



Green Focus

The Newspaper of the Green Party of California - September 2005

Green Party In The News

California Green Party Calls For Sweeping State-wide Campaign Finance Reform

Official Statement from the Green Party Of the State of California

Greens cite need for state campaign reform after the conviction of two San Diego councilmen for trading favors for 'nude' contributions

SAN DIEGO - The conviction of San Diego council members this week for trading political favors for campaign contributions from special interests should ignite renewed public concern regarding immediate campaign reform, said the Green Party of California Wednesday.

The Green Party - whose candidates do not accept contributions from business groups or corporations - has long advocated public financing of elections, as well as limits on campaign spending as a way of reducing the influence of business interests, and empowering the public interest in the election process.

Both the Republican and Democratic parties have resisted such changes.

In San Diego Monday, acting mayor Michael Zucchet and city councilman Ralph Inzunza were convicted of doing what elected officials from the Democratic and Republican parties do every day - accept money from business interests. Each received \$23,000 contributions from the owner of "Cheetahs Totally Nude club" and in exchange agreed to work toward easing a city law that prohibits nude dancers from touching customers.

"There is nothing in this case in San Diego that is really any different than what happens on a daily basis in the state Legislature or in local elected bodies. Special interest money is bribery," said Beth Moore Haines, a Nevada City GPCA spokesperson. "Even as San Diego elects people to replace these two council members, it sets the stage for more abuses because we allow special interests to influence our political leaders."

"It's a sad fact that our politicians are, as many say, the best that money can buy," said Stuart Bechman, a Southern California GPCA spokesperson. "Campaign financing laws must change before the citizenry completely tunes-out of the electoral process. This is a reform that is long past due as evidenced by the unfolding events in San Diego."

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Greens Hold Successful Protest Against the Power Elite at the Infamous Bohemian Grove



It was a 3 day weekend filled with fun, family and friends as the Green Party sponsored a Convergence at the Bohemian Grove, yearly site of a ritualistic retreat for the white male elite ruling class of government and corporations past and present. California Green leaders and other progressives spoke the truth at gates of elitest power.

Report and Commentary

Don Eichelberger, SF Greens

The middle weekend of every July, the members of the San Francisco Bohemian Club, America's aristocracy, commence their annual two-week encampment by ritually burning the "Dull Cares of the Marketplace" at their 40-foot owl shaped altar.

I had been involved with protests at the grove going back to 1980, and was able to get Green Party of California backing to hold a "convergence" on corporate accountability there this year, and shed a light on this. We organized a full week-end of events, including a Friday greeting, Saturday "Resurrection of Care" and Sunday community event of music and speakers called "Convergence at Bohemia".

Logistics for these efforts came together without too much crisis. With help of Paul Encimer and other north coast Greens, speakers and music were scheduled. We arranged a group camping space near the grove on private property. Food and portapotties were donated, we got a break on a great sound system, and our costs stayed under budget. But, despite decent local media, many Internet postings, a lot of phone calling and KPFA announcements, turn out for the weekend of events was somewhat low.

As organizers, we were disappointed, but as often happens, while the turn out was low, the quality of commitment of the people there was keen. A local rabbi who was in attendance for the first time pointed out that we were not just the chorus, but we should be chorus directors, and return home and conduct more meaningful music from what we take away from here.

During the Friday Greeting, a hand full of protesters stood by the Grove entrance to witness their arrival while Ralph Nader, in a pre-arranged telephone interview laid

out on KSRO AM 1350, with host Pat Thurston, some of our concerns about the Bohemian Grove and its power. He holds, and many of us agree, that this kind of secret gathering between financial interests and government officials should not be tolerated.

Government officials should be accountable to the people who elected them. Instead, close ties are established between government, industry, banking and the military, creating the very military-industrial complex we were warned about in the 1950's by Bohemian Club member, President Dwight Eisenhower.

Making the Grove even more relevant in this, the 123rd year of its existence is its now two generations of Presidents Bush. Together, with such enablers like Don Rumsfeld, Colin Powell, Paul Wolfowitz, Dick Cheney, the Bechtels, and their many corporate benefactors, they have opened up the oil fields of the Middle East to the West, and "brought democracy to the heathens, and profits to themselves."

Since 1980, protesters have staged a Resurrection of Care to bring attention to the Cremation of Care practiced by the Bohemians each year. Many Greens find the symbolism disturbing of a repugnant form of care, called the "Dull Cares of the Marketplace" ceremonially burned at an owl shaped altar so these men can forget their daily cares and have a good old frat time. A copy of George Lakoff's book, "Don't Think of an Elephant" came my way during the protests, and explained a

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Letters To The Editor

I am a Green Because...

I'm a Green, because I believe that working within the Democratic Party to reform it is futile - but not because it is irredeemable, per se. Just a portion of it... but that portion, unfortunately, is the tail wagging the dog.

At the same time, I think it is extraordinarily silly to say, "the Democrat Party IS the problem". The problem is the domination of our entire political system by corporate/commercial interests - instead of the interests of the average person (and the planet/other living beings we share it with). This domination prevails, to a greater or lesser degree depending on the area and level, from the President and Congress on down to non-partisan local government offices (witness San Diego) - the Democratic Party's dysfunctionality is a *manifestation of this*; it is a symptom, not a cause.

The problem is *not* the elements of the duopoly, it is not "The Democrats" or "The Republicans", it is the self-interest of the corporate/commercial elites running this country that leaves them blind to the long-term implications of their actions for the welfare of humanity and the planet as a whole. It is the arrogance and fear that drive them to do anything in their power (quite considerable) to crush and suppress anything which threatens to disrupt the status quo.

It is also the shared blindness of well meaning people in power everywhere, who simply cannot see their way to a solution to the problems we are confronting, who are convinced by realpolitick and experience that, even in the face of total disaster, they cannot speak up and fight for the right, without

risking loss of their ability to do anything at all to make a difference... the smallness of vision that fears risking the loss of an ability to make a small change, in order to attempt a large one.

These people, and the Democratic Party as a whole, have entered into a corrupt bargain with the forces of reaction, in which they say, "as long as you permit us to do *some* good things, we won't seriously rock the boat", similarly, these forces have a bargain with the Democratic Party that says, "we'll let you get away with x and y, and not throw our support to the other side and expell you from power altogether, as long as you don't rock the boat". This is a bargain which these people and the Democratic Party could choose to break at any time - the reason they don't is that the risks (in their view) would be huge: loss of all power, influence, ability to make real change... total domination (much more so than today) by the forces of reaction, etc.

The Democratic Party is not irredeemable, because it doesn't exist, per se: it is an agglomeration of people who share (relatively) similar beliefs (witness constant party line votes in the California Legislature on real issues of substance), but who are forced to co-habitate with powerful counter-forces that control enough of the party to prevent action - the only way to contend that the "party" is irredeemable is to contend that all the people in it are irredeemable.

And since most of the people who we share common interests and values with are still Democrats, that's not really the message we want to send.

The reality is that, if the majority of the folks inside the Democratic Party woke up tomorrow, and decided to throw out the corporate-compromised hacks running the party, the DLCers, etc., then the party would be "reformed"... it might also, at least temporarily, be significantly smaller, as the forces

of darkness follow through on the implied threat of withdrawal of support.

That said, I'm also a Green because, in my estimation, *EVEN IF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY WERE NOT CORPORATE DOMINATED*, the Green Party would still need to exist, because we have a fundamentally different approach to politics, a different set of values, and a different set of policies we wish to see enacted. Diversity is good. Diversity is necessary. I am not a disaffected Democrat. I am a Green. Have been since I first registered to vote (more or less) in 1990.

I, quite honestly, am not convinced that it is possible, even with a level playing field, even if somehow we could wipe out the vast majority of corporate influence from the system (proportional representation, publicly financed campaigns, a ban on corporate contributions to anything political, etc.), today, to convince a majority of the public to share the views of the Green Party. I think it is possible that we could persuade anywhere from 10-25% of the electorate, even 30-40% in exceptional cases, to vote for our candidates, if we had equal funding and access to the media, etc. and equally good/qualified/credible candidates with years of electoral experience at the local level.

But I'm fine with that (for now). Even a showing at that level, even without proportional representation, would force a radical shift in the priorities of our government (with proportional representation, it would be even better).

Thomas Leavitt is a member of the Santa Cruz Green Party, a member of various working group, frequent facilitator of meetings and a past member of the City of Santa Cruz Living Wage Advisory Committee and the City of Santa Cruz Homeless Issues Task Force.

Covergence at Bohemian Grove

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lot about the ruling elite. He points out that the "Stern Father" paradigm that rules conservative thought sees "Care" as a feminine principle, and therefore, a weakness, which works against our self-interest. And care, in his analysis, is the most important principle for a progressive to have; a caring for the community and the well being of others, not just ourselves.

Here is the social barrier that divides our thought at its very base. Is it insurmountable? A lot of belief; of myth, of self value and assessing the value of all things gives us a lot to work through, to understand and begin to confront. Actions like those to be had at Bohemian Grove are a rarity because they allow us to look inside the ruling paradigms and icons and understand them on a more human level.

So, in our effort to not quantify our values, as do the ones we protest, the positive messages and interactions over the weekend are recognized for the success they were. And there was a determined hope expressed for the future by local Greens that Green Party can and will continue to shed a light on this important venue.

And the venue is the thing. This gathering IS news, whether we do anything or not. People need to understand the concentration of the physical wealth of banks and industry, meeting in secret with

the ones who control the country's military might, political purse strings and media's spotlight (and dark places).

And as a protest site at the end of a two lane road in the redwoods of Northern California, even with the conspicuous police presence, many people who came voiced the same surprise at how intimately this encounter positions the demonstrators and some of the most powerful men in the world. It was likened by some as watching the Wizard of Oz enter his draped closet.

Perhaps next year we will call our event the Convergence at Oz.

Don Eichelberger lives in San Francisco and is active with the SFGP local. He helped in founding the state Green Party and is Co-Convener of Green Party of California Green Issues Working Group.

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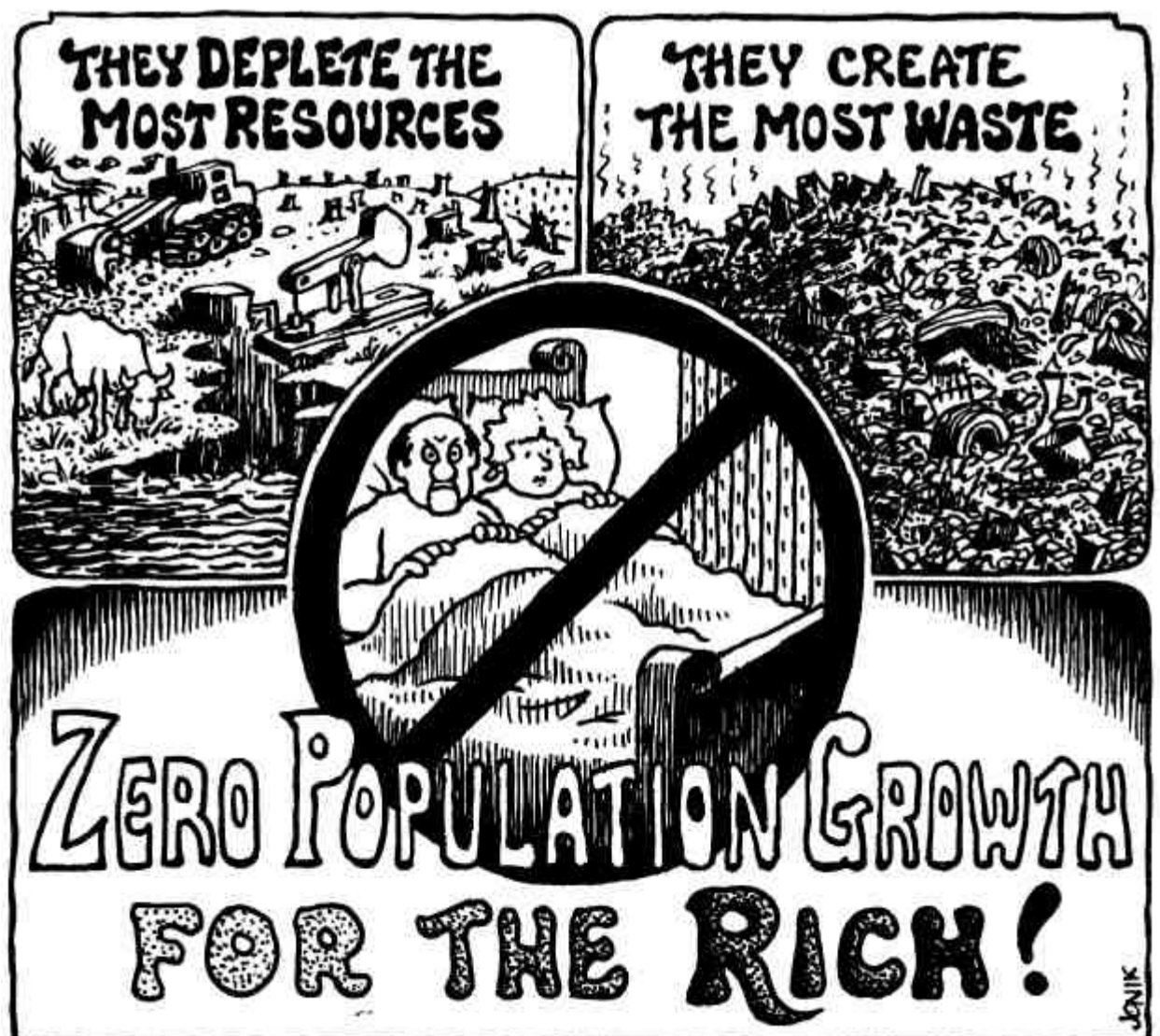
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Opinion

Proposal: Lowering the GPCA Voting Thresholds

By Cat Woods - delivered at the 5/22/05 GPCA plenary in Sylmar, Ca.

Lowering voting thresholds is not about destroying consensus.

I don't propose parliamentary procedure for the GP, and I'm aware that there are valuable aspects of consensus process we need to preserve. Yet many people condemn parliamentary procedure without knowing the first thing about it. It also has some features that are valuable. In the 17th century, the invention of parliamentary procedure enabled British parliament to arrive at a "common will" and depose King Charles II. He returned with an army, confident that they could not function well enough to stop him. Parliament again used their democratic procedure, this time to have the king executed. If they had used supermajority voting thresholds, they would have gone to much earlier graves themselves instead.

The relative democracy of different voting methods has been studied exhaustively. There are objective fairness criteria used to rate the relative democracy of a decision-making process. IRV rates well because of how it seeks majority opinion from plurality. Supermajority thresholds do not rate as

fair or democratic at all. Democracies use them for Constitutional changes because, in those cases, the default has already been arrived at democratically.

What a 2/3 threshold means is that a "no" vote counts twice as much as a "yes" vote. An 80% threshold means that a "no" vote counts four times as much as a "yes" vote. This is only justified in situations where the default situation is much more preferable to the proposal. We realize this implicitly when we use IRV for candidate elections. We don't require one candidate to get four times as many votes as another candidate, because the candidates deserve an equal chance at election.

The question is: which situations are analogous to a candidate election and which situations demand a supermajority advantage for the default?

Supermajority voting thresholds are appropriate for platform planks and any amendment that overturns standing policy. Since these are rarely urgent, the demanding process can also help improve the quality of proposals.

A democratic process is appropriate whenever the pro & con positions are roughly equal in standing and when a timely decision is required. In a political party there are situations where no action is much worse than imperfect action.

The recent Treasurer nomination was a case in point. After months of infighting, we ended up in violation of our own bylaws because we could not get 2/3 agreement on any method. Neither faction had enough incentive to support one of the many compromises, because both knew they had enough votes to block passage. This did not serve consen-

sus. It simply wasn't appropriate to count a "no" twice as much as a "yes" when not deciding left us in violation of the bylaws.

Consensus-building is a process of engaging in dialogue with opposing views and adapting proposals to answer concerns. This can happen within any process. Any process can also be manipulated in bad faith. The advantage of a democratic process is that it can't be brought to a complete standstill by manipulation or dissent. Everyone has an equal chance of success and an equal investment in building consensus.

Democratic process arrives at consensus or high majorities plenty of times. I'm surprised by how many people think it's an absolute atrocity for a vote to ever come down to 51% defeating 49%, and yet have no problem whatsoever with 25% defeating 75%. The minority report option preserves the prophetic voice of minorities without turning that into minority rule.

What tends to happen in a consensus process or supermajority organization is that cliques form in order to get work done. The members of these cliques do a lot of gate-keeping to protect the basic functionality of the group and eventually become rigid and domineering. Democratic process opens things up and makes it much safer to have full participation, because the group has less risk of being manipulated by someone who happened to get through the gate.

Anyone who is interested in continuing this dialogue and drafting a report comparing group processes, please join the Internal Democracy & Ethics list. ©2005 C. Woods. Used by permission.

Tulare Greens Stand Firm For Constitutional Rights

Local Greens Find Success in Battle with Target Stores for Right to Register Voters on Site

By David Silva, Tulare Greens

Last November, 2004 the local Target store at the Tulare County seat, the city of Visalia, at Packwood Creek denied access to any of their property, entrance ways, parking lots or other stores by denying the Salvation Army or anyone access to Christmas Shoppers in the public commons as defined by Chief Justice Rehnquist in the Pruneyard decision. They made a determination based on a suit by their parent company Dayton Hudson Corporation, a Minnesota Corporation, on behalf of its unincorporated Target Stores Division. The case against the Salvation Army of Church of Soldiers of the Cross of Christ of the State of California was filed in Superior Court in the County of Los Angeles. The Salvation Army told Target Executives and lawyers that they would not contest and would not show for the hearing. The Target parent company also never showed but has been using their (Proposed) Revised Judgment Case No BC 025473 as if it had been decided against the Salvation Army to scare away all comers. After reading of this farce in the papers the Green Party of Tulare County determined to challenge their outlandish position.

We showed up in the rain as six disabled veterans and an elderly woman to register voters despite Target's claims. We had for warned the Visalia Police of our action and requested protection if Target's Security thugs were to try to force us out from in front of Target. This approach forestalled the delivery of "Trespass Papers" by the Target Management under the condition we go into negotiations with the Target Division Director in Fresno, a Shane Bennet. We did. He gave us case after case that did not apply and could not provide us with any proof that the Pruneyard Decision had been abolished. Their tactic was to provide us with about one bogus case per month. It was winter and we were ready to re-group and re-organize anyway. We never won for the Salvation Army what they could have won if they would go into court. Next Christmas we imagine they will be allowed if they come and allow us to fight for them.

Come the 4th of July and we again planned to Register Voters in front of this Target Store. We had gotten commitments from the Republican Congressman, Devin Nunes, that if we got in legal trouble they would help us with legal matters. We



Tulare Greens, from left to right: Jovita Harrah, David Silva, Don Manro sit in front of the Tulare Target store in defiance of the Target Corporation's policy that they wouldn't allow even the Salvation Army to have a presence at their store. Tulare Greens vow to continue defend the rights of the Pruneyard decision.

got commitments from the Democrat Party that we would have access to their volunteers should we enter into a protracted struggle. As the fourth approached we did the courteous thing and let them know we were coming. Once again they said we could not. Once again we said we most certainly could. And we did.

We showed up on the 2nd of July and not knowing the press was among our volunteers the Target Management was rough and rude and crude. This gave us articles in the local papers making Target look silly once more. The Manager Guadalupe Franco called the Supreme Court "bullshit" and the California Penal Code "bullshit". After the press announced their presence the team of managers and security guards ran into the building and never came out again. Then of the 4th of July we showed up again and the local ABC affiliate was waiting outside trying to get management to come out. They never did. We as the Voter Registration Working Group will be in Porterville at Target on the 10th of July.

The Green Party Voter Registration Working Group are not the first unwelcome "trespassers" we learned from the low level employees at Target before us a family of ducks had returned to Packwood Creek. (See Photo) Naturally, the Target Man-

agement called the Visalia Police on these creatures and the Police reported it to the proper authorities but Target was ordered by the courts to let them stay. So we had great company and a great time. Many passers by were very glad that we were there because it seems none of them knew of the impending August 15th mail in ballot that would be tried in our county for the first time. WE registered mostly Decline to States (Independents) as usual but we were much appreciated by the walk by clientele.

Last November former Tulare City Councilwoman Nettie Washington called for a boycott of Target stores through Christmas shopping which the Tulare Advance Register printed. In our research of the various cases we found out that a group registering voters in Nevada County received a \$75,000 to drop their suit against their local Target Store. We have said repeatedly we won't be bought off and only want the right to do civics in the public commons.

This remains our position. Our victory here will mean victory through out our state and should change their national policy.

If you want to join our campaign call David Silva at (559) 684-0197



LA Greens Earth Day Event a Model For Green Outreach

Rex Weyler, founding member of GreenPeace offered stories and inspiration for a green future to a full house that included many visitors.

*By Linda Piera-Avila
- Los Angeles Greens*

As environmental concerns increasingly demand our collective attention, so Earth Day serves as an ever stronger conscious anchor, connecting us with the need to address our first Green key value, ecological wisdom. To observe Earth Day this year, we Los Angeles Greens hosted Rex Weyler, co-founder of Greenpeace International and author of a new book recounting the organization's illustrious history.

Mr. Weyler honored us with his stories, his wisdom, his humor and his very warm presence on April 20, 2005, at the Peace Center in Los Angeles. Our executive committee, both excited and humbled to be organizing for this event, put their "all" into preparations. We saw the fruits of our labors as the audience in the rather small conference area swelled to standing room only! Videographers and audiographers recorded the event for others to experience later and for our archives. An International Studies class attended as part of their course.

This man, along with his colleagues, literally changed history and the world when, armed with cameras, media skills and uncommon

courage, they challenged the status quo and took a stand for the environment, for the wildlife that calls the planet home, and for peace. Ecology is now part of the common lexicon and society's consciousness is more evolved thanks to their efforts.

This intrepid soul lived in Midland, Texas for a while as a youth and even attended school with the future first lady, Laura Welch Bush! Subsequently, Rex discovered the Beat writers at City Lights Book Store in San Francisco, joined the Vietnam War draft resisters movement (taking up residence in British Columbia) and left engineering school to pursue journalism. Indeed, Rex received a Pulitzer Prize nomination for his Native American history, "Blood of the Land," and his book "Chop Wood, Carry Water" was on the best seller list for weeks.

Mr. Weyler is a master story teller and held the audience rapt for well over an hour. He told of the



A few of the many attendees pose with Guest Speaker Rex Weyler for a photo: (left to right): Kit Bricca, Linda Piera-Avila, Lisa Taylor, Denise Robb, Rex Weyler and Cathy McKnight.

formative days of Greenpeace when the all volunteer group had no office, no phone and no money (sound familiar?). Driven by passion for protecting the planet, the fledgling Greenpeace combined their skills and waged successful campaigns to raise awareness about the environment and peace.

In addressing the topic "Sustaining Activism," Rex advised us to take 15 minutes a day to meditate. He likened it to the Buddhist phrase of "sharpening the sword" in preparation for effective activism. He also encouraged us, when engaging in actions, not to be intimidated by the consequences of having a conscience; stand firm and united. He admonished us not to let our individual egos ruin the important work at hand. And there is much work to do! We must mentor our younger activists coming up on the horizon to carry on with this work, to learn from our experiences, both good and bad, so that they can be even more effective than we. On a lighter note, Rex told how beer, shared among friends, is an effective organizing

tool! Creative serendipity strikes when we are socializing! Innovative ways of luring the media's attention can proceed from relaxed group discussion.

Everyone agreed this was a magically successful evening and will be remembered. Wanting to read more and chat personally with the author, 25 people lined up for his book, "Greenpeace, How a Group of Ecologists, Journalists and Visionaries Changed the World."

Copies are available at Rex's website, <http://www.rexweyler.com>, which is also a good place to learn more about Rex, his other books and the Greenpeace movement. Rex lives in Vancouver with his wife Lisa and their foster children.

For more information about the Los Angeles Greens, please visit our website at the following url: www.losangelesgreens.org

Remembering a Friend Killed in Iraq, Marla Ruzicka

by Kevin Danaher and Medea Benjamin

Editor's Note: Marla was an active member of the Green Party of California and was a frequent participant at state plenaries as well as serving as a campaign aide to Medea Benjamin in her run for the US Senate in 200. This article edited for length.

Just about every day we hear of bombs going off in Iraq, and perhaps we pause for a moment and think what a tragedy it is, and then we go back to our daily routine. But when someone close to you is killed by one of those bombs, the world stops spinning.

On Saturday April 16, our colleague and friend, 28-year-old Marla Ruzicka of Lakeport, California, was killed when a car bomb exploded on the streets of Baghdad. We still don't know the exact details of her death, which makes it all that much harder to deal with the utter shock of losing this bright, shining light whose work focused on trying to bring some compassion into the middle of a war zone.

Marla was working for a humanitarian organization she founded called CIVIC (Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict), which documents cases of innocent civilians hurt by war. Marla and numerous other volunteers would go door-to-door interviewing families who had lost loved ones or had their property destroyed by the fighting. She would then take this information back to Washington and lobby for reparations for these families.

A case in point, taken from Marla's own journal, as published November 6, 2003 on AlterNet:

"On the 24th of October, former teacher Mohammad Kadhum Mansoor, 59, and his wife, Hamdia Radhi Kadhum, 45, were traveling with their three

daughters -- Beraa, 21, Fatima, 8, and Ayat, 5 years old -- when they were tragically run over by an American tank.

"A grenade was thrown at the tank, causing it to lose control and veer onto the highway, over the family's small Volkswagen. Mohammad and Hamdia were killed instantly, orphaning the three girls in the backseat. The girls survived, but with broken and fractured bodies. We are not sure of Ayat's fate; her backbone is broken.

"CIVIC staff member Faiz Al Salaam monitors the girls' condition each day. Nobody in the military or the U.S. Army has visited them, nor has anyone offered to help this very poor family."

Marla first came to the Global Exchange office when she was still in high school in Lakeport. She had heard a talk by one of staff members about Global Exchange's work building people-to-people ties around the world-and she wanted to do something to help. She was a quick study and took to the work with a passion and energy that were inspiring to us older activists. She later chose a college (Friends World College) that allowed her to travel to many countries and learn from diverse cultures. She quickly developed "big love"-love of the human race, in all its joy, frailties and exotic permutations.

Marla worked with AIDS victims in Zimbabwe, refugees in Palestine, campesinos in Nicaragua. Following the US invasion of Afghanistan, Marla traveled to Afghanistan with a Global Exchange delegation and she was so moved by the plight of the civilian victims that she dedicated the rest of her too short life to helping innocent victims of war. She was on a similar mission in Iraq when she met with her untimely death.

Marla was once asked by a San Francisco Chronicle reporter if she would ever consider doing



Marla Ruzicka, above left, was cut down in the youth of her activist life by a car bomb in Baghdad.

work that was safer. Marla answered: "To have a job where you can make things better for people? That's a blessing. Why would I do anything else?" It is so difficult to think of this lively young woman as not being alive any more. Marla seemed to have one speed: all-ahead-full. She had more courage than most people we know. She loved big challenges and she took them on with a radiant smile that could melt the coldest heart.

One of the things we can do to honor Marla Ruzicka is to carry on her heartfelt work to build a world without hunger, war and needless suffering.

Orange County Green Will Run Against the Rightwing in Special Election to Fill Cox's Seat

Béa Tiritilli to challenge opponents in 48th Congressional Special Election

By Béa Tiritilli and Don Boring

Minuteman leader Jim Gilchrist and former Republican congressman "B-1 Bob" Dornan are two of the reasons Béa Tiritilli finds the 48th congressional district race fascinating. Although she's the only Green running, she's not the only non-Republican. Dornan broke ranks with his party in July to state he will likely scuffle with Gilchrist to become the American Independent candidate in this Orange County district.

The seat caught Tiritilli's interest in November 2004, when she went to the polls disappointed that no Greens had bothered to contest Republican Christopher Cox's 16-year tenure. She was aware that no one, including any local Democrat, stood much of a chance against a Republican incumbent in one of the country's most conservative districts (50% Rep., 25% Dem., 25% undeclared or other.) Busy raising children, Tiritilli had been an AWOL Green for a few years after several years as an activist; but with the kids nearly ready for school, she thought she might have enough freedom to get involved again. Tiritilli has been intensely frustrated with the extremely conservative, war-driven deviation our country has taken the last few years, and she feels determined to be a positive force for peaceful change.

A few months ago, she was elected to fill a vacant GP Orange County council seat, and was making plans to run against Cox in November 2006. To Tiritilli's surprise last spring, President Bush appointed Cox to head the SEC. His confirmation is expected before summer ends, at which point Gov. Schwarzenegger is expected to call a special election to fill the seat. Although the election may coincide with that already planned for November, it will likely happen later. This has put Tiritilli's leisurely campaign plans on the fast track. She may have as little as 48 hours to gather signatures and file her campaign paperwork after the election is called.

Once elected to congress, Tiritilli's number-one priority will be to convince her coworkers in Congress to bring our troops home from our lie-justified war with Iraq. Number two: reduce America's dependence on fossil fuels, particularly oil. In addition to polluting our air with carcinogens, our oil obsession has spawned two wars and led many in power to justify disturbing the balance of nature in ANWR.

With Gilchrist likely to run, one hot topic of this campaign will be undocumented immigration. Tiritilli firmly agrees we need to curb undocumented immigration, which leads to the tragic deaths of hundreds near our borders,

especially the Mexican border. With Ted Kennedy and John McCain are promoting bipartisan work-visa legislation for immigrants I might find ways to make a difference in Congress.

Tiritilli proposes phasing out all international free-trade agreements in favor of what she prefers to term the "International Fair Trade Treaty."

Working in conjunction with the international community, this treaty calls for a ban on trade with any company that has unethical work standards. Trade won't be authorized with businesses that: employ forced or child labor; have unsafe work conditions; produce environmentally unsustainable goods; and/or do not pay a living wage. Tiritilli also believes we should forgive the debts of any impoverished nation which agrees to invest in ethical job growth and sustainable business practices. She firmly believes that better jobs in foreign countries will reduce the economic desperation that leads to dangerous border crossings.

Because she believes in decentralizing government whenever logic dictates, she wants to return local control to our schools. *Bush's No Child Left Untested Act* is government bureaucracy run amok.

Tiritilli has been a public schoolteacher for more than a decade, and "in that time I can't recall seeing legislation that was a greater hardship on schools," she said. "This act presumes that America's millions of children fit into the same one-test-assesses-all pattern. The needs of at-risks students, those who have English as a second language, and special education students, for example, are much different than those of a typical student (if such a student exists). Expecting all students to thrive under the same curriculum standards is like expecting all human beings to adopt the same personality. It can't and shouldn't happen."

As a federal congresswoman from California, Tiritilli will write legislation on medical marijuana that recognizes and respects laws created in individual states, including ours.

Further, she declares, "I support freedom of choice on individual liberties in general."

Béa Tiritilli considers herself a Christian who believes in firmly the separation of church and state, and she strongly believe it's unfair for any religion to dictate its views on such issues as gay marriage, abortion, and federal stem-cell research to the general public; thus, she's in favor of legalizing all three.

There are dozens of other issues pertinent to this campaign. For more information, please visit my web site at <http://www.beatiritilli.us>.



Béa Tiritilli (above) is running for the Green in the 48th.

Although Tiritilli believes Gilchrist and Dornan (who is staunchly pro-military and anti homosexual) would be her most interesting opponents in a debate, they won't be the only ones. Democrat John Graham and Republicans Marilyn Brewer and John Campbell have declared they will run. Brewer and Campbell have already amassed at least \$150,000 each in their war chests, with Campbell saying publicly that he hopes to raise a million dollars to campaign for the seat.

Some may wonder why Béa's bothering to run in a district that is less than 1% registered Green. But she believes partisan campaigns are one way to spread the message of nonviolence, social justice, ecological wisdom, and other Green values. Whether she wins or loses, she is determined that at the end of this campaign there will be many more Greens registered to vote in Orange County and that the Green's will become a force to be reckoned with on the regional scene.

Contribute

**Contributions to Béa's Campaign
May be Sent to: P.O. Box 11385,
Santa Ana, CA
92711**

Contributions of \$100 or more must include your name, address and phone, and your occupation and name of employer.

Greens See Growing Pains at the State Plenary

Analysis and Commentary

By Don Boring

The process and the outcome of the May 21-22nd statewide quarterly Green convention in California (known as the Plenary) proved that the Green Party is at once a vital group, yet struggling with defining democracy and consensus for Greens in the 21st Century.

It is to the credit of the California Green Party that they are striving to wrestle with these issues and should not be seen as a sign of impending doom, but of forthcoming growth.

GDI Proposals

GDI addresses questions that when answered will help to define the Greens as a vibrant and distinct alternative to the corporate political parties. Review their specific concerns at their website at: <http://www.greens4democracy.net/>

GDI has been about setting out viable methods for Greens to be represented within a national body during the transition phase from 'some states' having official Green Party status, to a time when 'all states' will be registered parties with their respective Secretary's of States.

Make no mistake that this is a difficult time, but with the open minded 'Future Focus' of the Green rank and file and their elected representatives we will most probably see this process through to fruition. No matter a person's opinion of the GDI proposals, a vibrant future for the Green Party as a strong voice in partisan politics is a vision that all members can appreciate.

The fact that GDI proposals received nearly a 2/3 approval vote across the board in Sylmar means that the issues represented in these proposals are important to a great number of Greens in California.

Despite the failure of the 3 proposals as amended at the national meeting in Tulsa, the voices of the GDI movement will probably not stop calling for a strong, and independent Green Party. And all Greens will continue to be concerned with

the best means of representing individual states at both the Presidential nominating convention and the National General Meetings. This is a growth issue and no easy answer will be available til all states have obtained ballot status and comply with other demands of the FEC.

The Green Party is less than 20 years old in the US and as a teenager is experiencing growing pains. Due diligence and care by all in seeing the party through this difficult time will pay dividends throughout the life of the party. And all signs point to a leadership and a constituency that's up to the challenge.



Peter Camejo is seen working the base of his constituency for GDI at the May 21-22nd Plenary in Sylmar, CA. While all three proposals past with at least 60% of the delegate vote, the proposals failed in Tulsa.

Aimee Allison Campaign Takes the Oakland Greens to New Level

■ Greens mount successful 'high profile' campaign in the District Two Council Campaign, Gaining Wide Support

By Mike Feinstein, Los Angeles County

If the Green Party is going to truly become a significant player in U.S. politics, its ability to win urban, multi-cultural seats is one of the key political tests it must pass. The recent Oakland District Two City Council campaign of Aimee Allison gives much hope for just that.

The Opportunity

Allison's race – and the opportunity to succeed in it – came about unexpectedly, as did even her own entry as a Green, when incumbent Democrat Danny Wan resigned in January and a May 17th special election was called. Almost immediately afterwards, Wan's chief staff aide Patricia Kernighan announced her intentions to run for the seat, and Mayor Jerry Brown and the local Democratic establishment quickly got behind her.

Enter Allison, 35, an African American activist and Stanford graduate who made national news in 1991 when, as a medic in an Army Reserve unit that was re-deployed to Saudi Arabia, she took a public stand against the Persian Gulf War, and forced the Army to award her an honorable discharge as a conscientious objector.

With her political affiliation registered as 'decline-to-state' when the special election was called, Allison met with a number of Oakland progressive community leaders, who were searching for a candidate they could support, amidst the increasingly disappointing performance of Mayor Brown and his local Democratic machine.

One of those leaders was Wilson Riles, Jr., a long-time African-American community leader who had ran against Brown for Mayor in 2002, and who had earlier served three terms on the Oakland City Council. A lifelong Democrat out of the progressive (former Congressman) Ron Dellums camp, Riles publicly switched his registration to Green after that campaign, in part a result of the level of Green support he'd had, as well as the sweat equity Oakland Greens put in for progressive causes over the years. Now it was his turn to convince Allison, which he and other progressive leaders did.

Oakland's District Two represents the Grand Lake area, along with the Eastlake, San Antonio, and Chinatown neighborhoods. The district's diversity is reflected by streets with beautifully restored Victorians and California bungalows, located nearby run-down apartment buildings and street crime.

In the 1990s, the district was intentionally realigned as an "Asian district", putting Chinatown together with Vietnamese and Southeast Asian neighborhoods. More recently District Two has been characterized as "lavender", because of the number of gays and lesbians that have moved into neighborhoods near Park Boulevard, and Lakeshore and Grand Avenues.

Out of 27,000 registered voters in District Two, approximately 800 are registered Green. Many others are progressive and share Green values. Allison's campaign sought to reach those voters, irrespective of their party affiliation.

"It's much easier to get them to vote for Aimee than it is to get them to change their registration to Green," said Ray Tobey, one of Allison's campaign staffers, "Let's get them to vote for Aimee first. If they're led for the next two years by a Green sitting on their city council, they'll change their mind about the Green Party."

The Issues

An exceptional and articulate orator with a winning smile, athletic figure and energetic manor, Allison campaigned on four main issues - increased revenue sharing by Oakland's Port with the city, promoting affordable housing and tenants rights, regaining control of the public schools and increasing school programs, and limiting recruitment on local high school campuses.

Unlike the West Coast's other major ports - Seattle and Long Beach/Los Angeles – Oakland receives little revenue from its Port. Allison argued that from a regional economic development perspective, the Port is a regional economic resource and should be treated as such, especially since Oakland's Mayor appoints the Port's Board of Directors. Increased



Aimee Allison is a 35-year old biracial businesswoman and mother raised in Antioch, California. She holds a BA in History and an MA in Education from Stanford, and has lived in Oakland since 1991. She took time out of her professional duties with non-profit groups to run for City Council.

revenue, she advocated, could be used to fund schools and needed social programs. Even the Port's International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 supported this kind of independent thinking, backing a Green for the first time ever when they voted to endorse Allison.

On housing, in contrast to Mayor Brown's attempts to gentrify Downtown Oakland through the introduction of high-end condominiums, Allison argued for stronger inclusionary affordable housing policies and strengthening rent control. Two years ago earlier, local tenants won a huge victory with the passage of a ballot measure called "Just Cause Eviction". This time, both Just Cause Oakland! and the Oakland Tenants Union endorsed Allison.

With Oakland's school system in disarray, the Oakland Teacher's Association also endorsed Allison, pointing to her support of the union's efforts to stop school closures and improve teacher's benefits. Said one union leader, Allison "is the independent voice we need in city government to help us fight Schwarzenegger's attempts to dismantle public education in Oakland."

With nine candidates in the race, getting media coverage was challenging. But the campaign made headway, emphasizing Allison's personal experience as a war resister and conscientious objector. This served to reinforce the perception of her integrity, strength of character, passion of her convictions to District voters, bolstering her credibility in the process. According to the campaign media coordinator Forrest Hill, "our good press was the result of this emphasis, combined with frequent, well-written press releases and op-eds and letters to the editor to several Bay Area newspapers from Allison and supporters."

The Election

The election itself was conducted entirely by postal mail, with voting commencing 30 days prior to the official May 17th election date. But although Oakland voters passed a charter amendment in 2000 to fill City Council vacancies that allows the use of Instant Run-Off Voting (IRV) "to the greatest extent feasible", the City Council did not vote to use it for District Two.

In opposing IRV, some Councilmembers said it would be "too difficult for immigrant voters to understand." This drew a quick response from Green Matt Gonzalez, who had endorsed Allison, and the former President of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, had helped bring IRV to San Francisco. "I think it's condescending to say that foreign-born people are incapable of ranking their choices."

Oakland also faced a technical problem (as do nearby Berkeley and San Leandro, which also have adopted IRV for local elections) -- Alameda County voting machines are not programmed to use IRV and Diebold, manufacturer, has not been willing to write

the needed new code, even though it is not a technically difficult task.

As a result, the election was held without IRV, or even a traditional two candidate run-off, meaning the winner could likely end up with 30% of the vote or less. This made it even more challenging for Allison, because the number of left-leaning candidates meant that share of the vote would be spread thin.

By Election Day, the campaign had grown dramatically and claimed more than three hundred volunteers. Allison led the way, spending more two hundred hours walking precincts herself in the District. The campaign also raised \$30,000 from small donations, enough to hire staff and produce attractive literature, signs and targeted direct mail.

When the final results came in, Allison finished fourth with 14.2% of the vote. This was impressive because it not only came amidst the split of the left vote in the absence of IRV, but also because Allison's campaign grew and peaked at the end, after many voters had already cast their ballots in the month-long voting period. Kernighan won, but received only 28.8%, meaning she'll face re-election in June 2006 with the knowledge that over 70% of voters did not vote for her, despite the fact that she greatly outspent all competitors, including more than three times what Allison's campaign did.

The Future

Keeping her options open for 2006, Allison has indicated that this Special Election may have been the first, but not the last time she will run. Observed Hill, "this was a historic campaign. We took a candidate that was mostly known only among activists and in a few months, made her a household name in the community. People are now asking Aimee to come to City Council meetings and speak on behalf of their issues. When someone offers something historically different, it takes time. But time is on our side. We are all excited about 2006 and beyond."

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Are Your Core Green Issues Being Held Hostage by the Corporate Media?

By Nancy Doyle

Editor's Note: Nancy Doyle is founder of the "Free Media Greens," a media reform caucus of the Green Party of Minnesota which can be visited on-line at <http://www.mngreens.org/> She may be contacted at: nancyjdoyle@yahoo.com

White House press releases and consumer trivia—these are the tools we're given to make some of the most important decisions governing the world today. Not vigorous debate, not minority viewpoints, but: which is the best barbeque grill? What are rock stars' four favorite hotels? Which basketball celebrity injured his knee? This is the problem with the media.

The media are important because we are making decisions in this country that matter a lot, not only to us, but to people all around the world—people who don't want to get killed, for whom the policies of the United States of America mean very literally life and death.

This came into clear focus in the lead-up to the Iraq invasion. We watched every day as the administration tested its latest pitch for war and reporters dutifully wrote them down. No questions asked.

We have all heard the statistics since: that 72% still believe that there were WMDs in Iraq that 75% believe Iraq was providing substantial support for Al Qaeda. In this election season, we've seen the powerful impact of self-censorship, withholding information or refraining from engaging in issues deemed too "political."

More and more, Americans sense there's something not right. In a 2003 survey, almost a third of respondents called news organizations immoral, up from 13% in 1985. Seven in ten people said news outlets were often influenced by powerful people and organizations.

People sense that our media system is failing in its job of supporting a functioning democracy.

People sense that our media system is failing in its job of supporting a functioning democracy. What they don't know is how this happened. They assume that the media, like gravity, simply exists. There's nothing that's been done to create our media system that can't be undone. It's only and purely a matter of organized people dismantling a system built secretly by media corporations wanting to get bigger.

How we got here

Our policy approach to media in this country was put on paper in the late 1920s when people were trying to figure out what to do with this new medium called radio. Commercial broadcasters wanted it, but many warned that freedom of the press was impossible as long as broadcasting was under what intellectual John Dewey called "concentrated capitalistic control."

In a nod to citizens' ownership of the airwaves, Congress created the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to regulate them according to the "public interest." Policy was heavily influenced by commercial broadcasters who made sure that radio policy primarily supported a commercialization of the medium.

In decades since, corporate interests have remained at the reins. Consolidation sped up under Reagan and the first George Bush. In the corporate-giveaway Telecommunications Act of 1996, the term "public interest" appeared 112 times.

Because early makers of media policy never said what they meant by the term "public interest," there's been room for interpretation. The current chair of the FCC, Colin Powell's son Michael, has decided it means the FCC helps the media industry make lots of money. In a 2001 speech, Powell addressed the delicate question himself, saying:

"I am committed to building policy that is centered around market economics . . . Market systems, far from being the bane of consumers, have unquestionably produced more consumer welfare than any other economic model devised by mankind. Thus, if you are truly committed to serving the public interest, bet on a winner and bet on market policy."

It's an old story—this "capturing" of a federal agency for corporate benefit. According to the Center for Public Integrity, in the last eight years FCC commissioners and staff have received almost \$2.8 million in travel and entertainment expenses, mainly from the telecommunications and broadcast industries it's supposed to regulate. They received 330 trips to Las Vegas alone.

Both media policy in Congress and the FCC's implementation of that policy overwhelmingly favor Big Media corporations at the expense of the people and our democratic system. That means corporate consolidation, fluff news, stifled independent voices, rubber-stamping of the status quo—trends that few citizens want to see continue.

Taking back the media

Change number one: Advocate for a national media policy that truly serves the public interest.

The seeds of success have already been sown. In 2003, when Powell and the FCC were trying to push through rule changes that would take another great leap towards commercialization and concentration, the American people caught wind of it and responded. An estimated 2.3 million comments and petition signatures poured into Washington, almost every one passionately opposed to these rule changes.

It isn't easy to inspire our legislators, because Big Media is essentially the only road to voters. Whether they're buying campaign ads or hoping for favorable coverage, legislators are reluctant to compromise their relationship with Big Media.

That being said, there's nothing like a critical mass of angry constituents to get their attention. Under constituent pressure, Congress voted overwhelmingly to block the FCC's new rule changes. It was more evidence that only organized people can remake a system that organized money has corrupted.

Change number two: Build a mass movement.

The network of organizations and citizens demanding reform is growing but still relatively small and disconnected. We must reach beyond the usual suspects to engage our parents, our brothers and sisters, co-workers and friends.

This isn't easy. It's hard to believe there's a crisis threatening our democracy when you haven't seen anything about it on TV. We need to raise awareness, person to person, of the damage done every day by our current media system.

This includes shining a light on the gap between what people see on TV and the reality of this world. A friend of mine went to Haiti two months before the coup happened and was alarmed by the newspapers' narrative on Haiti. He said, "What the newspaper is writing—it isn't true! That's not what happened at all!" He witnessed a US-backed overthrow of an elected leader but read about a people rising up in their own rebellion.

Each person who is shocked in this way will never see or hear news the same way again.

The Green Party is uniquely positioned to raise the media issue.

In building a mass movement, we'll find perhaps surprising allies among reporters. Seven out of ten

reporters say that the buyouts of news organizations by big corporations have a negative effect on journalism. When asked about coverage of the 2004 campaigns, nearly three-quarters graded it C, D, or F. They said the news media was sidetracked by trivial issues, too reactive, and focused too much on the inside baseball that doesn't really matter to voters.

A reporter who worked in radio for many years once told me, "We'd like to do better reporting, but we can't." He said he wants to dig deep but he only has time to call one source. And it's the same source he called for the last five stories he's done on this issue. He knows that's not good journalism, but it's out of his hands. Budgets are cut to increase profits and journalism suffers.

The media is simply the way we talk to one another on a large scale. Every progressive group that has seen their issue abandoned by the corporate media has a stake in media reform. By reaching to every group and citizen that knows we need real, diverse national dialogue, we can remake our media system.

The Green Party is uniquely positioned to raise the media issue. The two Big Parties are so reliant on the existing system that they are unable to take leadership on this issue. As Greens, we are in touch with the unheard voices and invisible issues. We can make media reform central to our campaign platforms, our legislative agendas, and our direct action efforts.

We know the places where our nation has fallen short of its ideals. We want to bring all citizens to these places so we can create solutions. Author Danny Schechter said, "We cannot even talk about changing America without confronting and remaking media power."

Change number three: Support our public and independent media.

We need media that's relieved of commercial pressures. Independent media is often non-profit and community-based and makes truth-telling its primary goal.

Working together, we can create policies that promote independent media and fully fund our public media sources. We can also claim our own right to participate in our civic dialogue, challenging the assumption that only the contributions of media professionals or elite "experts" are legitimate.

Change number four: Demand accountability from the corporate media.

Most media businesses have long since abandoned any pretense of serving the public interest. Network executives state with increasing candor that it's a ratings game, nothing more.

In this environment, we can no more ask NBC to give us substantive news than we can ask McDonald's to serve nutritious meals. It's a business. Big Media provides what the market demands

It could be argued that making citizen demands of a corporation only charged with serving its own bottom line is misguided. Increasingly, we have no other option. What if McDonald's had bought out every restaurant and grocery store in town? Local media monopolies have done just that. The president of national newspaper chain Knight-Ridder boasted that no Knight-Ridder newspaper is subject to any competition in its geographic market. Good for business, but bad for democracy.

Nancy Doyle (nancyjdoyle@yahoo.com) is founder of the "Free Media Greens," a media reform caucus of the Green Party of Minnesota which can be visited on-line at <http://www.mngreens.org/>

"I am committed to building policy that is centered around market economics . . . Market systems, far from being the bane of consumers, have unquestionably produced more consumer welfare than any other economic model devised by mankind. Thus, if you are truly committed to serving the public interest, bet on a winner and bet on market policy."

Michael Powell
Former FCC Commissioner

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Book Review

Robert Jensen, Citizens of the Empire: The Struggle to Claim our Humanity, San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2004. 156 pp. \$11.95,

Reviewed by Bill Templer now living in the province of Trang, city of Sikao, Thailand, also of Berkeley, CA.

This book deserves repeated reads. Use it in organizing. Especially around issues of foreign policy, the Iraq occupation and alternatives to a consumerist culture. Include it in Green study groups. It's a dissenter's guide to living under the contradictions and excesses of an imperial America, how to struggle constructively against its inequities and insanities. Ed Herman praised it as "a much needed citizens' manual." Jensen's book challenges us to begin to "see clearly the ways in which the system of capitalism and empire has colonized our own lives, our own ways of seeing the world. From that, there is hope we can dismantle the system that seeks to dictate terms to the whole world" (129-30).

Greens of many persuasions will readily identify with Jensen's take on the System and its ills. He says a lot about cutting through the fog of political rhetoric spread by the corporate media and the political oligarchy. He speaks of learning how to deconstruct the brainwash of false "patriotism" (and its evasion of moral principles) the nation has been engulfed in since September 2001, the doublethink of the "war on terrorism" and the Pentagon's strategy of "full spectrum dominance" in a bid to run the

world. An impassioned passage discusses the atrocity of cluster bombs, another our political culture of "democracy-as-stupefaction" and how to energize forms of more horizontal participatory self-governance. A recurrent theme is how to build argument reaching out to ordinary people about a fundamental rethink, learning a "voice" for organizing, confronting the current mood of "triumphalism and apathy." A chapter "Knowing and Doing" explores the failure of the university in America today to galvanize a culture of counter-discourse and active dissent.

Maybe the most distinctive section is chap. 6, a critique of high-energy, high-consumption lifestyles in the (over)developed world. Interrogating consumerism is central to Green thought, and a recurring focus in Jensen's writings and speeches:

We need to begin the long process of taking apart a way of living that is grotesquely wasteful and based on unjustifiable disparities, not only because it is right in itself and in our own self-interest to do so but because that affluence tends to divert people from seeing how their affluence is made possible by brutal policies abroad (and increasingly at home) (107-08).

Commenting on his own zigzag path to activism he stresses: "even if I'm wrong in some ways, I'd rather be wrong with hope than cynicism. ... I'd rather work for a just and sustainable world and fail than abandon the hope" (122). Plainspoken, almost Socratic at points, Jensen has crafted a primer for better grasping the strands of our own "political emotions" post-9/11.

There are many powerful sub-chapters here, I especially like "The joy is in the struggle" (118ff.), which should become a Green Party slogan. Some may fault his approach for a lack of class analysis. Yet in its readability, honesty and "utopian pragmatism," the book belongs in any toolkit for fundamental transformation. The volume, dedicated to the



Robert Jensen poses for a picture outside his office to promote his new book, "Citizen's of the Empire."

Nowar Collective, which Jensen co-founded, can be downloaded and portions can be read in part at <http://tinyurl.com/7h46x>

Bill Templer is a Chicago-born linguist with family ties to Paradise/CA and currently teaching on the Andaman coast in southern Thailand. You can reach him at: bill_templer@yahoo.com

Ten Key Values of The Green Party of CA

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.

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