



Green Party of Canada Launches New Website

The Green Party of Canada launched a new website in March 2004. Not only does it have a new URL...

greenparty.ca

...but the website also has a new look and uses more advanced web technologies to make it more useful to its visitors.

The old website will take you to the same place:

green.ca

Green Party of Canada in Alberta is Ready for the Election!

George Read

Table 1 lists the Green Party of Canada candidates for Alberta. Not only is Alberta doing well, the party has almost all 308 candidates we need for a full slate across the country! For the first time, almost all Albertans will have a choice of voting Green.

The upcoming federal election is critical to the Green Party because if we can get 308 candidates we can

get easily achieve the 2% of the total votes cast, which means that the party will receive funding from the government. This money will be split evenly between the federal hub, the regions and the local Electoral districts. There has never been a more historic time for the Greens in Canada. Contact your local Green Party candidate today!

The Alberta Organizer for the federal election is Darcy Kraus. He can be reached by phone at (403) 541-1694 (cell: 519-8782) or by email at:

ab_organizer@green.ca

Table 1: Green Party of Canada Candidates in Alberta

| Riding | Candidate | Riding | Candidate | Riding | Candidate |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Athabasca | Ian Hopfe (780) 891-2220 | Crowfoot | Arnold Baker (780) 904-1755 | Lethbridge | Erin Matthews (403) 328-9839 |
| Calgary East | Dean Christie (403) 276-1133 | Edmonton – Beaumont | Michael Garfinkle (780) 436-9677 | Macleod | tba |
| Calgary North Centre | Mark MacGillivray (403) 667-4695 | Edmonton Centre | David Parker (780) 469-1448 | Medicine Hat | Kevin Dodd (403) 544-3960 |
| Calgary Northeast | Morgan Duford (403) 819-4136 | Edmonton East | Harlan Light (780) 471-4216 | Peace River | tba |
| Calgary – Nosehill | Richard Larson (403) 282-7278 | Edmonton – Leduc | Bruce Sinclair (780) 986-0813 | Red Deer | Peter Borsch (780) 429-2962 |
| Calgary South Centre | Phillip Liesemer (403) 619-4505 | Edmonton – St. Albert | Conrad Bitangcol (780) 722-0146 | Vegreville – Wainwright | Jim Kenney (780) 842-6727 |
| Calgary Southeast | George Read (403) 230-9474 | Edmonton – Sherwood Park | Margaret Marean (780) 469-1448 | Westlock – St. Paul | John McDonald (780) 923-3548 |
| Calgary Southwest | Darcy Kraus (403) 541-1694 | Edmonton – Spruce Grove | Jerry Paschen (780) 436-4913 | Wetaskiwin | Thomas Lampman (780) 985-2837 |
| Calgary West | Danielle Roberts (403) 289-3252 | Edmonton – Strathcona | Cam Wakefield (780) 484-5211 | Wild Rose | Chris Foote (403) 762-3111 |
| | | | | Yellowhead | Albert Aris (780) 718-5301 |

Green Popularity Polls

Dave Ferguson

A summary of recent Ipsos-Reid polls on the popularity of political parties in Canada can be found at:

members.shaw.ca/greenpower/polls

University of Calgary Students as Green Candidates

*Chris Beauchamp
U of C Gauntlet
March 4th 2004*

Two University of Calgary students have launched bids to become Members of Parliament under the Green Party banner.

Danielle Roberts and Morgan DuFord, both members of the Campus Greens, will run in the upcoming federal election. Roberts, who is working toward a degree in earth science, emphasized the bid is aimed at increasing awareness for the Green Party.

"A lot of people don't know that the Green Party exists in Alberta," she said. "We want to let people know the Green Party is here and we're not leaving. We're not a one-policy party. The federal Greens have a policy for every federal issue."

Both Roberts and DuFord expressed disappointment with the levels of voter apathy in recent elections and see their candidacies as a chance to get people interested. They stressed the Green Party prefers "face-to-face" campaigning methods over high publicity ad campaigns.

"Just talking to people about politics will actually make them want to go out and vote," said DuFord, who holds a degree in microbiology and is pursuing another in computer science. "I'd like people to vote for the Green Party, but for me I'd just like to see people vote."

Roberts will be running in the university's riding of Calgary West. She said, as an MP, she would focus on battling high tuition and improving public transit.

"I would take a hard look at the transit system," she said. "I'd really like to understand it more, and improve it."

ALBERTA GREENS INFORMATION

| | |
|------------|---|
| Address: | Box 61251, RPO Brentwood Calgary, AB, T2L 2K6, Canada |
| Web: | AlbertaGreens.ca |
| Leader | George Read +1-403-230-9474 politics_of_ecology@yahoo.ca |
| President | David Crowe +1-403-289-6609 David.Crowe@aras.ab.ca |
| Treasurer | Mark MacGillivray +1-403-204-5400 albertagreens@planet-save.com |
| Secretary | Madeleine Oldershaw +1-403-282-4788 molders@calcna.ab.ca |
| Membership | Alan McCreary +1-403-239-6768 AlanMcCreary@shaw.ca |

MEMBERSHIP - ALBERTA GREENS

Voting membership in the Alberta Greens is only \$10 per year! Simply send payment, along with your name, address and other contact information to our mailing address above. You do not need to be a voting (paid) member to 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 the party secretary.

COMMENTS

We welcome submissions for this Newsletter. Please send them to the editor by email to David.Crowe@aras.ab.ca.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please let us know your new phone, address 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 Alan McCreary, Erica Crowe and Julia Crowe for their assistance with the distribution of the newsletter.

DuFord pledged to make public research a priority, claiming MPs should not wait for their constituents to come to them. She supports “anything that can encourage people to act more environmentally,” proposing GST rebates for locally produced and organic food.

Both candidates admitted their odds of winning a seat are not high. “Basically, I just want to get information out there for people,” stated DuFord.

Rather than consider their youth and lack of experience as a strike against them, Roberts sees this as positive.

“We’re young and we’re new,” Roberts said. “This is our country and it’s scary that we’re letting other people run it. We need to get out there and let them hear our voice.

“You’re only young once.”

Mark 'Mad Cow' Purdey

Mark Purdey, the British organic cattle farmer and BSE researcher is speaking in Calgary on Tuesday, June 1st 2004 at the Dutton theatre in the downtown public library. This talk is sponsored by the Alberta Greens, Sierra Club Chinook and the Alberta Reappraising AIDS Society.

Mark originated the theory that a mandatory organophosphate program by the British government a couple of years before Mad Cow disease broke out was the actual cause and has spent most of the past decade investigating it.

For more information on his Western Canadian speaking tour, including his engagement in Calgary, consult:

aras.ab.ca/PurdeyTour2004.html

Write a Letter on Oil & Gas Remediation Responsibility Today!

Anonymous Source

The Oil and Gas Industry is lobbying the provincial government to terminate or end their responsibility for contamination. If they choose to clean-up to the condition it was in before they developed the site there is no problem, future responsibility should be ended.

However, the oil and gas industry wants to conduct only partial clean-ups and have the government end their responsibility. Guess who would then become responsible if the clean-up wasn't good enough? You the taxpayer!!

You can help stop this fiscally and environmentally irresponsible downloading of responsibility. Write a letter today!

Do not send emails – they are too easily ignored. Written letters with a return address will always get more attention.

Use the following text for your letter, adjusting as you see fit. Make sure you include your name, address and phone number:

*Hon. Lorne Taylor
Alberta Environment Minister
Legislature Office
#423, 10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB
T5K 2B6*

Dear Dr. Taylor:

This letter is to ask that you protect the principle of *Polluter Pays*. Do not terminate the oil and gas industry's liability for addressing contamination unless the site has been returned to a pristine state.

Government clean-up criteria are provided for guidance – they are not comprehensive remediation standards intend to terminate liability.

As our understanding of contaminants continues to grow, the government clean-up criteria must change. If oil and gas companies choose to clean-up only to today's government criteria rather than return the site to pristine conditions, industry must remain responsible for problems discovered in the future.

If industry's liability is terminated after only a partial clean-up we, the taxpayer, will end up paying to address any subsequent adverse affects. When oil and gas licenses are issued there is **no** sharing of the liability for contamination with the government either explicitly expressed or implied. Taxpayers should not pay for contamination that they did not control and did not authorize. The royalty paid by oil and gas companies is strictly payment for the resource. Taxpayers should not pay for contamination that they have not been compensated for. The releases that cause contamination are specifically prohibited by law. Tax payers should not pay for the regulatory non-compliance of the oil and gas industry.

Save us Money; Receive your Newsletter by email!

It costs about \$3 to mail out one newsletter. We can email the same information at almost no cost. If you are willing to receive this newsletter electronically, send your email address, along with a preference of 'Plain Text' or 'PDF' format, to our membership coordinator, at:

AlanMcCreary@shaw.ca

Include your mailing address and at least one phone number as well. It is common for people to change their email address and

Alberta Water Usage

Consumers are not the major users of water in Alberta. While a brick in the toilet is a good idea, it is industrial and agricultural users who are most wasteful:

- Municipalities – 5.4%
- Industrial (including oil companies) – 14.8%
- Irrigation – 70.9%

Oil companies use so much water because they often inject fresh water into aging oil wells to increase production. Obviously, this hopelessly contaminates the water, which is in any case, mostly locked beneath the ground.

Europe's First Green Prime Minister

Dave Ferguson

In February 2004, Europe got its first Green prime minister, when the president of European Union entrant Latvia asked former environment minister Indulis Emsis to form a government.

Green Party USA and Ralph Nader

Green Party USA

Greens welcomed Ralph Nader's entry into the presidential race as an independent, saying that Nader will take positions and raise issues of vital urgency in the 2004 race for the White House.

Even so, the Green Party of the United States (GPUSA) and its 43 state parties are preparing to back a Green nominee, not an independent or another party's candidate.

"In running a presidential ticket this year, we're keeping our eyes on the prize. Our mid-term goal is the creation of a multi-party political system and the participation of a strong Green Party in that system,"

said Ben Manski, co-chair of GPUSA. "To move closer to achieving our goal, we run and support Green candidates."

The following candidates have confirmed their participation in the Green primaries with the national party: Sheila Bilyeau, Peter Camejo, David Cobb, Paul Glover, Kent Mesplay, Carol Miller and Lorna Salzman. More information about their campaigns, with links to their web sites, is posted at www.gp.org/convention/process.html.

Upcoming forums and debates featuring Green presidential candidates are posted at www.gp.org/greensweek/index.html, the web page for Greensweek, the party's national weekly bulletin.

Some Greens have launched a 'Redraft Nader' campaign to persuade Mr. Nader to reverse his earlier decision to not seek the Green Party nomination and instead accept a nomination at the party's national convention in Milwaukee. There is also a campaign among some Green Party members to urge the party not to run a national candidate in 2004.

"We wish Ralph well and thank him for working with us and supporting us all these years," said Jo Chamberlain, also a co-chair of the national Green Party. "Our candidates – and our eventual nominee – are campaigning on a platform similar to his, so we don't consider ourselves in any kind of public competition with him."

Greens stressed the importance of participation by the Green Party's nominee, by Mr. Nader and by other 'third party' candidates in the presidential debates. The Green Party, Mr. Nader and other candidates and parties from across the political spectrum have filed suit charging the Federal Election Commission with failing to act on their complaint seeking to decertify the Commis-

sion on Presidential Debates (CPD) as sponsor of the presidential debates in 2004 www.gp.org/press/pr_02_11_04.html because it is a partisan group controlled by the Republicans and Democrats and acts to benefit only them.

Jake Schneider, treasurer of the Green Party of the United States says "The CPD has an interest in obstructing all candidates who are outside of these two parties and in narrowing the public debate in deference to its corporate sponsors. This is profoundly anti-democratic and limits the ability of voters to make informed choices. We need a nonpartisan debate commission free of corporate influence, like that currently being organized by the Citizens' Debate Commission."

The Green Party of the United States will hold its 2004 National Nominating Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin from June 23 to 28, 2004 at the Midwest Center, Milwaukee Theater and the Milwaukee Hyatt Regency.

Want to Help?

You can help the Alberta Greens in many different ways. You can run as a candidate, act as campaign manager or chief agent for a candidate, or simply drop off flyers, host a neighbourhood coffee party to introduce the candidate or get on the phone and call prospective voters.

Even when an election is not looming you can, of course, donate money to the party and receive much of it back in Alberta tax credits. You can also help out in the development of policy, write articles for this newsletter, phone to expand and strengthen the membership or dream up your own way to help the party grow.

MORE INFORMATION. Green Party Presidential Nomination Convention and Candidates:

www.gp.org/convention/process.html

The Green Party of the United States:

www.gp.org

1700 Connecticut Avenue NW,
Suite 404
Washington, DC 20009.
Phone: +1-202-319-7191
Toll free: 1-866-41GREEN
Fax: +1-202-319-7193

Citizens' Debate Commission:

www.opendebates.org

Good-bye Peter

*From a May 11th 2004
obituary in the Calgary
Herald and other sources*

Peter Fitzgerald-Moore was one of the early and most influential members of the Alberta Greens (Green Party of Alberta). He died in Calgary of cancer on May 5, 2004.

Peter was born in London, England on May 28, 1919. He is survived by his wife Marlene (née Fogarty); his daughters, Linda Fitzgerald-Moore of London and Alison Faid of Edmonton; and his son Padraic Garrett Fitzgerald-Moore of Vancouver.

He was educated at private schools in Switzerland and England before obtaining a Master's Degree from the University of Cambridge. In WW II he served with the Royal Artillery, being decorated with the Military Cross. Afterwards he worked for Royal Dutch Shell for 39 years as a geologist in several countries. The trilobite species *Pseudodechenella petermoorei* ORMISTON was named after him. At one time he was Chief Geologist for Shell Canada.

After his retirement, he did contract work for the Geological Survey of Canada. He joined the Faculty of

General Studies of the University of Calgary, developing and teaching "Technology and Contemporary Society", until he retired in 1998.

Peter's first venture into politics was in 1958 when he was elected mayor of the then-independent Town of Bowness, where he inaugurated large-scale modernization. He held several public offices such as President of the Calgary Branches of the Humanities Association of Canada and of the Council of Canadians and, for three years, was a Senator of the University of Calgary. His most controversial activity was as Chairman of the Metric Commission's Sector Committee for the Oil and Gas Industry. The plans and activities of this committee were partially crippled by the Americanization of Canadian industry, a trend he strongly opposed.

Most recently Peter was one of the leading experts working with Fair Vote Calgary, with a seemingly limitless knowledge of electoral processes

In lieu of flowers and gifts, donations can be made to the Parkland Institute, Faculty of Arts, University of Alberta, 11045 Saskatchewan Drive, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2E1.

Good-bye Tooker

*Green Party of Ontario
March 9th 2004*

Environmentalists, activists and the Green Party of Ontario mourn the passing of Tooker Gomberg, an eco-activist and champion of all underdogs.

"Tooker was a friend to many of us, and inspired all of us", said Green Party of Ontario Leader Frank de Jong. "Gomberg inspired even committed eco-activists to work still harder, be more selfless, live greener and believe even harder. Canada will miss him."

Gomberg, who committed suicide in Halifax on Friday, March 4, 2004, was instrumental in kick-starting Edmonton's recycling program while he served as a municipal councillor. When he arrived in Toronto, he brought his energy to lobbying councillors at city hall, organizing peace demonstrations, creating youth and environmental activist groups, crusading for the homeless. Gomberg is best known for his campaign in the 2000 Toronto Mayoral race, running a brilliant, guerrilla-activist campaign against the Mel Lastman machine with few allies and almost no resources.

"I met Gomberg as a member of the Student Environmental Network and was greatly influenced by his engaging, radical ideas such as tearing up the roads to plant potatoes! He will be missed," said Youth Coordinator Robert Carty.

"I was at a political event in 2001 when Gomberg came along with his bicycle trailer and a four foot high paper maché globe, which was then ceremonially ignited on the front steps of the university to protest America's refusal to sign Kyoto," said GPO Operations Coordinator Michael Pilling. "Anywhere he went he could become an instant media event. Gomberg led the news that night, he was never afraid to make trouble for all the right reasons; he was a deeply courageous individual."

"We deeply regret that someone who was an inspiration to many, one who devoted everything to the causes he engaged in, could leave us so suddenly under these circumstances", added Pilling. "He was an example to all of us and that example will live on."

Gomberg is survived by his partner Angela, to whom the Green Party of Ontario extends its deepest sympathies.

Nuke Proposal Wrongheaded say Ontario Greens

Green Party of Ontario

Ontario will be heading in the wrong direction if recommendations to build more nuclear plants in the province are adopted, said Green Party of Ontario leader Frank de Jong on March 23rd 2004.

“The recommendation of the Manley report on Ontario Power Generation that proposes more nuclear power plants is a giant step backward,” says de Jong.

“The only reason nuclear power ever had a hope of being economical without cost overruns” de Jong adds, “is because the Nuclear Liability Act reduced the liability of operators to \$75 million per reactor. Without open-ended taxpayer sub-

sidy, private insurers won’t touch this risk. Citizens and taxpayers shouldn’t have to either.”

De Jong notes that the cost overruns, shutdowns and the long lead times for construction of nuclear reactors have meant that conservation, efficiency and renewables would have been cheaper as well as cleaner and safer - and the contrast will be even sharper in the future.

“We have to accept that clean safe power will cost more, especially as the supply of fossil fuels declines,” de Jong says. “This is just one reason we must use electricity much more efficiently.”

GPO energy critic Doug Woodward points out that real time display of price, supply and cost could have a tremendous beneficial impact if installed in each household and business along with higher prices for peak periods and reduced rates for times of low demand.

“We need to make it profitable for suppliers to help consumers invest to save electricity - now, not in 2005,” Woodward says. “We need an ‘electricity feed law’ for renewables, like systems used in Denmark where 20% of the electricity comes from wind power and Germany, which has more installed wind power capacity than any other country.”

“We need to start now to pay suppliers of renewable electricity the full-avoided health and environmental costs of burning fossil fuels, with an eye to their inevitably higher prices in the future. This will make wind power profitable in Ontario and will bring a rapid increase in supply,” says Woodward.

“Those are the basics,” adds de Jong, “The government of Ontario needs to stop dithering, pick up that ball and run with it.”

Former Alberta Greens Treasurer a Big Hit in BC

Dave Ferguson

I attended a taping session in Campbell River on March 24th 2004 with our federal election candidate Pam Munroe [treasurer of the Alberta Greens when she lived in Calgary]. Her performance in a 30 minute taping for CRTV – a community co-op cable station was near flawless (only 3 short ums). When she stated that the Green Party of Canada expects to elect 14 MPs in the election and field a full slate of 308, the interviewer’s eyes went wide. It threw him off script a bit as it appears that he was going to continue on the basis that we were there more to put out a green message than to win. He recovered quite well and took Pam much more seriously for the rest of the interview.

Pam’s job creation via sustainable energy development, sustainable, community controlled forestry, organic agriculture message hit home as did her focus on disease

Global Green Websites Worldwide

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| ALBERTA | AlbertaGreens.ca |
| B.C. | GreenParty.bc.ca |
| SASKATCHEWAN | votenga.ca |
| MANITOBA | GreenParty.mb.ca |
| ONTARIO | GreenParty.on.ca |
| QUÉBEC | PartiVertQuebec.org |
| PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND | peigreens.isn.net/default.htm |
| NEWFOUNDLAND | infonet.st-johns.nf.ca/providers/green/index.html |
| CANADA | GreenParty.ca |
| USA | gp.org |
| MÉXICO | pvem.org.mx |
| EUROPE | europeangreens.org |
| CENTRAL & SOUTH AMERICA | web.greens.org/ams.shtml |
| AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND | web.greens.org/oceana.shtml |
| AFRICA | web.greens.org/africa.shtml |
| ASIA | web.greens.org/asia.shtml |
| OTHER INFORMATION | www.gruppom.com/gm/2003.html |

prevention. She also scored big because of her role as treasurer of the GPBC and the fact that the BC party is debt free.

BC Green Leader on PR

*Adriane Carr, Leader
Green Party of BC
(Winnipeg Free Press,
April 4th 2004)*

I was shocked when I first learned that only about one-third of the world's democracies vote like we do in Canada for representatives to national and provincial office.

"How could one vote differently?" I asked. "You have a ballot. You put an X in the box beside the candidate you either like the most or hate the least. The candidate with the most votes wins."

In our First Past The Post (FPTP) system of electing representatives, candidates in tight three-way races often win with less than 40% of the popular vote. When there are more than two parties participating in an election, it is well documented that our outmoded voting system often thwarts good governance by delivering unfair and unbalanced results. These include:

- Exaggerated "wins" and "losses", and the total exclusion of significant minor parties. In comparison to the share of the overall popular vote, one political party often gets more seats than it deserves and others get fewer seats than they deserve. In British Columbia's 2001 election, the Liberals got 97% of the seats with just 58% of the vote. The NDP got only two seats despite winning 22% of the vote and the Green Party got no seats despite attracting 12% of the voters.
- Majority governments with less than 50% voter support. A political party can receive less than a majority of the votes cast – and sometimes fewer even than

another party – but still form a majority government. In the 1996 BC election the Liberals won 41% of the popular vote to the NDP's 39% but the NDP won more seats and formed a majority government.

A system that distorts or discounts the will of the voter undermines and devalues the democratic process. In our winner-take-all FPTP system, a polarized and adversarial political culture is created. As recent election results in BC demonstrate, unconstrained and dictatorial governments often emerge. As a result, public cynicism has grown and fewer people vote, especially youth. The voting system is the true root of our crisis in democracy.

We can change our voting system to make it fairer just as we have changed enfranchisement. Initially only property-owning men could vote. Then we extended the franchise to all men, to women, to Asian-Canadians, to First Nations and, most recently, to 18 to 20 year-olds.

Only Proportional Representation (PR) systems are specifically designed to produce fair results by treating all votes equally and making most of the votes count towards influencing the election results. In PR systems, the percentage of seats in the legislature a party gets is equivalent to the overall percentage of votes it receives in an election.

It's true that PR systems most often deliver minority or coalition governments, but this is a strength, not a weakness. It makes for better-thought-out, more stable and more widely accepted legislation. In Canada, minority federal governments with an NDP balance of power gave us universal medicare and the Canada Pension Plan.

In order to limit the proliferation and splintering of parties and make it easier to form coalition governments, most PR countries have an

established "threshold" – a minimum percentage of the popular vote (say, 5%), that a political party must get in order to win seats. Countries with PR systems tend to produce stable governments with political parties working cooperatively to produce good legislation.

A Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system, similar to the one New Zealand adopted in 1996, is ideally suited for Canada. You get the benefits of FPTP by keeping locally elected representatives, while at the same time ensuring that political parties get their fair share of seats. In this system, every voter gets two votes – one for a local constituency representative (elected in the same way we do now) and one for the political party of his or her choice.

If a party does not win its fair share of seats as measured by its overall popular vote, its seats are "topped up" by electing candidates from its "party list". These "party" seats are filled from ranked lists of candidates made public by each party before the election. Lists usually include all constituency candidates (whose names are crossed off the list if they are elected locally) and are usually balanced for gender, geography and minority-group representation, much like a cabinet. As a result of well-balanced party lists, countries with PR have much higher proportions of elected women, significantly better regional and ethnic representation, and higher voter turnout.

The real 'democratic deficit' across Canada (citizens who opt out of voting or whose votes don't count) is leading to electoral reform across Canada. This year, the B.C. government struck a Citizens Assembly with the power to put a fairer voting system to a referendum vote in the next provincial election in May, 2005. (See www.citizensassembly.bc.ca). A commission in Prince Edward Island has just recom-

mended changing to a Mixed Member Proportional voting system there. Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick and the Yukon Territories are all pursuing electoral reform. And the Law Commission of Canada, asked to look into electoral reform by our national government, has just come up with a recommendation for MMP as well.

Electoral reforms spell hope for democracy in Canada. There's no doubt in my mind that voters will be less cynical and governments more responsive when votes truly count and electoral outcomes are fair.

Canada's Prescription Drug Crisis

Michael Garfinkle

In the lead up to the federal election, Canadians were told that the Paul Martin government would get to the bottom of the sponsorship scandal. However, the widely publicized investigation was cut off with over 60 witnesses still to testify.

Two men were charged with defrauding the government of close to two million dollars and Canadians are expected to accept this as the end of the story.

This whole exercise was more of a distraction from the real scandal emanating from Ottawa, the report of the Commons Standing Committee on Health.

The committee recommended that: "Health Canada ensure the provision of independent, unbiased and publicly financed information on prescription drugs to Canadians" and warned that direct advertising would fail to provide balanced and unbiased information about prescription drugs, by minimizing risk information and exaggerating benefits, leading to increased or inappropriate drug consumption. The report states: "Health Canada is failing to effectively protect Canadians

who take prescription drugs". Committee member Real Menard, of the Bloc Québécois, said that Health Canada "has abrogated its clear responsibility to enforce existing rules". The rules in question are those governing clinical trials of prescription drugs.

While no one has been physically harmed or killed by the sponsorship scandal, CBC News reports that "currently 10,000 reports are entered into the Canadian Adverse Drug Reaction Information System (CADRIS) database annually. In 2002, 450 of those involved a patient who died as the result of a suspected drug reaction." – Faint Warning, cbc.ca/news/adr, Feb. 17, 2004.

The CADRIS database was released to the CBC after a 5 year wait after the original Freedom of Information request. It has 164,000 entries, covering 1965 to 2003, a figure that according to UBC Health Policy analyst Dr. Barbara Mintzes is "not even the tip of the iceberg". She estimates that for every report there are another 10 or 100 not reported.

Dr. Mintzes contributed to the Canadian Medical Association Journal article on the suppression of clinical trial data for Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) – *CMAJ*, 2004, Feb. 17, 170 (4): 487-9.

British Psychiatrist Dr. David Healy, has spoken out widely about the link between SSRIs and an increased risk of suicide and violent behaviour. At a January 2004 conference in Ottawa, Dr. Healy said that "since 1988, over-prescription of the new generation of anti-depressants caused between 2000 and 7000 suicides in Canada". (*Globe and Mail*, Feb. 4, 2004). Dr. Healy was "highly critical of the volume of prescriptions written for these powerful drugs, particularly to children and teenagers. But he said the answer is more information, not an outright ban."

According to Vera Hassner Sharav of the New York based Alliance For Human Research Protection, "It is hard to imagine the anguish experienced by the parents, relatives and friends of a child who has taken his or her own life. That such an event could be precipitated by a supposedly beneficial drug is a catastrophe. The idea of that drug's use being based on the selective reporting of favourable research should be unimaginable". Sharav's concern echoes a strongly worded editorial in the preeminent British medical journal *Lancet*, Volume 363, April 24, 2004, which also includes a meta-analysis by Craig Whittington and colleagues that suppression of unfavourable research into the use of antidepressants in childhood has been widespread. See the entire AHRP statement at www.ahrp.org.

Dr. Jane Garland, director of the mood disorders clinic at B.C Children's Hospital says, "there have been several trials that have shown the ineffectiveness of these drugs on adolescents and children", but neither she nor the physicians who prescribe the medications have been allowed to see the results. "There have been 15 antidepressant trials on young people, but only three of them were published because the rest were negative – they show the medications don't work," Garland said. "That's part of the whole crisis we're in." (*Vancouver Sun*, Feb. 4, 2004)

Elsewhere Garland has stated physicians should inform young patients and their parents that medication will not cure depression, although it might improve some symptoms. They should also be told that psychiatric or behavioural adverse effects are at least as likely as antidepressant effects.

The Green Party of Canada recognizes that depression is increasingly common but that it, and other diseases, are often preventable

through improved nutrition, increased physical fitness and a cleaner environment. It further advocates an innovative funding network to support volunteer and non-profit organizations in offering care in our communities, as well as the inclusion of mental health clients and psychiatric survivors in research planning, policy development, program evaluation and other decisions that effect their lives.

The Green Party of Canada also recognizes that Canada's current economic, environmental and social policies are creating illnesses faster than our health care system can treat them.

The Ten Worst GreenWashers

The Green Life
April 1, 2004

On April Fool's Day, The Green Life released the 12th annual "Don't Be Fooled Report" profiling the 10 worst greenwashers of 2003.

The report holds corporations accountable for the integrity of their environmental messages in marketing and public relations.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines greenwash as, "Disinformation disseminated by an organization to present an environmentally responsible public image."

"We're all familiar with greenwash at some level," said Geoff Johnson, Program Coordinator of The Green Life. "It shows up on product packaging in the form of vague labels like 'eco-friendly' and 'all-natural,' it's in advertisements that show SUVs at home in the wilderness and it's in the way corporations churn out environmental rhetoric about 'sound science' and 'sustainability.'"

The *Don't Be Fooled* report finds that new forms of greenwash are emerging as corporations, industry

groups and government agencies explore innovative ways to mislead the public about their environmental commitment.

One alarming development is the advancement of the logging and biotechnology industries into American school systems. Project Learning Tree, an environmental education curriculum taught in over 300,000 classrooms, is a program of the American Forest Foundation, whose members include over 100 logging and paper companies. The Council for Biotechnology Information, funded by Monsanto, publishes "Look Closer at Biotechnology," an activity book for 3rd and 4th graders.

"Greenwashers are attempting to take over environmental education in this country," stated Johnson. "Clearly they believe the children are their future. They're writing and publishing educational materials that promote their agendas and providing them for free to underfunded and overburdened schools. Our kids are being shown the wonders of tree farms and genetically modified foods without being taught to think critically."

The report does not focus exclusively on the worst environmental offenders. In fact, several of the corporations profiled are recognized by consumers as environmentally progressive. Yet, the report reveals, such corporations have a tendency to slow down their environmental progress once they are perceived to be a step ahead of their competitors.

"Whether they've earned their reputation or not," said Johnson, "corporations that are considered to be an environmental leader in their industry often take advantage of the public's trust. Some, like Starbucks and BP, rest on their laurels, at least compared to the progress they could be making, until a competitor challenges their environmental leadership. Others, like Subaru this

past year, move backwards on the environment and hope that it won't get noticed."

The ten worst list consists of the American Chemistry Council, Avalon Natural Products, BP, the Environmental Protection Agency, Monsanto Company, Project Learning Tree, Royal Caribbean International, Salmon of the Americas, Starbucks Coffee Company and Subaru.

The report is a project of The Green Life's "Take Greenwash to the Cleaners" campaign, designed to explain, expose and erase greenwash in marketing and public relations. Copies are available at:

www.thegreenlife.org

The Green Life, formerly Earthday Resources for Living Green, is a non-profit organization that promotes simplicity, health and sustainability in daily life.

Truth Decay: UK Greens Oppose Fluoridation

*Green Party of
England & Wales*
April 21st 2004

[www.london.greenparty.org.uk/
index.php?s=news&n=347](http://www.london.greenparty.org.uk/index.php?s=news&n=347)

The UK Government passed the Water Bill in September 2003, which permits health Authorities to compel water companies to fluoridate the drinking water supply. Noel Lynch, the first Irish born member of the London Assembly said,

"The Republic of Ireland is Europe's most fluoridated country, yet it doesn't have Europe's best teeth. Dentists in Ireland, who are usually pro-fluoridation, have been expressing concern about the effects of bottle-feeding babies with formula made up using fluoridated water."

"And residents of the fluoridated Republic are 40% more likely to suffer bone cancer than residents of

non-fluoridated Northern Ireland. Bone cancer is one of the medical problems which has been linked to fluoride, because fluoride is a cumulative poison that builds up in the bones, so it may be that fluoride is causing a lot of cancer in Ireland.”

Jean Lambert, London’s Green Party MEP said, “Britain should learn from the Irish experience. The bottom line is that tooth decay is caused by poor diet, eating too much sugar and not brushing your teeth properly. Fluoridation doesn’t address any of those problems, which is why fluoridation is a lot less effective than education when it comes to tooth decay.”

“Greens have consistently argued for locally produced GM free food, more open spaces, safe routes for schools, more cycle lanes and the promotion of walking. These simple measures would do more to improve the nation’s health rather than Government enforced medication.”

Noel Lynch concluded, “The government should leave the right to choose or refuse medication in the hands of the individual, where it belongs. The proper role for politicians is firstly to uphold citizens’ rights – like the right not to be medicated without consent – and secondly to promote public health by the proper means, including education and poverty reduction.”

More information: See Truth Decay: Challenging New Labour’s propaganda on water fluoridation, published by the Green Party of England & Wales www.green-party.org.uk

Conservative Senator Speaks Out on Greens

*Mira Spivak
Canadian Senate*

The Green Party of Canada is part of an international movement that has elected members in some 30 countries and has grassroots organizations in more than 100. It embraces fiscal conservatism, progressive social programs (its leader was a former Progressive Conservative) and, as its name implies, ecological values.

In Canada, the party has 5% voter support nationally and substantially more in BC where it was founded 21 years ago. It is at 13% support in BC and fully 28% of voters in the 18 to 34 range support the party.

Last year in the Ontario provincial election, the Green Party ran candidates in 102 of 103 ridings. Still, it was excluded from the televised leaders’ debate, a decision made by TV network executives.

In the last federal election, the Green Party ran 111 candidates. Today, it has 200 identified candidates and hopes to run a full slate. It is coming of age.

These facts are germane to the decision those same network executives will soon make when the Prime Minister decides to take Canadians to the polls.

Some very prominent Canadians were disappointed with the Green Party’s exclusion from the Ontario leaders’ debate. Among them was Peter Desbarats, a former dean of journalism and CBC journalist who wrote in The Globe and Mail of the “shameful reluctance of the CRTC to cope with the issue”. Others who opposed the exclusion included Ontario Human Rights Commissioner Keith Norton, former CBC

broadcaster Michael Ignatieff and Progressive Conservative strategist and organizer John Laschinger.

It is my hope that those network executives will not deny Canadians the chance to hear from Green Party leader Jim Harris in the next national leaders’ debate. This is certainly an issue for the CRTC to investigate. It is important that the issues the Green Party raises should be part of the national debate, even if it appears as if they do not have a hope of becoming the government.

Green Party of Canada Challenges 2% Rule

The Green Party of Canada has engaged lawyer Peter Rosenthal of Roach, Schwartz and Associates to represent them in a constitutional challenge against the rule that only parties that received 2% nationwide support receive government funding following the election.

Although the Green Party will almost certainly exceed this vote total, the rule will act as a barrier to other small parties.

US Sues Europe over GMO Bans

*Guardian
London, UK
April 27, 2004*

The US has demanded that the EU abandon its ban on the growing of genetically modified (GM) crops and pay at least US\$1.8-billion in compensation for loss of exports over the past six years.

The affair has worldwide significance because if the US can force the EU into submission, then no country will be able to keep GM out without facing trade sanctions. But there is strong consumer resistance to GM in Europe and several coun-

tries have introduced rules banning imports of individual GMs, either for growing or in food.

Green Party Leader on Upcoming Election

*Jim Harris
Leader
Green Party of Canada*

I just want to **congratulate** the organizing team on our standing at 307 candidates!! This is **Absolutely Fantastic!**

The fact that we are just one candidate short of a full slate - before the election has even been called is **Incredible!**

You may not know it but in the last federal election only one party – the Liberal Party – ran a candidate in all 301 ridings. The Canadian Alliance didn't, the PCs didn't, the NDP didn't and the Bloc certainly didn't.

Imagine that in this election there are only two parties running candidates in every riding – the Green Party and the Liberal Party!!

GREENS WILL WIN SEATS

Andrew Lewis won 25.4% of the vote in his riding of Saanich and the Gulf Islands in the 2001 provincial election. He is running in the same riding.

Andrea Goldsmith is a local councillor in Gibson where she is running and in that riding in the 2001 provincial election the Green Party won 27% of the votes.

Pam Munroe won 22% of the votes in her riding in 2001 and she is running in the same area.

In four-way races these are all winnable starting positions.

In the 2000 federal election the NDP was at 11% in the polls in BC and won 2 seats. We have been at 13% in BC – so we will win seats – and I predict we will win at least four in BC.

The real opportunity comes of course when we are included in the televised leader's debate. We can expect our vote to at least double when this happens!

In BC the Green Party ran 71 candidates in 1996 and got 2% of the vote. In 2001 the party ran just one more candidate – 72 – and got 12.4% of the vote. What accounts for the explosive 620% growth? A simple thing – the inclusion of the leader, Adriane Carr in the televised leaders debate. For the first time hundreds of thousands of British Columbians heard the Green message and on election day almost 200,000 voted Green (197,000 to be exact).

Together, we are changing Canadian politics forever.

PREDICTION: GREENS WILL WIN UP TO 14 SEATS

In 1993 the NDP received 6.9% of the votes cast in the election and won 9 seats in parliament. In the 2000 election the NDP won 8.5% of the votes cast in Canada and won 13 seats.

UofC Campus Greens Panel Discussion

*Jeff Krekoski
UofC Campus Greens*

A panel discussion is being planned for September 9th 2004 by the University of Calgary Campus Greens entitled "Finding Common Ground: Reconciling Environmental/Green Politics with Fiscal Responsibility and the Capitalist, Free-market System". The specific location on campus is yet to be determined.

Speakers will discuss the key environmental issues that need to be addressed. Speakers will talk about the best ways to implement legislation that would allow maximum economic growth and prosperity within a framework of mandatory environ-

mental conservation and preservation. The audience will be able to participate in the discussion.

The following speakers have agreed to participate if possible:

Barry Worbets. Barry will bring extensive experience in the oil and gas sector to the event. Information about him can be found at:

tinyurl.com/2j4l7

Jim Harris. The Leader of the Green Party of Canada will identify major environmental issues and how the Green Party proposes to provide solutions:

tinyurl.com/2mavk

Preston Manning. Preston will bring his political experience to the event and is expected to make a valuable contribution in the area of coalition building:

tinyurl.com/24357

George Read. George is the Leader of the Alberta Greens.

This event will hopefully identify solutions that implement sustainable environmental practices, while preserving the capitalist incentive that drives our economy. I would like to have an active audience to participate in the discussion. I would also like to have as many media representatives present as possible. Hopefully this event will help to identify common ground among fiscally and environmentally conservative people and stimulate discussion among the public about this.

The event is being organized by Jeff Krekoski and Cody Torgerson and will be moderated by Jeff Krekoski (jwkrekos@ucalgary.ca).

Excerpts from the Geneva Convention

*Office of the
High Commissioner for
Human Rights*

Article 4 . A. Prisoners of war, in the sense of the present Convention, are persons belonging to one of the following categories, who have fallen into the power of the enemy:

1. Members of the armed forces of a Party to the conflict as well as members of militias or volunteer corps forming part of such armed forces.
2. Members of other militias and members of other volunteer corps, including those of organized resistance movements belonging to a Party to the conflict and operating in or outside their own territory, even if this territory is occupied, provided that such militias or volunteer corps, including such organized resistance movements, fulfil the following conditions:
 - (a) That of being commanded by a person responsible for his subordinates;
 - (b) That of having a fixed distinctive sign recognizable at a distance;
 - (c) That of carrying arms openly;
 - (d) That of conducting their operations in accordance with the laws and customs of war.
3. Members of regular armed forces who profess allegiance to a government or an authority not recognized by the Detaining Power.
4. Persons who accompany the armed forces without actually being members thereof, such as civilian members of military aircraft crews, war correspondents, supply contractors, mem-

bers of labour units or of services responsible for the welfare of the armed forces, provided that they have received authorization from the armed forces which they accompany, who shall provide them for that purpose with an identity card similar to the annexed model.

5. Inhabitants of a non-occupied territory, who on the approach of the enemy spontaneously take up arms to resist the invading forces, without having had time to form themselves into regular armed units, provided they carry arms openly and respect the laws and customs of war.

Article 14 . Prisoners of war are entitled in all circumstances to respect for their persons and their honour. Women shall be treated with all the regard due to their sex and shall in all cases benefit by treatment as favourable as that granted to men. Prisoners of war shall retain the full civil capacity which they enjoyed at the time of their capture. The Detaining Power may not restrict the exercise, either within or without its own territory, of the rights such capacity confers except in so far as the captivity requires.

Full Text. The full text of the Geneva convention is available at:

www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/91.htm

Vote Green!