

Green Party of Santa Fe County Annual Convention and Election of Officers Tuesday, February 24, 2009

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2009 Convention Report

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 pm by Xubi Wilson. Welcome to the Green Party of Santa Fe County Annual Convention. Tonight we choose our new officers, and will talk about the vision of the coming year. Many have seen the e-mails that have gone out about the local discussions in the local meetings. We won't come to consensus on the direction; instead we hope to have a good discussion about options. Those who are running for office will share their vision of the future, then you can vote based on the candidate statements.

Convention attendees introduced themselves. The convention was attended by: Suzanne Otter, Maurice Webster, Xubi Wilson, Sheila Sullivan, Tom Knoblauch, Mitch Buszek, Scott Shuker, Sansi Coonan, Gail Karr, Mark Duran, Emily Norris, Patrick McGinn, Marion Seymour, Nancy Judd, Russ Tyldsley, Eliot Gould, Kathleen Jacobson, John Otter, Virginia Miller, Moe Zimmerberg, Michael Collins, Craig Mack, Veet Deha, John Tarpak and Dean Williams.

Green Values in Action Awards

Green Values in Action Award to an Individual: Nancy Judd This award was presented by Marion Seymour. Nancy's shared with us that her work has evolved over the years. Today the garments that she makes attract a lot of attention and she uses the garments as a way to start conversations about environmental stewardship issues. Nancy stressed that it is the moment-to-moment decisions that have created the crisis we are in now. Her garments can be seen in airports, in Santa Fe public schools. Nancy appreciated being recognized by her peers and has worked with many of the individuals in the room.

Green Values in Action Award to an Organization: Voting Matters This award was presented by Xubi to Sheila Sullivan and John Otter. The most significant thing that happened in our community was the passage of a broad range of electoral reforms including campaign finance reform and instant runoff voting. Voting Matters was the organization that got the charter amendments to the attention of City Council, an eventually got them passed into law. A special thank you goes to Rick Lass—the person with the energy to get Voting Matters started. We are certainly not where we want it to be; we have the legislation, but not the implementation. The Green Party was active in getting the original charter through to establish Santa Fe as a home rule city. We attended those meetings, this kept the pressure on them and it was unanimously passed on to the voters by City Council.

State of the Green Party of Santa Fe County: Xubi Wilson, Co-chair

Our first Green Party victory came when a stripper at Cheeks got very involved in making sure condoms were available in the schools. The school board eventually agreed to this. This was an exciting time in the early 1990s. It led to electing Chris Moore, Fran Gallegos, Miguel Chavez.

Today, much of politics is focused on winning and getting the power, and hoping that maybe we'll be able to do something good if we get the power. But when it's all built on winning and getting the power we really lose out. I'm proud that the NM Greens helped to shape the National Green Party with a broad platform.

The state of the Santa Fe local financially, is that we don't have much money. We spent significant portion of what we had on Rick Lass' PRC campaign, including renting a Green Party office. We are down to a few hundred dollars. We traditionally pass the hat to pay for the room to put on this meeting. (We passed the hat.) We also have a program for monthly contributions with automatic withdrawals. (Envelopes and forms were available.)

The Green Party knows about recycling. We used to get compost and load a tractor trailer as a fundraiser for the Green Party. We were regularly going into the public schools and showing kids how to build a compost build out of straw bale. The message was: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

When I look around the room. *We have reduced.* There aren't as many of us in attendance as at past conventions. *We reuse.* I see the same few faces at our meetings every week. I feel at this time with the same group of people coming week after week, some of these great activists were coming to maintain organization instead of facilitators of actions. *We recycle.* Everyone is going green now, the opportunity for the things we have been talking about for years; the problems we said were coming are here, the solutions are critical. When I look around at our meetings it makes me question, what will we do, and how will we do things different?

These kinds of conversations at our meetings caused us to send out the three options. It is a time in our history when we have to stop and say what we want to be doing. Is this organization facilitating what we want to be doing? When we were firing up the party in 90s, we ran Roberto Mondragan for Governor, we thought we were the best organization on the issues of gay rights, the environment, civil rights, economic justice—we were *the* progressive party. Yet, so many of our natural allies had invested so much in gaining access to one or the other party over the years, we have to question where that leaves us today. Let's review the scenarios to find how to best use our energy in productive ways.

The Future of the Green Party of Santa Fe County Discussion

The first scenario—Green Party of Santa Fe County focuses exclusively on Local Issues—makes the case that it is important for us to maintain our party status. It is a return to the local model, having candidates run more often for more local and regional offices. It includes the proposal that we be present on boards and committees, take the lead in localizing our economy, food and culture, and actively seek better and more local candidates.

The second scenario—The Green Movement—would suggest that we cease being a local of the Green Party of New Mexico. We would continue to meet and organize as a Green Movements so that Santa Fe Greens can best continue their efforts to green society as a movement without ties to a political party.

The third scenario—Individual Activism—builds on our proud history as a political party whose ideas are right for current challenges and whose vision has pointed to the very crisis we are facing for more than a decade. Even so, we are a party of crisis which must make important choices as to how to best bring about the critical changes which are paramount to the prosperity of future generations. Perhaps individual activism is more effective than utilizing the form of the Green Party.

Before everyone had the opportunity to say their reaction to the scenarios, or put forth another scenario the question of our status as a party was discussed. According to the state constitution, the Green party of NM, after the last election in 2008, qualifies for both being a major party and for being decertified as a party. The expectation is that decertification will be the choice of the Secretary of State, which would mean we would have to pursue petitioning to reinstate the party. We will need 3,000+ signatures if this happens.

Go-Around Discussion of the state of the Green Party (We did not attempt to reach consensus on the future of the Green Party, instead this was a forum for each person to speak in turn and share their thoughts and feelings about the future of the Party.)

- The issues the Green Party could work on that would define us as a party, especially in terms of the Democrats. We could have a clear position on military spending, Gaza and separate state of Palestine, and public financing of campaigns. There are a range of issues that we could weigh in and have a big impact. We could this under any of these frameworks. These are issues that can define an identity for us.
- Everything going Green is a reflection of how much progress we have made in terms of consciousness. I think this may be the time, where by being outgoing to have a chance for outreach for the Greens. We can grow the Greens out of this again.
- Why do the options have to be only—it hinges mostly on maintaining the party status. I agree that I would like to maintain an official membership in the Green Party. It does have impact in the world. I am very reluctant to do much of anything. So I feel like I wish someone would do it, but I don't want to do it.
- It was the Green Party that pressed suit for the recount in 2006 that looked at the obvious election fraud that was going on. It took the Green Party. I think about all the organizations that were mentioned tonight. The community looked to the Greens to take part in this to do the work, get petitions signed, et., and we did it. We are an integral part of this community. People look to us for community participation—and many of these issues wouldn't be successful without the Green Party. Our image is out there as being a viable part of the community, this is not something to throw away.
- Times are always changing, but the changes that are occurring now are global and they are much more serious in terms of survival for the human race, peak oil, water, etc. The question arises as to the functions at the county level looking at “how growth will occur” whether that really is an appropriate function for government in this changing situation. Looking at where the energy of our community is, it is in the green area of conservation, recycling, localization of the economy. Survival will depend upon food and other resources in the local area. Municipal grids around energy, food, agriculture, water, there are lots of groups working on these issues. If we had a movement or a party that could pick up on the aura of change that permeates the country, in the wake of the Obama success, and the energy that exists in these other efforts the Greens could make a big impact behind those already Green efforts that are already going on. It's a matter of survival.
- It would be a shame if the Green party disbanded. It is important to have people in all kind of areas of the spectrum working for progress, whether it has to do with environmental issues. Whatever the issue, there needs to be people inside the system, working inside big business, and there needs to be people outside. The Green Party, and other groups, are extremely important in holding the place of radical ideas. Bringing up values, showing another way. If the Greens went away, who would do this kind of challenging? To have this as a political party is very important.
- I have operated as an activist registered Green and am so busy with peace and justice and non-violence, I can see living the values in a variety of ways. To help us survive and thrive in these very difficult times and perhaps simplify the organization so there are not so many meetings. That's what I like, the less meetings the better and still do the work that needs to be done. I've been supporting the Department of Peace Initiative can accomplish a kind of security that Homeland Security cannot even touch through restorative justice and a sustainable peace economy. To promote renewable energy, economic conversion, localization, water and the Buckman Diversion, so many things to work on. If the organization is simplified and not too many meetings so that people can gather and come together and talk again of how to proceed

and share the work that people are doing. I need a lot of time for the activist work that I do. As far as keeping it as a regular party. I will continue no matter what people decide. I care about the values and I like to connect once in a while.

- It would be sad to see the Green Party evaporate, I have to believe it would morph into something better. When I voted for Ralph Nader for president it was the first time I voted for someone I really wanted to cast a vote for. Ever since then, I feel proud to tick myself off as a Green Party member. It is important to hold the space for things that need to be held. Even in an ebb tide it is still important to hold the space. Another thing that attracts me to the Green Party is that it has echoes on the international stage.
- There was a meeting about Transition Town—small communities making changes after peak oil. I think the Green Party and the neighborhood associations could work together. I've seen places where neighborhood associations are registered with the city and are clustered near each other. Many of the same issues would boil up and be important. This is a microcosm of the town that is important. These associations are dormant until something big comes up and some sort of a connection with the Green Party could be made there.
- I'm blow away by the people I've met over the years working with the Greens. Someone has always stepped up and with great intellect and verve. This has impressed me over the years. A radical vehicle for critical issues, like the death penalty and many other critical issues for those of us who care. Voting finance has to be straightened out. The office of peace, peace curriculum in the schools. It has nothing to do with homeland security. Who has the energy to do it? We have to keep the loose organization available and ready for action. Greens set an example, we need to continue. Maybe as bare bones as possible. Keep the values going.
- Consider the separation of two issues. One issue is does the Green Party exist, or will it exist. A separate issue is does the state recognize the Green Party? This is a decision made by those who have the energy to do it, then the Green Party gets recognized by the state. The Green Party exists, regardless. For all of the different issues, they all come together. Everyone has their favorite issue they work on, but they all have a perspective and fit together. It's been great having this umbrella which we call the Green Party. I think the Green Party exists. It would be good to keep it alive.
- Probably 70% of the American people would go with our principles, but they vote for the person not the platform. We are more about platforms. If we don't have media attention, and you don't raise money. On a local level you can do it. Part of it is a scale problem. The more people we have the more membership, the better our chances of getting things done, run candidates. Keep the party status, get the 2,700 signatures, and focus on local.
- I am a firm believer that if we are going to be a party we have to yield to the political side. Ever since we formed there has been a dichotomy between activism and politics. If we look at just the activism, we may be better off joining other organizations to do it. I believe in the political side. My vision is Norman Thomas. He ran for president ten times, then Roosevelt picked up his platform. We have a platform, and this needs to be preserved. We used to be a younger group, we are short of energy. Either we find a way to bring in a lot of younger people if we want to go on. If we can come up with a slate of officers we can continue and I am all in favor of doing it. I seriously doubt we can get a complete set of officers tonight.
- On the local election of city council and county commissioners, local is not partisan but county is partisan. If we just got instant voting run off, it would be a real shame not to get some good progressive candidates on the ballot. We have to take advantage of this. We can't just throw political offices out the window. It doesn't have to be an either or on the organization involvement. We should continue to support candidates who want to run as Greens. We have to

get a better fix on being able to back a candidate and make it valid, make it work, take advantage of the local stuff. Make sure candidates know they can expect support and win.

- I've never registered in another political party. There are only three people in the room under 50 years of age. We have real issues that we could organize around. Myself I think 2700 signatures is a great organizing tool—we could get four times the signatures in a couple of weekends. It's a good way to focus energy and get people out there and do something. We saw that when we got signatures for Rick Lass, 5300 signatures in ten days for a candidate. Rick was a phenomenal candidate, he was issue oriented and worked hard. I really appreciated his effort. It was an effort that we drafted him for right here on the deck outside. This body should send him a thank you note for his effort. From the Santa Fe county gr. It was a big mistake this year to meet in a restaurant and change the meeting from Thursday to Tuesday. We also need to have more courtesy in how we deal with each other at meetings. We all work on a lot of issues. We have charismatic candidates with great platforms but they don't get on the media because of corporate ownership of debate. The Green name has been co-opted; we are not just an environmentalist party. Everybody here works on issues. Everybody has something we do. If everyone says "I'm a Green and I'm working on your issue." Maybe this would get rid of the Nader backlash. Should we disband? No. If the SOS wants 2700 signatures. Fine, that's good for us to do it. I don't want to put energy into the national party.

Nominations and Election of Officers

Female Co-Chair

No candidates were nominated

Male Co-Chair

Sean Knight was nominated for male co-chair, and was elected by unanimous ballot.

Treasurer

John Otter was nominated for treasurer, and was elected by unanimous ballot.

Recording Secretary

Xubi Wilson was nominated for recording secretary, and was elected by unanimous ballot.

Membership Secretary

Marion Seymour was nominated for membership secretary, and was elected by unanimous ballot. (Sheila Sullivan agreed to help with membership)

Green Council NM Members (Four members total were elected by unanimous ballot)

1. Sheila Sullivan
2. Tom Knoblauch
3. Sean Knight
4. Marion Seymour

Delegates to Green Party of New Mexico Convention (Scheduled for March 21, 2009). The following delegates signed their name in nomination and were elected by unanimous ballot:

1. Scott Shuker
2. Sean Knight

3. Moe Zimmerberg
4. Veet Deha
5. Dean Williamson
6. Craig Mack
7. Tom Knoblauch
8. Gail Karr
9. Sheila Sullivan
10. Marion Seymour
11. Virginia Miller
12. Russ Tyldesley
13. John Tarpak

Convention report submitted by Suzanne Otter