



### Alberta Greens AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Alberta Greens was held on October 15th-17th, 1999 at the Gull Lake Camp & Retreat, near Lacombe, Alberta.

The current officers of the party remain for one more year. Michael Garfinkle was appointed to the new position of Corresponding Secretary. Vacant positions on the Justice & Fairness Committee and the Issue Funding Review Board were filled.

The Green Party of Canada in Alberta also met. New appointments were David Parker and Ed Schell as co-chairs, Michael Garfinkle as Secretary and Harry Garfinkle as Federal Council Representative. Robert Wilde was re-appointed as treasure.

The next AGM is planned for October, 2000, also at the Gull Lake Camp.

### Donate Now!

If you pay income tax in Alberta, donate to the Alberta Greens before the end of 1999, and get your tax rebate sooner! As always, a donation of \$150 will result in an Alberta income tax rebate of \$112.50, for a net out of pocket expense of only \$37.50!

Mail your donation to *Alberta Greens*, Box 133, Station M, Calgary, T2P 2H6 before December 31, 1999. Help us build a fund to ensure a wide array of Green candidates are able to run in the next election, expected in 2000 or 2001.

### Detrimental Effects of Totally Free Trade

*David Parker, leader of the Alberta Greens, submitted this paper on behalf of the "Friends of the North Environmental Society" to the Free Trade of the Americas Association.*

For the last two decades the universally accepted theory of economic policy makers has been that free and open markets lead to universal prosperity. In the same period, we have seen discrepancies in earnings between rich and poor widen to levels inconceivable in the 1960's. The national economies of about half of the world's population have collapsed and approximately 750 million people exist in a state of near-starvation. In the face of these incontrovertible assertions, the predominant conclusion seems to be: continue to do more of the same.

The freedom of movement or any restriction of international capital is leading to corporate dominance by a few select entities and the destruction of small, indigenous and sustainable economies. The ultimate outcome of this mania of "globalization" must end in a catastrophe, the nature of which can only be speculated upon. The complacent belief is currently that the economic collapse of S. E. Asia was an unfortunate blip and the inherent dynamics of the totally open, free market will float all boats. Like ignoring Global Climate Change this hypothesis is akin to the ostrich placing its head in the sand when threatened. Simply because the solution is unpalatable and entails risk, is no rea-

son to ignore it. During crisis risk is essential to achieving solutions.

### TOBIN TAX

The first step, and one that the Canadian government should be commended for, is the acceptance of the parliamentary motion to "enact a tax on financial transactions...". The time for such a tax is long overdue and, were it in place two years ago, might have averted the debacle of last summer. A small tax on international transactions would penalize short-term capital investment and speculation while having hardly any effect on long term investments. Short term, untied investment encourages governments, where democracy is absent, to build unneeded infrastructure, purchase arms or embezzle the capital. For most of these investments the population receives no net benefit and is almost universally adversely affected, since the debt remains. Western corporations (not western peoples) benefit by selling weapons, nuclear reactors, dams, sweat shop factories, industrial agriculture and toxic waste to these countries and subsequently pulling out at the slightest whiff of a depreciation in earnings.

### NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY

Total dominance of the marketplace by capital is eliminating the ability of national governments to act in what they view as the best interests of their citizens. If a sovereign nation believes that a certain product or business practice will prove detrimental to its population, the corporate entity can trump any effort at legislation.

## **MMP**

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You will be familiar with the recent case of an American Corporation successfully suing the Canadian Government for disallowing MMP, which it deemed dangerous. Ironically, MMP is banned from many of the states of the same corporation's home country (USA). How much power is to be transferred from elected governments to multi-national corporations in the name of free trade?

## **rBGH**

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The sole purpose of recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH) is to increase milk yields, at enormous cost to the health of the animal and suspected risks to the consuming public. Since there is an oversupply of milk and milk products in supply today, why are we even considering the use of such a chemical? The adverse effects of the drug are not fully known since the research has not been done or has been suppressed? Thanks to the diligent and courageous efforts of certain scientists at Health Canada, important evidence of coercion and possible bribery has been brought to light and rBGH will probably not be allowed. However, we cannot be assured that the profit margins of the Monsanto Corporation will remain subservient to the well-being of the people of Canada, without continued vigilance.

## **CARIBBEAN BANANAS**

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A recent depressing portent was the outcome of an international court decision to disallow the European Community to purchase bananas from the Caribbean. The environmental practices of the Caribbean producers are far superior to the Central American states but, resulting from these more sustainable practices, the costs are higher. Under the modern rules of international trade, the cheapest product beats out all others, regardless of environmental or social costs. Genetically Modified Foods

Indians are fighting to preserve their traditional agricultural methods in the face of efforts to make them dependant on

genetically engineered seeds. The ancient practice of using seeds from previous crops will no longer be available, if the intentions of trans-national corporations are fulfilled. The intent appears to be to make indigenous farmers reliant upon "terminator seeds" which cannot self regenerate. The miniscule incomes of these village farmers will not be adequate to cover the cost of the annual purchase of fresh seed. After becoming dependant, the vast majority will be forced off the land and join the burgeoning populations of urban poor. Will British consumers be forced to accept GE foods against their will and better judgement? Will they be allowed to, at least, have their GE produced labeled as such? Will research, brought to the attention of the public by government scientists, be permitted to adversely affect the profit margin of the corporate elite? Alternatively, is the experiment with our health to continue, using supermarkets as the laboratory?

## **SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY**

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North American ecological forestry groups have been very successful in convincing European wood processors to boycott old growth timber. Can we be assured that these positive responses to deforestation on the continent will not be wiped out by the new rules of free trade? Precedents already exist for such regressive trade legislation; A successful boycott of tuna fished at the expense of dolphins was ruled as an "unfair trade practice" and consequently the practice remains.

## **TRADE BENEFITS**

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Not all trade restrictions have adverse ecological consequences. There is potential for the elimination of unfair trade practices rulings to reduce the amount of subsidization of ecologically unsound production. The EU and the USA have long warred over wheat subsidization, which has resulted in excessive overproduction and the loss of the small sustainable farm. Modern animal husbandry with its intensive methods

should be challenged over its environmental costs. Environmental costs are seldom factored into oil production, including climate change, oil spills, smog, loss of wilderness, and the suppression of ecologically sound alternatives. In conclusion, it must be realized that the worlds 6 billion people cannot live at the excessive consumption levels of Canadians. Recent research tells us that such a state of affairs would require an additional five planets. It is essential for first world nations to realize that we can maintain an excellent lifestyle, and in some ways an improved one, while developing a sustainable society. By the simple elimination of waste and excess, which do not contribute to additional wellbeing, we can give ourselves time to begin the arduous task of addressing the current environmental crisis. Trade practices can be a very effective tool in the task of implementing a sustainable society, if used correctly. If trade legislation remains controlled by those primarily motivated by profit we will not achieve this goal. Economic upheaval will occur even before ecological collapse. Ecology can exist without economy but the reverse is not true.

## **Car Sharing**

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*by Pam Munroe*

The car has become the dominant form of transportation in much of the developed world. This dominance has been a factor in many of the environmental problems we are facing today. The manufacture of a car uses massive amounts of energy to turn raw materials into fenders, doors, head lamps, seats, and steering wheels. Once the car is ready for the road its voracious appetite for asphalt creates roads everywhere, obliterating trees, grass, wildflowers, and parks. Our dependence on automobiles in cities, such as Calgary and Edmonton, means that huge areas of land are used as freeways and parking lots. Storage for cars comes at the expense of aesthetics; row upon row of monster houses with vast garages staring blankly onto the street. Driving cars depends on gas and

extracting this gas from the ground creates a myriad of environmental problems related to road access to wellsites, flaring of gas, spills from inadequate equipment, etc. And when we actually get in the car and drive it we are creating emissions that lead to global warming. This may be starting to sound pretty gloomy, there is an alternative.

In February 1999 a group of people interested in alternative transportation and creating a less car-dependent city started meeting in Calgary and talking about car sharing. This led to the formation of the Calgary Alternative Transportation Co-operative (CATCO) whose mission is to promote, develop, and operate transportation alternatives in Calgary preferably using the co-operative model. The purpose of CATCO is to:

- Develop alternative transportation methods,
- Reduce the cost of alternative transportation,
- Provide education on more sustainable transportation, and
- Lobby governments on issues affecting transportation.

Much of the energy of this group is centered around creating a car sharing operation in Calgary (Edmonton is also working on this concept). Most people are not familiar with car sharing as this concept is relatively new to North America. The idea originated in Switzerland in 1987 and spread around Europe. Today there are over 200 car sharing enterprises in Switzerland, Austria, Germany and the Netherlands. The concept spread to this side of the Atlantic in the early '90s and there are now organizations in Montréal, Quebec City, Toronto, Vancouver, and Victoria.

Car sharing is based on a group of individuals who share access to vehicles which are parked close to their homes. It is an organized way of redistributing the costs of car ownership, based on actual use. Users typically pay an initial, partly refundable membership fee, plus additional costs based on the number of hours and kilometres the car is used. The car sharing organization (co-op is our preferred model) pays the costs of insurance, maintenance and fuel. We see car sharing as a benefit for two groups in particular:

- those who do not own a car and would like access to one periodically to run errands or chauffeur visiting relatives around town, and
- those who sometimes need a second car to meet the demands of a busy family and schedule.

Of course, people want to know how much it will cost. Precise costs for the Calgary project have not been set. However, our research indicates that a person (or family) driving less than 15,000 km/year would save money by car sharing. The Canadian Automobile Association has published statistics indicating the costs of owning a compact car are \$6,859 per year or \$0.35/km (for 18,000 km. per year). We estimate that this cost could be reduced to \$4,800 a year. If you drive less, you will spend less. Driving fewer than 2,000 km per year could cost you less than \$100 per month. And without putting out the large up

## ALBERTA GREENS INFORMATION

Mailing address: Box 133, Station M, Calgary, T2P 2H6

Fax: +1-403-289-1465

Email: molders@calcna.ab.ca

Web: <http://www.calcna.ab.ca/politics/province/abgreens/abgreens.html>

Leader David Parker +1-403-469-1448

President David Crowe +1-403-289-6609

Secretary Madeleine Oldershaw +1-403-282-4788

Treasurer Pam Munroe +1-403-245-3441

### 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 - CANADA GREENS IN ALBERTA

Membership in the Green Party of Canada in Alberta costs \$15. Simply send your name, address and other contact information to:

The Secretary  
The Green Party of Canada in Alberta  
1108 - 7th Avenue South  
Lethbridge, Alberta T1J 1K5

Members have the right to vote at Green Party of Canada meetings and will also become members of the Alberta Greens.

### 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, call Madeleine Oldershaw in Calgary, or David Parker in Edmonton.

### COMMENTS

We welcome submissions for the Alberta Greens Newsletter. Please send them to the editor, Box 133, Station M, Calgary, Alberta T2P 2H6, Canada, by email to [crowed@cadvision.com](mailto:crowed@cadvision.com) or by fax to +1-403-289-6658.

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please let us know your new postal or email address before it changes. Include your name, both your old and new addresses as well as the effective date of the change.

front cost of a vehicle which can easily be in the range of \$25,000 - \$35,000.

The ultimate goal of CATCO is to reduce the number of cars on the streets of Calgary which will assist in lowering pollution and creating a more livable city. We look forward to your support.

CATCO needs assistance at this stage in its development in the following ways:

- Becoming involved as a volunteer.
- Filling out our Stated Preference Survey which will give us information that will help us set our fees, target a neighborhood, and market the concept. Call John Abraham at 1-403-230-5897 for a copy of the survey.
- Donating money to assist in the start-up. CATCO is an issue funding project with the Alberta Greens. A donation will get you a tax receipt. Send donations to Alberta Greens, Box 133 Stn M Calgary T2P 2H6. Note on the cheque that it is for the support of CATCO.

## BC Green Priorities

*In a July 1999 letter to Joan Sawicki, the new BC Minister of Environment, Lands and Parks, BC Greens leader Stuart Parker listed ten key environmental priorities:*

1. No Mining and Grazing in Parks
2. Ending Clearcut Logging
3. Moratorium on Highway Expansion
4. Full Preservation of Clayoquot Sound
5. Compliance with Climate Change Treaties
6. Industrial Air Quality Legislation
7. Halt the sale of Public Forest Land
8. Development Moratorium in High Growth Areas
9. Full Protection of BC's Agricultural Lands
10. Restoring Environment Ministry Staffing to 1991 Levels

## Canadian Green News

**British Columbia** • According to an article by Andy Shadrack in the Nelson Observer "the BC Greens have risen to 8% in the polls, but may languish like the BC Liberals did without a single seat from 1979 to 1991. Unlike Western Europe where Greens are in five governments, 8% in the polls under our archaic voting system in Canada means that part of the population who care about the environment can be ignored."

The 8% figure is based on an August 1999 Angus Reid poll, putting the BC Greens at a higher level of support than the Greens in Germany (where they form part of the governing coalition).

**Manitoba** • The Green Party of Manitoba ran 6 candidates in the September, 1999 provincial election – their first.

**Ontario** • On October 23rd, 1999 the Green Party of Ontario will choose a leader from two candidates, Shelley Lipsey, and incumbent, Frank de Jong.

In the June, 1999 election, the Green Party of Ontario ran 58 candidates and garnered almost 25,000 votes in total.

**Saskatchewan** • The New Green Alliance, Saskatchewan's fledgling Green Party, fielded candidates in two of three provincial by-elections in June. This was the first time green candidates have run in Saskatchewan provincial elections. The New Green Alliance votes were: Victor Lau - 333 and Neil Sinclair - 70.

You can contact Victor Lau of the New Green Alliance at:

2137 McIntyre Street  
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 2R7  
Phone: +1-306-352-0219  
Email: vlau@cableregina.com

## International Green News

**Belgium** • Greens were elected to 27 seats, up from 14 in the previous government, becoming the second largest faction in the Government. According to Reinhilde van Herck, Greens were elected to the national government, as well as both the Flemish and French-speaking governments. *Agalev* is the name for the Flemish-speaking Greens, and *Ecolo* for the French-speaking greens. Both parties work closely together, and most members speak both official languages.

Appointed to the National cabinet:

- Magda Aelvoet (female, Agalev) – Minister of Health, Consumer affairs and Environment.
- Eddy Boutmans (male, Agalev) – Under-Secretary concerning developing countries.
- Olivier Deleuze (male, Ecolo) – Under-Secretary Energy and Long-lasting development.
- Isabelle Durant (female, Ecolo) – Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Mobility and Transport.

Elected to the Flemish cabinet:

- Mieke Vogels (female, Agalev) – minister of Welfare, Health and Equal Opportunities.

**Europe** • The Green Party is the fourth largest group in the European Parliament, with 37 seats. This includes, for the first time, Greens from England and Spain. In total, there are 9 Green MEP's from France, 7 from Germany, 4 from Sweden and from Holland, 2 from Austria and England and 1 from Spain

**Scotland** • The Scottish Greens took the fifth largest bloc of votes in June, 1999 European elections, although 5.8% was not quite enough to obtain a seat in the European parliament. This percentage of the vote is up from 3.6% in the first modern Scottish national elections.