

**Green Party of California
Minutes of the General Assembly**

May 16 – 17, 2009
Venice, Los Angeles

Table of Contents

Minutes of the General Assembly	2
Saturday, May 16 GPCA Plenary Session Notes	2
A. 9:40am proposal: Confirm agenda, Presenter: Jim Stauffer	2
B. Consent Calendar items.....	3
C. Warner Bloomberg: CC member to propose agenda adjustments:	3
D. Open process for revised agenda:	3
E. GPUS Delegation Election: Sanda Everett – Rank all choices for IRV to fill 42 slots. Bring back by end of the day.....	4
F. PROPOSAL: GPCA Annual Budget. Presenters: Jeannie Rosenmeier, Joe Feller, Barry Hermanson.....	4
G. Ballot Measure Report:.....	5
H. DISCUSSION ITEM 4:37 pm.: Alameda/LAC Proposal	6
Sunday, May 17 GPCA Plenary Session Notes.....	8
I. IT announcement: common password will change right after plenary	8
J. Announcement/request from Contra Costa County:	8
K. Proposal by Michael Ruben:.....	9
L. Platform Proposals:	9
M. 11:15 Proposal - Alameda-LA proposal, addressing final concerns, before going to vote	10
N. 2:35, we began second two bylaw restructuring proposals as discussion-only items, with discussion time for them shortened to fit plenary timeline:	13
O. LA Co. bylaws discussion presented by Jim Stauffer.	14
Appendix	15
Platform Planks – Final version, with amendments, approved at GA.	15
PUBLIC EDUCATION (May 17 2009)	15
VIOLENCE IN SOCIETY (May 17 2009).....	17

Minutes of the General Assembly

Saturday, May 16 GPCA Plenary Session Notes

Morning Session: start: 9:20 (approx.)

Orientation – Michael Borenstein

Point of process – Glen Hopkins – wants to give the infinity symbol as a gift to the Greens.

Facilitators/confirm quorum -

Note taker: Tim Morgan

Facilitators: Jane Rands, Warner Bloomberg

Timekeeper: Lisa Hsu Los Angeles County

Vibes: Male: Glen Hopkins Los Angeles County, Female: Kendra Gonzales - Ventura

Scribe: Jack Lindblad – Los Angeles County

Consensus reached on team facilitation team

[initial setup discussion]

Request to confirm quorum – 8 regions, 37 delegates @ 9:32 – we have quorum to open the plenary

[back to open ceremony again – Glen Hopkins]

A. 9:40am proposal: Confirm agenda, Presenter: Jim Stauffer

Point of process: John Wenger – Los Angeles County, illegal election at Los Angeles County for delegates – attendees at council meetings glen h not part of election no quorum not given ballot, no alternates abolished in 2007, requests GA resolve, delegation 13/3, should have been 12/8 suggests.

Warner Bloomberg – credential challenge to Los Angeles County delegates

LH – Los Angeles County have Mike Feinstein Los Angeles County to respond could have had Glen Hopkins vote, had alternates since 1992, 13 people votes for 26 candidates, STV, can't redo absurd, can't phone in votes.

Warner Bloomberg – cc meeting says no bylaw for this – GA can resolve – consensus at CC meeting to put the vote to GA 2/3's approval and would Los Angeles County recluse self from vote

Adrienne Prince – Los Angeles County has 19 delegates? Yes, how many delegate here? How many like to be seated? answer:15

Michael Rubin – answer - it's unclear to him about 2/3 vote

Time keeper – we are 13 minutes off agenda

Point of process John Wenger – shall the existing delegation be sustained? More discussion.

Drew Johnson – Santa Clara, what was the practical impact of this election? Answer: Ellen Maison and Glen Hopkins.

Glen Hopkins - Los Angeles County – concern about Los Angeles County being Pakistan of party, cut is down by one half.

Concerns: Tian Harter – Santa Clara County – spent way too much time on LA problem, Adrienne Prince – Ventura – make decision that we can agree to those coming in to fill in, Bob Smith – Los Angeles County- is disgusted and LA has had a legitimate vote so we need to go along with it. Jim Stauffer – Santa Clara County – suggested 2/3ds and 1/3 as with Riverside, Bob Marsh - Alameda County, why is this coming up again? Michael Borenstein – El Dorado County – do a 2/3: 1/3 split and move on.

Mike Feinstein – adding new people in is not acceptable, change 2/3: 1/3 not acceptable because of discussions and meeting etc., John Wenger – wants to speak point of process Mike Feinstein in order John Wenger

Role Call Vote: Y: 7 N: 29 A: 6

B. Consent Calendar items

Any concerns for the Treasurer and Secretary of State Liaison to both continue with second 2-year term, any concerns? Mike Feinstein stand-aside concern – not process for this, concern that email was not appropriate CC needs to do better – consensus - on both @ 10:19

C. Warner Bloomberg: CC member to propose agenda adjustments:

Concerns or changes on agenda – Mike Feinstein Los Angeles County alternative agenda expresses concern about 4:35 sat item, (see alternate agenda), Bob Marsh - Alameda County – don't really disagree with Mike Feinstein proposal remove first item, GJ – Alameda County – may be a challenge to Contra Costa County delegation, Michael Borenstein El Dorado County – Los Angeles County fluctuates with county council wants to actually hear various discussions not remove anything.

Jim Stauffer – responds agenda developed early CC had agenda for 1 month, now Los Angeles County wants to rewrite agenda, does not want to accept friendly amendment's, Mike Feinstein will not stand aside, vote to affirm agenda.

Vote: to affirm the proposed agenda as modified by Jim Stauffer

Y: 15 N: 24 A: 3 proposal fails

D. Open process for revised agenda:

Mike Feinstein Los Angeles County – begin with GPUS delegation, breakout secession, day goes back 20 minutes Sunday same

Michael Borenstein El Dorado County – budget and bylaws need to be on

Jack Lindblad - Los Angeles County – revised agenda fine – if Alameda County/Los Angeles County proposals pass could go home early

Jim Stauffer Santa Clara County - impression that Los Angeles County wants to remove the bylaws and 2 restructuring proposals separating them out biases the process need to listen to all three – suggestion, Los Angeles County / Alameda County not really should be on agenda but was put on, need to resolve Los Angeles County question.

Mike Feinstein now presenter – clarifying questions – Bob Marsh - Alameda County – is the alternate agenda what Mike Feinstein is proposing, Kendra Gonzales – Ventura County – Jim Stauffer said one month for CC to deal with agenda why no Los Angeles County input? Mike Feinstein - no changes just order did email request, Michael Borenstein - El Dorado County – why can't we use process to do agenda? Jeanne Rosenmeier – San Francisco County, everything include but where are the 3 restructuring proposals?

Concerns and affirmations: Peggy Koteen SLOC – wants all three restructuring proposals together, Ross Frankel – affirm Mike Feinstein's work on alternate agenda, Michael Borenstein El Dorado County – not following process – one small group versus entire Green Party. Warner Bloomberg – any unresolved concerns PC (did not get name) and Michael Borenstein – PC will not stand aside about looking at one proposal, Michael Borenstein will not stand aside; point of process Adrienne Prince and alteration to the proposal.

Vote: Y: 31 N: 8 A: 2 NP: 1 – proposal passes 11:30 (approx.)

Break-out session to 12:30

Lunch

Afternoon Session: 2:30 pm.

Note taker: Adrienne Prince

E. GPUS Delegation Election: Sanda Everett – Rank all choices for IRV to fill 42 slots. Bring back by end of the day.

F. PROPOSAL: GPCA Annual Budget. Presenters: Jeannie Rosenmeier, Joe Feller, Barry Hermanson.

NOTE: The final version of the budget, as adopted in this session, will be available on the Finance Committee web site – <http://www.cagreens.org/finance/internal/index.shtml>. The common password is required for access.

Decreased funds caused deep cuts to every group's budget. Please make proposals to finance committee for nominal amounts, larger amounts will need CC vote. Great finance committee meeting brought new ideas for fundraising.

A letter just went out to 1500 prior donors, but no phone banking backed it up. OK response could be optimized with phone contact, a personal contact.

Income: \$38,000 projected but not guaranteed.

Clarifying Questions:

Warner Bloomberg: What was the reserve amount fund during beginning, middle and end of this fiscal year?

Barry: Reserve fund does not get touched.

Jeanne: Reserve fund is in the neighborhood of about \$30K, with about a \$30 debit if budget goes as planned.

Peggy Koteen: What were the legal expenses for \$1000 for last year? What was \$3800 for GPUS delegation for?

Joe: \$1000 was allocated in case of legal dispute needs, which weren't needed after all. GPUS funds was to support travel to national meeting last July (fiscal years begin/end April 30)

Michael Borenstein: Certain expenses for Clearinghouse and Green Focus that recoup themselves, is that accounted for? Can we recapitalize our proceeds to buy more merchandise?

Joe: The committee will need to make that decision as arises.

Actual budget line items got \$0 at times. Any working group that exceeds or wasn't given a budget, under \$200 will get approved by Finance, if over \$200 will be voted on by CC. Barry has come up with good fundraising ideas.

Concerns/Affirmations:

Warner: In case we don't pass a new budget before end of fiscal year, have final paragraph say “in the event a new budget is not approved by end of fiscal year, budget will be extended.” (Delete the term, “on a monthly pro-rated basis”

Team: OK

Sanda Everett: In past years, when we have had a national meeting, there is a lower early registration fee. GPCA budgeted some money to buy pre-registrations. 75% was to be paid back by delegates, 25% was low-income delegate support. A week ago, early registration opened, \$2500 that we didn't spend be rolled into this year's budget. Also, California is due to receive about \$3500 in (possibly past-due) GPUS state-sharing money. Please give ½ of this money to help support the delegates. Other states support their delegates and GPCA does not.

Team: We see \$6000 coming, but is it coming from this source or a different one? Is the national bankrupt at this point? We have been getting about \$1700 every 6 months.

Sanda: Because of California. National planned on 100 delegates from California, but when Nader delegates pulled out, we got big hotel bills of appx \$6K that we are paying off at \$500 at a time. California was 20% of the shortfall when hotel rooms for 800 delegates were reserved.

Team: We are on a cash type basis, not an accrual basis. Expenses and earnings are registered when cash goes in and out.

Sanda: These figures don't come close to covering expenses for delegates.

Team: Thank you for this input. We will have to go back and review this. Yes, we can roll \$2400 from last year into this year for pre-registrations.

Sanda: We need to raise more money, and raise more greens.

Tim Morgan: Thank you to Finance Committee. Election Reform Working Group spent no money last year. Part of our work plan was to produce a packet about IRV and STV but we need \$200 to finish our packet and work plan.

Team: Will take on that expense.

Michael Feinstein: Thanks for this work! In the case of our stipend-paid contract labor people (Treasurer and Press Secretary) needs a pro-rated. Change language to “this budget will allow a maintenance of effort for monthly expenses for contract employees, state phone line, web hosting.”

Team: OK

Mike: The \$4500 for loans to plenary host committees – Kenny Mostern when Treasurer, asserted that State party should foot this bill instead of leaving it to the locals to borrow the funds and pay them back. Renting the building should be absorbed by the GPCA. Can Finance Committee take this under advisement?

Team: We will get this onto agenda for next meeting.

Michael Borenstein: I will stand aside on the concern of we need to run our committees a little more like businesses, to enable them to re-capitalize when sales have brought money in. I'd like to work with Finance to devise a plan for this and bring back to a future plenary. My next concern is that IRV is sweeping the state, it is a large item – I could see where GROW could take Green Focus's profits to give to the ERWG to promote this. Can Green Issues, which has no leadership and no committee, be cut from budget and reinvested?

Team: That was last year's Anti-WalMart money, we were a founding member of Healthy Communities, an anti-WalMart group. That is our annual membership to that group.

MB: OK

Test for Consensus

Consensus Passes 3:18pm

The adopted budget will be posted on the Finance Committee web page – www.cagreens.org/finance/. The common password is required for access.

G. Ballot Measure Report:

We have heard from counties and decided to vote NO on all 6 upcoming California budget measures. 15 counties did not report, however. We just barely made quorum for this county polling. This is indicative of the problems in feedback we have been having. Reps from the non-reporting committees really need to ask their counties.

Discussion

Sanda Everett: Teachers associations do approve 1A, though I personally don't. Progressive teachers organizations have *only* approved 1B, because it allows for lawsuits.

Marilee Davies: I didn't see the rationale behind the positions you took. I noticed that GPCA's view was diametrically opposite to CTA's. I would have liked to know the reasons for GPCA's position.

Presenter: We polled counties and they submitted their responses, and this is what it is based on.

Break-out session 3:25 – 4:25

H. DISCUSSION ITEM 4:37 pm.: Alameda/LAC Proposal

(Presentation plus Clarifying Questions)

Presenters: Michael Feinstein, Laura Wells, Greg Jan

Presenter #1: Mike Feinstein - Since 2004 at least, some contention around membership/criteria of Coordinating Committee.

Even though CC is only an administrative body, it is still important that it is effective.

All-time lows in membership, and declining. Internal inefficiency is not acceptable.

This proposal is to attempt to curtail excess fighting over results, especially if the fault is structural.

No set rules for CC rep elections are in GPCA, and there is no higher adjudicating level either.

Instead of 11 artificially created regions (created 1990, amended 2000) – multi-county regions are hard to pull together, is there a process that isn't open to dispute and can eliminate this trouble?

National GPUS has a steering committee: every state party ranks its candidates, displayed on a web page. A simple, clean process. If we shifted to a voter verifiable system, much structural flaw will be corrected. Perhaps eliminate 80% of current disputes. Draft released a couple of months ago (North/South with 6 men, 6 women from each). But there are other reasonable approaches to mixing/matching the variables. Have IRV vote online this summer between variations of this plan.

Over the years, a Standing Green Assembly and online vote procedure have been desired. This could establish a way to do some online voting. At-large elections for state leadership positions voted for online is more responsive and eliminates carbon footprint issues. By fall, perhaps we can have something in place. I can put an amendment that keeps me from running for 2 years, and a cap in membership from any one county.

Current system might give geographical distribution, but actually small counties/regions are disadvantaged. Information flow would be maximized with the creation of a CC secretary who takes minutes and distributes them to all the counties!

Presenter #2: Laura Wells – I was on the CC a few years ago. What most of us wanted was to move things forward. Part of what the CC does is to coordinate events. It is extremely easy to stop anything from happening, however. Questioning the membership, questioning their internal elections, keeping that controversy makes the CC the “De-Energizer Bunny.” Also no consequences existed for people who were repeat “stallers,” they just kept getting reappointed by their locals, as an unwanted job. Whose values are to progress, or to have things stop or highly controlled? At-large reps would energize more people to join the CC, because they would be able to have a stake and get things done.

Regional structure: Their establishment was totally arbitrary. So many people tried so hard to get the structure unstuck. Many quit. Green Party has been correct all this time, we can have a chance to grow if we get moving.

Presenter #3: Greg Jan – It's time to move forward. This is a big opportunity. Current situation: every year, we are supposed to be electing ½ of the at-large reps. The 2 positions were open to be voted on at this plenary. But nobody wanted to run. This might open things up to enthusiastic members. We propose that instead of 20 reps +16 alts, we would (tentatively) have 24 reps, divided North/South (San Luis Obispo roughly being the dividing line.) Also evenly gender-balanced. 2 elections: elect 12 each year, with 2 year terms, for continuity.

Amendments: see document for implementation and possible variations. All are encouraged to think of best possible formulas for this representation.

Point of Process: Michael R: I'd like to have time for comments not just questions, since this will be decided upon, tomorrow.

Stack: Questions

John Earl: You want to form a committee, to consider up to 4 alternatives? Does the committee choose or does it go to state? How is this a cure for sagging party registration?

MF: The committee will take its findings to the state for approval. The inability of state party to have efficient meetings. We once fought for so many months about who was on CC, to even choose an agenda

to decide on the next state meeting. It's not a panacea, but it would help.

Peggy Koteen: How would polling work? County polling doesn't work very well.

MF: We thought we would leave it to the counties to do the polling by their own procedures.

PK: How do we decide who votes for CC reps?

MF: There would be variations available, that is what the committee would look at. You'd keep the same proportion that you'd have at a state meeting.

Tian Harter: How do you define proportions?

MF: As we elected the GPUS delegation, we would use a similar process. Many people have different skills – what mix of people is going to get the job done? This makes such a question possible.

Jane Rands: This seems to be a bylaws change. County polling. Implementing a secretary to report to the counties, couldn't we do that now? N/S and gender representation, can we guarantee rural/urban representation, smaller counties?

MF: We could have implemented the Secretary sooner, but we didn't. It make sense to have in any case. Summer polling instead of waiting till fall? A greater involvement of people who couldn't be here at this plenary. Spending another plenary on structure would be a waste, let's take care of it outside of “school.” The 9-member committee has members who have spent a long time thinking about this. Urban/Rural, that could be accounted for in the variations. 24 people insures a greater diversity and ensures that if people want to run, they will get elected without one area dominating. Every county voting means that not only large cities will dominate, there could be great geo diversity.

Michael Borenstein: Would you consider a committee of Greens from outside the CC or the current parties? My largest concern is that some of the info you are giving about the history is not entirely accurate. Why did we not honor the two additional variants already on the agenda? Why aren't we doing this like we've done every other large change?

MF: Standing Green Assembly has had at least 2 other exposures at plenaries. The reason to poll counties during the summer, is that every local will participate, and also to get it off the table and resolved before the next plenary so we can move forward. We felt the current CC model is simply unworkable. Combining PR and undisputed elections. We will have time tomorrow for concerns. Give the concerns in writing tonight and we can begin to address them.

John Wenger: Why have you proposed so many ways of dividing up the proportional representation by a power of 8? 2 regions, 2 genders, 2 term rotations. Seems to me that the people living rurally would miss out.

MF: There isn't one model. This would make more choices available. We thought gender balance is an important variable.

JW: Given that software for online voting is becoming available (nat'l committee has some) How about implement the Standing General Assembly?

MF: It does do exactly what you're asking for.

Ross Frankel: Regarding the committee which would include 5 members appointed by CC? What are the rules for how CC would appoint the people?

MF: Any way they wanted.

RF: Could the GPCA make sure the members are objective and open-minded?

MF: I would expect that anyone who came to this process, we all love to think about democratic structures, we will enjoy this discussion (J. Lundell, Jared Laiti were enthusiastic and thought of interesting variations). Because we have the opportunity to develop several models, less contention.

>Jack Lindblad wants to be in on the stack, but it was closed after Ross.<

Greg Jan: If you have concerns about the amended proposal, please contact us immediately, tonight.

MF: This isn't to preclude tomorrow's airing of concerns, just to get a head start for addressing them. Traditionally, we do discuss things over Saturday nights, and often come up with friendly amendments for Sunday morning.

Sunday, May 17 GPCA Plenary Session Notes

Agenda as of Sunday morning (revised May 16):

9:00 action: introduce facilitator., confirm quorum
9:20 - one of three revised platform planks, Platform SC
10:20 Proposal - Alameda-LA proposal, addressing final concerns, go to vote
11:10 Breakout session #3 - Committees and working groups
12:25 lunch
1:25 proposal: final platform plank Platform SC (finish platform from morning)
1:45 Proposal: Remaining two restructuring proposals:
 1. use region/at-large mixed system for CC
 2. restructure LA region into autonomous districts
 Bylaws:
 3. LA Co. bylaws discussion
3:25 Adjourn
 Changes in time, etc., noted below

Quorum reached (28 delegates present) as of 9:25 a.m.

I. IT announcement: common password will change right after plenary

The password and policy is in the agenda packet.

Procedural items

Morning session officials: Adrienne Prince Michael Borenstein, co-facilitators

Timekeeper: Warner Bloomberg

Vibes watchers: Shane QueHee, Lisa Green

J. Announcement/request from Contra Costa County:

Tim Laidman, current CC County councilmember, wanted to seat himself and two other delegates, Eve Diamond, Ric Orallo. Asked Assembly members present to approve and seat them.

Concerns:

Jim Stauffer said he heard that in the last two months there was no meeting in which the packet was discussed. Said he would stand aside, but said he hated to see plenary get into county issues.

Tim Morgan said he was torn, would stand aside, but implored to please get your county together! They responded that they were trying.

Affirmations:

Joe Feller from CC affirmed the three.

Jean Rosenmeier, SFC: affirmed them as active Greens, despite the fact that she mostly disagreed with them on everything.

No outstanding concerns, so they were given delegate cards.

Facilitation

Adrienne noted that we were nearly an hour behind at this point, so suggested time changes to agenda, which were taken from the floor and noted below.

K. Proposal by Michael Ruben:

Wanted to add thirty minutes to the Alameda/LA County proposal. Wanted to address broader issues involved, not consensus issues, during this time.

Michael Feinstein said he didn't see Ruben's proposal as a friendly amendment to the above, but was open to adding it as a new agenda item. Ruben did not agree to this. Feinstein's point of process was that we needed a two-thirds vote to change the agenda.

Votes to leave agenda as is: 17. Votes to accept Ruben's amendment: 18

Jan Arnold, friendly amendment: 15 minutes to discuss broader issues of this agenda item. Mike F. agreed, as did plenary members.

L. Platform Proposals:

NOTE: See the Appendix for final versions of the Public Education and Violence in Society planks as accepted in this session.

10:13, Shane Que Hee presented platform plank revisions from the Platform SC, then took as questions follows:

1. Public Education:

Peggy Koteen: needs perfect grammar and suggested several grammatical changes. Said, "it's not ready to be passed by consensus whatsoever."

Shane replied that he would make changes if Peggy trusted him to do that. He accepted her specific proposed wording changes.

Kendra Gonzales, Ventura: Wanted to know if consensus meant it became part of our platform, and remained forever. Shane said yes-- until the next plank amendment.

Cres Velucci: Concerned about #12: "Nutritious, preferably plant-based organic breakfast." He wanted to know why plant-based was crossed out.

Shane accepted his friendly amendment.

Bob Marsh, concern, but willing to stand aside: Wanted concision in platform planks. They are too wordy.

Peggy Koteen: Wanted grammar concise, accurate. Asked if we could pass by consensus with understanding that grammar would be good. Shane assured her.

Accepted by consensus with friendly amendments and a stand-aside concern.

2. Violence in society:

Andrea Dorey: problems with #7. Suggested wording change to be more specific about tax. Shane said he suggested a tax of 50% or more.

Ric Onalfo: Concern: higher prison sentences instead of taxing things that are not necessarily used as weapons.

Richard Gomez, Fresno, concern with #7: Some products generally not designed to cause violence, like baseball bats

Tian Harter, Santa Clara: I thought the biggest purveyor of violence on the planet was the pentagon. Why no mention?

Bob Marsh, Alameda: Canada has as many guns as us, but less violence. One theory: fear here. We need to add that.

Kendra Gonzales: Don't like control word.

Sasha Karlik, LA: We need to differentiate between violence and objects that cause violence, and we need to lessen jailing of non-violent criminals

Shane said this is a CA platform, not national, so pentagon mention is not appropriate.

Accepted by consensus with friendly amendments.

3. Water plank:

Linda Piera-Avila: #13, Objects to support of desalinization in any Green Party plank. Too energy intensive and can harm marine life. #25, refers to banning corporate farming. Suggests different wording

Mike Feinstein: added voice against desalinization

Andrea Dorey, Santa Clara: Concerned about small private water companies that tap water table at will. She wanted to know if this would be addressed and included. Also thought pollution from medications should be addressed.

Bob Smith, LA County: wanted to add crops to clean wastewater

Sanda Everette, San Mateo: wetlands to clean

Jack Lindblad: Wants to stop bottled water. Not in platform. Watersheds should be determiners of bioregions, not developers

Tian Harter, SCC: Wants to speak in favor of canteens, reuse of personal water containers

Peggy Koteen, SLO: Likes grammar changes. Asked for less ambiguous wording.

Mob Marsh: Don't think infrastructure should be mixed with water-quality issues in same part of platform.

Tim Laidman: #22, needs to be clarified that water standards are not infrastructure.

Shane replied that pharmaceuticals were mentioned in there. Said he'll accept deletion of #13, will clarify #22, make it less ambiguous. #25, said he would change wording. Would include mini-corporate conglomerate component as well as canteens.

Not accepted. Bring back with revisions.

4. California Elections:

Shane said he will note who has questions while he goes over platform proposal points. He noted points where people had questions without actually hearing or addressing them.

Linda Piera-Avila: #14, concerned it is open for a challenge based on first amendments, and suggested addressing public financing, clean money.

M. Ruben, Alameda: Looking at #15 amendment, user fees was crossed out on one reference but left on another. Wanted to see user-fee wording removed.

Tian Harter, SCC: Would like to connect electric grid to political grid.

Shane asked all those with comments to give them to him.

Not accepted. Bring back with revisions.

M. 11:15 Proposal - Alameda-LA proposal, addressing final concerns, before going to vote

Jim Stauffer, point of process: This is a huge bylaw change. Had concerns about how it would be presented.

Adrienne and Mike Feinstein discussed how to proceed with the presentation. The group "twinkled" desire to hear a recapitulation of the issue. Adrienne asked for strict limits on speaker time limits, gender stacking, etc. Stack spoke as follows:

Jan Arnold, Alameda, yielded her minute to Mike Ruben

Mike Ruben: Supports the proposal put forth by LA and Alameda counties. But said he believed some of the issues raised are broader than the proposal. He said it would remove one area of combat, but would not resolve the LA conflict. Broader question: CC has not functioned, regions haven't functioned. Main point: hoped adoption of proposal would lead to a change in GA meetings to focus on issues.

Jean Rosenmeier: "I'm confused by this process. I thought there were three proposals, and two hadn't been presented."

Jim Stauffer: Dysfunctional CC is more myth than reality. CC has functioned fine and regional structure fine lately. "The problem is LA."

Merrily Davies: We are fiddling while Rome burns. Petty power struggles not important.

Jack Lindblad: Coastline will be changing during next several years due to climate change. We can divide the state into four regions, not just north and south.

Genevieve Marcus, LA: If we do nothing and do not vote for change we'll go over this forever. There's plenty of opportunity to amend proposal later if it doesn't work.

Larry Mullen: CC is functional, we've put on three plenaries and made appointments. Unfilled committees are not being applied for.

Kendra Gonzales: I'd like to hear all proposals today. I think we need to hire outside mediation to get over these wounds so we can get actual work done

Warner Bloomberg: Restructuring won't change things, getting voters and raising money will.

Laura Wells, Alameda: I would really like to emphasize our gatherings. That's where we can get together and discuss what we want to do in our communities, not just bylaws and such.

Greg Jan, Alameda: You can have the best structure in the world, but Green activists will invigorate the party. That will happen if our proposal passes. We can turn a new page and move forward.

Linda Salas, Riverside: I thought Green Party would include more critical thinking. Every time Mike Feinstein is the common denominator, it slows things down via his contesting of procedure.

Ross Frankel, GPLAC: I'd like to affirm this proposal that has come from a group of people, not just one or two, including those with differing perspectives, to make it fair and reasonable.

Peggy Koteen: Upset by personality picking on. Not pleased other proposals will not be addressed. Will reluctantly support it.

Bob Marsh: CC has only 4 people and should have 7. Not functioning well. This proposal is more sensible and we should go with it.

Merrily Davies: Before we make a decision we should hear all proposals

Bob Smith: We attack men, not women, as they would emasculate men.

Dorothy Kennedy: We need to hear all three proposals, not just one.

Barry Hermanson: When this issue came up, it was apparent to me that we could not reach consensus on it in the CC. Wanted various parties to bring a proposal to the plenary that we could all agree on. This is not it.

Kjersten Jeppesen, Riverside: I got a forwarded e-mail stating that we don't need to follow the 10 KVs if the bylaws supercede them. There's a difference between our bylaws and the 10 KVs. That's basic to our whole problem. We can't have democracy with bylaws that conflict with our basic principles.

Adrienne wanted to bring attention in the notes that this is being heard without discussion of other items. Jim Stauffer said he wanted agenda changed. Discussion was made about whether to change agenda. Various people shared their views on this. Vibes were called on Adrienne when she purportedly showed bias, so she stood aside as facilitator and Sanda Everette took over.

Mike Feinstein began his presentation at 11:56. He recapped proposal and how it would be implemented. He asked for affirmations and concerns; Greg Jan reminded folks that a sheet handed out yesterday showed changes to the original proposal.

Béa Tiritilli presented concerns given to her by absent delegate John Earl. Among other things, he said the premise of the proposal was questionable, a potential power grab, and better solutions could be found.

Jim Stauffer: A few details about at-large elections: He's not necessarily opposed to it, he said, but they tend to accommodate factions. He's concerned abuse could occur, and that smaller regions could be overshadowed by larger. An at-large system may work if we had stable Green Parties in all counties, but we need to listen to Larry Mullen's proposal to see another way to do that.

Peggy Koteen: I'm affirming this proposal because we need to move on and try something new.

Warner Bloomberg: I have a number of concerns, but first, the proposal presented is in violation of our bylaws. Nothing in our bylaws allows for county polling, and the county polling process referred to is vague.

Jean Rosenmeier: I'm not necessarily opposed to this proposal, but I won't vote for it till I hear all proposals.

Barry Hermanson: This needs to be referred to a committee, which needs to be allowed to discuss everything and needs to agree on a plan to move forward and a greater good for all of us. We need to stop wasting plenary time.

Linda Piera-Avila: Affirms proposal and its emphasis on gender balance. She thinks the IRV provisions prevent any group from dominating on the CC.

Drew Johnson: I'm undecided on this proposal, but I like the fact that when Greg called to lobby me for it, he made good, reasonable points. But I do want to point out that at-large is not a silver bullet. It can empower rich folks at the top, and will not solve all problems.

Jan Arnold: I'm in favor of this proposal. Jim Stauffer in particular is negative about counties doing something positive. Counties are different. Some emphasize electing locals over getting involved in GPCA. I think every county that has an active party can take a lead. I think county polling is a great way to make decisions.

Bob Marsh: I think that Mr. Stauffer and the lady from So. California showed that the root of our problems is personality conflicts. Yes, Mike Feinstein can be a real pain in the you-know-what, but this doesn't mean he's wrong. I urge everyone to reconcile their logic.

Merrily Davies: I'm not necessarily against this proposal but won't vote for it till I hear all sides.

John Wenger, LA: The LA problem is a consequence of its size. One proposal is to break it up, and we may need to change our elections code to do that. Do not vote for this proposal until you've considered alternatives.

Adrienne Prince: There are some great features to this proposal but the way its presented is not particularly transparent and democratic. Stepped down from dais earlier to model appropriate behavior.

Ross Frankel: I assisted on creating this proposal. It does fix a number of glaring structural problems, such as gender balance. One of the alternate proposals doesn't do this. Another is not legal according to the secretary of state (breaking up LA County).

Kendra Gonzales: The big issue for me is feeling pressured to make a voting decision on things before hearing all three proposals.

Craig Thorsen: If GPCA is broken, let's fix it. This proposal will serve GPCA, and voting for it doesn't mean the other two proposals can't be considered today. Include them if appropriate as well.

Linda Salas: I have some issues with the proposal that are unclear to me. Too few people will have too much power. That concerns me. Electronic voting concerns me as it's too easy to manipulate the data.

Jack Lindblad: LA is about ten million out of 37 million in the state. That is the driving force in GPCA now. It's not a true plenary if some counties say they are too busy at home to come to a plenary. I support this restructuring as it's a breath of fresh air.

Sanda Everette: GPUS is always talking about how CA is a big state. Online voting, there is nothing to be afraid of. It's more democratic than expecting everyone to drive 600 miles to a plenary. Let administrative stuff happen elsewhere so we can be better focused when we're together.

Michael Borenstein: The current regional structure has been corrected already, with the exception of LA. IRV is designed for candidates, not proposals. We need to take a few plenaries to incorporate all comments.

Presenters addressed concerns:

Mike Feinstein: Electronic voting works fine for GPUS. The consensus process is being used for coordinating already. IRV works. This is not a new process. There are only 40 delegates here, but all locals will have a chance to discuss issues if this passes. Proportional rep. will not favor faction fighting. This will empower smaller counties. Counties will be capped so they can't take over. By design, proportional rep. keeps things fair.

Greg Jan: Electronic voting will be perfectly transparent. Small counties can now be overruled by larger counties within regions. That will change under the new system. This proposal simplifies, streamlines, and makes voting more democratic.

Points of process on above, etc:

Warner Bloomberg, point of process, clarified that we would need an 80% vote for this to pass. Mike Feinstein countered that this is a proposal that would need only two-thirds vote.

Jim Stauffer asked for clarification on the exact proposal

Mike F: the proposal says we endorse the approach of moving to at-large elections, not a bylaws change. This proposal sets up a committee to make changes.

Jim Stauffer said this seems to be a policy change, that would take an 80% decision.

Mike F: The only decision we're making is to establish a committee, which needs two-thirds

Mike Borenstein: Read from bylaws about voting thresholds. Discussion ensued from floor about whether this proposal needed two-thirds or 80%. Straw poll showed we were close to two-thirds in favor of passing it.

Various points of process were discussed, including whether people understood what they were voting for in straw poll. Discussion from floor about whether this was a bylaws change, policy change, etc.

Mike Feinstein proposed accepting a friendly amendment from Jim Stauffer. Six members would be appointed by the CC and three coming from LA and Alameda counties.

More points of process were brought up.

No consensus could be reached on any of them. Facilitators were split on how to proceed. After discussion, it was decided we would vote to test for consensus on setting of the committee and doing county polling and getting input, but that final decision would be at a future plenary.

No consensus was reached, so we voted on whether to set up a committee of three people from LA & Alameda and six from other counties to decide, over summer, how to proceed with this proposal before re-presenting it at the next plenary.

Needing a two-thirds vote to pass, the vote was: 36 yes, 7 no, 3 abstain; so the vote was more than two-thirds in favor and therefore passed.

Lunch

Lunch ended at 2:30. Due to time constraints, breakout sessions were canceled. Final platform plank of Platform SC was also canceled. (Shane had agreed at 11:15 to remove this from the agenda.)

N. 2:35, we began second two bylaw restructuring proposals as discussion-only items, with discussion time for them shortened to fit plenary timeline:

1. Use region/at-large mixed system for CC, presented by Larry Mullen.
2. Restructure LA region into autonomous districts, presented by Jim Stauffer. He said it will be withdrawn at this time, probably brought back in the future.

Questions, comments, concerns on both of the above:

Kendra Gonzales: Wants clarification: Is the separate LA regions legal? Jim said he thinks so, as the regions are designed by GPCA, not the Sec. of State

Tian Harter: Democrats draw maps based on assembly districts, why not us?

Linda Pierra-Avila: cannot support Larry's proposal as it has no gender balance

Jack Lindblad: concurred with Linda, and added that water robbing in LA is legendary. Lines should be drawn based on watersheds. Any restructuring should benefit party as whole.

O. LA Co. bylaws discussion presented by Jim Stauffer.

He said the bylaws committee has major concerns about various issues, as described in the agenda packet. Narrowing it down, the most important of these: a proposal was made to absolutely require LA to use proportional rep. when choosing regional reps.

Questions, concerns, affirmations:

Mike Borenstein: There are minor things in bylaws that would help bring everyone together. Look at IRV models to improve how things are done.

Kendra Gonzales: Jim, could you give specific examples of how proportional rep. helps factions?

Jim: Three distinct viewpoints in one district with five reps. Lets say the largest groups get two reps. And the other gets one.

Drew Johnson: We have well-defined factions in LA, so why not declare slates of candidates?

Linda Pierra-Avila: I want to point out that bylaws decisions in LA are moving forward, and we should be able to reconcile our issues internally. Why hasn't the CC accepted latest LA bylaws?

Jim: The only thing we heard about the LA bylaws committee is that they won't consider proportional rep.

Bob Marsh: Nowhere in the GPCA bylaws does it give the bylaws committee or the CC authorization to force previously approved bylaws.

Jim: The proposal is perfectly valid.

Greg Jan: We're supposed to be based on grassroots democracy and are a bottom-up org., not top down.

Jim: This is proposed to have general assembly approve bylaws. What are we supposed to do when CC receives complaints every election about fairness?

John Wenger: The requirement should be that Greens never support backwards proposals, which are unprincipled. Proportional rep. protects minority voice.

Andrea Dorey: Bylaws were found compliant with state bylaws at one time. What happened in March of this year?

Jim: In 2006, the opposition group won majority of GPLAC, then lost it again in 2008. The new council invalidated all bylaws changes from the previous council.

Jack Lindblad: It is an upside down layered cake. We need to stay with four pillars and principles, and do what we do well and work on those.

Jim: The CC is responding to complaints we get. That's why this has become an issue. I don't think we're asking that much. Instead of winner takes all, PR. No one is backing down over this simple issue.

The closing ceremony began at about 3:40.

Appendix

Platform Planks – Final version, with amendments, approved at GA.

PUBLIC EDUCATION (May 17 2009)

An important purpose of education is to prepare young people for leadership and participation in the governance and maintenance of their communities. To do this well, they need experience in participatory democratic practices. Since a good educational system is the most important insurance we have that our country's basic principles of social justice will be preserved, we must allocate sufficient resources to our public school system.

We owe our young people the right to learn to communicate well (read, write and speak), to understand how the world works (science, mathematics and ecology), to learn about the existence and allocation of resources (economics, civics and geography), to study the people who came before us and those who now inhabit the Earth (history, anthropology), and to understand health and human nature (nutrition, psychology and sociology). We must also assure that they learn to value themselves enough. We must encourage them to critique what they hear and see in print and in the media.

Young people also should be exposed to the creative arts (music, dance, drama, fine arts) as well as physical education. Vocational education should be included in the curriculum as well.

School has a tremendous influence on people's lives, because it is the primary social institution that young people encounter outside of the family. Schools reflect society's mores, including all of the prejudices and stereotypes that abound in our society. This too often results in the segregation of students by perceived academic and physical ability, language proficiency, religion, wealth, ethnicity and gender, and in the fostering of unhealthy competition. Young people are often tested and graded on meaningless drivel. All of this contributes to the alienation of young people and to feelings of passivity, powerlessness and hopelessness. We must end these practices and transform our schools into communities that nurture everyone involved with them. Our schools must become places where parents want to send their children and where teachers want to work.

Every child should have equitable access to free and appropriate educational resources and opportunities in a well-maintained public school. Since equal state funding does not produce equitable educational opportunities, funding for schools should be related to need. Schools with students living in poverty require higher funding. In addition, schools and districts with high numbers of English language learners and special education students should be funded at higher levels because those students need and deserve enhanced resources.

Since the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, California budget allocations have slighted education. Because of insufficient funding, teachers are woefully underpaid. An entire generation's music, art and foreign language programs have been dismantled. This is true at the preschool and K-12 grade levels, and in the area of higher education as well. California's community colleges, which educate more students than the University of California and the California State University systems combined, and which particularly serve immigrants, women, people of color, and working class students, receive far less money than they need. We will never have a quality educational system until we provide adequate funding. Special education is a federal program that has received decreasing funds that has crippled the program since funding can only then come from the school general fund. The Federal Government must fund such programs at the level it promised to do.

Another area of particular concern is the increasing use of mandatory standardized tests. High-stakes tests impose a climate of fear on students, parents, and teachers. They reduce education to memorizing disconnected facts - the very opposite of the thoughtful engagement in learning our children need. Standardized tests exhibit persistent racial, gender and economic bias. Reliance on test scores inevitably leads to students, teachers and schools being sorted along the lines of race, class, and learning styles. As an alternative to high-stakes tests, we should support the use of tools such as the learning record that rely on the authentic assessment of a student's actual work and have as their primary purpose improving student achievement. Meeting the needs of historically neglected schools in working class communities and communities of color should be a priority.

The Green Party advocates the following:

- Substantially increase and make more equitable state and federal funding for public education at all levels, from preschool and K-12 to the community college, the California State University, and the University of California systems.
- Increase compensation for teachers. Improve teacher support, training, mentoring and sabbaticals. Work to recruit and retain qualified teachers, especially teachers of color. Work toward putting fully trained teachers in every classroom.
- Work for free education eventually to be available from preschool through community college, university, graduate and professional schools.
- Reaffirm the value of public education and reject the use of public funds to pay for students' attendance at private or parochial schools, or to pay any for-profit organization to manage or run a public school.
- Decrease the student-teacher ratio in classrooms and increase the number of counselors, nurses, librarians and social workers. Provide smaller, more personalized schools and a greater diversity of choices.
- Oppose state or federal requirements to make significant decisions about schools, teachers or students based primarily on test scores.
- Advocate the design and use of a variety of developmentally appropriate assessment techniques that allow necessary accommodations, modifications, and exemptions and are bias-free, reliable and valid. While high-stakes testing remains in use, support legislation encouraging parents to opt their children out of all mandated standardized tests without penalty for students, parents, teachers or schools.
- Promote and fund bilingual and second-language immersion education with trained teachers and appropriate materials and support services.
- Oppose any advertising or promotion of commercial products on a school site or in any adopted or recommended curricular materials or school-based Internet access.
- Develop curricula that make the connection between our rights as individuals and our responsibilities to others and to the earth. New or expanded topics could include bioregional studies, cultural sensitivity, sustainable development, global interdependence, human rights, civics, sex education, public health, environmental justice, and peaceful conflict resolution.
- Vocational education high schools and vocation education programs in comprehensive high schools should be revived, expanded and fully funded. Training during the high school years should prepare graduating students for a variety of careers that pay a living wage.
- Add before-school and after-school programs. Nutritious, preferably plant-based organic breakfasts and lunches must be available for all students, subsidized according to need.
- Educate children and their families as early as possible through role-play in how to recognize, prevent, and react to adult behavior that is violent and addictive.
- Promote creativity in children at elementary school.
- Promote self-defense ability for children at elementary school.
- Provide training in how students should interact non-violently with peers and adults at the junior high school level.
- Offer small classes generally in senior high school.
- Provide training in negotiation, mediation, non-violence skills, and in dealing with diverse peers/adults in senior high schools.
- Schedule civics courses that include histories of how civil rights were achieved, and how current law can be used to achieve personal civil rights
- Promote and explain the roles of gender, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, and age in the real world, as the maturity of the student allows
- Educate children how and when to be individuals, and when to be team players.
- Mandate researched-based drug, tobacco, and alcohol prevention in middle and high schools.
- Expand special classes to address students' academic needs in light of their disability and language status. The state must enforce existing laws in this area by funding these programs, by increasing the accessibility of needy students, and by funding/training teachers in these special areas.

VIOLENCE IN SOCIETY (May 17 2009)

American society has an historical legacy of violence that results in a widespread acceptance of violent methods. This is reflected in high violent crime rates, the highest handgun murder rate in the world, a propensity for military solutions, and a patriarchal desire to dominate through threats and outright force.

Domestic violence is becoming more recognized and is being addressed, but it continues to linger as a major problem in our society. As with most acts of violence, the causes are known and the solutions are attainable.

Despite arguments about the second amendment, it is obvious that the easy availability of guns contributes to violent crime. The more guns there are in society, the more they will be used. Hunters, gun enthusiasts and those needing personal protection can be accommodated with minimal inconvenience while eliminating assault rifles and other such weapons whose primary purpose is to kill people.

Governments have a special responsibility to set good examples through their policies and actions. We, therefore, oppose the death penalty because executions are motivated more by vengeance than by justice. It has also been proven that executions are carried out in disproportionate numbers among minorities and the poor. More evidence is mounting that shows innocent people are being sentenced to death due to inadequate defense, false testimony from other criminals seeking reduction of their sentence, and over-zealous prosecution. Executing criminals has not proven to be an effective deterrent to crime, and it does not address the underlying causes of crime: lack of economic opportunity and education, drug use, child abuse, etc. In California, 125 organizations and religious groups have called for a moratorium on executions, as well as the U.N. High Commission on Human Rights. We recognize the need to protect society from violent criminals, but support a basic right to life and humane treatment. The lengthy appeals process is itself inhumane as well as costly. We also have a responsibility as a society to comply with international treaties regarding treatment of prisoners, both civilian and military. Yet we have a prison system that brutalizes prisoners, which hardens rather than rehabilitates them. And we have a system driven more by private profit than by penitence.

The role of violence in the media needs to be addressed because scientific studies have shown that an environment of unchallenged violence is conducive to the practice of violence. We need to reduce the tools and glorification of violence, keeping in mind content related to the freedom of speech and artistic expression protected by the First Amendment.

Violent individuals need to be encouraged, counseled, and taught how to best cope with their angry feelings in a therapeutic environment. Mental health, medical and health care services need to be provided as needed. Attacks on the vulnerable, such as the elderly, need to be addressed through victim restitution. Addressing gang violence requires community-based programs and public education.

Violence due to militarism and nationalistic actions is covered in other Platform Planks such as Disarmament and Foreign Policy.

The Green Party proposes these actions to counter patterns of violence:

- Expand mass media campaigns to educate the public on the presence and long-term damage of domestic violence. Provide early screening and prevention training for those families at high risk, and provide more intervention and treatment for both victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.
- Register all legal firearms, especially handguns and other concealable weapons. Strengthen the ban on sales of automatic and semi-automatic weapons.
- Teach nonviolence and peaceful conflict resolution at all school levels. Abolish corporal punishment in schools since to use it is to teach violence. Provide training in nonviolent parenting skills.
- Provide adequate funding to remedy the conditions that spawn violent crime. Such funding is economically more effective than the cost of trials and prisons. [see Criminal Justice plank]
- Develop police training and procedures that stress the handling of situations through mediation and negotiation, while minimizing the necessity for armed confrontations.
- Support incarceration rather than executions, with the provision that dangerous criminals will not be released as long as they pose a threat to society or other individuals. We support the growing call for a moratorium on executions.
- Alter the disposition to violent behavior by boycotting the sale of items that promote violence such as media that display content with gratuitous violence, and by taxing the instruments of violence such as weapons and products generally adjudged to evoke violence that feature frequent beatings, keeping in mind content related to

the freedom of speech and artistic expression protected by the First Amendment. Impose a high enough tax (at least 50% of cost or profit) to deter violence. The generated funds should be used to aid the victims of violence and to help fund counseling for the perpetrators of violence.

- Advocate counseling/education programs/anger management/medical care/healthcare as appropriate in a therapeutic environment for victims of violence and for the perpetrators of violent acts according to their separate issues-- to include special communities like children, LGBTs, adolescents, men, women, seniors, ethnic minorities, the disabled, veterans, drug abusers/users, single parents, parents with jobs, the suicidal, and the homeless.
- Promote less media glorification/sensationalism of violence, for example, through multiple non-Governmental sensitive rating systems, parental controls, and education.
- Address gang violence through community-based programs and public education