

## If There's a Will, There's a Way

*By Hap Hansen*

If I were to write a political will, I would write about the following:

Opinions, opinions, opinions. Everybody has them. And most folks aren't shy about expressing their opinions to anyone who will listen, especially about politics and politicians. I happen to be a registered political Independent. I will remain so, for at least the foreseeable future. It seems to me that the two main political parties are moving further and further apart. Democrats blame the Republicans for all of our nation's ills, and vice-versa. Unfortunately, those political opinions are not expressed quietly! Mostly, they are given at the top of one's voice, to an individual standing less than a foot away .... many times accompanied by repeated jabbing of the listener's chest by an extended forefinger! It makes for fascinating political theater.

That is certainly one way to get one's opinions heard. But it's a terrible way to get one's opinions understood, much less agreed to. Why? Because the listeners aren't really listening. They are usually waiting for the harangue to lessen, so they can expound on their opinion, also at the top of their voice, with forefinger extended and pounding! In these circumstances, opinions rapidly deteriorate into arguments. Faces redden. Necks bulge. Eyes widen. And the voice takes on a shrill, high-pitched timbre, demanding the speaker's will. Rational thought has disappeared. No one listens to anyone. Both political representatives begin shouting at the top of their lungs. They have forgotten about opinions. Now, it's just a matter of who can outshout whom, with the loser retreating because of vocal cord seizure and paralysis! What was accomplished? Nothing!

What was lost? Perhaps a friendship. Perhaps a good law that should have been discussed rationally. What could be learned by listening? Possibly a lot. Listen, there is an answer.

Listen, opinions can be heard. Listen, opinions can be agreed to. Listen. Listen. Listen. When one's vocal cords are vibrating, one's hearing canal closes tightly and doesn't let reasoning in. When we are shouting, a good idea or opinion can thump us between the eyes and we will neither see it nor hear it. Have you noticed that your throat may ache when you talk too much? But your ears never hurt when you listen to quiet reasoning. Marvelous things can be accomplished, if we only listen, listen, listen. Members of all political parties should be discussing the value of laws that need to be passed for the good of our country and especially for the good of our citizens. As an old adage says, 'Where there's a will, there's a way!'