



The Green Party of Virginia



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1997 Campaign Candidate Statements

by Staff and Candidates

Following a spring of successful petition drives, the Green Party of Virginia boasts five candidates for this fall's General Assembly elections. Running on the 81-plank platform of the Party, the candidates all hail from the western part of the state. Their mostly contiguous districts cover a healthy chunk of the Valley of Virginia. Four candidates are also members of the Rockbridge Greens.

"Unfortunately, they get re-elected and forget what it was like to live under the law rather than above it." --Charlie Jordan

Charlie Jordan (540-721-3232) is running in the 9th House of Delegates district. (Counties of Floyd, Franklin, and the city of Rocky Mount). Charlie is a self-employed website maker with a background in urban planning. He faces incumbent Allen Dudley(R) and Mary Harkin (D).

"In the twenty-first century, our economy will adapt itself by design or by failure to the reality that the resources of the world are limited." --Eli Fishpaw

Eli Fishpaw (540-463-7001) seeks the House of Delegates seat in the 18th district. (Parts of Rockbridge and Botetourt Counties, as well as Alleghany, Bath, and Highland Counties, and the cities of Lexington, Clifton Forge, and Covington). One of the founding members of the Rockbridge Greens, he ran for the Rockbridge Board of Supervisors in 1993. Eli, an architectural draftsman, is running against incumbent Creigh Deeds (D) and independent candidate Vic Brungart.

"I am vehemently opposed to the death penalty." --Daniel Metraux

Daniel Metraux (540-886-5251) eyes the House of Delegates seat in the 24th district. (Parts of Amherst, Rockbridge, and Augusta Counties, and the city of Staunton). Daniel is a professor at Mary Baldwin College and lives in Staunton. His sole opponent is incumbent Vance Wilkins (R).

"I will not beg for jobs from a corporation that does not pledge allegiance to the United States, much less the 25th district." --Sherry Stanley

Sherry Stanley (540-248-7721) is running in the 25th district for the House of Delegates. (parts of Augusta and Rockingham Counties, and the city of Waynesboro). Sherry lives in Augusta County and teaches high school English in Rockingham. She is currently serving the GPVA as co-clerk. Her sole opponent is incumbent Steve Landes (R).

"Citizens have the right and responsibility to participate in the environmental, political, and economic decisions that affect their lives." --Dale Diaz

Dale Diaz (540-433-3690) seeks the House of Delegates seat in the 26th district. (Rockingham and Shenandoah Counties, and the city of Harrisonburg). Dale recently accepted the position of director of Common Ground, a network for peace, justice, and the environment. She lives in Harrisonburg and faces incumbent Glenn Weatherholtz (R) and Ben Fordney (D).

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Student Greens Reach Out to Virginia Gays

by David Laibstain

The Student Green Party of Virginia (SGVA) had a very successful first year which included interest and/or groups at among other places, UVA, JMU, Mary Baldwin, George Mason High School, the Hampton Roads community, the Arlington area and the Richmond area. We are well on the way to achieving the goals we set out in the original resolution creating the SGVA.

On a national level, the SGVA has connected with student Green activists in Wisconsin, Maine, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Oregon, Washington and California, and has begun work on creating a national student network. We have also begun work to strengthen student leadership roles in the Association of State Green Parties (ASGP).

Coming off such a great year, the SGVA is looking forward to a great second year and the start of hopefully one of many special campaigns. After the many failures of the Democratic party (especially in the South) to hold true to its promise to support equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) peoples, the SGVA wants to work to recruit young gays and lesbians as a vital part of the SGVA and Green Party of Virginia, and indeed the Green Party as a whole.

We are frustrated with a legislature that continues to discriminate against homosexuals and deny basic human rights and dignity.

Following a year of stunning losses in the Virginia state legislature for GLBT issues, younger gays and lesbians have begun looking for alternatives to the two parties. We are frustrated with a legislature that continues to discriminate against homosexuals and deny basic human rights and dignity to GLBT people. Working with Virginians for Justice, a gay and lesbian rights advocacy group, to support the Employment Non-Discrimination Act and strong Hate Crimes Legislation and the continuing quest for Gay and Lesbian marriage, the SGVA hopes to create lasting ties to Virginia's GLBT community.

Also the SGVA hopes to have or share booths at at least the Richmond and Hampton Roads Pride Festivals and participate in the Hampton Roads AIDS Walk for Life. GPVA remains one of the only political parties in Virginia whose platform actively advocates Gay and Lesbian marriage, non-discrimination, and hate crime legislation. It is time for us to reach out.

--David Laibstain lives in Tidewater and is an active member of SGVA

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Into the "Democracy" Scam

by John Balkwill

"I believe I've lost my faith in politicians -- They all look like game show hosts to me." -- Sting, "If I Ever Lose My Faith in You."

When I claimed, "We don't have a democracy" at a party for a Green candidate, someone in a suit looked down his nose at my long-haired, scruffy image and patronized, "Technically, you see, we have a representative democracy -- after free elections, representatives then vote on our behalf." But since, in practice, we have neither representative democracy nor free elections, these terms have become little more than corporate media sound bites.

Considering those free elections, gubernatorial and general assembly candidates have bagged record campaign bribes this year from the developer mafia, polluters and other exploiters. Representatives of the people aren't allowed sufficient cash to become known to voters. Less than 60% of potential Virginia voters are registered, and most of these don't bother to visit the polls, not finding therein much hope for representation.

Representative democracy? Ronald Dellums, when chair of the House Armed Services Committee, told us \$23 billion was spent on the Stealth B2 bomber before most "representatives" (Members of Congress), were officially told that the B2 existed. NAFTA, which grants transnational corporations power surpassing that of governments, was negotiated by corporate bootlickers without the participation of a single people's "representative" from Congress. True enough, the Constitution does frame a republic, but that's been revised. Harry Truman deep-sixed even the pretense of representative democracy in 1947 with an executive order establishing the extra-constitutional CIA and other secret offices whose primary functions are to prevent democracy from breaking out (a) here and (b) elsewhere.

"The people who own the country ought to govern it," said first chief justice John Jay, who got his wish. At the top, an owning class finances the political campaigns and gets back: most tax loopholes and government handouts, death squads to terrorize the third world on their behalf, a gigantic military complex to narrowly protect their concerns while providing them capital gains from arms sales, the right to pollute the environment as they destroy it, a Federal Reserve Board to keep workers desperate, a servile justice system, and enough media control to maintain widespread blissful ignorance.

When President Bill and his doppelganger Speaker Newt conspired to reduce taxes on capital gains and estates to benefit the descendents of robber barons who grant them power, Senator Paul Wellstone noted of this budget agreement, "What is not on the table are the tax preferences that are bought and paid for with campaign contributions in a system that is corroding the very underpinning of our democracy." The richest 1% now pay a fraction of working class net tax rates with many of the wealthiest paying no taxes even as their corporate welfare drains the treasury (the wealthy and corporations got over \$150 billion in welfare in 1994, about five times that provided to the needy).

The poorest 20% actually pay the largest portion of income in sales, property and income taxes in 80% of the states (Harper's Index). But then, Leona Helmsley boasted that only "the little people" pay taxes. A growing number of the little people are now homeless as corporate media declare a "booming economy" on behalf of the Leona Helmsleys whom they represent.

Every homeless advocate with whom I've spoken has informed me that homelessness is growing in Virginia. But most of them are not aware that Virginia's homeless risk a ten-year prison sentence for merely registering to vote in our "representative democracy." I testified about this before a subcommittee of the General Assembly in January. Although citizens registering to vote are required to give a home address under penalty of a felony for false information, "Homeless people do not have homes," I pointed out what should be obvious even to corporate sycophants who rarely think beyond "how do I get my next campaign bribe?"

Later, I saw my delegate, Vince Behm, at a town meeting in Hampton where he spoke about Big Tobacco giving him a large box of goodies while the General Assembly was in session. He said that all the delegates and senators get them. Following, I spoke with two black delegates, Mary Christian of Hampton and Flora Crittenden of Newport News, both of whom told me they didn't get the gifts. Seems Big Tobacco didn't think it could bribe these two past winners of the Tidewater Social Justice Award.

Gore Vidal said it best when describing the U.S. Senate of his boyhood. His uncle was a Senator, which got him onto the Senate floor where he could observe that august body as Members drank whiskey, pinched the bottoms of secretaries, and generally made asses of themselves. "They were more honest then," said Vidal, as he described watching Senators openly accept cash bribes in the cloakroom. Today there is added hypocrisy as legislators (of our "representative democracy") pretend to be working for the public interest.

But even when a Senator like Bob Torricelli does one decent thing in his lifetime, blowing the whistle on the CIA for participating in Guatemalan death squad activity resulting in the no-no murder of an American citizen (it's okay to kill millions of third worlders named "Maria" or "Juan" if it influences the Dow/Jones upwards), Torricelli is chastised by the CIA. The State Department official who slipped Torricelli the facts has his security clearance removed by the CIA in retribution, thereby destroying his career. Those who defy it soon learn that the CIA is a higher authority than any "representative democracy."

Today in government, one often pays dearly for telling the truth. From my conversations with them, employees of Virginia's Dept. of Environmental Quality are in terror for their jobs, and will put the screws to the environment in a heartbeat to spare the wrath of Gov. George Allen.

The fact is that Allen was put into office by the Democrats, who differ only in rhetoric. You will recall when Allen's Democrat opponent for governor, Mary Sue Terry, with a massive 16% lead in the polls, began to bash environmentalists and labor unions to get more cash from those who pull the strings. She got record cash for a Democrat, and then lost big. Seems the Democrat rank and file had a lot of labor folks and environmentalists who sat on their hands rather than use them to stuff envelopes and leaflet door-to-door for Mary Sue Sellout.

You'd think the Democrats would have learned from this, but their latest candidate hasn't made a definitive public stand to declare independence from Forces of Greed who command our political realm, or shown voters where an opposition party might be. Don Beyer has praised George Allen for economic development and said, "If you look at my list of supporters across the state, it's almost as Republican as it is Democratic." He and opponent Jim Gilmore disagree on one thing: the means with which to fool the electorate. Tidal waves of cash have flowed to both, insuring that any hope for "Representative democracy" is quite drowned.

So let's urge friends to spend their time helping Green candidates build a genuine representative democracy. If there are no Greens running in your neighborhood, travel to help stuff envelopes or leaflet for a day. If you can't travel, at least send a few bucks to Green candidates in support of the public interest. Whether or not they win, Green candidates get out an alternative message which greatly improves the debate as they help the Party grow. We must get past merely squirming and retching in the polling booths over voting for the evils of two lessers. Our Green tortoise will prevail over brown-nosed bunnies at the finish line, with patience and a united front.

Columnist John Balkwill is a Tidewater Green. No stranger to controversy, John welcomes your response to his column. Please send your thoughts to Editor, Greens of Virginia, 1 South River Rd., Buena Vista, VA 24416 email: eric@rockbridge.net One Time Rights1997 John Balkwill.

Less than 60% of potential Virginia voters are registered, and most of these don't bother to visit the polls, not finding therein much hope for representation.

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Two Seek Seats on Soil and Water Conservation Board

Two members of the Rockbridge Greens are in a five-way non-partisan race for two open seats on the Natural Bridge Soil and Water Conservation District Board. Good luck, Greens!

Kathy O'Hara runs Second Nature Farm near Goshen in Rockbridge County and is an active member of the Healthy Foods Coop. In addition to organic gardening, she also teaches calculus at Virginia Military Institute.

Darrell Croson lives in the southern part of Rockbridge County where he operates an extensive farm. He also has a day job, training the unemployed for entry into the workforce. An active citizen, Darrell is well-known for recently spearheading a successful grassroots campaign against development of a local airport.

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Review: Check the Manual

by Sherry Stanley

On a steamy, rainy evening in Washington, D.C. last month, Sam Smith spoke to his neighbors, friends, and fellow activists jammed into the Politics and Prose book store. They had gathered for a book signing of Sam's new book, Sam Smith's Great American Political Repair Manual (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1997).

I met Sam last fall at the first gathering of the Associated State Green Parties and have enjoyed his occasional e-mail postings on the Green forum and his column in The Progressive Populist. I recognized only a few faces in the crowd (as many standing as sitting --- the sort of crowd as a candidate I envy), but clearly they knew and appreciated Sam.

I haven't read any reviews of Sam's book, but I heard that he was interviewed on National Public Radio. I missed it, but what a pleasure for all those listening to hear that reasoned voice. In my own campaign for the House of Delegates, I'll be toting the Manual. Sam has provided us with the basics and the background for building Green community and Green politics.

How to stay free, how to count the votes right, how to count the money right, how to stay alive, how to stay safe and play fair, and how to get along with other Americans.

Now, he hasn't written the great Green tome that will set the world on fire. No, instead, simple, short, fragmented chapters explain how to do things, the way we expect a manual to read. How to stay free, how to count the votes right, how to count the money right, how to stay alive, how to stay safe and play fair, and how to get along with other Americans. Just the essentials.

Often Sam is blunt. He reminds us, "Don't be a prig." Self-righteous environmentalists, he cautions, fall into condescending language that wins few friends, but linking environmental issues to health issues and minority issues and economic issues, for instance, makes questions about the environment real and immediate.

Always, he is informative. Greens promote proportional representation and preference voting, or as Sam explains, we promote voting in the U.S. (like most other democracies.) For anyone not sure what PR and preference voting are, this is your book. Sam keeps it simple. This book is full of boxes of all sizes wrapped around explanations, quotations, observations, tables, whatever. From the chapter on unrigging the system, such a box reminds us, "In America," says election scholar Douglas Amy, "You have the right to vote --- you just don't have the right to be represented."

Always, Sam is historical. I was surprised that quite a few Greens considered the create-a-local-currency plank in our proposed Virginia platform "flaky" and much too radical. The membership voted against this plank. Radical? Sam provides one of those history lessons we never got in school: during the Depression local governments, business associations, and other groups created their own money systems, everything from voucher systems to scrip systems. At least 300 communities survived the Depression this way. Sam then explains the current local currency system in Ithaca, New York. This is one part of his 12-step program for recovery from corporatism.

Finally, he is challenging. I'm trying to get the nerve to distribute Sam's "Test your local schools" to the other teachers, principals, guidance counselors, school board in the county where I teach. This little test is designed to "help you find out whether your schools are helping their students or just holding them." I recommend giving this as an oral quiz to avoid cheating, especially if you like to see people squirm.

Sam has provided us with the basics and the background for building Green community and Green politics.

I bought two copies, have loaned one to another candidate, and won't part with the other. I bought the paperback, only \$14.95; I suggest two copies because by the third chapter you will think of someone who really must read this book. It's ideal for a book discussion. There's a great book group here in Staunton; maybe they can substitute a politically sound book for one month.

As Sam traditionally ends his messages --- keep the faith.

--When not teaching high school, reviewing books, and co-clerking Greens of Virginia, Sherry Stanley is blazing the campaign trail as Green candidate for Virginia's House of Delegates in the 25th District. Book suggestions and campaign contributions are both welcomed at 8 River Ridge Road, Verona, VA 24482.

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