of politeness is too ingrained to be able to say what they really mean. You can then decide that the prospect doesn't want to meet and either pursue a smaller gift on the phone or let it go altogether.

Many people fear sounding like the proverbial time-share or aluminum siding salesperson who responds to every put-off and will not take "no" for an answer. The difference between the method recommended here and the one that aggressive telephone salespeople use is that they are trained to wear people down and get the person to say yes even if the person would rather say no.

We want to be sure we understand what the person is saying, and if it is no, to be respectful of that. However, in our anxiety about asking for money and our desire to be polite, we often wind up hearing things that aren't actually being said. We hear, "Go away and don't call again" in the phrase, "I can't talk right now." We hear, "I hate your group" in the phrase, "I give to a large number of groups."

To ensure that you don't lose a prospect because of your own anxiety, simply stay on the phone until the prospect has agreed to meet, or has put you off in more than three ways. If you don't want to count the ways, make a promise to yourself that will stay on the telephone 20 seconds longer than you want to. Prospects will perceive you as persistent, dedicated, committed to the cause, and so even if their answer is "No, I won't meet and won't give," they will be favorably impressed with your commitment. This could open the door to a gift another time.

If the prospect refuses to meet or to give, send him or her a thank you note. Thank him or her for talking with you. If the person has said you can keep them on the mailing list, thank them for that, or if you can approach

them next year, thank them for that, or if they have been candid, thank them for that. Then there will be no uncomfortable feelings between you and that person. Remember, at least half of the people you approach for money will turn you down. In order to meet your campaign goals, you will have a large number of people saying no.

Practice and Action

One of the best ways to get ready for a phone call to a prospect is to practice with other Board members, staff, volunteers, or a friend. Pretend that you have written a letter and are now calling to set up the meeting. Have your partner try to put you off and practice hearing everything your partner says as literally true. Your partner can be mean if s/he wants, but only as mean as a true prospect would be: that is a person who has the money, cares about the cause and knows you or of you. Switch roles after two minutes to get a sense of what it is like to receive such a call.

Ultimately, the only way to learn how to make these calls is to make them, and debrief after each one for the first few times. So stop reading this article and go do it. ■

Budgeting Guide for Nonprofit Administrators and Volunteers

by Mike Burns

Budgeting for Nonprofit Administrators and Volunteers is the **only** guide devoted entirely to nonprofit budgeting. It will help you:

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THE ZEN OF GRANT WRITING

by William C. Mengerink

Over the years, my wife, Anne, has frequently asked me to help her re-word something she has written. The formula is always the same. Before I respond she adds, "What I meant to say was . . ." and then proceeds to tell me what she meant to say. I write this down, usually word for word. She says thanks and walks away thinking I'm a great writer.

When Anne talks she is totally unconscious of her techniques. She mastered grammar (like most of us) by the time she was in the first grade. She got a handle on usage by the time she graduated from high school. In conversation, she articulates her thoughts beautifully. When she talks, she talks effortlessly, thinking only about her message and her listener. She has mastered the Zen of Conversation.

Zen practice teaches one to be present in every moment, conscious of the self but free from self-consciousness. An important ingredient in Zen is getting ourselves out of the way.

When I first learned to type, I was very conscious of technique. I fell asleep to images of the keyboard. I found myself typing words, mentally, when people talked to me. Today, though, after 20 years of typing, the only time my mind goes to the board is when I type the stuff above the numbers, i.e., "@#%*&* _ +", because I don't type

them very often. I have approached the Zen of Typing.

We can all approach this Zen state in grant writing if we learn and practice the basics. The suggestions that follow are offered to remind you of some principles you may already know but have forgotten and teach you some new ones to improve your grant writing skill.

1. PRACTICE THE ZEN OF GRANT WRITING.

We need to get ourselves out of the way when we write grants. It's similar to public speaking. When I speak to groups, if I'm thinking mostly about me instead of mostly about my message and my audience, I do a mediocre job at best and flake out at worst. Likewise, I write best when I am focused on sharing my message by putting myself in the reader's place. If I am constantly "adjusting my tie," so to speak, asking myself, "How do I look?" I don't write very well at all. This state gets easier after you learn and practice the basics.

2. DO YOUR HOMEWORK.

Research foundations before submitting proposals. Foundations are annoyed (to put it mildly) by agencies that submit proposals without bothering to determine if the submission is an appropriate one. Don't use a shotgun approach: use a rifle.

Trained volunteers can be very helpful in doing foundation research. Our team of 12 volunteers discovered 321 foundations for our capital campaign from the Foundation Directory. Phone calls to each reduced the group to 101. We submitted to all of them over a ten-week period and received gifts from 28 for a total of \$380,000.

3. USE THE RESOURCES OF THE FOUNDATION CENTER.

The Foundation Center has main offices in Washington, D.C. and New York City. These are national collections that will give you information on virtually all of the foundations in the country. Its field offices in San Francisco and Cleveland provide information on foundations in the west and midwest, respectively. The Foundation Center maintains a series of cooperating collections in over 170 cities throughout the country in public and university libraries. If you want to learn what collection is closest to you, call 1-800-424-9836.

4. STATE THE PROBLEM OR NEEDS CLEARLY AND SPECIFICALLY.

State them in terms of the problems or needs in the community, not in terms of your own agency's problems or needs. Foundations aren't interested in your problems: they are interested in solving problems in the community.

5. WRITE PROPOSALS TO AUNT SYLVIA.

When I write grants, I write them so my Aunt Sylvia can understand them. Don't write to a faceless committee: write to someone you know. This will personalize your grants and make them more readable. E. B. White said, "Don't write about Man, write about a man."

6. PAY ATTENTION TO MECHANICAL AND LOGISTICAL DETAILS.

Make sure that you follow the guidelines given to you by foundations. Send them the right number of copies. Make sure the proper signatures appear on your proposal. Include a copy of your IRS 501(c)(3) designation in your appendix. Make sure you have proper postage. Address the proposal to the right person. Don't miss any small detail that will give the foundation a reason to screen you out of the competition before they even read your proposal.

7. REVISE. REVISE.

Sidney Smith said, "In composing, as a general rule, run a pen through every other word that you have written; you have no idea what rigor it will give your style. Carve fat." Mark Twain said, "Forgive me for writing such a long letter. I didn't have time to write a short one." Gustave Flaubert said, "Whenever you can shorten a sentence, do. And one always can. The best sentence? The

shortest." Brevity takes time, but you will give your writing muscle if you make the effort.

8. NEVER STOP WRITING WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY NEXT.

Stop when you know exactly what you're going to say next. This reduces our tendency to avoid returning to a writing project. (A corollary of this is to stop reading when your book is interesting, not when it is dull.)

9. END YOUR PARAGRAPHS WITH POWER.

Put your power words at the end of sentences and paragraphs. Put your power paragraphs at the ends of sections. For example,

Arnold's mother was responsible for his broken leg, according to the 1990 Child Advocacy Report.

According to the 1990 Child Advocacy Report, Arnold's mother was responsible for his broken leg.

10. REMEMBER CAESAR.

There is a place for data in a proposal and there is a place for pictures. When you want to create an image in the reader's mind, use visual detail. See how this image is sharpened by adding only 5 words of detail:

Caesar's body was carried out of the forum on a stretcher.

Caesar's body was carried out of the forum on a stretcher, his left arm hanging down.

11. DON'T INFLATE THE LANGUAGE.

If I let myself imagine writing to an amorphous group of husky industrialists smoking cigars under rising bar graphs, I will tend to inflate my language. Jack Woodford said, "One of your first jobs, as you write for money, will be to get rid of your vocabulary." Don't be pompous.

12. RE-WRITE ANYTHING WRITTEN BY A COMMITTEE.

Even if some of the committee members have great style and good content, re-write everything in your own voice so it is unified.

13. BE ORIGINAL AND FRESH IN YOUR WRITING STYLE, BUT DON'T GET TOO CLEVER.

I recently wrote a sentence in a proposal that described our agency as being "fat-free." The context was that ours is a well-managed, efficiently operated agency that uses its financial resources wisely. After rereading the proposal, I decided that the sentence would interrupt the reader's flow, draw attention to itself. I revised it and said that our organization is lean.

14. BLANK PAPER IS HYPNOTIC.

Jump-start your grant writing if you are stuck by put-

ting anything at all on the paper. Write a letter to yourself about the grant. Write down key ideas. Anything. You can always revise later.

15. CHOOSE YOUR STYLE THOUGHTFULLY.

Many veteran grant writers insist on always writing in the third person to establish distance between the writer and the content. However, I had an experience writing a research proposal that I began as academically as possible and was advised by a foundation liaison that the review board "hates dusty, dry proposals." My revised edition contained numerous anecdotes and human-interest stories. I wrote in the first person plural, i.e., we, and we received a two-year award. Know your audience.

16. MAKE SURE YOU ASK FOR MONEY.

I always ask for money twice, once in the cover letter and again in the summary statement. I usually say, "Par-madale respectfully requests a grant of \$xxxxx to..."

17. IT HELPS IF THE GRANT REVIEWERS CAN CONNECT A FACE WITH THE PROPOSAL THEY ARE REVIEWING.

A director of a local small foundation said that an agency increases its chances of getting funded "by up to 75%" if a personal contact has been made. After you have done your research and targeted a foundation for submission, make a phone call for current information. Try to get a representative to do a site-visit at your agency. If not, try to get a 20-minute face-to-face visit at the foundation office. If you get it, prepare to leave after 20 minutes.

Here are two qualifications to this rule of thumb:

a. A proposal should be able to stand alone. It should be fundable based upon a strongly written case that matches an allocation priority of the foundation. Some foundations discourage face-to-face contact.

b. Be cautious when trying to influence a foundation reviewer. You may self-destruct by going over the head of a program officer whose job it is to do a first review of your proposal and make a recommendation to the review committee.

18. DON'T LET REJECTIONS GET YOU DOWN.

Get as much constructive feedback as you can from every rejection and then press on. A recent Charles Schulz cartoon pictured Lucy moments after dropping a fly ball. She said, "I let the past get in my eyes." If criticism is valid, make corrections and move on. Forget about dropping the ball in yesterday's game.

19. CONSIDER TWO- AND THREE-YEAR GRANT REQUESTS.

Some foundations, understanding that the symbiotic relationship with government is over, are awarding

grants for longer than one year. They realize that many of us need more than one year to get a program started and some are making two- and three-year commitments, assuming we have a viable plan for future funding.

20. LEARN TO THINK IN A PROPOSAL-WRITING FORMAT.

Consider this outline:

- Cover letter
- Title page
- Table of contents
- Summary statement (write this last and put it first)
- Problem or needs statement
- Objectives
- Methods
- Budget
- Evaluation
- Future Funding
- Appendix

It's beyond the scope of this article to go into too much depth on each point. However, I have these comments:

a. Assuming that you have identified the problem carefully, your objectives should be realistic, attainable and measurable changes that impact on the problem you described. If you find yourself using words such as "increase," "decrease," "reduce," etc., you are on the right track. If you are using words like "provide" or "offer," you're probably talking about "methods" rather than "objectives."

b. An excellent resource that expands on the proposal outline listed above is available by contacting The Grantsmanship Center in Los Angeles, California. (P.O. Box 6210, Los Angeles, CA 90014. Ask for their Program Planning and Proposal Writing materials.) They also provide very good workshop experiences.

21. GET AS MUCH LOCAL P.R. AS POSSIBLE.

Most social service agencies have a good reputation, but a low profile. Agencies that have been around for many years can establish credibility fairly easily in their proposals. Agencies without a long a successful history need to begin to build an image in the community.

To improve your grant writing skills, practice alone is not enough. Learn good techniques and practice them when you write grants. In time, you'll find yourself much less self-conscious, be able to think more freely and creatively about your subject, and, ultimately, raise much more money. ■

Bill Mengerink is director of development at a residential childcare center outside of Cleveland. His article, "How to Conduct Your First Capital Campaign and Live To Tell About It" appeared in the Journal in August, 1989.

26 Ideas for Multiple Appeals

Asking Current Donors for Extra Gifts: Why, How & How Often

by Kim Klein

(Editor's Note: This article is a revised and updated version of one that appeared in the August, 1983 issue of the Journal.)

One of the most effective but commonly overlooked ways to raise money is to ask your current donors for additional contributions several times a year. Most organizations act as though their donors are precious jewels that should only be brought out on special occasions. In fact, donors are much more like car batteries: if they are not started and run frequently, they will die.

The system of mailing to donors several times a year is called "multiple appeals." Generally, it is used with donors who give less than \$250 a year, although some organizations send all appeals to all donors. In response, about 10% of donors send extra gifts; one or two send letters complaining about the frequency of the appeals. Large national organizations appeal to their donors ten to twelve times a year, and studies show you can appeal that often without losing people. However, because direct mail is becoming a saturated strategy—that is, overused, with consumers increasingly complaining about the volume of mail they receive—we recommend appealing to current donors between three and five times a year.

Multiple appeals are successful for any number of reasons. First, a person's cash flow can vary a great deal from month to month. In one month, a person may receive an appeal from a group she supports, and would like to give, but just spent a lot of money repairing her car, so throws the appeal away. If the organization were to ask again in two months, when the person may have more money available, it might get a donation.

Second, some people respond to some types of appeals more readily than to others. Sending only one or two appeals a year does not allow for the variety of choices donors want. Organizations often discover that donors who regularly give \$15 a year will give \$50, \$100 or more when an appeal for a special project is sent to them. People who respond to specific project appeals are often called "bricks and mortar" people. They "buy" things for an organization: media spots, food for some-

one for a week, a job training program, a new building.

We rarely know why people don't respond to appeals. Despite this lack of knowledge, many people are willing to make the assumption that the donor doesn't want to give, when any of the following might be just as true:

a) The donor has been on vacation and mail has piled up, so he throws away anything that is not a bill or a personal letter, and your appeal gets tossed with the rest.

b) The donor is having personal problems and cannot think of anything else right now, even though he might be quite committed to your group.

c) The appeal is lost in the mail. This happens less frequently than we are led to believe; nevertheless, it does happen.

d) The donor loses the appeal. She meant to give, and put the appeal aside, and it got thrown away or lost before it could be acted upon.

Some organizations worry that donors will feel "dunned to death" by multiple appeals. On the contrary, they get a sense that a lot is happening in the organization. Their loyalty is developed when they know that their continuing donations are also needed. Most important, they have an opportunity to express their own interests when a particular appeal matches their concerns.

Once an organization has accepted the idea of sending multiple appeals, they often wonder what they are going to say in each different appeal. The following list of 26 ideas should help you choose some approaches that will work for your organization. Some of these appeals are taken from or modelled on specific groups' letters. Some of the appeals will be better suited to one organization than another, but almost any organization should be able to find one or two ideas that they could modify and use for their group.

Seasonal Appeals

1) *End-of-summer*: "Please help us get a head start on our fall fundraising. As you know, fall is the time that most non-profits do most of their fundraising. For us, it is

also a time of intense organizing and advocacy activities. This fall we anticipate. . . . If we have the funds ready, we can get right to work. Will you help?"

2) *End-of-year*: "As you close your books for this year, please remember _____ Organization. This is your last chance to make a tax-deductible donation to our organization and count it for this year's taxes."

3) *Beginning-of-year*: (Written as a testimonial) "One of my New Year's resolutions was to give more money this year to _____ Organization. I realized that, like many of my resolutions, this one could fade if I did not act now. So I sent an extra \$25 on January 5. I imagine that many of our members made a similar resolution. Perhaps you did. If you are like me, time may pass without action. So, join me, and send that extra donation now."

4) *Spring appeal for new members*: "Everything grows in the spring. Everything seems to put on a new look—new leaves, new flowers. . . . Our organization is growing too. You have been a big part of our growth and we thank you for that.

"This year, we want 500 new members—people like you. So, instead of asking you for an additional contribu-

tion, we would like you to send us the names of five people you think would be interested in our organization. We will send them a letter with an opportunity to join."

Holiday Appeals

5) *Martin Luther King's Birthday*: "Since Martin Luther King was born, the situation for people of color has improved in America. It is no secret that Dr. King was instrumental in much of that progress. We at _____ Organization live and work by the principles of Dr. King and other civil rights leaders who gave their lives. However, we have a long way to go. Help us celebrate Dr. King's birthday with a tribute gift to our organization in Dr. King's memory."

6) *Lincoln's Birthday*: "President Lincoln was only one of the more famous people to be killed with a handgun. I know you want to end this senseless outrage. An extra donation from you, sent today, will give us the extra funds we need to work on _____ special program against handguns/crime in the street/to strengthen our community organization activities."

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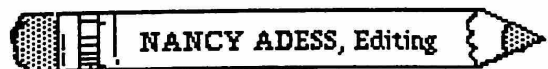
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7) *Valentine's Day*: "Do you often think of important people on Valentine's Day? Do you remember them with flowers, candy or cards? I know I do. This year, I thought of other important people in my life—the people at _____ Organization. They really depend on us, their members, for the financial support they need. Will you join me in sending an extra donation? You can send flowers or candy as well. Simply use the enclosed card."

8) *Month of April*: "Taxes. That's what's on everyone's mind right now. How to pay them. How much you owe. And where the tax money is going. That's the real rub. So much of it is wasted. At _____, we work to curb waste in government/stop using tax money for weapons/close tax loopholes for the rich. This April, send us a donation equivalent to 10% of what you owe the government, or what you will get back as a refund. It's an investment in better government."

9) *Memorial Day*: "By remembering _____ Organization with a memorial gift, you carry on the commitment of loved ones. We will send a special card to the family of the person in whose memory the money is given."

10) *June 14*: "Flag Day. Most of us don't put our flags out anymore on Flag Day. In fact, a lot of people go through Flag Day without even realizing it. When we were kids, we were taught that the flag was a symbol of a lot of things we could be proud of. Democracy, Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Thought. We at _____ would like those principles to be true for all people today. We know you would too because you have supported our work over the past several years. The principles the flag is supposed to stand for can be true—with your help."

11) *July 4 Special Event*: "We are inviting all our members to a special July 4 barbecue. Suggested donation: \$10 a person. All you can eat, games and fun. Children are welcome. If you can't come, come in spirit by sending \$10 anyway."

12) *Mother's Day/Father's Day*: "These are times to remember our parents and to celebrate ourselves as parents. For many people they are fun times, surrounded by loving family members.

"But what happens when this family dream turns sour—as it does for more than 50% of married women who suffer from battering or the millions of children cruelly abused or sexually assaulted by parents? Mother's Day/Father's Day becomes a cruel irony. Celebrate Mother's Day/Father's Day in a different way this year: enclose an extra donation to _____."

13) *Labor Day*: "A time to take the day off. But what about all the people who want work? For them, Labor Day is another reminder of their joblessness. Our organization is providing training to thousands of people so that they can get good jobs in areas needing workers. Re-

member the unemployed this Labor Day with a gift to _____."

14) *Columbus Day*: "Columbus discovered America. This is one part of American history almost everyone knows. The problem is that this is only a half-truth: Columbus discovered America *for white people*. There were already people here—our people. We are Americans. Yet our history since Columbus has been one of genocide, displacements and oppression. At Native American _____, we are determined to reclaim Columbus Day. You have helped us in the past. Will you help us, on this holiday, to continue our vital work?"

15) *Thanksgiving Day*: "We would like to make Thanksgiving Day a little brighter for hundreds of people in our city who cannot afford to buy food. With your donation of \$14.50 we will provide a family with a turkey and all the trimmings. Give whatever you can."

16) *Christmas/Hannukah/end of year*: "We are just \$400 short of our goal to buy a new furnace for our runaway house/send our staffperson to the state capitol to lobby for the bill we have been working so hard on/distribute thousands of leaflets telling seniors how to get their homes insulated for free. Can you help us meet our goal with a special end-of-year donation?"

Old Stand-Bys

17) *Anniversary*: "Our organization is now entering its third/fifth/fiftieth anniversary of service to the community. Celebrate with us by sending one dollar/ten dollars/100 dollars for each year of our existence. For your gift we will be pleased to send you a special anniversary parchment, suitable for framing. In addition, for those donating \$1,000 or more, there will be a special reception honoring Famous Person, who has been so helpful to our cause."

18) *Pledge*: "Did you ever wish you could give more? Would you like to be a major donor, but can't afford it? Now you can. By joining our Monthly Donor Club, you can give \$5, \$15, \$50 or whatever you wish on a monthly basis. We will send you convenient reminder envelopes."

19) *Famous Person*: "I'm _____. You may have seen me on television. In my personal life, I am very concerned about birth control/tenants rights/public education. I believe the _____ Organization defends our rights in this area. Please join me in supporting _____."

(Famous Person can be truly famous, such as a current film or music celebrity, or it can be someone well-known and widely respected only in your community.)

20) *Another member*: "My name is _____. I have been a member of _____ for five years. In that time, I have witnessed the continuing erosion of our rights, and the seemingly malicious efforts of our leaders

to take what little we have left. All that stands between them and us is _____ Organization. In the past five years, our organization has succeeded in _____, _____ . That's why I am giving a little extra this year. \$15 is not a lot, but it really helps, and if everyone gave just \$5, \$10, or \$15 it would really add up. Will you join me?"

21) *The story that might have been sad*, but ended happily because of your group: "Ruthie is ten. She ran away from her violent stepfather when she was eight. She was referred to our school by a policeman who found her walking in a daze down the streets of New York City—alone, scared, penniless. Today she is lively, popular and a good student. She would like to be an attorney, and then a judge. At our school, this dream is very possible. Help us continue to help children like Ruthie. There are almost _____ million children in need. Your extra gift of \$15, \$25 or \$50 can help us expand our efforts to find them and help them."

22) *Urgent need*: "We have an urgent need to raise \$2,000 to alert the public of the hazards of chemical dumping currently being proposed for the east side of town. This little-known bill, which has the support of our supervisors, will bring unwarranted health hazards to over 1000 people. The Town Council is trying to slide this bill through without our knowledge, and thus our protest. Help us stop this outrage now, with an extra donation of \$15, \$25 or whatever you can send."

23) *Specific project*: "Our day care center is in need of new toys for the children. In order to provide quality

day care, we need proper equipment. The enclosed sheet tells you how your donation could help."

Enclosed sheet:

One teddy bear: \$4; One swing set: \$100; Set of educational videos: \$150; 12 pails and shovels: \$31.

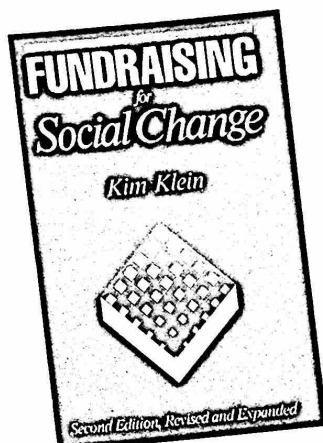
Combination Appeals

24) *Monthly donor to a specific project*: "Please join our Food for Thought Donor Club. For \$10 a month minimum donation, you will help us to keep serving 1000 meals daily at our Parish Hall. In return we will be pleased to send you our special newsletter, *Food For Thought*. This newsletter describes our work and provides essays and information on hunger in America and what could be done to stop it."

25) *Request for funds and new members in honor of an anniversary*: "It is our second anniversary. To celebrate, and to ensure that we will always be here, we are forming a 2 x 4 Club. Send us any combination of money, as long as it has 2's in it—\$2, \$22, \$222, \$22.22, and send us the names of four people who you think will be interested in joining. To thank you, we have had a special anniversary pin designed by one of our members. It is a 2 x 4, in a shape that will surprise and delight you. Join today."

26) *Any of the above appeals, with a premium*: "If you send your special gift before _____ date, we will send you free an autographed copy of *A Great Book* by A. Famous Person." ■

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Inside the *Journal*: The move is complete

The *Journal* has now completed its move from Knoxville, Tennessee to its new home in Berkeley, California with offices in New York City. Mail will continue to be forwarded from Knoxville to Berkeley, so that we don't miss anything. We are available on either coast by telephone: for people wishing to call the West Coast, the number is (415) 663-8562, and for people wishing to call the East Coast, the number is (212) 673-6216.

Prices Will Go Up slightly

As part of our move, and in the light of our recently filed tax forms, we have reevaluated the financial situation of the *Journal*. The goal of the *Journal* has always been to break even. All our staff work only part time, with the office manager having the most time at one day a week. We pay fair wages and use a union press, but no one is highly paid by the *Journal*. The partners do not draw any money from the *Journal*, as what little profit it has shown has been poured back in for developing special publications, responding to requests for free subscriptions from organizations in the Third World, paying writers' fees and so on.

Unfortunately, for the past two years the *Journal* has lost money. While we don't mind not making a profit on it, as it is a community service, it is not something we can subsidize beyond the partners' free labor. At the same time, we must face the fact that the cost of living has gone up since 1983 when we last raised our prices. So, to try to bring the *Journal's* financial picture into balance, we have decided on a small price increase for subscriptions. Starting in August, a one-year subscription to the *Journal* will be \$25. You can renew before August 1 for the

old price of \$20. Issues published prior to August 1, 1990 will still be \$3.50 each; starting with the August issue they will be \$4.20 each.

Some of you have wondered why the *Journal* is a for-profit partnership instead of securing non-profit status, like most of the groups of our readers. The reason is simple: we want maximum flexibility about what we write, with minimum reporting requirements to the government, Board of Directors, volunteers and so on. It is more expensive to operate as a for-profit entity when there is no profit, but it is worth that price in flexibility and independence.

Please Ask

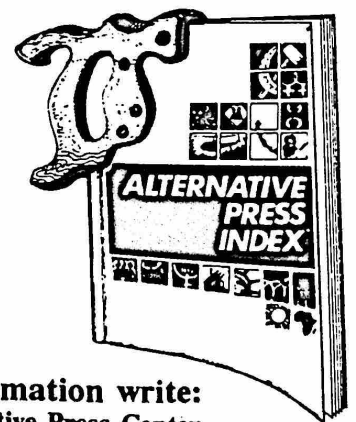
On another note, as I travel the country consulting and doing trainings, I notice that many of the articles from the *Journal* are regularly photocopied and handed out to Boards, volunteers, and staff of organizations. On a one-time occasional basis, we don't care if you distribute *Journal* articles. However, when you are copying more than one article, or making multiple copies, please call for permission. Some of the articles are not copyrighted to the *Journal* and we have to seek permission from the author for reproduction. As all of you know who have asked for permission to reproduce articles, if we can, we always give it. When we do, we ask you to write on the article, "Reprinted by permission."

We hope all of you will continue to subscribe and use the *Grassroots Fundraising Journal*. We thank everyone who has been with us for all or part of the past nine years. ■

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