

The Lustberg Communicator

Volume 20, Number 3

“Communication should be an intellectual act of love.”

Autumn 2011

Lustberg On... Exciting the Audience



Photo by Mary Norman

Arch Lustberg

I wrote in my summer column that the only serious candidates with any “color” in the Republican Primaries were Michele Bachmann and Ron Paul.

Now, with Rick

Perry’s entry, there are three.

There’s no denying Bachmann’s magnetic field. Those who love her really love her.

And I get a kick out of Ron Paul. Like Mike Huckabee and Ross Perot before him, Paul offers us a refreshing tell-it-as-you-see-it color.

Since I last wrote, Rick Perry entered the race and has excited a substantial

following with his cowboy persona.

Who’s ahead? Ever Since the famous New York



Daily News headline, “DEWEY BEATS TRUMAN,” I’ve not been able to trust polls. Every election is interesting and exciting.

2012 is looking like a real zinger, made even more fascinating and unpredictable by the change in the way the Republican primaries will be decided. They’re no longer a state-by-state, winner-take-all contest. This time, each candidate will carry his or her share of each state’s vote into the final tally.

That means Representative Bachmann and Governor Perry will be splitting votes

in each of their primary contests. They’re both brilliant at working the crowd, but they share the same crowd. Each has enough ego and fund-raising ability to stay in the race all the way. It promises to be a back-and-forth tug of war unless one offers the other the VP spot, which is highly unlikely.

The situation — with Bachmann and Perry splitting the “revolutionary” vote — lends itself to two interesting speculations. First, that Mitt Romney will coast in. And second, that the unbelievable will happen: Ron Paul snatches enough votes to sneak in ahead of either of the louder, better financed “revolutionaries.”

Romney has no viable competition, but hasn’t been able to connect with the audience. He’s obviously been getting some coaching. He’s loosened up his corporate image by frequently switching out suit and tie for blazer and open shirt, but even his rolled-up sleeves look starched and freshly pressed. He’s begun to make some of his points in story form. Time will tell if he can pull it off and garner a measurable level of affection; but exciting he’s not.

So far Jon Huntsman has been unable to rouse a following. He’s the one who stood to gain most from the debates, but hasn’t broken through.

Although largely ignored by moderators, the best debaters at the Reagan Library September 7 were Herman Cain, with his 9-9-9 prescription for the economy, and Newt Gingrich

who’s always shown himself to be brilliant in spontaneous debate.

Bachman was hurt by her un-presidential, distracting white-painted fingernails and her untidy hair. Perry dug himself deeper into the Social-Security-as-Ponzi-Scheme buzzword trap he set himself. Paul turned uncharacteristically shrill. Romney won by not losing.

Meanwhile, Obama has no primary

opposition. He does have some huge problems, though. He worked the crowd beautifully in the 2008 campaign. He was electric when he spoke from the heart, dropping the Law Professor demeanor. If he doesn’t get back to making intellectual love to his audience, the Democratic base will still be his... but may not bother to vote.

Ron Paul has his unique appeal. Bachmann and Perry excite the crowd. Romney is working on the warmth factor and seems confident that his “electability” will bring in primary supporters.

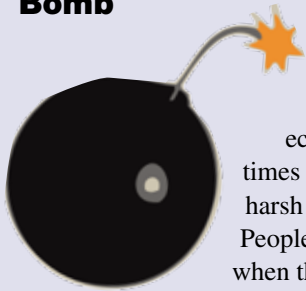
I rarely make predictions, but this time my money is on an Obama-Romney wingding. □

VOTE 2012

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Defusing the Buzzword Bomb



Harsh economic times usher in harsh attitudes. People lash out when they're angry, frustrated and scared, and often use negative buzzwords as weapons. Recent examples include several columnists who called Tea Partiers "terrorists" when our national credit rating was downgraded, and Governor Perry who lobbed the buzzword bomb "treasonous" at Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke.

Time for a tutorial: When you're on the receiving end of a buzzword bomb, breathe deeply from the diaphragm. Don't lash back. Don't deny the accusation. Open your face. Respond with a complete, honest statement explaining what you really are or really do. Use a story if you can. You're the one who'll look sane.

Shortcuts Can Get You Lost

Every year, Beloit College puts out its "Mindset List" to remind professors what's familiar and unfamiliar to the incoming class. This year the faculty was reminded that their freshmen were born in 1993. When they hear LBJ, they're more likely to think of basketball star LeBron James than President Lyndon B. Johnson. When they hear Amazon, they're more likely to think of on-line sales than a South American river. When they hear PC, they won't think of political correctness but a personal computer.

The lesson? Don't use short-cut language—including acronyms—that can be misinterpreted by your audience. By the time they realize they misunderstood, they've missed

Nits & Picks

a lot of what you've said. Be explicit: Lyndon Johnson, the Amazon River, and political correctness.

Barbershop's Open Face

If you get the opportunity to see a barbershop quartet—or a performance of their female equivalents, a Sweet Adelines group—do it! Not just for the pleasure of hearing the a cappella harmony, but to see the open faces.



Sweet Adelines Group

The open-face communication tool comes so naturally to the barbershop singer that one of my clients, Joe Forsee, coined the phrase "Everything you need to know in life can be learned from The Music Man," back when he was the Georgia State Librarian and first saw my open-face demonstration. We bonded; then Joe introduced me and my work to the world of library professionals. We've been friends ever since.

Fountain of Youth

In the 1500s, Ponce de León explored Florida, looking for the legendary fountain of youth. He never found it. In 2011, I did.

Leadership Florida books me every year. This August, they asked me to do two programs: one for the League of Florida Mayors, and one for the League of Student Leaders. They were as different as two groups can be.

I enjoyed working with the mayors. Their dedication surprised me, and I was pleased that they found my training useful and enjoyable.

But that pleasure was nothing like the joy I felt watching the young 20-somethings just beginning

their adult lives. They were so obviously delighted to see their futures transformed by a few simple revelations like the open face, the substitution of silence for the audible pauses of "well, look, uh, you know..." by the effective use of eye contact, proper breathing and other basic communication skills. I loved having them love me back. I can't remember the last time I felt so young!

The Power of Storytelling

The Washington Post reported on Mitt Romney telling a story to a New Hampshire audience about his dad taking him, and later Mitt's own children, on cross-country road trips to visit national parks: "As we went from park to park and we saw the beauty of the land, I know he wasn't just teaching my kids and me about the beauty of America—the majesty of our mountains, the power of our rivers and lakes and canyons and so forth. He was also teaching us about the character of the men and women of this country..." Later a woman from the crowd told reporters, "He came through human-like."

Telephone Rudeness

I've always felt strongly that the winner of most elections is the candidate who is better liked (or less disliked) by the voters who are undecided. Many arrive at the polling place not 100% sure of who will get their vote. A candidate can't afford to annoy or irritate a voter as the election approaches.

That's why I'd advise any candidate to resist the temptation to

See "NITS & PICKS" on page 4





Dear Arch

You're one of the reasons I've survived not once or twice, but many a day — both professionally and personally (and they get hard to separate). With continuing appreciation and admiration,

Joe Forsee

A current candidate for Governor is also a good friend. I shared your "open face" idea with him after seeing his first video. The second video is MUCH better!

John S. Myrland

I called upon all the TV interview skills I learned from you when the local NBC station covered the Royal Wedding Tea I gave. They came from Milwaukee for an hour-long interview, which was edited to a short piece. Folks asked how I managed to be calm during a long interview. Well, I had my points to cover and did so. Good training comes in handy years later! Thank you, Arch!

Kathy Fish

TLC Note

A Quick Refresher

Need a quick Arch fix before your next public appearance? Go to www.lustberg.net and click on "video clips." There Arch goes over the open face, the pause, speaking with pride, simplifying the message, eye contact and the rhythm of eye contact. Full instructional videos and books are also available for purchase on the website.

Wisdom of the Ages

The Postal Service is issuing a stamp honoring Hollywood Writer, Director and Producer **Billy Wilder** (1906-2002.) His six-Academy-Award career was exceptional — even without considering the fact that he arrived in the U.S. unable to speak English after fleeing Hitler's Germany. His many movie credits include *Some Like it Hot*, *The Seven Year Itch*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *Irma La Douce*, *Double Indemnity*, *Ninotchka*, *The Lost Weekend*, *Sabrina*, and *Witness for the Prosecution*.

Wilder had an exceptional talent for connecting with the audience and was

wonderfully quotable.

One of his most famous statements came when he returned to occupied, post-war Germany as a U.S. Army colonel. He was charged with keeping former Nazis out of the film and theater industries. When the director in Oberammergau requested permission for a former Nazi to play Jesus in the town's passion play, Wilder famously responded: "Permission granted. But the nails have to be real."

Other Wilder quotes offer good advice to communicators. Here are a few:



"I have ten commandments. The first nine are, thou shalt not bore..."

"Don't be too clever for an audience. Make it obvious. Make the subtleties obvious also."

"Trust your own instinct. Your mistakes might as well be your own, instead of someone else's."

"If you're going to tell people the truth, be funny or they'll kill you."

"I never overestimate the audience... we're not making a picture for Harvard Law School, we're making a picture for middle-class people, the people that you see on the subway, or the people that you see in a restaurant. Just normal people."

"Now, what is it which makes a scene interesting? If you see a man coming through a doorway, it means nothing. If you see him coming through a window — that is at once interesting."



Bringing Arch To Town

Below are the cities and dates of Arch's upcoming programs. Call or e-mail Marguerite Stone — (703) 979-4150, lustberg@erols.net — to piggyback onto one of these dates or to bring Arch to your group on another date. For information on all of Arch's training programs go to www.lustberg.net.

September

- 13 Lexington, KY
- 16 Orlando, FL
- 21 Philadelphia, PA

October

- 6 Colorado Springs, CO
- 22 Salt Lake City, UT

November

- 11 Richmond, KY
- 12 Dallas, TX

**An asterisk indicates the date is being held on a first-refusal basis. For updates, visit our home page: www.lustberg.net*

Nits and Picks

Continued from page 2

have staff manning the phones with those disturbing, annoying, irritating dinner-time (or any time for that matter) telephone calls soliciting votes. The junk mail and e-mail spam is bad enough, but easy to throw away. The unwanted phone call is a terrible intrusion and gets worse as the calls get more frequent.

If I were working for a presidential hopeful this time, my advice would be to put out a press release announcing "I respect your privacy. I've told my staff not to use the telephone to ask for your vote." I bet it'd be novel enough to get plenty of positive press coverage.

Use the Right Tools

Like story-telling, analogies and examples are important instruments in the communicator's toolbox. Rick Perry gained some footage using a football analogy: "...It's not who hands you the football and it's not where the ball is handed to you, it's what you do with the ball after you have it."

Avoid Distractions

In a Newsweek commentary, fashion writer Robin Givhan seems to applaud Michele Bachmann for campaigning in "sundresses — arms bared" and with "jangling accessories and swishing hair." I can't agree, and that goes for the peek-a-boo sandals she wears with suits. I've always maintained, and still believe, that men and women pull attention from their message when what they wear is distracting. Bare skin, eye-catching

jewelry and hair in motion distract. If you have something important to say, remember: nothing you do and nothing you wear should call attention to itself.

It's the Message That Matters

At 77, Gloria Steinem is still active on the speaker circuit. In an interview with Newsweek, she was asked about plastic surgery. She responded that her fear of bad surgery is far greater than her aversion to aging. "It's like a bad toupee. When someone's speaking, you can't think of anything else. For me, that kind of distraction would be a disaster."

Educating the Media

In a recent essay for Time, Joe Klein writes about a phone call he once received from General David Petraeus. Klein had just written a piece on Iraq and Petraeus called "almost immediately" from Fort Leavenworth where he was running the Army's equivalent of a think tank and university. He told the journalist, "You're on the right track, but you don't know anything.... You want to come out here and learn more?" Klein accepted the offer and undoubtedly came away with a better understanding of Petraeus' perspective. There's little reason to fear the media. Most reporters want to understand their subject and do a good job. By helping them, you help yourself.

The Lustberg Communicator

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Graphic Design: Marlece Lusk, MLK Designs

Web Management: Karen Thompson, Shadyvale Press

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Communicate Through Stories

It's hard to justify communication unless it's designed to be remembered, and stories are uniquely able to achieve that goal. Find the right story to illustrate your message and tell it well!