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Green Focus

The Newspaper of the Green Party of California - Summer 2007

May Day in LA: Greens and Immigrants Stand Up–Suffer at the Hands of LAPD Goon Squad

By Christine Pinto and Linda Piera-Avilla
LA Greens

LOS ANGELES - May 1, 2007—It was a beautiful day! The sun shone brightly in Los Angeles, which I guess is no surprise, but today especially it seemed to shine down upon the city and bless us with its warmth. Today was May 1st, International Labor Day, and while every other day of the year people labor to make ends meet, today's toil was a labor of love for those who gathered on the steps of City Hall. My heart was filled with optimism and goodwill for the rally to come. I started the journey riding the bus with a fellow Green down to where the rally was gathering. It was my first time riding the bus and I was heartened to meet several smiling faces all going to be a part of the day's march: some of them going to support those who needed it, some like me, going to march for my own family who needs it.

There was little question as to where we were supposed to go next -- we simply followed the flag waving patriots to our destination. When we arrived, I must admit that it was a little disappointing.

The sea that I was hoping for was more of a trickle of people; but some was better than none, so my comrade and I unfurled our Green Party banner and added our two drops to the flow of those who were marching. As we walked, it became crystal clear to me how very important this rally was to every person there. People of all races, ages, sizes, it didn't matter who they were or how they differed in other ways, in this march all were united under one flag, the American flag!

There were easily three American flags for every Mexican flag or that of any other country. People who had perhaps never cared about politics or participated in a rally before were there telling the world that they would not tolerate the injustice they and their families were suffering. They left the shadows of the hardship in their home country, not knowing what they might encounter in a foreign land but knowing that their home did not provide the economic shelter they needed for life. Today they came out of the dark into the sunshine, putting one foot in front of the other towards the life they envisioned for themselves. It was beautiful. As we came closer to City Hall, the trickle I griped about before turned into a sea that stretched too far for my eyes to take in.

Flags in the air, horns blaring, people chanting, "¡Si Se Puede! ¡Si Se Puede!" - "Yes We Can!" (For the español impaired). People were smiling and the sun seemed to be pulsing to the beat of the drums and the hearts all around.

It was a dramatic end to a day well spent. As my Green compadre and I took our bus ride home, we smiled and basked in the hope that sprung from deep within despite the extreme brutality that we heard had taken place just one block from where we had gathered. The people spoke loudly but peacefully and the sun shone brightly over City Hall today. That the LAPD met this celebration of freedom, and human determination for fair play with violence was a sad day indeed and a pox mark on the police and current administration of city government. But it did NOT dampen our spirits or hope for a better future for all. No matter what the cost, Greens must stand up to injustice, and speak loudly and nonviolently to resolve the current difficulties.

May Day in LA: In a show of solidarity, Greens, progressives and immigrants marched in downtown Los Angeles in favor of fair play for immigrants. Unfortunately, the LAPD made their presence known, brandishing batons and firing rubber bullets, injuring innocent men, women and children. As always the LAPD will investigate its own unlawful behavior.

At the scene of the LAPD massacre

The May Day police brutality as seen on TV is an example of what happened at the South Central Farm the day of the eviction. The tactics are the same. The police close in on the people and give them no space so that a crisis will occur. They want to scare and intimidate the people. They want to link it to a terrorist attack so the people will be afraid to come out. They want to justify their behavior in the name of "homeland security." Treating people that way equates with the tactics of terrorists. This is a local example of the bigger picture of what the U.S. government is doing in Iraq. Perhaps the police action last Tuesday was a training exercise for something else. Unlike last year when things were peaceful, this year the LAPD came out in full force and I hold the mayor responsible. These police tactics are nothing new. But this time the news media were in the middle of it. If the media goes through it, then maybe the public will know what the (immigrant) people go through every day with the police shooting our children. Now we are seeing it on a nationwide level .People must remember the long history of hatred toward the Mexican community. Since the 1848 war of aggression the immigrant laws have not favored the Mexican community. During the Great Depression in the 1930's a million Mexicans were taken off the streets and deported, including families and people who had been here for generations. Now that people are marching and protesting the deportations, the police are responding with these intimidation tactics in an attempt to stop people from speaking out. Deportation itself equals terrorism! What was beautiful about the May 1 march was that the symbolic meaning of May 1 as a working class holiday has been revived by working class immigrants. It was a successful march because of that. "¡Si Se Puede!

Editors Note: A "Goon" is a thug hired by corrupt elites to intimidate or punish people for standing up for themselves. Includes COPS, too!

In This Issue

Green Party of California
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Place Stamp Here

Sacramento Greens Arrested at Nation's Longest Sit-in Against Iraq War

Group Sponsors TV Ad condemning local Congress woman for hypocritical stand on war.

By Green Focus Staff Writer

SACRAMENTO - The Democratic Party may claim it is opposed to the Iraq War and wants to bring the troops home, but while it continues to vote to fund the war, members of the Green Party in California are pressuring the government to end this failed policy as evidenced by a 52-day sit-in at a California Congress person's office and an innovative television ad campaign against the war that made national news.

The Sacramento Greens helped organize and coordinate a multi-month "peace-in" with progressive Democrats and members of the Peace & Freedom Party. The protest eventually became the longest sit-in at lawmaker's office since the war began, according to news reports.

The "peace-in" began on the morning of Jan. 8 at the offices of Rep. Doris Matsui (D-Sacramento) after the middle-of-the-road lawmaker refused to meet with Veterans for Peace, and commit to voting against any new funding for the war in Iraq.

The action did not end until March 22, the day Matsui announced she would vote to further fund the war despite making numerous public statements that she, like other Democrats, wanted to "protect" the troops and was personally opposed to the war. Her vote for $100 billion more for the war continued the war.

On March 22, after Matsui's announcement, three members of the Sacramento Greens county council, Sheila Laracy, Scott Verhoef and Cres Vellucci were arrested as they sat in Matsui's office reading the names of U.S. and Iraqi citizens killed in Iraq. In told, seven were arrested, handcuffed and temporarily jailed.

"Rep. Matsui is the poster Democrat from California. She claims to be opposed to the war, but she insists that voting for more war funding will 'protect' the troops when all it does is leave them in harm's way," said Cres-Vellucci, a Vietnam veteran, Veterans for Peace member and Green Party of California press secretary.

"Matsui, like other Democrats, is playing political games. Democrats don't want this war to end because it gives them something to hang on Republicans in the 2008 elections. Instead of trying to stop the carnage in Iraq, Democrats are only thinking about their own political well-being," added Vellucci, who was a military war correspondent in Vietnam.

"In good conscience, we could not sit by while more people are sent off to die in this war that was initiated not just by the actions of Pres. Bush, but by Democrats in Congress," said Laracy.

Before the arrests, demonstrators engaged in a near-siege of Matsui's district office, including not only the daily "peace-in" inside the office but by holding outside "die-ins" marking the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians, news conferences featuring members of the community opposed to the war and other rallies linking the community to the anti-war action.

News coverage included local, regional and national wire service, television and radio outlets. Matsui's office, seeking to mitigate the damage demonstrators did by exposing an alleged anti-war Democrat as a pro-war politician, even banned the news media from her office after Associated Press and a large newspaper chain ran major stories during the first 10 days of the protests.

The protests also forced Matsui to at least recognize the Iraq War. Before January, she did not have even a mention on her web site about the Iraq War, including during her most recent campaign election. Matsui quickly added the war reference, claiming she was "anti-war."

The Sacramento Green Party also contributed $500 to a dramatic television advertising campaign targeting Matsui. The stark, black and white spot ran during prime evening viewing on local CNN, Headline News and other area broadcast and cable stations.

Die In at State Capitol: Sheila Laracy, Scott Verhoef and Cres Vellucci, among other members of the Sacramento Green Party gained major news coverage in print, TV and radio with their 52 day successful media campaign against the war in Iraq this spring.

The spot called on Matsui to vote against any further funding for the war to "protect" our troops and end the war. In the background of the spot viewers could hear explosions, sirens and people screaming. "The ad campaign was our way of showing the public more of the real face of war...the death, the chaos," said Vellucci, who wrote and produced the spot. "I remember Vietnam. Doris Matsui, and others who say they are opposed to war but are willing to extend it for months and years for political gain, must be made to realize how wrong their position is to the people on the ground in Iraq," he added.

Sacramento Greens also criticized a measure on next year's presidential primary ballot calling for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, noting it is nothing more than Democrats playing "self-serving" politics while more American Troops–including Californians–continue to die.

"Democrats in Congress voted to fully fund the war through late 2008. Now Democrats here are calling for the return of the troops? This bill is nothing more than a self-serving attempt by the Democratic Party to repair its image as a party that says it wants peace but votes for war," said Jeff Kravitz, another member of the Sacramento Greens county council, a civil rights lawyer, law school professor and 2006 Green Party congressional candidate (5th CD).

"The death toll in Iraq, for U.S. and Iraqi civilians, continues to climb and all Democrats can do is claim to be opposed to the war, while funding it. This resolution would have been a good idea...four years ago. It's way too late and way too little," added Kravtiz, who pointed out that the Green Party has been opposed to the war in Iraq, unlike Democrats and Republicans, since it began.

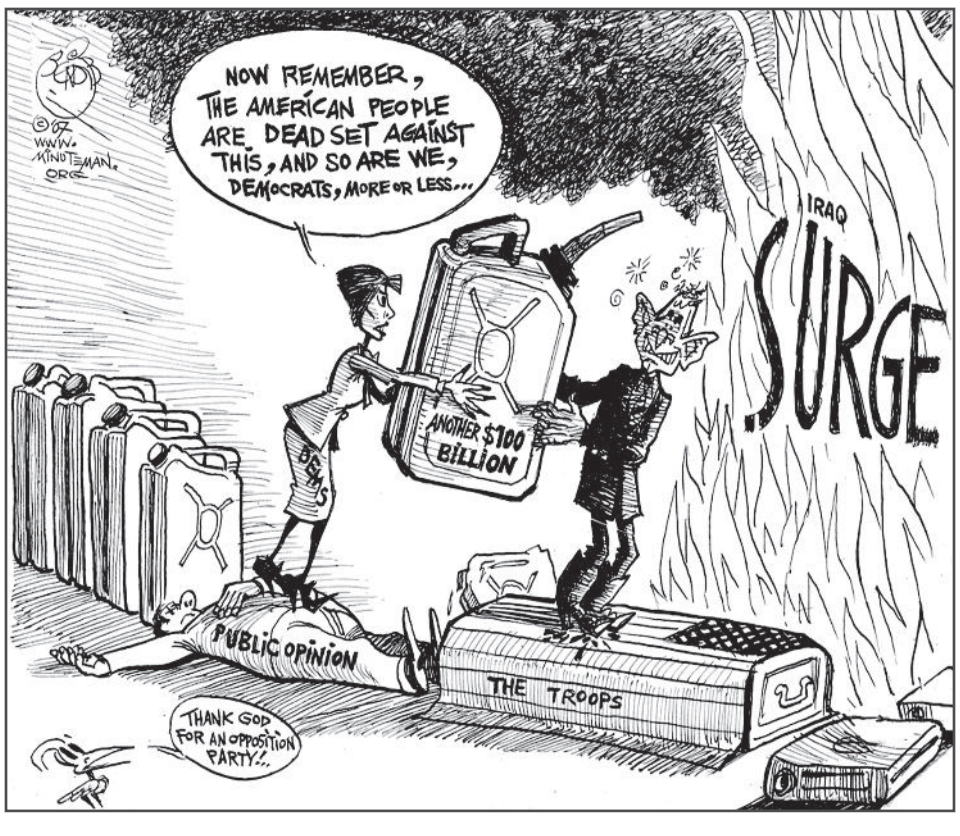
He said three Democrats failed to vote, thus killing legislation last year that called for a return of the California National Guard from Iraq.

For more on Sacramento action: see www.sacendwar.org

Green Party!

• First Party to Call for Impeachment

• First to Call for an Ending of Iraq War



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Blue Print For Green Organizing: How To Hold A Demonstration on 3 Just Weeks Notice

By Shane Que Hee,
Los Angeles Greens

LOS ANGELES–How to stop the Iraq War? The Dem majorities in the House and Senate after the November 2006 elections and the opinion polls implied the American people wanted to reverse direction. Except--- Bush and Dems contrived to talk about increasing the troops, with the Dems wanting to stop the INCREASE rather than stopping the whole caboodle. How very convenient for the duopoly– the Dems get to save face while the Republicans get what they wanted anyhow in their non-binding resolution charades. Congress has the purse strings. IF THE DEMS WERE SERIOUS WHY NOT CUT ALL FUNDING FOR THE IRAQ WAR?

The national call to bring the troops home and cut all funding was first made by United For Peace and Justice (UFPJ) who went all out for a Washington DC extravaganza that ultimately attracted over a million marchers. Amazingly at this event only Dems spoke and Ralph Nader was pointedly not invited to speak. Grudgingly, UFPJ gave late assent to a San Francisco event also. Because of the top-down tilt of most progressive left organizations, everyone else was supposed to converge on Washington DC on January 27. Many in LA who could not or did not want to go to Washington DC wanted to host our own event, especially since the state Dems and LA City Council in 2006 refused to support efforts to impeach Bush/Cheney, and to bring California's National Guard home from Iraq. And dammit, if San Francisco could do it why not LA?

The local action was first talked about December 20 at the Progressive Democrats of America sponsored rally outside Henry Waxman's office on 3rd Street in Beverly Hills by Vigil Congress convener Lisa Lubow, and many other supporters including myself as part of the UFPJ call to lobby congressman to cut all funding for the Iraq War and to bring the troops home. We all decided to make feverish calls for a general meeting of interested organizations at the United Teachers of Los Angeles office on Wilshire Boulevard on January 6.

What a meeting! At least 25 Organizations attended, with 40 people packed into a hot Board Room facilitated by UTLA's Andy Griggs. I represented two organizations, the LA LGBT Greens and its non-partisan peace and justice sister, Out Against War: LGBT & Friends Coalition for Peace & Justice. Ceil Sorenson, representing, San Fernando Valley Greens, was there too. We named ourselves the Ad Hoc Coalition for Action for January 27, 2007, and decided to limit all demands to just the 2 major ones. Organizations who agreed with those 2 demands were asked to put other demands on their banners/signs. The latter decision caused much hand-wringing because it was seen as limiting participation. No matter. Where and when to have the rally.. or march... or march/rally... or march/rallies... or marches/rallies...caused much more heat. Finally, it was decided by majority vote to begin with a rally in front of State Democratic Party headquarters at Figueroa/9th Street, march past City Hall, and then rally again at the Federal Building on Los Angeles Street. The major competing idea was to rally and march in Pasadena at Rep Schiff's office and at the Parsons Building. We were all asked to get back to our organizations to secure endorsements. Committees formed were: Logistics, Outreach, Lead Banner/Stage Banner, Media, Program (empty), and Chants. The hat was passed too.

The January 13 meeting convened in the basement of the Echo Park United Methodist Church facilitated by Coalition for World Peace's Don White, with the same number of organizations as at the first meeting with the addition of Green Party personnel like LA County Council Rep Jim Odling (also wearing his other hat of LA Coalition in Solidarity with Cuba); Henry Duke and Lynda Hernandez of the Greens of Orange County; and Dolly Arond of the Valley Greens (her other hat was Alliance for Democracy). The Committees reported back on their progress. Flyers were to be distributed at the Martin Luther King Day parade; the banner was approved; the march route and rally places confirmed; the draft press release approved; the broad program time approved with speeches for 30 minutes before the march and for 45 minutes after the march to make a departure from the hours of harangues at most previous LA rallies. The Coalition for World Peace was accepted as the banker. Five people self-nominated themselves for the Program Committee. I joined the Program Committee after the meeting.

"It behooves the Green Party to make more alliances through peace and other groups, and not rely just on political stance.

Most of the Greens in the Coalition wore at least two hats anyhow including me.

I encourage you all to work with potential allies—if you don't work on their issues why should they work on ours? But–be patient too!"

The January 20 meeting in the Echo Park United Methodist Church chaired by Don White was dominated by the meeting prioritizing areas for the speakers to cover since the Program Committee was not empowered to choose the speakers. There were 18 categories of speakers for some 80 minutes from which 10 categories were voted in:

1. Immigrant rights and Latino community;
2. Arab and Muslim;
3. Iraq Veterans Against the War;
4. African-American;
5. Labor;
6. Overall analysis, anti-imperialist, complete withdrawal;
7. Counter recruitment/Education;
8. Connection with Occupation of Palestine;
9. Military Families Speak Out.
10. Congress member against the war.

Cindy Sheehan: Cindy was just one of the many speakers featured at the morning series of events. Greens were heavily represented in the crowd with among others participating; including Jim Odling and Nativo Lopez, both members of the LA County Council Greens.

To my dismay, Green Party or Third Party, or Progressive Democrat did not make the cut in a March/Rally agitating for Congress to Stop Funding the War. Even Congress Member against the War was low priority of the chosen ten! The Platform Committee who had worked like beavers to set up some available speakers (I had asked Peter Thottam and Byron De Lear- who were both available, and Peter Camejo and Bill Paparian -who both did not reply or were not available) were all urged to select speakers with diversity considerations in mind. Cindy Sheehan, Ron Kovics, Dolores Huerta,and Jamahl were approved. The other Committees then gave their reports. A lobbying day was scheduled for January 29. An evaluation meeting was scheduled for February 10. The number of endorsers reached 100. These also included the Green Party of LA County, and the Ventura Greens.

Tinkering with speakers and musicians occurred right up to the Rally/March time. The speakers in order were: 1st Rally- 1. Rosa Furumoto (Coalition Against Militarism in Schools); 2. John Parker (International Action Center); 3. Omar Jubran (Council on American-Islamic Relations); 4. Pat Alviso (Military Families Speak Out); 5. Jabbar Magruder (Army National Guard Sergeant); 2nd Rally: 1. Jason Lemieux (Iraq Veterans Against the War); 2. Helga Aguayu (wife of conscientious objector Agustin Aguayo); 3. Sarah Knoop (LAUSD, UTLA, International Socialist Organization); 4. Ron Kovic (Vietnam Veteran); 5. Mazin Almoukdad (Al-Awda, Palestine Right to Return Coalition); 6. Nativo Lopez (Mexican American Political Association); 7. Kent Wong (UCLA Labor Center); 8. Rev. Lewis Logan (Black/Brown Unity Coalition and Community Call to Action and Accountability); 9. Cindy Sheehan (Gold Star Families for Peace). The Green Party was represented through Sarah Knoop (won 700,000 votes in coming 2nd in the Nov election for State Superintendent of Public Instruction) and Nativo Lopez (member of the Green Party of LA County Council). Musicians were: Tom Morello, Quetzal, Michelle Shocked, and Ross Altman.

On Wednesday January 24, the Press Conference in Pasadena outside Schiff's office featured Cindy Sheehan and local presses carried news items. The march/rally of about 5,000 on January 27 attracted a small but loud pro-war faction at Democratic headquarters, and the march moved off amidst isolated raindrops. Once at the Federal Building, rain became more heavy after the first two speakers. The LA Times and LA Weekly ran short accounts as did some TV channels. LA Indy media also posted many photos and videos. The offices of some 11 members of Congress were visited on January 29.

The organizations at the evaluation meeting on February 10 decided to continue to work on joint projects and to endorse the ANSWER March 17 March/Rally, to be held at 12 noon, at Hollywood/Vine. I chided them for the lack of LGBT speakers.

While the whole drive to mount a major March/Rally within 3 weeks was exciting, the speaker prioritization process revealed a general dislike of politicians. It behooves the Green Party to make more alliances through peace and other groups, and not rely just on political stance. Most of the Greens in the Coalition wore at least two hats anyhow including me. I encourage you all to work with potential allies—if you don't work on their issues why should they work on ours? But–be patient too!

Young and Old Alike: The entire event was a complete success and was well received by all the participants and observers.

Greens United With Social Justice Groups, Score Big Victories Against Wal-Mart in Northern California

By Cres Vellucci,
Press Secretary, GPCA

VALLEJO - Wal-Mart–at least in Northern California–has been taking it on the proverbial chin this past year in large part because of the work of Greens, who have been integral to a coalition of community organizations taking corporate bully Wal-Mart to task. Greens are keying fights against Wal-Mart in the San Francisco Bay Area, Merced and soon in Sacramento and other parts of the state.

The Green Party of California and Solano County Greens are founding members of California Health Communities Network (CHCN), which is a project of the Tides Center, an independent nonprofit organization. CalHCN includes organizations and individuals who share common concerns regarding poorly planned environmentally unsustainable, economically discriminatory and social unjust land use.

CHCN has worked with local groups to put a halt to the massive expansion plans of Wal-Mart in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. Wal-Mart projects in Concord, American Canyon and Hercules have been stopped before the construction phase, Oakland, Livermore and Martinez have bans on big boxes like Wal-Mart SuperCenters and Antioch rejected a Wal-Mart expansion earlier this year.

And, maintains Joseph Feller with the Solano Greens, the Green Party's alignment with CHCN is a natural. "The reasons Greens should be leading this fight is “sustainability,'" charges Feller, who is on the CHCN board and is battling Wal-Mart in Vallejo to stop Wal-Mart from building on an environmentally-protected wetlands area. "Greens believe in sustainability, and that includes the availability of locally produced goods and services, not the junk that Wal-Mart ships from thousands of miles away," said Feller. "We also, as Greens, want local businesses thriving, and producing jobs that pay a living wage. Wal-Mart represents the opposite of that by not providing decent wages or benefits, fighting unions and causing empty hulks of closed retailers in blighted areas because it destroys businesses around them."

Feller added that Wal-mart has an abysmal record on environmental issues, noting that Wal-Mart store storm runoff has brought 22 lawsuits and clean water suits in different states. It is under investigation for illegally shipping hazardous waste in California and Solano County, and Wal-Mart found it 'too complicated' to collect the California household hazardous waste tax which all other major retailers must do.

"About the only thing more abysmal than Wal-Mart's employment practices is its environmental record," said Feller.

In Vallejo, he explained, Wal-Mart wants to build a 400,000 sq ft center on a body of water called the White Slough. A decade ago, the White Slough area was established by agreement of 50 government, environment, and private entities as a flood control effort using natural wetlands. It has been so successful that last year it rained "biblical proportions "(40 straight days) and Vallejo avoided flooding.

Joe Feller: seen (left) of Solano County Greens talks to news reporters in front of the White Slough, a protected wetlands area near Vallejo where Wal-Mart wants to build a Supercenter. Feller has led the fight there, and also in other areas of the state as the Green Party member of California Healthy Communities Network, a nonprofit group battling to stop Wal-Mart from ruining city and towns.

"A side benefit of (the slough) is that many species of birds have returned to the north and south White Slough on their annual migration. A local environmental activist started a festival for bird watchers that draws thousands of people annually (and) thousands more come throughout the year to see our bird habitat. This kind of situation is an excellent example of ecotourism in an old navy town. It is truly a transformation," said Feller.

But, he warned, if Wal-Mart comes in with 24 hour operations, "the whole effort of the birding community will be damaged if not entirely lost. This is just a local example of the damage that Wal-Mart does. They just don't care about any local interests. Nothing is as heartless as the biggest corporation in the world," Feller added.

In Merced, where Wal-Mart seeks to build a 1.2 million square foot distribution center, Greens like Kenny Mostern, the outgoing GPCA treasurer, have helped mobilize citizens to fight the giant, 270-acre facility.

Merced, already the home to some of the worst air in the world, would risk even worse air quality, which would severely impact allergy and asthma suffers, if the Wal-Mart distribution center 'expected to produce up to 900 diesel truck trips a day on roads that pass by several schools and subdivisions' is approved by local officials late in 2007.

Because working to help exploited workers, and to stop the environmental encroachment of Wal-Mart is consistent with the GPCA's 10 Key Values, Greens are encouraged to contact CHCN and get involved in this social justice issue in their own areas, said Feller.

For more information, see www.calhcn.org or contact CHCN at info@calhcn.org.

Thought Control In The American Media: My Experience at the Los Angeles Times Book Festival

By Peter Thottam, JD, MBA
Westside Greens, LA

"The government story they handed us about 9/11 is total B.S. plain and simple... there was absolutely no possibility that Flight 77 could have descended 7,000 feet in two minutes, all the while performing a steep 270-degree banked turn before crashing into the Pentagon's first floor wall without touching the lawn... For a guy to just jump into the cockpit and fly like an ace is impossible — there is not one chance in a thousand."

— Capt. Russ Wittenberg, former Air Force fighter pilot with over 100 combat missions; Commercial pilot for Pan Am and United Airlines for 35 years; Wittenberg had previously flown the actual two United Airlines aircraft that were the ones that were 'hijacked' on 9/11 www.patriotsquestion911.com

America is 4% of the world's population. It has over 50% of the world's cars and spends more on its military budget than the other 96% of the world combined. Concurrently, the media ignores worsening global wealth inequities (a majority of the world makes less than $2 to $3 a day), third world slave labor circuits in China, India & Latin America and other separated global production nodes. The internationally renowned World Institute for Development Economics Research reports from recent 2000 data that the top one percent of the world's adult population (40 million people) owns 40 percent of the world's wealth. The bottom fifty percent (1.85 billion people) owns less than one percent of the world's assets. Thus, the planet's top 1% owns 40 times more than the bottom 50%. The same top1% percent owns 3 times more than the bottom 90 percent. The authors of the study also note that "The average member of the top decile (i.e. the top 10%) owns nearly 3,000 times the mean wealth of the bottom decile, and the average member of the top percentile [1%] is more than 13,000 times richer. Yet in spite of all of this, in reality the so-called "third world" is, in truth, the "Majority World". The ramifications of these disparities all crystallized for me as I returned from a recent trip to Africa (Spring 2007) and as I have become much more involved -- as an extension of my pro-Peace work -- with the national 9/11Truth movement. At the April 28th & 29th 2007 UCLA/LA Times Book festival, I attended a large panel discussion on "Religion, Politics & Faith." As I stood first in line at a microphone, during the Q&A, I was told by a security guard, that Christopher Hitchens didn't want me to ask questions to the panel of authors because I was wearing an 9/11 T-Shirt. Censorship from the LA Times of a questioner's free speech? The Tribune Company (and therefore the LA Times) is now owned by Sam Zell, a wealthy pro-AIPAC real estate investor. Consolidation of ownership continues to confirm a disturbing censorship trend in national media like The Tribune Company. Christopher Hitchens apparently made a specific request to the moderator, Thane Rosenbaum, that I be prevented from asking him any questions at all. Why? As the security guard noted, it was simply because I was wearing an "Investigate 9/11 T-Shirt. Demand the Truth" for the C-SPAN cameras conducting the live coverage of the panel.

Peter Thottam, seen above, is an Attorney, Green Party and Peace advocate who is active with the 911Truth movement. Peter was a candidate for Assembly last year in LA.

My question? I was going to ask Hitchens about the use of 'religion' in the U.S. as a propaganda tool to advance causes such as the Iraq war and, more broadly, U.S. imperialism. I was also going to ask Hitchens why he unconditionally supported Bush at a debate I saw him at in 2003 (at the Wiltern Theater in Los Angeles) against Robert Scheer. I wanted to know if he would retract his opinion, at that time, that -- “there are unconditionally, without a doubt, weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq." The Hitchens/Bush so-called "war on terror" has been made possible by vested interests and American elites' sum war on the 'consciousness' and global awareness.

In accordance with the formula elaborated in Noam Chomsky's Propaganda Model, unsustainable and environmentally toxic consumerism has become the prevailing national norm. Spectator sports and systemic conditioning advancing passive submission to authority structures vis-a-vis television & mass media both proceed with Orwellian styled precision. Corporate Media has become a propaganda tool advancing imperial interests via lies of omission and distortion. Critical thinking and reasoning are out the window and Americans are increasingly unaware about the world around them, especially China and India, areas where half of the world's population resides.

It is more important now than ever, that Greens organize, grow the party and take a stand against the evils of government and corporate mind control and lead the way forward to a truly internationally minded and sustainable future.
www.peterthottam.com

National Green's Shifts Gears: California Delegation Size To Triple

By Greg Jan, Alternate Delegate to GNC

SAN FRANCISCO, Ca. On April 16, 2007, the Green Party of the United States (GPUS) approved a new formula for calculating how delegates to its governing body, the National Committee (NC), will be allocated. California's delegation will grow from 13 out of 137 apportioned delegates (9.5%) to 42 out of 200 (21.0%). (California is home to approximately 40% of the Green Party members in the U.S.). The Green Party of California's increased role in the GPUS comes at a time when most California voters will likely be wooed more heavily than ever, due to the date of the state's February 5 Presidential primary, the earliest in California history.

For years, Greens across the country have wanted to change the national delegate allocation formula, which was primarily based on the number of Congressional districts in a state and was therefore proportional to general population data. Champions for reform wanted a model of representative democracy, where delegates are apportioned in proportion to the grassroots members they represent. The press for change reached a head in 2005, after a stormy year following our party's controversial 2004 Presidential nominating convention (where two California Greens -- Peter Camejo and David Cobb -- opposed each other for the national party's support). Amidst other internal struggles, the NC finally decided to wean itself from its population-based formula (in place since their founding in 2001), and in October, 2005, approved a proposal to "create the fairest possible representation of the Green Party membership... based on the principles of proportional representation."

In March, 2006, the NC (using proportional representation through ranked voting) selected an eight-person "Delegate Apportionment Committee" (DAC) with two California Greens, Cat Woods and Forrest Hill, winning seats. The DAC, although composed of Greens with widely different viewpoints on creating a fair and workable apportionment formula, was nevertheless able to make hard-fought compromises among themselves, and in November, 2006 submitted their consensus four-part formula to the NC. This DAC proposal then was hotly debated for over four months, went through five revisions and two formal votes, and was finally approved by a vote of 73 to 35, slightly above the required 2/3 threshold.

Delegates will be apportioned according to 1) Green Party membership, 2) campaign strength, 3) state voting strength, and 4) Presidential voting strength, with alternate options for each category. To increase proportionality without reducing the minimum delegation size of two, the size of the NC was increased from 137 to 200 members. (To read the complete text of the approved formula please see: http://gp.org/cgi-bin/ vote/ propdetail? pid=272)

California's new 42-member delegation, which will be chosen at the state party General Assembly meeting in San Francisco May 26-27, is currently scheduled to be seated during June, prior to the national party's Annual National Meeting, July 12-15 in Reading, PA.

Some in the national party have asked whether increased representation also implies increased responsibility. While that question has not been formally debated by the NC, or by our state party, a number of California Greens have already volunteered for national party committees, made financial donations to the GPUS, or offered to assist in other ways. (The GPUS website is: www.gp.org.)

It is imperative for the Green Party to have a strong campaign during the upcoming Presidential election year, not least, because most major Democratic and Republican officials continue to work against the best interests of Americans -- for example, by providing ongoing support for George Bush's Iraq War. The passage of a more representative delegate apportionment formula is a major GPUS milestone – a crucial step toward resolving several years of internal party turmoil around this issue. It comes at an opportune time for the Green Party to greatly organize and strengthen itself, both across this country, as well as within California .

Greg Jan, who resides in Oakland , is a founding member of the Green Party of

Green Party Lawmaker Leads Fight To Provide Half of Power to San Francisco From Solar, Wind

By Cres Vellucci, Press Secretary GPCA

SAN FRANCISCO, Ca. (April 20, 2007) San Francisco Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi the Green Party lawmaker who last month pushed through a bill to make San Francisco the first city in the nation to ban plastic bags co-introduced historic legislation here this week to require at least 50 percent of all the energy to the city be provided by solar or wind electricity.

If approved by the full Board of Supervisors next month, the ordinance for San Francisco's Community Choice will be the first effort to implement a state law passed in 2002 which allows communities to withdraw from purchasing power from private providers (PG&E, in San Francisco's case) and become a buying co-op known as a "Community Choice Aggregator."

The legislation calls for construct ing wind, solar and efficiency projects with the goal of meeting over 50 percent of the city's overall electricity demands through renewables by 2020. "As long as this nation is disproportionately reliant on oil and fossil fuel technology, we stand vulnerable. San Francisco needs to mount a smart, energetic counterattack designed to protect our environment and safeguard against energy market fiascoes," Mirkarimi has said. The state's Community Choice bill passed with help from Paul Fenn of Local Power. Fenn was also the main co-author and negotiator for the new San Francisco ordinance, introduced by SF Sups Mirkarimi and Tom Ammiano. The implementation plan was strenuously debated and re-written to reach its current form.

"The newest science on global warming shows that all industrial countries like the U.S. will need to cut our CO2 emissions by up to 90 percent in the next 20-25 years in order to avoid a global catastrophic climate collapse.It is absolutely vital that the Board of Supervisors pass the Community Choice renewable energy project immediately," said Eric Brooks, Co-Chair of the San Francisco Green Party Sustainability Working Group."We should hurry with implementing a way to get more renewable energy to San Franciscans and avoid siting polluting Natural Gas Turbines in southeast San Francisco, as is being considered, and making other mistakes we might need to live with for a long time," said Don Eichelberger of SF Green Party Sustainability Working Group.

Whether On The Street, In The Halls of Government, Or In The Pursuit Of Public Power—California Greens Are On The Move

Fellow Los Angeles Greens', including members Lisa Taylor, Cathy McKnight, Michael Rochmes and Erin Schmidt participated in a march on April 14 as part of over 1400 nationwide actions of ***Step It Up*** to bring attention to the threat of global warming. ***Step It Up*** is calling on Congress to cut 80% in carbon emissions by the year 2050. www.stepitup2007.org

Seen right: Lisa Taylor and Cathy McKnight, carrying signs at the April 14th march in Los Angeles.

Photo by James McKissack

As San Francisco is First to Ban Plastic Bags; Green Party Supervisor Leads Fight to Save Planet, Marine Life

By Green Focus Staff Writer

SAN FRANCISCO - San Francisco Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi, one of 50 elected Green Party members in the state, pushed through an ordinance late Tuesday that would make San Francisco the first city in the nation to ban the use of all but the most environmentally-sound shopping bags.

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted 10-1 in March to require the city's grocery stores and chain pharmacies to use only recyclable paper or compostable bags, despite stiff resistance from the California Grocers Association and the plastic industry. "I have been astounded by the worldwide attention the issue has received.

Hopefully, other cities and states will follow suit," said Mirkarimi, adding that he believes the decision is part of a "trend of making sure that a forward-thinking economy is one that understands its relationship with our environment."

The measure had been delayed after the grocery industry went to the Legislature to intervene. Now, the law goes into effect for 54 grocery stores within six months, and a year for large pharmacies with at least five locations. It benefits consumers in many ways, says Mirkarimi.

The compostable "plastic" bags are stronger, they can be dumped directly into a compost pile because they are made from starches like corn and potatoes and they won't pollute the environment, kill marine life or gum up recycling machines. The cost for compostable bags is about the same as paper bags.

Plastic bags are a worldwide environmental disaster and many countries have already made the leap to rid themselves of the bags, of which as many as one trillion are used worldwide every year, according to experts. Sea life, from whales to turtles to sea birds, ingest the bags.

The plastic bags are pervasive. In South Africa, there are two Texas-size "islands" of plastic bags floating at sea, and Bangladesh banned plastic when it was discovered millions of the bags blocked drains and led to massive flooding. In Ireland, a "bag fee" led to a 90 percent reduction in the use of plastic in three years.

Ross Mirkarimi: Seen here in file photo, continues to lead the way as one of the most visible Green office holders in the State of California.

In Solidarity Move: LA Green Party CC Endorses Latina Activist

By Linda Piera-Avilla
Los Angeles Greens

LOS ANGELES- It has been nearly a year since the encampment and subsequent eviction of the South Central Farmers. Since then the people have shown their resilience in many ways.

Perhaps most remarkable is the upcoming trip of one of the elected leaders of the South Central Farmers, Rufina Juarez, to the United Nations in New York City. Ms. Juarez will participate in the Sixth Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues which will take place from May 14 through 25, 2007.

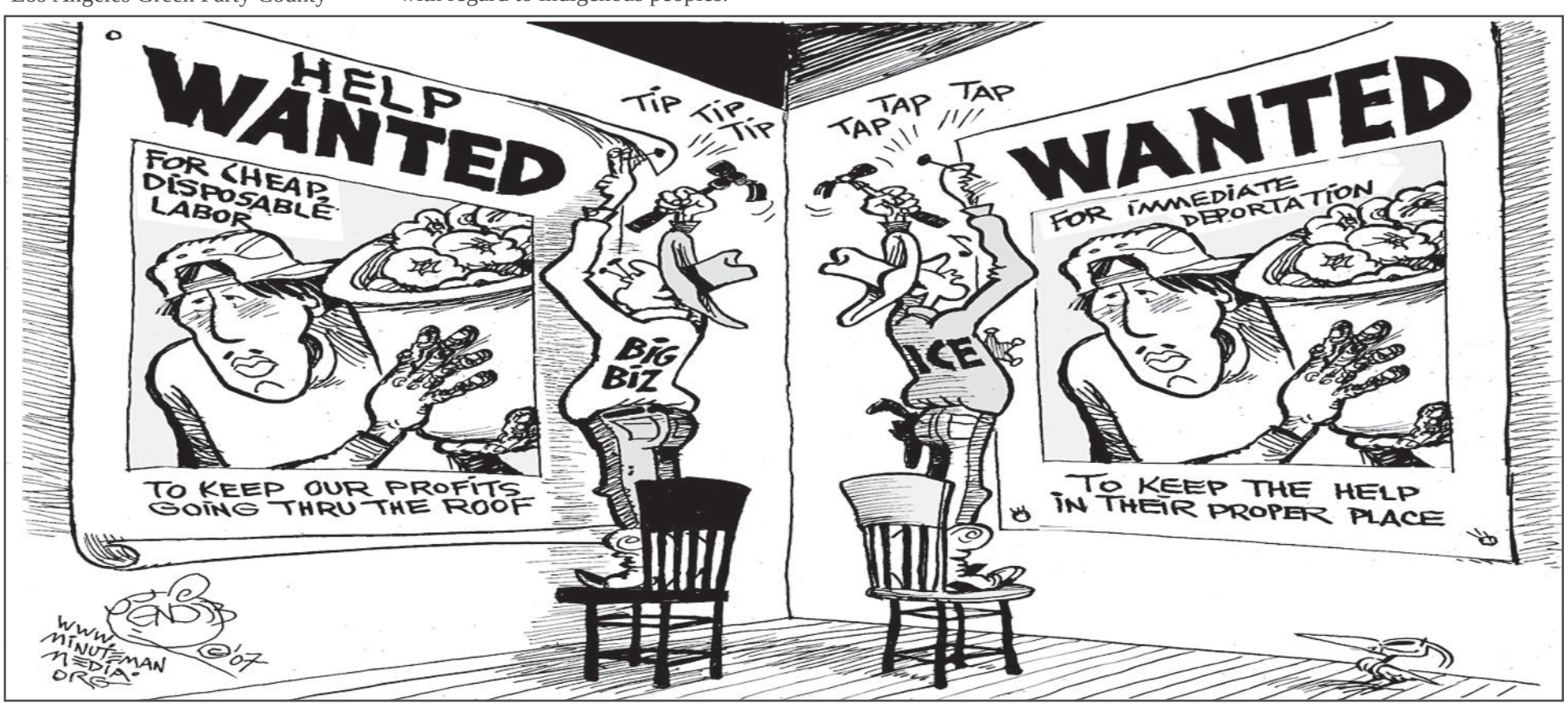
This year's special theme will be "Territories, Lands and Natural Resources." In addition to a dialogue on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples, there will also be a half day discussion on urban indigenous peoples and migration, a topic germane to the South Central Farmers. This Forum is the only official body that addresses indigenous peoples' issues.

At the most recent meeting of the Los Angeles Green Party County Council, the Council passed by consensus the proposed endorsement (introduced by Mike Feinstein) of Ms. Juarez' appearance in this Forum to represent the South Central Farmers' struggle and organization. The GPLAC has taken actions to support the South Central Farm, many of which can be found at: http://www.cagreens.org/lacounty/scf/ Because of the Green Party's role in supporting the Farm, as an international political party and as a supporter of indigenous rights, we are proud to endorse Rufina Juarez, one of the Farm's main organizers.

Says Ms. Juarez, "I am going to be speaking out about the injustice that was done by the City of Los Angeles to the South Central Farmers as indigenous peoples and as migrants. I will read my presentation to members of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. My talk will be recorded, analyzed by members and possibly formulated into policy that in turn will be passed on to the appropriate UN agencies that are charged with intervening in human rights abuses, especially with regard to indigenous peoples."

Rufina Juarez: right, is an elected leader of the South Central Farmer's who struggled last summer against corporate greed and government bureaucracy to save their patch of ground for small self sustaining cash crops of food. Her trip to the UN is May 14-25, 2007

"We also will be networking among others who identify with being migrant indigenous peoples, regarding land and natural resources throughout the world. We expect to learn more about our own struggle and to re-frame it within an international perspective and in comparison to other indigenous struggles worldwide."



The Value of Trust: Healing the Greens and Winning in Electoral Politics

Opinion

By Ray Toby

After more than four years of nearly full time volunteering on political campaigns, my plate was empty last November. So I started researching how elections are won. Of the 23 campaigns I've been involved with, we've often made a very strong showing, sometimes as high as 45%. But with only four victories, the final margin has been very elusive.

As part of this research, I've asked people "What is the most important quality for a candidate?" I believe the answer is "trustworthiness". I checked several versions of the ten key values, but the word "trust" was not mentioned anywhere. Some say that trust is assumed, but I believe our lack of attention to the matter goes to the root of our failures at the polls and our troubles within the party.

A few Greens claim that "personal responsibility" is a blanket covering trust. The explanations that I checked were all variations on "think globally, act locally". According to these, one might think that responsibility means we should buy hybrids.

Elected officials have always answered my question with "honesty" or "integrity" — both good. However, if I were to ask a friend for help, an honest one might say, "No, I'm busy," or "No, I don't want to do that." A trustworthy friend would help me, even if it required a sacrifice.

Integrity means "steadfast adherence to a strict moral or ethical code". Tom Lantos, San Mateo's 14-term congressman, uses the word as his slogan — and he certainly fulfills the definition. However, his code includes doing anything and everything in support of Israel. This support brings lavish donations from across the country that he uses to ensure both his seat and national influence. Unfortunately, I think Lantos' actions have damaged the interests of the United States and his constituents. Perhaps this makes him electable, but unconscious integrity is nothing I could be proud of. I must listen to others and constantly evaluate the consequences of my actions to determine if my code needs improvement.

Only competent candidates are worthy of my trust. If the office is Treasurer, then good standing in professional finance outweighs all ten of our key values. Yet, no one is perfect, so I must allow for the occasional mistake or divergent opinion. Insisting on a paragon of virtue is unrealistic and brings doubt to my own credibility. No one trusts a zealot.

"Foundations of Social Theory" by James Coleman offers a four-part explanation of trust:

•Placement of trust allows actions that otherwise are not possible. If the person in whom trust is placed (trustee) is worthy, then the trustor will be better off than if he or she had not trusted. Conversely, if the trustee is not worthy, then the trustor will be worse off.

•Trust is an action that involves the voluntary placement of resources (physical, financial, intellectual, or temporal) at the disposal of the trustee with no real commitment from the trustee.

•A time lag exists between the extension of trust and the result of the trusting behavior.

People do not vote for values, they vote for candidates. By Coleman's definition, I believe those votes are acts of trust. Therefore, if I were to run for school board, for instance, what I would like to communicate to each voter is this:

"You know me, and I know you. I am a mature adult, professionally qualified and emotionally ready for the responsibilities of this office.

I will listen to you. I am not an ideologue. I can compromise, and, if you present evidence of a better way, I am capable of changing my mind.

Based on years of service together, you know my commitment to this community. Regardless of pressure from unions or money from developers, I will do what's best for our children.

I have never lied to you, nor will I disrespect or diminish you or this office in any way."

These points are best not said but proven by working within a community for years before the election. While techniques exist to convey and reinforce trust, normally it cannot be done quickly.

Unfortunately, the Greens may be the party of distrust. We certainly distrust authority. We flock to conspiracy theories. We whine and complain about everything, particularly how the deck is stacked. We're quick to denounce others, even fellow Greens and progressives. I suspect that we've even built distrust into the structure of our organization by eliminating positions of responsibility and leadership. As a consequence of all this, the voters often distrust us and our candidates.

Americans don't want full time democracy, instead preferring to leave the tedious details of everyday government to someone else. In elections, otherwise virtuous, even prophetic candidates don't seem to win very often. My conclusion is that long-term trust is the key to the discriminating voter and majority percentages. As we evaluate potential candidates, I suggest we consider how each will affect the voters' trust in the party. Further, practicing trust with our teammates could markedly improve the effectiveness of the party and our satisfaction with it.

In short, I believe that trust is more important than the ten key values. We will not win offices until we learn to trust each other — and then earn the trust of the voters.

For more of Ray Tobey's research, including resulting theories on strategy and details on tactics, please visit www.bionictoad.com/politics.

Ray Toby is an independent computer application programmer, specializing in computer games, development tools and Windows applications.He has worked with Electronic Arts and several other game companies. The last few years he has spent most of his time volunteering for Green candidates.

Just Voting Green Is Simply Not Enough!

Cynthia Marcopulos
San Mateo Green Party

KCBS reports that presidential candidates must raise a minimum of one hundred million dollars to run for the highest office in our country, and that individual donors and corporations count on their candidates to run to make sure their interests are recognized. But, Green Party races never raise even a fraction of this and yet must compete in these electoral races.

If you look at the percentage of registered Democrats and Republicans to the amount of people who actually do the work for the party, I believe the Green Party has the same breakdown of those who actually do the work and those who just cast their vote. With that said, we must all work to get the Green message to the forefront. Simply casting your vote is not enough when we are fighting the machines of the Democratic National Committee and the Republican National Committee who garner support from corporate America and large donors.

As we can see, the Democrats have tried to insure their votes by attempting to appeal to a wide range of voters. For instance, they have introduced Hillary Clinton for the women's vote; Barack Obama for the African American and minority vote; John Edwards for the former Kerry voters, and Dennis Kucinich for the peace vote. In this way, they try to guarantee they will have a majority of the votes so that disenfranchised voters will not embrace third parties even though they do not support the individual final candidate.

If you look at the percentage of registered Democrats and Republicans to the amount of people who actually do the work for the party, I believe the Green Party has the same breakdown of those who actually do the work and those who just cast their vote. With that said, we must all work to get the Green message to the forefront. Simply casting your vote is not enough when we are fighting the machines of the Democratic National Committee and the Republican National Committee who garner support from corporate America and large donors.

However, this means we, the Green Party, must give more of our time to work for Green candidates and Green issues. Campaigns cost money, and if we all gave a minimum of $12 yearly to our local Green Party, we could make inroads in changing the direction of our government.

In the November election, the voters gave a mandate to Congress to change the direction of our country, to end the war and bring the troops home. Yet, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the Democrats are infighting, and so as not look unpatriotic in their desire for the White House in 2008, they are ignoring the will of the voters. This is a strategy which will certainly fail.

But, if we Greens work hard, and speak up to inform these staunch registered Democrats and Republicans not to let both parties take advantage of them by ignoring the will of the people simply because they are registered voters with those parties, but to reregister as Green, Declined to State, Independent or other third parties, it will surely send a message to the DNC and the RNC that we, the voters, will not be taken for granted when we send a mandate for change.

Water is For Fighting Over: California Water Wars From North To South—Impact of Global Warming

By Wes Rolley,
Morgan Hill, CA.

Commentary

Almost everyone who has written anything about water in the West has had occasion to use the Mark Twain quotation, "Whiskey is for drinking. Water is for fighting over.". Well, the fight has begun. Like the Iraq War, there are a few who are doing the actual fighting and the rest of us have much less involvement and perhaps no emotional attachment at all. We have not felt the pain... yet.

The public face of the fighting is what the media gives you. The Los Angeles Times wrote about an environmental lawsuit that threatens to stop pumping water from the California Delta into the California Aqueduct. The story, in one version or another, was carried in the major papers of Northern California. They even editorialized over whether in was right to protect the fish of the delta when the economy of California is at stake.

The essence of the decision is laid out in the Los Angeles Times story. "A Superior Court judge has given the state two months to get environmental permits in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta or he will shut down the massive Northern California pumps that kill endangered fish in the process of supplying the Southland with much of its water." (Los Angeles Times, March 24, 2007)

The California Sport Fishing Association (CSFA) brought the law suit under the California Endangered Species Act. The CSFA is not your normal environmental organization. It's members are more apt to be on the water in a bass boat than a kayak, to drive a Denali than a Prius, to vote Republican rather than Democrat or Green. But, they have used the same legal measures as have the Sierra Club or the Defenders of Wildlife when they felt that there was no other choice.

Just how big of a deal is this? The Delta supplies 60% of the water used by the Metropolitan Water District. Between the State of California and the Federal Bureau of Reclamation, the Delta's water supports $300 Billion of California's economy, primarily the agricultural sector.

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) seems to be in a state of denial. In a March 26, 2007 press release, Director Lester Snow says that "We're perplexed with the court's ruling in this case. We find the prospect of curtailing pumping to be unacceptable in terms of the economic consequences to the state." That is probably true, but the threat is surely one hell of a hammer to be hanging over DWR's head.

At one time, I was sure that the fate of New Orleans would be the tipping point for reform in the management of our water resources in the Delta. Dr. Jeffrey Mount, Director, UC Davis Center of Watershed Sciences, made that reference in a September, 2005 OpEd in the Sacrament Bee. Since then we have spent million making long overdue emergency repairs to the existing delta levees, but have not even begun to solve the fundamental, underlying problem including what Dr. Mount referred to as our "legacy of bad choices."

We all know that events are not static. The biggest threat to the delta is truly global warming. Sea levels will rise. Precipitation patterns will change. Farmers may need to change their crops as rainfall and temperature change. In the face of this, it may not be possible to maintain a static delta. We know that the economy does not operate as efficiently in the

The political powers in Sacrament have kept the issue in the news, focusing on securing funding for protecting the water supply in the latest round of bond measures. We are told that they are dealing with the infrastructure and that this will solve our problems. In fact, we are allocating the funds to solutions before we even decide if these are the right things to do.

The public decision process was set in motion in October 2006 when Governor Schwarzenegger authorized a Delta Visioning project. The project's web site proclaims that "Delta Vision is intended to identify a strategy for managing the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta as a sustainable ecosystem that would continue to support environmental and economic functions that are critical to the people of California." In actuality, it is clear that economic functions will dictate the answer. While the list of "stakeholders" included developers and agriculture interests, water districts and transportation executives, bureaucrats and environmental groups, the initial panel failed to include other major public interests: Indian tribes with treaty obligations or the very sports fishing groups that fronted the lawsuit against the DWR and there is still no representative of the rights of any tribal rights.

In March, The Public Policy Institute of California released Envisioning Futures for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, a massive, 394 page report that goes far beyond the usual PPIC documentation of our political attitudes. This is not taking our temperature but outlining the therapy required for a very sick system. The emphasis is on economic impacts. The leader of the study, Research Fellow Ellen Hanak is the Director of the Economy Program for PPIC.

I think that all can concur with the PPIC that "To address the problems of the Delta's native species, a fundamental change in policy is needed." Given that current policies have not changed for 70 years, this will not be accomplished without significant costs and possibly not without large scale disruption of current agricultural systems and possible the need to relocate populations as some delta islands may be abandoned.

Once again, we are faced with a question of whether there is a political will to do what needs to be done if our goal is to achieve a sustainable future. Current policies require a static vision of the delta, one in which everyone has their place: agriculture, development, fish, birds and the role of the State is to maintain that static environment.

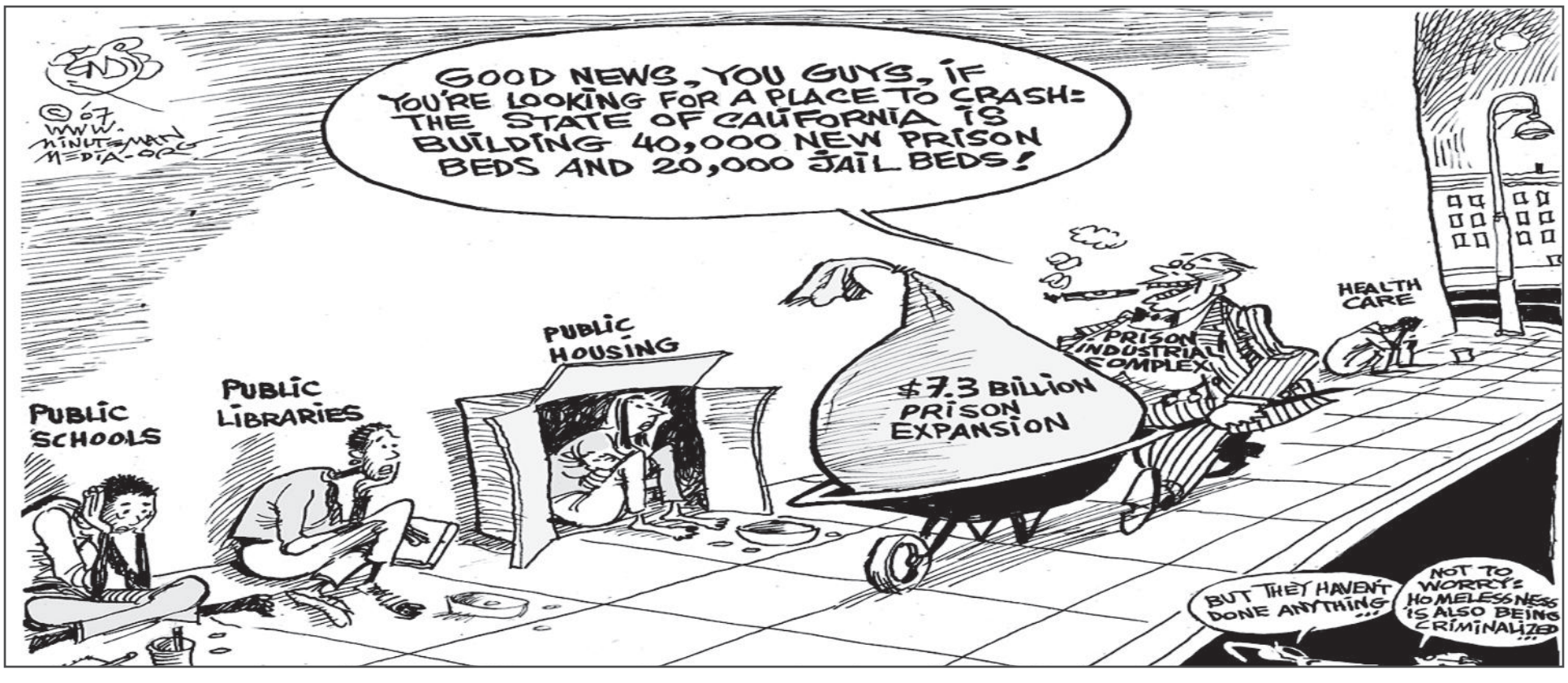
We all know that events are not static. The biggest threat to the delta is truly global warming. Sea levels will rise. Precipitation patterns will change. Farmers may need to change their crops as rainfall and temperature change. In the face of this, it may not be possible to maintain a static delta. We know that the economy does not operate as efficiently in the face of uncertainty and there will be strong pressures to maintain a status quo.

The PPIC report begins with a quotation from management guru Peter Drucker. "One gains nothing . . . by starting out with the question, 'What is acceptable?' And in the process of answering it, one gives away the important things, as a rule, and loses any chance to come up with an effective, let alone with the right, answer." Yet, the political question is always "what is acceptable"? What solution can I sell to the public? What will allow my party to maintain power? What to those who fund my candidacy need so that the funding continues?

This search for acceptable solutions has already led State Senator Joe Simitian (D – Palo Alto) to author legislation (SB 27) that would have authorized the construction of a peripheral canal, diverting fresh water around the delta to the pump site near Tracy. While that bill still exists, pressures from the public have gotten the funding of the peripheral canal removed.

The search for acceptable solutions has let Governor Schwarzenegger to create a media event to call for the construction of two additional dams while others are calling for the dismantling of four dams on the Klamath River and the massive Hetch Hetchy Dam which supplies water for San Francisco and other bay area communities.

Yes, the battles have begun. Only you can't buy a ring-side seat. The deals are done before the events make the news. Delta levees are merely the background for political photo ops. Even the Delta Vision process seems to be a public show when the solutions are already committed. If democracy depends on an informed population, as Jefferson said, we must become at least informed witnesses to these events.



Opinion

The Time is Now: Take'n the Green Message Public

By Wes Rolley, from his blog, http://cagreening.blogspot.com/

If there were ever a good time for the Green Party, that time is now. Let me offer you two pieces of evidence.

To begin with, the two major parties in the US are decidedly out of step with great segments of the population. The Republican Party, especially here in California is going through a period of high level defections that are taking prominent place in the newspapers. I have commented before, both here and on the Green California Forum, about the fact that Pete McCloskey has re-registered as a Democrat after a family tradition of Republican activism that goes back to the time before Abraham Lincoln was president. That was first announced by Lisa Vorderbrueggen of the Contra Costa Times, but soon picked up and run nationally.

The most recent defection was that of Steven Greenhut, political columnist for the Orange County Register. While not the national name that McCloskey is, Greenhut is very influential in a very Republican voting county. His defection is one more sign of the (im)moral dilemma facing the Republican party. He announced his defection in Sunday's column (04/29/07). Like McCloskey, Greenhut finds that the current Republican Party has wandered far away from its traditional fundamental values.

Our government is based on the radical idea that government should be limited to a handful of tasks, most of which revolve around protecting our natural rights. These are negative rights. They implore the government to leave us alone to pursue our own dreams and desires. Positive rights demand a positive response. If I have a "right" to education, then you must be forced to pay for it or provide it for me.

Traditionally, Republicans believed in negative rights. Yet Brooks thinks that's a mistake. He writes that the GOP needs to be "oriented less toward negative liberty (How can I get the government off my back?) and more toward positive liberty (Can I choose how to lead my life?)."

With the Republicans having such troubles, you would expect that the Demcorats are having a field day. You might believe that for all the rah-rah cheer leading over on dailyKos.com. However, when you get away from the activists, the general public has a different opinion.

I can thank GPCA Press Sec. Cres Vellucci for alerting me to the fact that the general public does not view the Democratic Congress as being much better. According to an NBC-News / Wall Street Journal poll conducted last week, a majority of Americans think that the Democratic Congress has not brought much change.

The Republicans are suffering from the moral crisis of the century and the Democrats are "not much change."

Greens should be on the offense. We should be challenging both the parties at every opportunity. This is not a time for too much introspection but rather a time when we should be aggressively pushing our values. The major parties have shown that their only value is power.

Let's get off our collective butts and take this fight to the public!

Things the Green Party is Doing Right!

I recently ran across the subject video on a site knows as gumbert.com. It is worth watching, at least for a while. It does not take long to get the point.

http://www.glumbert.com/media/shift

What that video tells us is that the future is not going to be predicted. I did not say that it was not predictable, but that we won't really get it except in hind sight. That is rather like looking back at 9/11/2001 and asking why "they" did not connect all the dots.

The current discussions within the Green Party California are all about what is wrong with the way that the party is being administered. I would like to shift the discussion to what is right with the party now. I am sure that there are a number of things that we are doing right.

Among them are the following: among just a few...

• We were the first party to stand up for the impeachment of the current Chief Executive.

•We have never expressed support for the war in Iraq.

•We are beginning to gain seat at increasingly high levels of government and to retain many of the seats that we held in smaller communities. e.g. Richmond in addition to Sebastopol.

• Green Party Members are leading the fight against GMO's all over the state.

I invite others to add to this list.

(***Editor's Note:*** Detailed 650–800 word articles, thoughtfully composed on the topic of compelling reasons for joining the Green Party and making bold, lasting changes in accordance with the 10 Key Values on any level of government will be seriously considered for publication in upcoming issues.)

Laundry Time for the GPCA

By Cat Woods,
At-large representative to the CC

Within organizations fighting for good government, many are reluctant to speak openly about problems. The mainstream bias against us makes many afraid to "air our dirty laundry in public." My own priority is that the dirty laundry be washed.

I intend to describe internal party problems and pose solutions. But first: why should you care? The Green Party is currently the only prospect of posing a progressive challenge to the two corporate-controlled parties. The California state party (GPCA) leads the country in terms of Green Party membership, candidates and political accomplishments. Yet this is contingent on the state party being functional enough to maintain Green Party ballot status for all the local parties and candidates in the state.

Strife that has gone on for the past six years currently endangers the GPCA. Anyone who becomes active in the administrative layer of the state party soon becomes surrounded on all sides by this conflict. The coordinating committee (CC) has become completely immobilized.

Green Party rules were established assuming a collaborative, cooperative atmosphere; in the current atmosphere, our "decision-making" structure is a recipe for constant chaos, divisiveness and unbelievable amounts of wasted time. I will present here a 3-part solution to the toxic impasse.

Part One: Correct the Structures

The premise of consensus process is that a group of people that spends enough time resolving concerns can arrive at a better solution. There is some truth in that, particularly when the decision is not time-urgent. The premise of super-majority voting thresholds is that they encourage the group to try harder to resolve concerns. There is very little truth in that. But even supposing both premises are true, there still has to be a way to resolve what happens if no option has super-majority approval: how is the default decided if it is not clear?

This issue has bogged our party down in interminable, pointless and frustrating arguments. The CC once spent four months failing to nominate a Treasurer, because no proposed process for doing so could reach the 2/3 threshold. We once spent 16 hours arguing over who was allowed to vote from a region, then voting against a proposal to NOT allow the two people present to vote, in order to allow the those people to vote for the last 45 minutes of a 17-hour retreat. The General Assembly (GA) has considered 7 different versions of the proposal to resolve issues around our national affiliation, but the issue is still coming back for more plenary time, because we could not get super-majority agreement on any of them.

The results become even more absurd when super-majority thresholds are applied to basic facilitation decisions. The standoff on the CC for the past six months was brought about by the use of a 2/3 threshold for agenda approval; we have spent many hours-long meetings entirely on arguing over what to agendize, with ultimately nothing being agendized. We once spent 45 minutes debating whether we were allowed to hold our regularly scheduled meeting, held another 45-minute debate on whether to add 5 minutes to an agenda item, argued for close to two hours on who should facilitate the meeting, and spent over an hour and a half deciding not to discuss something. This can't be called consensus process, because if you can't discuss something, you never get to the point of resolving concerns. It's about as far from the collaborative ideal of consensus as one can get.

The structural changes I see as necessary are: 1) a procedure for resolving ambiguities, when the default (i.e., what happens if no proposal passes) is unclear, and 2) sane facilitation guidelines, which allow neither dictatorship by the facilitator nor manipulation of voting thresholds, instead allowing the majority to at least decide how to proceed.

I have co-authored a proposed procedure to resolve bylaws interpretation ambiguities. See the document on the website located at the following url: ***(www.cagreens.org/bylaws/proposals/bylaws_ambiguities.rtf).***

While my co-author and I have opposite views on super-majority voting thresholds, we were able to agree on a method of determining whether an ambiguity actually exists, attempting consensus or super-majority approval, and then, if necessary, resolving the ambiguity with a ranked vote between the valid interpretations.

This method ensures that the default has at least majority approval, and in so doing, also makes super-majority voting thresholds workable. A test case of the IRV procedure is being proposed at the May plenary (IRV Procedure to Resolve Conflicts over GPUS Affiliation and Presidential Ballot Line, www.cagreens.org/bylaws/proposals/GPUS_IRV_procedure.pdf). This would allow the GPCA to finally solve the conflicts about our Presidential ballot line by getting 80% agreement that we will be bound to the result of an IRV vote among the main camps of opinion.

Functional facilitation rules for CC meetings have also been proposed to the CC. If we spent less of our time debating things like the procedure of deciding what our process is to make a decision, we would have a lot more time to do meaningful political work. A political party needs to make timely decisions and have productive meetings rather than endless "stacks" of procedural arguments.

Part Two: "Reboot the CC"

The impasse on the current CC is irresolvable, rendering the CC incompetent at its job. The GA should therefore reconstitute the CC, calling on all regions to elect new representatives, with anyone who has recently served on the CC being ineligible. Kick all of us bums out and start over.

Part Three: Recruit Workers

The inability of our state party to function is driving out the sane, competent people who are willing to do the party work, while those who remain feel stuck in increasingly unpleasant situations. We need to flood the administrative layer of this party with new blood and achieve a critical mass of competent people who can follow through on good policies and hold the line against the dysfunction that is currently preventing us from being a plausible alternative to the corporate parties.

Background Briefing and Notes

Editor's Note: The information on this page is provided to all members of the Green Party as an aid in better communicating with the world and each other. Understanding and be able to use the basics of consensus process are important to the healthy functioning of an organization, be it a family, or a political group. Further, it is important to note your own communication styles, and monitor those of the other players in the group process.

To that end, we have included a basic explanation of the consensus process as well as a brief outline of the Virginia Satir model of Styles of Human Communication. These explanations are of course brief. We encourage you to study them further. We suggest Wikipedia as an excellent starting point, and for those without Internet access, the public library, of course.

Considering Communication Styles: Self and Others

Editors Note: The following article is taken from a Web site located at: http://members.tripod.com/~LadyFribble/verbal/satir.html.

Green Focus is claiming a legitimate use of this material for educational purposes under Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107, which provides for such use.

The Virginia Satir Theory of Modes of Communication

Satir modes refer to common types of verbal behavior patterns. Understanding the five most common will be our first step in recognizing the verbal atmosphere around us.

The Placater

Even though the Placater doesn't dare admit it, s/he is frightened that other people will become angry, go away, and never come back.

Typical Placater speech:

* "Oh you know me--I don't care!
* "Whatever anybody else wants to do is fine with me."
* "Whatever you say, darling; I don't mind." "Oh, nothing bothers me! Do whatever you want."
* "What do I want to do? Oh, I don't know--what do you like to do?"

Hopeless conversation: Two Placaters trying to make a decision.

The Blamer

Because the Blamer feels that everyone is indifferent to his/her needs and feelings, s/he uses a verbal behavior pattern that declares that s/he is the one in charge.

Typical Blamer speech:

* "You never consider my feelings."
* "Nobody around here ever pays any attention to me."
* "Do you always have to put yourself first?"
* "Why don't you ever think about what I might want? I've had all of this I am going to take!"
* "Why do you always insist on having your own way, no matter how much it hurts other people?"

Two Blamers talking to each other usually ends in a very nasty screaming match.

The Computer

Think of Data or Spock, and you have a good reference for the Computer. The Computer is terrified that someone will find out what his or her feelings are. S/he wishes to give the impression that s/he has no feelings at all.

Typical Computer speech:

* "There is undoubtedly a simple solution to the problem."
* "It's obvious that no real difficulty exists here."
* "No rational person would be alarmed by this crisis."
* "Clearly the advantages of this activity have been exaggerated."
* "Preferences of the kind you describe are rather common in this area."

Computers work hard at never saying "I", unless they qualify it heavily, as in "I suppose it is at least possible that..." They also use a very limited set of hand movements and facial expressions.

The Distractor

The Distractor will cycle rapidly through the other Satir Modes. The underlying feeling of the Distractor is panic: "I don't know what to say, but I've got to say something, and the quicker the better!"

The Leveler

The Leveler is either the easiest or the most difficult to handle. A genuine Leveler is the easiest to deal with--just level back and tell them how you feel about their statement. One of the greatest ironies of verbal interaction is that many people mistake the statements of a Leveler for verbal violence and never suspect that the nice guy/gal down the hall is the one who is really giving them a hard time. Sometimes the difference between a Blamer attack and a Leveler's statement of fact, is the heavy stresses placed on the words by the Blamer:

Leveler -
"Why do you always smoke so much when you're driving?"

Blamer -
"WHY do ***YOU*** ALWAYS SMOKE so much when you're driving?"

The Phony Leveler -

A Phony Leveler, however, is more dangerous than all the other categories put together, and very hard to spot. They still use the attack patterns that will be described, with the proper vocal stresses present, but with a different vocabulary, so their attack is not as obvious. Their goal is to deceive you, lure you into a position of trust and vulnerability, and then sock it to you.

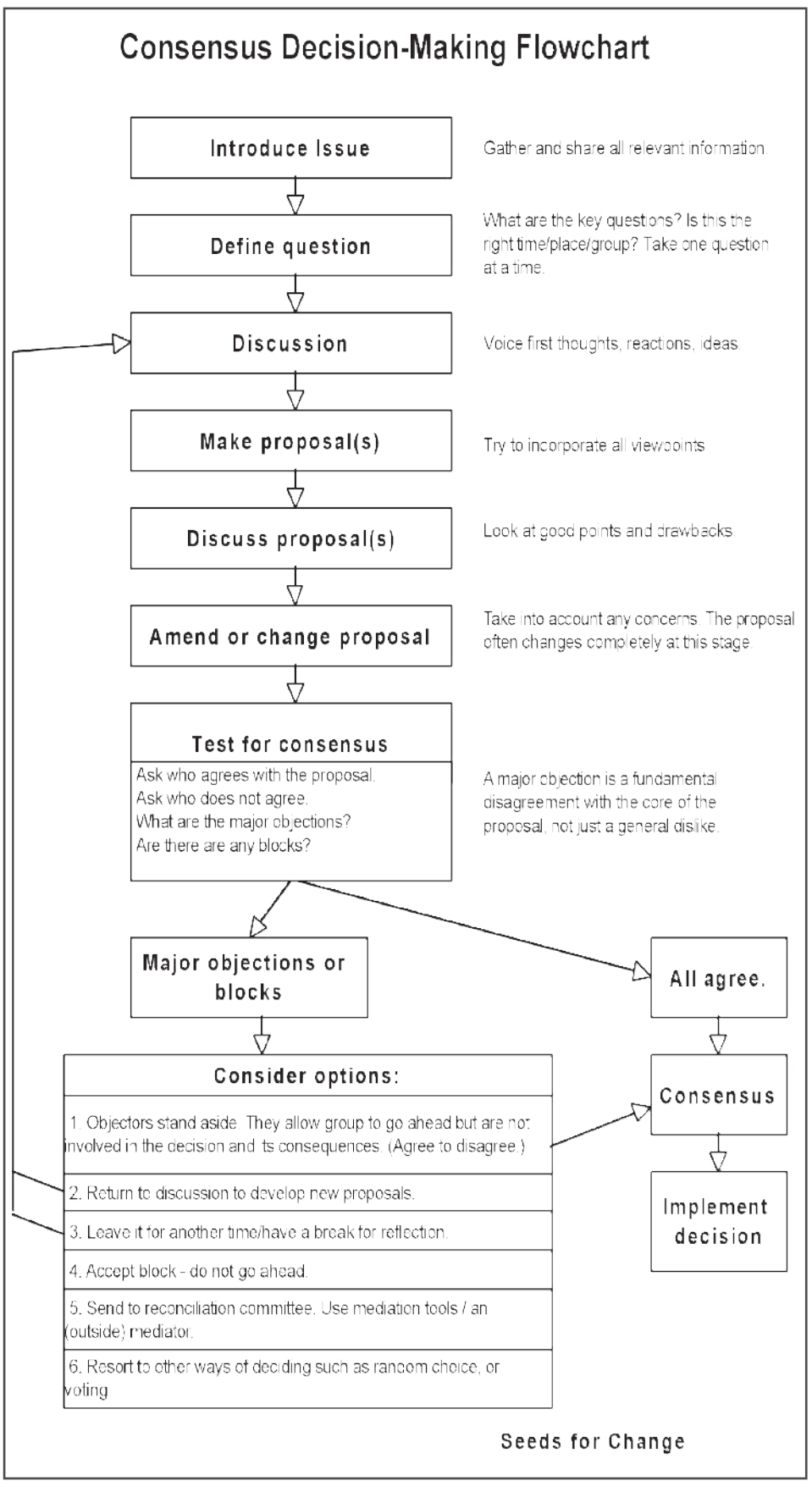
One of the best ways to spot a phony Leveler is to look for signs that they are lying. Most of what people "know" about lying is folklore. The two main rules for detecting lying are:

* Watch for mismatches between their words and their actions.
* When looking for mismatches, pay attention to the parts of language behavior that are the hardest to control.

The face (eyes included) is the easiest thing for a person to control, and therefore, the most unreliable focus for detecting lying. ***Remember, Phony Levelers are expert liars.*** When trying to detect lies, pay first attention to the speaker's voice, then their body, then their face, and least of all their words.

For a more detailed description of what to be alert for, read the section on phony Levelers, in Chapter 10 of Elgin's *The Last Word on the Gentle Art of Verbal Self-Defense.* I am not detailing this here because when dealing with most people, the signs are a lot clearer. Pay attention to your gut. Sometimes your subconscious will pick up on clues your conscious mind will miss. If you suspect you are indeed dealing with a phony Leveler, PLEASE read Elgin's books yourself. The best defense against a phony Leveler is knowledge, and there is no way I could give you enough of that on this here.

Although most people have a preferred Satir Mode when they are under stress, they are not confined to it. They can choose to use any of the other modes to meet the needs of the situation. The classic mismatch between inner feeling and outer expression may not exist at all.You should only suspect the internal conflicts listed, when the person you're dealing with uses a particular Satir Mode or two, most of the time--especially in relaxed situations.



Call To Action: Presidential Nomination Process

Commentary

Urgent Need For GPCA to ACT NOW for February '08 Presidential Primary

By Warner S. Bloomberg III Coordinator , Campaigns and Candidates Working Group.

The GPCA currently has no formal procedure for the selection of delegates to the national presidential nominating convention. In 2000, the GPCA adopted procedures to select delegates to the ASGP presidential nominating convention, but those rules were intended only for that year.

In September 2001, the General Assembly agreed by consensus that, among other provisions to proposed GPCA Election Code sections, "nominations for Green Party of California candidates for President and Vice-president of the United States...occur by primary election and not a convention." The Green Party of the United States (GPUS) obtained national legal status in November 2003. In September 2003 (by consensus) and March 2004 (by vote), the GPCA General Assembly again adopted temporary procedures for the selection and distribution delegates and alternates to the GPUS Presidential nominating convention held June 2004. The March 2004 rules, particularly regarding how to treat March 2004 primary write-in votes, were a disputed compromise.

The current draft of proposed GPCA Elections Code sections (approved by consensus at the June 2006 General Assembly) expressly refer to GPCA bylaws for the selection of delegates to presidential nominating conventions. In the past six months, two proposals for delegate selection procedures were posted on the Electoral Reform Working Group email list.

After discussions at the February 2007 Strategic Retreat, the authors (and others) have communicated by emails and telephone calls, attempting to bridge philosophical and procedural differences. The resulting proposal, which has been submitted for consideration by the delegates at the May 2007 plenary in San Francisco, incorporates compromises by all authors. It is based on the 2003-2004 procedures, but attempts to address issues involving write-in votes and the current inability of the GPCA to incorporate either NOTA as a voter choice or a ranked choice ballot as a voting method. The main points of the proposal are:

GPCA Delegates at the GPUS Presidential Nominating Convention are to vote collectively in proportion to the results of the votes in the GPCA Presidential Primary on the first ballot. They are to represent the intentions of those voters. There was no disagreement about this basic position about first round voting. Any candidate must receive a minimum number of votes equal to the percentage of one delegate out of the total number of GPCA delegates. The votes for a candidate who fails to meet that threshold will be put into a None of the Above (NOTA) pool. Ascertainable write-in votes that cumulatively do not reach the minimum threshold also will be put into the NOTA pool. If total NOTA votes reach the minimum threshold (or more) the GPCA Delegation will include NOTA in its report of the distribution of California delegate votes on the first ballot at the convention. Write-in votes for a candidate running for nomination in another political party will not be counted towards delegate votes or NOTA votes. (One of the compromises was that someone running as an "Independent" is not disqualified.)

Candidates will be allowed to submit a list of delegates before the Primary Election. Where candidates fail to submit sufficient delegates or there are NOTA delegates, additional convention delegates and alternates will be recruited from active County Green Parties. Gender balance and diversity are to be encouraged at all levels of delegate selection.

Candidate selection of delegate lists is intended to allow a candidate's backers to be proportionally represented in the delegation without the candidate having any claim to control their decisions. The GPCA Delegation will go to the convention to act as a California caucus representing the intentions of the the GPCA Primary Election voters. (Allowing candidates to offer slates of supporters as delegates and alternates with backup provisions to fill additional delegation positions was one of the compromises made in developing the proposal).

In the event multiple votes are needed before a nominee is selected, all delegates are to confer and reach agreement about the distribution of GPCA delegate votes on subsequent ballots. In that event the Primary Election results are to guide the delegates as to what would be the voters' intentions under the circumstances.

To aid the delegates in making those decisions, the proposal includes authorization for surveys of randomly selected GPCA registered voters' ranked preferences among candidates (including NOTA). The proposal also includes an option for County Polling to obtain ranked preference information. The results from the surveys or County Polling will be not be binding on the delegation, but will be information for their collective consideration at the convention. (Eliminating non-random surveys and making survey and County Polling results non-binding were among the compromises made in developing the proposal.) For transparency and accountability purposes, all of the votes of the delegates are to be recorded and reported after the Convention.

For additional proposal details, read the full text in the agenda packet for the plenary.

No procedure can micro-manage what happens at a convention. The February 5, 2008 Primary Election makes adoption of delegate rules urgent so that candidates can know what procedures are involved and so the delegates and alternates can be recruited with sufficient time. We are all going to have to trust the people we send to the national nominating convention as our delegates.

Letters

Re: Eagle Mountain Dump In Joshua Tree, CA.

Thank you Green Focus for your appeal for help in saving Joshua Tree National Forest and protecting the Desert community water supply by preventing the Eagle Mountain Dump project. Donna and Larry Charpied have been fighting this expensive battle alone, and surely need our help. It is essential that we do all we can to stop this and all despoiling of our dwindling, precious habitat..

But it is also essential that we look at what we, as individuals contribute to these on-going problems, and what each of us can do to prevent or ameliorate them. Statistics from the Environmental Protection Agency show that U.S. citizens consume and waste far more than people in other countries. Consider these examples of per capita consumption per year: U.S.A.-- 87 tons, Europe -- 48 tons, Vietnam—2.5 tons!

Census figures show that with a present population of 294,000,000, we are only 4.55% of the worlds population. Yet we produce more than 25% of all the worlds waste. In 2001, per capita waste in the U.S. was 4.4 pounds per day, for a total of 9.2 million tons!

The world can't tolerate a continuation of this wastefulness, and it is up to each of us to start thinking how we can make changes in our individual habits. For example, we can start by refusing to buy electronic equipment, an especially toxic contributor to our waste problem, unless the manufacturer agrees to reclaim and recycle the product after use, as is common in European countries. We can reduce our use of petroleum based, non- biodegradable plastic and Styrofoam, by switching to re-usable containers and other products, recycling pre-packaging, and switching to re-cycled paper disposables. We can drink out of a glass instead of through a straw. When we buy, a consideration for the environment should be part of every decision. Greens should be at the fore-front in changing our country's wasteful and environmentally harmful habits. Eventually, this might even reduce the number of battles we have to fight to keep garbage dumps out of our communities.

In Solidarity,
Kjersten Jeppesen
Donna Jo Warren

Announcements

Candidate Training Program Videos Available

DVDs of the Candidate Basics training program held in Petaluma March 19, 2006 are available for distribution to County Green Party Organizations to use to recruit candidates and as a program resource. The program was designed for prospective GPCA candidates and campaign helpers who have no or little previous campaign experience. Topics include: Deciding to be a candidate; Initial filing requirements; Media basics; and Campaign finance issues. Program sessions are about an hour and can be shown in order or separately. For more information, contact Warner Bloomberg CCWG Coordinator at (408) 295-9353 or _wsb3attyca@aol.com

Host Sought For Summer 2007 Candidate Training Program

The CCWG currently is seeking a host for a one-day candidate training program in July or August 2007. Local Green Party members will need to identify a weekend date and location for the program and provide volunteers for helping with the program. The CCWG will provide speakers and materials. The program will build on the March 2007 Candidates Basics program by focusing in greater detail on selected topics. For more information, contact Warner Bloomberg CCWG Coordinator at (408) 295-9353 or wsb3attyca@aol.com_

CCWG County Contacts Needed

The CCWG currently is seeking Green Party members to serve as county contacts. CCWG County Contacts have the responsibility to inform their local County Councils, locals, caucuses and general membership about CCWG programs and ssues and to report back to the CCWG via the email list, monthly teleconference and at plenary meetings. More than one person can serve as the CCWG contacts for their County GP. To volunteer for these positions, contact Warner Bloomberg CCWG Coordinator at (408) 295-9353 or _wsb3attyca@aol.com

As It Becomes Available

If your working group has announcements for the general Green membership or leadership councils, please send the information to us so we can try to include your notices in our next issue. Send your announcements via email, in plain text or .doc format to: **greenfocus@cagreens.org.** Thanks.

The Ten Key Values of the Green Party in English and Spanish

Grassroots Democracy - Develop participatory ways to control the decisions which affect our lives.

Social Justice - Create a system which promotes equality and dignity for all.

Nonviolence - Develop alternatives to current patterns of violence at all levels.

Ecological Wisdom - Operate our human society knowing we are a part of nature, and learn to live within the ecological and resource limits of the planet.

Decentralization - Move power *and responsibility away from larger and more distant institutions toward individuals and communities, with the goal of a decentralized, democratic society.*

Community-Based Economics - Redesign work to encourage employee ownership and workplace democracy, and establish basic security for all and a fair distribution of wealth and income.

Feminism - Replace the ethic of dominance and control with cooperative ways of relating to each other.

Respect for Diversity -Honor cultural, ethnic, racial, sexual, religious and spiritual diversity, reclaiming our country's shared ideals, the dignity of the individual, democratic participation and liberty and justice for all.

Personal and Global Responsibility - Learn from and be of genuine assistance to grassroots groups in all parts of the world.

Sustainability - Act not for the short range narrow interest of one country or group of people, but for the collective future of the entire planet.

Sabiduría Ecológica - Debemos actuar en la sociedad humana con el entendimiento de que somos parte de la naturaleza, y aprender a vivir dentro de los límites económicos y de los recursos del planeta.

Democracia de Bases - Elaboración de sistemas participatorios que nos alienten a controlar las decisiones que nos afectan la vida.

Justicia Social - Creación de un sistema que promueva la igualdad y la dignidad de todas las personas.

No Violencia - Encontrar alternativas para erradicar los patrones actuales de violencia a todo nivel, y al mismo tiempo eliminar la injusticia y sentido de impotencia que conducen a la misma.

Descentralización - Transferir el poder y la responsabilidad de instituciones grandes y lejanas a los individuos y comunidades, siendo la meta eventual una sociedad democrática y descentralizada.

Economía Basada en la Comunidad - Rediseño de las estructuras de trabajo para fomentar la propiedad para los empleados y la democracia en el trabajo, al mismo tiempo que se establece una seguridad básica para todos y una distribución justa de la riqueza y los ingresos.

Feminismo - Sustituir la ética de dominación y control por la de relaciones de cooperación.

Respeto por la Diversidad -Respeto a la diversidad cultural, étnica, racial, sexual, religiosa y espiritual, volviendo a los ideales compartidos de nuestro país: la dignidad de cada persona, la participación democrática, y libertad y justicia para todos.

Responsabilidad Personal y Global - Debemos aprender de los grupos de base del resto del mundo y ser de verdadera ayuda para ellos.

Sostenibilidad - Pensar en términos del futuro colectivo del planeta entero, no en los estrechos intereses de corto plazo de un país o grupo de personas.

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But We Need Your Help to Make It Happen

The Green Party of the State of California is working hard to promote candidates and provide financial support to campaigns on the local and regional level that we feel we have a chance of winning, or in which we feel we can make a spectacular showing in the media.

Further, we are improving our ability to speak truth to power, provide training programs for candidates and managers across the state and gaining media access through a viable network of spokespersons and a press agent for the party. To do this, and to fulfill our dreams of a permanent office in our state capital, **we are looking for people who can step up and become Monthly Sustainers to the Green Party of CA.** And as your added benefit, you will receive a free subscription to the GREEN FOCUS newspaper. We invite you to fill out the form below and help grow the party in a meaningful way. Today!

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