

The Next Step

To most Americans political dialogue is not meaningful or worth listening to unless participants scream at each other, shout the vilest epithets, and continually challenge each other over the smallest details. Bill O'Reilly, Rush Limbaugh, Jerry Springer, and their imitators have taught the general public well that this is the all-American way to exhibit your conviction, your political acumen, and your patriotism. And the best method by which to expose or imply weakness in your opponent. It also seems to be a way for the abusive debaters to cover up their own failings and intellectual shortcomings. The net result is a shortage of proven facts, a thunderstorm of ad hominem remarks, and an amazing paucity of attempts to consider solutions. Is that what political dialogue is all about? Seemingly so.

Here locally, two local Greens have been offering a different approach to political commentary and dialogue. On Public Access TV—Cox Cable channel 17 in Santa Barbara—producer Dave Wass and director Liz Burke are creating a new paradigm in political commentary. Their program—called “The Next Step”—addresses current issues, studies them, critiques them, and then looks for solutions to the problems posed and answers to the questions asked. It avoids looking for scapegoats and steers away from participating in that most popular of media sports—playing “THE BLAME GAME.”

The purpose and direction of political commentary could be a search for truth, a clarification and an explication of issues, leading to a discovery or a creation of solutions and answers. This is a Could-be that is seldom an Is. It is much easier and more attention-attracting to criticize-criticize-criticize. It also seems to be closer to our nature to find fault and degrade the ideas of others. And we all are so adept at it. Finding solutions demands a dedicated search for



truth and knowledge and a careful weighing of possibilities. It is hard work and includes the constant fear of failure and the ridicule of others. In the end it requires that dreaded virtue—humility.

Liz and Dave can't claim to have perfected this approach. All too often we fall back on those old standbys we all know so well—ridicule, ad hominem observations, shading the truth, denial. It is especially difficult to explain this discipline to guests, who initially agree to try it out, but almost immediately return to their old ways when the conversation heats up.

But we keep trying and so do our guests. Currently we are doing a series on California State Water issues featuring Carolee Krieger, one of the state's most knowledgeable water activists. In the near future we will be addressing a living wage ordinance for Santa Barbara and then a series on The Unity Statement, a remarkable compendium of solutions for the eleven most important challenges facing our country—mentioned elsewhere in this issue of The Green Scene.

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See THE NEXT STEP on Cox Cable channel 17 on Saturdays at 8 a.m., Tuesdays at 11 p.m., and Thursdays at 5 p.m.

Global Warming Continues

This information may be new to you, but global warming has been going on for 40 years. Because of this many people are optimistic and complacent in believing that it will be slow enough that we can adjust to it. Scientists have come to agree that global warming will eventually cause major changes and problems to the world, but want us to believe it could be 50 to 100 years before we actually have to deal with the effects. However, new powerful evidence strongly suggests that this is simply wrong and we had better start preparing now for other more abrupt possibilities.

For one bit of information, the effects of global warming are increasing at a faster rate than previously predicted and we don't have 50 to 100 years. What is happening is that

warmer temperatures are playing havoc with the melting of the Northern and Southern ice caps and glaciers.

The northern ice cap has created a huge river of fresh water in the Atlantic Ocean. Scientists warn this change could bury the Gulf Stream and plunge Europe and North American into frigid winter. The mixing of fresh water from the ice caps with the salt water of the Atlantic Ocean stops the pumping action that creates heat for North American and Europe. This information was available two years ago, but no one has taken it seriously. In other words without this pumping action, North America and Europe will be plunged back into an ice age.

Sir David King, Prime Minister of England's chief scientists, went to Mr. Blair and told him of the impending disaster and Tony Blair told David King to keep quiet, but King published the information in the American Journal of Science. He said that from his view, climate change is the most severe problem we are facing.

A special study was conducted through one of the Pentagon departments, directed by Andrew W. Marshall, who has the responsibility of identifying long-term threats to the United States. The study was released to the Pentagon and was named, “An Abrupt Climate Change Scenario and Its Implications for the United States National Security.” Mr. Marshall already knew President Bush's stance on Global Warming, which was beyond negative, and he decided to go around the president and publish the report for the American people. In Marshall's article in Fortune Magazine, he explained how the melting North and South poles and glaciers from around the world are composed of fresh water, and within this fact is the impending glacier weather disaster. Bush, like Blair, did not want the American people to get wind of this situation. Just as Bush did not keep his promise to lower CO2 standards, which is a main cause of global warming, he lied to the American people about the danger of the melting ice cap by telling them in the scientific conclusions that say there is a danger, is all wrong.

Then censorship began when the Environmental Protection Agency released an

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air-quality report that made no mention of Global Warming. Seven months later the Bush administration made wholesale revisions to the EPA's climate change chapter, on the "Report on the Environment." Even some Republicans were astounded at Bush's meddling in the EPA affairs.

Environment Defense Action Fund continues its all-out National campaign to pass the Climate Stewardship Act and get America moving in the fight to undo global warming. Our team of scientists, economists, campaign organizers and legislative experts are working the halls of Congress, forging unlikely alliances with new audiences and organizing local support with students, farmers, the faith community, local businesses and web users.

What are some of the biological proofs of global warming? Here are several environmental changes due to climatic changes. In Fairfield, Wisconsin, the white indigo flowers nine days earlier over a 27-year period. In Gothic, Colorado, the marmot (groundhog) emerges from hibernation 23 days earlier after a 23-year period. In Germfask, Michigan, the robin arrived four days earlier after a ten-year period.

In Europe, the pied flycatcher of Germany hatched three days earlier after a 13-year period. In Sussex, England, the common newt appeared in ponds 35 days earlier after a 17-year period. The cause of all these environmental changes is attributed to the heating of the planet.

Here are some local efforts we can do to undo what has happened before it's too late. Nearly 440,000 people have signed on as citizens-cosponsors to the Climate Stewardship Act, the country's best legislative tool to cut heat-trapped emissions. Each petition signature sends a message to Congress and the White House that Americans want solutions to our most urgent environmental challenge. All of these situations occurred because the higher temperature gave a signal to these species that it was time to change.

I would like to suggest that our Green Party, and maybe many Green Parties, take up the challenge. Just learning about the seriousness of Global Warming is not enough. FedEx, an organization, is doing something about Global Warming. We must support this organization's work and become part of the solution.

Nancy M. Broyles

Just Due It

Your membership in the Green Party of Santa Barbara County is important. We urge you to send in your dues, if you haven't done so already. We count on your support! See membership form for 2005 inserted into this issue.

What Next?

Yes, Green voters too suffered from the Post-Election Blues. Certainly, it was hard to find pluses in the confused response of the Green Party to the challenges of the election process and its own growth in membership. Certainly, the Democrats complicated matters by terming a vote for the Green Party candidate as "a vote against the only candidate that has a chance to beat Bush—Kerry."

But it is difficult to defeat an opponent (the Republicans) who will consider and use any tactic, no matter how nefarious, to win an election. The typical response, in American political practice, is to respond by going along with the winning innovation and to consider going one step further. The prospects are horrifying! The Democrats might well fall into this trap. The Greens cannot and will not.

But what role can the Greens play on the National scene and in the Local arena to meaningfully impact America's political, cultural, and economic life?

On the local arena your Green Party has started a grass roots program which includes the following: 1) the adoption and development of five local issues/solutions as the party platform---water issues, low-income housing, public housing, health care for all, minimum wage; 2) forming coalitions with other like-minded groups; 3) encouraging Green Party members to become active on city and county commissions and committees; 4) developing candidates for public office; 5) electing Greens to public office.

Already a series of Forums at the Townley Room, downstairs at the Main Library, has been scheduled as follows:

April 27—HealthCare for All
May 25—Water Issues

June 22—Public Transportation
July 27—Minimum Wage
Aug 24—Low Income Housing

At the national level the Republicans, after forty years of secretive scheming and building, have inserted a brass ring through the nose of the American People and are leading them down a treacherous road to poverty, powerlessness, and submission to a ruthless oligarchy of the super-rich. Up until recently, the opposition—the Democrats and the Greens—has been overwhelmed by the "shock and awe tactics" of this Republican juggernaut. Their tattered ranks have been hard put to identify, much less unravel, the multiple conspiracies of the neocons. The neocons know what they want. They spent decades planning it. The Democrats, who seem to be hobbled by indecision and by their addiction to corporate funding, have as yet to offer an alternative vision. At this point, if they regained control, they would have nothing to offer the American people but "more of the same."

The Green Party, however, just before the last election, almost as an after-thought, issued a remarkable document—The Unity Statement. This incredible instrument addresses the eleven critical problem areas that the US faces and proposes creative and ambitious solutions for all of them. It contains the seeds of a new vision for America. It draws on the best ideas from around the world. A copy of it is enclosed for your study. It should be the basis for a national dialogue by Greens and all Progressives about the New America. In the fall, your local Green Party will be running a series of public forums based on it, backed up by a television series.

The Green Party can play a critical role in prompting and encouraging this dialogue. And you can be a vital part of this effort. Stay tuned.

A Kid's New Toys

The general conception of the Green Party is that our interests are solely environmental. While the environment is extremely important to us, the Green Party takes a stand on all important issues facing our country. Furthermore, since we take no money from corporations, labor unions, or political action committees, none of our positions are influenced by campaign contributions from

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The Green Party's nuclear platform advocates reducing and eventually eliminating the need for nuclear power as an energy source and for making weapons. So we have a special interest in the month-long Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review now taking place at the U.N. New York headquarters.

The NPT went into effect in 1970, with 189 signatories. Only India, Israel, and Pakistan have refused to sign. North Korea had signed, but withdrew in 2003. The treaty was originally negotiated for a term of 25 years. In 1995 it was indefinitely extended. Non-nuclear states agreed to permanently forego the development of nuclear weapons. In return, the five nuclear-weapons states (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and US) agreed "to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating

Reining in Corporate Power

Since November, 2003, the Green Party of Santa Barbara County has co-sponsored and supported a group of individuals gathered under the name "Reining In Corporate Power." The group's mission statement is "to present a series of programs promoting awareness and action in the local community to oppose and rein in the power of rogue corporations" and is in tune with Green values.

To date, Reining in Corporate Power has presented seven community forums and town meetings, with varied topics beginning with an overview of corporations and the problems which they cause; and followed by forums on control of media, and possible solutions; rogue corporations and how they got that way; military and its ties to corporations; the good and bad aspects of corporate power; corporate health care, and most recently, the privatization of water. Each forum has aimed to present possible solutions to the problems raised by corporate control, and, whenever possible community actions that might be taken.

Speakers who have presented material at the forums include among others, Bob Banner, Eldon "Bud" Boothe, and Nelson Lichtenstein.

The next forum will take on globalization and the problems inherent therein. Future topics under consideration include property tax reform, and issues of clean money.



to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament." (Article VI). Meantime, the "have-nots" are guaranteed access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

Washington and Moscow have trimmed their arsenals considerably since the Cold War, but US current plans allow keeping 5,000 warheads indefinitely. As the FCNL Newsletter (Oct. 2004) states, "until the nuclear powers work in earnest toward complete elimination of their nuclear weapons, other nations will seek to even out the nuclear imbalance."

A good example is the Bush Administration's "Nuclear Posture Review," which named seven nations, including China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea, for a possible nuclear first strike by the US.

Although no nuclear plants have been

built in the US since 1974, the current administration is planning to run the old ones beyond their expected lifetime. And increasing attention is being given by the federal government to making them less vulnerable to terrorist attack. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has insisted that the container domes of nuclear plants can withstand a 9/11 style air assault, although European studies suggest otherwise.

Nuclear fuel pools are unquestionably vulnerable, according to an article in The Independent (9/9/04). Diablo's are "massive concrete squares with 35-foot-long sides and a depth of 42 feet. Between them, they contain every single fuel rod and...uranium pellet ever used to generate electricity for Pacific Gas & Electric...during Diablo Canyon's 19 years in operation."

Even the trauma center at Santa Barbara's Cottage Hospital, which is the only one between Los Angeles and San Jose, is discussing care after a nuclear attack.

An equally serious nuclear problem, seldom mentioned in the media, is the on-going effects of radioactive waste. For example, a recent study found that children living near the Livermore Nuclear Laboratory have developed malignant melanoma 5.4 times more frequently than those born elsewhere in the same county. Childhood brain cancers are also significantly higher. Also, Indian reservations are being eyed as dumping grounds for nuclear waste, especially the lands of the Western Shoshone territory in Nevada. And there are nearly 1,200 abandoned uranium mines on a Navajo reservation.

California Water Crisis

There is enough water in California for the people and the environment, but not if our water continues to be managed for the profit of a few. The greatest threat to California's water is greed—the greed of the few who are trying to deregulate and privatize our water resources for their own benefit.

80% of California's developed water is used by agriculture; of that amount, 40% is used to grow three highly subsidized crops: cotton, alfalfa, and irrigated pasture. The huge agri-businesses and oil companies who own the land that grow these crops know that if our water is privatized and deregulated, they can claim ownership of the water rights and sell them to the highest bidder. That will mean massive urban sprawl in Southern California and ever increasing water rates

for all of us. We must not let this happen.

The San Francisco Bay Delta is the largest estuary in the United States and currently as much as 70% of the water that once flowed through the Delta is now diverted to slake the thirst of Southern California and huge corporate agriculture. A recent newspaper article in the Contra Costa Times (May 1, 2005) lays out the shocking facts: the San Francisco Bay Delta is collapsing. The web of life that makes up the Delta is disappearing. And no one is doing anything about it.

Global warming is a scientific fact, but officials in California are not willing to acknowledge this problem. We must not only acknowledge the problem but also start planning for solutions. Most of California's

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water is stored as snow-pac. With global warming, this snow-pac is melting earlier and earlier and the results could be catastrophic for California's water supply: the water will not be there as it used to be. This could result in shortages, especially in the summer hot months.

"Paper water," water that is not real but only exists in a contract as a hoped-for amount, is being used by planners all over Southern California as if it were real. New towns like the Newhall Ranch in LA and Ventura are trying to build tens of thousands of new homes using this "paper water." This is very bad planning and must stop.

The California Water Impact Network (C-WIN) was formed to protect the water rights of the people and the environment. We have successfully stopped the special interests first attempt to deregulate the State Water Project. In 1995 attempts were made to deregulate the State Water Project; remember what happened after the legislature deregulated energy in 1996. Enron was poised, with their water company, Azerex, to do the same thing to water that Enron did to energy: game the system for private profit. California can ill afford another debacle like that.

C-WIN is urging the Green Party to take on the California Water Crisis as a major issue. Help us educate the people of California about these problems before it is too late to do anything about them.

Carolee Krieger

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these special interest groups.

Since both the Republicans and the Democrats are "in bed" with these groups, their voting records are markedly impacted in favor of these benefactors, and, in many cases anathema to what is right for our country.

My thoughts in this regard turn to our foreign policy which is so intertwined with the demands of the military-industrial complex. When a kid gets a new toy, he doesn't throw it into the closet and forget it. He plays with it, endlessly. Concomitantly, when our congress votes hundreds of billions of dollars for the military-industrial complex's new toys, the kid- generals and the boy-CEOs spend every waking moment plotting new uses for their gadgets.

No wonder then that our foreign policy is driven to invade other countries,

overthrow their governments, and force them into a curious form of government that is democratic in name only.

A recent cartoon in the Progressive-Populist says it all.

In Peace,
Bud Boothe



GREEN SCENE

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