Plotting the Evolution

Most of us, I would guess, are involved with the Green Party of California because we hope it can be a vehicle of genuine, fundamental change for our state, country and planet. We are Greens because for our own individual reasons, we don't feel comfortable in the system as it is. We want a place to dream, to take risks, to live out our ideals without having to constantly explain and defend ourselves.

For the Green Party to succeed, we must create a safe place for dreamers, innovators and idealists. Realism and cynicism must also be welcome. We are just human beings plotting the evolution, making it up as we go along.

Specifically, for an effective statewide process, we must rise to a number of challenges, including but not limited to the following:

1. Responsibility. Each of us must take the time to educate ourselves, to prepare for statewide meetings, to keep abreast of the issues. The Green Party cannot be just a mailing list of passive voters or cliques of ill-prepared activists.

2. Commitment. The Green Party is not a quick fix. We must be in for the long haul. We must stick with the process even when it hurts.

3. Cohesion. Organizations typically maintain cohesion through structure. The longest-lived human organizations have strong, hierarchical lines of order. Green Party cohesion must come from somewhere else. I suggest our cohesion come through building community.

4. Communication. California's a big state. Northern and Southern California are very different places, geographically, culturally and politically. We must use all means at our disposal (phone, EcoNet, fax, even the U.S. Mail) to stay in touch with each other and share our ideas and concerns.

5. Coexistence. Nobody has the corner on being green. In fact, given green disinclinations toward conformity, I would guess there are as many ways to be green as there are greens. If we cannot learn to celebrate our differences as gifts, we will destroy ourselves from within, forget outside forces.

6. Corruption. Frank Herbert once turned a twist on the old adage that power corrupts. He said "Power attracts the corruptible and absolute power attracts the absolutely corruptible." We already have a lot of trouble being big, and we're only about one percent of the state's voting population. What will happen to us if all goes well and we become a true Third Party, with the same numbers and clout as the Republicans and Democrats? We will only escape corruption by clinging to community, consensus and the 10 Key Values.

7. Cooperation. Americans compete. Politics has largely been defined as the competition between different power groups and their competing interests. It is difficult for American Greens to operate in a cooperative paradigm. But our party depends upon it. If we do not come together to work together, we will inevitably tear each other apart.

8. Vision. We must always ask ourselves "why are we doing this?" What is the purpose of the party? Why are we traveling around the state to meet? What is the vision for California that we all share? If we can come to consensus on our vision, 90% of our fight will be won. We can get on with the journey towards our brilliant future.