

Green Party Retreat July 15th, 2006
8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

In Attendance: Host Nancy Broyles, Gail Fairbum, Leo Raabe, Sandy Stites, David Wass, Patricia Hiles, Consuelo Delgado, Suzanne, and Simon D’Arcy, facilitating.
Guest: Laurie, with Food Not Bombs (Nancy’s houseguest). Jack Reed is coming at 10 pm per David.

Since every group’s members process and respond to issues and information differently, some people may need more time to reflect on what has been said. Planned “pauses” built in to an Agenda can be helpful to allow people to reflect, regroup, and collect their thoughts more efficiently. Additional “time-outs” can also be called as needed.

- 30 Second Pause to Reflect and Prepare for the Meeting -

Introductions

What has brought you here today?

Leo – time keeper for 2 minute introductions.

Simon D’Arcy says that, “Structure and time will be your best friend.”

Nancy – This is where the Santa Barbara Green Party started. In 1985 Mindy Lorenz contacted Liz Burke and the Santa Barbara Green Party developed and evolved through a series of events following their postcards letters. The party started with 15 members. Nancy, Bud Boothe and his wife, Dorthory were three of the original members that are still active in the Santa Barbara Green Party today.

Leo – Leo has known Nancy since 1990. He studied environmental studies in college. He attended an anti-war rally with Art Swartz in 2002, and was inspired by the energy there. He asked Arthur where he to go from there – what next? Arthur suggested that Leo come to one of the Green Party meetings. Leo sees the Green party as a way of providing a vehicle to engage in our community.

Patricia Hiles – Patricia got interested in the Green Party during Ralph Nader’s campaign for president. She has been long-time friends with Glen Mower, also an attorney and fellow Green, and got involved with the local Green Party around the 2000 presidential election. Patricia states that we need more of a public face, presence, and if things continue to stagnate the way they have, she may leave us to peruse other causes and interests.

Consuelo – Consuelo has always considered herself to be an activist. She changed her party affiliation from democrat to independent but was frustrated because she couldn’t vote in big elections – then, she went back to being a democrat and didn’t vote because she couldn’t support the candidates that were running. She decided to research the

political parties to find one that best fit her own beliefs and values. She went through all the parties' mission statements and the Green Party's mission statement was the one she felt fit best for her – but if things don't change soon, she too, will move on to something else. She is involved in the local green party because we “need to get on the ball.” She believes in “shakin' and moving – working on issues that impact her world.” These issues include: voting, Santa Barbara is a while supremacy town, employment and housing. Racism, Employment, Housing are her top three issues.

David Wass – David got involved in the Green Party because our society reached a point where changes needed to be made – He was frustrated by the “dualopoly” of American government that had bought-out through corporate power. David Wass joined Greens to affect change in himself and the community. Change will come from many directions. “I have patience and I will persist.”

Sandy – Sandy considers herself to be a private person but her passion and compassion has lead her to break out of this natural tendency; to speak out and be political. She was motivated towards action by the results of 2000 election and met Nancy through a women's group for Peace and Freedom. Sandy says, “This world is not a good place for just dipping into activism when specific issues come up. You can't stop – can't just focus on one issue. Corporate power just keeps on going.”

Suzanne – Green Party Secretary and scribe.

Gail – Gail is new to the group and describes herself as a life-long “recovering dem”. She has been active in the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment) in the past. She felt that the democratic party was happy to receive her money but didn't stand up for the things she believed in. Gail said, “If I was going to lose, I wanted to lose on my own convictions” but she says she is also subject to the burn-out feelings that members of the group have expressed previously – She wants great results – but not tied to it. Gail believes that “the way that you spend your time, and money, defines your character” and “the process is good for her and the general community.

Timing – “If I like what you're saying you get more time” school of timing is not fair – the bell pays the part of a content-neutral marker of time – it's purpose is just to signify the passage of time – not to interrupt or cut off the speaker.

Simon – Simon registered green before 2000 and voted for Nader. He has been strongly affected from his involved in a group called “Results,” a non-partisan group that trains citizens how to be activists. He has a passion for being a part of something “that has some traction,” and ability to make things happen. He has two daughters and lives in Santa Barbara. His daughters, following in his footsteps, have started a group called “Kids Speaking Up” in their school.

To which Consuelo responded, “Welcome to the troublemaker's club.”

Clarification of terms:

Alignment – what bogs group down is that they aren't really aligned. The ability of the group to express diverse views, and individually, the ability to suspend personal preference in order to move forward. Can only happen once views, concerns, are expressed fully. Being heard, then ability to suspend personal preference. The most powerful way for a group to move forward.

Agreement – the condition where you and I have personal preferences that are the same, priorities are the same.

Consensus – where everyone can say they agree on something. Inclusive, democratic, settles for a “lowest common denominator approach.” Outcome compromised in order to meet everyone's personal preference. More passive. “I didn't get my pet project – so I'm not going to give 100%”

Recommended Reading: Fierce Conversations – Susan Scott Recommended book on Business Communication

Outcomes for Retreat

- To get re-energized about the future of the SB County Greens
- To Create a coherent plan to increase participation, and retention, in Santa Barbara County Green Party
- Learn how to be more efficient and effective.

“We need to get more people” 70% response. Leo's clarification, to get and retain more people.

“Our goals may not be realized in our lifetimes.” Leo
Nancy – compromise essential for the good of the group.
Diverse participation

Agenda (through lunch)

Open/Introductions 30 minutes

Effective meeting practices 40 minutes

Align on Outcomes/Agenda 15 minutes

Last Year Review 30 minutes

Discouragements

Successes

Review Survey 15 minutes

Discussion about how to measure participation

What inspires people to get involved? And stay involved?

Set and align on specific goals.

Nancy – we need to stick to what we decide here once we develop a plan and follow up.

Effective meeting Practices

How to forward the action

*Listen and be curious – most people say that they do – but mostly good at waiting for others to finish so that they can get their point in. Requires leaving self-righteousness, ego at the door – not passion. “Chose curiosity over certainty”

Express fully and efficiently – consolidate ideas. Has someone already said it?

*Reflect and consider new views. Be willing to change your view in the face of new evidence.

Advocate

Inquiry – questioning, curiosity.

Reflect – pause, stop, silence, stillness. Consideration.

Advocate for ~~vs.~~ rather than Against

“Yes and” instead of “No But” - In “no but” all acceptance is conditional, invites the taking of sides, argument. Yes and – building something.

Be willing to suspend your personal preference for the greater good.

Regardless of your style, you may change your mind in the future. It's the loudest voices that get the airplay, but the quietest one may have the best ideas. Pay attention. Look around the room. Invite others into the discussion. Build in some silence and space into meetings. It's how the Quakers have done it for centuries. Difficult to bring in a moment of pause when we are on a time schedule and anticipating leaving. Gail – as we become more efficient, moderate process – we may have more time than before. At the end of the meeting – what worked what didn't? Nancy – stay on topic – call each other on it if we have to.

Assign rotating process observer and timer jobs.

Use of “I statements” as opposed to personal, blame associated with going off topic. Gives person ability to retort – “I know this may sound off topic... but –”

---- Short Break ---

Leo will be process keeper

Process keeper – the “butt-in-ski”

Solicit input from quieter members

Target Survey Summary

3 discouraging things from last year, 3 successful things from last year.

We went around the circle and discussed 3 discouraging things from last year and 3 things we each thought were successful last year, in order to put the disappointments of the previous year behind us so we can move on – while learning from them, and incorporating what we have learned into what we will create now.

Suzanne’s “Trinities”:

3 discouraging:

Concerned with - Low attendance, presence in the community
Lack of money/attendance, press, generated from the immigration forum
Disagreements, tensions between members.

3 successful:

Becoming part of the Green Party County Council
Earth Day tabling – connection with the public
Immigration Forum
Green Party Blog – updating the web (Okay that’s really 4 things – but I had a hard time narrowing it down any further than that.

An introduction to the talking stick – you can pass the stick to someone else for it to circulate another time so, when it comes back to you again you can speak then if you need extra time to gather your thoughts. The talking stick passes around more than once – but each member only speaks once. Pass to the left.

2 minutes each - + whatever you want to say to complete with the last year – personal feelings.

Patricia

The meetings have improved better to have 1 per month than two, + city financed elections, new people Suzanne and Gail, incorporation due to Sandy, - low attendance at forums and open meetings lack of publicity, interests, no new issues, candidates, to the public.

David

There really aren’t any negatives. We have to fail many times to find out what works. Connection to the progressive coalition +, + city financial elections and related issues. New members +. Relationship to reining in corporate power +, + energizing factor in outreach to the community.

Nancy

Seconds Dave’s summary. The Monthly forums on community issues may have been too ambitious. Would like to set up a list of issues pertinent to the “think globally, act locally stance.” Would like to see monthly issues addressed.

Leo

Our greatest loss has been our greatest asset: Nancy.

- constraints on personal time limited participation,
 - On-going confrontation of things on an either-or basis contributes to the notion that the community is not whole. The idea that if we don't see results – members will leave – but maybe the people aren't ready for the things we are advocating – perhaps it is our job to get the people ready for the party.
- + Continuing success of forums and reining in corp. power.

Sandy

+ new members on the board, website +, happy about coalition building, disappointed with lack of volunteers at Farmers Market –potential for bringing in members and money – lack of candidates.

Jack Reed

Proud that green party has put on forums on reining in corp. power but he is concerned that we may be preaching to the choir. He loves seeing the green party at the Farmer's Market, - splintering of the party in LA, a more inconvenient truth could be a sequel, Thinking big – not interested in the small things.

Consuelo – pleasure being part of a group working towards progress, attending the plenary – felt more useful contributing there than at the meetings. Needs to be more respect shown to the members. Complaint about disrespect, back biting, undermining, going on within the council. Forums good. One meeting good. Out in public good. Need to bring more people into the party. Forum – didn't address issue for the grass roots working people – too intellectualized. Issues that impact peoples lives directly. There needs to be more Greens running for local office. Earth Day – Dave retired New York drug dealer comment – Plenary – David decided that he and Nancy were going. John acknowledged Consuelo as a member of the counsel. Consuelo would like to see more party Unity, Solidarity, and respect. She feels invisible at times. Doesn't feel that Dave respects her.

Gail – We need a process for conflict resolution before things become too painful and facilitator neutrality

Patricia – someone who hasn't been involved in the conflict should mediate – and she suggested Jack.

It is suggested that Consuelo and David continue this conversation at lunch, with 3rd party support.

Leo and Suzanne will help mediate at lunch.

Increase participation and retention in the Green Party

Elements that make people stay – what gets people inspired?

What engages people?

Working on issues and candidates

Issues with impact

Injustice
Listening to people
Issues that effect their pocket book
Hope for change
Positive vision
Personal invitation
Media coverage
Learning something, gaining perspective, awareness
Community
Possibility to make a difference
Inspiring leaders, charisma
Different offers for different time availabilities – opportunities that fit personal recourses
– tailored, various, opportunities to contribute, time.
Relevancy
Integrity

What keeps people?

Doing things
A stake
Specific tasks, specific results.
Feeling accomplishment.
Legacy
Cultivate a commitment for the long-haul.
Celebrate milestones
Actions tied to bigger picture
Empowerment
Knowledge
Information
Tools/Skills
Connection
Make a difference
Changes take place
Recognition
Encouragement
Personal welcoming
Personal connection

How do you measure participation?

How many people show up as active members?

Attendance
Money contributions
Actions taken

Participation in an event
Meetings – general monthly meetings
County Council

Specific
Measurable
Actionable
Related
Time-bound

Year Goal

Public Event – twice the participation
By 12/31/06 we increase our average by 5 people at the general meeting.
3 more tablers at the Farmer's Market.
2 more people active in county council

Agenda for after Lunch

10 Minute Brainstorms – 3 separate ones

- Pause -

Evaluation – 45 minutes

- 1) Is it inspiring? Does it give energy to the group?
- 2) Is someone willing to own it?
- 3) Will it accomplish the goal?

Propose – “I propose we do x, y, z as a group.”

Action Planning

WHO will do WHAT by WHEN.

Follow up

Celebrate – recognize each other.

Gail will facilitate. Leo will time and process observe.

Brainstorming

To bring in more people, especially people of diverse backgrounds

- 1) Raise our own awareness
 - Sensitivity training
- 2) Meet in other places
- 3) Green party awards to community members working on Green issues
- 4) More media coverage.
 - a) founder's day event
 - b) coverage out of area – alternative independent media
- 5) Get a regular newspaper column
- 6) Research community concerns. (outreach)
- 7) Find out what other green party communities are doing.
- 8) High profile “shock and awe” tactics
- 9) Rally behind Green candidates around the time of the election. Use upcoming election as a tool for getting more people involved in the green party.
- 10) Direct people to sources of information (through web-site)
- 11) Progressive Reading Group
- 12) Ask city to recognize the free energy issue.
- 13) Support CEC regarding fossil free – 2003.

Kind of Events

Forums – speakers, panel discussion, audience participation

- Police brutality

- Death penalty

- Implications of Fossil Fuel decrease

- Green Household Procedures

- Food Security - Organic Agriculture

Community TV

Miscellaneous: Founders' Day, Award Ceremonies

Coalition Building and Networking

Social Events

Community Garden

Owen Dell's Fossil Free Veggie Garden

Try to push a local issue – publicize and advocate.

Specific Actions for Retaining People

Every time someone volunteers – email, post card – follow up – we hope you will come back and join us at... What areas would you like to participate in?

Event or forum – name tags for everyone – people designated at the events to be personal greeters – ask about how they found out about the event – sign in sheet with email or contact information. “I'd like to talk to you more about that, do you have an email address I could contact you at?”

Green party business cards.

Include website address on everything we send out.

Reward volunteers with T-Shirts

Criteria for Evaluation:

Will it accomplish the goal?

Is it inspiring to many?

Is someone willing to own it?

Dot exercise

One Yellow, two blue, two black.

Coalition with CEC and other regarding fossil Free 2033 - two blue dots

Police brutality - one yellow

Death penalty - three black dots

Implications of decrease in fossil fuels and alternatives - two black one blue

Green house hold procedures - one blue

Food Security - one black one blue

Pick a local issue advocate and publicize - one blue one black one yellow

Founder's Day - one black

Coalition building networking - one yellow one blue

Community Gardens - one blue

Meet in other places - one blue

Green party awards to community members working on Green issues - one black

More media coverage – one yellow one blue

Get a regular newspaper column - two blacks

Research green party community concerns - one blue one yellow

Bring in hi-profile topic and speaker - one yellow

Use the upcoming election as a tool - one blue

Direct people to sources of information through website - one black

Seven Main Things to Formulate an Action Plan for in the next few months.

1) Thank yous to everyone who does something – Gail

2) Pick a local issue – will move forward all that it lacks is the action plan

3) Coalition building will happen in some way – more powerfully with an action plan – David

4) Media Coverage – Suzanne

5) Research Community Concerns (Outreach)

6) Implications of decrease in fossil fuels and alternatives – Leo

7) Police Brutality Forum – Consuelo will help move this forward.

When and how will we do the action plans: one or two per council and/or general meetings.