

## Country Real Estate, #355: January 22, 2015

### I advise the primary candidates

By Curtis Seltzer

**BLUE GRASS, Va.**—Every four years at this time, Presidential aspirants seek my counsel about how to lose the coming primaries.

Any fool can tell them how to win. It takes a special talent and decades of experience to show a candidate how to orchestrate a loss.

Not to boast, but I am a highly qualified loser-consultant. Every candidate for whom I've written speeches has lost. My advice has doomed countless others.

Modesty does not forbid me from admitting that I coached Governor Rick Perry on debate tactics in 2012. ("Oops," was my cat—that I just let out of his bag. Pay no attention to this paragraph.)

As a professional pol, I now stay so far behind the scenes that I often can't see what's going on in the front row. Nonetheless, I'm very choosy about who I hide behind.

Here are the candidates I've counseled this week.

Me: Hello.

Candidate: Is this policy consultant Seltzer?

Me: Yes. I also do debate prep.

Candidate: I'm running for President of the United States with the Smashembashem Party.

Me: OK. What's your position on terrorists?

Candidate: Nuke 'em.

Me: How about terrestrials?

Candidate: Nuke 'em.

Me: How about extraterrestrials?

Candidate: Nuke 'em twice. Extra never hurts.

Me: Federal programs?

Candidate: Snuff 'em.

Me: How about the poor, pitiful and oppressed?

Candidate: Tax ‘em.

Me: Well, that’s a little more broad-minded. What would you do about bedbugs?

Candidate: Give ‘em out as foreign aid instead of dollars.

Me: My advice: Don’t change a single splinter in your platform.

Me: Hello.

Candidate: I’m running for the Presidency of the United States on the Freedom and Liberty Party.

Me: What’s your position on paying taxes?

Candidate: Taxpayers should have a right to choose.

Me: Do you think Americans should have more freedom?

Candidate: Of course.

Me: Do you mean...say whatever they want; print whatever they want; do whatever they want?

Candidate: Well, no. Mae West got it wrong. Too much of a good thing isn’t wonderful.

Me: What’s your position on Social Security and Medicare?

Candidate: Obamahandouts suck liberty from our rugged aged and our infirm individualists. Principled seniors should reject and return these “detriments” that the government calls, “benefits.” As President I will limit those two giveaways to combat veterans of World War I who served barefoot in Fiji.

Me: My advice: Emphasize your positions on Social Security and Medicare—they’re wildly popular with Baby Boomers.

Me: Hello.

Candidate: I am running for President of the United States on the Greeniebeanie Party. I stand on a platform woven from free-range stinging nettles and the chaff of groats.

Me: What’s your position on pollution?

Candidate: I’m against television programing. I favor home spinning and bobbing for fallen-only, highly bruised organic apples in biodegradable water from Himalayan glaciers.

Me: How about hydrocarbon fuels?

Candidate: Nuke ‘em.

Me: The right to bear arms?

Candidate: Only for defenders of endangered species, like house flies.

Me: What’s your federal school-lunch menu?

Candidate: I would serve nothing that has lived, is living or will be living.

Me: What’s that leave?

Candidate: Low-fat, low-sugar, low-salt gravels in unfiltered, unpalatable water of celery.

Me: Electric cars?

Candidate: Only if they’re powered by windmills.

Me: How about the electric-power grids?

Candidate: Nuke ‘em. Candles are hot!

Me: My advice: Run against refrigeration.

Me: Hello.

Candidate: Cool! I’m the Presidential candidate of the Free Spirit Party.

Me: OK. In the 1928 presidential election, the GOP ran an advertisement that boasted of Republican prosperity in the 1920s that had provided a “proverbial chicken in every pot....” What would you do for the American electorate?

Candidate: Is ‘proverbial chicken’ French? Is it named for the province?

Me: I hear exhalations. You must be smoking.

Candidate: Ah yes. A wonderful non-nicotinic habit here in Colorado. So you’re asking what *would* I do for the American expectorate?

Me: Spit it out.

Candidate: I would make everything freez.

Me: Like food, like housing, like everything?

Candidate: Sure. I’m not a tax-and-spend Democrat. I’m a spend-and-spend Free Spirit.

Me: How would you work with Congress?

Candidate: I’d declare a no-dress Friday.

Me: You mean only pants suits?

Candidate: No, like everything optional.

Me: That would certainly level the playing field. How would you deal with Putin?

Candidate: I'd feed him loaded brownies.

Me: North Korea's Kim Jong-un?

Candidate: I'd make him a star on American TV. He'd be the Funky Chicken dancer on the new "Soul Train."

Me: My advice: Promise publicly to offer Kim a plot in Arlington National Cemetery?

Me: Hello.

Candidate: I'm a candidate for the Presidency of the United States on the Nuts&Bolts Party.

Me: OK. What's your basic political philosophy?

Candidate: Screw 'em.

Me: Everyone?

Candidate: Everyone who's not like us.

Me: Do you accept all nuts as party members?

Candidate: Of course not. We prefer lock nuts and jam nuts.

Me: What about wingnuts?

Candidate: Nope. They back out too easily.

Me: How about bolts?

Candidate: Membership is limited to lag bolts, cheese heads, sex bolts and mating screws.

Me: My advice: Secure your base.

Me: Hello.

Candidate: I'm the presidential candidate of the Me-First Party.

Me: Why are you running for President?

Candidate: Good salary. Room and board are comped. Travel on the taxpayer's dime. Someone's always around to fix the computer and pick up the takeout. Free dog walking.

Me: Do you have a program?

Candidate: I like "The Price is Right."

Me: I mean what would you do as President?

Candidate: I'll be busy preparing for my rounds of \$200,000-a-pop speeches after I finish my White House years.

Me: Do you have a policy agenda?

Candidate: Doing less is more, but doing nothing is even more of less. It's in my campaign book, Slacking Is Not Harder Than It Looks.

Me: But what would you do when problems appeared?

Candidate: Leave them alone. And they'll go home. Dragging their tails behind them.

Me: My advice to The Ignorer in Chief: Your campaign slogan should be: "The bucks stop here!"

I should add that I don't advise every candidate who calls. I refused to accept a collect call from Bernie Madoff who, I've been told, is testing the waters and raising money from past donors.

Running a how-to-lose consulting business has one distinct advantage over conventional political hustles: I advise only those candidates I want to lose. And there are always a lot of those who need my help.