

Green Party Tempest

Weathering the Storm of 2004

By Greg Gerritt

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Moshassuck River Press
Greg Gerritt
37 6th St
Providence RI 02906

401-331-0529

gerritt@mindspring.com

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Extra special thanks go to Kathleen Rourke. She keeps me on my toes.

Thanks also go to all the Greens I have worked with over the last 20 years for helping me learn so much and for being willing to persevere in the face of a planet and culture that seem headed for destruction.

You have before you a very personal book. I have written about what I know and emphasized the things I saw with my own eyes and participated in. The candidates would write very different books. Events in Rhode Island loom larger in this book than would be the case if it was written by a Green from somewhere else. The analysis of the events reported is different than you would get from another reporter. But I think what I have to say will be interesting and educational. Many Greens have helped me to see, but I accept full responsibility for anything that is inaccurate and for an inevitably flawed analysis.

greg gerritt

April 2005

Foreword

The Green Party is an experiment. An experiment in American politics from the perspective that we must treat the earth properly, that violence is wrong, democracy must be practiced, governance should be founded on these principles, and that practical policies that promote the general welfare can be derived from a clear understanding of these principles. Since human beings started living in cities these principles have never formed the basis for civilized (urbanized communities) governance. So we build the bridge as we cross it. Greens are trying to build a new kind of politics, create a way of governing, and govern at the same time.

As a real world experiment in politics the Green Party can be hard to get an accurate read on. There are multiple centers of activity and they are invisible to all but those who participate directly. Much Green activity is purely local. It is one of the reasons the media has such a limited understanding of the Green Party.

My academic background is in evolutionary biology and in anthropology. As a naturalist I have looked at the Green Party as part of an ecosystem with an eye towards understanding its ecological niche in the American political system. In anthropology the participant observer is an honored approach to scholarship. One participates in the life of the community at the same time they are studying, analyzing, and attempting to understand and explain it. I have been a participant in every aspect of the Green Party since its founding in the United States twenty years ago. I have helped founded Green Party locals, served in a variety of organizational roles at the local, state, and national level, and run for office. I was the first Green candidate for state legislature in the United States in Maine in 1986 and my most recent campaign was for Mayor of Providence RI in 2002. Over the years have written about the Green Party extensively but eventually I always come back to what is the ecological niche of the Green Party and what strategies and tactics by the Greens helps the party fill that niche well.

If the Green Party did not exist we would have to invent it. There is a place in the American political spectrum for an organization focused on elections outside of the two mega parties, based on a radical approach to peace, ecology, democracy, and justice, and encompassing a holistic understanding of the way the issues connect to each other. No political party in the last 100 years has managed to fill it as well as the Greens, though the niche itself has changed through the years.

Despite the Green Party filling that niche better than anyone else in the last 100 years, there are tensions in the Green Party that prevent it from doing an even better job, and the 2004 election cycle laid bare the stresses within the party. Over the years the Greens have struggled with questions about how to approach our work, and factions have developed with different ideas about how to fill the Green niche effectively. In Europe they called the argument over the direction of the party one between the Realos and Fundis. In the US the argument has been between Greens who think of themselves as within the left and Greens who think of themselves as members of other traditions.

As with most Green arguments, the argument over what approach the party should take is unwinnable, and arguing about it is a waste of time and energy. What really decides things is organizing and gaining support in the community. If no one wants to work with you, the best ideas in the world are not going to get implemented.

One last note before the tale begins. Maybe it is because I remember the Maine Green Party when it was just 3 people that I tend to think about the Green Party as a guerrilla band engaged in long term non violent revolution. As a guerrilla operation the Green Party has to live off the land and be a part of the community. This is how local Green politics operates, and it is how rebellions from the American revolution to the Iraqi resistance survive.

In our case being a guerrilla operation means no contributions from corporations. We grow by being good neighbors earning the respect and friendship of the people in our communities. It is an each one teach one model rather than the left's classic mass movement model. There is a place for ideology, and an important place for the Green Values and the programs that support them, but practicalities have to overcome ideological purity and unrealistic expectations to thrive in community. This is most clearly demonstrated when Greens win local elections. Often Greens win because they are well integrated into the progressive fabric of their community, they are a part of the community. And when Greens win local elections they have to govern based on community in order to remain in government, as an ideological mode of governance does not get their program enacted or get them re-elected.

Introduction

During 2003 I started thinking about how the presidential campaign season was shaping up as a perfect storm for the Green Party. This is what the Green Party faced. The Anybody But Bush (ABB) push in progressive forces following on the tail of the “spoiler” factor left over from 2000. A war on terrorism that was progressing as a disaster that made it even more of a tool for Republicans to strike fear into the hearts of Americans. The Democrats were demonstrating that they were their own worst enemy, supporting war in Iraq and generally trying to be Republican light, but still insisting that progressives join their campaign as there was no other choice or path for removing Bush. Closer to the heart of the Green Party there were additional discussions about what to do. Should the Green Party have a candidate? Should Ralph Nader run? Should he run as a Green? If we decide to have a candidate and its not Nader, who should it be? What should the campaign strategy be? Just what is the best set of tactics for growing the Green Party in 2004? Just who is our core audience and how do we best engage them? With all this rancorous debate is it any wonder there were people in the party who were wishing the 2004 election would just be over so they could get back to the real work of party building.

Through a combination of strategizing, action, and the whirlwind we found ourselves in, the Greens ran a homegrown Green ticket for President and Vice President working to build the party by helping grow local efforts, the team of David Cobb and Patricia LaMarche. I ended up supporting the home grown Green strategy because it was the only strategy that I found that could actually provide a plausible explanation of how it was going to help us continue to grow in the conditions we found ourselves in in 2004. Many Greens believe that a different strategy/candidate would have been better for the Green Party, but they have never demonstrated in any meaningful way that a different strategy or candidate would have actually benefited the Party, produced better results for local candidates, or strengthened local and state parties.

Does anyone have a good explanation of how running no Presidential candidate have given us better results for local candidates on election day? Would local Green Parties around the country be bigger and stronger than it is now if we had not run David Cobb for President? Would a screw Kerry campaign have helped local candidates on election

day or contributed to a bigger and stronger Green Party today? Would endorsing Nader have helped local candidates more on election day? Where Green Parties worked closely with Nader did that help their local candidates more than working with Cobb would have? Did the local parties working with Nader grow more than those working with Cobb? In places where Greens worked with Nader do they have new and enduring ties to other centers of activism beyond the Green Party that will be used to build the party? Any better than those in other Green centers?

In some ways these questions are unanswerable. Alternative futures were unknowable at the times we had decisions to make, and even in hindsight it is hard to say how something else would have played out. For those few things on the list we could theoretically measure, we probably could not get good data. But I am pretty sure we did the right thing by running the Cobb/LaMarche ticket and have a hard time imagining that another approach in 2004 would have produced better results for the Green Party.

So all in all the atmosphere around a Green presidential run looked pretty bleak. But from the time I adopted the perfect storm terminology, I was also very clear that despite the storm, despite the fact that the Presidential campaign was likely to be a very difficult campaign no matter what we did, there was no magic bullet that was going to make it a great year for a Green presidential campaign, the Green Party was going to come out just fine in November 2004.

The reason I was always so confident that the Green Party was going to be fine is that the Green Party really is about building at the grassroots. Green Party local campaigns were going to be the source of our growth in 2004 no matter what happened in the Presidential campaign. I know it takes away from the drama, but it seems reasonable to state here that the local elections were successful. Local Green candidates garnered 1.6 million votes, more than ever before. There are now more Green elected officials, more local chapters and more active state parties than ever before. There are some Greens who think the year was disastrous, and there are local groups that were severely impacted by the events of 2004, but for the most part Green activities around the country are in pretty good shape and the assessment of the activists is up beat. And yes, the successful outcome does influence how this account shapes up.

Chapter One

2002

I joined the Green Party Presidential Exploratory Committee (PEC) in April 2002, replacing Rhode Island's previous delegate, John Martin. Early in 2002 the PEC started to develop a questionnaire that was eventually sent to the various state parties looking for suggestions as to who the Greens might like to see run for president and asking various questions about the kind of campaign Greens were interested in, and the capacity of their state party to participate in such a campaign. The questionnaire was sent out to the state parties after the Green Party of the United States (GPUS) summer 2002 meeting that was held in Philadelphia. Below is a copy of the questionnaire including the answers I sent to Green Party of Rhode Island (GPRI) leaders for inclusion in the Green Party of Rhode Island response to the questionnaire in August of 2002.

GPUS 2004
Presidential Exploratory Committee

QUESTIONNAIRE SEEKING

GUIDANCE FROM STATE PARTIES

1. Should the Green Party of the United States run a Presidential ticket (president and VP) in 2004?

YES

2. What do you feel are the benefits of running a Presidential ticket in 2004 for your state party? Prioritize these benefits. Some possibilities include: build the Green Party (dollars, registered voters, etc.); spoil the Democrats or Republicans chances; pursue the 5 percent threshold for matching federal funds; provide coattails for local campaigns and non-partisan candidates; extend or affirm the life of the Green Party; gain entry into the debates; use the Presidential race to gain state ballot access where none exist.

It will help grow the Green Party
Maintain ballot access in RI
Helps recruit and support local candidates
Brings out key issues that are otherwise ignored

3. What are the important characteristics of a potential candidate?

Prioritize these characteristics.

Willing to run hard
Commitment to green issues and values
Ability to articulate the issues
Willing to work with state parties
Able to raise money
Understands organizing campaigns

4. What would you like to know about a potential candidate as a person? Please list in priority order.

5. What would you like to know about a potential candidate's political history? Please list in priority order.

Key things they have done
Are they a member of the Green Party
Have they any electoral political experience

6. What would you like to know about a potential candidate's values and philosophy?

How Green are they?

7. On what current issues would you like to have the candidate provide views and propose resolutions? Please list in priority order.

Energy

Social issues such as poverty

Foreign policy

Militarism

Environmental issues such as deforestation

Linkages between issues

such as environmental racism

8. What other things do you want to know about a potential candidate? Please list in priority order.

9. Can your state party support ballot access for a presidential campaign in 2004?

YES

10. Can your state party support fundraising (mailings, phone solicitation, house parties, major events) for a presidential campaign in 2004?

YES

11. Can your state party support campaign organizing (canvassing, leafleting, phone banking, tabling statewide) for a presidential campaign in 2004?

YES

12. Who would you like the Green Party of the US to approach as potential candidates?

13. When should the 2004 nominating convention take place?

Late June works best for RI petitioning, which takes place over the summer. Actually, as we have ballot status, and can have a primary, I am not quite sure how the process works as the dates are different than any other election deadlines in RI. Probably much earlier deadlines, so it changes petitioning for us.

Other Greens in RI also wrote up answers which were then combined and we came up with a list of 10 or so people we wanted to see run for the Green party Presidential Nomination. Ralph Nader and Cynthia McKinney were at the top of the list.

Things were pretty slow on the presidential campaign front other than the questionnaire going out until after the November 2002 elections as many PEC members were involved in campaigns. I was running for Mayor of Providence, so other than participate in a few conference calls I did not do much until after the election either.

In November the PEC reconvened and had responses to the questionnaire in hand from approximately 20 state parties. PEC Co-chair Jane Hunter, from NJ, was in charge of analyzing the data. The tabulations from the 20 state parties as to who they might want to see as a Green candidate follows.

Nominee Count

| | | | |
|---------------------------|----|----------------------------|---|
| Ralph Nader | 20 | Carol Miller | 1 |
| Cynthia McKinney . . . | 19 | Annie Goeke | 1 |
| Medea Benjamin | 11 | Henry Waxman | 1 |
| Jim Hightower | 8 | RFK, Jr. | 1 |
| Michael Moore | 6 | Tom Hayden | 1 |
| Noam Chomsky | 5 | Tom Harken | 1 |
| Barbara Lee | 4 | Susan Sarandon | 1 |
| Winona LaDuke | 3 | Russell deForest | 1 |
| Jello Biafra | 3 | Ronald Carey | 1 |
| Manning Marable | 2 | Ron Dellams | 1 |
| Angela Davis | 2 | Robert Reich | 1 |
| Peter Camejo | 2 | Karl Workowski | 1 |
| Dennis Kucinich | 2 | Robert Bowman | 1 |
| David Cobb | 2 | John Passacantando . . | 1 |
| Jerry Brown | 1 | Rev. Ed Sanders | 1 |
| Jesse Ventura | 1 | Ramsey Clark | 1 |
| Hillary Clinton | 1 | Phil Donahue | 1 |
| Erin Brockovich-Ellis . | 1 | Paul Glover | 1 |
| Kim Stanley Robinson . | 1 | Kevin Danaher | 1 |
| David Bonior | 1 | Aaron McGruder | 1 |
| Cornell West | 1 | John Rensenbrink | 1 |
| Charles Rangle | 1 | Robert Redford | 1 |

There are no real surprises on the list though some of the potential candidates listed by one state party or another are not well known. A few are prominent Democrats. To no one's surprise Ralph Nader and Cynthia McKinney were listed by nearly every state party.

The Presidential Exploratory Committee did not particularly want to tinker with the list, but did agree that the committee would not contact some of the prominent Democrats on it. Greens of all stripes were also welcome to invite other people to run and if a person who was not on the list joined the fray, the PEC would offer them the same services that were being made available to those who received communications from the committee based on the list. The PEC was most definitely not choosing the candidates, just facilitating asking them to join the race and providing services if they did.

The committee drafted a letter to potential candidates telling them they were on the list and asking if they were interested in running. At the same time the PEC developed a follow up system so that everyone getting the letter would also receive a call shortly after from a committee member to talk about it and again ask if they were interested in running.

I do not have in my files the final version of the letter sent to candidates but the following is an early version, the final letter being similar, just a little smoother.

[Dear-]

Your name has been suggested by one or more state Green Parties as someone having the character, vision, and ability potentially to represent the values of the Green Party of the United States in the 2004 presidential campaign.

If you have an interest in being considered by us for 2004, we are inviting you to begin a dialogue with our Presidential Exploratory Committee, which is charged with contacting and interviewing prospective presidential and vice-presidential candidates.

We ask you first to consult our web site at www.gp.org.

There, among many other links, you will find a copy of the current platform of the Green Party of the United States. It should give you a clear picture of the Green Party's vision and how that vision can impact public policy.

We will be in touch in the near future, or if you need more information, please don't hesitate to call either of the Exploratory Committee co-chairs named below.

With appreciation and respect for all that you have done to preserve democracy in the United States,

Signed, ...

I was assigned to call Professor Manning Marabell at Columbia University, cartoonist Aaron McGruder, creator one of my favorite comic strips, Boondocks, and Paul Glover an activist in Ithaca, New York best known for helping create Ithaca Hours local currency. In the latter part of January I was able to reach Dr. Marable. He was honored but demurred. I had a very interesting conversation with Aaron McGruder during which I learned he was honored to be thought of, but he was too young to run and also too busy with Boondocks. Paul Glover expressed some interest, so I had several conversations over the next couple of months with him about how the campaign might be joined.

Maybe it was my service on the PEC, maybe it was that more than most Greens, I tend to use the US model of politics as a starting point in my political

explorations, looking to create a distinctly Green, but recognizably American, political party. Whatever it is, earlier than just about anyone else I realized/decided that the path to the Green Party presidential nomination involved candidates actually talking to Greens in every neighborhood and state throughout the country, building a campaign that would turn people out for primaries, caucuses and state conventions, and finding people willing to vote to allocate some delegates from their state party to that particular candidate at the national convention. To get the nomination a candidate would actually have to campaign to Greens. What a novel concept.

I therefore started advocating within the PEC for the creation of the Initial Point of Contact (IPC) program, and then took the lead in creating it. The Green Party has relatively weak networks in many places, and was recruiting candidates who, for the most part, did not have had much experience either running a campaign or with the Green Party. Therefore the party needed some simple way for potential candidates to get in touch with members of each State Green Party so they could set up a campaign in that state. The Initial Point of Contact program was designed to do just that. With it we could send a list of IPC people to every candidate and say if you want to start your campaign, these people will help you connect to their state parties. The 35 or so IPC people that we were able to recruit agreed to help all potential candidates connect to their state Green Party. The PEC backed this up with informal communications to each person who announced they were interested in seeking the nomination telling them about the IPC program and encouraging them to use it.

I had conversations by phone and/or email with Lorna Salzman, David Cobb, Paul Glover, and Kent Mesplay telling them about the IPC and how to use it to boost their campaigns. I also spent some time trying to talk to them about what they were embarking on and what it might take to gain the nomination. I gave all of them the same spiel about the process and how it was envisioned that to get the nomination one was going to have to collect delegates from state parties all over the country and really build a campaign.

I would not call the IPC a resounding success, but it did show that the Green Party was willing to take a practical step to actually help candidates, and I think it provides a good model to use until we have enough home grown candidates for president that are already in contact with many state parties and have enough contacts throughout the party that the IPC is redundant. I expect the IPC, or something else performing the same functions, will be put into place for the 2008 election cycle.

Chapter Two

Winter 2003

Shortly after the letters went out to the people the state parties asked us to solicit, it became pretty obvious that we were not going to be blessed with a plethora of great candidates. Nearly everyone turned us down. Some more directly than others.

Nader responded he was still thinking about it. McKinney, after waffling a while, responded she was interested in running for her old congressional seat as a Democrat, and so on and so forth. Between the political situation the country was in and that running a Presidential campaign is something very few people can fit into their lives, we did not have a lot to choose from. Paul Glover expected Nader to be the nominee, but until such time as Nader announced, Glover put his hat in the ring. But Glover would neither travel nor raise money. Over the next few months responses continued to trickle in. Peter Camejo said no, but rumors continued that there was a slim

chance he would change his mind. Carol Miller announced that she would stand as a favorite daughter from New Mexico, while also waiting for Nader. The only person on the list submitted by the state parties who said yes was David Cobb. Eventually he would be joined during 2003 by Lorna Salzman, a Green from New York; Kent Misplay, a Green from California; for a brief moment Sheila Bilyeu of Washington DC; and at the very last moment by JoAnne Beeman of Michigan.

Lorna Salzman is one of my least favorite Greens, someone who is always trying to tear the party down, a person I have had run ins with several times over the years. I jokingly take the blame for Salzman getting into the race because shortly after the solicitation letters went out from the PEC to all of the candidates, Salzman started to attack the PEC. I wrote back objecting to this slander and eventually got into a somewhat heated exchange with Salzman via email. Eventually I figured out that what Salzman was objecting to, and criticizing, was not the process, (I mean how straight forward can you get, the PEC wrote a letter and offered to help) but the fact that Cynthia McKinney was being asked to run. Salzman had major objections to McKinney's position on Israel/Palestine.

It happens that McKinney's position is much closer to that of most Greens than Salzman's, but McKinney's position gave Salzman an excuse to attack the Green Party and she jumped on the opportunity. After much heat, and some light, I was able to point out to Salzman that her criticism's were unfounded, that the process was fine and that a more appropriate action would be to campaign against McKinney. Salzman then decided to run for the nomination, while at the same time endorsing a Nader candidacy.

Another Green Party critic, Sandy Lemberg, from CO, joined one of the national email lists about this time and from day one on the list wrote about how the Green Party started off the presidential campaign improperly this year by not getting more and better candidates. Lemberg is still at it, and after 2 years it sounds like a broken record. Lemberg has never once offered how the process could have turned up more and better candidates. Yes, it was very hard to find lots of good candidates, but it is also apparent that the problem was not so much with the Green Party or the process, but rather in the political mood of the country. The doom and gloom cloud that seems to follow the work of George W. Bush has completely infected many Americans. They are stuck in 2 party

oppositional politics and cannot see that the way beyond the dilemma is new parties and a political system that is transformed. So what else is new. There are not many Americans, especially prominent Americans, ready to build the bridge as they travel the road of Green Politics. And a candidate who can build the bridge as they travel it is the only kind of candidate that can run a Green campaign. Lemberg really had nothing to offer, but he did help to set the tone of noise and chaos that surrounded the Green Presidential campaign right up to election day.

Lemberg started off complaining about the survey, how he never got it. The simple answer that he could get it from his state party never registered as he had very little to do with his state party. Lemberg told us to solicit this candidate or that candidate, and we cheerfully replied that he was more than free to contact anyone he wanted and ask them to run or at least provide us with good reliable contact information so we could send them a note. Eventually he started offering campaign strategy that had no practical relevance without ever once lifting a finger to actually help a candidate.

About the only thing he ever said that had any value was that he wanted a candidate who was actually a member of the Green Party and that any candidate who was not a member of the party was not really a Green candidate and did not deserve Green support. I doubt he swayed many people but it did put some Nader supporters a bit on the defensive.

The following email is typical of the answers Sandy gets from Greens, it is from the fall of 2003, but is a perfect example of the opportunities offered to Lemberg to participate that he never responds to.

Sandy—

The PEC focused on potential candidates identified by the state Green Parties. Far from making decisions "behind closed doors," the PEC specifically and committedly followed the direction of the state parties, who in turn are presumably guided by their grassroots membership. If you want to influence the range of candidates for future electoral cycles, I suggest that you get involved in your local and state electoral committees.

The only portion of PEC processes that were not completely public were discussions with folks who were— or are— not ready to declare as Green candidates. Until such time as an individual chooses to declare or to turn down the opportunity, we have a responsibility to protect the privacy of their deliberations. For folks who are in leadership roles in charitable non-profits and for the few who are associated in one way or another with another political party, that protection of privacy can be critical to any current or future relationship with the Green Party.

I'm sorry you feel that you didn't have an opportunity to participate in the process. If you want very direct involvement, I suggest that you put yourself forward as a potential delegate to the 2004 Green nominating convention.

Jane Hunter 10/7/03

Chapter Three

Spring 2003

As the spring of 2003 rolled around the big argument in the Green Party was should Ralph run? The most influential article written, at least among those written by Greens, was the article by John Rensenbrink and Tom Sevigny urging Nader not to run and arguing for a nuanced strategy in relationship to the two party monopoly. Every Green had an opinion. Many people made their comments public. The categories of response include: the Greens should just sit out the whole race, Nader should run as a Green, the Greens should find a homegrown candidate, the Greens should run all out, the Greens should run hard but be mindful of what is going on around them, the Greens should run hard but be aware of the two party horse race in deciding how hard to campaign at the end, the Greens should run but be ready to pull out at the end if the race between the Democrats and Republicans was too close. This last one had the least amount of support. I was in

the camp saying the Greens should be in the race and leaned very much to running hard, but I was flexible as to who or how to run. I knew that there really was no resolution to the argument, that the only resolution would come at the 2004 Nominating Convention and that the result of the convention would be based on who did what work between this time and the convention. If a candidate appeared and excited Greens then all thought of not having a candidate would go away, or at least become irrelevant. If Nader decided he really wanted the nomination and was willing to campaign for it, then despite what Rensenbrink and Sevigny wrote, Nader would get the nomination, and by that time, because of his campaigning, Greens would be behind the campaign, or would have gone to other pastures. So all the shouting and writhing about was really just prologue as the resolution would come when someone rolled up their sleeves and went to work.

Even at this point it was pretty obvious that it was very unlikely that Greens would endorse the Democratic candidate or sit out the race. The reason for this was that those Greens who wanted to support the Democratic candidate were voting with their feet. They were not staying active in internal Green Party debates and were very unlikely to attend a Green state convention and vote to stay out of the race. If all the

advocates for a position leave the building those still assembled are not likely to pick that option, and it was apparent that that was the way the support the Dems or run no candidate options were going to drop out. It was an organizing project, not a debate. Unfortunately some Greens tend to think of these things as debates, and therefore get really mad at those Greens who do look at it as an organizing project, do some organizing, and then get the results they want rather than focusing on the debate. Somehow organizing seems to be not playing by the rules to some Greens, rather weird for a political party and activist group, but something we have to live with. I figured that whatever group was able to muster the work would win the day. Leadership by example is usually the best strategy.

Greens eventually voted in state caucuses, primaries and conventions and ultimately the state conventions chose delegates to the national convention and determined how those delegates would vote on the nomination. It is also true that Green activists, the people who do most of the work on Green campaigns and in keeping Green Parties functioning, do have a larger influence when their state parties and locals make decisions, and if they decide they want the party to do something, it usually happens. A successful campaign for the nomination was going to have to appeal to all

Green voters, but especially appeal to the leading activists in each region as they would influence other Greens and be instrumental in creating the local campaigns. That meant that the strategy of the campaign had to please general Green voters and be acceptable for the activists and fit in with what they were doing to build their local parties.

On 5/4/03 I sent out an email (excerpted below) which I think laid it out pretty well:

Personally I strongly lean towards running a Green candidate all out. When I poll active Greens in RI, that is also the response. That may not be true elsewhere. We also have to take into account the response to our actions by two different constituencies, those people who are our core base, active Greens, and those who might vote our way but could be persuaded to vote D if they just thought it would beat Bush even if it got them almost nothing in terms of real policy transformation. I do tend to believe that running a good campaign, even if it gets far fewer votes than Nader got in 2000, can still build our core base and be a great recruitment tool. I also see us continuing our growth at other levels no matter which choices we make, though there is always the risk that any strategy we try could negatively effect us down ticket.....

We not only do not have a candidate for President yet, we can not decide if we even want one, and we can be sure that the debate about that is why we do not have one. But no amount of debate is going to settle this question. What will settle it is when a Green or someone who basically agrees with the Green analysis decides that a grassroots campaign is possible and decides to meet with every Green Party and local group in the country, figuring they can raise enough money at each stop to get to two more. If no one does that, then all the debate is moot. We have no campaign or candidate. Is someone does decide to do that, and organizes signature collecting in each state, the debate is moot, the campaign is on. There are enough Greens interested in the campaign who think that our being in the race is more important than the results. When a potential candidate comes to their neighborhood, they will come meet her, and if convinced that she has even a smidgen of what it takes, has what it takes to run a campaign at an acceptable level, they will sign on and tell their friends. Greens who are not impressed will sit it out or go elsewhere. Too often in our history we have told people you can not do something bold, and each time we tried to do that, the bold pressed on and prevailed. "

Of course Greens being Greens, we were always willing to argue about things, especially something like campaign strategy or who our target audience is, that

can not actually be decided by debate. Greens seem to think that if they articulate what they think is the perfect strategy everyone will see the wisdom of their suggestion and go along. It never works that way, but Greens keep hoping. So Greens argue strategy endlessly and in ever more acrimonious tones. I do more than my share. But the participant observer approach I live also helps me occasionally step back and look at how the discussion is going, and sometimes, even in the heat of the arguments, I write about the discussion as well as the issues.

What the Greens should have been talking about was what was going to build the Green Party the best. What would help the Green Party stay on track for world domination by growing the Green Party and helping us weather storms? My initial reaction, one documented in the questionnaire copied earlier, was run all out no matter what the Democrats did. But as I became more cognizant of the gathering storm, I also was thinking about what would allow the Green Party to deflect some of the full fury, as I felt deflecting some of the fury might help us more than fighting it.

So the Rensenbrink/Sevigny piece opened the flood gates and then everyone jumped into the fray. In my email files there are full blown calls for Nader to be the candidate running full out. Other Greens were beating the drums to not have a candidate at all. Full out with a homegrown Green, support Kucinich, support Dean, support your name here in the Dems and stay there, it was a circus of ideas, three rings could not nearly contain it.

Here is an example of a call to support Nader:

5/6/03

**NO WAR FOR OIL!
NO VOTES FOR MILITARISTS!
VOTE FOR NADER IN 2004!**

**RALPH NADER 2004
Draft the Greens! list formed**

**Ralph Nader 2004
has formed a list group to Draft the Greens!**

The Green Party needed a better way to have the discussion and a way to have it that was calming as well as productive. A method that would show how much support the various positions had in the party without backing anyone into a corner. The Presidential Exploratory Committee decided to hold several events at the 2003 summer national Green Party Coordinating

Committee meeting that was to take place in mid July in DC. One event we decided to hold was a candidates forum where they could all speak. This was a straight-forward task. The PEC invited everyone who was a declared or semi declared candidate to attend the DC meeting and speak. The PEC also wanted the party to have a discussion among the Greens about strategy in a way that was less debate, less talking and shouting heads, less listening to the voices of the loud, while showing us what active Greens were thinking.

The PEC went looking for a methodology that would allow Greens to show the full spectrum of what they were thinking without letting it be dominated by the talkers. We wanted all Greens to see where people stood and in what proportions, and in a way that no one had to sum it up.

One idea was to use Visual Consensus Building (VCB). In VCB as each question is presented the spectrum of answers is also described such as running all out would be by the windows and no candidate at all would be at the door with all gradations in between. Then all of the individuals in the room, by talking to each other, would sort themselves along the spectrum. In theory it could produce long lines with each person standing in one place along the spectrum of the possible, but mostly it creates clusters of people who are in basic agreement. Then each cluster picks a reporter to tell everyone what held them together as a cluster. People see where people are aligned and relative numbers.

Another method of discussion, called the World Cafe, was to break everyone into small groups with a facilitator at each table, generate small group discussions with a specific series of questions and then hear reports from each group on the range of their discussion.

Several other possible processes were also suggested, but eventually the PEC decided to use both of the methods described above, with the discussion generated at the World Cafe providing some of the questions to be asked during Visual Consensus Building.

The PEC worked through June and July to tweak the methodologies, insure proper preparation and facilitation, and come up with appropriate questions as well as preparing for the candidates forum.

The following are the notes from a PEC conference call in which the PEC was finalizing plans for the DC meeting events.

I. Review outline of what we are doing Friday night:

All Greens may participate. NO MEDIA.

Session 1: Small group meetings. 2 Rounds of sessions, 35

minutes each (vs. 3 rounds of 20-25 min each). The first round should be shorter, to give folks the idea of how it works and get brains warmed up.

Ground rules for reporting back after each session: 1 speaker per group, no one gets to present twice. Limit by time or number of major points (up to 3) being made.

Ideas from first round of discussions incorporated into second round of group meetings.

Facilitators work to make sure everyone is involved and being heard.

Questions: we should develop questions as back up, in case groups run out of ideas.

Session 2 (after dinner break): Visual Consensus Building.

Using the results from the second round of small group discussions, we will ask a series of questions and use visual consensus building.

Question #1 and LAST Question: Do we run for President. After the first time we ask this, we can run through various options and scenarios on how to run, why to run, who to run, etc. During the final round, we ask the question again, to see how people's opinions have changed and hopefully end on a high note.

During the dinner break, Susan, Juscha, Greg, Jane and anyone else on this committee will meet to develop the strategy questions to be asked in between the first/last question.

Ground rules: time limit, no one speaks twice. Do stack to control speaker order and allow each speaker to only make ONE point.

We talked about using the microphone as the 'talking stick'. We discussed giving everyone a speaker's token to allow only one use, but decided that the written stack will help us control the speakers and set limits.

Facilitators: CCC: 7 members will facilitate; PEC 7 members; SC will also provide some facilitators, so we have at minimum, 15 facilitators.

We want no more than 15 in each of the cafe groups.

Lets get together 10 minutes before the session to make sure we are all on the same page.

Discussion of media in the event. Eventually consensed on no.

Mentioned Friday noon Press conference discussed microphones, likely to have 3 on cords

We want still photos, especially of vcb. Jane followed up to make sure Anne G will have camera

Things to do:

decide number of groups

report to CC on methodology. susan was sending that

prep facilitators

Jane will coordinate efforts to pull together questions that facilitators can use for backup in cafe.

Remember to pull ourselves together for vcb categories.

One other decision during the spring of 2003 was that the National Convention would be held in Milwaukee in 2004. Minneapolis and Milwaukee had both submitted bids, and Milwaukee's was chosen by a vote of the Green Party of the United States Coordinating Committee in early June.

Chapter Four

Summer 2003

The GPUS Coordinating Committee (CC) meeting held in July 2003 in DC was pretty much like previous CC meetings, though the setting was not. The meeting was in one of the grand old Washington hotels, the Mayflower, famous in RI because several weeks before Congressman Patrick Kennedy had appeared at a press conference at the Mayflower and noted that he had never worked an expletive day in his life and never would have to because of his family fortune.

The meeting had the usual array of business, forums, workshops, and late night discussion. Tension levels were high, but that is often the case at CC meetings, and there was back room politicking going on as to who was going to be elected to the Steering Committee. I was the lone candidate for Secretary, but at the last minute a few Greens convinced Tom Sevigny of Connecticut to run for Secretary instead of co-chair and it turned into a very tight race. Resolutions on ending the invasion of Iraq, process questions, and the usual assortment of organizational details were on the agenda as well as the discussion of the Presidential campaign.

The candidates forum was pretty good. Camejo, Cobb, Salzman, and Miller all made speeches. We also had Theresa Amato, Nader's campaign coordinator speak on his behalf. Peter Camejo, coming off his CA gubernatorial campaign, was good, and David Cobb was his typical high energy Texas self. I happen to like Cobb's particular speech style as it has some of the political theater Americans like, and for that reason I think it can be somewhat effective beyond just talking to Greens.

We conducted the World Cafe discussion groups and Greens talked about the campaign and what they wanted, though I do not remember much other than being there and enjoying the discussion. The Visual Consensus Building also turned out to be a big hit and reinforced what we had been reading all along in the streams of emails. Greens wanted a Green campaign in 2004 but as there was at least some senti-

ment among the Greens to not nominate under some circumstances. Also pretty obvious was that a little actual organizing and campaigning would completely overwhelm the do not nominate school of thought and that Nader could have the nomination if he wanted it.

As the summer wound down I started to realize that Rhode Island had some of the earliest presidential petitioning deadlines in the nation, so in order for RI to have a Green candidate on the November 2004 ballot we had to gear up fast. We therefore had to find candidates to get on our primary ballot. The GPRI was a ballot access party from 2001 to the end of 2004 because in RI Nader received 5.85% of the vote in the 2000 Presidential race. Looking at it realistically the GPRI did not believe that we were going to get 5% again in 2004. Some of us were not particularly worried as getting on the ballot as a Green independent in RI is as easy as getting on the ballot when the Green Party has a ballot line. There are some advantages to being a ballot access party, but it does not preclude our success when we are not.

The GPRI faced a March 2004 primary, a Super Tuesday primary. First we asked Nader if he would be interested in being on the primary ballot. Tony Affigne, one of the long time members of the

GPRI, talks to Nader occasionally, so in addition to letters we emailed to Theresa Amato, Tony called Ralph. We also saw emails about the draft Nader movement and wrote to those folks asking who they had in RI that we could work with. The email to the draft Nader folks copied below is pretty typical of what The GPRI sent out during the summer.

From: Greg Gerritt <gerritt@mindspring.com>
 Date: Wed, 16 Jul 2003 19:20:15 -0400
 To: Doug Friedline <Doug@draftnader2004.com>
 Subject: Rhode Island

Doug Friedline, I ran the Nader committee in Rhode Island in 2000, and am Secretary of the GPRI as well as active nationally with the Green Party. Because of my positions I am not able to lead a draft Nader effort in RI, but I could be of great assistance behind the scenes. I have all the GPRI mailing lists if nothing else, and the ones from 3 years ago that Nader has are seriously out of date. I am also the Initial Point of Contact person for all Green presidential campaigns (a program of GPUS) that want to meet Greens in RI and have key activist lists.

What I want to know is who is leading efforts in Rhode Island now. They probably ought to talk to me. I will be in DC for the GP meeting. If you are there, look me up. I also have info on ballot access in RI as I met with the Election Division of the Secretary of State's office on behalf of the Green Party in order to be able to talk to candidates this weekend about RI deadlines.

greg gerritt

We were pretty disappointed when Nader turned us down. Peter Camejo also turned us down.

Plan B began with inviting David Cobb to come to RI, give a campaign speech and start doing a

little organizing. We even offered to try and help him raise a little money. Cobb agreed to come to start his first campaign trip, a New England swing, and we set Sept 28 as the date.

It was pretty clear to me that the early deadlines, combined with a lot of uncertainty over what was going on and general lethargy in the Green Presidential campaign as a result of the ABB world, that even the little Green Presidential politics work that was going on in RI was more than was going on most other places.

As the summer wound down I also started to slide off the PEC as it morphed into the Presidential Campaign Support Committee (PCSC). As Secretary of the GPUS I had lots to do, and it seemed that with the constant tensions between the Steering Committee and the rest of the organization, having the Secretary on the committee would be putting too much SC imprimature on the process for general consumption. I felt no such compunctions about moving efforts in RI. I serve as the GPRI official and unofficial liaison with the Secretary of State's office. Because I talk to the Elections Division regularly and have a good relationship with them I always have the inside scoop on the legal requirements and deadlines we have to meet so these types of things are on my mind more than most other Greens in RI. It seemed that unless I took the lead in RI almost nothing would get done until too late and we probably would not be able to get a presidential candidate on the ballot. So I got busy.

In the middle of our preparations for the Cobb visit we got the news that on Sept 13 Kent Mesplay of CA decided to get into the presidential nomination race and announced it at the CA state meeting. I contacted Mesplay shortly after to let him know about the IPC program and what was going on in Rhode Island. Also about this time Sheila Bilyeu of DC decided to run for the nomination as well. Her campaign was short lived, and she is the only candidate for the nomination who campaigned or got delegates that I never had a conversation with about the IPC or for any other matter, though I did try to reach her.

Chapter Five

Fall 2003

September 28 was the date for the first Cobb campaign appearance in Rhode Island. Whatever people think of David Cobb or the strategy that his campaign developed, one has to admire his willingness to take on the challenge. He has an upbeat approach to Green politics that appeals when he goes into a room of Greens. I have had run ins with David over Green politics before, seen things I did not appreciate. But it was clear that if Nader decided not to seek our nomination Cobb could run the type of campaign we needed and his upbeat grassroots approach was appropriate during this time of uncertainty and the gathering storm.

With the early deadlines the Green Party of RI had to move ahead, we could not wait for things to shake out around the country. We asked the Secretary of States' office for an opinion as to whether or not we could petition during the petitioning time of the Independent candidates, the next summer, but were told by the Elections Division that if we wanted to have a Green candidate on the ballot in November 2004 we had to petition in November of 2003.

So I resolved that the RI portion of the campaign was going to be done right. I knew that if we failed to make the RI deadlines and get candidates into the Presidential Primary that it might be demoralizing for Greens in other states and that our options nationally would be diminished. I also had the little voice in the back of my head saying what would it look like if the state party of a national officer could not pull together a petition drive in a relatively easy ballot access state like RI? I was convinced that some kind of Presidential campaign was important as a part of our strategy for 2004, and I knew that my actions were going to be important for setting a tone in 2004. It is probably because of this resolve to make it happen, combined with my belief that it was simply an organizing project rather than an ideological discussion, that I was a national officer, that I was open about my determination to get a Green on the ballot, and that we were successful, that occasionally gets my name into articles and writings about the secret cabal that was destroying the Green Party by opposing Nader, selling us to the Democrats, or whatever other imagined plot the author

needed to cook up. As they say, proud to be a part of this number, and as demonstrated by my efforts to help the Nader campaign almost right up until the convention, the cabal seekers need to get a life.

About 40 people came to see Cobb on Sept 28, 2003 in Warwick RI. They heard a pretty good speech and asked lots of questions. Cobb got some media coverage, we got a promise that Cobb would fill out paper work so that petitioning could happen, and about \$300.00 was split between the Cobb campaign and the GPRI, the first official campaign contributions his campaign received David, I, and a number of other Greens then went to lunch and talked about campaigns, Nader, and the general state of the Green Party. Greens in RI reiterated that they wanted a Green candidate who understood the Green Party, and would help local candidates by campaigning with them, and we all appreciated how tough a presidential year it was going to be for the Green Party.

Cobb was frank, he said if Nader wants the nomination, he can easily get it, and Cobb would just get out of the way, but until such time Cobb was running to get the nomination and build the party. I do not recall any conversation about what if Nader runs outside of the Green Party. We were not thinking about that in September.

From the start of his campaigning Cobb carried a nuanced message. His message was: I will follow whatever strategy the Green Party wants to carry through the campaign, but right now what I am saying is; George Bush is really bad, and we need to get rid of him. The policies advocated by the Democratic Party are also horrible, but it is likely that a Democratic president would be a shade less bad than Bush, so yes I want to see George Bush go. Knowing a Green was not going to get elected in 2004 Cobb also pointed out that an effective Green campaign would focus as much on helping local Green candidates with their campaigns as running for President. It was still not clear how Nader was going to approach the campaign and the Green Party needed to be ready for a campaign if he decided not to run. Cobb also noted that I was the first well placed Green who said if you are going to run, actually do it, so maybe the conspiracy theorists are right about me, though it was the same advice I gave to all the potential candidates.

At the same time he was turning down an opportunity to be in the RI primary Nader also took his name out of consideration for the California and Washington DC primaries. Camejo, Salzman, Cobb, and Mesplay were placed on the California primary ballot through votes at the California convention in September. Camejo only put his name in after Nader pulled out and actually missed the deadline, but was given a reprieve by the California Green Party. Getting on the ballot in CA and DC was done through votes at state conventions, so the GPRI figured out that we were going to be the first state party to petition to get the Green presidential candidate on the ballot for 2004.

The GPRI again wrote to all of the potential candidates after the Cobb visit seeking to figure out who else was going to be in the primary. Below is the letter that went out.

OCT 23, 2003

Dear Green Party candidates for President, I know none of us are ready for this, but if any of you want to have Rhode Island delegates to the national convention vote for your nomination as the Green Party Presidential candidate, this is the time to re-prepare to get onto the primary ballot. RI is a ballot access state, party status being awarded when the Nader/LaDuke ticket in 2000 received 5.85% of the vote. RI ran a very active presidential campaign that year, and continues to have an active Green Party. Last year David Segal was elected to the Providence City Council as a Green from Ward 1, the first Green elected in RI.

As we all know, a Green Party Presidential Campaign this coming year has generated

divisions in the Green Party, with some Greens sloughing off to other parties and campaigns in the Anybody But Bush hysteria and segments of the progressive community not being happy with us. When this is combined with the very early date of petitioning in Rhode Island, and the short time frame allotted to signature gathering by State Law, we anticipate that we are going to need the active cooperation of your Presidential Campaign to put you on the ballot for the March 2, 2004 primary.

The first step to getting on the ballot is to fill out the form attached as a pdf. This must be returned to the Secretary of States office, though I am unsure of whether it needs to be mailed or delivered by hand. The GPRI would of course be most willing to hand deliver as many of these as y'all send to us, we would love to see 6 as a matter of fact. We are also most willing to be listed as a local contact in the appropriate place and would help you find a local campaign contact if you would be so interested.

The GPRI, or your campaign team, would have until Dec 19 to turn in more than 1000 certified and validated signatures from RI registered voters.

This means that the earlier you get your papers in, the more likely we shall have sufficient time to collect your signatures. An extra week before Thanksgiving would make a big difference, especially with the big event we run each year the day after Thanksgiving that we can collect signatures at.

Until such time as the GPRI helps you find someone to coordinate your campaign/signature gathering I am serving as the contact person for Presidential campaigns in Rhode Island. In addition to serving on the national Presidential Exploratory Committee as the representative from Rhode Island I am the designated contact person for RI campaigns in the PEC's Initial Point of Contact program. I also serve as Secretary of the GPRI. I would appreciate a quick note, call, or email as to whether or not you intend to file to get on the RI primary ballot ASAP so we can begin to prepare. Time is short. I will provide whatever information I can, and of course information on the GPRI to place on your form in the contact information section.

Sincerely,
Greg Gerritt, Green Party of RI
PO Box 1151
Providence RI 02901
401-331-0529
gerritt@mindspring.com

Eventually Cobb and Mesplay responded affirmatively. Lorna Salzman was a little slower and also kept asking us to resend materials as her email was not acting right. Since we were unable to get them through

to her we told her what website she could download them from, but she could not manage that either. The more Salzman had problems, the more she blamed us and complained. I specifically told Salzman that I had sent her a list of Greens from RI to contact, and all of the materials, maybe had done as much to actually help her as anyone in the country, and that at this point she needed to find herself a champion in the GPRI or do the work herself if she was to get on the RI ballot. I made it plain that if she was really running for president it might be time to actually organize a campaign and that there were some pretty straight forward things one could do to move that process, such as call the Greens on the list I had given her. She went back to her woe is me routine and attacked me and the GPRI some more after that exchange, so I reminded her that it was less and less likely that any Green in RI would help her if she continued to abuse us in that way. When the GPRI Coordinating Committee actually voted in early November as to who to petition for, no one stood up for Salzman, and as she never lifted a finger, she never got on the RI primary ballot.

When the GPRI had to actually decide who to petition for we decided to go with the strategy of petitioning simultaneously for two candidates hoping that a contested primary would give us a little publicity at a time that it was going to be tough to get any. The media was going to be completely focused on the Democratic race. We also figured out that the state party was going to be handling the petition drive completely on our own, as none of the potential candidates were in any position to create a campaign in RI. The GPRI CC decided that all petitioners would be requested to carry both petitions and voted to petition for Cobb and Mesplay as they were the only candidates who filled out the paperwork.

In Rhode Island candidates had to file papers seeking to petition onto the ballot in the 3 days from Nov 15 to 17, and signature gathering would begin the following week. Signed petitions were due at town offices by Dec 19. As a ballot status party the GPRI had to follow the calendar of the Democrats and Republicans and the same laws governing petitioning a presidential candidate onto the ballot.

About 15 of us started petitioning on November 22 and with sunny weather the first 3 days we made a good start towards our goal of more than 1500 signatures. Then winter roared in. We had blizzards two of the three prime petitioning weekends which slowed us down tremendously. During the week I would go out lunch time at the busiest street corner in RI for foot traffic downtown. Then we would hit the supermarkets, or at least the two that did not kick us out all the time. The ink in my pens froze every day. But we persevered and collected over 1600 signatures

getting more signatures than most of the Democratic candidates. John Edwards, with his 974 validated petition signatures was 26 signatures short but they let him on the ballot after he filed a law suit. About 98% of the people who signed a Green petition signed for the two candidates, Cobb and Mesplay. Kent Mesplay came to town for the last weekend of petitioning. He spoke at the gathering we called to collect up all the signatures so we could turn them in all over the state in the next week. He also stood out in the cold and snow and gathered signatures for both himself and Cobb.

I have great respect for what Kent did, putting himself out, even petitioning for his opponent in the snow, but I have to be realistic in my assessment of his candidacy. He was not ready for prime time. I sat with him in media interviews in the middle of December 2003, among the first he did as a candidate. In between interviews I coached him on both message and delivery. He seemed to be learning, and when I saw him again at the GPRI debate and the convention he was better at presentation, but it was a bit of a mind blower having to do that kind of beginners training with a presidential candidate.

When you petition on the streets you often have interesting conversations with the passers by. Some conversations are with those who sign, many are with people who do not sign. The comments we got were very interesting. Many people said were not going to sign a Green Party petition (ABB and the spoiler effect being the primary reasons) until I told them it was not a petition for Nader. That changed a lot of minds. I remember more than a few instances of when a person walking by found it was not for Nader. They were happy to sign under those circumstances, but only one person would not sign when they found out it was not for Nader. There seemed to be a fair number of people who probably were not going to vote for a Green presidential candidate but were happy to sign for home grown Greens because they wanted a vibrant Green Party but were afraid of the spoiling potential of Nader. But these signers were also much more likely than the usual voter to vote Green down ticket, so the conversations created much good will that was transferable to local candidates. When I hear about how the grassroots wanted Nader and the Greens prevented his candidacy from taking off properly by being ornery, I think back to my time on the streets and its reinforcement of the idea of a grassroots Green campaign in 2004 making sense. It made me think long and hard about Nader, the potential of his campaign for 2004, and how it might effect local Green candidates.

The comments we heard on the streets also let us know how difficult a year it was going to be for the

Green Party no matter what we did. People recognized the need for a Green Party but they wanted to give the Democrats a clear shot at Bush. In the shortest days of the year the Dean machine was rolling on his anti war call, so at least a few Democrats held out hope of a peace candidate. Kucinich also attracted attention from progressives still unwilling to cut the apron strings to the Democrats, so our work was even harder during the winter than after Kerry took charge and doused all Democratic efforts for peace.

Another event in the fall of 2003 was the passing of a resolution by the GPUS Coordinating Committee setting the size of the delegations from the various state parties to the national convention. The formula was a very slight modification of the formula used in 2000 with most of the delegation's size being based on the population of the state. Other factors included how well Green candidates had done in recent statewide votes and the number of Green elected officials in the state.

I include here just a snippet of the voting role primarily to point out that the entire CA delegation to the GPUS CC voted for the formula and allotment. The importance of this will become clear later. It was important for states to know how big a delegation they would have early so that they could start to raise money to send their delegation to the convention and for the planning committee to use in dealing with convention centers and hotels.

Accreditation of Delegates to the 2004 Nominating Convention

Floor Manager: Ben Manski

Phase: Closed

Results: Adopted 11/16/03

YES...57 NO...23 ABSTAIN...2

82 Total Votes Received
from 37 States/Caucuses

| | | |
|----|-----|-------------------|
| AZ | YES | Richard Scott |
| CA | YES | Sara Amir |
| CA | YES | Stuart Bechman |
| CA | YES | Leslie Bonett |
| CA | YES | Alex Brideau III |
| CA | YES | Ginny-Marie Case |
| CA | YES | Jo Chamberlain |
| CA | YES | Greg Jan |
| CA | YES | Peggy Lewis |
| CA | YES | Kevin McKeown |
| CA | YES | Bill Meyers |
| CA | YES | Beth Moore Haines |
| CA | YES | Nanette Pratini |
| CA | YES | Michael Wyman |
| CO | YES | Charlie Green |

Chapter Six

Winter 2004: *Nader Opts Out*

Before Christmas Nader was giving stronger and stronger hints that he would not seek the Green nomination but officially he had not made up his mind about whether he would run, and if he ran, under what banner it would be. I have seen reports from John Rensenbrink and Matt Tilley detailing a meeting they attended with Nader in Maine just days before he officially sidestepped the Green Party. Nader noted he was still deciding what to do, but seemed to be very down on the Green Party. State Parties had to start petitioning and the uncertainty was making petitioning more difficult than it had to be in some places. Parties with ballot access can often substitute the convention nominee for the candidate they petition for, but in states without ballot status Greens often have to petition for a particular candidate with no substitutions allowed. As usual the 51 different sets of laws and the uneven ballot status of the various state parties made the process more crazy.

Nader officially announced that he would not seek the Green nomination via the media and sent the GPUS a letter the last week of December 2003. He stated he would not seek the Green nomination but had not made up his mind about whether he would run under some other banner. The reasons he cited for not seeking the nomination were that the timing of the convention was wrong and that he was not going to participate in a process in which there was any chance that the party was not going to decide to nominate.

My response at the time, and one I still believe to be true, was that his comments on the convention timing were pure bs, as the timing was exactly the same weekend as the convention had been held in 2000. In addition how could anyone with any political sense ask for a convention before the primaries, which were taking place between January and June, were finished. The Green Party had conducted an open process for picking a date, with input from all over the country before voting on a date. Nader was given plenty of notice about what was happening and plenty of opportunity to weigh in at the proper time. He never said a word when the timing was being discussed. Late June is a time that works well for many but not all states for ballot access, and is the earliest a convention can be if a party has primaries. I think no matter what the tim-

ing was he would have said it was wrong in order to justify his decision to not run as a Green.

The hard core Nader for President crew in the Green Party started screaming at the Green Party and its leadership when Nader opted out. The rap, that Green Nader haters had driven him away, that he was our only hope for a good campaign, rose from the tragic chorus. Many Greens, including me, pointed out that many of the people the Nader crew was blaming for his staying away from the process had actually asked Nader to run, and it was pointed out that with the current process it was easy for Nader to get the nomination if he changed his mind and decided to seek it.

I am still sifting through the debris in my mind trying to figure out all the different reasons Nader decided not to run as a Green. I am sure he has his own thoughts on the topic. My take on it is that there were several things that combined to lead him to the decision. One factor is that Nader is very uncomfortable in an actually political milieu. He is a person who keeps his own counsel and makes up his own mind, and does not like to have to clear things with committees or get approvals to go forward. He runs his own operations and surrounds himself with just the people he prefers to work with, almost all of whom are also

uncomfortable with the Green Party and not really aware of what is going on inside it. Nader does not want to be really a part of a truly collaborative process, or in this case a truly collaborative campaign in which the local Green Parties would be consulted as to what the message was and how it would be delivered.

Nader had considerable support among active Greens and probably even more support among less active Greens who were not aware of what the relationship between Nader and the Green Party was like. The Greens that wanted Nader to be the Green candidate, but who are not really active in party, represented a large pool of potential support that could have been turned out for state conventions, caucuses, or primaries if a proper organizing effort was conducted. Nader was reminded of this several times, but still refused to do any organizing. Nader seems to have wanted a clear path to a general election berth without even considering how primaries can be used to excite a party and build it if the nomination is contested in the right spirit.

Nader's strongest supporters in the Green Party could not convince him that being the Green candidate was a good strategy, so of course none of the rest of us could either. No one did a poll of Greens, but if Nader had done the polling he would have seen that he could have the nomination in a walk over and any efforts to have no nomination could have been overwhelmed by his campaign if he had done the necessary organizing. Because he did not understand either the Green Party or grassroots organizing Nader developed a flawed strategy for the early campaign and the preliminaries of the season such as petitioning to get on the ballot. He seems to have had a very weak understanding of where he was going to find petitioners and volunteers without the Green Party and misjudged how much Greens have invested in building the party. He did not understand that many Greens were reluctant to give up working on building the Green Party for a presidential campaign working in an iffy coalition with people many Greens have already worked with in their own neighborhoods and found to be wanting. Nader never really understood that many of the most active Greens would support him as a Green, but not as an independent or in some grand third party strategy. His misunderstanding of Green activism has to be considered as leading to one of the bigger mistakes of his campaign. He did not do what was needed to secure his Green base and never found another.

I am not at all impressed with the people Nader surrounds himself with, his inner circle. None of them could actually give him good information on the Green Party, because none of them are really comfortable with greens or the Green Party. Nader then listened to a few loud Green voices saying do not run, and therefore

never looked deeper or beyond the few voices that were easy to hear, and his inner circle just mirrored the negative image of the Green Party that he wanted to hear. Yes, a number of prominent Greens suggested that this was not a good year for him to run. Yes, several relatively prominent Greens were not happy with the campaign Nader ran in 2000, how he treated the Green Party during the campaign, that he was unwilling to share lists with the Party, or whatever other real or imagined complaint they were willing to air.

Working with the Nader 2000 campaign was not a lot of fun for many local Green Parties and some were not very enthusiastic about trying it again. The Nader advance folks were difficult to work with and some Greens questioned their competence. When he surrounded himself with the same staff as he had in 2000, a number of long time Greens had diminished enthusiasm for the campaign. In 2000 the GPRI took the attitude that Nader was Nader and that campaigns are crazy. We argued with the advance team plenty, but ultimately said we are going to run good events and have a good campaign, and that we would put up with the craziness because that was just how it is, and we wanted good events in our neighborhood.

Other Greens tried to look at it strategically, did not think a Nader run in 2004 would build the Green Party very much, and felt that an alternative strategy might work better. Some Greens in RI expressed some misgivings about whether a Nader run in 2004 would be good for the Green Party, whether a Nader campaign was the right strategy. Others were ready to support him. Similar conversations took place all over the country. Even so, if Nader had decided to run as a Green he would have had enough support in Rhode Island to get the bulk of our convention delegates, and my guess is that it was like that almost everywhere but Nader refused to see it and took our hesitation and questions for more than they really were because it fit in with his predetermined strategy.

The second part of Nader's answer, that he did not want to participate in a process that might end up choosing to not have a nominee is just another facet of the same problems. Ralph Nader is not a grassroots organizer and to be a successful Green candidate you have to think like an organizer. Nader has never actually petitioned for himself. He goes to court to defend the right to petition or to say the number of signatures needed is ridiculous, but he never actually does his own petitioning. He has not knocked on doors in a campaign in years. He goes to schools and auditoriums, but he does not stand on street corners handing out literature and collecting signatures. It gives you a very different perspective on politics. Nader, not being an organizer, not being comfortable with real grassroots political action, has some holes in his knowledge

of how real grassroots politics is done. Nader saw the Green Party discussions about what to do as a refusal rather than seeing all of the support that could be mobilized and taking it on as an organizing challenge.

Nader's vision of a large 3rd party coalition did not appeal to me or to many of the Greens I know. The idea of a cross ideology third party is one of the touchstones of third party politics in the United States. People, mostly those with little on the ground experience or a real dedication to building their party, are holding out for this great miracle political movement from the radical center. The cross ideology 3rd Party fails on ideological grounds and on activist grounds. In RI, I have worked with Libertarians, Reform Party members, the ISO and all of the other people outside the two party system who do electoral politics in their community. While many of them are nice folks and committed activists, I would just as soon not be tied intimately into a campaign with them or attempt to build a sustainable organization with them, and in addition there are just not that many of them around to work with. Nader got the International Socialist Organization and the Reform Party to rally to his banner nationally, with a few Reform Party activists rallying to him in RI. I think the ISO in RI supported him in name but in they did not do much real work. I never saw them handing out Nader literature or trying to run any kind of campaign. Sometimes I even got the impression that the ISO supported Nader as a way to undermine the Green Party. I get the feeling that an actual on the ground and locally funded campaign for Nader could not have been found in America in 2004, whereas in 2000 there were locally run campaigns all over the country. In 2000 the GPRI raised \$12,000 to run the state part of the presidential campaign, raising enough to pay a stipend to an organizer and run radio ads the last week of the campaign that were created by local volunteers with experience in the business. In 2004, everyone knew it was hopeless to put that kind of effort in, there were likely to be no returns on the

investment, so no one invested their energy even if they did put up some money.

As further justification for his approach, Nader attacked Green organizers, calling their work insufficient because they did not meet his standards. Only someone without grassroots political experience would hold onto the expectation that between 2000 and 2004 the Greens would have found 20 times as many candidates as they had in 2000. Anyone who actually understood the Greens would know we grow arithmetically, not geometrically, and that is why we have been able to grow for 20 years rather than crashing like the Reform Party. We are a guerrilla band, not a virus.

With Nader out of the running for the Green nomination there was a some loss of energy in the efforts to gear up for a presidential campaign in the various states, but since the Green Party had already taken hits from the Dean and Kucinich campaigns, it felt sort of normal for a perfect storm year. So when Nader opted out many Greens around the country kept on working. Cobb offered to come anywhere and help with the petitioning if that is what it was going to take for Greens to get on the ballot. As I said previously, it was an organizing project, not a debate. The side that would prevail would be the side that did more work, and without Nader's interest, those Greens on the Nader team had a harder time figuring out where to place their Green Party efforts. Unfortunately that unchanneled energy kept evolving as an attack on the Green Party rather than the building of a positive campaign for Nader.

This last point is one I want to reiterate, as it was the one part of the storm that I did not anticipate. I knew publicity would be hard to get, that the Democrats would attack us and try to keep us off the ballot, that the ABB sentiment would be strong, but it never crossed my mind that the Nader campaign would attack the Green Party so heavily or with such vehemence until it actually happened.

Chapter Seven

Convention Rules

After the turn of the year, not long after Nader decided he would not be a Green candidate, it occurred to Greens on the Coordinating Committee that the convention floor rules had to be set. The 2000 rules were more than adequate for the uncontested race for the nomination that we experienced in 2000, but this time the picture was cloudier and the party had to account for more options. The Green Party argued for a while as to which committee should tackle this task. Eventually a Floor Rules Working Group was set up under the auspices of the PCSC. Some folks wanted the Bylaws, Rules, Policies, and Procedures (BRPP) committee to take this on, but the BRPP was busy and could not muster the energy. The BRPP sent a liaison to the PCSC to work with them, and BRPP eventually became engaged in the discussion, but PCSC was the committee that brought its proposal to the floor for a Coordinating Committee vote.

Convention rules are primarily constructed around nominating a candidate and voting for a platform. The late timing of rules work meant that it ran into the actual planning of the convention, and when the convention schedule came out, it was clear that the nominating process was going to be constrained by the time available. The Party had the big room for just Saturday, so all CONVENTION business had to be done that one day. Therefore a process that moved us through convention business a wee bit faster than we might have liked had to be developed.

There were some interesting discussions were about how to craft the nominating process when the celebrity candidate (Nader) was not seeking the nomination, was running outside of the party, and was saying he would not accept the nomination, but if we did not nominate our own candidate he would accept an endorsement. If a political party comes together to nominate a willing candidate who has sought the nomination, the rules can be very simple. Nominate those candidates seeking the nomination, vote, count, and whoever has a majority wins. If no majority emerges, keep voting until a candidate can put together a majority. The traditional method for putting together a majority is to offer a cabinet post or similar inducement to your opponent in exchange for support by the

delegates pledged to them. In the Green Party there is nothing of substance to offer, but politicking between rounds is generally accepted.

A party trying to accommodate some more unconventional strategies has to get a little fancier. Rules need to be developed as to how to end the nominating process and setting out at how the party decides to endorse a candidate who will not accept the nomination or decides to neither nominate nor endorse.

There were many things to think about that the party had never grappled with before, and this being the Green Party, some of the terrain had to be traversed blind even if other organizations had found ways to deal with much of it. One of the more interesting things to contemplate was what would happen to state parties if the nominee or endorsed candidate decided not to accept ballot lines from the various state green parties.

What does it take to place a name on the convention ballot? What are the criteria in order to be nominated? Can you be nominated if you will not accept the nomination? If acceptance is a criteria, how should that be formally expressed? Should a candidate be required to petition in some form to be placed on the convention ballot? And if you do not petition? The

Floor Rules Working Group had to find something we could all live with, and it was a big mess. Actually everything Greens discussed all year created a big stink, but this was one of the bigger ones. Whatever possible permutation, we had some Greens who thought that permutation would work to the advantage of their preferred candidate/strategy and wanted it in the rules to the exclusion of every other possibility.

Over the years Greens have searched for better ways to conduct elections. Greens would like to see a candidate with majority support win but know that bringing voters back for a second round is expensive, favors better funded candidates, and often results in very low turnout elections. One of the ways of conducting elections that solves those problems is called Instant Runoff Voting (IRV), of which there are a many varieties. Ranked Choice Voting is a form of instant runoff voting in which the voter ranks the candidates 1, 2, 3... and if no one wins a majority of the first place votes the candidate with the fewest votes is dropped from the running and their second place votes are distributed to the other candidates. This continues with the candidate in last place being eliminated and their ranked votes distributed until enough votes from lower ranking candidates have been distributed so that a candidate gains a majority of the vote. The Greens, in a rarity in recent American politics, were conducting a convention that did not have a preordained nominee. No one had a majority of first ballot votes lined up. Therefore the Green Party considered using Ranked Choice Voting to determine the nominee. But as it was a convention, rather than a ballot on Election Day, the Green Party could conduct multiple rounds of voting without any additional costs or having to bring voters back to the polls. Most Greens wanted multiple rounds of voting which had the possibility of creating more excitement at the convention and might actually make for interesting television, and that view prevailed.

The Green Party took all of these questions, and more, and started to piece it all together with the on line debates being more than a little raucous. Everyone had something they wanted put in or leave out of the rules. But we all wanted as straight forward, fair and transparent a vote as possible. Many Greens wanted to nominate a willing candidate, but the rules also had to be open to the possibility that the Green Party did not want to nominate anyone. Eventually we created a set of rules that while not perfect were more than good enough to conduct a fair and honest polling of the Green Party sentiment about what to do.

By May the rules had been written and the GPUS CC voted on them. The resolutions passed in a series of votes in May with votes ranging from 60-26 to 68-4 for the passage of the various sections. The

later refinements continued to open up and improve the process. There has been criticism noting that it would have been more appropriate to space the votes out over a longer period so that the amendments could have been more fully integrated into the documents. A most valid criticism, but we were all equally responsible, the critics as much as the rest of us, and just ran out of time. A slow start, combined with a lengthy process, and we were right smack against the deadlines. No one was totally happy with the rules. I took this to mean that the rules were relatively fair, that the will of the convention would win out. There was a clear path to each possible decision, but a few details should have been spelled out more clearly. If the Greens wanted a course of action to be taken the rules were going to allow that to happen and the will of the majority at the convention was going to win out, but it just might be a little hard to figure out at high speed.

One reason that I am most upset with those who claim the convention was rigged was that the delegates at the convention knew that if they voted for an option, it would win. They did not have to nominate and they could endorse a candidate if no one was nominated. Below is the first of the proposals to pass. It was amended a few times along the way to the convention, including final revisions at the Coordinating Committee meeting the day before the nominating convention, an event described slightly later in this accounting. The resolution copied below is taken directly from the official records of the GPUS voting page website <http://green.gpus.org/vote/>.

Proposal:

2004 Convention Floor Rules

Presenter:

Presidential Campaign Support Committee
(PCSC)

Floor Manager: Jake Schneider

Phase: Closed

Result: Adopted 5/2/04

Result Details

Quorum: 29 (0.6666)

Threshold: 58 (0.6666)

Background: This proposal is the result of two months of discussions by the members of the Floor Rules Working Group (FRWG), a working group of the Presidential Campaign Support Committee (PCSC), in regular consultation with the rest of the PCSC, the Annual National Meeting Committee (ANMCom), and the Bylaws Rules Policy and Procedure Committee (BRPP).

The PCSC and FRWG have begun discussing possible alternatives for rules enabling the convention to endorse a candidate, should no candidate win the nomination. We welcome feedback regarding endorsement rules.

The contact person for this proposal is Marc Reichardt, PCSC Co-Chair.

Proposal: (Second Revision posted 4/22/04)

- - - Intent - - -

These floor rules are designed to meet the following goals:

- * Simplicity.
- * Democracy.
- * Expedience.

- - - Overview - - -

Delegates vote in multiple rounds until there is a simple majority for a candidate that will accept the nomination, or a simple majority for not fielding a presidential ticket. After the second and all subsequent rounds, last-place candidates and all candidates receiving less than 10% of the vote during the rounds will be eliminated except as otherwise stated.

- - - The Election Administrator - - -

The GPUS Steering Committee shall select an Election Administrator to supervise the nomination process, and to select Assistant Election Administrators as necessary; all of which are to be given final approval by the Coordinating Committee.

- - - Candidate Speeches - - -

Equal time shall be allocated for the purposes of addressing the convention to those candidates who have submitted a petition documenting an intention to vote for the candidate in the first round by at least 25 credentialed delegates from at least 3 states. Such petitions must be submitted to the Election Administrator by 6:00pm on Friday the 25th of June; delegate signatures which appear on more than one petition will be disqualified. A candidate need not qualify for the speeches portion of the agenda in order to receive nominating votes.

- - - State Delegations - - -

Each state party shall elect a Reporter and an Alternate Reporter from among its delegates, and shall provide the Election Administrator with the Reporter and Alternate Reporter contact information in advance of the nominating session.

Responsibilities of all state delegation Reporters include attending a preliminary meeting of all state delegation Reporters on the morning of Saturday, June 26, and accurately reporting vote totals from their state within the allowed time limit set by the Election Administrator. A Reporter may designate another delegate to announce votes.

If a state fails to designate a Reporter who can fulfill the required duties, then the Election Administrator shall appoint an Assistant to carry out such requirements for that state.

A state party's instructions to its delegates shall not be enforced by the convention. Enforcement of instructions and mandates shall be a matter between the state party and its delegates. Disputes shall be resolved by a vote of a state's delegation, according to the state's rules, and the convention shall accept the decision of the delegation.

- - - Rounds of Voting - - -

Multiple rounds of voting shall be conducted until a simple majority of the voting delegates vote for an eligible candidate or for "No Nominee".

In each round of voting, the states shall be polled. Each state's Reporter, or designated speaker, shall announce 1) the number of state delegates plus alternate delegates standing in for regular delegates present (not to exceed the state's authorized number of delegates), and 2) the votes for each candidate, including "No Nominee". A delegation may pass no more than once per round.

The total votes cast by any state may not exceed the number of authorized delegates for that state, nor the number of delegates and alternate delegates present. Half-votes from delegates assigned with such will be counted in the first round. Succeeding rounds will count whole votes only.

Delegates may vote for any candidate or any non-candidate option during the first round. If there is a first-round winner, that candidate must formally accept nomination, or that candidate becomes ineligible and the voting proceeds to the second round.

After the first round of voting, candidates who have not formally indicated in writing their willingness to accept nomination and to allow their names to be placed on all state ballots shall be ineligible to receive votes in subsequent rounds.

The Election Administrator shall permit a reasonable period of time between voting rounds for states to caucus, and for candidates to withdraw. Candidates who withdraw shall not be eligible to receive votes in subsequent rounds.

Beginning with the second round, only votes cast for eligible candidates or for "No Nominee" shall count toward the threshold for nomination. Votes for ineligible candidates or any non-candidate option besides "No Nominee" shall be treated as abstentions and shall not count toward the threshold for nomination. The next whole number greater than half the number of non-abstention votes cast in each round shall be the threshold for nomination in that round.

At the completion of the second round and all subsequent rounds, any candidate who received less than 10% of the vote in that round shall become ineligible. Should all candidates have received in excess of 10% of the vote in the previous round, the lowest

vote-getter from that round shall become ineligible. "No Nominee" shall remain an option through all rounds of voting.

In the case of a tie between last-place candidates receiving at least 10% of the vote, none of these last-place candidates shall become ineligible after the first such tie. If two consecutive rounds end in a tie between the same last-place candidates and the elimination of all such tied candidates would leave two or more candidates, all such candidates shall become ineligible. If two or more consecutive rounds end in a tie between the same last-place candidates and the elimination of all such tied candidates would leave fewer than two candidates, no candidates shall become ineligible after any such round.

When an eligible candidate receives the majority of votes in a given round, the Election Administrator shall ask for an approval voice vote of the assembled delegates, after which the candidate shall be declared the presidential nominee of the Green Party of the United States.

Endorsement of candidates may only occur if the Party chooses not to nominate a presidential candidate. Candidate endorsement rules and procedures, as well as vice-presidential nomination procedures, shall remain separate from presidential nomination convention floor rules.

Resources: Implementation of this proposal will require action by the Steering Committee in appointing an Election Administrator, the Annual National Meeting Committee in facilitating AV and other logistics, and the Presidential Campaign Support Committee in preparing materials for the delegates regarding the floor rules and voting procedures.

References: The contact person for this proposal is Marc Reichardt, PCSC Co-Chair.

-- End of Document --

The Green Party was building the road as we traveled and making it more difficult by doing everything at the last minute. But is it even possible for a rag tag guerrilla band, even a great one, to develop complex rules at multiple levels of organization, local, state and national, under varying conditions, any sooner than absolutely necessary? So at the same time the national party was developing convention rules, state parties were developing rules about how they were going to pick their delegations to the national convention and how they were going to instruct them to vote. Every state party that I have knowledge of allocated delegates to candidates proportionally to how the candidates did in that state's process. At the same time some state parties were setting up their rules, in other states, where early primaries or caucuses were mandated for the Green Party by state law, convention delegates, and how they would vote at the convention, were being chosen. RI passed delegate selection rules at a convention in April, a month after the primary. Other state parties had more time and some had finished their rules a head of time, but generally it was a hurry up state of affairs. My assessment is that despite the jumble the rules developed by both the state parties and the Green Party of the United States were more than sufficiently democratic so that the will of the Green grassroots and activists would be done at the convention even if they were a little rough around the edges.

Chapter Eight

The Primaries

The results of the first Green Presidential primary of the season, held in Washington in January in DC were as follows:

386 total votes

| | | | | | |
|---------------|-----|--------|--------------|-----|--------|
| DAVID COBB | 142 | 36.79% | Write in | 123 | 31.67% |
| SHEILA BILYEU | 71 | 18.39% | No candidate | 50 | 12.95% |

This was the first of 5 Green Party Primaries held in 2004.

Rhode Island then made history again when the first ever Green Party Presidential candidate debate was held in Providence on Jan 28, 2004. Kent Mesplay and David Cobb both acquitted themselves nicely on a snowy evening in front of 40 people. Massachusetts also had a Super Tuesday primary coming up, and the next evening there was a candidates debate in Massachusetts, later followed by a series of forums around the country. Candidates other than Cobb and Mesplay, most often Lorna Salzman, participated in

some of the forums as well. We had a grassroots Green campaign going on.

The California Primary was also taking place in March. It had a little different landscape than the Eastern primaries as Peter Camejo was on the ballot and California is the largest Green Party in the country with well over 100,000 members. Camejo was very well known in California from his two gubernatorial races, while Cobb, Mesplay, and Salzman were complete unknowns to all except the most active Greens.

The results of the March primaries were as follows.

California Green Party Primary Results

44589 Total Votes

| | | | |
|--------------|-------|---------------|------|
| Peter Camejo | 33753 | David Cobb | 5086 |
| Kent Mesplay | 913 | Lorna Salzman | 4759 |

Rhode Island Green Party Primary Results

131 Total Votes

David Cobb 71 No Candidate 29 Kent Mesplay 16
Write Ins 15 Including 7 For Ralph Nader

Massachusetts Green Rainbow Party Primary

Results 1069 Votes Total

| | | | | | |
|---------------|-------|-------|---------------|-----|-------|
| Kent Mesplay | 60 | 5.6% | Lorna Salzman | 217 | 20.3% |
| Paul Glover | 78 | 7.3% | David Cobb | 198 | 18.5% |
| No Preference | 236 | 22.1% | | | |
| Write Ins | 19.5% | | Blank | 73 | 6.8% |

Of The Write Ins

| | | | |
|--------------------|----|---------------|----|
| Dennis J. Kucinich | 35 | John F. Kerry | 22 |
| Ralph Nader | 39 | | |

All Other Write Ins 112 Not Differentiated On
MA Sec Of State Website

One of the most interesting things about the RI primary was that the turnout by percentage was higher in the Green Primary than in either the Republican or Democratic primaries. Probably this is because neither of the two big parties had much of a race going on by then. In Providence, where half the Greens in Rhode Island reside, City election officials messed up and the voter rolls on primary day listed all Green voters as members of no party. People who asked for the Green ballot received one, as unaffiliated voters can choose the primary they wish to vote in in RI, but often the election officials seeing an unenrolled voter offered the Democratic primary ballot unless the voter specifically knew to ask for the Green Party ballot. As many Rhode Islanders have no recollection of what party they are registered in, a number of Greens, when handed a Democratic primary ballot voted in the Democratic primary instead of the Green. We lost about 15 primary voters that way, significant in a turnout of 131. Election officials did say they would rectify the problem when we brought it to their attention the next day, but it took them two months of constant badgering before Green registrations were straightened out.

New Mexico held its primary in June. In this case Carol Miller was running as a favorite daughter, keeping NM's convention votes in play and as a surrogate for Nader.

The results of the NM Green Party Primary:

628 Total votes

| | | | |
|---------------|-----|--------------|-----|
| David Cobb | 156 | Paul Glover | 55 |
| Kent Mesplay | 16 | Carol Miller | 345 |
| Lorna Salzman | 56 | | |

Cobb won the two smallest turnout primaries, Salzman won one primary, and Favorite Children Camejo and Miller won by large margins in their home states.

Only 5 State Green parties held primaries so a variety of other techniques were used by state parties to choose convention delegates and who they would vote for at the convention. Some ballot qualified parties were in states that did not normally hold primaries and used conventions or caucuses to choose delegates to the national convention and determine how the state delegation would vote on the nomination. Many states did not have ballot qualified parties and often were less regulated by state election law. These state parties had to develop their own process. Some tried on line or mail in ballots, others used a home grown caucus process or held a convention in order to choose their delegations and decide how the state delegation would vote at the national convention.

In some states Green Parties lost a few activists during the run up to the Democratic nomination. Dean and Kucinich drew Greens into Democratic circles, especially in states where registrations were not an issue. Some of those folks came back to the Green Party as the Democratic nomination drifted towards Kerry, but some stayed in the ABB/Democratic Party camp. Those Greens that stayed in the ABB camp essentially left the building in terms of influencing the Green Party decisions about the presidential campaign as by voting in a Democratic Primary they forfeited their vote in Green Party decisions in many states. I described it as an organizing problem for the Greens who did not want the Green Party to nominate a candidate. When they opted to not participate they lost the power to actually influence the decision. Pretty hard to turn that into a winning strategy.

Rhode Island lost none of our activists to Kucinich or Dean. One active Green in RI carried petitions for Kucinich, but he voted Green, and worked on Green campaigns after Kerry got the nod. We probably lost a few members to the Democrats, but while they were either registered Greens or old names on the mailing list, the people we lost were those who we had not seen since 2000 or even earlier.

Chapter Nine

Spring 2004

Peter Camejo came out with the Avocado Statement during the spring. I found it to be a pretty good representation of Green politics and signed on. But after 2 conference calls it turned out that what Camejo wanted to do was use it to support the Nader campaign. Nader had already declared by this time, spring 2004, that he was running as an independent. I found it a little disconcerting that Camejo was writing about building the Green Party and then stumping for an independent Nader, so I dropped out of conversations about organizing around the Avocado Statement.

All through the spring, petition drives were going. In some states the petitioning was so that the Green Party could put up any candidate it chose at the convention. In some states the party had to decide who to petition for with no substitutions. Often there was petitioning going on for both Cobb and Nader. Neither were doing all that well, states with very difficult ballot access regulations were inaccessible to both candidates, and volunteers were in short supply.

Cobb and Nader took very different approaches to their petitioning woes. When Cobb ran into petitioning woes, he jumped into petitioning, going to a state and joining the petitioning. In some states, even when he was unable to get himself on the ballot, he would help with the petitioning for local candidates and help them get on the ballot. In Illinois Cobb's petitioning efforts really made the difference in the success of 3 local petitioning drives.

Nader took the opposite tack, suing states left and right and relying on someone else to do the actual petitioning. Rumors flew that Nader was taking Republican money, as a Nader campaign was a way to create problems for the Democratic nominee in November, but that was just corporate party and media propaganda taking the contributions and statements of a few individuals and blowing it all out of proportion. Nader ran into troubles in several states with hired petitioners, as the hired petitioners often were inexperienced, and when they were low income folks getting paid by the signature they collected signatures without

taking the time to make sure they were getting valid signatures. There was at least one case in which Nader's people temporarily refused to pay some low income petitioners due to the quality of the signatures.

The Nader campaign had more resources than the Cobb campaign, more money, more name recognition, a built in constituency for a Nader candidacy. But what Nader did not have was the support of many of the most experienced Green activists, the Greens in the state parties most capable of pulling together and running a successful petition drive. These grassroots oriented workers/leaders related better to the Cobb campaign with the grassroots front and center and a long term commitment to building local Green Parties. I very much noticed that the Green activists from around the country I most respect and prefer to work with all were lining up for Cobb and the Green Party campaign instead of the Nader campaign, and that the Green activists that moved towards the Nader campaign were generally those that I would just as soon not work with. This was not a hard and fast rule, there was some geographic variation, there were some people I greatly respect for their Green work on the Nader side of the divide, but the people I most like working with on projects were in the Cobb camp in an overwhelming percentage.

Nader has a lot of trouble relating to the long term party builders/leaders of state parties, the folks actually doing the work every day that keeps locals plugging along. He does not understand them very well nor understand how important they are in getting things done within the party. Therefore he did not seem to notice who in the Green Party he was attracting and how that might influence what help he would receive building local campaigns. Maybe he figured that his name recognition in the grassroots would overwhelm being out organized and that the leaders of the state parties were generally not lining up for his campaign. Or maybe it was okay with Nader to not attract the best Green organizers as he seemed more interested in suing than running and really had no place for these leaders in his campaign.

As a petitioner who has collected thousands of signatures over the years it bothered me a lot that most of Nader's petitioning problems could have been solved if he had been willing to devote his spring to petitioning. Think about how many signatures, volunteers, and ballot lines Nader would have been able to get if he had been willing to go petition for 3 days at a major intersection downtown in those states where he need tens of thousands of signatures. With a little publicity people would have flocked to see him.

I have an off the wall theory about this. The theory is that Nader, while giving slightly mixed signals about Kerry, and talking about running hard everywhere, deliberately missed ballot lines so that he could talk a really good game about running hard against Kerry as well as Bush, but as he would be off the ballot in so many places his actual effect would be negligible.

The Green Party of RI held a state convention on April 3, about a month after our primary. The purpose was to choose delegates to the national convention. We voted on a formula for allocating delegates based on the primary results with two extra delegates being designated as uncommitted so as to be flexible if the situation changed between April and the convention. We did have some members hoping that Nader would change his mind and seek the nomination, but no one really hoping for a Nader endorsement. The GPRI elected 10 delegates and 2 alternates, filling our entire delegate allocation. Six delegates were pledged to vote for Cobb on the first round and four went as uncommitted. RI did not mandate who delegates were to vote for after the first round, offering the delegation the opportunity to seize the day. We promised to raise some money for all of those who needed financial assistance in order to attend the convention, and eventually did.

The most interesting thing at the GPRI meeting was when Dave Richardson, a person who occasionally comes to Green meetings, but primarily

identifies himself as a member of the Reform Party, asked who besides him was going to be working on the Nader for President campaign. Not a single person in the room other than Richardson raised their hand. Everyone else in the room, all the Greens, had no real interest in the Nader campaign unless it was a Green campaign. And that is how it went, not one active Green from RI did anything to support the Nader campaign, and the Nader campaign stayed nearly invisible in RI with one campaign planning event in May and one college appearance in the fall. I later discussed this meeting and the response to Richardson's question with Jo Chamberlain, one of the GPUS co chairs from CA, and she was amazed as she thought nearly everyone was going for Nader. I pointed out that there were many state parties like RI, especially the smaller parties, the activists in these places wanted a Green campaign, and unless Nader was running as a Green, they were not going to help him.

Nader came to RI in the spring, May 25 2004 to be exact. It was a low key organize some volunteers meeting, about 25 people attended. Greens, Reform Party members and a few Nader fans I did not know made up the crowd. Nader spoke for a few minutes and then opened it up for questions. I tossed him what I thought was a softball of a question. I asked, hoping for an answer in the affirmative, if he would accept the GPRI ballot line if he was endorsed (note that I asked about if he was endorsed) at the convention. He came back with some song and dance and said I am not going to answer that now. Nader followed up his statement that he would not commit to ballot lines if endorsed with a lengthy listing of all the things that he did not like about the Green Party. He was so down on the Greens, we were doing nothing right in his eyes and he was appalled that we did not have 10,000 candidates for local office in 2004. A number of Greens in the room looked at me as if saying what the hell is he doing, and a reporter asked me if he had just completely dissed the Green Party. I had to agree.

Later during the discussion I said to Nader that his understanding of what was going on in the Green Party was rather weak and that he was missing out on an opportunity by not being willing to work with the Greens. This brought on another dissing of the Green Party and that is when I figured out that he really did not understand anything going on in the Green Party or much about grassroots political activism. I decided that I was definitely not going to support him at the convention, though I was still resigned to a Nader campaign if he decided he actually wanted to do something to get the nomination or endorsement. At the end of the meeting I talked with Nader's campaign aides, Russell Mokhiber and Carl Mayer, and told them that if Nader wanted the endorsement he probably ought to show up in Milwaukee.

Chapter Ten

Prepping for the Convention

Every 4 years the GPUS National Committee annual meeting is combined with a Presidential Nominating Convention, in 2004 scheduled for the last weekend in June in Milwaukee. It was the end of the legislative session in RI, so I was spending long hours at the State House, and was generally very busy. Preparation for the Convention and Coordinating Committee meeting took huge amounts of time. With the Steering Committee being seriously short handed due to a few members dropping out over the course of the year, I seemed to end up handling of a lot of what was going to happen at the Coordinating Committee meeting, and almost completely in charge of the agenda.

As noted earlier the GPUS has put into place, though not 100% perfected, an on line process for discussing and voting on resolutions. Using the Voting Page system all GPUS resolutions and the calendars associated with them are on the web and accessible to everyone, though only those with a password can vote or join the discussion. CC Delegates can check the documents at any time, amendments can be easily posted, and the results of every vote since the system started are on file. Delegates are prompted by the voting page genie when a new resolution is posted and when it is time to vote. I have some responsibilities for keeping the voting system operational, and have come to know it pretty well. It really works and the delegates know what they are voting on and debate is unhurried, though often carried out by only a few delegates. There is time to think about how a resolution effects other parts of the system. This must be contrasted to the usual state of affairs at GPUS meetings in which a flurry of hastily crafted proposals come forth, and due to time constraints may be passed without full debate, without finished language, or without enough time to think about the implications.

On occasion passing resolutions in a hurry at the annual meetings has created a real mess. We were hoping to avoid that scenario in 2004 and set a precedent for future years.

With the voting system in place, and most people wanting to focus on the convention, several months before the meeting I started sending the CC delegates notes reminding them that at the CC meeting the Party was going to focus on reports from the committees and caucuses and the election of officers. The Steering Committee repeatedly asked for agenda items, and asked that any resolutions the delegates wanted to submit come early enough so that they could be planned for in working out the schedule. The SC announced well in advance that tweaks to the system for electing the SC would be the only thing the SC had in the way of resolutions. The national committee saw at least 5 versions of the agenda. Each time it was sent out for comment it was revised based on the feedback. We managed to take care of just about every concern raised, and get everything submitted onto the agenda. Eventually the agenda was finalized and by then it was time to go to Milwaukee.

Chapter Eleven

The 2004 GPUS Presidential Nominating Convention

The GPUS Presidential Nominating Convention (PNC) was a pivotal event and no respite from the stormy weather.

The CC meeting was scheduled for Thursday, Friday, and Sunday, the 24th, 25th, and 27th of June, and the convention for Saturday the 26th. I flew to Milwaukee on Monday to help with all of the last minute details of putting on the convention. Monday was also the day that Nader announced that Peter Camejo would be his vice presidential nominee. The Steering Committee and staff met every day at 8AM and kept working until late at night taking care of planning, packet stuffing, checking venues and making sure everyone was on the same page. The staff worked incredibly hard and did a great job under difficult circumstances. Special kudos go to

convention organizer Adam Benedetto. Ben Manski was the SC person in Wisconsin and also did a tremendous amount of work, pre convention and during the event. I managed to see a lot of Milwaukee, going for long walks at 5 every morning. What was most interesting to me about Milwaukee was the geography and development practices. Milwaukee very much reminded me of Providence, a place where several rivers meet downtown and flow into a large body of water that leads to the world. I spent some time at the confluence of the rivers and where the river enters Lake Michigan. Both cities have lost most of their industrial base and the removal or renovation of factories and the waterfront to create upscale living or arts spaces seems to be the order of the day. The governments of both cities must read the same development manuals.

CC meeting

The Coordinating Committee, the national committee, meets once each year, conducting all the rest of its business on line. Each state party has a delegation sized according to the population of the various states, with delegations ranging from two delegates for most states to 13 delegates for California. Each year at the meeting the delegates are frustrated and driven crazy by the way the Steering Committee runs the

meeting and interprets the rules and want to spend most of the meeting arguing about it, while the SC tries to move them through their business. 2004 was no exception. The quality of the meetings over the years, the contentiousness and the frustration of working in that atmosphere, are one of the reasons the organization is in the shape it is. I think some Greens are constitutionally unable to work properly in groups, their temperament makes it impossible for them to work well with others and actually allow a group to progress. It comes out as arguments about process. The most contentious of the Greens claim the process is always insufficiently open and democratic, but Greens really do practice democracy. Greens nit pick process when they do not have the votes to win or the substance to persuade. There are people in the party who want to hamstring people getting something done because they can not control those initiatives. There is some politics involved but at least as much of it is psychological.

So 2004 was nothing out of the ordinary. Contentious as ever. The lack of institutional memory due to the constant flow of new people into the organization, a somewhat idiosyncratic evolving process, political differences, and a supply of ornery people do not a good mix make.

The first day of the CC meeting, Thursday, was for reports from the various caucuses and committees, and approving and seating newly accredited state parties and caucuses. The GPUS is now made up of 44 state parties and 3 caucuses. Committees reported, took questions, and then we went on to the next committee. We were behind schedule all day.

Thursday night was the candidates debate with Salzman, Cobb, Mesplay, and Camejo slated to appear. It may have been the most important event in Milwaukee other than the actual nomination.

In addition Thursday was notable as David Cobb used the day to announce that if he was nominated his vice presidential candidate would be Patricia LaMarche. LaMarche had been the Green Party candidate for Governor in Maine in 1998 and was respected and liked by everyone who knew her. She is a great candidate, she really connects with people, is articulate, and has her heart in the right place. The Nader/Camejo supporters immediately started attacking her record because 6 months earlier she, like many Greens, had been quoted as expressing some doubts as to whether it made sense for the Green Party to run a candidate for President in 2004, an attack the left kept up all through the campaign season even as LaMarche campaigned across America.

The Debate took place in a sectioned off part of the Convention Center in a packed room with several hundred people in attendance. Each candidate made a short opening statement and then there were a series of questions for all the candidates, with rotation of the order of who answered first. As for the issues, the candidates on the stage were all Greens and the differences spelled out were minuscule compared to the differences between all of them and the corporate mainstream. They all want world peace, a healthy environment, justice, and democracy, and know that making the rich richer and starting wars is not the way to get there.

Salzman acquitted herself pretty well, though she also reminded all of us that she was not really running for the nomination. Mesplay's performance was also decent, not much different than his appearance at the RI debate during the winter.

Cobb was well versed on the issues, spoke with his usual enthusiasm and energy, laid out his nuanced strategy of running however the local Greens in that state wanted him to run but being unwilling to attack people who feel they have to vote for Kerry because Bush is so bad.

Camejo did address the issues but spent an inordinate amount of time attacking Cobb and his strategy, a tactic Camejo practiced throughout the campaign. Interestingly many of the things Camejo

threw at Cobb had been discussed by Nader in similar ways. Camejo was arguing for an all out campaign and attacked the nuanced strategy but when it was noted that Nader had met with Kerry and called him Presidential, Camejo said that did not count. When it was noted that Nader had also conceded that Bush was worse, that did not count either. I think the nomination/endorsement turned towards Cobb at this point because of Camejo's unrelenting attacks on him and the hypocrisy of attacking Cobb for saying things that were very similar to what Nader said. The manner in which Camejo attacked Cobb also helped Cobb because it was then clear to many who had not seen Camejo in action before and did not know his record, that he is not a very nice person. Cobb's supporters had much to cheer about during the debate, while Camejo/Nader's supporters shouted their anger but had little to cheer.

The strangest thing in the debate, other than Camejo's performance, was the interjection of JoAnne Beeman into the picture. I was hoping that there would be no last minute candidates, figuring they would be sort of an embarrassment. Beeman, a Green from Michigan, stepped onto the stage at the end of the debate and made a short statement announcing her candidacy. I found out later she had some support within the Michigan delegation, and that she was an elected county official back home.

Friday morning, after the usual early morning planning sessions, the CC reconvened. The agenda called for more reports and a clarification in the rules on how the SC is elected, bringing a proposal for Ranked Choice Voting and allowing nominations on the floor just before the vote. As is usual in the evolution of the Green Party rules we had run into situations we had not anticipated and therefore were doing a little updating a little late in the game.

During agenda review several delegates noted that they wanted to bring up more convention rules. The delegates were for the most part not really enthusiastic about the idea, but after an hour of wrangling agreed to schedule a special Friday afternoon session specifically to look at proposals for amending the convention rules. This meant that CC delegates would be unable to attend the various Friday afternoon workshops, some of which had CC members as presenters. After the CC scheduled the extra session it returned to the original agenda and worked through it fairly routinely.

For the extra afternoon session various delegates presented 6 proposals. One proposal sought to allow a greater range of candidates than the original rules to speak at the convention. One asked whether the convention would pass its own set of rules rather than use rules adopted by the CC. A third clarified

whether a potential nominee needed a plurality or a majority to win the nomination.

The afternoon session was relatively uneventful. Facilitated with a strong hand by Jane Hunter of New Jersey and Kevin McKeown of California, the CC methodically went through the proposals. The CC decided to open up the speaking program to a greater range of candidates and require a majority vote to be nominated. It rejected 4 of the proposals, two during preliminary debate, two after a second lengthier discussion.

I had hoped that the proposal to have the convention delegates vote on their own rules would have been brought up so that after a full debate it could be clearly defeated. In a two step process with a short debate first and then a vote by the CC to decide whether or not a proposal merited further debate the CC decided it did not merit further debate. The two major proponents of the convention voting on its own rules had very different reactions to the defeat. Victor Fleitas of MS said he would accept the vote, while Gary Novosielski of NJ stewed about it and contemplated looking for a way to disrupt the convention enough to force everyone to hear him out.

The Friday afternoon session lasted until dinner time, after which the schedule called for some fun including a block party outside the convention center with some local bands. The block party was fun, but lightly attended as the Nader/Camejo supporters were meeting rather than joining the festivities.

Convention Saturday

Saturday was the actual convention. C-SPAN was there and some other media, with over 500 delegates in the house. I started off my day with Steering Committee meetings then jumped into organizing the vote reporters from each state and the peace keepers.

Modern US Presidential Nominating conventions hold no drama, the winner is known months ahead of time. The front loaded primaries essentially ending the contest before the Super Tuesday primaries, in early March, even for the party without an incumbent. The 2004 Green Party convention by contrast was a complete mystery. No candidate had anywhere close to a majority of the delegates sewn up going in. If as anticipated the convention voting went beyond the first round, only a few states required their delegates to vote in a certain way in later rounds.

The lack of a candidate with a majority of the delegates sewn up coming in was the result of several factors. First and foremost was that the original favorite, Nader, had decided to not seek the nomination, but still wanted an endorsement. The other candidates were relatively unknown. Also the Green Party is

subject to 51 different election codes and each state party has its own unique set of rules, so no one really knew exactly how flexible the response to events by the state party delegations would be.

During the spring, as each state held its convention, caucus, or primary and allocated delegates to the various candidates and positions, the Green Party kept a running total on the website. By convention time Cobb had 270 out of the 800+ delegate slots that had been allocated. Camejo had about 100 delegates pledged to him, most from California as he had not really run anywhere else, and by this time was Nader's VP candidate. Nader also had just over 100 delegates pledged to vote for him in the first round. Mesplay and Salzman had small numbers of delegates pledged to them, some delegates were pledged to vote for no nomination or none of the above, and some delegates were not pledged to any particular candidate or outcome.

The system of voting during the convention was that each state party would designate a reporter to stand up when their state was called and report how many votes from their state were going to which candidates. The reporters were instructed to keep a tally sheet with the votes from their state so they could be sure they were getting it right and so there would be a written record if some one complained that votes were recorded improperly. It happened that in writing convention rules we had not considered what to do with the state tally sheets, whether we should collect them or leave them in the hands of the state parties. During the early morning training of reporters I was asked what we should do with the tally sheets. I replied that we probably ought to collect them. Gary Novosielski then noted that the rules did not call for their collection. I said okay, then we shall not collect them. Novosielski then complained about us not collecting them, so I asked him what he suggested. He suggested following the rules, but as it had just been noted that the convention rules had nothing in them about the collection of tally sheets it was useless to continue the conversation with Novosielski, so we just moved on.

After we got the reporters squared away, Jody Haug and I then organized the peace keepers. We were hoping that the peace keepers would be superfluous, that everything would be calm. But we set up a few checkpoints so that only delegates, candidates, and other authorized people would actually be on the convention floor and had a few peace keepers walking around watching. We also set up a liaison system with the security guards. It was kind of strange to have security guards at a Green event, but when you have Presidential candidates in the room, might as well follow the tradition and have a little security. I ended up as the liaison with the security guards.

For me it was really good being one of the peace keepers because it gave me a perfect excuse to keep walking around the room during the convention rather than sit in one place. I do not sit very well through events like conventions, and liked getting the exercise and having a chance to see what was going on all over the floor. I checked in regularly with the RI delegation, but got to see the world.

Saturday morning the Convention started about an hour late because we were waiting for someone from the Accreditation Committee to come in from the registration desk with the data about how many delegates from each state were present, and how many proxies they were allowed to vote, so we would know how many votes each state delegation could cast and the overall totals. Once we got the Accreditation information, GPUS co-chair Jo Chamberlain and I went on stage and gave our completely scripted welcome to the delegates. We worked hard on writing it and it was just right. Then Holly Hart, co-chair of the platform committee, conducted the vote on the platform. On Friday there had been a series of hearings on the platform in which all of the unresolved issues had been taken care of. Therefore the SC asked Holly to just conduct a voice vote. In retrospect it might have been nicer to conduct a tallied vote, but it would not have changed the results.

We then had all the announced candidates address the convention. Cobb was his usual self, Camejo continued his attacks, and to my surprise I liked JoAnne Beeman's speech. We also had a speaker asking for no candidate. Following the speeches we started voting.

Voting was a tremendous experience. The reporter for each state delegation arose in turn, in alphabetical order, and their reporter announced: The GP of X state, the home of....., very traditional on the surface, but then followed by recalling a racist legacy, a toxic waste dump or some other crime against humanity that was a part of their state's heritage instead of the usual jingoism. Then they would announce their delegation's allocation for the candidates.

Matt Gonzalez, 2003 Green candidate for Mayor in San Francisco, had been elected Elections Administrator by the Coordinating Committee and was administering with his assistant Bob Coleman. Gonzalez would call out a state, and after the state reporter announced the allocation of votes, Gonzalez would repeat it to make sure it was correct. Questions were quickly cleared up, and then it was typed into a computer and displayed on the big screen. Running totals were displayed for all candidates throughout.

Results for the first round were:

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------|-------------------|------|
| Carol Miller | 9.5 | David Cobb | 308 |
| Dennis Kucinich | 9 | JoAnne Beeman | 14 |
| Kent Mesplay | 24 | Lorna Salzman | 40 |
| No Nominee | 74.5 | None of the Above | 35.5 |
| Paul Glover | 5.5 | Peter Camejo | 119 |
| Ralph Nader | 117.5 | Sheila Bilyeu | 2 |
| Dr. Jonathan Farley | 3 | Eugene Debs | 1 |
| Uncommitted | 6.5 | | |
| total 769 | | | |

As expected, no candidate had a majority of the vote, so a second round of voting was in order. Before the next round was to be conducted everyone took a break for lunch, giving us time to absorb what was going on, for state delegations to caucus, and for all of the various campaigns to rally their support. I went out into the sunshine and ate and walked.

As we returned from lunch stories about what was happening with the California delegation started drifting in. Camejo had spoken very harshly to the California delegation, livid that some of the delegates who had been pledged to him or another candidate for the first round of voting were going to vote for Cobb in the second round. Susan King told me Camejo had singled her out and threatened to damage her campaign for San Francisco City Council if she voted against him. Interestingly early in the campaign Camejo had openly discussed the idea that his delegates were really only his as a place holder and that if he did not seek the nomination they were to be free to go where their conscience took them in later rounds of voting. Obviously that statement was something Camejo was not standing by.

After lunch the second round of voting began, conducted in the same way as the first with State reporters announcing votes and after confirmation by Election Administrator Gonzales, being projected onto the big screen. The rules called for up to 4 rounds of voting with lowest ranking candidates being dropped off the ballot after each round. The Green Party had rules stating that only candidates that signed a statement saying they would accept the nomination would be placed on the ballot for any round after the first. Miller, Camejo, and Salzman all declined to accept the nomination and were therefore not on the ballot for the second round. Nader had also made it clear he would not accept the nomination. The Nader/Camejo surrogate was No Candidate. The Convention rules stated that if No Candidate got a majority then party would have no nominee and the convention would vote on whether or not to endorse a candidate. This was in the rules to accommodate Nader who did not want the nomination but wanted an endorsement if we did not nominate. The rules also included a clause stating that even if No Candidate had the lowest vote of any

option on the ballot in a particular round it would remain as a choice on the ballot.

I continued strolling the convention floor and checking in all over the room during the second round. I was watching the vote totals go up and started wondering what the state by state comparisons were between the first and second rounds. I was not anticipating a second round victory, but was curious as to how close Cobb would get. At first no one I talked to was keeping track of the state by state comparisons though I assumed the lead people for the Cobb campaign might be. This was confirmed when I ran into Lynne Serpe, Cobb's campaign manager, who was keeping track and reported that they were doing better than round one by a decent margin, though she was unsure whether it was going to put them over the top in this round. A key pickup was 22 more votes from California than Cobb had received in the first round, the ones Camejo was so angry about, but Cobb was picking up votes everywhere from delegates who had been pledged elsewhere on the first round. Late in the round it looked like Cobb might go over the top and get a majority of the votes. When the Texas delegation was called to cast their ballots, they passed. A State Party delegation was allowed to pass when its turn came, and then vote at the end of the round. The thought of Texas passing sort of gave me a little twinkle. I walked over to the delegation and asked if they had passed so that they could be the final votes to put their home boy over the top, and the reply was affirmative. The TX delegation was very excited, and when at the end of the alphabetical round of voting Texas was called for a second time their 37 votes put Cobb over the top and cheers erupted. As the voting was ending the peace keepers came up front just in case the disgruntlement of other camps boiled over, but nothing happened.

The final results of the second round were:

| | | | |
|-----------|-----|------------|-----|
| Cobb | 408 | No nominee | 308 |
| Beeman | 8 | Mesplay | 43 |
| Abstain | 3 | | |
| total 770 | | | |

As a portent of bad times and bad behavior to come though, Peter Camejo left the room at the announcement, taking some of his people with him, and never congratulated Cobb and LaMarche, either in person, or even by returning phone calls.

Following the choosing of the Presidential candidate the next order of business was choosing a Vice Presidential candidate. Cobb had already made clear that his choice was Patricia LaMarche of Maine. LaMarche was accepted by acclamation.

Then Cobb and LaMarche made speeches and the organizers thanked a few people for their work on the convention.

We then took a well deserved recess, reconvening at night for speeches and music.

A quick comparison of the first and second rounds of voting is in order to see how Cobb put together the majority of the votes and won the nomination.

The first round results:

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------|-------------------|------|
| Carol Miller | 9.5 | David Cobb | 308 |
| Dennis Kucinich | 9 | JoAnne Beeman | 14 |
| Kent Mesplay | 24 | Lorna Salzman | 40 |
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2nd round results:

| | | | |
|---------|-----|------------|-----|
| Cobb | 408 | No Nominee | 308 |
| Beeman | 8 | Mesplay | 43 |
| Abstain | 3 | | |

total 770

Of course the first thing that jumps out is that the candidates who were not actually seeking the nomination were not on the second round ballot. No Nominee was the Nader stand in, in that if a majority of the delegates voted not to nominate then the convention could do an endorsement if it so desired. The first round votes for Nader and his surrogates Salzman, Camejo, and Miller combined totaled 286, 37.1%. Cobb had 308, on the first round, 40%. Most of the 286 who voted for Nader, Camejo, Miller or Salzman in the first round voted for no candidate in the second round, but there were some defections including 22 votes from California switching to Cobb. Some of the New Mexico votes that had gone to Miller in the first round also went to Cobb. True advocates for sitting out the race who voted for no candidate probably stayed in that column, but some of the no nominee/none of the above votes in the first round were mandated by state conventions to vote that way on the first round but were free to vote for other choices on the second round, and some of those might have gone to Cobb in the second round based on what was going on at the convention. The votes for Bilyeu, Debs, Kucinich, Farley, and Glover, about 20 in all, probably swung towards Cobb.

Cobb received 100 votes more on the second round than he did in the first round, while no nominee received fewer votes than Salzman, Camejo, Miller, Nader, and no candidate/none of the above had received on the first round. Beeman dropped a few votes while Mesplay increased his vote, which reflected the dignity Mesplay had brought to the entire campaign. 40% of the Greens at the convention either

wanted us to stay out of the race or supported Nader while 60% of the delegates wanted a Green presidential campaign. I thought we were going to have a third ballot, I did not think Cobb would get 386 on the second ballot, but I figured most of Beeman and Mesplay's votes would have gone to Cobb in the third round so that if Cobb had come up just short a third round victory might happen, but happily two rounds of voting gave us a candidate with a majority of the vote.

The fact that Nader did not come, and was represented by Camejo, must be considered a factor in the convention ending up nominating Cobb and not endorsing Nader. Some Greens assumed that if Nader did not come, he did not care, and others were so put off by Camejo's performance at the debate and his general behavior/demeanor throughout the days leading to the vote that folks who were undecided decided to go with Cobb. This was most definitely a factor in the California delegation where 22 people switched to Cobb in the second round. It is just a coincidence that without those 22 votes Cobb had exactly the 386 needed to win, but a large switch did influence the perception of the race in the room.

The Sunday CC Meeting

Sunday the Coordinating Committee reconvened for the purpose of electing officers and a Coordinated Campaign Committee. The CC argued all day. The CC even wanted to hold an election when only 9 people ran for the Coordinated Campaign Committee and there were 10 slots to fill. For the Steering Committee elections the Green Party tried out a method of holding the election using IRV. Jonathan Lundell of California worked out a program for tallying/transferring the ranked votes by computer. Even after approving election rules two days before the CC wanted to argue about rules some more before holding the vote. Then it argued about who could vote and how many voters there were. The meeting had been run on the honor system. It was assumed state parties knew how many votes they had and were voting appropriately. The counts were pretty regular all weekend, but there was a big stink when it was discovered that one state party had accidentally cast one extra vote in the paper ballot Steering Committee vote. Eventually it was figured out where it was from, and it was removed, but even leaving it in would have made no difference in the results. The practice at GPUS CC meetings has been to count hands whenever there was vote on resolutions. All weekend we had three counters counting independently and the results from counter to counter were consistent. Now some CC delegates were demanding that future resolution votes be roll call votes rather than hand counting votes. The Party always uses paper ballots for the

electing of people to positions, and that is where the one extra vote was found. Of course by this time we did not have any resolution votes coming up, so the point of demanding roll call resolution votes was moot for the current meeting, but the policies and procedures are likely to be amended to include roll calls for all resolution votes at face to face meetings. A new Steering Committee and Coordinated Campaign Committee were seated and then the meeting adjourned.

Following the CC meeting, we convened the new Steering Committee just long enough to figure out how to communicate with each other and get ourselves started. Then it was time to relax.

Late Sunday afternoon, I sat in the park across the street from the hotel with my old friend Michael Feinstein who I had first met at a Green Meeting in Eugene Oregon in the 1980's. Feinstein told of doom and gloom descending on the Green Party, that choosing Cobb instead of endorsing Nader was the worse thing the party could ever do and it would intensify our downward spiral. I do not see a downward spiral, I see Green Parties being more and more effective all over the country, becoming more of a part of the community in more and more places, so I had to disagree. Feinstein spoke of how the whole idea of a contested nominating process was so bad that it would split us, we should have let Nader have his cakewalk. I had to disagree saying that under the circumstances, with all of the uncertainty and ABB sentiment, we had had to be ready for every alternative. Therefore the Green Party had been well served by an open process where candidates had to actually campaign in order to be nominated, which meant using the campaigning to build the party and actually try to create on the ground operations around the country. Cobb did that, and therefore won the nomination. I admitted that I probably had an earlier and clearer vision of what it would take to claim the nomination than most other Greens, and had set about making it happen. I told Feinstein he could blame me for setting up the real contest for the nomination, that I thought it was a big step forward for the Green Party that we had had a contested process, and that I was proud of my part in helping make it happen. All he could do was cover his ears and run away screaming.

Sunday night I went to see David Cobb. Prior to the convention as Secretary of the GPUS I needed to be officially neutral and could not do anything to really favor one candidate over the another, but when the convention had made a choice, I was going to be in a position to really help the chosen candidate as I had no Greens on the ballot in my voting precinct except for the Presidential slate. I was probably going to take on some of the organizing of the Presidential

campaign in RI but I also wanted to help the campaign nationally. I talked a few minutes with Cobb and then went to dinner with Cobb, Pat LaMarche, and key Cobb campaign people including Lynne Serpe, John Rensenbrink, and Holly Hart. I was trying to figure out what I could do for the campaign, but did not figure it out that night.

The next morning it was time to go home and after walking with new GPUS co-chair Jody Grage Haug, I went to the airport and ran into John Rensenbrink and Michael Feinstein. We talked a little more politics and then it was time for a long ride home.

Chapter Twelve

July in Rhode Island

Post convention many things happened simultaneously. I had work to do in Rhode Island around ballot access for local candidates and for the first two weeks of July that occupied much of my time. The Camejo camp ratcheted up their attacks on the convention and on Cobb/LaMarche. And the Cobb/LaMarche campaign moved to a higher gear.

As the GPRI pointed out months previously when we filled out our questionnaire, having the convention on the last weekend in June meant that when we returned from the convention, it would be just in time to register candidates for all local offices and begin to petition to get them on the ballot. As we had petitioned the previous November and December for the presidential primary, we did not have to do any presidential petitioning. We

thought we had 4 candidates for local office, just under our average for the last few election cycles, but when we heard that someone who was in no way a Green was trying to use our ballot line to run for Mayor of Warwick, we went out at the last minute and recruited a candidate for the primary, a real Green, Stephen LaMarre, so that the person on the Green ballot line would actually be someone we wanted representing us. LaMarre filed 3 minutes before the deadline. This meant that we had to gear up a petition drive at the last minute and collect 300+ signatures in Warwick in 10 days. Nothing impossible, but not something we were planning for. But we did it, I collected 75 of them, and it was good to spend that time of the year collecting signatures door to door. So it worked out that we had our usual complement of 5 candidates going into the fall, six if you count the impostor, and the first ever in RI Green primary for a local office scheduled for September.

As noted earlier I met with Cobb and his campaign team at the end of the convention so I could figure out how to help. When I returned home there was some email traffic about how to set up a system to provide content for the website on the issues, answer questionnaires, and develop policy statements for the campaign. I helped organize a working group of policy

drafters including GPUS Platform Committee co-chair Holly Hart, Woody Hastings, Ted Glick, and John Rensenbrink. We sent drafts around for comment and then to key campaign decision makers (Campaign Manager Lynne Serpe and Media Coordinator Blair Bobier) for approval and posting.

I looked at the policy and questionnaire writing work as an extension of the work I already did answering the info@ email for the Green Party. At that address I get questions, questionnaires, student inquiries for information or materials, and the notes on where are the tee shirts I ordered. I also get to see the hate mail and the compliments, and it really is an excellent window into what is going on. Much of what came through the infoline colors what is in this book. It happens that in addition to sending things directed towards the party, it was also used by the public as a conduit to the Nader and Cobb campaigns as it is the first address to post to listed on the Green Party home page. People not familiar with the party use it if they want to send anyone connected to the Green Party a note. For the Cobb campaign I was able to answer or direct materials, saving the campaign from having to duplicate functions. When things came in for Nader I wrote back and said check his website as to where materials should be directed as he is not our candidate

and I have not been informed as to where things should go. I occasionally checked the Nader website so that I could give people a better place to direct things, but the website never seemed to have a good place to direct email. I sort of got the impression they did not want to know.

Right after the convention the amount of traffic on the info line picked up. A great deal of it was hate mail directed at us for nominating Nader. I answered almost every note that came in except those threatening violence. When I pointed out that the Green Party had nominated David Cobb, many people wrote back and said that gave them a very different perspective on the Green Party and that they would give us a second look. There were also a few comments saying that the Greens were stupid for not going with Nader, but the anti-Nader comments were much more prevalent than the pro-Nader comments.

I know it is not very humble to say it, but I think I am as well suited to answering the questions and composing off the cuff position papers for the Green Party and Green campaigns for office as anyone in the Green Party. As a party founder I have a pretty good grasp of our history and issues, and as Secretary I have a pretty good idea of what is going on and where to refer people when they need something

specific. I also think my instincts on the issues are pretty good, and there are some issues about which I am more knowledgeable than most Greens, especially ecology issues. Over the years I have taken stands on lots of issues, and when I compare my personal approach to an issue and the approach that comes out of a Green consensus, I am almost always pretty right on. Not perfectly, but pretty close, so if you need someone to instantly provide a green position to random questioners, while knowing exactly how to send them to the platform for more details, my answers are going to be acceptable to Greens almost all the time. I also know how to answer kids with enough information to keep them fishing and a request that they do their homework by reading more of the source materials rather than rely on me to reinvent the wheel for them. When combined with my experience with campaign writing from my previous runs for office, the ghost writing I have done for Green candidates and referendum campaigns, and that the style of writing for this work comes naturally to me, it ended up being a very enjoyable fall watching the reaction of the larger world, helping the Cobb/LaMarche campaign, writing to my hearts content, taking the lead on papers on forest and economic issues and participating in the editing of many others.

Chapter Thirteen

Claims of a Rigged Convention

Right after the convention the big news in the Green world should have been the campaign, but Peter Camejo and his henchmen decided to make the “rigged convention” the news. Considering there is no truth to anything about a rigged convention that came out in the either the media or in papers written on behalf of Camejo, one must at least consider why this story was created.

For its entire 20 year history, the Green Party in the United States has been a balancing act between the members of two political tendencies. Greens who come to the Green Party from the environmental movement, the peace movement, the free trade movement, the women’s movement, are comfortable with holism, consensus seeking, and a need for relationships to be harmonious. They are spiritually centered as Green. Greens who come to the Party from the left are much more comfortable with confrontation, standing up to the man and the state. There are many reasons for the development of the confrontational political philosophy, attitude, and style in the left, much of it due to the oppression they have faced on the streets of America, but the atmosphere only attracts people that are comfortable with that type of confrontation, and they are not necessarily people good at building something other than a vehicle for confrontation.

After a short afterglow from the Nader 2000 presidential bid that left the Party in a very nice place, the leftists in the Greens went back to the same tactics they have used for 20 years. Making the Green Party a contentious place. They are not a majority in the Greens, have only rarely been, and currently do not control the organization. They are included in all discussions, have a voice and influence, but not control. The new folks replacing those driven out by the confrontational atmosphere do not have the institutional memory of what happens when this particular group dominates the Green Party, though if people get involved they find out pretty fast on the email lists.

The left in this country relies on people in progressive politics being relatively unsophisticated about their tactics, and naive about their goals. I

started dealing with this in the mid 1980’s and it has only occasionally let up. The advantage the leftists have in this is that contentious people easily create a contentious atmosphere where they can thrive, while maintaining a more peaceful atmosphere is very difficult when there are contentious people in the room. It takes more energy than can be mustered and eventually folks leave, leaving the left back where they began. The recurrent theme is that after they gain control they proceed to run the organization, whether a Green Party local or state party, or any other kind of activist group, into the ground, leaving a hollowed out shell. The leftists in the Green Party keep thinking that some day it will work, that they will be able to take over an organization like the Green Party and it will not become a hollow shell, but it never happens. The shorthand for this tendency in the Green Party is GPUSA, as much of this behavior is associated with those Greens and their intellectual descendants who favored the GPUSA model of organizing as a membership based mass movement as opposed to the GPUS being a federation of state parties. When the GPUSA collapsed, most GPUSAers eventually migrated to the GPUS, but their nostalgia for a membership based organization, rather than a political party based on state parties, is combined with a style of personal behavior that slows down the development of the party.

The left is a hard place to hang out because their organizations may be the only organizations in America that welcome the belligerent anti-social behavior that characterizes their dealings with the world around them. They seem to thrive in an environment of confrontation and purity that mostly results in circular firing squads. Most people are not very comfortable there and find it a very difficult environment to make much headway in. The practitioners of this confrontationalism call it dissent. They label it political but when turned on fellow progressives it is internalized violence, the same as facing off in manly way against the police state, but they are really in the room with people with the same goals but different tactics. In order to work with them, the rest of us have to endure a rigidity and violence bordering on the psychotic, and often they are convinced that theirs is the only possible approach to party building rather than encouraging everyone with different strategies to experiment. I wish them well, we live in a horrible world that requires whole scale transformation, but that approach is not Green, and having to deal with it makes it much more difficult to maintain the activity of people with a more gentle approach to life and politics.

Members of the confrontational faction say that the Green Party should have 100 times as many members and that it is the gentler approach that gets in the way. Only confrontation 100% of the time is appropriate. Other Greens prefer a more gentle approach, as the confrontational approach has not yet worked. If the "tried and true" methodology drives people away, maybe we need to be in different rooms using different tactics. But when Greens try to create a Green space for politics, the left follows wherever we go because they want our success.

One important part of this debate is how best to continue the revolution. The Greens are a guerrilla band choosing battles carefully, confronting, but also dodging standing battles. The left, or at least the part of it that is so troublesome to growing the Green Party, insists that Green guerrilla tactics are a sellout to the capitalists and the Democrats and that confrontation at 100% is the only honest approach. Cobb being willing to sidestep the Kerry/Bush confrontation in a small way in 2004 was the biggest sin in the world according to the left despite what Nader said. Interesting how the left with its egalitarian rhetoric clustered around the celebrity despite his positions on social issues and ecology being less progressive than the positions espoused by Cobb, and Nader's less than democratic campaign structure. It is as if the left has so little faith in their model that they latch on to celebrity coat tails as the way to grow, whereas some of us are ready to stand on our own two feet and endure the slow but steady growth that seems appropriate in this ecosystem.

The two segments of the Green party fill different though somewhat overlapping niches, and as is fitting for organisms fitting into different niches, do things differently. There is something to be said for unity, bigger is better for political parties, but I, and many other Greens, see the left's tactics/approach as really harming the development of the Green Party. It creates a disharmonious atmosphere.

The differences in approach pervade our campaigns, preferred organizational models, strategies for growth and daily operations. In the contest for the Green Party, when the dialogue is peaceful, those of us who still hold to the Green Party as a federation of state parties, a model of organizing that began to emerge in the early 1990's, thrive, and we see the party growing around us. When the left can create a cantankerous environment, the gpusa clan takes more precedence, and the party struggles. They create the disharmony as that is the best environment for them. They move the battle to their niche. They thrive and it puts the rest of us off balance, makes us want to go home, and we do, leaving them the empty shell they always get when they do this. Everyone wants one big Green Party, but when the philosophies for growing it differ so much, we get in each other's way and no one benefits.

So when everyone arrived home from the convention the big story should have been the Greens nominated a great ticket of two home grown Greens and were ready to run a grassroots campaign. But following up on his abominable behavior, not even calling to congratulate Cobb and LaMarche on winning the nomination, Camejo and his henchmen concocted a story of a rigged convention. This was amplified by several state parties deciding that rather than accepting the results of the convention they helped set the rules for and participated in, they would attempt to undercut everyone and place Nader on the Green Party line in their states, or at least not place Cobb/LaMarche on the ballot. Nader had stated that he would only accept Green ballot lines if he was endorsed by the convention, but that did not seem to matter to some Greens.

The Green Party conducted a full and open debate on convention rules and the size of state delegations to the convention. All the state parties participated in the process by which delegation sizes were set. No one did anything unseemly in the selection of delegates. Candidates campaigned and recruited delegates, but there was no unseemly influence in any of the decisions as to how states would choose their delegations or in any of the state conventions, caucuses, or primaries that chose those delegates.

Camejo and company provide us with an almost text book example of how to lie with statistics. Camejo decided that since the California primary had

more votes cast in it than the other 4 primaries that California should have had more votes than all of the other states put together at the convention and therefore should have been able to throw the endorsement to Nader no matter what the other state parties wanted, even though the delegations had been agreed to months before. This needs a little deconstructing numerically as well as philosophically.

Delegation sizes were determined using a formula primarily based on the population of the various states and then factoring in the best statewide vote totals for a Green candidate in recent years and the number of Green elected officeholders in the various states. This meant that state parties were apportioned delegates primarily based on population, which honors one person one vote rather well, with a little bonus for Green electoral success. At the time when the formula was approved, there was not a whole lot of dissension, and the entire CA delegation voted to approve it. California, with about 1/8 of the US population was allocated something over 1/7 of the total number of delegates to the convention. They did not feel slighted when this was announced, and had by far the largest delegation, more than twice the size of any other, as is appropriate. The formula did slightly favor tiny states by establishing a minimum delegation of 3. Little Rhode Island, small in population (0.3% of the US population) rich in Green votes (6% for Nader in 2000 compared to 2.7% nationally) was allocated 1.2% of the delegates to the convention. Some of the mid range states with relatively small Green vote totals may have been slighted a bit, but no one complained, and everyone felt the allocation was basically fair.

At the time delegation sizes were set, November 2003, no one really had a handle on exactly how delegations were to be chosen by the state parties, what primaries and caucuses would look like, or a whole lot else other than candidates were going to compete for delegates everywhere if they wanted to be nominated. It said you had to run everywhere because no one state had enough convention votes to nominate.

After the convention Camejo and his front men trotted out a one person one vote argument that reflects a part, but definitely not all, of the definition of one person one vote. There are two aspects to one person one vote as practiced in the United States. One aspect is the actual number of votes cast, being scrupulous that each person gets one, and that they are counted properly. This Camejo and crew emphasized. But the other part of one person, one vote is that in a representative democracy, something the Green Party, as a federation of the state parties, most definitely is, each representative or delegate should represent the same number of people back home. This latter definition of one person one vote, that each delegate

represented the same number of people back home, was most definitely the goal of the Green Party in setting allocations for the convention, and one we followed pretty closely.

Camejo and crew then focused on two numbers, the number of registered Greens in California vis a vis the number of registered Greens in the country, and the size of the vote in the CA primary compared to the number of votes cast in the other 4 primaries that were held in 2004.

The Green Party has over the years had many discussions about how to measure Greens and how to allocate delegates. Greens can only register as Greens in approximately 20 states, and what that registration means varies from state to state. In some states only ballot qualified parties can have partisan registrations accepted and there are many states with no partisan registration what so ever. This tells me that using the number of registered Greens in a state is not a particularly good measure of the actual number of Greens in a state. Different states have also over the years used a variety of other criteria to measure the number of Greens in the state, and again there is no measure that allows one to accurately compare states. Another potential measure that has been discussed is using the number of votes Green candidates receive in elections.

This last one is a better measure for comparing the different states than are registrations, but even here there are problems in using it as a comparison due to the 51 different ballot access laws and political cultures we face in the states. Interestingly when Greens are able to get on the ballot the percentage of votes they receive around the country varies by much less than registrations or any other way of counting signed up greens. This then eases the discussion back towards using population, the one measure that is comparable across state lines and election laws, as the proper way to set the amount of representation a state Green Party should be allocated at the national committee or the national convention. Based on different cultures, the population versus registrations schools of thought may infect the Green Party for many years.

But back to the Camejo complaint. California has about 160,000 registered Greens while the other 20 states with Green registrations combined have a similar number. The number of votes in the California Green Presidential Primary was about 44,000 of which Camejo received 75%. The other 4 places with Green Primaries, DC, MA, NM, and RI have a population of about 10 million people compared to CA's 35 million but only turned out 2100 voters in the primaries: DC 384, MA 1069, NM 623, RI 131.

If you compare delegation sizes to population, DC, MA, NM, and RI did have a somewhat higher

proportion of the convention for population than California. The four states/colony were allocated 61 delegates compared to California's 127. This is the result of the slight bias towards low population states and a few additional delegates allocated to these places due to the very high percentage of the vote that the Green Presidential ticket received in 2000 with DC, MA, and RI being among Nader's best showings. MA and RI ended up with 6% of the vote going to the Green Party compared to 3% in California, which about matched the national average. One could make a case that California deserved a larger delegation compared to these 4 states, maybe 30% more delegates, but one would be hard pressed to justify giving California 50% of the convention delegates when one realizes that there were another 42 states present and they were not included in these calculations because they were not holding primaries. One also wonders why this did not come up before the convention.

The argument that 20 times as many votes were cast in the CA primary as in the other primaries put together really does not offer much of a reason to increase the allocation of delegates for California either. If you are electing people to a representative body such as a legislature or a convention using population based districts, then voter turnout for the election in no ways changes the allocation of representation. A congressional district with 200,000 voters on election day gets its seat the same as a congressional district with a turnout of 400,000 voters. In other parties, the early primaries have more interest and higher voter turnouts than the primaries held after the nominees are already decided, but the later primary states do not lose delegates or the early primary states gain delegates based on turnout. In RI we had 131 votes, about 20% of our registrations. We had a higher turnout than either of the other parties proportionally because by Super Tuesday the contest in the Democratic Party was essentially over and the Republicans did not have a contest. But just because turnout at the Democratic primary was low compared to other states does not mean that RI got a smaller delegation at the national convention. In other words you set criteria and determine delegation size for the convention independent of turnout at the primary. It is the only fair way to allocate delegations in a federation of state parties. The same thing with inclement weather. If it snows in RI on primary day and turnout is low is it really fair to reduce our delegation to the convention? So arguing that as CA had a large primary turnout it should get 50% of the votes in the convention does not hold water.

The Green Party openly and democratically arrived at a formula for determining the size of state delegations to the convention.

One can make a case that by some measures CA was slightly short changed in the allocation of delegation slots. Some measures of the Green Party might have given CA a slightly larger share of the delegates, but it was somewhat over represented going from 12.5% of the population to 14.5% of the convention delegates. Other large population states, especially with strong Green electoral success could also come up with some measure saying they were under represented. NY has never laid out a case for what they deserved in 2004, though they had the second largest delegation. I did not hear MA moaning that RI with 1/6 its population was getting a delegation 1/4 the size or NM kicking as it has a larger population but was allocated one fewer delegate than RI because of RI's success in the 2000 election. Everyone had the chart when they voted and it seemed to represent a fair allotment and honor our history and evolution. And even though RI could on some measures have been thought of as having a disproportionately large delegation, proportional to the size of the convention RI had a smaller delegation than in 2000, going from 6 delegates in 2000 to 10 in 2004 while the entire convention more than doubled in size.

Yes, the Green Party has lots of very small state parties, and overall the small parties probably had a larger percentage of the convention delegates than would have been the case if the convention had been allocated strictly by population or any other single criteria because of the efforts to make sure every delegation reflected at least some of the diversity of the population of the state. But in a country in which political parties gain strength through the work and campaigns of state parties, and in an organization that is a federation of state parties, that is something that passes the smell test. You have to reward state parties, even small ones, as a way of helping them grow during tough times.

Further contemplating how large a slice of the party the CA GP should be, it should be noted that CA candidates for partisan office do not do any better than Green candidates in other states. State legislative candidates and congressional candidates regularly receive higher percentages of the vote in other states than in CA. In RI for example our legislative candidates in 2004 received 29%, 21% and 5% of the vote, the 29% of the vote being the highest percentage of any Green State Senate candidate in the country. In other words there are many ways to measure Green Parties, but as Green success all over the country is pretty regular, wherever Greens run they do about the same, the fairest way to allocate representation, and the only number that is really comparable across all of the states, is population. And therefore any representation plan for the national committee or the convention that is not at least partly based on population does not

reflect one person one vote or any other democratic principle. Yes, a case could be made that California was shorted compared to some of the little states like Rhode Island, but when it is also noted that California had a delegation more than 3 times the size of Texas's and had a greater percentage of the delegates (more than 14%) than it does in the population of the United States (12.5%) it is hard to believe that the California delegation was seriously shorted, or that the argument that Camejo made was anything other than sour grapes.

The articles that were circulated making the Camejo case were, in addition to being based on false premises, filled with lies about the actual events they were supposed to be describing. Months after the election was over, Greens in the Camejo camp were talking about a Greens for Kerry table at the Green convention that never existed and spreading false rumors saying the Democratic Party paid for which delegates to come to the convention and vote for Cobb. I wonder if those people in the Nader/Camejo camp in screaming after the election about how poorly Cobb/LaMarche did on Election Day, ever think about how the rancorous tone they set post convention played into it. I also wonder if they gave any thought to what the reaction of the Cobb camp would have been if the convention had gone the other way. Does anyone believe that Greens in the Cobb camp would have put so much energy and vituperation into attacking Nader?

Clearly there was something more at work here, and some of it is political as Greens struggle with what a federation of state parties actually means. Some of it was the politics of a presidential campaign. Some if it was the traditional tactics of the left working to take over organizations since they do not do a very good job of creating and building their own. And some of it is the outright meanness of Peter Camejo in his relationships with his fellow human beings.

Some might say that my story here about Camejo is just an old line Green taking potshots at their opponents, so I quote here, with permission, an excerpt from an open letter to Camejo by William Anderson, a Green from Wisconsin, after he attended a speech by Peter Camejo. I have never to my knowledge met William Anderson, our only communication has been by email after I found this material on line. This is just one example of the many notes that went out about Camejo's behavior during the campaign season. It was sent out by Anderson on October 8, 2004.

“ The second question I asked you during your speech you failed to actually answer. So I will ask you again, Peter: What have you done since the convention to help build the Green Party? Simply reviewing your

contributions during the California gubernatorial elections, Matt Gonzalez campaign, and other assorted events of the last 4 years does not answer this question.

Since the convention, you have not only failed to do anything to help build the Green Party, you have been actively working to destroy it. It has become clear that you are more concerned with this elitist ideological notion of running a high profile campaign against John Kerry in order to prove once & for all the failures of lesser-evilism, and could care less about the future of the Green movement in America.

Peter, you seem to have forgotten one of the most important tenants of the Green philosophy. I suggest you go to www.gp.org and click on the list of 10 Key Values on the right side of the screen. Scroll down to Key Values #5 and 6. Can you tell me what they say?

That,s right, they say Decentralization and Community-based Economics. Indeed, the Green movement, unlike the various Socialist groups you have belonged to in the past, is specifically community-based, locally oriented, and anti-authoritarian. I do not say this to tarnish Socialists because I would not want to be accused of red-baiting seeing as I have been the victim of it myself on numerous occasions. I bring up this point for another reason, because all genuinely Green politics is local politics. The most important race I am involved in right now is not the Cobb campaign, but the Sally Stix for Dane County District Attorney, Brian Pruca for County Clerk, and Tony Schultz, for State Senate District 26 campaigns.

The issue of whether or not Nader supported efforts within his campaign attacking Cobb and LaMarche is one I can not fully answer. Watching Nader in RI in May, it was clear he was very angry at the Green Party, and he probably got angrier when it finally rejected his strategy of a third party coalition. He also had to know what Camejo was doing. My guess is that he did not really approve of the attacks and vituperance of the Camejo campaign as it does not appear to be his style. But I also believe that if Nader had wanted the attacks stopped he could have said so and stopped them, so he does need to accept some of the responsibility for Camejo's abominable behavior.

It was during this same time period, August/September, while dealing with all of this bad behavior by Camejo that people started to come up to me with stories of Camejo's old days in the Socialist Workers Party. Seems this type of bad behavior is one

of Camejo's trademarks throughout his career. We just happen to be the current victims.

This story of a rigged convention then fed into the second part of what hit the media, Jeffrey St Clair, and a few others started writing about how the Green candidacy was doomed and with it the Green Party because they rejected Nader, though it did not seem as if any of the writers were really touting a Nader candidacy as a boon for the Greens. St Clair filled page after page with deliberate misinformation and distortions. He did not even get the tallies of convention votes right. But what is most clear about St Clair and the other writers who attacked the Green Party is that they do not have any familiarity with Green Parties around the country and do not understand that the growth of the Green Party is not dependent upon a Presidential candidate. St Clair is caught in the Ross Perot syndrome as well, not understanding the arithmetic growth of 20 years of the Green Party and how it is the folks on the street who give it credibility because of what it does on the street, things the media does not pick up on.

The story of a rigged convention also provided some of the Nader supporters an excuse to do something inexcusable, take Green Party ballot lines and deny them to the nominee from the convention. This is something that flabbergasts me. You are a member of a political party, your state party has voted to affiliate with a national party, you participate in all the deliberations, help set the rules, voted on delegation allocations. It does not bind individuals to the convention nominee, individuals can always choose to support whoever they want. But it does bind the state party to place the nominee on the ballot or at least make a good faith effort in those places with ridiculous ballot access laws. If a state party is unwilling to place the nominee on the ballot, it should have the decency to disaffiliate at the same time because they are clearly not a member anymore. What else ties a party together except placing its Presidential slate on the ballot? If you are unwilling to do that, why be in the party and take part in decisions and deliberations after that. Secede.

Chapter Fourteen

Utah and Vermont

After the convention several state parties started discussions about placing Nader or no one on their ballot line. With Camejo and his strength in California, the CA GP had some rather contentious internal debates, but eventually the state coordinating committee received so many notes asking them to place the Party's slate, Cobb/LaMarche, on the ballot, that the matter of not accepting the convention nominee was dropped. The Vermont and Utah Green Parties eventually decided not to place Cobb/LaMarche on their ballot lines, though the tales are quite different.

The Utah GP delegation came to the convention with a two votes for Cobb, one vote for Nader mandate. On the first ballot they actually voted 1 for Cobb, 2 for Nader. So clearly some members of the UT delegation were unhappy to begin with. With Camejo storming out and slandering the democracy of the convention, two of the UT delegation went home prepared to prevent their state party from placing Cobb/LaMarche on the ballot, and possibly giving Nader the ballot line. It happens the delegation to the convention were in a minority in the party, and the rest of the party still wanted Cobb/LaMarche on the ballot. But Jerry Parsons, the person designated as the legal liaison and official paper signer with the Secretary of State's office wanted Nader and filed paperwork saying that the party would not place the Green slate on the ballot. The rest of the party organized frantically, though they probably started a little late and time was short. The rest of the Green Party of Utah leadership conducted an email vote of their entire membership and their coordinating committee, and both were overwhelmingly in favor of recalling the official liaison and substituting someone who would do the will of the party, but the Utah state government would not recognize the change. It was disheartening to lose this ballot line, but it unified and strengthened the party in UT ultimately, and they now have a state party much more able to move forward.

The relationship between the Green Party of Vermont and other Green Parties has always been a little tenuous, going back to the earliest days of the party, the mid 1980's. The political climate in Vermont, with Bernie Sanders and the Progressive Party, means that the political niche available for a Green Party is somewhat constrained compared to other states, and the history of the Green Party in Vermont is tied up with people like Murray Bookchin and his bombastic left political style. Many of the people who would be active Greens in other states are tied to Sanders and the Progressives, so the early Greens in VT were not at all into the Greens as a political party. They were not among the early state parties joining the ASGP or GPUS. Some of the delegates they have sent to the CC in the last few years have had a chip on their shoulder, they write in ways that push buttons and they respond to anything that might or might not be a rebuke with escalations instead of trying to help calm things down.

Craig Hill was an extreme case even for VT on the email, but maybe the best example that this is not strictly an email phenomenon took place just after the vote at the convention. I was walking by the VT delegation on my way to see someone in the VA delegation. Hill yells at me then launches into a harangue that the Green Party is now less relevant than.... I can

not remember exactly which leftist splinter party he used as an example and it does not matter. He was spitting venom. I replied that the party was going to be just fine, and had just done the right thing. Then I walked on to go see the person I was on my way to see before the abuse began. Hill is still sputtering.

The Vermont GP made it known that they would make a decision about what to do at their September 13 meeting which was one day before the deadline for getting on the ballot in Vermont. Greens on the national committee were appalled that VT was seriously discussing not put Cobb/LaMarche on the ballot line. One Vermont delegate, Craig Chevrier, tried to calm us down pointing out no decision had yet been made and what they were going to do was vote. He was inclined to place Cobb/LaMarche on the ballot, but would support what ever the state party decided to do.

VT's other delegate to the CC at the time was James Leas. Leas sent to the email lists an incredible string of essays and replies to comments and questions. The first thrust of what Leas said was the bylaws of the GPUS do not state in black and white that a state party must place the nominee on the ballot, so we do not have to. Common sense, the simple understanding of what else does a national political party do but put the convention nominee on the ballot, was irrelevant to him. To pound this in more he twisted the respect for diversity key value into pretzel shape and said you really ought to be proud of us for standing up to you.

The psychic violence of his replies, the essaying that the Party is getting raped, lie back and enjoy it, turned a lot of stomachs. I really do think of the Green Party as a little guerrilla band in non violent revolution. Leas' description of what he wanted to do was the equivalent of high tailing it when the going got tough, sticking a knife in our backs as he skeddaddled, and then twisting it for good measure.

Only in February 2005 did the national Accreditation Committee pull itself back together enough to begin to look into the situation. Emotions were still high on both sides, but it may be long enough after the fact that no one takes any strong measures against the VT Green Party. But you can be sure it will be a long time before many Greens trust the VT party.

The one lesson we have learned from this is to upgrade the bylaws and write that if a state party does not place the nominee on the ballot for reasons other than crazy ballot access laws, then it has officially voted to quit and will only be readmitted after formally requesting to join and going through the Accreditation Process that all newly joining state parties go through.

Somewhat typical of the attack dogs technique that the Nader camp turned on the rest of the party after the convention was that practiced by my former RI colleague Tim McKee, now of CT. His attacks on Pat LaMarche were ridiculous and lasted for months. From the start McKee was on Nader's team, leading CT efforts for Nader. As a former Rhode Island Green he was still regularly posting to the GPRI email list. Right after the convention McKee started posting, repeatedly, article after article, actually all versions of the same article, the article in which months before LaMarche had openly discussed the idea of Green Party not having a candidate in 2004. Post convention, LaMarche made several statements to the media saying the idea of not having a candidate under the circumstances had crossed her mind. LaMarche also noted that the reporter made her point much more strongly than she felt it or made it, and that months later, after further consideration, LaMarche was now totally convinced that a grassroots home grown Green campaign was the right thing. McKee and his compatriots who attacked LaMarche were reminded repeatedly that LaMarche had pointed out that the media had overblown her first comments, and that her thinking about a Green campaign in 2004 had continued to evolve, but to no avail. Harping on her earliest statement, and showing no understanding of LaMarche's evolving thinking, McKee and company continued to attack, even after the election was over. I eventually wrote McKee and said if you want to send materials touting your candidate, inviting support, reporting on the issues, organizing events, go for it, but I will not tolerate a guest on the GPRI email list just attacking the Green candidate with falsehoods. McKee persisted, and lost access to the RI list.

A late summer diversion from the attack politics of the Camejo camp was the first ever Green primary in RI for a local office. This is the race mentioned earlier in which Stephen LaMarre jumped in at the last second so that a neighborhood curmudgeon with no affinity for Green politics would not end up as the Green candidate for Mayor in Warwick. LaMarre ran a very low key campaign with a few press releases on issues such as affordable housing, energy, and organic gardening. He also sent a letter to the 30 or so registered Greens in Warwick. When I woke up the day after the primary Lamarre's 47 to 6 victory was described in the newspaper as a landslide. Even more interesting to me was that despite the very low key campaign, a number of people who were registered as unaffiliated were willing to come out and vote in the Green primary, and that nearly every person who was willing to do that voted for the Green endorsed candidate rather than the more well known, but not Green, candidate.

Chapter Fifteen

A Meeting With Camejo

The GPUS Steering Committee that had been elected at the Milwaukee convention was meeting regularly by phone and email, but it was felt that a face to face meeting would be very helpful in order for us to learn how to work together better and to take care of some business. The SC therefore called a meeting that took place in DC the weekend of Sept. 18. Most of Saturday was allotted to dealing with the financial situation of the party. When the weekend was being organized some time was also set aside to meet with the Cobb/LaMarche presidential ticket as well as the Nader/Camejo team. Of the four candidates, only Peter Camejo was able to attend the meeting, so we scheduled a time for meeting with Camejo for Sunday morning September 19. It happened that the meeting took place at the height of the Camejo and company attacks on the GP convention so at least a few of the SC were not very happy about meeting with Camejo that day. Sunday morning, after a long Saturday of pretty intense meetings on the GPUS budget, we assembled at a restaurant near Dupont Circle, took a little time prior to Camejo's arrival to set up an agenda for the meeting with Camejo, and designated a facilitator. Dean Myerson came to the meeting to represent the Cobb/LaMarche campaign.

Jake Schneider, GPUS Treasurer, had been designated as facilitator and after Camejo arrived he started describing the agenda. Camejo immediately interrupted him and said what we are going to do is, I am going to make a statement first and I am not going to subject myself to your questions. Camejo then made a statement that was filled with lies, misstatements and threats. Camejo reiterated his story that the convention was rigged and threatened to release the Forrest Hill paper purporting to show that because Camejo won the California Primary, as a Favorite Son, he was entitled to dictate to the convention that they should endorse Nader. That paper has been deconstructed elsewhere so it will not be repeated here. Then he started talking about the creation of Greens for Democracy, which I will come back to. Then he really stuck his foot in it by complaining about the make up of the Steering Committee and how it was all Cobb supporters and did not reflect the diversity of opinion in the Green Party. It happens that 4 of the 9 Steering Committee mem-

bers had supported Nader at the convention, while the other 5 had eventually ended up in the Cobb camp, very similar to the percentage of the vote on the second ballot at the convention. It also happens that Gwen Wages, one of the newly elected co-chairs, and one of the founders of the Mississippi Green Party, was elected to the SC specifically to represent Nader supporters. Wages had previously mentioned to me in passing a comment or two about the back room politicking that lead to her election to the Steering Committee despite being from a brand new State Party and therefore not really knowing any of the delegates prior to meeting them in Milwaukee. In addition to Wages, SC members supporting Nader/Camejo at the convention included Maya O'Connor from DC and Peggy Lewis and Jo Chamberlain of CA. So when Camejo started talking about how distorted the make-up of the Steering Committee was, Wages spoke up and reminded Camejo that nearly half of the SC supported Nader, so where did he come off making a charge like that. It really showed just how little attention Camejo was paying to what was actually going on in the Green Party. It was also an amazing charge for Camejo to make considering he had powerful supporters on the Steering Committee right there in the room giving lie to his words.

Next Camejo started to talk about what he called an inappropriate relationship between Jody Haug and the Kucinich primary campaign in her home state of Washington the previous winter. Haug was more than happy to admit she had held conversations with the Kucinich campaign during the primary season and offered them some advice. A fair number of Greens in Washington State were helping the Kucinich primary campaign and it behooved her as a state party leader to find ways to leave doors open so that as many as possible of them would come back to the Green Party after the primaries were over and the Kucinich campaign was no more. One way to do that was to maintain a cordial relationship with the Kucinich campaign. Again Camejo was grasping at straws to excuse his bad behavior.

The SC had given over an hour of its meeting to meeting with Camejo, and it still had plenty of important business to conduct before folks had to start leaving for the airport. Camejo was appalled when after 75 minutes we actually made moves to return to the rest of our agenda, but at least a few of us had had more than enough and it was time for him to take his act elsewhere. When he was finally gone some of us joked about forming Stop Camejo in 2008.

Camejo mentioned the formation of Greens for Democracy. The creation of Greens for Democracy has to be taken as just the latest in the 20 year cycle of leftists not understanding the Green Party. Given the history of the left, and its delusions of mass movement in America, it is no surprise that leftists within the Green movement occasionally try to take over the Green Party and remake it their own image of confrontational radicalism.

GPUSA is the prime example, Greens for Democracy the latest incarnation, of efforts to create a "mass movement" rather than understanding the Green Party ecological niche as a federation of state parties, with the state parties actually doing the grassroots work and the national party simply being a place to pool resources for campaigns and publicity. Green Parties are really much more likely to grow through each one teach one and individuals coming to this form of resistance on their own than any spontaneous mass movement or uprising, but the Green Party gets chastised by the left for actually building one by one as it does not meet their desires for a mass

movement based on the working class. Creating a mass movement of resistance is a fine goal, but trying to remake the Green Party is a misguided effort to move the Green Party out of its productive niche rather than find a way to make their own vehicles flourish. Green Politics flourishes when it is politics more like an ecosystem, more a diverse flowering than a coherent machine. It seems the left is stuck in an industrial mode.

Greens for Democracy, as is so often the case, explained their need to take over the Green Party as an attempt to return it to its grassroots and to ground it in one person one vote. I have described above my critiques of the one person one vote system Greens for Democracy wants to impose on the party, a system based on criteria that do not apply equally in all states. It is an effort directed at creating a traditional left organization in the Green Party rather than respecting the effort to try something new, something with a different culture, one that flourishes under different conditions. A system based on counting individual members is a different animal than a federation of state parties that are the equal members and honor the individuality and culture of each state party. The left approach, and the criteria it would use to allocate votes in the Coordinating Committee and at conventions, means that most state parties would see their voice in the party greatly diminished while dramatically increasing the voice of a few large state parties, especially Camejo's home state of California. It is quite possible that most delegates to the national committee would vote against such a system, one that undercuts their own state parties' role. Under the circumstances the only way to achieve Greens for Democracy's goals is to drive out people of good will by turning the Green Party into a very contentious place.

So yes, the leftists in the Greens, especially in a few states, are going to try another takeover/transformation. Yes they can create enough tension and rancor so that people can be convinced that the Green Party is a waste of time under the current circumstances and therefore stop being active. The leftists seem to have a special gift for surviving the tensions and rancor, probably because they like to use it in their work and it suits them personally. That it will also turn the party into a hollow shell if they succeed is something they are blind to.

Chapter Sixteen

The Fall Campaign

I followed the fall campaign on line except when the candidates came to my neighborhood. Articles on the Cobb/LaMarche campaign filled my email inbox as state parties sent articles from their local media to national lists whenever they had some. Cobb/LaMarche did not get much national coverage, but local media wrote positive articles everywhere they went.

Pat LaMarche came to Providence in September as one of her first stops on the Left Out tour, a nationwide campaign swing focused on the issues of poverty and homelessness which involved sleeping on the streets and in shelters while connecting to local community efforts to end poverty and eliminate all of the surrounding symptoms. LaMarche grew up in Providence, in public housing, before moving to Maine, so we were very glad

to welcome her back. The GPRI had a very interesting day with her. The day started with a press conference at the Chad Brown housing complex where LaMarche spent her early years. Then we toured shelters all over the city donating supplies in a very low key way and having some very interesting conversations with shelter and service providers, many of whom I knew because of my work on Buy Nothing Day events and homelessness issues in Providence. In the evening there was a march to the local HUD office, a speak out, and a sleep out in the park with People to End Homelessness an organization that was started and is run by homeless and formerly homeless people. The founder is a Green as are several board members.

Nader came to town in October and drew hundreds to a speech at Brown University. In keeping with the nature of this year's campaign, the events were much smaller and media coverage was less extensive than they had been in 2000. There also appeared to be very little on the ground campaigning going on for him.

David Cobb came to RI in mid October for a day of speeches and meetings with Greens. The GPRI helped raise some money for the campaign, heard some great speeches by Cobb and local candidates, had a good dialogue on the state of the party and the

progressive movement in America, got some media coverage, convinced a few voters to mark Green on the ballot, and sent him off to NYC. For Cobb it was another day on the trail, for the GPRI a day to be a part of the national campaign, and then go back to our real Green work. As far as I can tell this is what the Cobb campaign was like everywhere it went, energizing Greens, and then they went back to their local campaign work.

I spent much of the fall working on two local campaigns. I helped raise a little early money and later canvassed for the Jeff Toste for State Senate campaign. I have run for office with door to door campaigns three times in the last 20 years, one time getting 20% of the vote, but for the first time I canvassed door to door in a neighborhood where folks had heard about the Green candidate and were open in their support. The Toste campaign took Green organizing to new heights in RI, as we had never had a campaign with that level of organization before.

More of my time was spent on a referendum campaign, the Conservation and Clean Water bond issue. My job with the Environment Council of Rhode Island (ECRI) put me in a position to help the campaign a lot, and it turned out that under RI Election Law, ECRI was the only environmental organization in

RI that could legally take contributions from other environmental groups and spend money on the bond issue campaign. As a Green Party candidate and state party official I had experience with the campaign finance laws in RI and experience dealing with the Board of Elections so when the bond issue campaign ran into the crazy campaign finance laws I became part of the Question 8 campaign steering committee and managed all the money through the Environment Council.

The Board of Elections would never explain just what the appropriate way is for a coalition of community groups to band together and work on a referendum/bond issue campaign and share resources. We eventually hit upon the strategy of using the C4 organization I administer to pay everything and several of our member organizations made large contributions that could be considered just a member contributing to the organization. ECRI was the single corporate entity that RI allows to spend money on referendums without forming a PAC. As we were not sure what paperwork to file, I picked what seemed the most closely related form and I made sure that I filed them in person with a BOE campaign finance specialist notarizing them at the office so that if the political winds changed or the Board of Elections came up with a new interpretation we would be able to stand up to the scrutiny. It was gratifying to see in December when the BOE came out with its scofflaws list, ECRI was not on it. The sickness of the campaign finance system, the fact that community groups were forced to go through some very convoluted hoops, became apparent to all, even the Board of Elections, and hearings on reforming the campaign finance system for referendums and bond issues are being held.

The campaign provided me with new contacts in the RI environmental community, built the prestige of the Environment Council in the community, and built the prestige of the Green Party in RI as all of the environmental leaders working on the campaign came to know that it was my work with the Green Party that prepared me to take on parts of the campaign that no one else was able to do. Several of the leaders of

environmental organizations in Rhode Island now “get” the Green Party in a whole new way, but maybe that is just a Rhode Island thing. Relationships are everything in RI politics.

At the end of October I represented the Green Party and Cobb/LaMarche campaign at two campaign forums. One was at the Community College of RI in its world famous Warwick unistructure, while the other was at a middle school in Burrillville. The CCRI forum was attended by about 60 students and faculty at lunch hour. The Democrats did not show up and the Executive Director of the RI Republican Party told the audience that he was not empowered to speak for the Bush campaign and therefore could not talk about national issues. Nader was represented by Dave Richardson, the Reform Party person who at the April GPRI meeting asked who was going to work on the Nader campaign and no one raised their hand. Dave is a good man, but not particularly dynamic, and said nothing that enticed students to get involved. I gave a 15 minute off the cuff speech starting with a complete denunciation of Bush policies in Iraq that had the kids cheering. Cobb and local Green candidates picked up some votes that day.

In 2000 I represented the Nader campaign at the Burrillville Middle School forum so I was happy to go back in 2004 representing the Cobb campaign. The Republican Town Chair represented the Bush campaign and the head of the Brown College Democrats did a pretty good job saying nothing for the Kerry campaign. The Nader spokesperson was from Massachusetts, they could not even find a RI volunteer to send. He was a 50 year old political neophyte, sort of a Reform Party type and I honor him for being willing to stand up, but he knew almost nothing about Nader’s stands on the issues, and actually supported things that I am quite sure Nader does not support such as drilling in the ANWR. It was sort of interesting, and sort of pathetic. Most of the newspaper coverage the next day recounted the things I talked about such as the war and how bad an idea it is to base school curriculums around standardized testing.

Chapter Seventeen

Election Day and the Aftermath

I spent most of Election Day electioneering. First thing in the morning I went to vote, but when I got to the polls the machines were broken so the line stretched for 100 feet out the door. Finally someone called the Board of Elections from their cell phone, the BOE sent someone over, and the polls opened about 1/2 hour late. After voting I spent an hour holding a sign for the conservation bond. Then I went crosstown to Federal Hill to a polling place in Jeff Toste's State Senate District and did poll watching for the Toste campaign. At this polling place the poll wardens were helping people vote straight ticket Democratic and despite RI law, the Democratic candidate was standing right next to the door going in. Again I was at a polling station with a few machines that were not working right until serviced by the technicians. On my way home I stopped off at a different polling station and spent another hour in front of a poll holding my Vote Yes on 8 sign

and talking with the other sign holders. This polling station also had voting machines that were not working properly and I watched the BOE technicians arrive here as well. I went over to the Toste Victory Party after the polls closed to watch returns. Toste did very well but not quite well enough to win. The other 4 Greens running in Rhode Island did reasonably well too, so it was a good day for the GPRI. The bond issue I was working on was passing with the best vote of any bond issue in the state, over 70% of the vote, so that felt pretty good too.

RI went strongly for Kerry, 60% to 40%, but right away I thought that Kerry was in trouble even though he was still ahead in the exit polls. The problem was that in RI Kerry was running far behind what Gore received in 2000. Gore got more than 70% of the vote in 2000, Kerry was nearly 13 points behind him, and it occurred to me that if RI had shifted so far towards Bush, it might be happening in the rest of the country as well. Which is sort of how it turned out. Kerry received a record number of votes, but this time, if the accounts are to be believed, Bush got the majority. It was a gathering of Greens at the Toste victory party, but we were bummed as the night wore on that Kerry was not doing well. I did not stay up all night watching as I knew no matter what the Presidential

result, it was going to be 4 more years of hard times. Morning would be soon enough to deal with it.

Cobb and Nader both had one of their better showings nationally in RI. Cobb got 1333 votes, 0.3%, Nader 4555 votes, 1.06%. With 0.3% of the population we provided Cobb with more than 1% of his 119,000 votes, though as he was on the ballot in only 28 states, that is a little misleading. Nader also got about 1% of his national total in RI.

In 2000 Nader received 25,000 votes, 5.85%, and the GPRI received ballot status for 4 years. In 2000 the GPRI earned our ballot status by handing out nearly 30,000 brochures, while this time no one anticipated any real bang for our buck if we campaigned for a presidential candidate, so no one did very much. Nader's campaign was invisible as well. Interestingly there was one precinct in Providence in which Cobb out polled Nader, pulled in 2.56%. It was Cobb's best percentage for any precinct in the state. It was also only the precinct in Toste's State Senate district in which he received a majority of the vote. Says something about which direction our coattails flew this year.

While the presidential campaign results were mildly disappointing, local Green candidates in RI did well. Jeff Toste received the highest percentage of the

vote of any Green State Senate candidate in the country, 29%. Larry Kern, running for the State House of Representatives in Westerly received 21% of the vote, while two local candidates in other towns who hardly campaigned received 5% and 6% of the vote. Stephen LaMarre appeared at one candidates forum in Warwick and received over 300 votes, 1%, in a four way race.

Many Greens think that somewhat side stepping the presidential campaign, running while still giving the Democrats a clean shot at Bush by focusing on local campaigns worked out pretty well. There are also Greens who call it a complete sell out and a death sentence for the party except if they take it over and run it their way. The low vote totals, the loss of ballot status in RI and elsewhere could be considered losses, but the local vote of 3900 in precincts covering less than 15% of the state's population, is growth. Nationally it appears to be the same thing. About 1.6 million different voters marked a Green candidate for local office on their ballot. Up significantly since 2000, up from 2002. And there are now more Green elected Office Holders than ever. Yes a divided presidential campaign hurt us, though no matter what we chose to do in 2004 presidentially it would have hurt us. But the local campaigns did as well or better than ever and in much of the country the Green Party grew. Mark Dunlea from NY noted that his local group was larger and stronger than it was before the campaign in a recap account sent to the GPUS email list in November. He said his local was bigger, just not as much bigger as they were hoping the presidential campaign would grow it. Many other Greens have said the same thing. Many local Green groups are bigger and stronger than ever.

RECOUNT

Everyone in America should be thanking Ohio Secretary of State Kenneth Blackwell for helping Americans remember that we have work to do to save democracy. And he must be especially thanked by Greens for giving the Green Party the opportunity to lead a charge for democracy. The statements he made before Election Day about handing the state to Bush and statements on how OH was going to challenge voters, especially black voters, lent credibility to all of the charges of electoral fraud, and opened the door for Cobb/LaMarche to ask for a recount. Kerry conceded very quickly and was unwilling to stand up for democracy. He had millions in campaign funds left over and was unwilling to spend them. So the Green champion for democracy all of a sudden became news.

It is rather ironic and incredible that the Green Party candidate for President, David Cobb, received a lot more press coverage and a lot more campaign contributions calling for a recount in Ohio, than he did during the campaign season. But in 21st century

America that is what we live with.

Up until election day, the Presidential campaign that David Cobb and Pat LaMarche had run was exactly what we had expected. They campaigned hard, had some fun, worked very well with local Green Parties and candidates, and generated good publicity wherever they went. The campaign was basically ignored by the national media except when Cobb and Libertarian candidate Michael Badnarik got arrested at the St. Louis debate. Nader received very little attention, gained no traction and left behind almost no infrastructure that could build towards the broad third party that he envisioned at the beginning of the campaign. So up until election day the year was pretty much a bust presidentially.

And then came the recount, and all of a sudden the presidential campaign of Cobb/LaMarche was bringing in activists and money, generating great publicity and excitement, creating lots of friends for the Green Party. From November to January Cobb and the Green Party were news! It made the Green Party lots of friends. The info line really heated up. For a few weeks the volume of letters was staggering and the number of volunteers unprecedented. Hundreds volunteered and thousands donated for the recount effort in Ohio. There was a little bit of the hate mail demanding that we call off the recount. But there were lots of notes from people who were having regrets for having worked for the Democrats and saying they would never do that again, as well as many thanking Cobb/LaMarche and the Green Party for upholding democracy, and then asking how they could join and contribute.

In 2000 we were in the right place at the right time right up until election day. Then the spoiler story began and the climb became tougher. This time we anticipated a struggle all through the campaign, and got it. Many Greens therefore directed most of their energy towards local candidates, rather successfully I might add, and we had the good fortune to have a presidential slate who could relate to that. Then, the day after the election, we were in the right place to defend democracy. A place we probably would not have been in if we could have garnered enough votes to control the middle between Bush and the Democrats again. Fewer votes served us better in some ways more than more votes would have. There is something a little strange in that, and none of us could have anticipated it, but somehow it seems completely appropriate in the diminished democracy of modern America.

Nader's future with the Greens

I assumed as the campaign took shape that the Nader/Camejo campaign would at some point run a

positive campaign on the issues with the independent Nader and leave the Green Party to run its campaign. But it never happened.

My opinion on the Nader campaign is that Nader misjudged the Green Party and the situation, and then floundered when nothing went his way. The outpouring of support from the Reform Party, the mythical third party coalition, or anyone else, failed to materialize. That was noticeable from the very beginning. Nader had ballot access problems without Green Ballot lines and Green petitioners. This is not to say that ballot access for Cobb was any easier, but his response to it did not derail his campaigning in the way Nader's ballot access fights did.

Nader did not realize just what faction of the Greens was going to stick with him, and if he had known, I am not sure he would have been as quick with his strategy of not seeking the nomination. He got the contentious left ideologues, not the Greens who are leaders in their state and local parties. Nader also did not quite understand that even without him, the Green Party is a potent political force even if it is not as big as he hoped it would be at this time. Nader lambasted us for having only 500 candidates in 2004. He thought we should have had 10,000. He got caught up in the American ideal of how organizations grow, (repeating that idea in a Counterpunch interview in December) the up fast and crash theory of organizing, with the corollary that one must confront the 2 parties the same way each time as well. Green Party organizing is just different. It is really each one, teach one, one person at a time reaching an understanding of permanent life long political striving as non violent revolution. Greens expecting some miraculous left mass movement, and the confrontational attitudes necessary to run such a movement, drive away people coming to the Green Party in that slow sustainable drift. Then the ideologues tell us that it does not matter that they are driving people away, that we should be running a mass movement and should have thousands of recruits, not those individuals. The answer to that is, if the mass movement ideal is working so well, how come we do not see it? How come the left does not create it outside of the Green Party since we are obviously not worthy, and must be sellouts? Nader should have known his campaign was not going anywhere when he saw the particular factions in the Greens drawn to his campaign, but he was not looking.

Nader does not understand the Green Party very well. His political blinders prevent him from

seeing us. He does not see the splits over strategy for the psychological as well as political divide they are. The Green Party, because of both the political and psychological dimensions of the divide, has a messiness and level of tension that not too many people really enjoy, and Nader has no tolerance for it at all, even though it was his supporters that created the level of animosity in 2004 that drives the rest of us crazy. His aversion to politics and Greens meant that he did not try to penetrate the organization and peel away its mists. It is headless, with hundreds of autonomous units. Yes, it has a national committee and an executive committee, but that work is so small compared to everything else going on. The best of Green politics is at the local level. People really becoming a part of the fabric of public life in the community.

I expect the Nader folks will say that they were trying to create something bigger, something out of the Green sandbox, but it was not thought out very well and forgot to take into account how Green work gets done, which is by independent cells of pluggers. Nader's strategy really annoyed the Green pluggers. He forgot to take into account people who really love the Green Party and have been nurturing it for a very long time. They wanted a Green candidate, for both legal reasons and because they are building a Green Party because a Green Party is needed. I can not worry about how much a Reform Party or a Socialist Party is needed, let the Reform Party and the Socialists worry about that. I think we need a Green Party and I will do what ever I think helps build the Green Party, and building the Green Party was not what Nader was doing in 2004.

Nader did not run the kind of campaign that penetrated the grassroots and turned his fans into active campaigners. Therefore he could not translate the general positive feelings Greens have about him into convention delegates in the run up to the convention or into votes on Election Day. The people he surrounded himself with or who flocked to his campaign also could not figure out how to translate his appeal into convention delegates and did not ask for the right kind of help. His campaign did not generate good feelings among activists in the Green segment of the Green Party. I do not think Nader has much of a future with the Green Party, nor in third party politics in general. He will continue to be a force, a gadfly, an icon, an important source of ideas, but he will not be a rallying place for the politics of the 21st century.

Chapter Eighteen

Forward for the Green Party

It takes time for a Green Party to become a part of the politics of a community. It can not be rushed, though concerted work can help it move faster. Rare are those places in which people already enmeshed in the political life jump to the Greens in any numbers, we have to grow people into it. So we have not grown 10,000 candidates into it yet. It is each one teach one, and the people who can teach by example are doing just that. We grow organically. The media can not figure it out, nor can the left, but it works. We persist and develop good people. People who do not understand the pacing of the Green Party slow us down by trying to speed us up. But eventually the people who understand how to build and integrate into the community develop and the party grows. Often it takes years to reach a takeoff stage. When Greens successfully take a leading role in a community struggle or campaign, it builds credibility and the Green Party, but often it takes years to position

the local party for such a campaign. The party also grows when it has good candidates run well run campaigns. State parties dominated by people who do not have respect as activists outside of Green circles in their neighborhood are going to continue to struggle until found by people who are winning respect in the larger community and who join the Green party despite the obstacles. Nader did not make the effort to see that in RI there are now 6 or 7 Greens involved in the statewide coordination of the Peace movement when formerly there were 2. That organizing around issues of homelessness also has 6 active Greens involved, even if they wear other hats at some events. Hearings for justice see 3 or 4 more openly identified Greens than in the past. That does not get us 10,000 candidates in 2006, but it gets us better ones, ones with greater chances of winning and growing the Green Party. And the Green Party is putting down roots and growing in more and more places each year whether our registration numbers go up or down.

Greens have to build trust in the community. They are always seen originally as alien in the 2 party system. But if Greens are a good dependable ally for a number of years, never taking credit for other's work, not claiming authority to speak for others, but always being on message and reliable, eventually it shows in

the community by how the local campaigns are run and who besides hard core Greens support them. When Greens attract those who bring the confrontational attitude and adopt a phony radical democracy versus the elitists Greens attitude it does not go as well.

I also think something of a political culture develops in different places. In RI you can not go into a progressive meeting unless you are really new in the community and not see people who you know. People know whether you are going to do what you say you will or drop the ball. Those that drop the ball or make it difficult for others to do organizing are eventually not invited to the places where work really gets done. No one really has the time to put up with such distractions or aggravations. Those that criticize but do not build gain little respect from others. Those that make things happen, coordinate good events, are a reliable public presence, find ways to help others do good work, get the respect and see their organizations grow. People are always choosing who to partner with on little projects, the little things that add up. I sometimes choose projects based on who else is working on them. And this applies to my work in the Green Party as well. Other states have different cultures and different levels of tolerance for confrontationalism.

The future of the Green Party is not completely in our hands. But we do have control over what we do and how we react to circumstances. As the Green Party grows, it must adopt more completely a tone of peace. It must completely understand the sensitivities of human beings and how important joy is as a part of political organizing. The creation of an unpleasant climate hurts the Green Party tremendously. After years of putting up with the untenable tone, watching it eat at the party, finally Greens are standing up, with a new understanding of the tactics of the left and how a climate of disruption works to shift the Green Party away from its best course, provides advantages to contentious individuals and their political approach to organizing. Greens are saying, enough. If we can not create a peaceful climate in the party we can not go forward and as we are resolved to go forward, those who will not go forward peacefully, those who disrupt the work of the members of the party, shall be asked to leave the room.

The Green Party confronts this same divide as it decides what to work on. The confrontational attitude is accompanied by the political philosophy of always be aggressively confrontational to the state. Other Greens prefer a more flexible strategy. The 2004 struggle with the election within the Green Party can falsely be boiled down to: the Nader camp believing it appropriate to confront all the time on all the issues versus the Cobb camp arguing for a more flexible strategy of choosing the places of confrontation carefully, doing good deeds every day in the community and breaking out at the times and places of our choosing.

It is hard to accept that confrontation 24/7 made a lot of sense in 2004 and the results bear that out. Think about any revolution for freedom in the face of the empire. George Washington did not line up the ragtag revolutionary army in pitched battles with the Hessians, he chose Christmas Eve sneak attacks. He attacked only when he had an advantage, and the rest of the time watched from the hills looking for opportunities. Every insurgency in the world operates that way or else it loses, and this is especially important for non violent revolutions. But the left insists on allout attacks on every battlefield despite the general lack of success in the approach.

People have so much to do, life is full of twists, turns, and daily disasters. If we are unwilling to provide an atmosphere for individual growth and joy we are harming the party and slowing its development. If most of the contentious atmosphere is coming from a particular political tendency, one that finds a contentious atmosphere and slower growth to its advantage in setting party direction, then the party must develop the remedies. Success in improving the tone

of debate will go a long way towards determining the Green Party's political future despite what the left says or believes. This tension between the confrontational and adaptive wings of the party plays out even more strongly for Green elected officials who have to govern practically in their communities. The confrontational attitude leads left Greens to attack Green elected officials without understanding what it is like in their shoes. But I see is a bright future because if the Green Party did not exist, we would have to invent it.

The Last Word

As I bring this project to a close in April 2005 the Green Party continues to debate the issues discussed in this book. My seat at the table for the current round of the debate includes being a member of the Presidential Nominating Process Working Group (PNP). The PNP was created by a vote of the national committee specifically to examine the entire process of a presidential campaign, including recruiting candidates, deciding strategy, setting state party delegate allocations for a convention, convention rules, and anything else that should be discussed. I am also a member of the BRPP subcommittee looking at how committees and other organizing groupings of people in the party can turn themselves into more functional operations by insisting that truly disruptive people leave the rest of us alone so we can do our work.

Every state party and caucus, as well as relevant committees, was encouraged to designate one person to serve on the PNP. 20 states sent volunteers. I represent GPRI, having volunteered on the basis that as I was studying the process carefully for my book, I might as well use what I have learned on the working group. All factions are represented, all the people engaged in the arguments volunteered, and the tone is rather harsh. We have discussed everything, but need much stronger facilitation if the working group is to actually provide much of value to the party in anything resembling a reasonable amount of time.

The brpp subcommittee on the removal process plods along. We are working diligently to institute due process with every check possible to slow down committee action against the very occasional person who communicates with a nasty tone designed to keep everyone else off balance. Productive work gets to be impossible in email working spaces under those conditions. Nearly all organizations have some mechanism that enable small groups to remove disruptive elements, so they can get work done. It is time the Green party codified such a process. I look to getting something passed this year.

The tensions continue to permeate the party email discussions, Peter Camejo sent out another diatribe recently, and the discussion around how to conduct the election to replace a resigned SC member has been pretty raucous, but in the grassroots it is more a tempest in a teapot. Most Greens try not to pay much attention to the national committee and just go about the work of building the Green Party in their

neighborhood. And you know what, it is still working. Local chapters are doing just fine, local elections are going just fine, there are more and more neighborhoods with green locals, the state parties are getting good attendance at their meetings, and we go forward like the little engine that could, getting bigger and stronger every day, just like we have for 20 years.

