



GREEN HORIZON

Magazine

..... AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL PUBLISHED BY THE GREEN HORIZON FOUNDATION

The Left
must
embrace
living
lightly

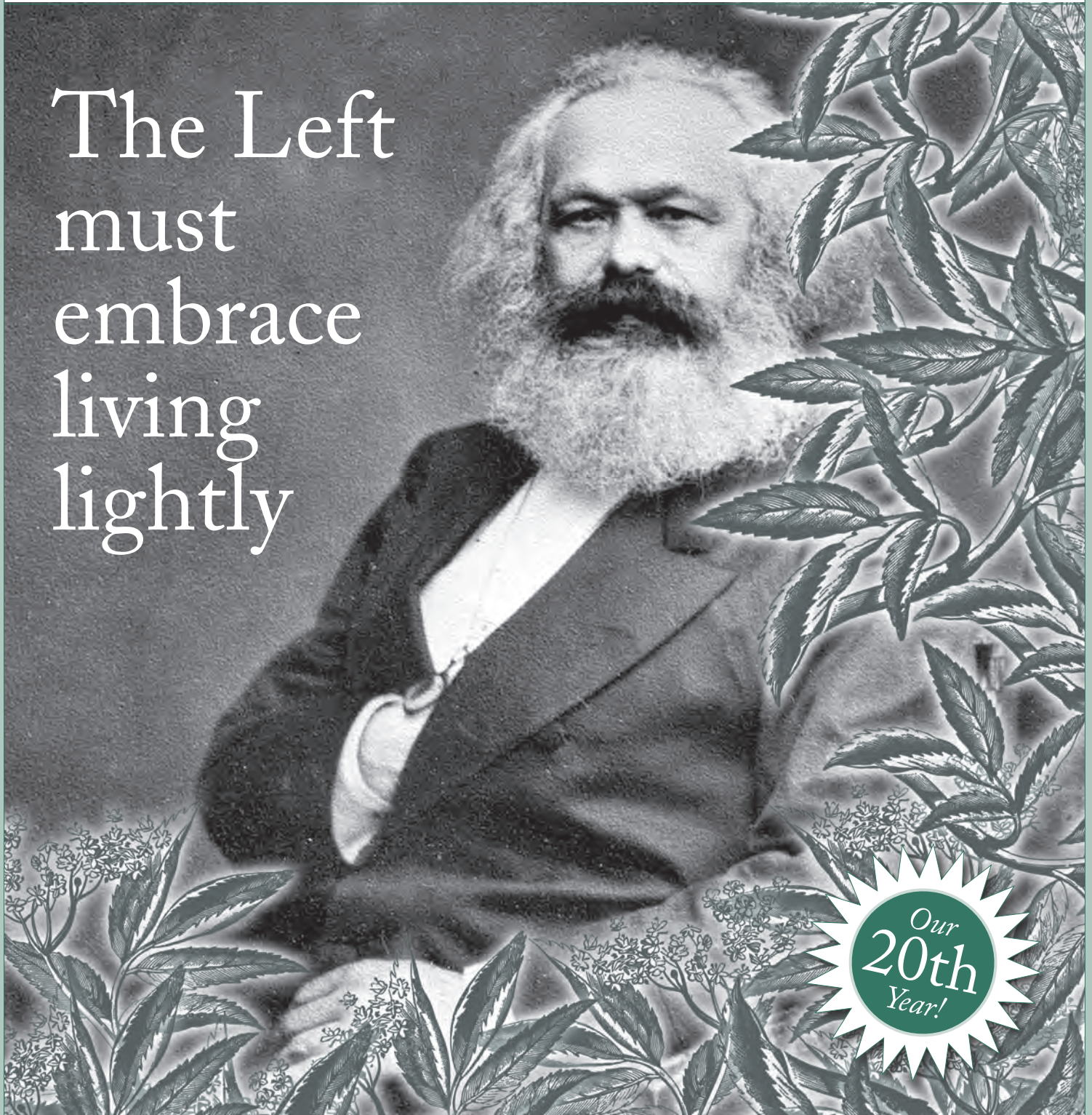


TABLE of CONTENTS

Global Greens Congress in Korea 2

The Left must embrace living lightly. 3

Three Green Women in Nicaragua 6
**DIANNE BLAIS, PHOEBE SORGEN,
 JENNIFER SULLIVAN**

Matt Hoh campaign in North Carolina. . . 10
ROSE ROBY

Bioregional Activation in Colorado. 13
BENJI ROSS

Alternative Economic
 Wellbeing Indicators. 16
GÖSTA LYNGBÄ

Dishgamu Humboldt
 Community Land Trust 18
DAVID COBB

On Judicial Courage 20
PHILIP GREGORY

Three book reviews. 23

The General Strike. 26
DAVID WATSON

Green Party History. 27
STEVE WELZER

Snippets of Charlie Keil 29

Progress re: Electoral System Reform . . . 30
ROB RICHIE AND BARRY BENDAR

BRITTLE. 32
JON OLSEN

Toward a Sane Society 33

Letters and Two Haiku 34

Sustainers. 35

www.Green-Horizon.org
DONATIONS VIA PAYPAL WELCOME!

Global Greens Congress 2023

The Fifth Global Greens Congress will be held in June in South Korea. The theme will be: “Uniting and empowering the world’s Green movement.”

The Global Greens (GG) is an international network of political parties and movements which work to implement the Global Greens Charter (<https://globalgreens.org/about/charter>). The GG consists of various national green political parties, partner networks, and other organizations associated with green politics. Formed in 2001 at the first Global Greens Congress, the network has grown to include 76 full member parties and 11 observers and associate parties. It is governed by a 12-member steering committee called the Global Greens Coordination.

The six years since the last Congress have seen an unprecedented pace of impacts in climate and democracy which make the work of the Green politics movement all the more crucial. Time is fast running out to galvanize the changes that will make a better today, for a fairer and sustainable tomorrow. Inaction is not an option! Power and positivity is how we can make a difference. Congress is where we connect local to global. Past congresses have been held in Canberra (2001), São Paulo (2008), Dakar (2012), and Liverpool (2017).

Uniting the four international Green Federations (Europe, the Americas, Asia Pacific, Africa), Global Young Greens, indigenous peoples, politicians, activists,

academics, institutes, and NGO’s from around the world, the 2023 Congress will connect Greens and provide the information needed for us to make a difference in our communities. Positive, practical solutions will be front and center. The Green Party of Korea (kgreens.org) will be hosting. It was established in 2012 in response to the Fukushima Nuclear Crisis of Japan. Korea is a unique country with a strong and blooming Green movement. It’s a country that unites: tradition with modernity, East and West, and, as a more recently developed country, Global North and South.

CLIMATE AND DEMOCRACY

The Global Greens Congress is the event that unites the international Green movement. Its decisions have global implications. The Congress will address the growing threats to climate and democracy, creating the vision, action and policy that will transform the world. Each country with a Full Member party can be represented by up to 3 delegates with voting rights for the formal decision-making sessions. Additionally, anyone can attend to observe the formal delegate sessions and to be involved in discussions in the general sessions.

Visit: <https://globalgreens.org/korea-2023>

The 21st Century will be Green!

THE TEAM

PUBLISHED BY THE GREEN HORIZON FOUNDATION • SPRING 2023 • VOLUME TWENTY #46

EDITORS

Steve Welzer: stevenwelzer@gmail.com
 John Rensenbrink, 2003-2022

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF GREEN HORIZON FOUNDATION

Ted Becker, Alabama	Darryl Moch, Washington, D.C.
Denise Brush, New Jersey	Carla Rensenbrink, Maine
Linda Cree, Michigan	Liz Rensenbrink, Maine
Greg Gerritt, Rhode Island	Sam Smith, Maine
Madelyn Hoffman, Colombia	Steve Welzer, New Jersey

**INQUIRIES,
 SUBMISSIONS,
 DONATIONS,
 LETTERS:** GREEN HORIZON FOUNDATION
 P.O. Box 2029
 Princeton, NJ 08543 USA
Green.Horizon.Foundation@gmail.com

GRAPHIC DESIGN:

www.SharonPieniak.com

LOGO DESIGN:

Sean Hill

EDITORIAL ASSISTANCE:

Paula Fischer

MEMBERSHIP & BOOKKEEPING:

Liz Rensenbrink

MEMBERSHIP & MARKETING MANAGER, HARDCOPY:

Laura Houck

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE:

Deanna Taylor

Green Horizon Magazine is indexed in the Alternative Press Index, which is available from:
 Alternative Press Center, PO Box 33109, Baltimore, MD 21218

The Left must embrace living lightly

The IPCC contributing authors keep issuing warnings and worsening environmental conditions keep multiplying. Governments will violate their pledges on climate change whenever their economies need pumping up—such as China’s decision to permit 168 new coal-fired power plants to be built, or the US decision to go ahead with the Willow oil drilling project in Alaska. Populations will keep wanting More—more plastic packaging, more air conditioning, more access to food from far away, more oil and gas, more lumber from old forests, more homes where they shouldn’t be built, and more government bailouts when things go wrong.

— From “The Climate Time Bomb” by Mel Gurtov
(*Counterpunch* 4/4/2023)

* * * *

The egalitarian ethos of the Left is commendable. But its historical conception of manifesting such is problematic. Too many on the Left still have in mind: More.

Socialists and capitalists used to wrangle about productivity. When Krushchev, in 1956, said to the West: “We will bury you!” he meant that the countries adopting socialism would out-produce those clinging to a capitalism that his ideology told him would soon be moribund. Who said so? Marx did.

HOW GREEN, REALLY, WAS KARL MARX?

The Left has scrambled over the last three decades to make a case that Marx had considerable ecological sensibility. It’s quite a stretch. One of his central messages was that egalitarianism via socialist transformation was *dependent upon*: More.

There’s little in Marx about living lightly. Surely nothing about living locally. He was an advocate of industrial development via concentration and centralization. Influenced by a nineteenth century zeitgeist exuberant about growth and progressive development, he lauded how “in barely a century, capitalism has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together” (*Communist Manifesto*).

Greens should recognize that the capitalist system has been socially and ecologically pernicious since its inception over five hundred years ago. But Marx viewed it as necessary for establishing the “material basis” for the ultimate transcendence of class-divided society. From *Das Kapital*:

The means of production can be economized by concentration on a vast scale ... The expansion of capitalist production creates the technical means necessary for those immense industrial undertakings which require a previous centralization of capital for their accomplishment ... Everywhere the increased scale of industrial establishments is the starting point for a more comprehensive organization of the collective work of many, for a wider development of their material motive forces—for the progressive transformation of

isolated processes of production into processes socially combined and scientifically arranged ... The world would still be without railways if it had had to wait for individual capital accumulation adequate for the construction of a railway. Centralization accomplished this in the twinkling of an eye, by means of joint-stock companies ... The masses of capital fused together overnight by centralization become new and powerful levers in social accumulation.

— *Capital*, Volume One, chapter twenty-five: “The General Law of Capitalist Accumulation”

Even while those “progress-inducing” joint-stock companies were being formed during the nineteenth century, indigens and peasants in the villages and the agro-communes were still living in the age-old cyclical way. Marx interpreted that as stagnation and backwardness. In fact, he said, capitalism was about to rescue them from “the idiocy of rural life.” Get with it, he said. History is a process of progression through higher and higher stages, each characterized by certain “relations of production” (i.e., relations of ownership and control that manifest in different class structures at different times, such as slavery, serfdom, and wage-labor). Each stage eventually constrains development due to contradictions between its system of economic organization and its technological potential.

Notice how, he said, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the rigidities of the feudal system hampered economic growth. Transition to capitalism resulted. In the preface to his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* he wrote: “In broad outlines ancient, feudal, and modern bourgeois modes of production can be designated as progressive epochs in the economic formation of society.” And: “No social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed.”

So progressive capitalism just ran out of room for further development. Socialism would “unfetter the productive potential” of our advancing technology—as is *historically necessary*. Social harmony and justice can’t be achieved without a highly developed “material basis.” Generalized abundance must be the goal. Socialism could and would produce: More.

LIMITS AND BALANCES

But the real “contradictions” involve issues Marx never really fully appreciated, recent efforts to color him green notwithstanding. Many of the things that he valued—growth, industrial development, centralization, concentration—are severely stressing people and the planet. If you point this out as a conundrum at a leftist conference or on a Marxist-oriented online discussion forum—and especially if you advocate degrowth or assert that living more lightly can yield a higher quality of life—accusations of reaction, or even “eco-fascism,” are quick to emerge. “You’re advocating austerity for the multitudes!”

Many leftists won’t countenance any attitude that doesn’t uphold a vision of ultimate material prosperity for those who have been impoverished and disadvantaged due to the historic colonialist

legacy of hyper-exploitation, those living in capitalism's sacrifice zones. "We must not consign them to underdevelopment!" It's an understandable but problematic vision of billions ascending, based on an egalitarian-modernist standard of material sufficiency. It's a dubious standard—individualistic, technocratic, and dependent upon a dauntingly complex, highly developed socio-economic infrastructure. The vision is delusional. It's neither possible nor advisable. For the sake of "the planet"—but also for the sake of the general welfare—humans, altogether, must transition toward living more lightly. Peoples in the core affluent West and those at the systemic periphery actually are facing a similar challenge, that of weaning themselves from dependency upon that unsustainable socio-economic-technological infrastructure.

If the Left thinks it can offer a progressive program centered on globalized redistributive justice, it needs to come to terms with the fact that there's no "world community" that "we" can apply policy to; "we" can't spread the wealth to get everyone everywhere above our poverty-line metric. The United States can't, the Western powers can't, the "international working class" can't. Such a bogus vision makes the Left look idealistic in the worst sense of the word.

Peoples in all places and all circumstances will be needing to focus on finding their own path toward lifeways that recognize and are in conformance with limits and balances. This is not an edict; this is an inevitable absolute of ecological reality. If humanity fails to move in that direction the ecological imperative will impose that reality. Where peoples have been impoverished by the horror of the expansionist imperialism of the last five millennia, they'll have to re-create for themselves local sustainability. Overshoot means overshoot. And it will be a breathtaking phenomenon during the coming decades and centuries as realization sets in regarding the extent of the industrial-era overshoot.

YES, POPULATION REDUCTION IS NECESSARY

Leftists: Stop with the "eco-fascism" accusations. Wake up. The hypermodern megalopolis conurbations are pure insanity—anathema for people, planet, flora, fauna, biosphere. For Gaia. It's been a characteristic of modernity to equate population growth with progress. It's been considered an economic tonic. That's nothing but a sign of how we've lost our bearings.

Our species must not live like this. Degrowth means degrowth in all aspects. For most tribal groups in most places at most times population control was a *vital priority*; and population numbers were essentially stable. Such a social praxis was intuitive and endemic—and communitarian. The value system of the community influenced and encouraged (even enforced) it.

Cyclicity, minimal growth, was a characteristic of the original lifeways. That was lost with the radical transformation to developmentalism five thousand years ago. Sensibility regarding limits and balances waned with the increasing predominance of mass society, states, and empires, with their valuation of expansionism and wealth accumulation. Local community life withered. Over time, communitarian norms, mores, covenants, and strictures were lost. Then the facility and productive powers of industrialism accelerated the problematic civilizational trajectories.

"More, bigger, farther, faster" became cultural touchstones. The resultant condition of hypertrophy in all aspects of life should not be surprising. But it surely has now become unsustainable.

As well as sociologically insane, as Erich Fromm asserted.

A QUITE REVAMPED KIND OF SOCIALISM

A Marxist will ask: What's all so different about eco-socialism? What's so profound about "layering on a green veneer"? The question indicates a failure to recognize the paradigm shift of our time.

Traditional socialism understood much about social injustice. We go to a deeper level when we talk about social insanity. Profound is to restore the sensibility regarding limits and balances. Profound is to embrace degrowth. "From Red to Green" involves a transition to a much different mindset; a cultural and characterological transformation. Practically: a reining in of industrial overdevelopment; a diminution of the human ecological footprint.

Eco-socialism must tackle the challenge of doing so starting from where we are, within the context of modern mass society, approaching the precipice of collapse. It's surely the most daunting task humanity has ever faced. And the transition must be done with gradualism, incrementalism, and sensitivity. Revolutions never work out well. Gradually: downscale, decentralize, and democratize; devolve power to communities and bioregional polities. Gradually: foster new lifeways characterized by technological simplification, re-stabilization, re-localization, and renewal of the human relationship to the land.

Humanity can't "go back," and the messaging of our movement shouldn't sound that way. What we can do is encourage appreciation for what used to work. Consider the indigenous of the Americas. They started to arrive here about forty thousand years ago. Not every tribe, individually, lived well and within ecological limits, but their ways, generally were sustainable. They could not have flourished if their lives were all so "nasty, brutish, and short"—if they suffered from a sense of continual scarcity and misery—as Hobbes conjectured. There is every evidence, rather, that they lived satisfactorily, with adequate resources, appropriate technology, extensive cultural enrichment; and likely could have continued to do so into the indefinite future. Having their own creative ways of dealing with the challenges of being human, they avoided hyper-growth and disdained power run amok.

David Watson writes: "When the Lakota medicine man Black Elk said 'we should be as water, which is lower than all things yet stronger than the rocks,' he wasn't counseling servility. He was telling us something valuable about strength—not as force, but as endurance—about radiating power rather than possessing or controlling it; about listening to nature instead of fantasizing about mastering it; all evocative of the kind of character change that will be necessary to sustain us."

CRISIS CANNOT BE AVOIDED, BUT WE CAN MOVE FORWARD

Fostering degrowth gradually (the only way it can be done with sensitivity) means that we won't get far enough fast enough toward the necessary minimalization of human impact. Therefore crisis is inevitable. So considerable energy will have to

be devoted to mitigating the consequences. Samuel Alexander calls for: “transformation by design, not disaster” ... but the unfolding reality will exhibit much of both.

To counter despair we can message about the positive perspective of starting to “turn the ship of state” in our time. History will look back on our efforts as pivotal; thus they can be a source of pride. As the old techno-optimism—that of the industrial capitalists, but also of the Marxists—begins to fade, Greens can and should put forward a vision of the future that can resonate as proactive and constructive, i.e. “the salvational greening of society through living more lightly.” Toward a Better Way of Living For All. Not toward a higher stage of history, but toward a higher quality of life.

It will require fostering a greener kind of leftism: Eco-socialism to defang the ruinous capitalist system, yes, but counterculturalists (rather than “the proletariat”) as the primary agency of social change. A Green New Deal at the macro level, yes, but meanwhile, at the micro level, undermining the system in myriad ways—via community land cooperatives, ecovillages, local currencies, municipalization; by building up bioregional economies and decentralized proto-polities.

Much of the paradigm shift will likely be the province of youth. We need a renewal of what, during the Sixties, was called “The Movement.” Committed twenty-somethings could refuse to “take their place” in the system. Their lifework could involve building the new within the shell of the old. Some might establish ecovillage communities and ecovillage urban neighborhoods having a social change orientation, putting themselves forward as modeling “best practices.” Others might form cooperatives to locally provide goods and services. The communities and the cooperatives could become the basis for an alternative economy. Some might run for municipal council on a “Transition Towns” type of program. It would be exciting to see one town after another become a locus of the greening process.

And thus can a transformation movement gain momentum generation by generation. Such was the case with Christianity. But the good news now is that the ideological basis for a Great Turning already exists. If we figure that it dates from the initiation of Earth Day, deep ecology, voluntary simplicity, bioregionalism, and Green politics—almost all-at-once fifty years ago—taking a long-range historical perspective, we can see that it’s actually resonating relatively quickly.

ECOLOGY AND COMMUNITY

Of the Ten Key Values of the Greens, most (democracy, peace, justice, etc.) are pretty standard-faire vis-à-vis traditional progressivism. But three of them—Ecological Wisdom, Decentralization, and Communitarian Economics—constitute the basis for a distinctive political worldview, for the greening of the Left, and for the promulgation of the ecovillage ethos.

Ecovillages could serve as both lifeboats during the Long Emergency and as basecamps for social change. The Global Ecovillage Network (www.ecovillage.org) delineates the following principles:

Social Practices

- Nurture diversity and cohesion for thriving communities.
- Build trust through transparency and accountability.
- Empower collaborative leadership and participatory governance.
- Promote health, healing and wellbeing for all.

Cultural Practices

- Enrich life with art and celebration.
- Honor indigenous wisdom.
- Innovate in order to simplify, otherwise sparingly.
- Reconnect to nature and embrace low-impact lifestyles.
- Move towards equitable stewardship of land and resources.

Ecological Practices

- Protect the soil through regenerative agriculture.
- Clean and replenish sources and cycles of water.
- Move towards 100% renewable energy and transport.
- Adopt and spread green building technologies.
- Work with waste as a valuable resource.
- Increase biodiversity and restore ecosystems.

Economic Practices

- Shift away from globalization toward communitarian economics.
- Commit to responsible production, consumption, and trade.
- Generate wealth through sharing and collaboration.
- Use banking and exchange systems that strengthen communities.
- Cultivate a high quality of life based on sufficiency rather than affluenza.

Diversity of implementations is anticipated and desirable. The ecovillage ethos can be applied in various ways to rural communities, suburban townships, and urban neighborhoods.

WHAT TO DO

Social changers, transformationalists, counterculturalists are always wondering: What can I do? What kind of steps can I take? How about: Wherever you live, get together with some like-minded neighbors and craft an ordinance to propose to the city council for adoption. There’s no need to re-invent the wheel—ecovillage overlays and low-impact development ordinances have been passed in numerous municipalities. If you copy the text of one and insert the name of your town you’ll have a draft. Likely there will then be a period where tweaks and compromises with the zoning authorities will be required. Patiently persist. Keep in mind that a project to green your municipality, the place where you live, has no deadline.

Moving society in the direction of living more lightly should be viewed as a process. It’s best if we avoid ultimatism and delusions about “revolution.” A deep transformation will unfold if each generation going forward successfully reduces its overall ecological footprint incrementally.

The restoration of social sanity depends upon people moving toward renewal of eco-communitarian lifeways. In order to stay relevant and truly progressive, the Left needs to embrace this paradigm of What to Do and Where to Go. — SW

Travelogue: Three Green Women in Nicaragua

BY DIANNE BLAIS, PHOEBE THOMAS
SORGEN, AND JENNIFER SULLIVAN

Local clinics constitute
the first level of
Nicaragua's neighborhood
healthcare system.

The country has turned
confiscated drug trafficking
vehicles into 67 mobile clinics!

In the sphere of healthcare,
US sanctions have had little
effect due to the fact that the
government planned ahead by
getting help and technology
from Japan and China.

In October 2022 the Alliance For Global Justice (AFGJ) sent out an invitation to join a delegation: "WOMEN IN NICARAGUA BRIGADE." Three of us who had been in Salt Lake City for the Green Party's July 2018 Annual National Meeting and women's retreat applied—and were accepted!

So shortly after New Year's Day 2023 we flew from Florida, Virginia and California, respectively, to Sandino International Airport in Managua, the capital of Nicaragua. We were driven to Casa Benjamin Linder, a beautiful compound graced with lovely art (see: www.casabenjaminlinder.org). Benjamin Linder was a young engineer/activist from Portland, Oregon who was shot and killed by the Contras in 1987.

The room the three of us shared was named in honor of the mother of Jill Clark-Gollub, a translator and guide of the brigade. Jill was interviewed by Margaret Flowers and can be heard on the January 30, 2023 *Clearing the Fog* podcast (popularresistance.org/podcast) titled "Nicaragua is Run by Women with a Revolutionary Feminism."

The day before the brigade tour officially started, Phoebe, Jennifer and a University of Maryland agri-ecology student took a taxi to Granada. This lovely city, founded in 1521, has many horse-drawn carriages, historical buildings, and a busy downtown and square. It is on the largest lake in Central America, Lake Nicaragua. In the evening, Becca Renk, our master tour guide, briefed us on what to expect the next week. Becca has lived in Nicaragua for 20 years, working with the Jubilee House Community and its project, the Center for Development in Central America.

Over the course of the following eight days our packed agenda was followed without a hitch thanks to excellent organization and the spirited cooperation of our comrades ranging in age from 10 to 80.

DAY ONE (SUNDAY, JANUARY 8)

* San Pablo Apostle Community Church. "Liberation Theology" was important to the Sandinista revolution. Adjacent to the church is their school and a soccer field complex dedicated to Hugo Chavez.

* In the Park on the Hill, a giant black silhouette of Augusto César Sandino is visible from many areas of Managua. Sandino was a leader of the rebellion against the United States occupation of Nicaragua, circa 1927-1933. The latter-day revolutionaries of 1979 named their movement after him: Sandinista National Liberation Front (Spanish: Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional, FSLN).

DAY TWO (MONDAY)

* Nueva Vida Clinic. We met with neighborhood clinic staff. It is one of many clinics that constitute the first level of Nicaragua's neighborhood healthcare system. In addition to standard healthcare ministrations, this clinic serves youth at pre-teen and teenage levels with peer group counseling and information on reproductive and other forms of healthcare needs.

* Casa Materna in Ciudad Sandino. The maternity section houses women the final week or two before their expected delivery date. The women's needs are cared for with a healthy diet and supervision to ensure a safe delivery. It is directly adjacent to the hospital. We had lunch with the healthcare workers, who discussed their union (almost every job is unionized in Nicaragua!). The women proudly passed around a large booklet containing their union agreement. We noticed that it delineated how pay raises are determined.

*Union Hall. We met with the director of the nine federations of the National Workers Union, the largest union group in the country, which was organized by the FSLN. He introduced us to a poet who is one of the two representatives in the union under the banner “self-employed.” This includes street vendors also. The vendor union members were especially enthused about the fact that they’re able to carry on business at their various stations at major intersections or other prime locations around Managua. No longer are they driven away, as they used to be by the old regime’s police thugs. Now they have been given respect for their humble, yet hard, daily work as they make a living. The Self-Employed Workers Union also includes domestic workers, known as “neighborhood workers.” They proudly call themselves “peasant revolutionaries”! The unions have a motto: UBUNTU (meaning: Where One Goes, We All Go).

What helps working mothers is that every child gets free lunch and, if needed, free breakfast. This is indicative of how the Sandinistas look out for poor people’s needs. Some wealthier citizens (like those in many other countries) get indignant about “entitlements.”

Trade unions are enshrined in the constitution to work with upper management and the government to strengthen Nicaragua. Most members consider themselves socialists. It’s felt that attention to human rights fosters stability, social harmony, and economic productivity. The equivalent of two billion dollars (57% of the national budget) goes to support forty social programs.

DAY THREE (TUESDAY)

* Velez Paiz Hospital. At this huge ultra-modern facility we met with the Minister of Health, the director of the hospital (both women), and a top doctor. It seemed to have all the amenities that hospitals in the US have. And every patient’s room looks out onto a view of manicured gardens and trees. No one is turned away (including foreigners), though they encourage folks to try the local clinics first.

The Minister of Health told us that an annual census identifies undernourished children, who are then visited to ensure that they’re getting a healthy diet and breakfast in the morning. The country has turned confiscated drug trafficking vehicles into 67 mobile clinics! And it sponsors almost a thousand weekly health fairs. Every community has access.

A sampling of what they’ve accomplished nation-wide: In 2022 they had 183,000 services for the disabled, 273,000 eye surgeries, are rated first in Central America with vaccinations and fourth in *all* the Americas using non-Big Pharma vaccines from Cuba. Infant mortality was 29 per thousand in 2006 but by 2021 there was a 55% reduction to 12.5 per thousand. There’s been a 44% reduction over these years of pre-born mortality, a 61% reduction in early childhood deaths, and maternal deaths are down 66%. (In 2020 the US rate for maternal deaths was 24 per 100,000 live births, the highest of all the wealthier nations in the world, and we keep getting worse every year! Perhaps our priorities are misplaced?)

Nicaragua is a country of 130,373 square miles (a little smaller than the state of Montana) and has a population of about 7 million. Crops like peanuts, sesame and coffee are exported.

All jobs in Nicaragua have equal starting salaries. Raises are based on things like punctuality, effectiveness on the job, educational level, and seniority.

The US has invaded Nicaragua 14 times! The father of the revolution, Sandino, is their national hero. He led the Nicaraguan resistance against the US occupation and was assassinated in 1934. Other martyred heroes include FSLN founder Carlos Fonseca and poet Ruben Dario. Revolutionaries of other nations are honored, too: Salvador Allende, Hugo Chavez, Fidel Castro, Che Guevara.

Various reactionary Somoza scions ruled from 1936 to 1979. The family owned 23% of the land and got away with using corporate bribes, industrial monopolies, and foreign aid siphoning for all those years.

The neo-liberal years started with Reagan and were characterized by rampant inequality. Reagan, of course, was responsible for the notorious Iran-Contra Affair, in which his administration secretly facilitated the sale of arms to Iran and used the proceeds to fund the Contras, a right-wing rebel group, in Nicaragua.

After battling the three evils—capitalism, colonialism, and paternalism—all these years, it’s no wonder that a verse in the FSLN theme song has a line: “Let’s fight the enemy of humanity” in reference to the United States.

In Ciudad Sandino we learned that 174 fire stations had been built, co-ops of women were given micro loans, health clinics and pharmacies abound. The pharmacies don’t have make-up and aisles of candy and junk food, etc.—they have no-nonsense medicines like the European model.

The average age for a woman to have her first child is 27 and many stop after three children, choosing to get free tubal ligation. They enjoy the fact that their country is foremost in Central America for empowering women. The gender gap has been closed in elected office. In the early days of FSLN (2006), there was initial resistance by men, but as awareness was raised and education made a priority the resistance gave way to cooperation. The vice-president, attorney general and the head of the Supreme Court are women. When a couple purchases property in Nicaragua the title is most often registered in the woman’s name.

Rural women lead the way in the agricultural sector and in learning technology. Led by the vice president, they have coordinated programs called “childcare with tenderness,” helping to prevent violence in the home. Only Nicaragua and Argentina offer an actual class called “Gender Rights and Equity” helping women to become entrepreneurs.

Medical workers will still use boats and /or horses to serve remote patients. When the neoliberals ruled, the indigenous were not allowed to use traditional medicines, but that's supported now. In the sphere of healthcare, US sanctions have had little effect due to the fact that the government planned ahead by getting help and technology from Japan and China.

* Parliament. We met with six female Assembly members. Nicaraguans say they feel truly represented and empowered by their "good government." We heard a touching speech presented by a representative of the remote Caribbean area whose motto is "Love for the Mother Earth." Her district now has good roads and a major bridge that connects this formerly neglected part of the country with the rest of the country.

The current governing regime is primarily Sandinista (FSLN) but includes several other parties. By law, all parties must present at least 50% women on their tickets. The Executive Committee is now majority women. Legislators generally go out into their districts and engage with citizens. No corporate funding is allowed for any campaigns.

Nicaragua has a Secretary of Climate. Environmentally responsible laws and practices are expanding. The country's timeline to be 100% clean-energy efficient is 2030. Right now 97% of all homes and businesses have electricity and 87% of that is renewable: geo-thermal from volcanoes, hydro-powered from dams, solar, wind, and biomass. Managua is known as the greenest capital in Central America. Besides its many real trees, there are the beautiful, colorful and well-lit theme trees of the city known as "The Trees of Life" that tower over the coastal area of the city.

* Ministry of Women. Available through their office are numerous pamphlets to empower and educate the women of Nicaragua

on different laws and rights. Topics include zero tolerance for abuse. Law #648 gives women absolute and indisputable equality so they can develop in social, economic and political areas. Law #779 proscribes violence against women. Violation can result in prison, even a lifetime sentence.

* Salvador Allende Pier. The pier offered us beautiful sunset photos, restaurants, all sorts of places to stroll or sit under cozy cabana palm-frond umbrellas plus playgrounds for children.

DAY FOUR (WEDNESDAY)

* Gloria Quintanilla Women's Cooperative in Carazo, one of the most successful peasant cooperatives. It's nationally recognized for its advanced agro-ecological production practices.

DAY FIVE (THURSDAY)

* Matagalpa. Its main crop is coffee and we saw numerous large coffee operations.

* Skills to Save Lives. Our group spent the morning and had lunch with women and girls involved with that organization. We learned about the fight to end violence against women.

* Matagalpa police station. We were told that officers on their beats do not carry guns and that 40% of the police force are women. Law #510 states people can get a gun, but they have to explain to the government why they need one. Gun violence deaths in Nicaragua are 7 per 100,000 population annually, compared to 12.2 per 100,000 in the United States.

A separate women's police force works hand-in-hand with the national police force and the Ministry of Women. There are 18 women's police stations in the Province of Matagalpa. Crimes prioritized under law #779 (Protection of Women) are:



- 1) Failure to pay child support
- 2) Intimidation
- 3) Psychological violence
- 4) Physical violence
- 5) Rape of a child under 14
- 6) Sexual abuse

These crimes get an immediate response and an expeditious trial. All of the judges in these cases have special training in regard to violence against women. Complaints can be called in with a cell phone.

This country's success under the motto: "Break the Silence to Stop the Violence" is becoming known internationally. And their judicial system is sensitive to victim trauma. Often the testimony of the police or the doctors attending the victim will suffice in court. That way the woman does not have to relive her incident over and over.

DAY SIX (FRIDAY)

- * FEM (Fundacion Entre Mujeres), where women and girls join self-help groups and learn skills for self-sufficiency.
- * Las Diosas (The Goddesses) cooperative. We visited the processing plant where they make hibiscus flower wine and jelly, mead, honey, jewelry, pinatas, and grow and process coffee for export. They make compost and fertilizer and sell what they do not use. Las Diosas is also the brand-name of their products.

DAY SEVEN (SATURDAY)

- * Museum in Esteli. The museum presents chronologically, starting with fossils of mammoths, giant sloths, and other pre-historic creatures; then ancient petroglyphs and pre-Columbian art; and then there are many displays about the revolution, highlighting heroes of all genders (Somoza bombed Esteli three times because it was a Sandinista base).
- * A briefing with the long-time Latin American expert, Sofia Clark; also Camilo Mejia, who was a Nicaraguan serving in the US military and one of the first Iraq war resisters. The event was hosted by the Asociacion de Trabajadores del Campo (Association of Rural Workers).

DAY EIGHT (SUNDAY) ... PLAY DAY!

- * San Juan de Oriente. A town of pottery artisans. We were treated to a demonstration by the renowned potter Pedro Guerrero.
- * Laguna de Apoyo. An independent resort at a volcanic crater lake that had food, drinks, and swimming. After relaxing and sunning we headed to a large market to do some shopping.
- * Masaya National Park & Museum. We met with a group of park rangers, officials, and office personnel, and then viewed the volcano with its yellow bubbling lava and its reddish lava glow.

Day Nine, the last day. We said our goodbyes with hugs and love to our fellow explorers.

In conclusion: We came to feel that it's pernicious that our country retains sanctions on Nicaragua. When one looks at the US State Department website's recommendation on international travel, Nicaragua is discouraged in an ominous way, giving a misimpression that it's dangerous and not worth visiting. After our week there we felt very much to the contrary ... and we're not the first to say: "Nicaragua is simply a 'threat' of a good example!"

ADDENDA

Phoebe had found out that Ivermectin was available over the counter. Many pharmacies had medications that could be bought over the counter for far less than in the USA—some of which are only by prescription in our country. After a delegate came down with Covid, the Ministry of Health recommended that we each take one Ivermectin tablet for two days following our exposure.

Another one of our group, who stayed an extra week, tripped while walking on the beach of a small island and broke her wrist. The little clinic there treated it as best they could (no actual doctor there) by binding it and offering pain meds. The next day, at a larger island, there was a hospital that had an x-ray machine and a doctor who could recast the wrist fracture. The cost? All 100% free! Her paperwork? She just showed them her passport.



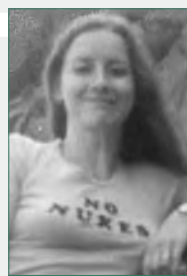
DIANNE BLAIS

After running as a Democrat and then an Independent for the Virginia House of Representatives, Dianne was asked to run for Congress as an Independent Green. While running, Dianne attended the 2014 Annual National Meeting, learned she was a true Green, and became involved in the party. She is currently the Secretary of WILPF US (the US Section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom).



PHOEBE THOMAS SORGEN

was Outstanding Woman of Berkeley (2005) for her work as a Peace and Justice Commissioner, including writing resolutions to end corporate personhood and stop CAFTA. She's a Green Party Alameda County Councilor and a member of the California GP coordinating committee, as well as a delegate to the GPUS National and International Committees. Phoebe is also the GPUS representative to the Global Green Network.



JENNIFER SULLIVAN

is a lifelong feminist and activist currently serving as a National Committee delegate for the Green Party of Florida (GPFL) and treasurer of the National Women's Caucus. She served four years as a co-chair of GPFL. Jennifer hosted a TV show in Tampa called "On the Table with the Green Party." She has organized lobbying by Greens in the US Congress to get public funding for elections.

Matt Hoh Advanced Green Politics in North Carolina

BY ROSE ROBY

Progressive independent candidates should be running both high-profile races where the vote total will likely be low and also local races where there's a chance of winning.

Our campaign bolstered the idea that the Green Party can be a place where political progressives fed up with the tepid policies of the Democrats can find a home and fully expound their vision.

On the basis of my experience managing Matt Hoh's 2022 North Carolina campaign for US Senate, I'd like to contribute some observations to the conversation about building alternative parties.

First, I want to address an ongoing controversy re: is it worth running unwinnable races for national office or should Green Party campaigns be limited to the local level where they can have more of an impact? I'll make the case that different campaigns can achieve different goals. Progressive independent candidates should be running both high-profile races where the vote total will likely be low and also local races where there's a chance of winning.

When I signed on as campaign manager I understood from the start that Matt wouldn't be able to win a Senate race under the current electoral system. An articulate, charismatic candidate like Matt would be a strong contender to win an office such as city council. But a US Senate race has millions upon millions of dollars poured into it, dark money feeding the campaigns of both of the establishment parties; just having the best, most qualified, and most charismatic candidate (which I believe we did have in Matt) isn't enough! At that level of office the game is clearly rigged against minor party candidates.

So, then, why run?

REASONS TO RUN AT THE HIGHER LEVELS

First, in our case we had a candidate with enormous credibility as an anti-war activist and therefore we felt it best to run him in a race where foreign policy would be on the table. Matt Hoh served as a Marine and was rendered disabled and traumatized fighting imperialist wars. He advanced to being a high-ranking official with the State Department in Afghanistan. It was there that he realized he could no longer fool himself into believing he was fighting on the side of "freedom," but was instead participating in a deadly and corrupt occupation. Once he came to this moral reckoning, he publicly quit his position in 2009. His brave stand made the front page of the *Washington Post*.

Matt then became a leading figure in the anti-war movement. He appeared frequently in media and wrote denunciations of the military-industrial complex for publications that have wide circulation. He developed the skills to speak on-camera with confidence (an important quality in a high-profile candidate). So he was well qualified to run at the level of US Senate.

We considered how a campaign at that level has the potential for influence and resonance beyond the state where the campaign is run. That factor gave our fundraising operation the ability to do outreach around the nation. And, sure enough, contributions from out of state amounted to almost 80% of our total donations.

Another plus was that it gave progressive independents around the nation a campaign to support, promote, and be proud of. It was especially inspiring and unifying for Greens, as it bolstered the idea that the Green Party can be a place where high-profile political progressives fed up with the tepid policies of the Democrats can find a home and fully expound their vision.

Reaching out broadly, we were able to engage volunteers from around the nation. Online meetings and organizing through social media have allowed independent campaigns to gain national attention in new ways. For example, we had a volunteer

in Atlanta who would “tweet-storm” Matt’s Fireside Chat webinars. In doing so she was able to get the word out widely and bring in more attendees (and: additional potential donors!).

Running a statewide race, as opposed to a local race, Matt was able to be a driving force for statewide ballot access. In North Carolina last year almost 14,000 valid signatures of registered voters were required to be submitted for placement on the ballot. We knew that we needed to collect far more. In fact, despite the fact that we handed in almost 23,000 signatures, of which nearly 16,000 were verified as valid, the state and the Democrats still tried to remove the Green Party from the ballot. With effective and much-appreciated legal support we ultimately thwarted their nefarious efforts.

BALLOT ACCESS STRATEGIES

The petitioning process is difficult for alternative party candidates in many states. When large numbers of signatures are needed, there are two schools of thought about how to obtain them: 1) bring in dedicated volunteers to do the work; or 2) hire a petitioning firm to get the job done. My experience led me to believe that neither method is ideal.

Volunteers can potentially accomplish the task if you need no more than about 5,000 valid signatures to reach the threshold. You must have at least five people who are willing to go out and stand on their feet in any weather, dealing with approaching strangers (some of whom will be hostile), facing a preponderance of rejections, for a minimum of ten hours a week—consistently, week after week. A 5,000-valid-signatures threshold actually means you’ll need at least 7,500 signatures. The state will inevitably invalidate many ... sometimes for the most trivial of reasons, like transposed numbers in a zip code, a failure to include a middle initial, an address that doesn’t stay fully within the box provided. Greens know from experience that if the election authorities want to keep you off the ballot they can find ways to invalidate twenty or thirty percent or more of the signatures submitted.

In cases where the threshold is high—more than, say, five or ten thousand—if you can’t pay to have the bulk of the signature collection accomplished it is very unlikely your petition drive will be successful. That’s where the issue of hiring professional petitioning firms comes in.

But my experience on this campaign raised many red flags about working with petitioning firms. Post-COVID, the price-per-signature skyrocketed. What was once \$1–\$3 per signature now costs a minimum of \$5 per signature, with many firms charging \$10 or more! Such an expense involves the kind of large sums that make a campaign vulnerable to the involvement of questionable “helpers.”

When I came into the campaign in March 2022, I realized that most of the petitioning firms were operating in California where big money was being poured into ballot initiatives. Professional petitioners there were making over \$6,000 a week. They had no

interest in coming to North Carolina to make a fraction of that working for us.

An ethical question was also on my mind. A professional will go out one day with a petition to keep abortion safe and legal and go out the next day with a petition to ban all abortions! This isn’t because they’re bad people—they simply have a job to do and they’re going to work for whoever is paying them. Meanwhile, they surely are not going to display the enthusiasm of people who truly believe in what they’re doing. They may get the signatures, but they’re not likely to attract new people to the party. When someone signs a petition held by an enthusiastic Green, there’s a much better chance the signer will give a thought to what’s motivating the petitioner.

One thing that was abundantly clear during the petition-drive stage of the campaign: There are a lot of people out there who are dissatisfied with a political landscape that’s perennially Red vs. Blue. We noticed that even some people who said they consider the Green Party “too left” for their taste nonetheless signed eagerly because they favor the idea of a healthier democracy with more choices on the ballot.

HOW WE SUCCEEDED

The key to ballot access success in North Carolina came from finding passionate supporters of both the campaign and the party and then paying *them* to do the work. Most of our petitioners were paid \$20 per hour as independent contractors. That meant that if they petitioned at a big festival taking place over a weekend and did the work eight hours each day, they could wind up with \$320 for their efforts. For the working poor, that’s the kind of part-time work that helps keep them afloat. For the petitioning effort, it meant that one person could potentially bring in anywhere between 250 and 500 signatures over the course of one weekend. These were the kinds of numbers necessary for the ballot access drive to be successful.

It was a win-win situation: Petitioning helps build strong organizers. Folks volunteering on that basis were most welcome. But many of the activists who came out for our campaign were not in a financial position to give the time and effort necessary without the benefit of pay. This suggests that the Green Party should endeavor to develop professional organizers. They could be its greatest resource, but they must be mentored, nurtured, and appropriately remunerated. I was gratified to feel that the Matt Hoh campaign was successful in developing a new generation of leaders.

Another great success of the campaign was in developing and utilizing the tools for our own media operation. For the price of a monthly Zoom subscription, we were able to reach thousands of people through webinars. Matt’s background and prestige helped attract big name guests, both high-profile Greens like Jill Stein and Ajamu Baraka and luminaries such as Medea Benjamin, Lee Camp, Eleanor Goldfield, Margaret Kimberley, Chris Hedges, Katie Halper, and even internationally renowned

rock n' roll legend Roger Waters. With those webinars we were able to engage in intellectually stimulating political conversations that are rarely offered in the mainstream media. Meanwhile, they were key fundraising opportunities.

THE CULTURE OF THE GREEN PARTY NEEDS TO BE DELIBERATED

Our campaign became painfully aware of the weakness of the Green Party. There's plenty of blame to be placed on the tremendous structural barriers that exist within the US electoral system. And it's admirable that the Greens have managed to endure over time while so many other progressive alternative initiatives have come and gone (Citizens Party, Labor Party, New Party, Natural Law Party, New Progressive Party, Justice Party ... just to name a few!). But the Green Party won't be able to attract and retain high-caliber candidates unless it comes to terms with internal deficiencies that need to be addressed.

The Greens need to welcome "outsider" progressives as our campaign did. When I started working with Matt in March of last year, ballot access appeared to be a long-shot. There were only 2,000 signatures verified by the state. In my first month that number only crept up slightly. That means we faced a situation of needing to collect enough signatures to make it over the 13,865 threshold in the remaining six weeks! It was through the campaign massively reworking its fundraising operation under my and Dave Schwab's leadership that it was able to succeed. Matt's credibility as a candidate was our central selling point to donors.

The North Carolina Green Party (NCGP) had \$14,000 in its coffers in March 2022. They were willing to commit that money to the ballot access effort. But the petition drive wound up costing over \$40,000! And then there were the additional thousands needed for the ensuing legal battle. That and the rest of the expenditures through November were paid entirely by the campaign, not the party.

The NCGP is a dues paying organization (a model I've always enthusiastically supported), but without much presence in the state it currently brings in less than \$400 a month from these dues. It's not enough. We'll need to build a much larger base of support that could bring in thousands of dollars a month toward seriously increasing our professionalism and viability.

Some of the most valuable volunteers for the campaign came out of the DSA (Democratic Socialists of America) and a former chapter of the Movement for a Peoples Party (the chapter had disaffiliated itself from the national party, which was somewhat in crisis). These progressives didn't join the campaign out of loyalty to the Green Party's Ten Key Values or even its platform—they were excited by Matt's vision and they wanted to get involved. When the Democratic Party Senatorial Campaign Committee started its insidious campaign of phone calls, texts, and even harassment of petition signers *at their doorsteps* in an attempt to remove signatures, these non-Green supporters were outraged and among the first to tell us what was happening. This included screenshots of texts, details of the phone calls they received, and

even videotaping the Democratic Party operatives showing up in person. These activists were the lifeblood of the campaign. If we had related to them as opportunistic outsiders they would have walked away and never looked back. But the campaign welcomed them with open arms. They responded by giving a great deal of time, energy and talent.

We need to be doing outreach to independents everywhere and find common ground to form alliances. We need to end any self-defeating "purity tests" that preclude meaningful collaboration. We need to understand that without strong candidates we can't fundraise to sustain the party.

The Matt Hoh campaign raised over \$190,000. This amount, for a non-presidential Green campaign, was second only to Lisa Savage's 2020 US Senate race that was run in Maine where Ranked Choice Voting is a democratic option for voters. (In addition to her campaign's robust fundraising, her 5% vote total, quite impressive for a Green candidate in a high-level race, demonstrates the importance of fighting for RCV nationwide.) If GPUS would actively promote strong Green campaigns like Matt's, it could bring in sustainers by showing that it's a party that can attract serious candidates and will go all out to back them.

RUN AT ALL LEVELS, SEIZE ALL POSSIBILITIES

We should be running campaigns on various levels—not just federal and statewide races, but also for local school board, city council, mayor, etc. We should invest in campaigns that have a good shot at winning. There are offices all around the country where a single candidate goes unopposed; many of those races are less expensive to contest. We should be doing a nationwide search to identify districts where seats routinely go unopposed and then recruit strong Green candidates to run.

Those who advocate that we should only campaign on a local level and avoid running in races that can't be won, could argue that Matt's 30,000 votes was not a huge total and was far from a win. To them I would point out that the number of votes was *a hundred times greater than the number of registered Greens* in NC at the time of the election. Imagine if even 10% of the brave people who voted their hopes instead of their fears were to register as Greens and join the NCGP as dues-paying members.

How about Matt's supporters around the nation? Will some of them stay and build the Green Party and perhaps even be inspired by Matt to run for office themselves? There are so many exciting possibilities we can seize if we have the will ... but also the humility to analyze our weaknesses and do what we must to overcome them.



ROSE ROBY

has been a political independent for over thirty years. She was the Scheduler/Logistics Coordinator for Howie Hawkins' Green Party presidential campaign in 2020, and last year was the Campaign Manager for Matt Hoh's US Senate run in North Carolina.

Bioregional Activation in Colorado

November 18, 2022

Yesterday the air was crisp along the Front Range of Colorado. A few red and yellow leaves were still clinging to trees and Pikes Peak could be seen from Denver, some 80 miles to the south.

Paonia and the Gunnison River Basin: The landscape's invitation

On Friday afternoon we departed from under the energetic presence of Mt. Sopris and the town of Carbondale. We were leaving the Roaring Fork River Basin, one that is largely defined by its relationship to the nearby Colorado River that it flows into. We were headed up and over McClure Pass which would take us into a bioregion that Joe Brewer, Penny Heiple, and I had been thinking about for the past several weeks. It was one of those November days when you're not yet adjusted to the early setting sun. As we ascended the mountains, what felt like the mid-afternoon was quickly becoming evening. The low angle of light made the snow-capped peaks especially photogenic. Joe snapped pictures and reflected on the wisdom of mountains.

We made it up and over the pass with just enough light to get a glimpse of the Gunnison River Basin. That basin, which Paonia calls home, is defined by big landscapes. To the east and to the south are some of the more striking ranges of the Southern Rockies, the West Elks and the San Juans. To its north it partly sheds Grand Mesa, the largest flat-topped mountain in the world. To its southwest it sheds the Uncompahgre Plateau; in the process the waters snake their way through the red-rock canyons of Dominguez Escalante, hinting at the Utah deserts not too far away. This is a powerful place.

After topping McClure Pass it wasn't long before we were descending alongside the North Fork Gunnison River. Joe and Penny were new to the Gunnison River Basin, and it had been many years since I'd been lucky enough to temporarily call this region home. Regardless of our different histories, each of us was feeling a new relationship coming to life. This is because we were carrying a story with us that in less than an hour Joe would be sharing with members of the community. It was because of the story that we were invited to Paonia. It was our roles in the story that allowed us to quickly feel a kind of relationship to that place.

Activation begins

We pulled into the Paonia Public Library parking lot under the last of the day's light. We saw the young family that had invited us there, Marissa, Jeremiah and their 5-year-old son Gabriel. They greeted us warmly, but Jeremiah and Gabriel wouldn't be able to attend the talk. Gabriel had swallowed a toy and they were soon headed to the emergency room. The toy was small, so the visit was mostly a precaution, but it was under a shared concern for the little fella that we began our friendship. Knowing now that Gabriel ended up just fine—and given what we were there to do—it felt fitting to arrive directly into the realities of family life.

We made our way inside and it wasn't long before community members were filling the room. The story that Joe was getting ready to share would take us all on an emotional roller coaster. The title of the talk, "From Planetary Collapse to Earth Regeneration," gives a sense of the ride. He begins with an eyes-wide-open account of the trajectory of our planetary systems and he doesn't hold back. It's a full recognition of the depth of our collective predicament. This is vital for enabling an appropriate response.

BY BENJI ROSS

The concept of bioregional regeneration suggests that we can learn to collectively see our landscapes in holistic ways.

If communities around the world can begin to heal the land at a local scale, it will ultimately have a planetary impact.

Landscape Partnerships provide a common language and a framework that could enable bioregions all over the planet to interconnect and to share lessons.

Just before someone in the back of the room turned out the lights so that we could more easily see the images projected onto the screen, I was struck by the deep emotional engagement expressed on faces around the room. Joe shared a quote from Joanna Macy about love being the other side of grief. When you grieve, it's because you love. Joe said that Earth regeneration is an act where we continue to love while we navigate the grief of a suffering and collapsing world.

With the lights out and everyone sitting together in the dark, Joe began the envisioning journey. He introduced the concept of bioregional regeneration, of the possibility that we can learn to collectively see our landscapes in holistic ways. We can learn to *relate* to them in holistic ways, too. If communities around the world can begin to heal the land at this scale, it will ultimately have a planetary impact. He brought everything to life by sharing some of the story of what is happening where he lives in Barichara, Colombia ... of the bioregional devotion and activation happening there. He spoke of regenerative people and projects learning to weave together as they discover bioregional coherence; as they not only come to understand what that means, but also that they come to *embody* it. He spoke of a growing community effort to bring the local dried up and polluted rivers back to life.

The inspiration derived from seeing what is possible in an activating bioregion was palpable in the room. Joe finished the talk, the lights flipped back on, and we opened the floor for discussion. It was clear that many people in Paonia have long aspired to work toward local regeneration and have made some efforts in that direction, but I had a sense that something new was present. Something more holistic had been woven together.

Bioregional workshop

On Saturday morning we made our way to another community space on Grand Avenue, Paonia's ironically named small-town main street. As our start time approached, the room quickly filled with energy and boisterous conversation. People were excited and ready to hear more.

The second gathering would be an emergent workshop intending to both reveal a glimpse of Paonia's story of

place and to explore some themes that provide a pragmatic and collaborative way forward. Joe began the workshop by proposing the agenda and inviting the spirit of improvisation into the room. Soon after, someone in the audience requested that we reorient ourselves into a big circle. Joe finished his introduction then gave the go-ahead. The room filled with the chaotic sounds of reshuffling chairs. Soon the group formed into a spiral, then after a quick readjustment settled into a circle so that we were facing one another.

Joe invited each of us to share our purpose for being there. As we went around the room we began to see the kinds of things that were already happening locally, a pattern of topics that mattered to the people of Paonia. It was encouraging to hear about a number of existing regenerative projects. I heard mention of rotational grazing, permaculture, regenerative education, and intentional communities. Another purpose for attending that came up several times was simply to see who else would be there. It was as if people wanted to know how these ideas were resonating with others and who was ready to join in.

As a newcomer I felt I'd had my first glimpse of Paonia's story. I felt honored to have shared in that moment.

After the group had the opportunity to get a sense of itself and to establish some coherence as a whole, Joe launched into a presentation on the first of the two anchoring themes. It was fitting that we had just finished hearing from everyone. This provided an embodied sense of interconnection for us to then explore something called "prosocial."

In its essence, prosocial is simply an orientation toward caring for and improving the welfare of other individuals and society as a whole. It is also a flexible framework and ecology of practices that give rise to an ability to form effective groups. It is deeply rooted in evolutionary science. With regular community practice it fosters the possibility of collectively growing into becoming wise managers of our local and global cultural evolution. Broadly speaking, it has a lot to do with cultivating a deeper awareness of our personal thoughts, emotions, and psychology, the depth and authenticity of our relationships, and the quality of our cultural agreements.

Joe made the case that a prosocial orientation is vital in order for us to grow beyond the world of separation and into something bioregional. After his presentation, we broke out into smaller discussions where we reflected on past experiences of collaborating in groups. When we came back together and Joe solicited feedback, one thing that was revealed was a glimpse of local interpersonal conflicts. This was something that would become one of the notable storylines of the day.

Joe then presented the second theme, an organizing structure called Landscape Partnerships. He gave an example: For over a decade, the Commonland Foundation has been developing Landscape Partnerships to hold and guide communities through the process of bioregional regeneration. The model has proven to work in landscapes all over the world. It starts with coming together around a shared intention for a particular place. The initial phase is a lot about learning to appreciate the land, its many functions, and our collective relationship with it. As we do that, newly forming shared identities open the door to shared purpose, collaboration, and communitarian reconciliation. A team at Commonland has been demonstrating how Landscape Partnerships can become spaces of belonging where people can rediscover the meaning of Home.

The remaining phases of the model guide communities through continued collective learning, prototyping, implementation, scaling, and adaptation. Landscape Partnerships provide a common language and a framework that could enable bioregions all over the planet to interconnect and to share lessons.

Immersion into the landscape with the people

The remainder of the day was about immersing ourselves into the realities of Paonia. Inspired conversations carried us through lunch at a local taco shop, a “bioregional walk” (that was more of a bioregional drive) to a nearby mesa, a visit to a local pub, and lastly a dinner with our gracious hosts and fellow house guests.

What became clear to me through it all was the awareness people had of their local challenges, along with a deep sense of what makes their bioregion special. Water is of central importance. Years of drought are putting the current system of local agriculture into a precarious position. A fundamental shift in how the community sees and interacts with the water cycle seems vital. There was talk of finding ways to recharge the water table more broadly across the landscape.

What also became clear were the individual and collective traumas and conflicts that make up an important part of the local story. The day’s events revealed broken hearts and frustration among community leaders. Achieving territorial regeneration and community revitalization is so challenging! Stories of individual and collective traumas will be a part of every bioregion. Coming from a world characterized by competitive dynamics and spiritual impoverishment, how could they not? But it could be that healing our inner and

interpersonal traumas will help us discover some essential medicine that we’ll need to heal the land.

Strategizing next steps

After waking on our final day in Paonia and packing our bags, there was one more thing to participate in. Energy had been activated and we wanted to offer what we could to the people committed to carrying it forward. We met with our hosts and a community leader for breakfast. In this last conversation we explored next steps for a newly forming core team in Paonia as well as how we could continue to provide connection and sustained support through the emerging virtual and planetary network.

We also contemplated what can happen on the ground. We spoke of the importance of strategizing for modest and early advances that build momentum and validate the importance of focusing at the bioregional scale. We reflected on the slow initial pace of bioregional activation and the importance of setting appropriate expectations for ourselves. We discussed exploring mapping processes that can reveal various kinds of opportunities. Most important of all, a follow-on gathering was planned for the next weekend. Regular gatherings and conversations are the most fundamental scaffolding for continuation and endurance.

After breakfast it was time to hit the road. Just the day before, Joe, Penny, and myself were invited to meet with community members of Carbondale on the other side of McClure Pass. Along the way, we also wanted to have enough time for Penny to at least dip her toes into Penny Hot Springs. How could we pass that up?

As we pulled away someone brought up the modesty of it all. So much of this is about forming friendships, about sitting around dinner tables, about playing with kids, joking around, walking on the land, appreciating the good work that has come before; and about vulnerability, bringing our fully authentic selves, loving the world, and enjoying being human.

Paradoxically, perhaps on the grandiose side, it also feels like we are a part of something new and historic. But with all of the work to be done, I’ll let that idea settle into the background for now.



BENJI ROSS

says: “I come from a rural place with a blue collar. My colleagues and I are weaving, syncing and coalescing towards more regenerative communities and cultures.” Within Earth Regenerators, an international study group for restoring planetary health, Benji leads the Bioregional Catalysts course. At www.patreon.com/benjiross he’s “creating processes and storytelling for bioregional adaptation.”

Greens Advocate for Alternative Economic Wellbeing Indicators

BY GÖSTA LYNGÅ

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the economic valuation indicator used in most countries to measure progress in regard to production and consumption of goods and services. An aim of governments, generally, is to grow this value. But many problems have been recognized about this way of measuring progress. For instance, few assessments of environmental impacts are included in GDP. Unsustainable agricultural practices, wars, and noisome mass-market advertising all work toward *increasing* the GDP! Another example is expenditures related to an industrial accident: the monetary costs associated with repairs, health consequences mitigation, etc. detract from prosperity and the commonweal, yet add to GDP growth.

So there are now calls for a shift to a more holistic indicator that will give a more meaningful measure of economic development, including metrics of wellbeing and environmental sustainability. UN Secretary-General António Guterres stated at the gathering to celebrate the 50th World Environment Day last June: “We must place true value on the environment and go beyond Gross Domestic Product as a measure of human progress and wellbeing. Let us not forget that when we destroy a forest, we are creating GDP. When we overfish, we are creating GDP. GDP growth is not a way to measure richness in the present situation in the world. Instead, we must shift to a circular and regenerative economy.”

During the decades since the 1970s many Green parties have been formed worldwide. In 2001 the first Congress of the Global Greens was held in Canberra, Australia. I was fortunate to be a member of the ACT (Australian Capital Territory) Greens and was able to take part in that and the following Congresses which were held in São Paulo, Brazil; Dakar, Senegal; and Liverpool, England. In Liverpool (2017) I conducted a workshop on alternatives to GDP. Sixty-five Greens from 15 different countries took part in an inspiring discussion. The Liverpool congress advocated that an alternative to GDP be widely implemented. We discussed alternatives such as the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI), which considers environmental and social as well as economic values. The GPI separates the concept of societal progress from economic growth and is favored by many countries.

To GDP data the GPI adds measures of non-monetary benefits such as the contributions of household work, parenting, and volunteer work. When economic growth results in deleterious environmental or social costs, an indicator such as GPI *deducts* such costs.

Agencies and think-tanks around the world, among them the Australia Institute, have been addressing this issue. In addition to GPI, other measures have been used by different countries such as:

Many problems have been recognized about measuring progress via GDP.

There are now calls for a shift to a more holistic indicator that will give a more meaningful measure of economic development, including metrics of wellbeing and environmental sustainability.

The Better Life Index (BLI) was proposed by the OECD in 2011. It includes characteristics yielding quality of life improvement based on 11 metrics. Comparisons can be made between different countries.

Gross National Happiness (GNH) was created in 1972 by Bhutan, one of the first countries to measure wellbeing. GNH references four pillars: good governance, sustainable socio-economic development, cultural maintenance, and care of the environment. In 2011 all countries in the United Nations General Assembly accepted a resolution from Bhutan advocating wellbeing as a central development goal for the world.

The Happy Planet Index (HPI) was introduced in Britain in 2006 by the New Economics Foundation. Each country's HPI value is a function of its subjective life satisfaction, life expectancy at birth, and the ecological footprint per capita.

In 2010 Maryland became the first US state to formally calculate and maintain GPI accounts. Several other states have done likewise since then. And recently New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern proposed a wellbeing index involving five social priorities for that country. Every budgetary expenditure proposal is required to meet at least one of the priorities.

The Global Greens formed a working group based on those ideas following the Liverpool congress. The group, which I initially chaired, includes members from Australia, Greece, and several other countries. The purpose is to encourage governments to consider adopting one of the following options:

Accept alternative measures to replace GDP. Our group is aware of the challenges involved, seeing as how the GDP metric is still embraced by most economists.

Keep GDP but also employ alternative measures. That goal is probably easier to accomplish. It has already been done by some governments.

Consider issues of environmental and social wellbeing when assessing all budget propositions. This is already a growing trend, especially where Green parties have been able to influence governments.

The working group has disseminated its views and proposals to Green parties all over the world and has received a number of positive responses. When I retired as convenor, Vivienne Glance from West Australia and Alexander Pagoulatos from Greece took over as co-chairs. The activities of the working group, as well as those of other supporters of alternatives to GDP, have given Greens in parliaments inspiration and authority to speak on these matters. In countries where Green parties are part of the government, they've had some notable influence.

I think it would be easiest to compare genuine progress between countries if there could be agreement on one commonly used index—GPI or BLI or any other. A good opportunity to discuss this will be at the next Global Greens Congress, which will be hosted in Seoul by the Green Party of Korea in June. It's my hope that the future of the working group on alternatives to GDP will be discussed there.

Let me add what a pleasure it has been to watch the growth of the Wellbeing Economy Alliance (WEAll), a collaboration between governmental agencies, organizations, movements, and individuals working for a wellbeing economy for the sake of people and the planet. Five governments—Finland, Iceland, Scotland, Wales, and New Zealand—are in the Wellbeing Alliance partnership. They have aspirations to make significant social and ecological impacts by 2040.



GÖSTA LYNGÅ

earned a PhD in Astronomy from Lund University, worked as an astronomer for many years, and then became active in the Green parties of Sweden and Australia (where he co-resided) during the 1980s and 1990s. He served as a Green member of the Kävlinge Local Council, 1985-1988, and as a member of the Swedish Parliament (Riksdag) 1988-1991 as a Minister of Taxation. In the latter capacity he introduced a carbon tax in 1990. Gösta was a delegate to the Global Greens Congresses in Canberra, São Paulo, and Dakar.

Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust: Decolonization in Practice

BY DAVID COBB

Decolonization is a hot topic in my circles. I suspect that is true for many *Green Horizon* readers. So what does it mean in both theory and practice?

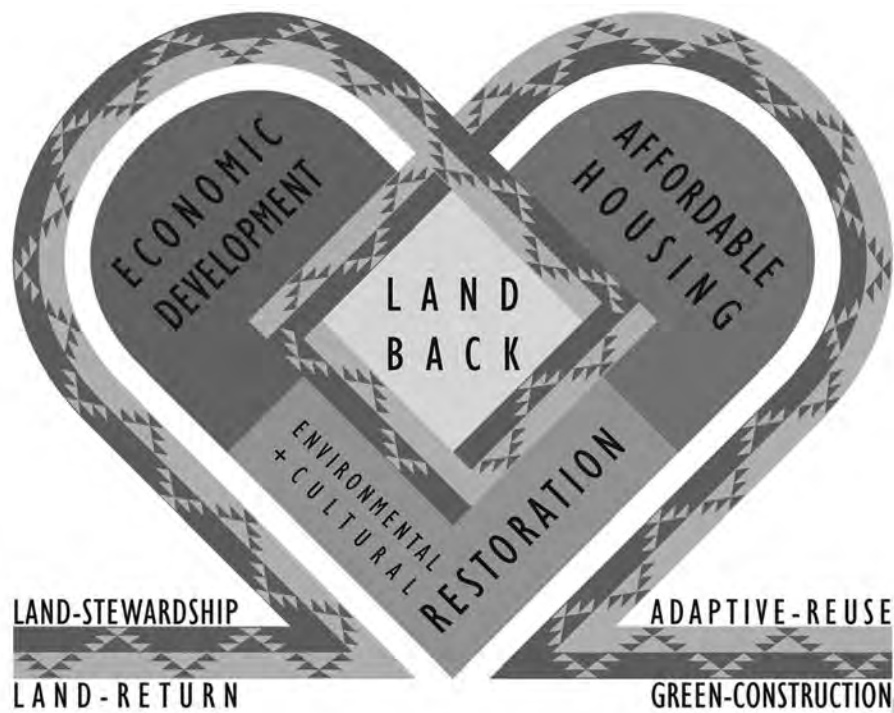
In essence, decolonization challenges each of us to reflect on the history of the United States as a settler-colonial project and to embrace responsibility for that history (as opposed to accepting fault). Decolonization also provides a path toward recreating systems that are ecologically sustainable, socially just, non-violent, and democratic. Literally, decolonization is a manifestation of the Four Pillars of the Green Party.

I currently live as a guest on Wiyot ancestral territory, which is located in far rural Northern California. I am proud to say that my Momma taught me how to be a good guest to and with people. If you invite me to share a meal at your home, I will help clear the table and wash the dishes. If I stay overnight, I will make the bed the next day. It is how I was raised. Momma says, “Always be a good guest and you will always be invited back.” But I have to admit that she never taught me how to be a good guest to and with land. She didn’t teach me that because she wasn’t taught that. It’s not her fault. It just wasn’t part of our cultural worldview. And that makes me sad.

My ancestors once knew how to be a good guest to and with land. Just like yours did. Because we all descend from indigenous people. Read that again. Every human alive descends from people who shared collective ancestral ties to the lands where they lived. Their identity, culture, and physical and spiritual well-being was inextricably linked to the ecosystem. They understood that they didn’t “own” the land, they were stewards of and part of the land.

In addition to living on Wiyot ancestral land, I also work for the Wiyot Tribe’s new Community Land Trust (CLT) project. Dishgamu Humboldt is the Community Land Trust of the Wiyot Tribe, operating in what is known today as the Humboldt Bay Area of Northern California. (Dishgamu means “Love” in Solutluk, the original

Decolonization provides a path toward recreating systems
that are ecologically sustainable, socially just, non-violent, and democratic.



language of the Wiyot people.) We work with community, capital, and government partners to return ancestral lands to tribal ownership and stewardship. Using the community land trust model, we help direct land use toward three impact areas:

Regenerative Economic Development

We practice inclusive and non-extractive economic development, including using our projects to create local living-wage jobs and green building training programs.

Affordable Housing Creation

We develop and preserve affordable and sustainable housing to allow Wiyot people to remain in their homelands while addressing our region's dual crises of housing and climate change.

Environmental and Cultural Restoration

We prioritize projects that protect and restore land with ecological, cultural, or ceremonial significance in collaboration with Wiyot Tribal Departments.

As a tribal community land trust, land is at the center of everything we do. By using the CLT model, we maintain Wiyot ownership in perpetuity, remove land from the speculative market, and direct its use in ways that build community and individual wealth.

We aim to restore Wiyot people to their rightful place in relationship with their ancestral land. Our goal is a decolonized future where Wiyot language and ceremony are an active, thriving part of the cultural landscape; where Wiyot place names are restored and recognized; and where intertribal Indigenous communities have affordable housing and living wage jobs.



DAVID COBB

serves as Advancement Manager for the Wiyot Tribe's Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust. He is a co-founder of the Green Party of Texas and he ran for Attorney General in that state in 2002. David was the Green Party nominee for president in 2004, and in 2016 he served as campaign manager for the Stein/Baraka campaign.

Every human alive descends from people who shared collective ancestral ties to the lands where they lived.

On Judicial Courage

BY PHILIP GREGORY

“the prudence of the times must provide new remedies upon new emergencies”
— William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765-1769),
Book 1, Chapter 7, “Of the King’s Prerogative”

For John Rensenbrink (1928-2022)

Judicial courage is exercised when, presented with a controversial issue, an emboldened judge provides independent judgment based on the evidence.

Constitutional climate litigation is the current movement seeking to use judicial authority to address a systemic problem through the vitality of equitable remedies.

The only way we as a society will effectively address systemic issues like the climate crisis will be as a result of the exercise of judicial courage.

What is judicial courage? Judicial courage is not using law versus political power as a tool to effectuate one’s personal preferences of what needs to change. Rather, in the face of political pressure and popular opposition, judicial courage is the exercise of independent judgment to decide cases based on evidence introduced in court using principles of legal reasoning and constitutional rights in order to structure an effective remedy.

Judicial courage should be framed first by understanding judicial duty. A judge’s duty is governed by her oath. For a federal judge, that oath reads: “I do solemnly swear that I will administer justice without respect to persons, and do equal right to the poor and to the rich, and that I will faithfully and impartially discharge and perform all the duties incumbent upon me under the Constitution and laws of the United States. So help me God.”

How does this oath translate into judicial will? Allow me to link judicial courage to actual cases, starting with the civil rights movement. In my view, the civil rights movement was shaped by exercise of judicial authority, such as the federal lawsuits that eventually enforced *Brown v. Board of Education*. In terms of constitutional law, while the Supreme Court has the power to say what the Constitution means (for example, what public school districts must do to provide equal education to all students), the real meaning of that law depends on how other courts and parts of government interpret and enforce it. State and local actors, inside and outside government, exercise discretion or influence in ways that can frustrate, advance, or otherwise affect court orders. When a judge’s order faces massive resistance the judge becomes a central actor, as it is the judge who determines the effects of her order—how it will shape culture, society, political institutions, and people’s lives.

The initial response to the *Brown* decision by several states, like South Carolina, was to flout orders to desegregate. In response to the State’s “equalization” program, a federal district court judge ordered South Carolina to desegregate in 1963 based on the evidence at trial. The State had done virtually nothing to desegregate voluntarily. With numerous acts of judicial defiance, the State did not begin to accept the 1963 order until 1970 and, even then, continued to circumvent its purpose. If you wish to read about the risk Southern judges endured to enforce *Brown*, read *Unlikely Heroes: The Dramatic Story of the Southern Judges of the Fifth Circuit who Translated the Supreme Court’s Brown Decision into a Revolution for Equality* by Professor Jack Bass.

Another area to examine judicial courage as to fundamental constitutional issues involved rights for sexuality and marriage. As the Supreme Court wrote in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, “[t]he identification and protection of fundamental rights is an enduring part of the judicial duty to interpret the Constitution.” The decision in *Obergefell* (re: same-sex marital rights) continued: “The nature of injustice is that we may not always see it in our own times. The generations that wrote and ratified the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment did not presume to know the extent of freedom in all of its dimensions, and so they entrusted to future generations a charter protecting the right of all persons to enjoy liberty as we learn its meaning. When new insight reveals discord between the Constitution’s central protections and a received legal stricture, a claim to liberty must be addressed.”

Constitutional climate litigation is the current movement seeking to use judicial authority to address a systemic problem through the vitality of equitable remedies. Often when a party comes into court, the judge is asked to craft a remedy to address a special class of problems, which a judge does by applying equitable remedies. In this context, equitable remedies must be employed where judicial intervention is essential to effectually protect constitutional rights against injuries caused by governments that are otherwise irremediable.

In essence, a court in equity acts in response to inadequacies in the law; as the law changes, equity adapts. Equity vests a court with discretionary powers whose exercise is guided by the evidence and the judge’s conscience. Yet courts right now are working to limit their own power by keeping equity away from the most politically sensitive and delicate matters, asserting the survival of our judiciary depends on the acceptance of a limited role. This limited role is turning the judiciary into a second-class branch, more of a twig, rather than equal to the legislative and executive power.

These issues were recently presented in a constitutional case of great national importance involving children’s rights to life and liberty, *Juliana v. United States*. In 2015, 21 youth Plaintiffs brought this action against the United States government. The Complaint alleged the federal government’s systemic affirmative ongoing conduct, persisting over decades, in creating, controlling, and perpetuating a national fossil fuel-based energy system, despite long-standing knowledge of the resulting destruction to our nation and profound harm to the youth, violates the youth’s constitutional due process rights. Courageously, the trial court held: “I have no doubt that the right to a climate system capable of sustaining human life is fundamental to a free and ordered society.” In allowing the children’s claims to proceed, the trial court recognized that such a right, if supported by evidence, would be, like the right in *Obergefell*, a right “quite literally the foundation ‘of society, without which there would be neither civilization nor progress.”

On an appeal decided in 2020, the three-judge appellate panel in *Juliana* initially agreed the children presented “copious expert

evidence” to establish the federal government was a substantial cause of the youths’ injuries. Despite this evidence, a two-judge majority “reluctantly conclude[d]” the specific relief the children sought is not “within the power of” the federal judiciary. Based on their model of judicial minimalism, the majority narrowly defined the range of available remedies for systemic injustice, directing the children—who cannot vote—to plead their Fifth Amendment rights “to the political branches or to the electorate at large . . . through the ballot box.”

In taking too narrow a view of its own discretion, the majority significantly limited judicial power in ways that will debilitate courts in deciding constitutional cases and controversies based on the evidence at trial, thereby denigrating fundamental rights of life and liberty to constitutional suggestions—subject to the tyranny of the majority. The constitutional interpretation behind this decision failed to impose negative constraints on a government’s knowingly injuring its children and future generations. The majority also improperly ignored extensive evidence raised by scientific experts in the trial court that the government could substantially reduce emissions to minimize the risk of worsening these children’s injuries.

Expressing outrage at the majority opinion, Judge Staton in dissent characterized the evidence as showing not only is government action already posing permanent harm to children, “the problem is approaching the ‘point of no return.’” Even with this evidence, “the government bluntly insists that it has the absolute and unreviewable power to destroy the Nation.” Citing *Marbury v. Madison*, Judge Staton noted the authority of the judiciary “entails commensurate power to grant appropriate redress.” Addressing the issue of judicial courage, Judge Staton’s dissenting opinion concludes: “Where is the hope in today’s decision? Plaintiffs’ claims are based on science, specifically, an impending point of no return. If plaintiffs’ fears, backed by the government’s own studies, prove true, history will not judge us kindly. When the seas envelop our coastal cities, fires and droughts haunt our interiors, and storms ravage everything between, those remaining will ask: Why did so many do so little?”

When the case returned to the district court in 2021, the youth requested an opportunity to amend their Complaint. While that request is currently pending, a central question presented by *Juliana* is whether the courts will allow the political branches to arrogate to themselves the “judicial Power” granted exclusively to the judiciary by Article III of the Constitution.

The next trial court to examine the evidence behind the climate crisis will be in June 2023. Youth from Montana filed a climate lawsuit under the Montana Constitution alleging the State is violating their Montana constitutional rights to “a clean and healthful environment” by supporting a fossil-fuel-driven energy system. Their case, *Held v. State of Montana*, will be the first constitutional climate trial in the U.S. The case has its basis in several statutes which promote the production and use of fossil fuels. The young Montanans seek a court declaration that

Courts right now are working to limit their own power by keeping equity away from the most politically sensitive matters. This limited role is turning the judiciary into a second-class branch of government ... more like a twig!

these statutes and the State's policies to prop up fossil fuels are infringing upon their Montana constitutional rights, including the right to a clean and healthful environment. In other words, the court will be deciding the constitutionality of an energy policy that promotes fossil fuels, as well as a state law that allows agencies to ignore the impacts of climate change in their decision-making.

The *Held* trial will mark the first time that government defendants at the state or federal level will have to attempt to explain how their continued support for a fossil fuel-based energy system squares with climate science that clearly indicates fossil fuels must be rapidly phased out to limit the most catastrophic climate impacts. It also will be the first time constitutional arguments will be made in a climate change trial in the U.S.

Court decisions matter. According to Justice Neil Gorsuch, Alexander Hamilton explained "the job of the judge is to enforce the supreme and enduring law of the Constitution over the current will of the majority," which Hamilton acknowledged would "require an uncommon portion of fortitude in the judges to do their duty as faithful guardians of the Constitution." Constitutional limitations on a majoritarian government "can be preserved in practice no other way than through the medium of courts of justice, whose duty it must be to declare all acts contrary to the manifest tenor of the Constitution void. Without this, all the reservations of particular rights or privileges would amount to nothing" (*The Federalist* No. 78, Alexander Hamilton). Or as Justice Scalia wrote, the judiciary "rest[s] on the bedrock principle that 'the constitutional structure of our Government' is designed first and foremost not to look after the interests of the respective branches, but to 'protec[t] individual liberty.'"

A functioning government requires independent judicial supremacy to exercise its full authority courageously, especially to protect individual liberty. In asking what the judicial power is and what it is for, the question turns to whether judges will be equitable administrators of justice on behalf of marginalized citizens, children, and future generations, as their oath requires. Can courts use the law to restructure deeply ingrained systems and reorient power in favor of subordinated groups who, the evidence shows, are being seriously harmed by the systems? If one recognizes the long-term impacts projected for the climate crisis, one also should recognize our scheme of governance

was not designed to give those generations who will be most impacted by our climate actions today any kind of voice in the scheme, except through the courts. If our youth are going to have effective rights to life, liberty, and property, as well as equal protection, how does a court resolve questions of political power, of sovereignty, of government? Is it, like in *Brown* and *Obergefell*, by intertwining concepts of equity, remedies, and the judicial power when an individual's rights are actually being invaded or imminently threatened? As Thurgood Marshall concluded his argument on behalf of the children in *Brown*: "the rights of the minorities ... have been protected by our Constitution, and the ultimate authority for determining that is this Court.... As to whether or not I, as an individual, am being deprived of my right is not legislative, but judicial."

Judicial courage is not a mirage, a chimera. Judicial courage is exercised when, presented with a controversial issue, an emboldened judge provides independent judgment based on the evidence. As long as the evidence shows there is constitutional right being infringed, for example by a government actively engaging in conduct that will harm citizens and "our Posterity," a court must exercise both its power and its will to order a remedy for that violation. The government must not be allowed to knowingly injure its citizens to pursue economic ends. Rather than a circumscribed approach, courageous judges have to use their duty of authoritative adjudication to allow effective legal action to carry forward and develop, including authorizing suits by youth to protect their rights under the Constitution.

Watch a documentary "*Youth v. Gov*":
<https://www.netflix.com/title/81586492>



PHILIP GREGORY

is Of Counsel to Our Children's Trust (ourchildrenstrust.org), the world's only non-profit public interest law firm dedicated exclusively to securing the legal rights of youth to a healthy atmosphere and safe climate, based on the best available science. Mr. Gregory is co-lead counsel in *Juliana v. United States* and co-trial counsel in *Held v. State of Montana* (ourchildrenstrust.org/montana) scheduled for trial in June.

Three book reviews

On the Emergence of an Ecological Class
By Bruno Latour and Nikolaj Schultz
Polity publishing, 2022

REVIEW BY PAULA FISCHER

This book contains an idea that has the potential to liberate the Left from its stagnation. It implies that the Left should not be orienting toward a paradigm where the working class is considered to be the primary agency of social change. Rather, the authors posit the idea of a new “ecological class ... assembled by its collective interests in fighting the logic of capitalist production and safeguarding our planet’s conditions of habitability.”

The ecological class questions old assumptions. Is there capital (owners of the means of production)? Yes. Is there labor (those who don’t own means of production)? Yes. On that basis the Left has asserted: “There’s a class struggle, capital vs. labor, and people must decide which side they are on.” That made sense in regard to fostering a labor movement, circa 1850 to 1950. But it does not figure to be the central consideration in regard to fostering the social transformation that’s so badly needed in our time.

THE CHIMERICAL IDEA OF THE CLASS-FOR-ITSELF PROLETARIAT

Obviously there is a sociological working class ... wage earners in jobs that are regarded as more or less “blue collar,” supposedly of lower status than the middle classes whose jobs are more or less “white collar” (or, at least, somewhat higher in income). Marx called the former the “class-in-itself” and counterposed it to an historically-conscious “class-for-itself”:

Economic conditions had first transformed the mass of the people of the country into workers. The combination of capital has created for this mass a common situation, common interests. This mass is thus already a class as against capital, but not yet for itself. In the struggle this mass becomes united and constitutes itself as a class-for-itself.

—*The Poverty of Philosophy*

That was written in 1847. Has it been a common phenomenon since then to observe the working class self-organizing to “fulfill its historical mission” to overthrow the capitalist system ... clamoring for socialism, state power, and collective ownership and control of the economy? Hardly.

Workers are oppressed and they periodically rise up to protest such, to strive for betterment of their condition (and, of course,

we should always support their struggles), but a congealing into a conscious and active “class-for-itself” is, in fact, very rare. So, for well over a hundred years, waiting for the congealing has been a somewhat tortuous Waiting for Godot.

Bruno Latour and Nikolaj Schultz make the case that our movement for social transformation should be informed more by political ecology than by political economy. From the publisher: “Under what conditions could ecology, instead of being one cluster of movements among others, organize politics around an agenda and a set of beliefs? Can ecology aspire to define the political horizon in the way that liberalism, socialism, conservatism, nationalism and other ideologies have done at various times and places? What can ecology learn from history about how new political movements emerge, and how they win the struggle for ideas? In this text, consisting of seventy-six talking points, Bruno Latour and Nikolaj Schultz argue that if the ecological movement is to gain ideological consistency and autonomy it must offer a political narrative that recognizes, embraces and effectively represents its project in terms of social change.”

The idea of the working class as the agency of such change was part of a paradigm that focused on material production and the so-called “relations of production.” Yet many human societies have viewed production as subordinate to *social relations*. When Greens talk about “community-based economics” there’s a sense that the subjectivity of the community in many areas should supersede the domain of production. That tempers the centrality of the “capital-vs-labor” contradiction.

From the book:

The ecological class takes on the issue of habitability. Because of this, it has a broader, longer, more complex vision of history and even of geohistory. What at first looked like a retreat, a backward movement, now becomes an immense expansion of sensitivity to the conditions necessary for life. This is why the ecological class has entered into conflict with the old classes, which were incapable of grasping the underlying conditions of their projects. Neither the liberals nor the socialists adequately took the conditions of habitability into account. In this sense, the ecological class, because it sees further, because it takes a greater number of values into account, because it’s ready to fight to defend them on a greater number of fronts, can consider itself more rational than the other classes in the sense Norbert Elias gives that adjective ... Elias noted that, just as the bourgeois class, during its ascent, blasted the aristocracy for its overly narrow vision of its values, similarly the new ecological class contests the legitimacy of the old ruling classes, paralyzed by the crisis and incapable of finding a credible way out of the venture of modern politics and history. It’s from this that the new class can draw its energy, its potential power to bring people together ... Extending the action horizon outside production and beyond the framework defined by the nation-states is the task of the ecological class that’s forming.

Workers are oppressed and they periodically rise up to protest such,
but a congealing into a conscious and active “class-for-itself” is very rare.

Anders Dunker comments: “The ecological class struggle will not follow the blueprint of former class struggles. It obeys its own logic and doesn’t necessarily follow a classic revolutionary pattern.” Hmmm. Who remembers: “There is a revolution coming. It will not be like revolutions of the past. It will not require violence to succeed, and it cannot be successfully resisted by violence. It promises a higher reason, a more human community, and a liberated individual. Its ultimate creation will be a renewed relationship to the Self, to society, to nature, and to the land.” (Charles Reich, *The Greening of America*, 1970)

The Left should have listened in 1970. Hopefully it will listen now.

* * * *

*The End of the Megamachine:
A Brief History of a Failing Civilization*
By Fabian Scheidler
Zero Books, 2020

REVIEW BY GINA SEABURY

It was Lewis Mumford who first used the “megamachine” terminology. Mumford was a little hard to read. Verbose. Not only that, but the great bulk of his writing was done before he came to the conclusion that the direction we’ve been going in has been highly problematic. Fabian Scheidler recognized it early and writes about it straightforwardly.

The publisher’s blurb for the book says: “*The End of the Megamachine* provides a uniquely comprehensive picture of the roots of the destructive forces that are threatening the future of humankind today. Spanning five thousand years of history, the

book shows how the three tyrannies of militarized states, capital accumulation, and ideological power have been steering both ecosystems and societies to the brink of collapse.”

Fabian Scheidler says: What kind of “progress” leads a society to the brink of collapse?

His book is reminiscent of Fredy Perlman’s *Against History, Against Leviathan*. The latter was written in a somewhat mythopoetic style, which had its advantages in terms of readability but prevented it from being taken seriously by academics and mainstream media reviewers. Scheidler, on the other hand, is a concise and authoritative documentarian. *The End of the Megamachine* follows two timelines: the first five chapters cover a period from about 3000 B.C. tracing the development of military and economic power concentrations that resulted in the phenomenon he refers to as “Empire.” The following six chapters cover the last 500 years, relating how the capitalist-industrial system emerged and globalized. The world now is fully dominated by mega-states that are essentially political empires and mega-corporations that are essentially economic empires. All are socially and ecologically pernicious.

Apocalypse is not just a province of the imagination, says Scheidler. No other civilization in history has managed to produce so many real-life doomsday options, from nuclear war to environmental collapse to the spread of mutated killer pathogens arising from the over-use of antibiotics. Nonetheless, even though the direction has been problematic, the disintegration we are facing does not necessarily have to result in apocalypse. A determined resistance against the destructive force of the Megamachine is possible, and new social and economic structures can be built to allow people gradually to live outside its logic. Scheidler ends with various examples of “defensive struggles” going on around the world which are resisting the old and building the new.

See: www.fabianscheidler.com

What kind of “progress” leads a society to the brink of collapse?

Emma Goldman: Political Thinking in the Streets

By Kathy E. Ferguson

Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011

(this is adapted from a review by David Porter which first appeared in the Fifth Estate issue of Summer 2013)

In her fascinating book on Emma Goldman, Kathy Ferguson focuses on Goldman as a dynamic thinker whose differing social activist contexts and personal challenges produced constantly evolving theoretical perspectives.

Ferguson reminds us of Goldman's whirlwind energy for the cause—writing 200,000 lifelong letters, delivering over 10,000 public speeches, making frequent cross-country speaking tours, writing numerous articles and books, and editing *Mother Earth Magazine* for over a decade. Additionally, she endured numerous arrests, spent over three years in prison, lived many years abroad, and directly experienced the Russian and Spanish revolutions.

To gain a dramatic sense of her central political stature, Ferguson asks us to imagine in today's context a powerfully articulate and defiant “young working-class immigrant woman from a despised racial group,” consistently and charismatically electrifying for decades huge crowds and networks of liberals, radicals, and anarchists across the country while constantly being demonized by the elites, the government, and the media. Goldman's reputation and her writings have made her still an icon, generations later.

In Chapter 4, Ferguson creatively analyzes Goldman's privately self-described romantic dependency struggles through a prism different from that of her feminist critics. By examining Goldman's attraction to theater and disdain for film and her literary aesthetics favoring 19th century “romanticism/realism” versus overly analytical modernism, Ferguson emphasizes Goldman's preference for didactic and inspiring imagery in her dramatization of struggle, at both intimate-personal and social levels. She parallels Goldman's passion for erotic fulfillment with her love for revolution, each with enormous transformative power and each involving tension between gratification and consistency. Though experiencing disappointments in each realm, Emma refused to give up the ideal. “She insisted on our power to change the world”—and she applied that expectation to her own erotic politics as well as to the broad movement.

Finally, it was Goldman's refusal to accept any limiting orthodoxy and her constant learning from personal and political challenges that led her to develop her own “political theory in

the streets,” a lively dynamic between her activist engagement and her generalizing reflections on successes and failures.

Ferguson's intent is to demonstrate “a different manner of political thinking, one that is located specifically in a radical political space, articulated passionately amidst intense personal relationships in response to an immediate set of questions about oppression and possibility.” She specifically describes the contexts of, and Goldman's contributions to, “anarchist time” (a temporality of periodic and special actions encouraging the expansion of movement space and potentials of revolution) and “anarchist space” (the extensive daily encounters and conversations among activists, writers, correspondents, and audiences receptive to the revolutionary message).

These, as well as the broader realities of multi-dimensional social oppression and violent repression, all fueled Goldman's passionate political engagements. In portraying the anarchist milieu, Ferguson draws richly from her impressive research, much in the Berkeley-based Emma Goldman archive, and into the well-developed movement of Goldman's era, including the previously neglected notable presence of anarchist women. Chapter 2 is devoted to profiling the early movement and chapter 6, supplemented by an expansive and useful website, to the role of women within it. These two chapters help to explain Goldman's powerful linkage of feminism and anarchism. As well, chapter 1 vividly conveys the extent of anti-labor political violence and the overall contexts of social oppression that encouraged and justified her revolutionary rhetoric.

Beyond the state's direct coercion, Goldman was well aware of, and often discouraged by, the power of the media and of religious, political and sexist conditioning in clouding consciousness and inhibiting liberatory action. But she believed in the eventual ability and desire of everyone to work toward personal and social emancipation if only they recognized the various hypocritical glues of the “social order.” Goldman was thus committed, prophet-like says Ferguson, to motivate people toward thinking deeply and radically, to rupture “acceptable reality” through exposure to and acceptance of an alternative vision and then to act accordingly.

A great value of Ferguson's book is to help people think about the vital shaping influences on Goldman's politics as well as Goldman's subjective methods of shaping the political world (personal and broadly social) herself. However commendable her vision, courage, and influence, Emma Goldman is still better understood and more easily related to by contemporary readers, not as a distant icon, but as a woman constantly struggling with, learning about, and reassessing issues important to us all.

Ferguson reminds us of Goldman's whirlwind energy for the cause—
writing 200,000 lifelong letters, delivering over 10,000 public speeches, writing
numerous articles and books, and editing *Mother Earth Magazine* for over a decade.

The General Strike

BY DAVID WATSON

It started when the carrots refused to germinate.

They'd had enough. If they had had tools, say, drills and hammers, they would have laid them down. One might imagine their abandoned chisels and mallets left on the elaborate scaffolding around the precariously tall, swaying, irregular, auger-like cathedral of what was to become a mature carrot; the fine latticework of the leafy pinnacle unfinished and flapping like the torn rigging on a scuttled sailing ship; the incomplete wiring around the foundations in the dusty soil. One might imagine the tiny orange rivets growing, along a narrow, shallow furrow made by the gardener's fingers, each displaying a minuscule, feathery great handkerchief to wave at the watering can as it made its rounds.

One might also imagine the carrot proletarians leaning back (if they could lean back) and folding their wise, gnarled hands into sinewy arms (if they had hands and arms), declaring "No more." But, of course, carrots fabricate themselves without tools and scaffolding, in a kind of Moebian caprice, making themselves out of what appears to be nothing, like rabbits pulling themselves out of a hat, without the hat. They work quite mysteriously, under cover, a secret guild.

Not this time, though. They never opened their shutters, never came out of their shadowy hovels: No carrots the first year! It would be almost possible to imagine them behind closed doors, drinking their home-made grog, kicking off the wooden clogs for which sabotage has been named, and dancing to a carrot music of their own making. The mute refusal of the carrots—no leaflets, no broadcasts, no congresses—sent shock waves through the garden.

Quite soon afterward the other rows joined the mutiny. First the beans, after growing opulent in their foliage, and after producing flowers insouciantly and dazzlingly seductive, bore no fruit. It was a wanton gesture bordering on vindictiveness. The manic blossoms made the bees swoon. The beans might have been as hallucinogenic as peyote if they had come on, but they didn't.

The following year the beans didn't germinate at all. Like the carrots, they simply boycotted the event. The row lay there, indifferent to sun and rain, like slightly raised scar tissue. One could imagine getting down on all fours and placing an ear against the ground to hear what might be going on there behind the locked door of the beans' renunciation. But there

would only be a capacious silence, as if the beans, turned inward after that year of sterile profligacy, were meditating on cushions. They were not going to answer that door.

It was only a matter of time before the corn and the squash and the chilies, lonely without the beans, all followed suit. They, too, put on a startling display one year before giving up the ghost the next. One had to suspect what was coming as one gazed on a row of beautiful, deep green corn, tall and lusty and almost blue as a tropical sea, tassling lasciviously and then bearing no issue. The gardener must have gazed across the corn with the despair of a thirsty wanderer who realizes that the desert oasis is nothing but a mirage.

Finally, all the crops joined the strike. Replacement seeds—new and supposedly improved strains from distant laboratories—were trucked in as a situation one might first consider an irritant became a question of consternation, growing unease, a sense of peril and outright cataclysm. But the seeds fared poorly. Some germinated only to be mowed down by obscure plagues. One hardy little tomato plant would catch a blister or blight, start to sniffle, and overnight all would be struck down with a biblical violence. The engineered seeds were too perfect, too uniform, too docile. One might imagine them smiling identically in their conditioned optimism, all of them properly inoculated, all unblemished, all sporting the same smartly creased and starched jump suits, all shouldering their tools, all blissfully daydreaming to the same piped-in music. But then would come a ripple in the smooth surface of things, and brutish, muscular insects would arrive, scarred and hirsute; or sly viruses would infiltrate the crowd like pickpockets; and the manufactured seeds and plants would wither and crumple all at once.

Gradually it became clear that whatever it was the carrots had initiated was now more than a limited refusal. Rather, an entirely new regime had emerged, and qualitatively different conditions were now in place. Leaving the tools hanging in their storage shed, the hoses coiled and the granary empty, the gardener moved on, actually *becoming* the tattered, hungry beggar that had been a flickering apparition in a dream that season when the carrots began, obscurely and tentatively, to turn everything upside down.

Emblem of that shadowy vagrant disappearing on the horizon, only the scarecrow remained, its weathered frock flapping exhausted in the gentle wind, a twisted, wiry arm pointing away at nothing.

Green Party History

BY STEVE WELZER

ENGLAND: THE BEGINNINGS

The genesis of the Green politics movement dates to about fifty years ago in the wake of two key events: 1970 saw the inauguration of what has become the worldwide Earth Day celebration; then, in 1972 in England, Edward Goldsmith published the seminal document “A Blueprint for Survival.” It was signed by over thirty of the leading scientists of the day. Here is an excerpt from its Preface:

This document has been drawn up by a small team of people, all of whom, in different capacities, are professionally involved in the study of global environmental problems. Four considerations have prompted us to do this:

- 1. An examination of the relevant information available has impressed upon us the extreme gravity of the global situation today. For, if current trends are allowed to persist, the breakdown of society and the irreversible disruption of the life-support systems of this planet are inevitable.*
- 2. Governments are either refusing to face the relevant facts or are briefing their scientists in such a way that their seriousness is played down. Whatever the reasons, no corrective measures of any consequence are being undertaken.*
- 3. The situation has prompted the formation of the Club of Rome, which is currently trying to persuade governments, industrial leaders, and trade unions throughout the world to face these facts and to take appropriate action while there is yet time. It must now give rise to a national movement to act at a national level, and if need be to assume political status and contest the next general election. It is hoped that such an example will be emulated in all countries, thereby giving rise to an international movement.*
- 4. Such a movement cannot hope to succeed unless it has previously formulated a new philosophy of life, whose goals can be achieved without destroying the environment, and a precise and comprehensive program for bringing about the sort of society in which it can be implemented.*

*This we have tried to do, and our Blueprint for Survival hopefully will herald the formation of a **movement for survival** and the dawn of a new age in which humanity will learn to live **with** the rest of nature rather than against it.*

The document was first published as a special edition of Goldsmith’s *The Ecologist* magazine. When later published in book form it sold almost a million copies worldwide. A synopsis ran as an op-ed in the *New York Times* in February 1972.

From that point forward Edward Goldsmith argued for a deep kind of social change based on values that would become the four pillars of the Green politics movement: ecological responsibility, extended democracy, social justice, and nonviolence. He helped found a new political party in Britain, the Ecology Party, which eventually became the Green Party of England and Wales. He stood for office as a candidate representing that party in a number of elections.

* * * *

GERMANY: THE BREAKTHROUGH

England’s Ecology Party inspired the founding of Green (or similar) parties in one country after another between 1975 and 1985. In Germany the initiation of *Die Grünen* was planned during the late seventies by activist luminaries such as Petra Kelly, Joschka Fischer, Rudolf Bahro, and Jutta Ditfurth. A founding convention was held in 1980 to little fanfare. But it was big news all around the world when in 1983 the party won 27 seats in the Bundestag (the national parliament). This was the first time an ecological party became viewed as a significant political force in a major country.

The *New York Times* ran an article by James Markham, “Germany’s Volatile Greens,” in February 1983. Some excerpts:

In an uptight, rule-bound country, the Greens’ irreverence is a breath of fresh air. The Greens are the latest edition of youthful rebellion in West Germany. Dotted lines connect them to the student movement of the 1960s, which in West Germany cut its teeth on the issues of Vietnam and the rights of unorthodox intellectuals to teach in universities.

The post-Sixties wave of resistance to the established order might have remained politically dispersed, but several developments pulled it together. One was the durability of the coalition between the Social Democrats and the Free Democrats, first forged under Willy Brandt in 1969. The coalition had shifted the Social Democrats to the center of the political spectrum, leaving no real alternative to their left. During those years of Social Democrat moderation and government responsibility, the extreme left—which in

other Western European countries is accommodated within Communist or Socialist parties—felt it had no home. The Greens soon became that political home.

It is a fine irony that a party suspicious of the United States was founded by one Petra Karin Kelly, 35, who learned politics from Robert Kennedy, Hubert Humphrey and the American anti-Vietnam War movement. Petra Kelly is a blend of German passion and American pragmatism; she speaks an American English frozen somewhere in the let-it-all-hang-out 1960s [she lived in the United States with her parents during her teen-age years between 1960 and 1969]. She is, paradoxically, the star and standard-bearer of a political party that rejects the very idea of permanent leaders. She wants deeply to be a member of the Bundestag.

The following month Petra and 26 other Greens achieved that goal and put Green politics on the map.

* * * *

UNITED STATES: WHAT HAPPENED TO GPUSA?

There's no avoiding contention and occasional acrimony within ideological movements—left, right, or center. Even the relatively pacific and egalitarian-minded Greens can be subject to discord, disunity, and antipathy.

In the last issue of *Green Horizon* Charlene Spretnak wrote: "The ISE [Institute for Social Ecology] group's aggressive way of doing politics was evident at the first national gathering, in Amherst, MA, in 1987. On the opening night several journalists from leading publications were in the audience, curious to see what Green politics was about. Instead of speaking on that subject, as we other plenary speakers did that night, Murray Bookchin used his time to attack and demean a long list of male ecological-political authors he wanted to take down. He and his ISE adherents also cultivated other conflicts during the conference, explaining afterward that (in their belief system) you have to 'make some heat to get any light'."

The Amherst conference was a major movement event in this country. I first got interested in the Greens after reading about it in *Z Magazine* in the fall of 1987.

As Charlene intimates, the kernel of the bad vibes that would split the Greens (GPUSA vs. ASGP) in the mid-nineties was evident in Amherst. Many of us attribute the problem to Murray Bookchin. He had an antagonistic 1930s-style tone to his participation in the movement. And to the extent that his *modus operandi* bled into the Left Green Network, it made the LGN anathema to many Greens. Charlene is correct when she writes that LGN tended to have "a vanguard mentality [implying] that the rest of us had no interest in economic change and that Green economic policy was a vacuum, which they rightfully should be the ones to fill."

Howie Hawkins was very associated with Murray Bookchin during the 1980s. To his credit, he started distinguishing himself from Murray in terms of ideology, orientation, and tone after helping to launch GPUSA (Greens/Green Party USA) in 1991. I joined up with the Greens after reading Howie's seminal document from that period titled "Toward A New Politics." Having been a leftist since college during the 1960s, when I came into the Greens I at first gravitated toward the Left Green Network—and then toward the GPUSA side when a pending split became evident following the Elkins, West Virginia national gathering of 1991.

The Association of State Green Parties (ASGP) constituted the other side. It was formed in 1996 advocating state-based electoralism. GPUSA favored the idea of activist locals networking as sub-units of a national dues-paying membership organization. Most leftist groups are organized that way. ASGP recognized that, for a nascent organization like the Greens, membership in the locals would for many years be too thin to reach critical mass, and membership at the national level would be too remote and diffuse. Interest, identification and critical mass could best be galvanized at the state party level. Also, ideologically, ASGP was more sympathetic to the German formulation: "Neither left nor right but out in front."

By 1998 some of us hoped to see ASGP and GPUSA merge, adopting the strategic orientation of ASGP along with the anti-capitalism ideology of GPUSA. On that basis we formed a caucus called "Greens for Unity." Within two years we had motivated the "Boston negotiations." A merger seemed possible. But the negotiations were not successful. They failed because too many GPUSA members wanted to adhere to their more-leftist, more-activist praxis and to retain much of their organizational autonomy. It was a fatal mistake on their part. The ASGP orientation had more resonance.

I participated at Boston as a GPUSA representative. It was clear to me that disdaining a merger was bound to result in marginalization for "our side." I think Howie could see that, also. He tried to move his comrades to appreciate the reality they were facing and thus to be more compromising. But Don Fitz and his co-thinkers, in particular, wanted the GPUSA negotiators to hold out for more influence in the ultimate national party. Their intransigence wound up ruining GPUSA. Instead of being influential, that *party manqué* just faded away over the next ten years.



STEVE WELZER

is the editor of *Green Horizon*. He was a founder of the Green Party of New Jersey in 1997 and has run for a variety of offices as a GP candidate. Steve is a principal with the Altair EcoVillage project in Kimberton, PA.

. . . snippets of Charlie Keil

the bear visits daily now
takes apple and pear
the size of nickels

i already share my gardens
with woodchucks, rabbits, chipmunks, squirrels,
crows, blue jays, birdies non-discript but busy,
voles eating melons, insects turning eggplant leaves to lace,
spotted slugs & snails competing when days are moist

soon it will be all alliums: onions, leeks, and garlic
asparagus & bonus henricus in spring
arugula in summer . . .

plants that other critters leave alone
mizumi can get big and keep us in salads
tomatoes and peppers can make it thru
lots of kale? . . . let's see what we can do

* * * *

matricentric musicking
earthMother-minded
untethered from t'othering
who is the kindest

foot tapping
knees bouncing
make it look easy
each instrument audible

everything balanced
everyone blending
lots of the old tunes
each person laudable

sharing the heritage
making it like new
enjoying each other
thru & thru

let's do it, too
me & you

greeks will come to their census
count each other still alive
realize that all the troubles they've survived
came from a sky god who never cried

& now the Mother gifts once more
& all her children She adores

& butterflies dance from flower to flower
transforming storms into gentle showers
Earth will be green again

* * * *

rainforests are not just the lungs of the planet
they are the brains of classless people who live there
if the eco-logics of these true anarchists
were followed by all
we would have zero pandemics
x and y and z would be gifted in small circles
with pre-existing immunities in many species

thanks to rob wallace Big Farms Make Big Flu
we know how each pandemic spills over into us
a capital expenditure for slicing into the rainforest
creates a monoculture and selects for bad bugs
creates a new interspecies interface, and off we go
spillage from village to village
to "wet markets" and over to the nearest airport . . .

a Global Organization of Democracies
a Women's Forum for Peace & Eco-equilibrio
could stop the slicing up of habitats
promote the self-determination of forest peoples
reforest the plantations, savannas, and deserts
bring hope and passion to the oncoming generations
new songs and dances to save the world

Progress re: Electoral System Reform

RCV and the Fair Representation Act

BY ROB RICHIE

Ranked Choice Voting ensures that the winner of an election will have the support of the majority of all votes cast, not just a plurality, and there will be no “wasted” votes.

The surge in progress for RCV and other structural reforms underscores that if you keep promoting good ideas, find allies, and stay nimble, you can catalyze real change.

In June 1992 a spirited group of activists founded FairVote and I became its founding director. Our surge in progress for Ranked Choice Voting and other structural reforms underscores that if you keep promoting good ideas, find allies, and stay nimble, you can catalyze real change.

FairVote began as Citizens for Proportional Representation and winning “PR” remains our north star. In 1990, PR was already the international norm, with nearly every new democracy adopting it instead of US-style winner-take-all elections. In this country we wanted public debates to be enhanced with more voices and the power to join with like-minded allies to earn a fair share of seats. Ever more Americans lose in today’s sectarian winner-take-all politics in which Democrats and Republicans are deep in a death spiral of polarization that limits choice even as huge problems are poorly addressed or completely ignored.

So how best do we win change? Many democracies use *party-centric* PR systems—where each party puts forward a list of candidates. Voters look over the lists and then cast votes for parties. If the Greens receive 10% of the vote, then 10% of the seats are populated with candidates drawn from the Green Party list. But I believe American traditions point to the *voter-centric* system of Ranked Choice Voting—especially in its proportional form embodied by Congressman Don Beyer’s Fair Representation Act. The latter, by mere statute, could establish PR for Congress by implementing a variant called “Proportional Ranked Choice Voting” (P-RCV, also called “single transferable vote”). While not as directly beneficial to small parties as a system based on party lists, it represents a huge leap forward for sustaining multi-party elections and more responsive government. Voters feel comfortable that minor parties and independents can run aggressively without splitting the vote.

Unlike parliamentary democracies, in the US we directly elect executive offices—president, governors, mayors, and so on. Ranked Choice Voting is a powerful improvement over both plurality voting and “delayed runoffs.” It’s now law for presidential elections in two states and in local elections in more than 50 cities. When RCV is applied in elections for multiple seats, P-RCV is best. For each additional seat being contested, more voters will have a chance to elect a favorite candidate. The logic, then, is to broaden districts and include multiple representatives in each.

Unlike list systems, P-RCV can be used for nonpartisan elections, which dominate our politics at the local level: It’s already working well in cities like Minneapolis and Cambridge, Massachusetts. Portland, Oregon recently established it for city council elections. It enables independent candidates and voters to participate on an equal basis. Tens of millions of American voters are proud to be unaffiliated, and many candidates run as independents. P-RCV gives them a level playing field to compete in general elections without needing to affiliate with a party.

P-RCV transparently upholds the Voting Rights Act: Because it involves voting directly for candidates, racial minority voters can elect candidates of choice directly. At the same time, RCV means they can indicate backup choices that will count if their first choice falls short, which increases the power of their vote and opportunities for inclusion. It’s a proven voting rights remedy that has already been upheld in federal and state courts.

P-RCV fits our political culture of “big tent” parties that encompass diverse perspectives: American parties traditionally encompass major internal differences spread across our vast national geography. P-RCV would allow that big tent to be filled with the range of views that truly co-exist within the major parties – especially because P-RCV in primaries (as proposed in the Fair Representation Act) will ensure a party’s nominees fully reflect their party’s internal diversity. Illinois for more than a century showcased this kind of politics when electing its state legislature with a similar proportional system (“cumulative voting”), and it promoted better, more inclusive governance.

In 2015, FairVote asked fourteen leading political scientists and law professors to evaluate 37 different electoral reforms across 16 different dimensions of impact. They concluded that P-RCV would be the single most impactful change. Congressman Don Beyer quickly saw the logic of P-RCV when we met to talk about it. He introduced the Fair Representation Act in 2017. Backers include columnist David Brooks, the *New York Times* editorial board, and growing numbers of members of Congress.

It’s time to scale our electoral system reform efforts. We all can work where we are with the many state RCV allies supported by FairVote Action and Rank the Vote. Implementations in schools, organizations, parties, localities and, ultimately, states will normalize RCV. And during campaigns we need to relentlessly talk about the need to replace winner-take-all elections.

It took 31 years for FairVote’s remedies to be on the cusp of a breakthrough. Within the coming decade, an expanded coalition could make RCV the norm in our elections and win the Fair Representation Act.

Targeting New Jersey for RCV Implementation

BY BARRY BENDAR

Six years ago I found myself at the Green Party of New Jersey (GPNJ) convention in South Amboy, New Jersey. It had been a successful convention, with exciting and varied speakers and the introduction of our state-wide candidates. There was electricity in the air as we approached the point in the program where we would be choosing our leadership for the new year. Somehow, I was drafted to be part of the polling team for this election. That’s when I first heard the term Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). I was not at that time familiar with the concept, but the GPNJ Membership Chair pulled me aside and gave me my first lesson (in 15 minutes).

That was my introduction to RCV. I’ve since learned that it’s an integral part of the GPNJ platform. My interest is such that I helped found, and now am on the leadership team of, the organization Voter Choice New Jersey (VCNJ). Its goal is to bring Ranked Choice Voting to all elections in our state.

RCV has been used in other countries for years. It ensures that the winner of an election will have the support of the majority of all votes cast, not just a plurality, and there will be no “wasted” votes. The voters’ preferences will register much more clearly through their ranking of the candidates. Ranked Choice Voting makes for less contentious campaigning (as you may want to encourage an opposing candidate’s voters to list you as #2), eliminates the idea that a third candidate would be considered a “spoiler”, and saves money by eliminating the need for costly (and usually lower participation) runoff elections.

RCV is a solution to the dilemma where a third party supporter might feel compelled to vote for the “lesser of two evils.” Many times, as I’ve gathered petition signatures to try to get a Green candidate on the ballot, I’ve heard voters say, “I’ll vote for a Green Party candidate once we get Ranked Choice Voting. I’m too afraid to do that now.”

Voter Choice New Jersey is targeting Board of Education, municipal, and county elections to implement RCV so that voters become familiar with it before we pursue implementation for state and federal level contests. The latter would require changes to the state voting laws. We’ve started making progress toward that end. VCNJ is also reaching out and educating the public. A relatively new tool being used is “mock elections” that have shown to be very successful educational devices. These events have already been held in two of the larger cities in our state (Jersey City and Hoboken)—and since wonderful culinary expertise can be found in both of those places, the “mock elections” have been to “rank the restaurants” rather than to rank political candidates. Those attending not only have gotten the privilege of learning how Ranked Choice Voting works, but they’ve also been able to sample what they voted for!



ROB RICHIE
is president and CEO of FairVote, www.fairvote.org.



BARRY BENDAR
is the Green Party of New Jersey Elections Chair. He ran for Ocean County Commissioner in 2021 and Lacey Township Committee in 2022.

BRITTLE

BY JON OLSEN

Like a frail elderly person, the bones of many governments, including our own, have become brittle.

Reflect on the word. It means ‘hard but fragile.’ In our own lifetime, we saw the end of the USSR. It had become brittle in its governance. Now, it seems it is the turn of the USA. Let me hasten to say that the problem is not the form of government, with its careful and mutual limitation of the three branches, but rather the *content* of government within each branch. They have all been effectively captured by corporations, in the aggregate. So, to paraphrase Lincoln, we now have a government “of the corporations, by the corporations, and for the corporations.”

This circumstance is causing the brittleness. There is no longer the flexibility to bend to the will of the people. The collective powers of citizens to affect government have been fatally eroded, and the result could be a mudslide into catastrophe.

The *hardness* quality of brittle comes into play in many domains. The reality is that freedom and liberty have become almost subversive words to the power elites, with regard to finances, medical care, travel, language, and more. Edicts that are not *laws* passed by Congress or legislatures—coming from the executive branch or from governmental agencies—have become normalized. The power of citizenship has been usurped by these agencies and we are being treated as “wards of the state” in far too many areas. Hardness is also evident in the judicial system, with its emphasis on punitive measures rather than restorative justice. Hardness is the awful choice so frequently employed in plea bargains: either admit to a crime for which you might, in fact, be innocent and get a light sentence or hold your ground and risk a huge sentence if the skewed justice system gets it wrong.

Hard, too, is the description I would give to the injustice where those who unselfishly sacrifice their freedom and often their safety blocking the infrastructure of the voracious fossil fuel companies get labeled as (and prosecuted as) “eco-terrorists”—while those who are literally destroying the capacity of the earth to sustain life are rewarded with corner offices and stock options.

And there is a pernicious kind of arrogant hardness, redolent of empires, that spurs a government to establish and maintain some 800 military installations outside its own borders.

What about *fragile*? It is the other component of brittle. We see it in the desperation of the authoritarians who feel a need to try to control the population. Restrictions proliferate; and they elicit grievances reminiscent of those against the King of England in that famous July 4, 1776 document. We see it as well in censorship by the assorted corporate media, including self-censorship in areas they understand from the unwritten rules of corporate governance. Those who dare to transgress are quickly labeled “conspiracy theorists.” By using that CIA-inspired term, rational discussion is short-circuited, even sabotaged, and that is exactly the intent!

As questioning of and opposition to government and corporate policy increases, we the people are beginning to feel our power and gain the confidence that “we shall overcome.” The tide is turning. The objective need for that which sustains life—adequate nutritious food and water, housing, medical care (not disease mitigation), as well as the clamor for liberty and justice for all—is running up against the intransigence of a brittle corporatized industrial state. Like with tectonic plates colliding, something has to give. I believe that in our time we’ll be witnessing a political earthquake that will unsettle the existing order and open pathways toward the ultimate greening of our society. In that respect, it’s an interesting time to be alive!



JON OLSEN

After teaching high school for a year, Jon was drawn to Hawai’i, attending the University of Hawai’i at Manoa and obtaining a Master’s degree in philosophy. He was a founding member there of Students for a Democratic Society and Draft Resistance. Twenty years later he was a founding member of the Hawai’i Green Party. Upon returning to his Maine homestead

in 2001 he joined the Maine Green Independent Party and has served three times on the state steering committee, once as co-chair.

In the US now we have a government “of the corporations,
by the corporations, for the corporations.”

Sane Society?

Our society tells itself a story about making progress regarding “betterment”—while its value system (growth, development, wealth accumulation, profit, consumption, power, control, conquest of nature) has led toward egregious inequality, failed states, withering of community, habitat destruction, and potential ecocide.

If an individual knowingly destroyed the conditions of their own existence, we’d question their sanity.

In his 1955 book, *The Sane Society*, the great psychoanalyst Erich Fromm suggested that nothing is more common than the assumption that we—people living in the advanced industrial economies, the “liberal democracies”—are eminently sane. A conundrum is the possibility that most of us as individuals can be sane and rational while the collective reality is eminently not.

Moreover, most of us now can hardly imagine what a sane society would look like! We’ve lost our bearings. We accept insane standards and scales. Then we endeavor to find success within the Leviathan. It’s terribly stressful—but we have no other point of reference.

“Leviathan” means that it’s an awesome, monstrous behemoth of a social reality. Within it we tend to live isolated existences, confronting the behemoth as individuals or nuclear family units. We try to cope but encounter frustration. We don’t consider that the current scales of institutions and technologies, mega-states and media, have become hypertrophied. Our far-flung domains of individual experience overwhelm us. The scales of mechanized production, distribution, and pollution overwhelm nature’s capacities.

The wasteful and irresponsible “economy” of the United States of America spins around ever more rapidly without ever seeming to get anywhere worth going.

But every time a jobs report comes in below expectations the government spends more, borrows more, stimulates more. And it continues to spend a trillion dollars a year on militarism. Few citizens are aware of the scope of the latter derangement; fewer actually approve; none seem able to do anything about it.

* * * *

A spiritual malaise is spreading throughout advanced capitalist societies. The material rewards of consumerism don’t provide meaning or satisfaction for the populace. And it may be that the system has hit a wall even from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie; after central-bank-induced inflation of asset prices over the last several decades, prospective returns on capital figure to be minimal going forward. Governmental attempts to stimulate the economy and buoy the populace seem exhausted.

Meanwhile, the citizenry plods along without much (without enough) questioning of the injustice, plutocracy, exploitation, and alienation. Why? Because the Leviathan has subtly grown up around us over time with a dynamic of its own. Evidently a society can go insane without being aware of its own tragic predilections.

Like a fleet of ships that has been unmoored in a storm, our species is drifting in dangerous seas without a clear sense of direction. Erich Fromm saw it clearly and warned us almost 70 years ago . . .

The above incorporates material from “Delusions of Sanity” by Samuel Alexander (<https://www.griffithreview.com/articles/delusions-of-sanity>).

If an individual knowingly destroyed the conditions of their own existence, we’d question their sanity.

Letters

While reading an issue of *Ballot Access News* late one evening, I was saddened to learn of John Rensenbrink's passing. I became one of John's long-distance friends, in the late 1980s, when he was overseeing the Green Party's SPAKA (Strategy and Policy Approaches in Key Areas) process. My wife and I hosted him at our house a few years later, when he visited Columbia, Missouri. Although I'm not Dutch, we shared a common connection in that we were both alums of Dutch Reformed colleges.

While we differed on some things, theologically and politically, we also shared some common values and I always found John to be a man of integrity and a perceptive political scientist. Through the years, I was grateful to have the opportunity to see my articles published in *Green Horizon*. John was a careful and helpful editor. As a manuscript reader, he played a key role in getting my first book published and I did the same for his last book.

John Rensenbrink will long be remembered for his principled and eloquent advocacy on behalf of grassroots democracy, decentralization, ecological wisdom, social justice, and nonviolence.

— Jeff Taylor

Political scientist and Iowa State Senator

We are deeply saddened to learn of John Rensenbrink's passing, yet grateful for the wisdom he unrelentingly shared with so many for so long. As residents of Topsham, Maine from 1978 until 2009, we were fortunate enough to have known John and Carla at a close personal level. Together with other Mainers, we engaged in numerous direct actions for preservation, conservation, smart growth and the betterment of our community in the Mid-Coast area.

John and Carla consistently set a sterling example for emerging activists while imparting their insights and perspectives on perseverance with a gentle respect, resolve, grace and humor. My service, with Carla, as a member of the Topsham Conservation Committee while she was chairwoman, was fruitful, satisfying and memorable.

Engaged in political conversation over lunch or supper in each other's homes, and while ice skating, canoeing or walking along the Cathance River or the mountains of western Maine, we savored their enlightened company, even hiking together at Zion and Bryce Canyon National Parks when they came to visit us at our chosen home after we relocated from Topsham to Kanab, Utah. Our public engagement skills, optimism and commitment to community participation grew immensely through our many years interacting with the Rensenbrinks. In many respects, our friendship with them helped develop our abilities to dedicate years of community service here in Utah through the two 501c3 nonprofits we founded, Amazing Earthfest and Stellar Vista Observatory.

Going forward, we'll continue to enjoy reading and learning from the articles published in *Green Horizon*. Thank you for your continuing dedication to the principles of Green politics.

— Rich and Debra Csenge

Kanab, Utah

Two Haiku

A traditional Japanese haiku is a three-line poem with seventeen syllables, written in a 5/7/5 syllable count. Haikus tend to emphasize simplicity, intensity, and directness of expression. Ted Becker and Patricia Lantz have compiled over a hundred into "The Haiku Blues" (Wipf & Stock; Eugene, OR; 2017). They've graciously given us permission to share these with you:

**Until the people
are involved, global issues
will go unresolved.**

**Thoreau walked Walden.
The waters whispered one word:
Simplification.**

The production of Green Horizon is funded by the generous contributions of the Sustainers who are listed on the following page (though some are anonymous). We're the only print magazine in this country focusing on Green politics and related movements. We endeavor to provide vital coverage and thought-provoking discussions, but we need your support. Please join the Sustainers list by sending a check to the address on the back cover or via PayPal at our website: www.Green-Horizon.org.



GREEN HORIZON

GREEN HORIZON FOUNDATION SUSTAINERS FOR THE 2022-2023 CYCLE

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| Tony & Melba Affigne, Rhode Island | Michael Heichman, Massachusetts | Liz Rensenbrink & Anne Karczewski, Maine |
| David Bath, Florida | Fred & Hadley Horch, Maine | Rob Richie, Maryland |
| Ted Becker, Alabama | Patricia Jackson, Maine | Olga Sanabria Davila, Puerto Rico |
| Eli Beckerman, Massachusetts | Christopher Jones, New Mexico | David Schwartzman, Washington, DC |
| Glen Bennett, Rhode Island | Kanab City Library, Utah | Peter Schwartzman, Illinois |
| MJ Berry, Nebraska | Maynard Kaufman, MI | Evelyn Seberry, Michigan |
| Justin Beth, Maine | Charles Keil, Connecticut | Robert Sellin, Maine |
| Brian Bittner, Maryland | Robert & Kimberley Kinsey, Colorado | Brian Setzler, Oregon |
| Dianne Blais, Virginia | Jim Krosschell & Cindy Dockrell, Massachusetts | Mac (Charles) Sexton, Hawaii |
| Bowdoin College Library, Maine | Joseph Lacayo, New Mexico | Alberta Shelby, New York |
| Peter Broeksmit, Illinois | Hector Lopez, Connecticut | William & Ursula Slavick, Maine |
| Charles & Dianne Brown, Kansas | Erik Lords, California | Sam Smith, Maine |
| Denise Brush, New Jersey | Margie & Bruce MacWilliams, New Jersey | B. Sidney Smith, Virginia |
| Rich Burrill, Pennsylvania | Linda Martin, Washington | Thom Speidel, Washington |
| Caron Cadle, Florida | Justine McCabe, Connecticut | Charlene Spretnak, California |
| Hank Chapot, California | James M. McCarthy, Maine | Stephen Swift, Massachusetts |
| Roy Christman, Pennsylvania | Elaine McGillicuddy, Maine | Lisa Taylor, California |
| Don Crawford, Illinois | Brent McMillan, Indiana | Jeff & Shirley Taylor, Iowa |
| Aimee Cree Dunn & Linda Cree, Michigan | Raymond Meyer, Iowa | Deanna Taylor, Utah |
| Rich & Debra Csenge, Utah | Al Miller, Maine | David Thompson & Leslie Pearlman, New Mexico |
| Joseph de Rivera, Maine | Daryl! L.C. Moch, Washington, DC | David & Marilyn Tilton, Maine |
| Christine DeTroy, Maine | Tim Morgan, California | Victoria Tredinnick, New York |
| Jenefer Ellingston, Washington, DC | Dean Myerson, Oregon | Rachel Treichler, New York |
| Romi Elnagar, Louisiana | Michael Ochs, Pennsylvania | Marko Ulvila & Jarna Pasanen, Finland |
| Paul Etxeberri, Nevada | Jon Olsen, Maine | John Van Pelt & Karen Blaisdell, Maine |
| Richard Evanoff, Japan | Rosalie Paul, Maine | Rhoda Vanderhart, Alabama |
| Charles Fitzgerald, Maine | Janet Pence, Maine | Dave Vollrath, Tennessee |
| Curtis Fitzgerald, California | Karen Peterson, Arizona | Steve Welzer & Laura Houck, New Jersey |
| Thomas Foote, Maine | Suzan Preiksats, New Jersey | David Whiteman, South Carolina |
| Gunter Frankenberg, Germany | Joshua Pritchett, Georgia | Paul Woodruff, Texas |
| David & Melissa Frans, Maine | Earl Prochaska, New York | Margaret & Peter Zack, Maine |
| Bruce Gagnon, Maine | Virginia Rasmussen, New York | Anne Zill, Maine |
| Greg Gerritt & Kathleen Rourke, Rhode Island | Richard Reisdorf, Minnesota | |
| Green Party of Rhode Island | Carla Rensenbrink, Maine | |
| Gil Harris, Maine | Kathryn Rensenbrink & Jon McMillan, Maine | |
| Holly Hart, Iowa | | |

Thanks to all!!



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 454
Portland, ME

GREEN HORIZON FOUNDATION
P.O. BOX 2029
PRINCETON, NJ 08543

