



Provincial Election Issue!

An Alberta provincial election is expected to be called some time in February or March, 2001. The Alberta Greens/Green Party of Alberta wants to be ready. And to do that, we need your help.

You can help with your time and with tax deductible donations (75% of your first \$150 donated to Alberta political parties is reimbursed to you if you pay income tax in Alberta). If you have time you could help us by going door to door to drop off flyers or talk to voters, or you could even run as a candidate or act as an official agent.

Calgary Candidate Nomination Meeting

There will be a nomination meeting for candidates in the Calgary area at 1:30pm on Saturday, February 10, 2001 in the Hearth Room of the Hillhurst-Sunnyside Community Centre. This is located at 1320-5th Ave. NW (on the north side of 5th Ave. between 14th St. and 12th St.).

Come to this meeting if you are interested in running as a candidate, in meeting potential candidates or simply in discussing the Alberta Greens election platform.

Note that because an election may not have been called at the time of this meeting, all candidates will have to be reaf-

firmed once a formal election call is issued.

Provincial Election Candidates Needed!

Margaret Chandler, on behalf of the Alberta Greens, is searching for candidates (south of Red Deer) for the expected provincial election. Running as a candidate for the Alberta Greens is an excellent opportunity to raise public awareness and discussion around some critical environmental and social justice issues. So many of the environmental issues of concern to Albertans will not be resolved without a significant change in government policy and direction. It is important to run as many candidates as possible so that voters throughout the province can vote Green if they so desire.

If you personally cannot make the commitment to put your name forward as a potential candidate, Margaret Chandler would greatly appreciate you providing the names of people who may be willing to run. She will then contact them and see if they are indeed interested. Please also forward this information to your contacts.

Margaret can be reached by phone at +1-403-686-0703 or by email at chandlera@home.com.

Draft Party Platform

Compiled by George Read

The Green Party is concerned with the full range of issues facing Albertans today. The Green Party believes in the strengthening of the community, the renewal of democracy, the restoration of the environment and building a sustainable economy. We are a forward-looking party. We offer a new platform for genuine progress and real change.

STRENGTHENING THE COMMUNITY

A Green government will restore and strengthen local communities by fostering greater local autonomy.

Health and Healing

We believe that the health of Albertans must be the primary focus of our health care system. The Green Party will reduce the factors contributing to illness and disease, through increased prevention, greater choice, and decentralization of health care facilities. Health care resources must be safe-guarded through conflict of interest legislation. These are the key values that will guide our *Health and Healing* program.

Superior Public Education System

The Green Party will work to provide proper funding for a *Superior Public Education System*. Albertans deserve the excellent primary, secondary and post-secondary education. All Albertans, young and old must be given equal access to schooling. Education must be broadened to allow for choice, excellence and impartiality giving no sector of society undue influence in our halls of learning.

The Renewal of Democracy

Why should the friends of politicians profit at the expense of our communities? The business of the Alberta Government must become open, transparent and honest. Full public disclosure of all elected representatives' assets and financial interests is essential for keeping government clean and honest. The Green Party will work to achieve a comprehensive conflict of interest statute to ensure the integrity of MLA's and top government officials. Greater disclosure and freedom of information is a cornerstone of the Green Party's *Honesty In Government* program.

The Restoration of the Environment

Protecting the environment for future generations is the responsibility of the Alberta government. Wilderness must be allowed to exist for its own sake. Development must consider the needs of the natural world, ensuring clean air, clean water and healthy land. The Green Party is committed to maintaining biodiversity and habitat protection, reducing the use of toxic chemicals, and working with Albertans to address climate change concerns.

Forestry Forever

Our natural heritage must not be sold for short-term profit. The Green Party will put sustainable logging practices into legislation. All logging must be conducted sustainably and with the well being of the community in mind. The Green Party *Forestry Forever* program will work to achieve full value from forestry, conservation of the ecosystem and promotion of alternative pulp and paper production methods.

Family-Based Sustainable Agriculture

The family farm is an endangered species. In today's global marketplace Alberta's farmers need the support and cooperation of government to ensure viable production and marketing standards. Regulations for intensive livestock operations must be clearly defined and enforced. The Greens support organic agriculture and a moratorium on commercial growing of Genetically Modified Organisms. The Green Party will listen to rural Albertans to promote *Family-based Sustainable Agriculture*.

ALBERTA GREENS INFORMATION

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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:

Michael Garfinkle
Secretary, Green Party of Canada in Alberta
PO Box 52023
Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 1C9, Canada
Email: abel@freenet.edmonton.ab.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, 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 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.

Energy For The Future

The Green Party supports diversification of the energy sector. To remain an energy technology leader, Alberta must invest in sustainable forms of energy. As proud Canadians we must honour our national commitments to greenhouse gas reduction while ensuring a just transition. Legislative changes to promote resource conservation, alternative energy production and open opportunity for competition are the cornerstones of the Green Party's *Energy For The Future* program.

Building a Sustainable Economy

The Green Party will implement policies to improve the quality of life for the people of Alberta, make the economy more responsive to environmental concerns and ensure resources for our future. Poverty has no place in a sustainable economy. A transition to an environmentally sound economy will improve the quality of life for all Albertans. A Green government will ease the transition from today's grey economy to a green economy. Converting waste into riches will eliminate tomorrow's poverty. Sustainability will create jobs now and ensure jobs in the future. The Green Party will use alternative economic indicators to guide economic planning. Only a sustainable economy will sustain Albertans.

The Green Party believes in the strengthening of the community, the renewal of democracy, the restoration of the environment and building a sustainable economy.

COMMENTS ON THE PLATFORM

This is only a draft election platform. If you have suggestions to correct or expand it, please forward them to:

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Calgary, AB T2E 0V4

or, via email to:

Wightlight@aol.com

THANKS

The Alberta Greens thank all those who worked so hard on pulling together a draft platform at short notice, particular George Read and Pat Gidora.

Green Power

*An open letter to
Finance Minister Paul Martin
by David Parker
Leader, Alberta Greens*

I am writing on behalf of the Alberta Greens (Green Party of Alberta) to strongly endorse the initiative by the Clean Air Renewable Energy (CARE) coalition that has put together two ideas of which I am sure you are familiar. CARE is a coalition of environmentalists and industrialists who both agree that the time for action has arrived and believe that change will only come when government policy promotes positive movement.

The two initiatives are:

1. A consumer tax credit for purchasers of electricity from sources such as wind, sun and biomass fuels.
2. A broader investment-tax credit for green power research and development.

The effect, the group contends, and the Alberta Greens concur with, would be a reduction in the emissions that cause urban smog and global warming. Arguably these two environmental problems are first and foremost in the minds and concerns of most Canadians. Both are worldwide in scope and both result from the same activity, the burning of fossil fuels. All the major cities of the planet are beset in varying degrees by the problem of urban smog, the severity is usually affected by local topography and climate. Climate Change, on the other hand, leaves no one unaffected and is massively more destructive, costly and unpredictable in the resulting effects.

Industrial participants so far involved are Suncor Energy, Shell Canada, BP Canada, TransAlta and Westcoast Energy. It

has been obvious for several years that a change away from dependence upon non-renewable resources is long overdue and critical to Canadian fiscal viability. Although Canada produces many of the energy sources responsible for worldwide pollution and ecological destruction we also are at the whim of a few major producers. Money spent on energy is not available for social problems, investment, environmental remediation, reducing taxation, health and education, all of which are the highest concerns of our population. Please take heed of these forwardly thinking corporate entities and instigate the proposals agreed on.

Presently tax policy favours the burning and wasting of energy. The motto of all Green Parties is "Tax the Bads, Not the Goods". We realize that many with vested interests benefit from the status quo and reap huge profits from ecological destruction. The playing field must be leveled and indeed tipped in a direction favourable of sustainable practices. Such an outcome will in fact ensue over time, as environmental destruction gains even greater momentum and more people are adversely affected, but can be greatly advanced by government policy. We ask that the good offices of the Canadian finance department act in a manner beneficial to all Canadians and not merely a few investors in such places as Calgary, Houston and Saudi Arabia.

In an economy with options beyond the burning of fossil fuels other, less developed, regions can become involved in the economy. Non-renewables are available everywhere and, with the right taxation and fiscal policies, can be exploited anywhere. The world is moving toward a sustainable future and Canada can become a leader in technologies suitable to the new age but not without leadership and financial commitment from government. The sunset industries were promoted in this way a century ago, it is now time to shift that focus to industries compatible with the 21st century.

The enormous growth in concern over environmental destruction should be an indication to you that people want to do

the right thing. Canadians still want to invest for their retirements but no longer in practices that will make that retirement unendurable. People are realizing that all the investment income in the world will not allow them to escape the future that income is creating.

The Liberal Party of Canada has moved in recent years towards private sector solutions to Canadian problems, these recommendations are such initiatives. Let the private sector develop the required technology and market it but take away the props from the old economy, which is impeding the growth of the new. Shift the subsidies, infrastructure grants and tax breaks towards the industries that will provide us with a future we can live in.

To reiterate, these technologies will become reality but the financial rewards will go to entrepreneurial countries without the ball and chain of developed fossil fuel industries. Canada must bite the bullet and become a clean economy.

Trashy Ideas

*by Frank de Jong
Green Party of Ontario Leader
Published in 'Eye Magazine',
Toronto
August 20, 2000*

While the August 10, 2000 *Eye* editorial rightly encourages Toronto to reduce garbage volume by aggressive composting like Halifax or a wet/dry system like Guelph, your recommendation doesn't go far enough. With assistance from the federal and provincial governments the waste stream could be reduced to near zero. The principles of sustainable development suggest that there should be no such thing as garbage.

The onus for reducing curbside and industrial garbage should be placed on the manufacturer not on the consumer. People have few options when trying to avoid single-use packaging or disposable products when shopping. Municipal pay-per-bag by-laws and higher

tipping fees should be avoided since they place the blame at the wrong end of the product's life cycle, though they do encourage existing recycling and composting programs.

The long-term solution would be to stop producing garbage. Every product should be designed to be repaired, reused, recycled, or composted. Industrial processes should use materials in closed-loop, continuous cycles. A garbage-free society would conserve resources and thus eliminate the need for dumps. And the economy will benefit since re-using materials is labour-intensive rather than material-intensive, there being many more jobs in repair, reuse and composting than in single-use disposal.

While municipal recycling and composting programs can significantly reduce the waste stream, the only way to a zero-garbage society is through legislation and taxation – which are provincial and federal government jurisdictions. Manufacturers should be taxed on their per unit production of disposable products and packaging. Reusable, repairable, compostable products and packaging should be tax free. Industries, which always follow the path of least tax resistance, would quickly phase out disposables.

Tariffs at the border could impose import taxes on single-use products to ensure a level playing field for local manufacturers.

A Visit with Three Oxford Greens

*by Andy Shadrack
Green Party of BC*

CAROLINE

Elected in 1993 Caroline Lucas was the first Green to sit on the Oxfordshire County Council. Six years later she became one of two English Greens elected to the European Parliament. Quoted in the pamphlet *Why women should join the Green Party*, Caroline (an aid agency policy advisor and Oxfordshire County Councillor at the time) stated:

"Green politics is about a new way of relating to the world and to each other. The core values at the heart of our philosophy - equity, peace sustainability - make the Greens the only radical party in Britain."

In May 2000, just 7 years after Caroline was first elected, the Oxford Greens won their tenth municipal seat in the City of Oxford. They now jointly run the City with the Liberal Democrats, having ousted Labour after 20 years in power.

This is no grand coalition. Rather the Greens proposed a joint administration of all Council business when no one party secured a majority in the 2000 election. Labour refused, so the Greens hammered out an agreement that they would share the administrative workload, provided they were free to vote on each item according to its merits.

Less than two months later some Liberal-Democrat and Labour councillors (with views closer to the Greens) have started to vote with the 8 Greens as a bloc - preferring the Green way to simply toeing the party line. But what is even more remarkable about these Green pioneers is the fact that they each received upwards of 44% of the vote in electoral contests with up to five other opponents.

That's right. These Greens are winning in a "first past the post" system!

GREEN URLS

The URL for the Alberta Greens website is:

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

The Green Party of Canada is at:

<http://green.ca>

ELISE AND CRAIG

Meet, for example, East Ward Councillor Elise Benjamin (her life partner, Craig Simmons, is the County Councillor for St. Clement's Ward and has just completed writing a book on ecological footprints with Mathis Wackernangel). Elise lives on the Magdalen road, is a governor at East Oxford First School, Vice Chair of East Oxford Adventure Playground, and a member of Bloominarts Management Committee and the Levellers Day committee. Prior to her election in 1999 she also sat on two City Council Committees and administered the local LETS scheme.

Their house is piled high with Committee papers, they are in the middle of renovations and about to go away for a much needed vacation. When I arrived Elise is meeting with the person who will take over her LETS position, Craig is still at work across the street, and for over an hour the phone never stops ringing or being used. Elise states:

"I was elected because the Greens are the only party in Oxford that actually wants to represent the people. We are not elected because we are Greens, but because we are ordinary people who care enough to get involved and want to change the political system,

You know, there is this Councillor up in Bradford (an inner city ethnic ghetto in Yorkshire) who took 12 years to get elected, and the Green group in Huddersfield simply decided to go door to door and take on the casework the other parties' elected Councillors were ignoring."

Elise took a more modest five annual elections before she earned the right to sit at the Council table. In England municipal councils are elected on a four year rotation - three years of parish, town, city and district elections, with a fourth year at the county level.

In 1993 Greens took 12% of the vote in East Ward. In 1995 Elise pushed that to second place with just under 20% of the vote. Then came the long hard slog in

1996, 1997 and 1998, when the vote climbed to 42%. Finally in 1999 Elise won with 48.4%.

She now has three years to convince voters she should stay there. In neighbouring Central and St. Clements Wards the Greens have gained control of all six City Council seats and both County Council seats since 1993. Elise's win was the first outside the "granola" belt of students and alternative lifestyles and in 2000 the Green Party took their first seat in South Ward.

A visit to Elise and Craig's back yard reveals both a wind generator and solar panel which create enough electricity to heat the greenhouse and run a lamp in the sitting room.

What are some of the issues that Elise and the Greens focus on in Oxford? Here's a list from one of their pamphlets.

- Poverty and Regenerating the Local Economy
- Improving Housing and Services to Homeless
- Reducing Pollution and Waste
- Managing Transport and Sensible Planning
- Local Democracy
- Crime and Community

In the centre of the pamphlet under the title *Green Action*, 48 campaigns are listed, with 25 having arrows pointing to a place on a map in East Oxford where this work has been undertaken. Out on the street neighbours come up and chat and raise issues as we walk over to a community business district for an evening meal.

The east Asian restaurant staff are pleased to see their local councillors and later another shop owner banters that a restaurant in another part of the district has better food. In East Oxford it is the Greens who are champions of small business and regenerating the local community.

"We used to be laughed at for our policies of local control and community economics," Elise says. City staff were

ordered not to share information with the Green councillors. But in Oxford, thanks to "Free Trade" in Europe, the Rover car works has shrunk from 25,000 employees down to 2,500 and 1,500 of those are on lay-off.

At this point in our evening meal a debate ensues over the merits of promoting tourism and whether or not the other parties' new found interest in building local economies is more out of self-preservation than an actual conversion to real economic change.

"We have our fundi's too," grins Elise, talking about the third member of our supper gathering. Then she goes on to admit that she has little time for the holier than thou members of the party who go to meetings to participate in endless policy debates. She sees these people as bureaucrats who are not faced with the reality of being an elected Green politician.

Elise and Craig are originally from London, and their politics are played out in the daily grind of life in the back-to-back housing in the inner city district of East Oxford. With the fall of Labour, Greens and Liberal-Democrats are reconstituting the East Oxford parliament - the first meeting of which saw over 150 citizens come out and say they wanted more control, not less, over their daily lives as well as input in proposals for their community.

Their friend, by the way, for all his complaints about internal Green politics and frequent *coup d'etats* at the top of the national party, is a key fund-raiser at election time. He pays for all the pamphlet production in East Oxford and then tries to raise the money to cover what he has spent.

Despite serious reservations and a deeply held cynicism he backs his "reallo" friends.

He despairs about the lack of Green consciousness among the English citizenry, and feels if the Greens ever took complete control of Oxford City Council and implemented stated policy they would be turned out on their ears at the next elec-

tion. In 2000 when the Labour Party targeted small businesses for posterizing, the Greens were able to counter with more business support. "We'd just never thought to ask them if they would place Green Party signs in their shop windows," stated Craig.

The night before the Thursday, May 4th, 2000 election, Green Party canvassers dropped 8,000 postcards into the mailboxes across three wards, reminding their identified voters that tomorrow was "E-day". By 6 PM voters who had not gone to the polls were being phoned: "Vote Green for a Change".

It is a constant balancing act representing people in Oxford, between stated aims and assisting the people on the day-to-day issues they are facing. Elise and Craig are more convinced that people are prepared to listen to Green ideas when they are seen to effectively address problems they face, however their friend is obviously not convinced that this is the correct path to follow.

If Greens in Canada want to start electing Green candidates they are going to have to build the same election machinery as the Oxford Greens, develop the same long term links to the voters and citizens they want to represent, and weave their way through the same maze of policy development and complexities of implementation. As Elise remarks, and Craig agrees, the Oxford Greens have a better political machine than Labour does. "They became complacent and we have knocked the stuffing out of them," Elise chuckles.

What's obvious, looking around their house, is that these are two very committed party members who really care about the community and the people they represent.

In 1997 Craig Simmons was re-elected to Oxfordshire County Council on the same day as a British General Election. To his surprise he received the same percentage of the vote with more than double the turnout of a usual municipal vote (1 in 3). It was quite a disappointment that the same voters who elected him

municipally opted for other parties in the national election.

"Greens," he muses, "will only be elected to government positions that the citizenry feel they are ready for...and where they have a chance of winning."

US Green Party Showing in Election'2000

*Reprinted from
www.ballot-access.org/
2000/1116.html#11*

Ralph Nader's 2.7% is the third best showing for a US minor party presidential candidate in the last 75 years. The only parties which did better, since 1924, were been the American Independent Party in 1968, and the Reform Party in 1996. Nader's showing topped the best that Norman Thomas ever did (2.2% in 1932), and also tops former vice-president Henry Wallace's 2.1% in 1948 (however, independent presidential candidates John Anderson in 1980, and Ross Perot in 1992, did better than Nader).

The Green Party won two partisan races this month: Art Goodtimes was elected County Commissioner in San Miguel County, Colorado; and Julie Jacobson was elected to the Hawaii County Council (although the voters of Hawaii County this year voted to make that office non-partisan in the future). Greens also won at least 14 non-partisan elections, and now have a 3-2 majority on the city council in Sebastopol, California.

Green candidates for US House polled almost 300,000 votes, and for the US Senate, approximately 650,000.