



The Green Party of Virginia

Number 21

The Green Party of Virginia Newsletter

Fall 1998

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Of Special Interest

Staff

November 21, Saturday, from 10:00 A.M. until 4:00 P.M. at the Charlottesville Public Library -- In the morning we will hold a workshop on consensus decision-making before breaking for lunch. In the afternoon we will conduct our fall decision-making meeting.

Volunteers Needed --- Anyone interested in researching, writing, and advocating a single-payer health insurance bill for Virginia, please contact the Greens of Virginia.

Locals --- If you are interested in organizing a Green local in your area, please contact us. We can put you in touch with other GOV members near you.

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Paving The Family Farm: Proposed Interstate 73 Gains Steam

Mark Petersen

We must stop hundreds of miles of destruction, planned under the guise of "job creation" and "economic growth." The Myth of the Interstate, the notion that prosperity is inseparably tied to major highways, again threatens to cause serious problems in the hills of southwestern Virginia.

What began in 1993 as a proposal for routing I-73 along existing I-77 has steadily grown into a new-terrain highway proposal snaking its way from Bluefield, WV southeast via Roanoke to the North Carolina state line. By the end of 1995, Congress had expanded the project tenfold, transforming it into a "high priority" transcontinental proposal.

The proposal currently calls for the construction of a highway north of Detroit, Michigan to Charleston, South Carolina. North Carolina and West Virginia have already commenced construction now that funding has been secured by Congressional approval of the massive, billion dollar highway pork package passed in April.

Canadian corporations, taking advantage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), are backing the road to encourage transnational ground transport trade to Southern port cities. But rail is much more energy-efficient and less destructive than either new highways or widenings.

Interstate 73 is a farm killer, encouraging unharnessed suburban sprawl for the counties of Bedford, Botetourt, Roanoke, Franklin, and Henry. Most of the route would involve paving through undeveloped rural areas. Hundreds of family farms would be split, creating hardship for families dependent on the land for their survival.

Area residents are fearful that reasonable alternatives to the new-terrain options will not be fairly considered. The current Environmental Impact Statement is for a Roanoke to Martinsville highway only. In reality, this is a Detroit to Charleston project. Currently, Virginia Department of Transportation consultants have divided I-73 into two segments for study and evaluation. Cost estimates for the Roanoke to Martinsville segment vary, and policy makers will not have a concrete estimate until a route is chosen, field studies conducted, and right-of-way and mitigation expenses considered.

Every three days the population of San Francisco is added to the planet. Unfortunately, as these newborns are added, the Earth doesn't grow. As economist Herman Daly observes, the economy may grow in size, but the ecosystem (and fertile soil) does not. This nation's transportation policies --- packaged as "progress" by those profiting from "growth" --- through petroleum extraction and roadbuilding will only spell disaster for Virginians in the years to come when world oil supplies dwindle and no feasible alternatives have proven themselves profitable and sustainable. As one citizen made clear at a VDOT scoping hearing: "Why would we want to implement a transportation network that has only proven to be outdated and costly in other metropolitan regions?"

State representatives cite safety concerns and congestion along the 220 corridor, justifying a new-terrain interstate highway. Every major road project since the 1950s has promised traffic relief but has actually produced the opposite result. As more and more development occurs along new roads, the resulting traffic congests the roads even more than before. So, today's open highways are tomorrow's traffic nightmare.

As VDOT prepares to spend additional millions for their final study and subsequent Environmental Impact Statement, citizens have the opportunity to demand fair representation as well as accountability. Ever rising taxes, endless traffic jams, dirty skies, and government under the thumb of special highway interests. Is this the golden future we want for our community? Can developers get away with it? They have a dazzling arsenal of weapons: money, lobbyists, teams of lawyers, public relations people, and connections --- high and low. But their number one weapon has been the simple one: PUBLIC APATHY. Now is the time to act while the process is open to us. Community opposition has successfully stopped highway projects elsewhere. Perhaps something can be learned from these examples.

For more information, contact Mark Petersen @ (540) 362-7141.

Mark Petersen is an urban affairs consultant to the Fossil Fuels Policy Action Institute. He currently resides in northwest Roanoke. A native southern Californian, Mark has witnessed the destruction caused by excessive road building and subsequent urban sprawl. He predicts that southwestern Virginia's scenic quality will eventually be marred by California-style suburbanization. Two miles south of Boons Mill, VA on Route 200, this highway sign announces a new-terrain interstate highway. Mark Peterson, who took this picture, speaks for southwest Virginia citizens who seek to stop the construction of I-73.

... today's open highways are tomorrow's traffic nightmare.

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The Way We Vote

Muriel Grim

Presidents Clinton, Nixon, Kennedy, Truman, and ten others before them were elected to office by a minority (i.e., less than 50 percent) of the total votes cast. In 1992, 57 percent of the voters did not vote for Clinton; yet he won the election because his 43 percent of the vote was higher than any other candidate's. American voters are accustomed to electing someone without a majority of the votes. They accept choosing the "lesser of two evils" as part of our democratic process, rather than as a byproduct of our method of voting. Simple procedural changes to the way we vote might correct some of the defects in our elections and, at the same time, reduce voter apathy.

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Most elective offices in the United States are filled through winner-take-all voting methods. When there are more than two candidates for an office, often the winner has not been elected by a majority but by a plurality. Winner-take-all is not the only voting option.

Many of the world's democracies strive for a truly representative government through a combination of voting methods and proportional representation that elects candidates favored by the largest number of people. These systems also result in minority opinions being represented in the legislature. In the United States, we might be able to correct at least some of the problems of our electoral process by adopting part of this combination: that is, through new voting methods.

In single seat elections, where voters within a certain constituency choose one person to represent them, independent and minor party candidates increase the number of candidates beyond two, and voters have a dilemma. Although people may support the minor and independent party candidates' positions, they rarely vote for these candidates because they fear throwing away their votes or supporting a spoiler. In fact, if they do vote for their favorite minor party candidates, they sometimes do cause the candidate they least favored to win.

This situation is not hypothetical in New Mexico. Since 1992, Green candidates have been winning offices and have gotten over 10 percent of the votes in congressional elections. Roberto Mondragon received 10 percent of the vote in the 1994 gubernatorial election, and more recently Carol Miller and Bob Anderson received 17 percent and 15 percent in congressional elections. In all three cases, Republicans won seats that had traditionally been Democratic. It is not certain that the results would have been different if the Green candidates had not run, since the Greens did bring out many new voters. President Clinton recently appealed to NM voters not to vote for the Green candidates, claiming that they should abstain from a Green vote so that the more environmental of the two major party candidates could win. Close to 20 percent of the people are willing to vote for a sure loser because they support that candidate's positions. How many more might vote for that candidate if they didn't feel compelled to vote for the lesser of two evils? In order to elect an environmentalist, should New Mexican voters be required not to vote Green or should they have the right to both vote Green and get the type of representation they want?

When more than two candidates are running for an office, the voters should be able to rank the candidates according to preference; on the ballot they should indicate first, second, third, etc. choices. In the 1994 gubernatorial election in Maine, the results of a 4-way election were that the winner, King, had 36 percent of the vote, with the other candidates getting 34 percent, 23 percent, and 7 percent respectively. In the 1992 Presidential election, Ross Perot got nearly 20% of the votes. If voters' second choices were figured in the ballot counting, perhaps there would have been a different outcome in these elections, an outcome in which a true majority of the voters had expressed some support for the winner.

There are different ways to count the votes from a rank-the-candidates election. One of the simplest, advocated by the Center for Voting and Democracy, a leading organization working for more democratic voting processes, is called Instant Run-off Voting (IRV). It has the advantages of a run-off election without the costs or the need for two trips to the polls required in most run-off processes. After the first vote count, the candidate with the least first place votes is eliminated. The ballots on which that candidate had been first choice are then recounted with the votes going to the second choices on those ballots. This process was used in the last Irish presidential election. After the first count, Brian Lenihan had 44 percent of the vote, Mary Robinson had 38 percent, and Austin Currie had 17 percent. Robinson was the second choice of most of the people who had voted for Currie, so on the second count, with Currie eliminated, Robinson was elected with 53 percent of the vote. With a check-off-one-candidate system, Lenihan would have won although 53 percent of the voters preferred Robinson to Lenihan.

With voters ranking the candidates rather than checking off just one, there is a good possibility that changes would occur in our whole election process. Negative campaigning should be minimized because a candidate cannot run negative ads about every other candidate. People will have the right to vote for their first choices and not be required to vote for the lesser of two evils. People who normally would not vote but are in favor of an independent or minor party candidate will be encouraged to come out and vote. Unlike Louisiana, where voters do get a choice because of run-off elections, IRV would not require the expense of holding a second election. Again, IRV is instant.

Reduction of negative campaigning and voter apathy, increased voter participation, and election of candidates favored by a majority of the voters could all be the results not of complex legislation or massive advertising campaigns but of a simple procedural change. The solution to many of our problems lies in the way we vote.

Muriel Grim, from NOVA Greens, has agreed to write several articles on voting alternatives. We would appreciate hearing from others on this vital aspect of democracy also. For additional information on voting process issues, you may contact The Center for Voting and Democracy, Box 60037, Washington, D.C. 20039, (202)828-3062, e-mail:

FairVote@compuserve.com Web site www.igc.apc.org/cvd

Should voters be required not to vote Green or should they have the right to both vote Green and get the type of representation they want?

Voters have a dilemma.

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Community Supported Agriculture: For a better understanding of the connection between the farmer and the table

Aaron Feldman

At the age of 18, when he grew his first perfect head of cauliflower, Brian Rakita realized what his life's pursuit would be. "I knew that raising good food was what I wanted to do in life," he told me as we chatted at his home, Acorn, an intentional community in rural Louisa County.

Brian, who prefers the nickname "Cricket," was given the moniker for staying up all night drumming at East Wind, another intentional community in southern Missouri, where he lived in the early '90s.

It was then that he was first introduced to the idea of Community Supported Agriculture. "In 1992, while I was living at East Wind a friend of mine, named Ed, told me about the concept of CSA. He had worked on one and the idea of having a regular base of customers drew my interest. Then, a couple of years ago while living with friends in Gordonsville, I heard that Acorn wanted to start a CSA. So I wrote them a letter and told them that I'd like to take part in it. I moved here, in large part, to work the CSA. I also wanted to live in an income sharing community, and especially one that practiced consensus decision making. That Acorn is a small community was also attractive to me."

Community Supported Agriculture is an arrangement by which local consumers can support the farming of organically grown, healthy produce in season. Each member of the CSA pays a fee at the start of the season in exchange for a portion of the garden's produce each week. Acorn's shareholders are informed as to which vegetables they can expect and when to expect them through the CSA's newsletter for its subscribers, "A Cornucopia." Of course, this comes with the caveat that cooperation from the weather and insects will cause expectations to vary. Membership in a CSA includes sharing with the farmer in the shortages of poor growing seasons as well as in the bounty of plentiful ones.

Cricket says, "The CSA allows us to directly market from the farmer to the consumer and eliminate the middle people. It allows our customers to participate and feel good about the way their food is being grown. My feeling is that science will follow intuition. If you intuitively understand that a farming practice is bad for the environment, then in time science will prove you right, even if it can't right now. Our customers know that our farming practices are good for them and for the environment, even more directly than a label at the market."

"Many of the vegetables that we grow here are heirloom varieties and we stay away from the use of hybrids as much as possible. Corn has been our primary compromise on that position. We also use open pollinated varieties. We're working on developing our own variety of bok choy and if that works out, then we'll develop our own variety of Chinese cabbage as well."

Of course many farmers operate truck farms or sell their produce at farmers' markets, but CSA offers advantages over these methods of marketing produce. Cricket told me, "We wanted to deal directly with the community. We wanted to market directly to consumers, and it's hard making a living when you work only through farmers' markets. We considered doing a pick-your-own-farm, but that didn't offer us enough privacy here, which is important to us."

No one gets rich through small-scale farming, including CSA. In the two years that Acorn has run the project, they have not yet turned a profit. But this is often true of many new enterprises, especially in farming. Cricket told me, "There's a hope that it will one day soon turn a profit for us and there's still strong support for it among the community members, with no real opposition, but there have been a number of start up costs associated with getting this off the ground. The members are into it! There's the added benefit of growing our own good food and it's a business that we feel good about running. We want it to be a viable model for farming. It can, in time, turn a profit and does for many similar farms."

Though CSA farming is not a huge moneymaker --- an important consideration for any young community or family farm trying to stay afloat financially --- the support of Acorn's members for this venture is yet another contribution that they make towards living up to their values regarding the environment. The community has made a commitment to subsidize the CSA in its salad years, to give it a good flying start. They were also fortunate enough to receive a \$2000 grant to refurbish their greenhouse and to purchase a replacement for their old rototiller.

Cricket, who grew up in Milwaukee and studied agriculture at the University of Wisconsin, says he enjoys the solitude of working in the three-acre garden by himself. "I mostly work alone with some occasional help from other members of the community and interns. I like working alone. It gives me lots of time to think and I find it meditative. A bit like Buddhist meditation."

In addition to the savings that CSA's can pass on to consumers who prefer to purchase organic produce, they're helping to create awareness about sustainable growing practices and help people realize that there are better alternatives to supermarket shopping. It also allows people to better understand the connection between the farmer and their table.

Other CSA's operate throughout Virginia. Look for one in your area!

Aaron Feldman, a member of Central Virginia Greens, divides his time between the roles of a student and an interning journalist.

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The King William Reservoir: Part Two Who's Drinking Our Water?

Thomas C. Rubino

The Greens of Virginia summer of 1997 newsletter carried on page 2 an article about the proposal to build a dam and reservoir in King William County, which would divert water from the Mattaponi River to increase the fresh water supply of the Virginia Peninsula. In the fall of 1998, the struggle continues. A plank from the GPVA platform reads: We oppose the construction of the King William Reservoir, which would inundate 524 acres [but now the present proposal calls for more than 1500 acres] of valuable wetlands, submerge American Indian archaeological sites, and harm animal and plant life along the Mattaponi River by changing its salinity. We support the use of water conservation measures to eliminate the need for this reservoir. Thomas Rubino provides the facts behind our plank.

The proposed King William Reservoir project, which would pull water from the Mattaponi River and impound it in a reservoir carved out of a local wetland, has received the first of three state permits. However, there are legal actions in place by several environmental groups and neighboring King & Queen County to overturn this first permit. Two Indian tribes have separate actions over treaty rights. Even if these challenges are unsuccessful, two additional state permits must yet be granted. The US Army Corps of Engineers must issue a permit. And the EPA must see fit not to use its veto as it has done on a similar Newport News project in the past. Contrary to the published accounts by Newport News Water Works, the project is far from assured.

In a recent straw poll, 93 percent of King William residents voted against the reservoir. Public outrage is a significant factor in environmental protection.

There are several reasons to deny the King William Reservoir permit. First, regional water need for this reservoir is disputed by four independent studies. Second, the Mattaponi Indian Tribal fishery, which has been a cultural tradition and an important food source since before recorded history, will be at risk. Also, the proposed reservoir represents the greatest wetland area ever permitted for destruction in the state of Virginia. In addition, salinity increase on the Mattaponi River is likely to occur when fresh water is removed; however, the salinity model used to predict these delicate changes in salinity is dangerously outdated. Finally, there are environmental threats, specifically to the national shad, herring, and bass fishstocks and to the sensitive joint vetch, which this project endangers.

The need for this reservoir is in doubt. Newport News contends they require a 100 percent increase in water storage capacity to meet the demands of a 25 percent population increase. A recent study commissioned by the Army Corps of Engineers has asserted that the actual water need for the region is less than half of the amount claimed in the permit sought by Newport News Water Works. Another independent study agrees with this opinion, "Non-reservoir alternatives are capable of providing the region with sufficient capacity for the 2000-2040 period." There is presently no shortage of water in the region. Independent scientific analysis does not support the need for this project.

The reservoir's intake pipe is located in the area where shad spawn their eggs every year. It is also near the traditional Mattaponi Indian fishing grounds. Mattaponi River water will be withdrawn through screened intake pipes in the river and be stored in a reservoir carved out of a nearby wetland. The screened pipes may filter out fish eggs and larvae --- but I believe shad and other fish populations are likely to suffer large losses from effects that have not been studied.

Removing water from the river will leave the eggs and fish behind, like spaghetti left at the bottom of the strainer after the water goes down the drain. This increase in eggs and infant fish around the intake pipe is likely to result in a corresponding increase in the local predator population. A published study warns about similar intake designs, "One drawback of low-velocity screening systems is that they can cause the migrating fish to slow down to such an extent that they become vulnerable to predators. The predators may linger in the shadows of the low-velocity screening systems, awaiting their opportunity for an easy meal. This problem has surfaced on the Columbia River, where squawfish gobble up 6-8-inch salmon smolts as they head downstream" (Counting on Fish Protection by Leslie Lamarre, EPRI-Journal/Jan-Feb '95). The problem of increased predator species destroying valuable fishstocks is documented on other low-velocity screening systems, yet there has been no study of predator impacts.

Fish food is another issue left unstudied. The narrow openings in the intake screening may filter out the shad eggs and juveniles, but assuming they are bigger than the food they eat, the screens will not filter out their food source. Won't their food be lost down the intake pipe? Where are the studies that address this problem?

It seems probable that an increase in fish concentration plus a loss of shad food added to an increase in the local predator population endangers the shad. Native shad populations statewide have already been devastated by massive pollution and poor environmental management. Virginia has invested substantial taxpayer resources in restocking the shad fishery. Any permitted devastation to this valuable resource would contradict years of effort and tax dollars invested in restocking.

The permitting of this reservoir would result in one of the largest losses of wetlands ever dedicated to a single project in the Chesapeake Bay. In all, more than 1500 acres will be flooded; 437 acres of wetland habitat will be lost forever. "Replacing" them with synthetic wetland is being contemplated as a compensation, but past attempts have proven this to be a poor substitute. It takes Mother Nature a millenium to produce a wetland --- the notion of replacing it with an artificial one has proven to be scientifically insupportable. Cohoke Creek Watershed is the area that will be engulfed by the proposed reservoir. The Cohoke is miles of rich woodland and wetland habitat that provide fertile spawning and rearing habitat for herring, shad, eels, turtles, and many other species, which eventually live in the Chesapeake Bay. The dam will deny the creek its natural rhythms of precious water. The permittee proposes hideous scenarios to protect the downstream creek habitat --- with fresh water releases from the reservoir in flow patterns that do not even resemble natural rhythms. Miles of habitat will be lost. To developers, wetlands may look like wastelands, but to Mother Nature they are as valuable as nurseries. We simply cannot pour this precious ecosystem down the drain.

The salinity study employed in the proposed King William Reservoir EIS (environmental impact statement) is based on a one-dimensional, twenty-year-old computer model. Many modern 3D salinity models are available that use a more dynamic approach to examine river environments. Several factors set in motion in a computer simulation may include fisheries issues such as the movement of fish eggs, fish food, and shellfish larvae. They also predict hydrological issues including water temperature; the effects of wind, silt, and sand sedimentation; and fresh water input from streams and springs. Sensitive fishery and botanical areas are identified, and specific impacts on these areas are considered. However, only dissolved salinity is studied in the model employed in the EIS. Many examples of 3D models are available. For instance, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science has a 3D model for estuaries and tributaries including the James, York, and Rappahannock Rivers. Old Dominion University has a 3D Chesapeake Bay model that includes wind stress, tidal forcing, runoff/precipitation, and solar irradiance. Mid-Atlantic Marine Education Association offers a 3D model that is studying shellfish larval transport and the salinity stratification of the York River. The United States Geological Survey has a 3D model that studies salinity and wind stress on Lake Pontchartrain in Louisiana. The Tampa Bay Oceanographic Project is using a 3D model to study Tampa Bay, Florida. Scripps Institute of Oceanography is using 3D modeling of the salinity field in the San Francisco Bay using wind effects and evaporation to predict intertidal salinity variations. Many examples of three dimensional models are in use around the country --- but these have been overlooked in favor of a simplistic, outdated one-dimensional model.

There is a significant population of the endangered species sensitive joint vetch on the Mattaponi at Melrose Landing that is likely to be living in as high a salinity as is possible for that species. If so, a minor shift in salinity may prove fatal to this colony. That is not the only danger to sensitive joint vetch. Backflushing will occur when the intake screens are cleaned by forcing massive amounts of water and compressed air backwards through the filtering screens. Debris entrained on the filter surfaces will be forced into the water. What will this material be composed of? Will seeds of undesirable species entrained by the intake filters be released into the water in high concentrations? A significant population of sensitive joint vetch lies just 500 feet from the intake pipe. It is one of the largest stands of this species in the world, composed of between 400 and 500 plants. Will an aggressive seed concentration settle on and overgrow the SJV? A modern 3D model could be tuned to more accurately address the salinity impact and backflushing on this particular population, but only a cursory examination of the impact is provided in the EIS.

If the current permit is issued, there will be no limits placed on who will consume this national water resource. Newport News is a premiere deep water port, which gives supertankers easy access to an emerging industry --- the selling of water. In the Journal of Commerce, John Hayward of the World Bank states, "... we will see a rising recognition that water is an international commodity." A company named Global Water, of Vancouver B.C. has recently received a 15 year water export permit to ship 4.7 billion gallons of water annually from Sitka, Alaska to Beijing, China. The company is upgrading an oil tanker for use as a raw water transport to haul 40 million gallons of water per transit. In an even more ambitious project, engineers from MIT have helped develop a polypropylene bladder system to transport drinking water --- up to 225 million gallons per shipment. Transported by ocean tug, the bags will be coupled together like train cars that bob on the surface. Markets for overseas water exist in the Middle East, Europe, and South Africa. Newport News is centrally located within easy shipping distance to these markets. Yet, no permit restrictions are being entertained by either state or federal agencies. We are putting ourselves in danger of permitting apples, but selling oranges.

Remember that the recent study commissioned by the Army Corps of Engineers has assessed the actual water need for the region as less than half what has been claimed and that there is presently no shortage of water in the region. Who will consume this overabundance of empounded water? Our national resources should not be for sale to the highest bidder. The Mattaponi River is already using every drop. The Indians need the river that bears their name. The Chesapeake Bay benefits significantly from the resource. Avoiding scientific analysis, motivated by greed and misuse of power, is not acceptable.

Public support is crucial to protecting the environment. Make noise. Contact the Corps of Engineers and tell them to deny the King William Reservoir permit. Write to Colonel Allen B. Carroll, District Engineer, Norfolk District, United States Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Norfolk, 803 Front Street, Norfolk, VA 23510.

Thomas Rubino, a boatwright living near the Mattaponi, is currently constructing "The Dancing Bear," an expedition grade all-wood yacht that he and his wife plan to use to explore far away places. He says his commitment to the environment is the "logical result of my exposure to it." He traveled extensively throughout America in his youth, including one eight-month campout.

The river cannot defend itself because a river has no voice. I've offered the river my voice.

The proposed King William Reservoir poses danger to sensitive joint vetch, an endangered species.

Make noise. Join others in an effort to save the Mattaponi River.

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Restoring our Historical Memory

Sherry Stanley

In late July, seven Greens from Virginia attended the first Eastern Green Gathering in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Greens from New York, Maryland, West Virginia, Ohio, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, D.C., and Virginia met for a weekend, primarily to rethink history and confront the realities of a democracy gone awry. Our time there centered around discussions with Richard Grossman of POCLAD, the Program on Corporations, Law, and Democracy.

The key word for the weekend was sovereignty. Again and again, Richard reminded us that we are a sovereign people and reminded us how a sovereign people should act. We should not, for instance, beg corporations to pollute our rivers less this year than they did last year. A sovereign people should not beg their representatives to reduce subsidies to corporations. We should not beg corporations to pay for contaminating our soil.

We must remember that originally states chartered corporations and did it for specific purposes and for specific times, and when the corporations fulfilled the purpose outlined by the charter, the corporation vanished; the charter was revoked. The corporation was no longer needed for the purpose the people had given it.

Today corporations tend to exceed their authority, and they get by with it. Through a series of events that managed to erase historical memory of the idea of sovereignty, corporations have managed to instill the idea of indispensability. Naturally if we assume something is absolutely necessary, we concede it a great deal of power. In doing so, we have been channelled into a regulatory mode, assuming the best we can do is regulate the behavior of these giants. We have forgotten that we are the people who grant them the charters, i.e. the authority to operate. We have forgotten that we can revoke those charters. We have forgotten our long history of struggling to define ourselves as we, the people.

In 1886 the US Supreme Court granted corporations some sort of fictitious human rights by declaring in a case brought by a railroad company that a corporation is "a person." As Jim Hightower complains, suddenly the corporation had "civil rights without any civil responsibilities." Coupled with the mythology of indispensability, this identity as a person, gave the corporations incredible power. We have, thus, given artificial entities the right to govern. This is such a short version of the history of corporate domination; we left Chambersburg admitting that we cannot have a democracy until there is a direct challenge to the privilege of the corporation. At the same time, we must challenge the "colonization of the mind" that gives corporations such cultural power. Chartering corporations is both our historic right and our civic responsibility; we must reclaim both.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to get the whole story in this small paper. We must meet and discuss the abuse of power we have allowed these state-chartered corporations to assume. I urge you to contact POCLAD at PO Box 246, South Yarmouth, MA 02664 for more information. In addition, anyone associated with a university or any group that can create an audience should consider a few days with Richard Grossman and a serious discussion of democracy. I would be happy to help you contact him and bring POCLAD to Virginia.

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Another Green Weekend

Sherry Stanley

One problem with our decision-making meetings is that we all go off in different directions and then often fail to implement the decisions we made. So we stay in the same place we started. This summer we did something different. We stopped. We reflected. We planned. We implemented.

In the middle of August on one of the few rainy weekends of the summer, Greens from around Virginia gathered on the Middle River in Verona and took a deep breath. Trapped inside by the drizzle, we got to real business. In just a few days we educated ourselves about holding one-on-one conversations with the community (as Rockbridge Greens are now doing), about proportional representation, and about other voting alternatives. We talked about who we are and where we are going and started the work of forming a PAC and a 501(c)(3), basically to protect our name and fully establish ourselves in Virginia. We worked through some bylaws problems. Finally, we sat down and designed a brochure that we can all use. But we weren't all business. We got reacquainted in some cases and newly acquainted in others.

Sorry you missed it, but contact me about our new brochure. Sue Micklem, of Valley Greens, did a fine job of putting our ideas together into a really attractive package. In the meantime, we need volunteers to put together a winter retreat maybe in early February. Interested?

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Rockbridge Greens Update

Eric Sheffield

The Rockbridge Greens are in the middle of a two year project to develop a Rockbridge Platform and run a full slate of five candidates in the '99 Board of Supervisors races. Greens have been out in the community holding one hour conversations with a broad cross section of the community trying to determine concerns for the future of Rockbridge and any ideas the people might have for addressing their concerns. We are now in the early stages of drafting the platform and hope to send it out to our membership for ratification before the end of the year.

For the sixth consecutive year, the Rockbridge Greens had a booth at the Rockbridge Community Festival. This year we had a free raffle of gift certificates donated by three locally-owned businesses. That, along with the free popcorn and ice-water ensured a steady crowd at the booth. We picked up seven new members and one for the Valley Greens. Many thanks to the nine Rockbridge Greens that volunteered and our not-so-corporate sponsors.

The Blue Heron story continues to have surprisingly positive developments. As you will recall, the Blue Heron experiment was a community-finance project which the Rockbridge Greens initiated along with Laurie Macrae. On the anniversary of the day that Laurie accepted \$56,000 in loans from community members, she was able not only to pay all the interest on those loans: she paid off two loans in full. Several months later, due to the success of the Blue Heron, Laurie found herself the owner of a piece of prime Lexington real estate. She was able to purchase the restaurant she had been renting using the more conventional community-finance method of "owner-finance."

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From NOVA Greens

Muriel Grim

On September 19, some NOVA Greens met with Libertarian and Natural Law Party (NLP) folks about voting methods: We decided education is the first step towards change since the average voter is probably unaware of preference voting or proportional representation. One Libertarian is promoting an unusual form of voting involving being able to vote against candidates and thus produce negative votes. The General Assembly will consider two carried-over ballot access bills: NOVA Greens are contacting Green locals to request that they contact their delegates regarding these bills.

Some NOVA Greens will help Natural Law Party candidate, Sarina Grosswald, in her write-in campaign for Congress for the seat currently held by Tom Davis.

The following are some of the decisions made at our September 27th regular NOVA Greens meeting. Our local newsletter will be shortened and include one sentence summaries of items, with electronic links or phone contacts for anyone who wants to get more information. Green calendar items will be highlighted. We agreed to accept the proposed changes to the GOV/GPVA bylaws We decided to pay more attention to what other people are saying about the Greens: This was prompted by strange interpretations of Green philosophy and platform issues showing up in print and campaign materials.

After the September 27th meeting, a small but dedicated band braved the 95 degree heat to clean up our adopted highway, a job at which we are becoming much more efficient. The clean-up went well.

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Loss of a Defender of the Wilderness

Sherry Stanley

In early August, Rockbridge Greens learned of the death of one of their members, Ernest Dickerman. Mr. Dickerman, at age 87, committed suicide at his cabin near Buffalo Gap, leaving a note for his family saying he had done as he had long planned for that time when he knew he could no longer "master my own fate in the wilds of this wild country."

Mr. Dickerman had been known for years for his work in conservation and environmental protection. He had fought development in our national parks, our national forests, and our other designated wild lands. He understood the need to keep the pressure on --- wherever, whenever, and forever. He worked for years as a lobbyist for the Wilderness Society, and after his retirement he continued working from his nephew's farm, where he died. He inspired many younger activists --- several active Greens, in fact --- and today we remember him fondly.

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Editor's note:**Sherry Stanley**

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition. As always, special thanks to Gerry Cervenka for his layout work and for X-High Graphics in Elkton for their printing. Please send submissions for our winter edition by January 5 to Sherry Stanley, 8 River Ridge Road, Verona, VA. 24482 or e-mail: sastanle@rica.net.

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Welcome to Our New Members**Staff**

Blue Ridge Greens: Robert Egbert, Michael Bentley

Central Virginia Greens: Mary Anne Gentry, Peter Thompson, Robert Hueckstedt, Suzanne Chapin

Greens of Virginia: Michael Ragland, Aaron Kelson, Mary Becelia, Kevin Donaghey, Claudia Bloemer

New River Valley Greens: Joseph Auth, Timothy Cox

NOVA Greens: Doug Eyde, Mark Long, Stephen Carey, Petra Schultze

Rockbridge Greens: Tara Daystar, Dusan Janjic, Winnie Wickstrom, Katie & Larry McNeil, Elaine Sunnen, James Slagle, Nancy Reinhart

Student Greens of Virginia: Joseph Marsico

Valley Greens: Jack Holt

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Thank You, Recent Contributors**Staff**

Blue Ridge Greens: Robert Egbert

Central Virginia Greens: Robert Hueckstedt & Nazen Merjian, Peter Thompson, Suzanne Chapin

Greens of Virginia: Doug Eyde, Mark Long, Kurt Donaldson, Mark Yatrofsky-Geduldig, Reber Dunkel, Tim Lietzke, Tim Cox, Tex Wood, Roger Hopper, David Laibstain, Petra Schultze, Steven Copus, Pat Barrett, Mary Becelia

New River Valley Greens: Tim Cox, Tex Wood, Steven Copus

NOVA Greens: Mark Long, Kurt Donaldson, Roger Hopper, Petra Schultze

Rockbridge Greens: Elisabeth, David, & Tara Daystar

Tidewater Greens: Mark Geduldig-Yatrofsky, Mike Maraney

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Latest Update: July 3, 2010