



The Green Party of Virginia



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Number 16

The Green Party of Virginia Newsletter

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Tyla Matteson Runs for Congress

With election just days away, voters in Virginia's first Congressional District now have a choice. Republican Herbert Bateman, notorious friend of polluters, suddenly faces an unexpected challenge from Tidewater Green, Tyla Matteson. Matteson, who also chairs the 11,000 member Sierra Club of Virginia, announced her write-in candidacy for Congress when Democrats failed to find a candidate willing to take on the entrenched incumbent.

Top concern to Matteson and her supporters is Bateman's abysmal environmental voting record. National environmental groups, in fact, have consistently rated Bateman at zero, one of the worst in Congress. Bateman has also received thousands of dollars in campaign financing from some of the nation's premiere polluters. These backers include Exxon, infamous for the nation's largest oil spill; General Electric, known for the nation's biggest nuclear pollution site at Hanford, Washington; and Union Carbide, responsible for the chemical spill that killed or permanently disabled thousands of people in India.

Citing current practices in campaign financing (a.k.a. "corporate bribery") as the biggest thing wrong with our election system, Matteson charges her opponent is part of a corrupt system that exists to keep democracy at bay. Matteson notes that for the millions they spend in campaign contributions, corporations receive billions of dollars in free lunches; the nation is going bankrupt as a result.

Upon election, Matteson will thus push hard for a bill that will authorize public financing of elections, and a Constitutional amendment differentiating between free speech and election campaign bribery. These moves should save taxpayers billions of dollars each year. They should also ensure that representatives of the people have a chance to be elected, a repudiation of the current system which favors the election of those who represent greedy special interests.

Meanwhile, Matteson restricts her campaign to the following: no PAC or corporate contributions, and no individual citizen contributions above \$100. Donations to Matteson for Congress should be sent to: Matteson Campaign, 27 Mitchel Road, Hampton, VA 23669. Make checks out to: "TYLA MATTESON."

Voters in the First District should be advised that, since procedures differ for the various voting machines, they should ask poll workers how to do a write-in at their voting booth.

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Whatever Happened to Liberty?

by Peter Robinson

Is it a mere oversight that neither the word "Liberty" nor the word "Freedom" is found in the Ten Key Values of the Green movement in America? Perhaps we are just taking our liberties for granted, since, for the most part, they have been safeguarded in America, the most glaring exceptions being slavery before the Civil War and segregation in the South before the nineteen-sixties. Possibly Charlene Spretnak, Mark Satin, and the sixty other persons at the 1984 gathering in St. Paul, Minnesota which produced the first draft of the "Ten Key Values", were focussed on those areas which most needed improvement in America. If so, leaving out freedom is understandable but ultimately unwise. As Wendell Phillips reminded us, "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." An oversight perhaps, but my gut tells me that Greens have become suspicious of those rights and freedoms in twentieth-century America which are enjoyed most of all by the richest members of our society, and which protect their property and privileges from those who have little. These same suspicions were expressed by Dorothy Canfield Fisher when she wrote, "Freedom is not worth fighting for if it means no more than license for everyone to get as much as he can for himself."

I also suspect that some American Greens understand the sixth key value, "Community-based Economics", as pointing the way toward something like "confederal municipalism" Howie Hawkins (one of the St. Paul participants) describes confederal municipalism as "independent politics conducted at the municipal level with a view toward building a popular dual power based on citizen assemblies and municipal confederations." In his writings, Hawkins tightly links the concept of municipalism to the goal of anti-capitalism: creating a decentralized, democratic economic alternative to both the capitalism of the West and the Statism of the East.

The rub is that it is hard to overturn capitalism without restricting individual freedom.

Though I share these wellfounded misgivings about capitalism and market economics, I remain convinced that all of the alternatives are worse. If Greens can unite around the goal of harnessing and directing the free enterprise system, rather than radically altering it, we will notice that there are hundreds of achievable remedies to gross inequality.

A Modest Proposal

I, for one, see no reason to keep Liberty and Human Rights waiting in the Green anteroom, and would like to proceed, with all deliberate speed, to elevate this fundamental value to its rightful place in the Green decalogue.

Keeping fundamental Green values to the traditional number of ten rather than eleven or twelve will require some pruning as well as planting. Without further ado, and with all possible modesty, I would like to propose this new enunciation of the "Ten Key Values":

- Ecological Wisdom
- Grassroots Democracy
- Economic and Social Justice
- Peace and Nonviolence
- Decentralization/Community Focus
- Liberty and Human Rights
- Feminism
- Respect for Diversity
- Personal and Global Responsibility
- Sustainability and Quality of Life

Some Explanations

By splitting the concepts "Community" and "Economics" and hooking them onto other values, we are able to make room for the lost value of "Liberty." We should certainly examine the effects of this migration. Much of what we consider "Social Justice" is also "Economic Justice". Uniting these on the same banner strengthens both of them in a very natural way.

The best rationale for "Decentralization" is that it helps to build strong, vibrant, more democratic communities. This is the ultimate goal. Consider that decentralization which merely takes power away from the federal government in order to hand it to state governments may be a dangerous detour on the way to human-scale communities. In summary, dropping "Community-based Economics" and adding "Community Focus" means that rather than prescribing the kind of economics that we should have, we describe the kind of communities we wish to live in, while we experiment with various economic forms as a means to that end.

The motivation for the final two changes is independent of the goal of adding Liberty, but as long as we are redecorating we might as well do the whole house.

"Peace" is often used as shorthand for "Nonviolence". Peace and nonviolence, however, are quite distinct concepts. Out of context, this substitution can be dangerously misleading since many that profess to Peace do not attest to Nonviolence.

We should understand that peace is not some kind of quiescent state. As C.T. Butler puts it, "If war is the violent resolution of conflict, then peace is not the absence of conflict, but rather, the ability to resolve conflict without violence." Thus active peacemaking and passive nonviolence are complementary strategies. Placing Peace and Nonviolence side-by-side on our standard proclaims that we need both while reminding us that they are not the same thing.

Finally I have dropped the obscure phraseology of "Future Focus" in favor of the popular phrase, "Sustainability", along with "Quality of Life."

There's nothing wrong with the basic concept of future (long-term) focus. The problem is that most folks don't get the meaning on first reading.

The word "sustainability", on the other hand, is changing the thinking of mainstream Americans all over America.

I have added "Quality of Life" because as the New Mexico Green Party platform puts it, "Our overall goal is not merely to survive, but to share lives that are truly worth living." We must refocus our lives on our families and communities instead of our possessions, on our understanding of art, science, religion, and politics, rather than our standing in the pecking order.

One may notice that I have avoided tampering with that most controversial of the G/GPUSA 10KV: "Feminism", having come to like this simple and dramatic replacement for "Post-patriarchal Values." I could be convinced otherwise, but any further alterations to the seventh value should come from Green women and not from me.

Controversy

Attempting changes of this magnitude in a text that is approaching religious significance in the American Green movement will certainly be controversial. But I think the debate that would ensue could help to resolve the prolonged though quiet struggle between those Greens who would reform capitalism and those who would end it, a struggle which has stunted the growth of the Green Party in America. And what could be more fitting than for activists in the state of Virginia to spark renewed attention to the central place of liberty in the Greening of America?

Peter R. Robinson is a member of the Blue Ridge Mountain Greens. He wishes to acknowledge the seminal influence in this paper of an offhand remark by Tony Pereira on October 19, 1995 in the GRNS.USA.FORUM Internet electronic conference as well as the stimulating feedback of many current participants.

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Beyond Corporate Media

by **John Balkwill**

The Clinton Sellout

"The professional reporters wouldn't know how to ask a tough question unless their jobs were on the line-- which they would be if they asked a tough question." -- Ralph Nader

If you're upset at liberal friends who admonished, as you presented your Nader petition, "No!--we have to vote for Clinton to stop Dole," ask them to read the following about Bill Clinton's being the best president money can buy, and would they take a Green Party membership form in case they should change their mind?

Bill and the "Two-Party System"

This summer's Democratic convention was livened by a scandal about a call girl named Sherry Rowlands, who quoted her boastful john, "They all know who holds the leash that's around Clinton's neck." Corporate media blathered incessantly about the john, political guru Dick Morris, and his cavorting with Ms. Rowlands, but stayed away from the real story--the one about that leash.

Part of the real story is that Dick Morris is the prostitute, a hired gun who, when not attempting to impress hookers, pitches "family values" issues at Democrats to show them how to campaign like his Republican clients Jesse Helms and Trent Lott as they sell out the public interest. Frustrated in efforts to appear different from the president on issues, Bob Dole recently asked, "If Clinton likes Republican ideas so much, why doesn't he step aside and let a Republican run the White House?" Since Clinton first resigned from his all-white country club to hustle record cash with which to run for president, a media campaign has distracted the public with Gennifer Flowers trysts, Whitewater mud and other diversions. The corporate media spotlight rarely shines on the real President Bill, so that the public perception is skewed. In fact, the real story is that William Jefferson Clinton's administration is even more corporate- friendly and conservative than Reagan/Bush.

Dashing Hope for the Poor

The bill that Clinton signed in August to "force people off of welfare and into jobs" is worse than any social injustice of Reagan/Bush (and they were heartless). Any fool can see that people are on welfare in the first place because they cannot find jobs, so this policy is cruel (see "abandoning workers," below for how government policy actually promotes unemployment).

Environmental Betrayal

In May, the Los Angeles based Voice of the Environment (VOTE) placed ads in Western editions of The New York Times pointing out, "President Clinton, you have done more to harm the environment and weaken environmental regulations in four years than Presidents Bush and Reagan in their 12 years." Read Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey Saint Clair's "Slime Green" in the May, '96 Progressive for more on Clinton's environmental sellout.

Human Rights Shame

Unlike Reagan/Bush, Clinton delinked human rights from trade in China. Almost immediately, Chinese dissidents disappeared or were imprisoned. But when transnational corporate profits were threatened by Chinese copyright violations, President Bill warned China that, for the lofty ideal of corporate greed, he would impose trade sanctions.

Bankrolled in his first presidential campaign by Miami Cubans, Clinton signed anti-Cuba laws more draconian than anything Reagan/Bush attempted, designed to starve out the Cuban people for not subordinating their government to corporate control.

The "Free Trade" Sellout

Clinton promoted and signed into law both NAFTA and GATT trade programs designed to circumvent remaining legal responsibilities for transnational corporations. Newt Gingrich, Bob Dole and Jesse Helms were some of Clinton's closest allies in passing NAFTA and GATT in Congress. An overwhelming majority of Democrats voted against NAFTA, but it passed because sellout Democrats joined Clinton and the Republicans for a majority.

Informed Zapatistas rebelled on the day that NAFTA became law. In the Maquiladora precursor to NAFTA, even the Mexican minimum wage had been pushed down, so Zapatistas knew it would be brutal for the Mexican working class. Since the implementation of NAFTA, in all three nations affected, thousands of workers have lost good jobs and average wages have dropped. The promise by NAFTA supporters that Mexican wages would be raised to ease illegal U.S. immigration problems has been revealed to be untrue, as Mexican workers, worse off by far, now make northern border crossings at increased rates.

Dooming Children

Christopher Hitchens notes (The Nation, 6/24/96) that "We have come to something when Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan has the best lines. Could it be, he mused aloud the other day, could it be that in carelessly abandoning a sixty-year New Deal commitment to a basic standard of support for every child, this Administration has calculated that retirees vote and infants do not? When questions like that can be posed in public, and when the usual liberals are coughing and shuffling, you know there's been another of those shifts to the right that couldn't happen-- oddly enough, under a Republican Administration."

Under Clinton we are first among industrialized nations in percentage of children living in poverty. Holly Sklar (Z Magazine, 11/95) wrote "Poverty kills. Already, 27 children die from poverty every day in the United States. That according to the Children's Defense Fund."

Corporate Welfare

President Bush's projected "defense" budget was much below that spent by Clinton, despite Clinton's campaign promise that, with the cold war over, he would transfer military spending to social needs (which he has since cut). Although thousands of "defense" workers have been laid off, profits for Clinton's arms industry backers are high, as total "defense" spending is nearly at the cold war average, without Reagan/Bush cold war "enemies."

Abandoning Workers

Clinton campaigned for office promising a jobs program. In The Agenda: inside the Clinton White House, Bob Woodward revealed that, soon after being elected, Clinton was visited by Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan and advised that bond holders were against a jobs program, and none was created.

Greenspan raised interest rates six times during 1994 alone after unemployment began to drop, citing imaginary "inflation" dragons as justification. This slows the job market and pushes wages down even as the economy is expanding. Despite administration propaganda, Jobs created during Clinton's term

average low-wages. Official unemployment figures are undercounted by about half (none of the following are counted at all: those who have given up hope of finding a job, our industrialized world's highest per capita prison population, or part-time workers who want full-time work).

Greenspan's policies have contributed to our having the largest gap between rich and poor in the industrialized world. Clinton has since rewarded Greenspan by nominating him for another term as chairman of the Fed. One gathers from this that Clinton agrees with the "let them eat cake" policies of Greenspan, which make wealthy those who finance our political campaigns and control corporate media, at the expense of all others.

Your Role in the Plutocratic Oligarchy

For months corporate media have been showing us polls every few hours to indicate that President Bill is more popular than the Macarena, inspiring a herd instinct to get in line, shake hips and pull the lever in November for four more years so that he-who- feels-our-pain may continue to toil for three strikes, increased phone taps, and unqualified transnational corporate rule.

Voters will oblige. In the dark subterfuge of the polling booth, holding noses and retching, they will be given the familiar corporate choice: will it be Hitler or Satan? After what will seem an eternity, they will opt for Adolph, rationalizing that at least he's human, somewhat. Most will stay home, many not even registered, seeing more hope in betting it won't get dark at night. Corporate puppet masters will yawn in victory, impatient to see what their campaign financing has purchased.

You Greens who walked thousands of miles in attempting to get Nader on the Virginia ballot deserve a heap of thanks, because, as this column screams it, YOU WERE RIGHT. Sherry Stanley and Peter Robinson never quit in their efforts to organize a breakout of democracy here in the Old Dominion, and I'm sorry that we didn't get the numbers for their fine efforts.

Virginia Democrats and Republicans in power have made it difficult for opposition. New York, with triple Virginia's population, only requires 15,000 signatures to get someone on the presidential ballot, fewer than us, and the rules here allow for dozens of ways that signatures can be negated, as we've seen in our struggle. We must move beyond this obstacle with pride that those in power see us as representing the masses, and they fear nothing more than an outbreak of democracy, not even allowing write-in candidates for president.

Hang in there and our Green family will grow and step into a new morning when the sun radiates freedom on everything so brightly that the propaganda melts in its flames. Stay with us, because we will never quit the struggle to oppose hatred, greed and delusion. First we have to steer the facts around corporate media to the people. We can and we will.

Editor's note: with this issue, we welcome Tidewater Green John Balkwill as a regular columnist. John is a journalist by training and an activist by calling. His work has been published from the little-read English Honor Society's Rectangle to the millions-of-readers USA Today. Along the way, he's won national writing awards for poetry, fiction, and non-fiction work. No stranger to controversy, John welcomes your response to his column. Please send your thoughts to:

Editor, Greens of Virginia
Rt. 1, Box 380-A
Buena Vista, VA 24416 or email: eric@rockbridge.net.

Comments and replies to be published next time.

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Global Environmental Issues -- Focus of Recent UVA Seminar

by Linda J. Davis

It's just common sense that environmentally aware people behave according to different "shades" of green. We may not think too much about this on a daily basis. But Edward Freeman, of the University of Virginia Darden Graduate School of Business, has thought extensively about environmental questions as they relate to values and business. An avowed capitalist, Freeman foresees the currently popular idea of "sustainable development" becoming bogged down by the problems of coordinating international policy. An overly regulatory mindset is, to his way of thinking, one of several barriers to the development of innovative solutions to environmental degradation.

Freeman distinguishes four "shades of green" in business: 1) Light Green (or legal green), which means creating and sustaining economic advantage by complying with laws; 2) Market Green, or responding to environmental preferences of customers, a currently popular strategy; 3) the more widely encompassing "Stakeholder" Green, which is responding to environmental preferences of all stakeholders -- customers, suppliers, communities, financiers... 4) Dark Green, which means creating products and sustaining resources in a manner respectful of the earth (looking beyond human society).

Freeman was one of several provocative speakers at a global environmental seminar held last summer at UVA in Charlottesville. The idea of the four day meeting was to look at the changing global environment from several angles to realize its complexity and interconnection.

William McDonough, of the UVA School of Architecture (the "green dean") presented some of his guiding principles for design: 1) waste = resource; 2) work from current solar income; 3) respect diversity (local cultures, communities, resources)

McDonough has designed a "green" Wal-Mart store in Lawrence, Kansas, and a day care center for children in Frankfurt, Germany, which can be climate controlled by the children, but his interests range far beyond the design of buildings. Working with German chemist Michael Braungart, he helped to develop environmentally friendly ramie/wool fabrics for interior decor. Out of 4,000 dyes used in the industry, they eliminated all but about 30, and yet produced a broad range of attractive colors. The purpose was to create fabrics which would not add "toxins, heavy metals, endocrine disruptors or bio-accumulatives" to the soil when they were discarded. These products are bio-degradable. However, products which are not consummable (such as cars and televisions) should be leased to users and returned to the manufacturer for disassembly and re-use. McDonough says that prices need to reflect the true costs of products, including disposal and health costs for dangerous materials.

Among the other speakers at the seminar were scientists Michael Garstang and Hank Schugart. Garstang presented a startling research model of dust storm activity that brings tons of mineral-rich nutrients from the Sahara desert across the Atlantic to the Amazon basin, where it is washed out of the air in frequent storms to nourish the tropical rain forest. Schugart also ran a computer model of forest growth that could predict the number and sizes of particular tree species over the course of 500 years.

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Emus, Drugs and Booklists

by Sherry Stanley

How do I, as a Green, reply to someone who praises raising emus in the Shenandoah Valley as a move toward sustainable agriculture? I mean without insulting her and risking permanent alienation.

Defending, explaining, and revising our platform calls for a substantial background of information in many areas. The platform must represent our ten key values in a way that includes an historical examination of conditions that exist today. Our support of organic farming, for instances, looks ahead by looking back. We must recognize the economic, political, corporate influences that have generated factory farming of animals used for food and application of herbicides to fields. We must understand not only that the family farm is disappearing but why and how some folks are struggling to hang on. We must see the real people and events that shape the positions we support.

In order to do this, we have played with the idea of creating position or background papers for the planks in our platform, but that task proves difficult and threateningly undemocratic. We could probably do this well, but a suggestion of hierarchy---words from on high--- makes us nervous.

We can, however, share our own personal sources of clarification or understanding or persuasion. In this spirit, I have volunteered to begin and keep a Green bibliography.

I need from all of you lists with short descriptions of books, articles, music, movies, anything that we can use for our own insight as well as reference to those who ask how we arrived at supporting a particular plank. We need to know what has helped you. What should I suggest the emu supporter read?

I'll start, though this entry still won't help that question.

Smoke and Mirrors: The War on Drugs and the Politics of Failure by Dan Baum. This recently published book tells the story of our national fiasco flamed by the emotional fires that are so easy to kindle with mention of drugs, especially in combination with the word youth. Our drug war has given us RICO and Ross Perot and that's only the start. This is written history at its best. This book shows why we should call the drug wars our national distraction, a political deception. And look who's using it again!

So, what has moved you? I welcome all suggestions on how to organize and distribute this bibliography. I suggest we include occasional reviews in our newsletter and encourage your contributions. You may send suggestions to the newsletter address or to me at 8 River Ridge Road in Verona, VA 24482.

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The Greens of Virginia on the Web

Thanks to the efforts of two Rockbridge Greens, the Green Party of Virginia and Rockbridge Greens now have their own website.

Early this year Tom Ahnemann started a new business providing Internet access to the Rockbridge area. A longtime member of the Rockbridge Greens and former steering committee member, Tom realized the possibilities for advancing the Green cause through the Internet and offered to donate the Rockbridge Greens a website.

Tom also offered to have one of his employees set up the initial website. This basic homepage included the Ten Key Values, our Platform and Bylaws. One of the first people to read this site and realize that she should be a Green was Rockbridge resident Nell Bolen.

To make a long story short, two months later Nell has spent hundreds of hours working on the Green Party of Virginia website, creating one of the premiere Green websites on the Internet. Now, in addition to the basics, we have an on-line newsletter, open forum discussion board, complete archive of minutes, history of electoral races, upcoming events, on-line membership form, and more. If you haven't seen the website yet, you don't know what you're missing. The address is:

<http://www.rockbridge.net/greens>

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Meet Tom Ahnemann -- Living the Ten Key Values

by Harmony Periman

First in a series featuring Virginia Greens whose lives embody aspects of the Ten Key Values.

Beneath the quiet exterior of Tom Ahnemann, you find a quiet interior, and a common theme. Caring and unassuming, he wields a concern about the young people in the Rockbridge community. It reflects in the many aspects of his life. In his work, he provides young people with tools for their future. In his business, he provides them with work experience. In his family, he provides an example of how to live a life in accord with strong interpersonal values. Looking closely, one observes that Tom has obviously taken to heart the phrase "let it begin with me."

Tom has worked at Washington and Lee University for six years. "It's a dream job. My official title is 'Computer and Network Applications Specialist for the Sciences.' I specialize in helping implement computers in the science curriculum. I work with both students and teachers, providing support to them by answering their questions and helping them solve problems."

Yet Tom sees computers strictly as a tool, and his ability to work with them as a marketable skill. "Computing ability," offers Tom, "is very marketable and portable. I can go anywhere and talk about communications and computers."

"I don't play an instrument, or speak a foreign language," he reveals. "My parents worried a lot about my getting an education, but they never worried about my picking up a marketable skill. I can do some carpentry and plumbing to get by at home, but before computing, I didn't have anything that I could use to make a living and support a family."

Tom met his wife Karen (also a Green) in high school. She was going out with his best friend. That was in 1966. "We've been together ever since," he says. Today, they have two children, Brook (18) and Mathew (16). As a family, they do a lot of camping and travelling, primarily in the U.S. and Canada.

"Two of our favorite places locally," shares Tom, "are Cave Mountain Lake and the Chesapeake Bay. We crab and fish." Tom used to live on Long Island, a spot ideal for crabbing. "We had crab pots then," he muses, "and during crab season, we'd gather a bushel or so and have some friends over on the weekends. We had a great time." Tom also loves to canoe and hike. "I love this stretch of the James River, from Gilmore Mill to Natural Bridge Station. It's fantastic."

Finding things to do in his spare time is one of Ahnemann's specialties. "I like to do more than just one thing; it's part of my nature." So, mixed in with work and family is co-ownership of Rockbridge Global Village. Tom's business is an example of community-based economics in action. Explains Tom, "The business provides an opportunity for people in the community to attach to the Internet from their homes or businesses. It provides web services: things that people want to do on the Internet like publishing, run businesses, having their own web pages or conducting research."

RGV expresses its commitment to the local community in a variety of ways. By employing a number of college students, RGV provides a number of learning opportunities for young people. "They design and write programs for web pages, help out in the office, and do whatever's needed," says Tom. "It's a very cooperative, supportive atmosphere." In addition, Tom's business has provided grants so that all public schools in this rural area could be connected to the Internet, and it offers discount rates for educators and students.

Tom has also provided a free web site for the Rockbridge Greens and the Greens of Virginia. Referring to the extensive Green website, Tom remarks, "That's really coming along. Nell [Bolen] has done a great job. A few people have joining the Greens based on seeing the web page. The communication has really picked up. I get emails all the time from there."

A member of the Rockbridge Greens for several years, Tom has had time to reflect on both the strengths and limitations of organizing within the Greens. From his point of view, "Greens seem to be getting bogged down in the process, rather than the content. . . Sometimes it's hard to get anything done. Consensus is time-consuming and changes come slowly. In a spiritual sense, that's good, but in a political sense, people are uncomfortable with it."

"There's almost two flavors of Greens," adds Tom. "There's the political part that a lot of people feel is important, and they want to work at it and be part of their lives, and there's the part of it who are involved because there's some kind of cause, something there they identify with. I'm pretty much apolitical, but there's enough good in it that I support the Greens. As soon as it becomes all organizing and politics, it becomes a big turnoff to me. Some people's goal is to get one person in office. I just care about one more person hearing our voice. I really don't care that the Greens have a senator or congressman, that's really irrelevant to me, because I don't believe in the political system that way. But I do think it's great when someone reads about it and says, "Wow, there are people who write this and think these things and this is true," and then they show two more and two more; I think that's where the value is."

Tom when to a military high school. "It wasn't much of an educational experience," he relates, "but it gave me the important skills of how to get to know people, and how to live with them. I went on to a small liberal arts school, and majored in psychology. I really got in the social sciences. When I had free time, well, it was the 60's, in the middle of New York, and so there was a lot of political things going on. I was very involved in anti-war activities. It was a good climate for that kind of thing."

"Young people today," observes Tom, "have a very hard time finding things to do. Even an activity like roller-skating on the sidewalk is illegal. I see so many kids just hopping in their cars and cruising around, until they find trouble, for lack of anything better to do. We hosted a German exchange student one year, and she was flabbergasted. In her hometown, smaller than Rockbridge, they had community centers, run almost exclusively by the kids themselves. The young people got together frequently, and the town was always trying to provide opportunities for them."

"The needs of our young people," adds Tom, "seem to be overlooked in the planning for our local area. So many of the activities here are marketing-oriented, geared toward brining in tourists and businesses. I'm concerned about the young people that live here now. These young people are our next generation. We need to provide for them, to inspire them, today."

Harmony Periman is a member of the Rockbridge Greens. A version of her article appeared in the local newspaper, The Weekender, Oct. 12, 1996.

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Move Over Christian Coalition -- Here Come the Peace Voters!

Not having a candidate in the race hasn't stopped the Rockbridge Greens from making their presence felt in the 6th District Congressional race. In late August the Rockbridge Greens printed 20,000 voter guides for the three way race in the 6th District. The non-partisan guide was developed by Peace Action (formerly SANE/FREEZE), as part of their national Peace Voter '96 campaign, which they patterned after the Christian Coalition's highly successful voter guides. Printed on both sides of a half sheet of paper are 16 questions on issues of peace, justice, and the environment, along with the candidates yes or no answers.

Questionnaires were faxed, emailed, and sent by certified mail to each candidate, requesting that they respond within four days. The Democrat and Libertarian did. The Republican incumbent has yet to be heard from; unfortunately for him, he has a voting record. Peace Action was able to provide the incumbent's record on most of the issues.

As it turns out, there are some real differences among the candidates that were brought to light by the voter guide. The Democrat is an honest to goodness liberal (a rarity in this part of Virginia!) and the difference between a Republican and a Libertarian seems to be that the Republicans don't want any domestic government while the Libertarians don't want any government.

The day after the guides were off the presses the Rockbridge Greens handed out more than 1000 at their booth at the Rockbridge Community Festival. A few days later, Greens and some friends plastered Buena Vista during the Labor Day parade, handing out 1300 guides in one hour. The rest of the guides have been distributed to volunteers associated with the Peace Centers in Lexington, Harrisonburg, Lynchburg, and Roanoke.

To contact Peace Action about the Peace Voter campaign call 202-862-9740 or write: Peace Action, 1819 H St. NW, Suite 420, Washington, D.C. 20006.

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