

Berkeley (*Coordinating Committee only, November 1991*). The Coordinating Committee faces the dismal reality that we are only halfway to 80,000 Green voters with less than two months to go. The Democratic Party has begun a number of attacks on the Greens, including a post-card mailer to Greens urging them to re-register Democrat. There are rumors of Republicans interested in backing the Greens to dilute the Democratic vote. Greens in the Bay Area and Los Angeles express interest in paying registrars if money can be raised. Plans are made to both renew our request to qualify the party and submit election rules in case we succeed. Mindy Lorenz subsequently finds a \$20,000 donor to fund paid registration drives. Somehow, in six short weeks, Green registration doubles.

Sacramento II (*January 1992*). The first statewide meeting of the ballot-status Green Party of California. It is the end of one chapter and the beginning of another. There are lots of strangers to the process - new enthusiastic Greens, candidates in suits and ties. The plenary decides to submit Green election rules to the Secretary of State rather than adopt the rules of an existing party as required by law. These rules include the innovative "None of the Above" rule for Green primaries and the controversial opening and closing of races by county GPOCs. Cuest, by virtue of living in Sacramento, is designated by the Coordinating Committee as liaison to the Secretary of State.

There have been numerous statewide meetings since our qualification and many earnest attempts to reform and restructure the organization. At each meeting, decisions were made built upon past decisions and precedents. The culmination of all these decisions is the Bylaws.

Bylaws

A curious document was circulated at the January 1992 statewide meeting in Sacramento. It was called "Bylaws, Green Party of California" and opened with a note explaining the three different typefaces found in the text: one for existing bylaws, one for proposed changes and one for notes. The proposed changes were actually inserted (albeit in boldface) into the existing bylaws as if they had been adopted.

This version of the Bylaws, although not created to confuse, demonstrated the ongoing trouble with statewide bylaws: we are making our rules up as we go along and often it is not clear what we have already agreed to.

Bylaws are different than Green Party Rules, which are our contribution to the California Election Code, delineating how the state is to interact with the party. The Rules largely describe how we want the Secretary of State to run our primary elections.

Bylaws function as the rules for our internal, statewide process. Drafting and approving bylaws is not a glamorous task and easily thrown overboard as we are hit by wave after wave of crucial current issues.

Time taken to disparage endless bylaw debates could be more productively spent reading them and learning the rules. The more familiar delegates are with the Bylaws, the smoother everything will go at statewide meetings.

With so many dialects of Green being spoken around the state, the Bylaws serve as the dictionary of our common language. They define who delegates are and why they come together. They outline how proposals move from locals to the plenary body and by what steps these proposals shall be considered.

Encourage someone from your region to join the Bylaws Committee so your delegation can be consistently apprised of bylaws decisions and modifications. Let's look more closely at some of the critical sections of the existing statewide rules.