

Green Party of Canada Conference: Arrow Lakes, BC: August, 1996

The Green Party of Canada biennial conference will be held at the Selkirk College, Castlegar campus, in the West Kootenays of British Columbia, from noon, Friday August 9 to Sunday 11 1996, with an optional excursion on Monday August 12.

Attendance with dorm accommodation and three vegetarian meals each day, for Friday through Monday is \$200. Registration without room and board is \$50.

Registration must be paid by July 15, 1996 and no refunds will be available after that date. Please send name, address, phone number and an email address (optional) to

Eco-Centre
577 Ward Street
Nelson, B.C. V1L 5R4.

Cheques should be made out to "Arrow Lakes '96". Selkirk College is within walking distance of Castlegar airport.

Alberta Greens and GAIA AGMs for 1996: Put This Date on Your Calendar!

The Alberta Greens will hold their 1996 Annual General Meeting from 9am-3pm on Saturday, May 4th at the Pioneer Lodge in Red Deer (5821 45th Ave). The GAIA society will hold its AGM at the same time and place. Elections will be held for President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and 5 directors.

Greens Oppose Express Pipeline Export Application

The National Energy Board is hearing an application by Express Pipeline Ltd. (owned by Alberta Energy and TransCanada Pipelines) for a new oil pipeline to the USA. The Alberta Greens are not officially intervening on this occasion but have been observing the process and supporting environmental interveners, such as Mike Sawyer of the Rocky Mountain Ecosystem Coalition.

This project falls within the authority of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA), therefore a federal environmental impact assessment is required. To avoid duplication, the NEB process and the Environmental Review are being combined in this hearing. Two of the four members of this board are environmentalists. Even so, it is clear at the end of three weeks that not much is going to change, as government is still on the same side as business. Even though our remaining inexpensive conventional oil is quickly running out, companies want to export as fast as possible, and an extra pipeline will help ship Alberta's diminishing supplies south.

Any concern about global climate change is dealt with by assuming that the CO₂ emissions caused by burning all this extra oil do not count because they occur in the United States, not Canada. That is how the Alberta petroleum industry can liberate 400 million tonnes every year but only be held responsible for about 50 million.

When conventional oil and gas run out

the plan is to bring our tar sands on line. This oil will be more abundant than conventional supplies, although even harsher on the environment and considerably more expensive to extract.

If all of us pesky environmentalists would only cooperate with industry, then together we could ensure that environmentally benign energy sources, such as wind and solar power, do not become economic until long after the earth is destroyed. It all makes wonderful sense, doesn't it!

Green Party of Canada, Rocky Mt. Region Assoc., Notice of AGM

The Green Party of Canada, RMRA, will hold their annual general meeting at 7pm on Thursday, April 11th at the Calgary Green office (#009, 610 8th Ave SW). Election executive and board members will be held.

Thank You! The Green Eye in The Sky is Yours

The Green Eye in the Sky project is off the ground. In the last issue of this newsletter we requested donations to purchase satellite photographs of Alberta to document the environmental destruction of our forests by the oil, gas and forestry industries.

Thanks to your donations, over \$2,000 has been raised so far. We are currently deciding which view to purchase, to get the best contrast between forest and cut areas. Autumn colours and light snowfall can help with this. Watch this space for further updates.

Proportional Representation

Canadians believe they live in a democracy. After all, we do have free municipal, provincial, and federal elections held through-out the nation. Yet, the results of elections show that the Canadian form of democracy does not accurately reflect the preference of voters.

Chart 1 points to the discrepancy between voter support and the number of seats won. While the Liberal Party won a majority of the seats in 1993 despite 59% of people *not* supporting them, the

Progressive Conservatives captured less than 1% of the seats although they received more votes than the Bloc Que-

becois who won 18% of the seats.

Similarly, in the last Alberta election, the Conservatives won a majority of the seats with 44% of the vote, while the NDP won none with 15% of the vote.

If Canada is a democracy then why does a party with a minority of votes win a majority of the seats and govern as if they had majority support? Why do small parties with support across Canada get locked out?

If Canada is a democracy then why do 1,093,244 votes elect one Progressive Conservative and 34,186 votes elect one Bloc Quebecois member?

First Past the Post

Canada's current electoral system has been called the "First Past The Post" or the "Winner Takes All" system. These titles identify the system as being concerned with only the winner of the electoral "race", giving no recognition to the other candidates, even if their combined

support is greater than that of the winner.

In our electoral system the winner is the one with the *most* votes, not the voice of the *majority* of voters. This system creates majority governments with a minority of the nation's support. These governments can enact legislation to fit their own agenda and not meet the wishes of the people. This abuse of power was demonstrated by the Brian Mulroney PC governments during their 1984 and 1988 terms of office.

Our current electoral system does not represent the diversity of Canadians and their many values. It is not possible for the ruling Liberal Party to represent all Canadians since not

all Canadians voted for them. We need a system that meets the needs of those Canadians who do not vote for the winning party. A system of this sort does exist. It is called Proportional Representation, and it can be successfully practised in Canada.

Proportional Representation (PR)

A Proportional Representation electoral system makes representation proportional to the number of votes cast. If a party gets 15% of the votes, it will get 15% of the seats in Parliament.

Proportional Representation is used in most democracies, and is the reason new political movements are represented in many European legislatures. The only major democracies that do not use PR are Australia, Britain, Canada and the USA.

Recently, other nations such as South Africa, Russia and Mexico have adopted forms of PR to elect their national governments. In a spe-

cial referendum in 1993, New Zealand voters overwhelmingly chose PR.

If Proportional Representation had been used in the 1993 Canadian Federal Election the results would have looked like Chart 2. The Liberal party would have captured the most seats but they could not have formed a majority government. They would have been forced to create a coalition with one or more of the other parties.

This coalition would have the healthy effect of keeping the Liberals in check. They would be more inclined to listen to what Canadians want. Small parties, such as the Greens, would have had a chance to elect at least one representative, and more people would be willing to vote for these small parties, knowing that their vote would not be wasted.

It is important to note that Canadians highly regarded the coalition governments of the 1960's which witnessed the birth of some of Canada's most progressive legislation such as Medicare and the Canada

Chart 1: 1993 Canadian Federal Election

Party	% of Vote	# of Seats	% of Seats
Liberal	41	177	60
Reform	18	52	17
Conservative	16	2	1
Bloc Quebecois	13	54	18
New Democrat	6	9	3
Other	6	1	1

Chart 2: If Canada had PR in 1993...

Party	% of Vote	# of Seats
Liberal	41	121
Reform	18	53
Conservative	16	47
Bloc Quebecois	13	38
New Democrat	6	17
Other	6	18

Pension Plan.

A coalition government also means that our elected officials would have to cooperate with each other in order to run the nation. A refreshing change from the adversarial, mud-slinging tactics adopted by parties today.

Instead of watching our elected leaders insulting the policies of other parties regardless of their merits, we might witness a mature dialog of negotiation and compromise between the parties, that would lead to a better Canada.

Toward a New Electoral System in Canada

The choices are clear... do we continue to live with an archaic democratic system that ignores the diversity and wishes of Canadians? Or do we begin calling our elected officials at all government levels to hold a referendum on Proportional Representation before the next federal election?

If you wish to see Real Democracy come to Canada then call or write your elected officials at both federal and provincial levels and tell them you want to bring PR to Canada and to your province.

This article was prepared with information from David Parker, leader of the Alberta Greens, and *The Proportional Representation Alliance of Canada*.

If you wish to receive blank copies of a petition for proportional representation in Canada, or wish to send a much needed donation to help further the PR movement, please write:

The Proportional Representation
Alliance of Canada
117 Parashin Bay
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2R 1B1

Bow Chinook Barter Community

A new economic model has arrived in Calgary. The Bow Chinook Barter Bank is growing by leaps and bounds. The February 20, 1996 bulletin contains 200 listings of services being offered and requested; everything from accounting services, house cleaning and, computer training, to violin lessons and window washing. A steering group is developing policies and procedures that will enhance the bartering process for users of the system.

The barter bank is also about creating community with monthly potluck suppers where members and friends gather to trade goods, eat great food, and talk about making the barter system even better. If you want to participate in a local economic movement, bring a pot of food, and your own plate and utensils, to a potluck supper at 7pm on Tuesday, March 19 or April 16 at the Unitarian Church on 17th Ave. at 1st St. NW, Calgary.

ALBERTA GREENS INFORMATION

Office location	#009, 610 - 8th Ave. SW, Calgary	
Mailing address:	Box 133, Station M, Calgary, T2P 2H6.	
Phone:	(403) 269-2384.	
Fax:	(403) 289-1465.	
Email:	molders@freenet.calgary.ab.ca	
Leader	David Parker	469-1448
President	David Crowe	289-6609
Executive Secretary	Madeleine Oldershaw	282-4788
Treasurer	Pam Munroe	245-3441
Recording Secretary	Albert Munz	230-8891

Meetings

For information on meeting dates, times and locations, call Madeleine Oldershaw in Calgary at 282-4788, or David Parker in Edmonton at 469-1448.

Comment

We welcome submissions for the Alberta Greens Newsletter. Please send them to the editor, Box 133, Station M, Calgary, T2P 2H6, by fax to (403) 289-6658 or by email to crowed@cadvision.com.

Donations to Alberta Greens Increase in 1995

In 1995, the Alberta Greens raised almost \$25,000, most of which was spent on specific environmental projects, in partnership with a number of environmental organizations. An increasing number of organizations are realizing that joint projects with the Alberta Greens make great sense. Working with other groups is only natural for Greens that feel that a distributed approach to solving problems is most effective. For donors the choice of a political tax credit makes it possible to be much more generous than would be possible with a charitable donation, or a donation that has no tax benefit at all.



Canadian Green News

British Columbia: The big news is that David Suzuki personally endorsed the Green Party of British Columbia in a CBC radio interview on February 20, 1996. This started a firestorm amongst the press and the NDP who are both desperate to keep up the pretence that BC Greens are fringe loonies.

The Nelson-Creston Greens are launching a campaign to elect the first legislator in Canada. They feel that this area of the province, devastated by logging, and increasingly populated by environmentally sensitive people, is ripe for a breakthrough. If you want to help, they can be contacted by phone at (604) 354-4615, fax at (604)352-9288 or e-mail c/o Andy Shadrack (uc090@ciao.trail.bc.ca).

Quebec: The Parti Vert du Québec has chosen Victor Martel as its new leader. The bilingual Martel was the party's communication officer during the second last provincial election when Les Verts, for one term, became the third most popular party in the province. Two years later, then leader Jean Ouimet defected to the Parti Quebecois with a number of other organizers, leaving the party barely able to maintain its registration in the most recent Quebec election.

Now the party is coming back to life. It has ambitions to run a full slate in the next provincial election.



International Green News

USA: Ralph Nader, the famous consumer advocate, has agreed to stand as a presidential candidate for the Green Party in at least the states of California and Maine. He will not be running actively, but acting as a stimulus for the initiation and growth of state Green Parties, something he has done similarly for innumerable consumer and citizen groups around the US. While controversial among some Greens, this is significantly increasing the profile of the Green Parties, giving activists in some states without an official party the boost that they need to get enough signatures to register a party. In other states, like California, his candidacy is revitalizing a Green Party that was starting to shrink in size.

In Pennsylvania a Green received 8% of the vote in a special election ("by-election"), granting the party ballot access in the next election in that district.

In Oregon, the Pacific Party (known informally as the Green Party) challenged the vacant seat left after the resignation of Senator Bob Packwood.

England: The British Green Party currently holds about 90 parish, town and community council seats.

Egypt: A fledgling Green Party, with 6 candidates was the only party to include the environment in its platform in recent elections.

Austria: The Green Party suffered a defeat in December, dropping from 13 to 8 seats in a recent election. Their leader has offered to resign.

Spain: The Catalan Initiative-Green Party jumped to 11 seats from 7 in regional elections.

Taiwan: A Green Party has recently been formed, as part of a small, but growing environmental movement in

Cancer: The Depressing Facts

- 1 in 3 people will contract cancer, and 1 in 4 will die from it.
- Within 5 years, cancer will surpass heart disease as leading cause of death.
- Since 1950, cancer incidence has increase by 44%, breast and male colon cancer by 60%, testis, prostate and kidney cancer by 100% and malignant melanoma, multiple myeloma and some lymphomas by more than 100%
- Production of synthetic chemicals has increased from 1 billion pounds in 1940 to more than 500 billion pounds in the 1980's.

Courtesy of the Cancer Prevention Coalition, 520 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 410, Chicago, IL 60611, USA (email: cpc@igc.apc.org).

The National Cancer Institute has stated that "it is well established that primary prevention is the most effective means of disease control. This is particularly true". Yet "lack of appreciation of the potential hazards of environmental and food source contaminants, and laws, policies and regulations protecting and promoting tobacco use worsen the cancer problem". The US National Cancer Advisory boarded reported to the US congress in 1994 that "the elimination or reduction of exposure to carcinogenic agents is a priority in the prevention of cancer. We are just beginning to understand the full range of health effects resulting from the exposure to occupational and environmental agents and factors."

Rachel's Environment & Health Weekly provides an interesting analogy: "Assault rifles kill an estimated 250 people [in the USA] each year and pesticides kill an estimated 10,400 people each year [through cancer and other disorders], yet assault rifles have been banned while the use of pesticides is expanding."



The Alberta Greens need your support. And now is a good time to give it, especially if you want to donate some money and have up to 75% of it returned to you as a political tax credit on your 1995 tax return.

But the Alberta Greens need more than money. We need people to give a little of their time to work with the many issues that we have been involved with. Even one hour a month would help. We have been involved with many issues over the past year:

- Intervening at National Energy Board hearings to demand environmental assessments of oil and gas export applications.
- Opposing Swan Hills expansion.
- Fighting for reduced pesticide use in Calgary.
- Maintaining links with other environmental and social action groups.
- Fighting the Whaleback sour gas well.
- Fighting to keep public lands open to the public, even when ranchers hold grazing leases.
- Fighting the Sunpine logging road.
- Fighting development in the Bow Corridor and Kananaskis Country.
- Supporting the land claims of the Lubicon people.
- Monitoring Alberta's forests through satellite photographs.
- Bringing environmental groups together.

The support that we are building now will assist us in the next Alberta general election. But more people could do more work and get involved with more groups with similar aims and speak with a stronger voice to oppose the anti-environmental policies of the Klein government.

Please turn the page to see where you can help...

Where do you fit in?

Active Member

I want to give some of my time to help the development of the Green movement in Alberta, either regularly or during elections. Please call me...and keep your newsletter coming!

Contributing Member

I have enclosed a cheque or money order payable to *Alberta Greens* for a donation of \$____ now and/or post-dated cheques of \$____ for each month of 1996. I understand that donations are up to 75% tax-rebatable (i.e. a donation of \$100 would result in \$75 back on your tax return).

Note: receipts are only given for donations over \$15. Keep that newsletter coming!

Direct donations are important to us. We would like to thank you by sending a gift, depending on the size of your donation (please check the appropriate box):

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 or over | Environmental poster. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 or over | Mug with environmental message. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 or over | T-Shirt with environmental message. |

Supporting Member

I have no money or time right now, but support the Alberta Greens in my heart and when I vote. Please keep your newsletter coming!

Associate Member

I want to support the Green movement by donating to a joint project with another organization. I understand that this will make up to 75% of my donation tax rebatable as an Alberta political tax credit. I have enclosed \$____ for the issue funding project I have checked below:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends of the West Country | Opposing Sunpine logging road expansion. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health Action Network | Opposing water fluoridation. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rocky Mountain Ecosystem Coalition | Protecting Rocky Mountain wilderness. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alberta Wilderness Association | Promoting the protection of Special Places. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Earth Harvest Cooperative | Renovations of this health food store. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends of the Athabasca | Challenging the government's restrictive definition of a "directly affected" person. |

Mail this form to:
Alberta Greens
Box 133, Stn. M
Calgary, Alberta T2N 3W1

All members of the Alberta Greens, in any category, will receive this newsletter.