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Now is the best time to donate to the Green Party, and ensure that your political tax credits apply to your 2002 income tax. If you pay taxes in Alberta your donation is eligible for a rebate of up to 75% on your Income Tax return. If you donate a total of \$150 to the Alberta Greens in 2002, you would receive an income tax credit of \$112.50, meaning that the donation actually only cost you \$37.50! Above \$150 the rebate declines. It is 50% of the next \$675. The total rebate cannot exceed \$750.

The Alberta Greens use our donations to fund party activities. Most will assist candidates at future general elections or by-elections. The party has no employees, so no money goes to salaries.

Race for Leader of the Green Party of Canada

Nominations for the position of Leader of the Green Party of Canada are due by December 15, 2002. The election will be on January 15, 2003.

At press time we had been contacted by Jason Crummev of the NWT, Jim Harris from Ontario and have heard that John Grogan of British Columbia may also be running. More information on Crummev and Harris can be found later on in this newsletter. There may be other candidate declarations before the December deadline.

If you are not currently a Federal member and wish to vote, please contact:

Alan McCreary

Secretary of the Federal Greens in Alberta

Phone +1-403-239-6768

Email: alanmccreary@shaw.ca

Federal memberships are \$25.

Greens in Alberta Annual General Meetings

The Annual General Meeting of the Alberta Greens was held in Red Deer on Oct 19th, 2002. The officers of the Alberta Greens remain the same. Pat Gidora was confirmed as Party Secretary. See the sidebar on page 2 for full contact information.

The AGM of the Federal Greens in Alberta was also held at the same location on the same day. Darcy Kraus, a Green Party candidate in the last provincial election, is the new Alberta representative on federal council, replacing Alan McCreary. Alan is taking now Federal Party Secretary. Robert Wilde continues as Financial Officer and George Read as President of the Federal Greens in Alberta.

The Federal meeting focussed on the pressing debt of the Federal Hub. Members voted to send more than the standard amount to the central party to help with their financial issues. Any members who wish to help the federal party can make a donation through Robert Wilde (email: wrfb@freenet.edmonton.ab.ca).

Edmonton Green Meeting Soon

A date has not yet been established, but an Edmonton meeting of Greens will be held soon. Please contact George Read (Wightlight@aol.com) or David Parker (voa@planet.eon.net) for more details.

Helping the Campus Greens in Alberta

*Cody Torgerson
Campus Greens*

The Campus Greens exist to represent the Green Party on college and university campuses. We do this mainly through actions that promote the latest environmental, social, or economic cause while also relating to Green Party policy. So far, Campus Greens in Alberta have organized actions on fairly traded organic coffee and the ratification of the Kyoto protocol.

This is where you can help. Even though our members are keen on organizing actions they are not familiar enough with the Party to determine its official position on issues. As the Campus Greens are working to maintain a presence for the Green Party on campus, we would appreciate it if there were a few folks who would help with developing official statements or policy related to activities that we organize.

Like other political clubs, we also organize speeches by prominent political leaders. Over the summer, Campus Greens in Alberta were influential in bringing both Jello Biafra and Ralph

Nader to Alberta to speak; both are eloquent speakers with distinct Green Party ties in the U.S. We also organize debates and rallies to raise the profile of Green Party candidates in Alberta as well as support elections. So far, the U of C group has supported four student candidates in the two separate elections (last federal and provincial) and will continue to do so in the future.

We also host regular discussions, road trips and parties. One of our members organized an awesome solstice party this past year that ran until the wee hours of the morning with over 150 people attending. Sometimes we introduce our members to outstanding Green Party members in the area, get together and discuss politics or just get together for social purposes. All of this is done in the hopes of furthering the Party in Alberta (honest).

Another area where you could help is with bringing new people into the club and introducing them to the Green Party experience. However, it is safe to say that most people that will be interested in the club will know nothing about the Party. We also need to have some printed materials and a presentation that we could use to introduce students to the Party.

The Greens are growing in Alberta and this is particularly true on campuses. We hope to have a Campus Greens chapter set up in Red Deer by the end of 2002. Cody Torgerson is also working hard in Calgary to develop an organizing guide for Campus Greens groups. It will be field-tested at Red Deer College and used when we invade other cities. This guide can be considered the first project in the development of a Campus Greens organizing web site. Within a couple of years, we will have a national "virtual" office, developed with the help of Campus Greens groups across Canada to co-ordinate activities of existing groups, facilitate the development of new groups and integrate efforts of faculty, staff and students.

We constantly work to promote the club to all members of the campus community, not just students. However, the best arguments for getting involved always seem to come from those you know. If *you* know anyone teaching, working or studying at any campus in Alberta, we would love you to pass on the word about the Campus Greens. If you know people who are on campuses where we do not yet have a club, we would like to work with your contact to start promoting one.

Do not hesitate to contribute what you can to the development of campus groups in Alberta. To get involved with or contribute to campus organizing, please contact Cody Torgerson at +1-403-220-0754 or ucgreens@ucalgary.ca. For more information on the U of C Campus Greens, go to www.ucalgary.ca/ucgreens.

Wild Greens

The Wild Greens, a group of environmentalists who practice direct action have a website at:

www.wildgreens.ca

ALBERTA GREENS INFORMATION

Address:	Box 61251, RPO Brentwood Calgary, AB, T2L 2K6, Canada
Email:	molders@calcna.ab.ca
Web:	green.ca/ab
Leader	David Parker +1-403-469-1448
President	David Crowe +1-403-289-6609
Treasurer	Madeleine Oldershaw +1-403-282-4788
Secretary	Pat Gidora +1-403-686-0703
Membership	Alan McCreary +1-403-239-6768

MEMBERSHIP - ALBERTA GREENS

Membership in the Alberta Greens is free! Simply send your name, address and other contact information to our mailing or email address above. Members have the right to vote at Alberta Greens meetings and will receive this newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP - GREEN PARTY OF CANADA

Memberships in the Green Party of Canada are available for \$10 to individuals, or \$15 to families from:

Alan McCreary
Secretary, Green Party of Canada in Alberta
#46 - 6915 Ranchview Dr. NW
Calgary, Alberta, T3G 1R8, Canada
Email: alanmccreary@shaw.ca
Web: green.ca

DONATIONS

If you cannot give us your time, we could certainly use your money! 75% of your first \$150 in donations to the Alberta Greens are returned to you on your next Alberta tax return. You can also receive this tax break on donations to joint projects between the Alberta Greens and other environmental and social action groups. Contact us for details.

MEETINGS

For information on meeting dates, times and locations, contact Pat Gidora, the party secretary.

COMMENTS

We welcome submissions for the Alberta Greens Newsletter. Please send them to the party address above or directly to the editor by email to David.Crowe@aras.ab.ca.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please let us know your new phone postal or email contact information before they change. Include your name, both your old and new information as well as the effective date of the change. Send updates to our address above.

NEWSLETTER VOLUNTEERS

Thanks to Madeleine Oldershaw, Alan McCreary, Erica Crowe and Julia Crowe for their valuable assistance with the distribution of the newsletter.

US Green Party Continues Steady Growth in 2002

*Green Party, USA
November 6, 2002*

Washington, D.C. – In an election in which conservative forces took control of both houses of the US Congress, the Green Party continued its steady growth. Although some local results are not yet in, the party won at least 33 races on November 5th, for a 2002 total of 66 races won (some earlier in the year). This is the highest total to date, eclipsing the previous best of 58 in 2001. The Green Party's count of elected officeholders stands at 171, pending final results.

The most prominent victories included John Eder's victory in state house District 31 in Portland, Maine. Eder defeated his Democratic opponent by a two-to-one margin. Additionally, David Segal was elected to the Providence, Rhode Island, City Council Ward 1 seat, a working-class and traditionally Democratic district. Victories ranged from Hawaii to Maine and Texas to Minnesota, with North Carolina and Texas both electing their first Green to local office.

"My resounding victory last night demonstrated that grassroots politics still works, and took the Maine Green Independent Party, and the Green Party in the US, to the next step in its growth," said Eder. "I'm ready to go to work for my constituents and demonstrate that the Green Party's platform can help the quality of life for Mainers."

Eder's victory caps an election in which many Green candidates for state legislative office recorded vote totals over 20% and 30%, and in the double digits in races with both Democrats and Republicans. Green candidate AnnDrea Benson in Pennsylvania's 3rd Congressional District won 22%, the best yet for a Green in a House race. And many Greens running statewide improved on the vote totals from the Nader campaign in 2000.

"Last night's election demonstrates that the Green Party continues to grow whether the economy is up or down, whatever the issues are, and independent of the plight of the Democratic Party," said Dean Myerson, Green Party Political Coordinator. "The Green Party achieved its core goals of electing a candidate to a state legislature and improving its electoral performance over previous years."

In an interesting turn of events, the Election Night party for the Adam Benedetto for Dane County Sheriff campaign, which won 16 precincts, was paid a visit by Wisconsin Senator Russ Feingold, wishing the Green Party well.

"Progressives such as Representative Tammy Baldwin did well last night," said Green Party Co-Chair Ben Manski. "Progressive candidates not only can win, but do win, when they are true to their values".

For More Information

US Green Party Election Results:

www.greens.org/elections

Green Party Candidate Endorsements:

www.greenpartyus.org/endorse02.html

The Green Party of the United States National office is at 1314 18th Street, NW Washington, DC 20036. They can be reached by phone at +1-202-296-7755 or on the web at:

www.gp.org

GREEN URLS

The Alberta Greens website can be reached via:

green.ca/ab

The Green Party of Canada is at:

green.ca

Federal Bi-annual National Meeting

George Read

The Federal Green Party had its Bi-annual General Meeting in Montreal this August. It was attended by over 60 representatives from Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan. A new federal council was elected, putting an end to the year of difficulties following the resignation of former leader Joan Russow. The new council will take the party forward on a good footing, so the future looks encouraging.

I particularly appreciated the opportunity to meet with people from across the country and to realize that we are all in this together. The Ontario Greens are doing great things even though they are not getting much press out West. They are organized in most constituencies.

The New Green Alliance in Saskatchewan has just had a change of leadership, resulting in renewed vigour and a new direction.

The Manitoba Greens are fighting malathion spraying. Manitoba has only a small group of Greens but they did manage to send one representative.

The highlight of the meeting for me was meeting the Quebec Greens. They have just restarted the provincial party which was previously torn apart by sovereignty questions. The Quebec group was vibrant enough to host the Bi-annual meeting and is growing quickly.

Paul Falvo, a Green Party member who is living in the North West Territories, joined the Federal Council after this meeting. It is good to see the reach of the Green Party expanding.

The Challenge

It is not enough for Greens to just be Greens at election time. A challenge from the Federal Meeting was for each of us to have 50 political conversations between now and next year. If people are thinking Green they are more likely to vote Green.

Jason Crummey — Leadership Candidate

Jason Crummey has announced that he will be running for the position of the leader of the Green Party of Canada.

He has been involved with the Green Party since 1996, and is a charter member of both the Terra Nova Greens (in Newfoundland) and the newly formed Western Arctic Greens.

He is currently employed as a security guard at the Diavik diamond mine at Lac De Gras.

You can contact Jason at:

crummey@hotmail.com.

Jim Harris — Leadership Candidate

Jim Harris is also campaigning for the position of Leader of the Green Party of Canada. He is currently the President of the Green Party of Ontario.

Jim has been involved with Green Parties since 1985 and organized the Ontario Green Party's 1990 election campaign. While living in England in the late 1980's he was the press secretary of the UK Green Party.

Jim is the author of three best-selling Canadian books, and is an independent management consultant.

You can contact Jim at:

jim@jimharris.com

Greens and Kyoto

Former Alberta Greens candidate Jan Triska continues to fight for Kyoto as the leader of *Albertans to Ratify Kyoto* (ARK). Jan organized a meeting at the University of Calgary where Mark McGillvery spoke on behalf of the Green Party. The forum was well attended with Dr David Swann, Rev. Bill Phipps, Liberal House Leader Ken Nichol and a union representative speaking.

The Green point of view was well represented by Mark who emphasized that Kyoto has not only Climate Change implications but also health effects. Dr David Swann (the Alberta public health officer fired by the Alberta government because of his public support for Kyoto) entered at the height of Mark's medical remarks to a standing ovation. He added that we need to not only consider health issues but also must defend our right to speak out on them.

MP Wayne Cao was in the audience and was called on to ask the government to spend the same amount on pro-Kyoto voices as the \$2.2 million they are spending on their anti-Kyoto campaign. Wayne insisted that the government campaign was educational.

ARK — Albertans for Ratifying Kyoto

ARK

The ARK coalition, representing Albertans who support ratifying the Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse gas reductions, got into full swing this fall.

It started as an outreach and organizational project earlier this summer but has now turned into a full-scale media campaign, including a 'war of words' with the provincial government who are waging their own publicity effort to discredit the Kyoto treaty. It is not every day that an environmentalist, non-profit organization makes the front page of the Calgary Herald (Sept.20).

ARK provides channels for Albertans from all walks of life to express their support of the treaty. We are now using web-based and traditional media, distributing petitions and partnering with environmental NGOs. ARK also is promoting awareness about the climate change treaty on campuses, especially during the University of Alberta Eco-conference (held Sept.13-15).

Our effort is broad-based. Supporters include large unions like the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers, both provincial opposition parties, municipalities and many individual Albertans.

For more information, please contact us through e-mail:

ark@web.ca

or call the AEN offices in Edmonton at +1-780-433-9302.

To join ARK, visit our website at:

www.web.ca/~ark

While there, browse through the available links and sign our petition.

You may also call Jan Triska at +1-780-991-6420 or +1-403-242-5896 or email him at:

jantriska@yahoo.com.

The ARK campaign is made possible by a grant from the federal Climate Action Network. Partners include the David Suzuki Foundation and the Pembina Institute.

Alberta Greens Leader Speaks out on Kyoto

This letter was sent to Prime Minister Jean Chretien by the leader of the Alberta Greens.

*David Parker
Leader, Alberta Greens*

I am actively working to promote meaningful solutions to climate change in my work and personal life. I resent my government having closed-door consultations with oil industry officials on tax incentives and emissions trading schemes.

The ecological mess we now find ourselves in has been caused by ever growing market distortions. Whether it is massive pig factories, uneconomical pulp mills, wasteful tar sands extraction, depressed commodity prices due to overproduction, or fiscally insane energy production, the misguided hand of either government intervention or disregard has normally been present.

Please do what government can and should only do: Regulate. Don't show favourites, the free market is well equipped to do that. Don't bypass public or environmental health as a means of "stimulating" economic growth, it doesn't work. When all jurisdictions are doing the same thing all we do is race to the bottom of the barrel and ensure the only winners are the largest corporate interests, never the people.

Proportional Representation

Submission to the Electoral Boundaries Commission of Alberta on behalf of the Alberta Green Party by its leader, David Parker, PEng.

No amount of tampering with the British Parliamentary system used in Alberta will make it as good (i.e. fair, democratic, equitable) as a system based on Proportional Representation (PR). The recent history of politics in Canada has shown that the First Past the Post (FPTP) system is fundamentally undemocratic. Some examples of the inequities:

- The provincial government of Quebec holds a majority of seats with a minority of popular support.
- The former NDP government of BC also had a majority of seats with a minority of the popular vote.
- The present governments of BC and Alberta have far more seats in their legislatures than warranted by the number of votes received.
- The federal Progressive Conservatives, immediately after the Mulroney government, were reduced to 2 seats after having received approximately 19% of the popular vote. The Reform Party, with similar support, became the official opposition.
- The BC Green Party received 12.4% of the votes in the last provincial election, but was awarded no seats.

The present situation in Federal politics makes it seem that the west is entirely supportive of the Alliance Party, Ontario

of the Liberals and that the PC Party is only supported in Atlantic Canada. In other words, it is divisive and polarizing. These disparities and the propensity of governments with large (and false) majorities to enact unpopular legislation, have created a lack of interest in electoral politics, especially among the young.

The FPTP system can also encourage people to vote against candidates they find totally unsuitable as opposed to the candidate they truly support. This has caused the ongoing split in the right of center vote and robbed parties such as the Greens of support, where sympathizers prefer to vote against the right of center parties known to have regressive environmental policies.

In local competitions where two or more candidates of similar proclivities are vying for the same seat the vote will be split and a candidate supported by a minority may squeak through the middle. This scenario was played out in several Edmonton constituencies in the last provincial election between Liberal and NDP candidates resulting in an apparent increase in support for the ruling Tories.

The mandate of your commission is to examine another unfair feature of the FPTP system, that of Electoral Boundaries. The FPTP system requires the voter to choose one person to represent them, not a party. The voter may consider the candidate totally unsuitable for public office but, because he or she supports the party, may vote for them anyway. The reverse may also be the case – the voter supports an individual not the candidate's party platform.

Major population disparities exist between rural and urban constituencies in Alberta. The worst case is that of Calgary–Shaw where it takes four votes to equal one vote in Athabasca–Wabasca.

On average, the disparity between rural and urban votes is about 1.5 to 1. This must not be allowed to continue, if we are still to regard our political system as democratic. The concept of *one person, one vote* must be reestablished.

The general excuse for retaining such disparate constituency populations is that the size of rural constituencies make it difficult for the representative to adequately represent their constituents. In the 21st century, when communication and travel are so refined, fast and convenient, this excuse does not stand up. All representatives must spend a large proportion of their time travelling to and from Edmonton but this elicits few complaints. Unlike when the British Parliamentary system was first established, an elected representative can now be instantly in contact with any of their constituents. Highways and air travel now ensure that the representative can be anywhere in the province within a few hours when electronic communication is deemed inadequate.

The PR system is currently used in most democracies, with the notable exceptions of Britain, Canada and the US.

Germany and New Zealand electoral systems offer a compromise between our local constituency system and a totally PR system. These systems, known as *Mixed Member Proportional* allow each citizen two votes, one for a local candidate and another for a party list.

Another common PR system is the Single Transferable Vote in which electors rank several candidates in order of preference. If one candidate does not obtain at least 51% of the popular vote the candidate with the least votes is dropped.

PR has allowed a more diverse spectrum of political ideology within governments allowing them to more closely represent the political values of the electorate. Normally a single party does not acquire sufficient representation to form a government by itself forcing the creation of coalitions in order to govern.

There are several major criticisms of PR, but they do not hold water:

1. *Governments with illegitimately large representation do not deserve to have the ability to enact legislation beyond the wishes of the population or outside the promises made during the election.*

Democracy is messy, and a higher voter acceptance results from compromising party ideology than having the illegitimate power to enact legislation. Examples of where Canadian governments acted outside the wishes of the majority of the electorate are with NAFTA and the GST.

2. *Small parties can become part of government, due to the necessity to create coalitions. Consequently, they may have an inordinately large influence on governmental policy.*

This happens in countries where the threshold of electorability is low (i.e. the amount of the popular vote required to achieve representation). This is easily resolved by having a high threshold of, for example, more than 5% popular support. The country most often cited in relation to this problem is the State of Israel where the threshold is very low and certain religious parties hold undue sway on government action. If 1 in 20 people are prepared to give their support to a particular party I believe this confers the legitimacy required to hold office.

3. *Governments can often be toppled in mid-mandate.*

If the consent of the population is so narrow that a government does not have the requisite support to continue then this is a good example of democracy working. The post-war history of Italy has seen much of this governmental instability. However, Italy has always had a very strong communist movement and the Cold War influence has been very strongly in opposition of allowing the far left any foothold.

Although acceptance of a PR system is still remote in the province of Alberta I sincerely hope your Commission will make it one of your primary recommendations. Failing this I strongly suggest that electoral boundaries be given equal parity in population regardless of geographic size.

Ontario Media Finally Notices Green Party

On November 2nd, the Toronto Star's Ian Urquhart admitted that "the Greens have appeared on the provincial political radar screen for the first time, with potential consequences for the other parties".

Urquhart fears that the Greens will just help the Conservatives stay in power, just as some accused Ralph Nader of helping to elect George Bush. It is ironic that, just after the US mid-term elections, it has become clear that the Democrats are as weak and ineffectual as Nader claimed, unable to strongly oppose the Republicans on Peace and Environmental issues.

Support for Ontario's Conservative party has dropped from 42% last summer to only 33% in an October 26, 2002 Ipsos-Reid poll. Support for the Liberals and the New Democrats increased by only 1%. The Green Party of Ontario made a dramatic first appearance in the Ipsos-Reid poll with 6% support.

Urquhart notes that the phenomenal success of the Greens in British Columbia, now at about 19% in the polls, has helped the Ontario party make headway.

Ontario Green Party leader Frank de Jong claims that the party will run candidates in all 103 ridings in the next election, expected within a year. In 1999, the party had 58 candidates and fewer than 1% of Ontarians voted for them.

The Ontario Green Party website is:

www.greenparty.on.ca

2004 Federal Convention . . . In Alberta?

The Federal Greens in Alberta are considering hosting the 2004 Green Party of Canada convention. We will need a lot of help if we are going to do this. Anyone interested in helping with this should contact George Read via e-mail at

wightlight@aol.com

or by phone at +1-403-230-9474.

Alberta Greens Candidates Workshop

The provincial Greens are beginning to think about elections, and are considering a candidate's workshop. The dates have not been finalized and there may be more than one if there is enough interest. Anyone interested in putting their name forward as a candidate in the next election or attending a workshop on how to campaign should contact George Read via e-mail at

wightlight@aol.com

or by phone at +1-403-230-9474.

Pesticide Subsidies

The Green Party of Ontario is protesting the subsidization of pesticides by the Ontario government. This amounted to almost \$20 million in 2001. The party asks why there are no similar subsidies to help farmers grow organic crops.

Organic farms have tripled from about 1,000 in 1992 to 3,100 now. Almost one-fifth of Canadians are regular consumers of organic produce, and the number is rising all the time.

Canada risks being left behind. In Germany there are plans to make 20% of farms organic within 5 years. In Sweden, increased taxes resulted in an 80% reduction in pesticide use over the past 20 years. In the Netherlands, there are subsidies for organic farmers.

It makes sense to subsidize organic farmers because of their startup costs, and need to gain experience, and because these farmers are providing a benefit to the entire planet by eliminating the side effects of pesticides and artificial fertilizers on the environment and human health.