

libertarian or of any other sort. Even someone at a university needs ILL if the university library can't help with a particular item.

Besides which, footnotes are informative. If something is published by the Oxford University Press, that means somebody respectable thinks that this is a respectable writer and that his is a respectable argument. Wacko Press of Hicksville in the state of Antarctica means something else again, in terms of scholarly prestige. It all helps. An anti-semitic smear published in Berlin, 1935, means one thing. The same thing published Berlin, 1953, is another matter.

Footnotes also enable your readers to recycle the quotes you supply, and to recycle your footnotes as well. This is a bit naughty, because they thus suggest that they've read the original, when in fact you did the job for them. But no actual lies are being told, and such users of your work will love you for it.

Finally, footnotes enable you to include some tangential implications or additions, without the central spine of what you're saying getting bent out of shape. Thought is often spoken of as a linear thing. People speak of chains. I have here spoken of "paths" and "journeys". But as all writers know, thought is not linear; it branches out in all directions. Yet a writer must always choose the one path, and a footnote may be just the right compromise in such a dilemma. But this is incidental to my argument, and maybe this entire paragraph should itself have been a footnote.

THE FOOTNOTE FAILINGS OF THE UNIVERSITIES

We in the LA are becoming less and less tolerant of writers who fail to supply proper footnotes, and less and less willing to finish the work which they havethemselves thus failed to finish. And we are becoming *utterly contemptuous* of people who, when all of the above has been explained to them with searing eloquence, then *argue* about it. We are also acquiring a hearty contempt for the universities, most of whom no longer bother routinely to inculcate into their inmates this elementary scholarly procedure, upon which all other scholarly procedures depend. (Many of those who object to our footnotes complaints actually have university degrees!)

On the other hand, if you *do* now understand the importance of footnotes, you will also understand that it really isn't that hard to supply them. All you have to do is note down *at the time* all the sources you are using! Name of author, title, publisher, place of publication, date of publication, page number of anything you quote. Author, name of article, name of journal or magazine or newspaper, date of journal or magazine or newspaper, page number of anything you quote. Is that so hard? It's the work of a moment. But it's one hell of a lot more than a moment to try to dig up such information later. We're talking here about the difference between on the one hand seconds, and on the other of hours, and often of days, weeks, months, even years.

In the course of a recent conversation with Dr. Bill Thompson of Reading University, I learned that he at least is an exception to this general condemnation of the Universities. He deducts one mark for every missing footnote in anything his students submit to him. He too makes much of the time difference between on the one hand getting it right first time, and on the other of having to chase it up again later.³

THE ABSENCE OF PROPER FOOTNOTES CAN PREVENT LA PUBLICATION ENTIRELY

I repeat. Before we publish something, we now *demand* that footnotes are supplied whenever they are needed, and that they are complete. Name of author, title, publisher, place of publication, date of publication, page number of quote. Or: author, name of article, name of journal or magazine or newspaper, date of journal or magazine or newspaper, issue number and volume number of journal or magazine or newspaper, page number of quote. Failure on your part to supply such information with your manuscript can *prevent publication entirely*, of an otherwise very usable piece. Contrariwise, some fairly mediocre pieces of writing that nevertheless did have some complete - and worthwhile - footnotes have found their way into our publications list, for that entire reason.⁴ Writers who are personally acquainted with the Libertarian Alliance editorial junta

will have heard tell of the notorious "LA pipeline". There's no better way to get your particular piece of crap stuck in that pipeline for ever than by failing to attach proper footnotes to it, "crap" being exactly the kind of language we use in such circumstances.

Sometimes, writers who learn that we are dissatisfied with their footnotes say something like: "Fine. Just give it back to me, and tell me what you want added." This is bullshit. For starters, the writer should still have a copy, and the demand for proper footnotes should suffice for him to go away and do another version which this time is usable, with no further handholding from us. In the absence of even this basic level of scholarly togetherness, and given that the original job was so poorly done, what guarantee is there that the "completed" footnotes will actually be complete, without yet more to-ing and fro-ing, in which further assistance from us is demanded, tracking down particular things, and with many of the origins of quotes beng lost beyond tracing? We just aren't interested in spending our time this way. This is not how we wish to live. The LA is an amateur organisation, not in the sense that it is less that excellently run, but in the sense that we who run it have only so much time to spare chasing up details, only so much brain to consume on shit shovelling little jobs like this. True, each one piffling little detail that the author should have sorted out himself may be no huge battle to unscramble. (Then again, it may be a very huge battle indeed. It's impossible to know beforehand.) The problem is in the accumulation of such details. Given eleven such "little" problems to solve, why should we sort out nine of them, if the two most essential references, the absence of which severely maims the entire publication, and which will give other writers the idea that they don't have to bother about essential footnotes either, then prove to have vanished beyond rescue? At any particular moment there is in our files a great mass of stuff from which new LA publications will eventually emerge. Why should we flog ourselves to death over your damn thing, and lead you by the hand through the entire production process - *with no guarantee that there'll even be a definite publication to show for it at the end of all this grief* - when other submissions are presented in a form that makes them immediately publishable with zero fuss? *Make it easy for us.*

An otherwise excellent piece of writing held up for years is a still unpublished piece by Marc-Henri Glendening on "New Times", which was submitted about three years ago. Key quotes, which *had* to have footnotes, had none. In theory these are traceable, maybe, and I recall lurching with M-H and embarking with him on the footnote clean-up. Since then, every time I take that file out and try to resume bashing it through to completion I think: sod it. Or more politely: time applied to other tasks will yield quicker and more definite results. That this snarl-up is partly my fault is of no use to M-H. He may have a fine case against me for my share of the confusion, and no doubt all this bitching from me is terribly unfair, but the thing would have been published by now if only he had *made it easy* for me.⁵

I perfectly understand that I'm not blameless in these snarl-ups. Drawn into the morass by the desire for a good publication, I embark on the publication process before realising how prolonged it is going to be. And then, precisely because I then associate this particular publication effort with my own incompetence, as well as that of the author, the overwhelming temptation is for me to turn my back on the whole mess, and work on something else where I have been drawn into no such complicated negotiations.

AMERICAN LIBERTARIANS ARE ESPECIALLY BAD ABOUT FOOTNOTES

May we especially draw the attention of American libertarians to the matter of footnotes, for American libertarians are notoriously bad at supplying them, and notoriously inclined to imagine that failing to supply proper footnotes is not a major vice.

In the case of Brits who fail to supply decent footnotes the reason is usually, as I say, an arrogant inability to see things from the reader's point of view. In the case of American libertarians the problem is more often that widespread American libertarian disease: populism.

Because the USA was in its origins the closest thing that the world has yet seen to a libertarian nation, US libertarians are appallingly

prone to aim all their efforts at “ordinary people”, instead of at other thinking people like themselves. And “ordinary people” are supposed not to be interested in footnotes. Worse, they are actually said to be *repelled* by them. Well, if these ordinary people are so terminally ordinary that they are put off by footnotes, then be it hereby and henceforth known that these ordinary people are of no interest to the Libertarian Alliance.⁶

Many people are indeed *indifferent* to footnotes, until they suddenly decide that they’d like to follow something up in more detail, at which point they suddenly see the point of footnotes and either rejoice at their presence or curse their absence. But only complete numbskulls are actually *put off* by footnotes, and as I say, we can live without these. The LA is going for the commanding heights of intellectual debate. When these are captured, the lush pastures and river valleys wherein reside ordinary people will be conquered for liberty with little further fuss.

To cite just one typically frustrating American example, in the January 1992 issue of *Reason*, on page 22, in William Anderson’s article “Acid Test”, we read:

Krug’s problems began, in a sense, in the late 1970s. Scientists in the United States, Canada and Scandinavia became alarmed at what they believed was massive environmental degradation caused by sulfur dioxide-laced rain that came from coal-fired power plants. The media followed with hundreds of apocalyptic stories, such as “Scourge from the Skies” (*Readers Digest*), “Now, Even the Rain is Dangerous” (*International Wildlife*), “Acid from the Skies” (*Time*), and “Rain of Terror” (*Field and Stream*).

Suppose you were wanting information about acid rain, and media treatment thereof. *Reason*’s anti-footnote policy presents you with a wonderful choice of roads, each with a tree trunk across it. Although we are told which periodicals the quotes come from, we aren’t told *which issues*. “Late 1970s”. What the fuck use is that? That’s six unnecessary hours in some damn library. That’s twenty well referenced articles about environmental scaremongering in the media that *won’t even be written*. Would it really have been such an effort for anti-footnote cretins to have had to drag their weary eyes past *International Wildlife*, “No. 189, November 1977, p. 27”, or whatever? Or to have had a little clutch of numbered small print at the end of Anderson’s piece to ignore?

The otherwise excellent neo-conservative journal *Commentary* is similarly afflicted by unsatisfactory publication details of the books and articles it quotes or otherwise refers to. And just to show that Brits are capable of the same silliness, it is amazing but true that the conservative journal *Salisbury Review*, edited by Roger Scruton (whom I revere for all the help he gave to the Eastern European opposition during the eighties), also now has no proper footnotes. Scruton decided to cut them out. Unbelievable. Totally unbelievable. This man is supposed to be a *professor* for heaven’s sake, and in Britain, where that still means something. I suspect that here again we have a bad case of the populist delusion. Like libertarianism in America, conservatism in Britain is supposed to be the province of “ordinary people”. (Populism was also Arthur Seldon’s problem.)

THE DIRECTOR OF THE LA AGREES

Perhaps you suspect that it is only I, the LA’s Editorial Director, who am creating this footnote furore, and that the LA’s Director and my colleague Chris Tame does not share my obsessional concern or readiness to set aside good manners in this matter. Wrong. I now speak of footnotes with the fervour of a convert. And who was it who converted me to the path of footnote righteousness? Chris Tame.

Most of my criticisms of our rivals and competitors come from his bitter experiences rather than mine, me not being nearly such an industrious creator and user of footnotes as he is. It was he who told me that Arthur Seldon of the IEA used actually to cut journal references, in order to make them fit his “house style”. I didn’t myself know this, and frankly, would not have believed Seldon capable of such stupidity. If you deviate from footnote rectitude,

you’ll get the same abuse from Chris Tame as from me, only more so. Had he written this it would have been even more abusive. A particular would-be LA writer called Angela Ellis Jones would have got several paragraphs of public denunciation, for a similar saga to the Glendening New Times mess. I decided to leave it at this.⁷

THE ACCELERATION IS ALREADY HAPPENING

I realise that I’m not being polite, but the prize I seek is a glorious one. If from now on most submissions to the LA have complete footnotes attached, that will result in the biggest acceleration to our publication rate since we first acquired a desktop publishing system.

To put it another way, I’ll be able to meet my constantly enlarging production targets on less and less time, which will leave me more and more time for other LA activities such as public speaking and media performances, and also for scraping a living. I have recently been banging away about footnotes at LA social gatherings and meetings, and have started putting little footnote homilies into other LA publications besides this one,⁸ and there are now several regular LA writers who *always* get their footnotes right.⁹ I can sense the publication acceleration starting to happen. After this the deluge!

DO COMPUTERISE

Don’t get me wrong, I love it when LA writers also send me a computer disk, along with their manuscript, as some of them already do, and more and more now realise they should. This saves much time. (I insist on having a print-out with any disks submitted so that any electronic foul-ups can be corrected manually. I must know what you think the disk says. The majority of computerised writers have sufficient brain cells to realise this.) But given the choice between a manuscript that isn’t computerised but is properly footnoted, and one that *is* computerised but *isn’t* footnoted, give me the footnotes every time. Typing is typing. A couple of Bruckner symphonies on the CD machine¹⁰ and I know that the job will get done. Chasing footnotes can stretch out for ever.

You should always keep a copy of anything you send in. If you fail to do this, and if for our own reasons we sit on the thing for a couple of years, then any difficulties that this causes you will be your problem, not ours. (If you merely send in a computer disk with no manuscript - see above - then the only probable consequence will be that the disk gets scrubbed and added to my disk collection. Incidentally, it irritates me to have to send computer disks *back*. I collect them, for storage purposes. This is, I feel, a trivial price for a writer to pay for the privilege of LA publication.)

One the other hand, once I have all the LA’s writers well subjugated in the matter of footnotes, the next job will be to bully all those who’ve not yet got computers into getting them. Nothing is worse than chasing footnotes, there are many things I can imagine which are *better* than typing. But that’s for a later tactical note.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION AND GRAPHICS

Another very helpful thing for LA scribes to include, which verges on being essential, is a brief biographical note. Omit this, and we are liable either to omit any such information ourselves, or else invent some. Far simpler for you to supply such stuff yourself. But we can survive - grudgingly - without that.

I also have an iron whim about attaching graphics to as many LA publications as is convenient. So if you have some appropriate imagery - suitable for photocopying and usable by my little electronic scanner - please send it in with the article. *Good* photographs of our regular writers would be particularly welcome, the human face being a device that has evolved precisely in order to attract the attention and recognition of other humans. A bad photograph, with the face too small, with an overbearing flash shadow behind it, taken in one of those silly little photobooths at an underground station, is useless.¹¹

If you do include graphics, try to remember not to fold the stuff down the middle when posting it. One ought not to have to say such things to supposedly intelligent people, but I know from bitter experience that this instruction is also necessary.

GET THE TITLE AND SUBHEADINGS RIGHT, WHICH MEANS GETTING THEM ACCURATE EVEN IF RATHER LONG

But none of the above items - computerisation, biography, graphics - are remotely as important, nor anything like as tiresome as potential decelerators of publication as are *footnotes*, hence this entire publication, short enough for us to be able to mass distribute it cheaply, devoted to this one essential topic. This piece was stuck on my hard disk for months because the title was wrong. It was: "How To Write For The Libertarian Alliance". Then I typed in the new title which hit the nail that mattered the most on the head, scattered on the other stuff about computers, biography, graphics, etc. as the mere seasoning that it is, and the piece was done.

This illustrates another important LA procedure, which is getting titles right, another item of incidental spice which I might as well mention here. LA titles are almost always better than the title the author attached to his thing in the first place. This is again caused by lack of imagination. A hard-pressed student in a library does not want to be faced with some assinine guessing game before he can work out what your piece is about. He must be told. If you take sides, your title should say which side. Don't just put your question; put your answer.¹² And put in equally clear subheadings, so that a casual observer of the piece can tell at a glance approximately what it's about, and where you stand on the sub-issues. If you don't do this, we will. If you then object to our title and our subheadings, that's your fault for not doing the job yourself.¹³

But all of this is, as I say, incidental. You can hand-write your piece in what we call the "suicide note" style, include no graphics, or clues about who or what you are, and have at the top of it a title that is as much use as a crossword puzzle clue, and still have the thing published by us, so long as it is intelligently libertarian, reasonably well written, and *so long as it has proper footnotes*.

I WOULD LOVE TO MAKE A SCENE ABOUT THIS

Acquaintances of mine may be tempted to tease me in the months and years to come to the effect that I am maybe making too much of a fuss about footnotes. I would advise against this. There is nothing I would love better than a hugely dramatic and embarrassing scene for everyone to cluck over for years afterwards, which will dramatise for ever and burn unforgettably into the brains of all LA scribes the vital importance to the Libertarian Alliance of footnotes. Do you want to be a part of that scene? Do you want to hand me a manuscript at an LA gathering, and do you want me to observe that some of your quotes have no page numbers attached to them, and then go to the end and find that those matters you have referenced have been referenced incompletely, minus some of the publishers, some of the places of publication, some of the dates and/or some of the page numbers? And do you want me then, in public, to gather together your disgusting collection of scribbblings and/or bangings, take a step backwards and then *throw it back in your face?* You being a cretin, the resulting paper storm will be your only copy, so you'll have to scabble about on the floor and collect it all up, while simultaneously explaining to your contemptuous associates the cause of your humiliation. Do you want that? Do you?

So, do us and yourself a favour, and make sure you always supply proper ...

FOOTNOTES

1. My own *Publishing Without Perishing*, Tactical Notes No. 9, Libertarian Alliance, London, 1990, p.4, further describes our extreme enthusiasm for a large number of titles, by many different writers, with many different points of view and tones of voice.
2. For details of some of the major works of the libertarian literature, see note 7 below.
3. Sadly, Bill Thompson's otherwise very satisfactory *Moral Crusades and Media Censorship*, Sociological Notes No. 11, Libertarian Alliance, London 1991, is *not* an example of how we want footnotes done.. Publisher's names and places of publication are in many cases missing. We were so eager to published this that we just said, what the hell ... Alas, if we waited for all submissions to be perfect before we published anything, we'd not have made nearly so much publishing headway.

4. I consider the four issues of Sociological Notes so far written by Tim Evans (No. 6: *Sociology and the Soviet Union: A Libertarian Critique*, No. 7: *Sociology, Crises, Contradictions and Capitalism: A Libertarian Critique*, No. 8: *Radical Politics and the Constraints of the Parliamentary System*, No. 9: *Individualist Explanations and the Sociology of Women*, all Libertarian Alliance, London, 1990) to be less than supremely stellar pieces of writing, being too jargon-ridden for my taste. But the footnotes are excellent, as several sociologists have gratefully commented.
5. No publication details here, because no publication.
6. I exclude the admirable Cato Institute from these criticisms. Their footnotes are always impeccably complete, which is a significant part of why they are doing so well. Ditto, if the things I've seen are anything to go by, the Pacific Research Institute.
7. The footnotes which I scanned in for the cover of this were from Chris R. Tame, *The Bankruptcy of the New Socialists*, Political Notes No. 27, Libertarian Alliance, London, 1987. Note 8, glimpsed in my graphics, deserves to be reproduced in full, being a model of how we want things to be done (Thank God for the copy and paste option in Ventura.):
The idea of an anarcho-capitalist society was originated by the great Belgian classical economist Gustave de Molinari, and expounded by the largely American school of individualist anarchists like Benjamin Tucker. In recent years it has enjoyed a vigorous restatement by both free market economists and libertarian philosophers. See, for example, David Friedman, *The Machinery of Freedom*, Arlington House, New Rochelle, New York, 1978; M. & L. Tannehill & J. Wollstein, *Society Without Government*, Arno Press/New York Times, New York, 1972; Murray Rothbard, *For A New Liberty*, 2nd. edn., Collier Macmillan, New York, 1973; John T. Sanders, *The Ethical Argument Against Government*, University Press of America, Washington, D.C., 1980; David Osterfeld, *Freedom, Society and the State*, University Press of America, Washington, D. C., 1983.
8. See for example my editorial note at the end of Michael Fumento, *The Profits of Doom: How To Achieve Fame and Fortune by Being Spectacularly Wrong*, Economic Notes No. 44, Libertarian Alliance, London, 1992, reprinted from *Crisis*, February 1991, in which *Crisis* gets a well deserved bollocking. Thank you Joe Peacott for the excellent bibliography at the end of your "The AIDS Activist Movement", in *Big Forehead Express*, September 1990. From this bibliography I obtained the publication date of Fumento's *The Myth of Heterosexual AIDS* -1990 as it happens - which we wanted for the Fumento bibliographical information. (My abuse of US libertarians re footnotes absolutely does not apply to Peacott.) See what I mean about dates? 1992 wouldn't have been half so impressive a publication date for a book about heterosexual AIDS being the myth that we now all know it to be.
9. The names of LA writers David Botsford, Antoine Clarke, Danny Frederick, Kevin McFarlane and Barry Macleod-Cullinane spring to mind as people who seem to have learned the footnotes lesson. Antoine Clarke, *The Micropolitics of Free Market Money: A Proposal*, Economic Notes No. 39, Libertarian Alliance, London, 1992, has fifty five footnotes, most of them of use to someone or other, and there's also an excellent free market money bibliography.
10. See my *Ferrari Refutes the Decline of the West and So Do Classical Compact Discs: Some Reflections on Freedom, Materialism and the Winning of the Cold War*, Cultural Notes No. 20, Libertarian Alliance, London, 1990. And see note 12 below about long and accurate titles.
11. For an example of the kind of photo we like, see the front of Jan Carnogusky, *On Being a Christian in Slovakia*, Religious Notes No. 4, Libertarian Alliance, London, 1992. For how not to do it, see Dennis O'Keeffe, *The Contradictions of Socialist Education*, Educational Notes No. 5, Libertarian Alliance, London, 1990, on the cover of which Dennis looks like an escaped convict. His fault for supplying a lousy photo. My fault for using it.
12. When John Burton's *Why The State Should Stay Out of Culture: An Economist's View*, Cultural Notes No. 21, Libertarian Alliance, London, 1990, was first submitted to us, it was called: "Should The State Intervene in Culture?", or some such exercise in fence sitting. Antony Flew sent us a piece that *Free Inquiry* (Spring 1991) had called "Was Karl Marx a Social Scientist?". We called it *Karl Marx Was Not a Social Scientist* (Sociological Notes No. 13, Libertarian Alliance, London, 1991), which makes the picture much clearer. As a result, this is a formidable piece of anti-Marxist propaganda to anyone who even hears about it. If most read no further than the title, they will at least have read that much of the truth. There's something very nineteenth century about the LA's titles. They are longwinded, but they don't sit on the fence and they do tell you something. As a result of them, our Publications List is a formidable propaganda tool in its own right, and when our publications are footnoted by others our message automatically spreads. Our titles illuminate how the LA differs from academe, from which Marxist and sub-Marxist propaganda emerges in torrents, under cryptic on-the-one-hand-on-the-other titles which make it all seem tremendously sensible and unbiased, until you read it.
13. The title and all the subheadings for Danny Frederick, *Casual Sex and Morality: A Kantian-Libertarian Analysis*, Philosophical Notes No. 18, Libertarian Alliance, London, 1992, were supplied by Danny. They are a fine example of how to do it.