



Alberta Greens AGM

The Y2K Annual General Meeting of the Alberta Greens will be held on October 13th-15th, 2000 at the Gull Lake Camp & Retreat, near Lacombe, Alberta.

Elections of the following officers will be held: Chief Financial Officer and Executive Secretary. The positions of Leader, currently held by David Parker, and President, currently held by David Crowe, continue for one more year.

Nominations

Nominations must be received for open positions by August 1st, 2000 to allow time for a mailout of ballots, if necessary.

Nominations do not require a specific form, but merely a letter signed by the person being nominated, and one other person. Both must be members in good standing of the Alberta Greens.

If a mailout ballot proves necessary, each nominee will be allowed to provide information about their candidacy that will be included with each ballot package.

Voting will be by the "Single Transferable Vote" system if there are more than two candidates for any one position.

Memberships

Since the Alberta Greens do not currently charge a membership fee, becoming a member simply involves notifying us that you wish to be a member. If a mailout ballot proves necessary, it will only be sent to those who register as members by September 1st, 2000.

NEW URL FOR ALBERTA GREENS

A new, more convenient URL is now available for the Alberta Greens website (although the previous URL is still valid):

<http://green.ca/ab.html>

Genesis is Dead — Long Live Compensation?

On June 1st, Gary Mar, Alberta's Minister of Environmental Protection, announced that he was vetoing all three phases of the proposed Genesis tourism development in Kananaskis Country's Spray Valley. There had been massive opposition to the projects and very little support. On June 2nd Mar abandoned the Environment portfolio and moved over to Health and Wellness. After a tenure in which he consistently lost out to Steve West on all environmental issues, at least he went out on a high note.

The Genesis development consisted of a tour boat operation on the Spray Reservoir, a heli-cat skiing operation on Mount Sparrowhawk and a giant four-season resort at the south end of the Spray Valley.

The K-Country Recreation Policy had banned all future large tourism projects. The projects being promoted by Genesis escaped this ban because they were already within the approval process.

The original submission by Spray Development Corp. dated back to 1987.

Genesis's reaction to the Mar decision was predictable. They expressed aston-

ishment at the news and demanded compensation to the tune of \$35 million.

Is it possible that the potential for financial compensation has been at the root of this outrageous proposal all the time?

Genesis certainly doesn't deserve any compensation.

In 1995 and 1996 a government review of recreation development policy in Kananaskis found that Albertans didn't want any more large developments in Kananaskis. This result was confirmed in additional surveys by the Kananaskis Coalition and by the Calgary Herald.

In 1997 and 1998 the Alberta government conducted another survey, this time on a much larger scale, which obtained the same result. Public opinion was 5:1 against more golf courses and 6:1 against more major hotels.

In September, 1998, in the midst of all this public opposition, the Genesis Land Development Corporation acquired the rights to the Spray development, through the acquisition of Kananaskis Pathways Corporation and Spray Development Corporation. The agreement provided for the following financial consideration (source: Genesis Annual Report 1998, p.29):

"\$35,000 in cash on signing the agreements plus \$75,000 of shares at fair market price on or before Dec. 31 1999."

Any further payments were dependent on government approval of the projects.

This is a far cry from Genesis's demand for \$35 million, even adding in the cost of two project descriptions, (30 pages in

total), and the pathetically inadequate Terms of Reference for the required environmental impact assessment. The only noticeable effort that Genesis has put into this development has been to market its potential as a company asset with an appraised future value of about \$32 million.

Genesis didn't care about the wishes of Albertans. They speculated on environmentally sensitive real estate. Fortunately, they lost. They made a bad business decision and they should not be rewarded for this with Albertans' hard earned tax dollars.

Greens are BC s Third Party

A recent poll released by Christie Jung Inc. has the B.C. Green Party standing at 13% in the polls. The poll was quite large: 3,980 voters were contacted in all 79 ridings.

"If there was an election within the next six months to one year in British Columbia, which party will you vote for?"

1. B.C. Liberal Party: 50%
2. New Democratic Party: 33%
3. B.C. Green Party: 13% (71 out of 79 ridings)
4. Reform B.C. Party: 4% (6 out of 79 ridings)
5. Social Credit Party: 0%
6. B.C. Conservative Party: 0%.

Turmoil in Green Politics in British Columbia

It is perhaps a sign of the growing strength of the BC Green Party that there are real competitions for positions within the party. In March 2000 the party voted to remove Stuart Parker from his position as leader, and installed Tom Hetherington as interim leader, with a leadership convention scheduled for September, 2000.

The events caused some hard feelings, at first, but these seem to have died down. The result was not a complete removal of the 'old guard', but definitely saw a new generation of activists moving into positions of responsibility and power within the party. Colleen McCrory and Adrienne Carr, in particular, are well known to environmentalists in Alberta.

The events may signal a final stage in the withdrawal of environmentalists from the New Democratic Party, which seems unable to reconcile its historic labour movement ties with truly Green policies.

ALBERTA GREENS INFORMATION

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Treasurer Madeleine Oldershaw +1-403-282-4788

Secretary Madeleine Oldershaw (acting)

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 crowd@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.

Bill 155: Electoral Reform

by David Parker, Alberta Greens Leader

Dear Prime Minister Chretien:

I wish to place the support and enthusiastic endorsement of the Alberta Greens behind motion M-155 submitted by Lorne Nystrom MP (Regina-Qu'Appelle). Proportional Representation is an electoral objective whose time has come. The people of Canada desire and deserve a representative democracy similar to most other democracies in the world.

We strongly encourage the time table of the motion which includes:

1. A report on Proportional Representation prepared by an all-party committee after extensive public hearings.
2. A referendum asking whether electors favour replacing the present system with some form of proportional representation.
3. The referendum may be held either before or at the same time as the next general election.

The existing FPTP [First Past the Post] system is fundamentally undemocratic, as even the UK Government has admitted. Efforts are afoot to change the British system which, as you know, was the model for our own.

1. FPTP has the propensity to satisfy only a minority of the electorate since elected governments are most frequently chosen by fewer than half the eligible voters.
2. In some notable cases provincial governments hold power after receiving less votes than their opposition colleagues (BC and Quebec).
3. In the case of Alberta, the ruling PC party have an overwhelming majority of seats after being endorsed by a mere 51% of the electorate and proceed to enact legislation contrary to the wishes of that electorate, because they can (e.g. Bill 11).
4. Voting habits are affected such as to cause the electorate to vote against

a party rather than for the party they wish to be in power.

5. Coalitions, which more closely reflect the wishes of the electorate, as well as tempering the excesses of the ruling party, seldom occur.
6. Large minorities of the voting public receive no representation (e.g. federal Tories and NDP).
7. Regional parties achieve disproportionate shares of power (Bloc Quebecois and Reform) with objectives contrary to the majority of Canadians.
8. Coalitions are, by definition, inherently cooperative and would satisfy the electorate much more than the current adversarial system.
9. Many different models of PR exist and, as such, a choice of system would not be fraught with too much difficulty or insecurity.
10. Parties such as ours, which reflect the views of a large and growing sector of society, receive few votes as a result of the "strategic voting" caused by FPTP. Green parties all over the world are affecting policy toward a more sustainable future for humanity. Not so in Canada.

No electoral system is perfect but this should not be an excuse against moving toward a better, fairer and more democratic one. We anxiously await acceptance and implementation of M-155.

Electoral Systems Explained

A letter from Lorne Nystrom, a Canadian member of Parliament, describes the most common electoral systems:

SINGLE MEMBER PLURALITY

The voter casts one vote for one candidate. The candidate who wins the most votes is elected. Examples are Canadian Federal and Provincial elections.

SINGLE TRANSFERABLE VOTE

Voters rank candidates in order of preference. Candidates whose vote totals meet the quota are elected. The Quota is calculated as:

$$\text{Quota} = \frac{\text{Total Valid Votes Cast}}{\text{Number of Seats} + 1} + 1.$$

Examples of countries with this system are Malta and Ireland.

PARTY LIST PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

Voters choose one political party. Candidates may be ranked according to internal party lists or, in some systems, voters can alter the party lists. Parties that reach the minimum threshold are declared elected.

Examples of countries with this system are most western European States.

MIXED MEMBER PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

Voters cast two votes, one for a local candidate and one for a national party. Local MPs are elected by receiving the most votes locally, and Party List MPs are elected by receiving national support. Party totals are "topped up" according to the amount of national support.

This system is used in Germany, New Zealand and Scotland.

Ralph Nader Runs for US President as a Green Again

Ralph Nader is in the running to be the Green candidate for US president. According to a CNN report he is drawing larger crowds than the Reform Party candidate Pat Buchanan, and it is felt that this could spell trouble for Democratic nominee Al Gore. CNN noted that Nader is much more serious about his campaign than in 1996, and is thinking about hiring big-league advertising talent to increase the exposure of his campaign.

Medical Justice

There are an increasing number of cases where medical treatment is being forced on children, often with no certainty that the treatment will be effective. In the Tyrell Dueck case, the 13 year old Saskatchewan boy lost a court battle to prevent forced chemotherapy and amputation (although doctors later withdrew this demand). In a more recent case, a Montreal mother lost custody of her two children because they were HIV+ and she refused to give them medications. The fact that she had been HIV+ and healthy (without medications) for 14 years did not sway the judge.

Cases like this are not hopeless, however, because of the existence of a relatively new group known as the International Committee for Medical Justice (ICMJ). For more information, consult their web-site:

www.icmj.org

or contact them via phone at:

+1-540-829-9350

Ontario Environmental Cuts Responsible for Walkerton Tragedy?

Is Ontario's "Common Sense Revolution" really "Uncommon Idiocy", at least when it comes to cuts in Environmental programs? The Gallon Environment Letter (egallon@pcstarnet.com) reports that the budget of Ontario's Ministry of the Environment was pillaged by the Harris revolution:

Ontario Environment Budget Item (\$millions)	1995/1996	1996/1997	% Cut
Recycling (e.g. Blue Box)	\$59	\$13	78
Programs & Standards	93	32	66
Science & Technology	19	7	63
Policy Development	9	6	36
Labs & Monitoring	28	20	28
Compliance & Enforcement	46	40	14

The June 4, 2000 issue of Gallon details the destruction of environmental safeguards in Ontario initiated by pressure from industrialists who felt that all the testing, monitoring, inspecting and reporting was just unnecessary red tape.

Canadian Green News

British Columbia • In a December by-election, the Green Party scored more votes than the ruling NDP candidate. This election was also notable as a smashing defeat for former premier Bill Vander Zalm, ending his comeback plans.

In November 20th civic elections, four Greens were elected: Lisa Barret as Mayor on Bowen Island, Art Vanden Berg to the Victoria City Council, Sharon Jackson to the Duncan Council and Roslyn Cassells to the Vancouver Park Board.

Ontario • On May 23, 2000 the Green Party of Ontario called for an end to the cosmetic use of pesticides. The party noted that "We cannot afford to continue our current dependence on pesticides for either agriculture or lawn and garden care. The hidden costs include: increased trips to emergency rooms for asthma attacks triggered by pesticide exposure; the long-term cost of environmentally-induced cancers; poisoning of wildlife; the destruction of soil fertility."

Party leader Frank de Jong proposed that "The first thing the Ontario government should do is remove the tax-free status of pesticides for farmers. The tax structure should encourage people to buy (and industries to produce) life-affirming products rather than poisons."

In a November 15th, 1999 by-election, York West Green candidate Henry Zeifman received 101 votes (0.7%).

Québec • In a November 15th, 1999 by-election, Hull-Aylmer Green candidate Gail Walker received 307 votes (1.8%).

Saskatchewan • In a November 15th, 1999 by-election, Saskatoon-Rosetown-Biggan Green candidate David Greenfield received 195 votes (1.2%).

International Green News

England • Greater London assembly elections resulted in 3 seats being assigned to Greens by direct election, and another 3 as "top up seats" based on proportional representation. Green candidates received between 6% and 16% of the vote in the various electoral districts.

Netherlands • Groenlinks received about 11% of the votes in June, 1999 European Parliament elections, higher than the 10.1% received in earlier regional elections.

New Zealand • In December, 1999 elections Greens won 6 seats in parliament, giving them the balance of power.

South Africa • The website of the new *Green Party of South Africa* is:

www.greenparty.org.za

Switzerland • In the most recent elections, the Swiss Green Party received 5% of the votes, giving them 6 sitting members (all in urban areas).

USA • Ralph Nader announced in March, 2000 that he intended to run for President of the United States on a Green Party ticket.

The website of the new Miami Greens is:

www.miamigreens.org