

Summer Gathering

Common Ground Lexington, Virginia July 13, 1997

Present: Eli Fishpaw, Muriel Grim (facilitator), Sherry Stanley (notetaker), Brandon Smith, Eric Sheffield (facilitator), Charlie Jordan, Jana Cutlip, Peter Robinson, Herb Goldstein, Kathy Fox, and the following guests: Doug Grim, Tom Roberts, Tex Wood, and Alexander Cutlip.

1. Reform Party Request: Tom Roberts and Tex Wood from the Reform Party presented a request. The Reform Party had a governor's candidate on their executive slate for the fall elections, but for personal reasons she has withdrawn. Looking for someone to fill that slot and focusing on their goal of retaining ballot status by seizing at least 10 percent of the vote, they asked the Greens of Virginia to put forth a candidate. They said they saw shared goals of a representative government in our parties.

Tex said this is the first time in his memory when there could be an alternate ballot line for the executive races in Virginia; Tom reminded us of the potential press coverage because there are only two elections for governor in the U.S. this year. They asked that we join them at their meeting in Afton on Saturday, July 19, and to consider this proposal and possible Green candidates.

2. Minutes --- Eric distributed the minutes from the spring meeting. Eric then reported our only interim committee decision since the last meeting: approval of the membership-voted platform. Brandon requested that the clerks send printed copies of the minutes to each local before the meeting.

Because it was linked to the minutes, we took this time to ratify (second approval) the change in the by-laws concerning platform development, section XIX. Platform Revision Process. There was considerable discussion about inadequacies in the process. Suggestions included e-mail as well as mailed copies to membership for voting, changing turn-around time from 30 to 45 days, looking at the discrepancy between votes needed for deletion and votes needed for inclusion, correcting a spelling error, and looking into a separate platform for congressional races. Eli asked that we accept the by-law change now and begin looking at revision in our winter meeting. Peter said he would convene a subcommittee to revisit the process, open to everyone for suggestions. We voted to approve the by-law amendment: 5 yes, 1 no, and 3 stand-aside.

3. Treasurer's report --- We have a balance of \$327.78. We would like to have a newsletter printed prior to August 23, the date of the Community Festival in Lexington, but with such low funds maybe we could reduce to four pages. Eric noted that NOVA Greens have some money and haven't spent any so maybe they could contribute to the newsletter. Kathy volunteered to find a way to have some sort of fund raiser, perhaps with musician John McCutcheon or someone else. We asked her to pursue this. Eric said that the New River Valley Greens owe us more than \$40; there is no money in their account. We discussed what we should do about inactive locals. Sherry agreed to contact the New River Valley Greens for their status and advice.

4. Reports from the locals --- Muriel reported that NOVA Greens are not presently meeting. They are communicating through a newsletter mailed to members without e-mail. She distributed their first copy.

Tidewater Greens meet every other week for a discussion centered around a particular book. Tim Morton, present at earlier Summer Gathering events, reported they seem to be losing the battle to stop the King George Reservoir.

Brandon said that he considered the Charlottesville Greens to consist of himself, Heather Gay, and Kierk Sorenson. Peter asked that the minutes reflect that our data base shows thirteen members in the Charlottesville Greens but Brandon only recognizes three. Brandon asked that some comments Harmony Periman had distributed at the October, 1966 meeting be included in the minutes; we decided to check the archives because Sherry, Peter, and Eric thought they had been included. Brandon verbally attacked Peter and asked for some things to be included in the minutes, but Sherry made the choice that name-calling is neither appropriate nor relevant for our minutes.

Blue Mountain Greens --- Peter asked that we put this local on dormant status and said he would write to each member asking him or her to join the Greens of Virginia at-large local. Jana volunteered to attempt to reconvene the local herself to avoid that. She had just signed a membership form selecting the BMG as her local.

Rockbridge Greens --- Eric reported that this local has six members on the ballot; all fall candidates in Va. are from RG. He reported on progress on the Green Pages, a directory of locally-owned businesses. He also described the successful appeal to find members of the community to finance a new restaurant in Lexington (actually an expansion/move of an already existing restaurant), raising more than \$50,000 in only fifteen days with interest rates ranging from 0 percent to 6 percent as opposed to the bank's 12 percent. About half the lenders were Greens, and the appeal was made by the RG. They are now preparing for the annual Community Festival and the campaign kick-off parade in Buena Vista on Labor Day.

5. Governor --- We discussed possible response to the Reform Party invitation to offer them a governor's candidate. We presented positives (a way to get on the ballot without the impossible number of signatures required and coverage of our platform) and the negatives (possibility of Reform candidates speaking for Green candidates and drain of limited resources from other candidates). We need to check on the legality of this.

Brandon called for a vote on the motion that we seek to find a Green candidate to put on the Reform ballot line; the proposal stated that the GPVA begin a search for a candidate to run for governor as a Green Party candidate on the Reform Party ballot line. We understand that the candidate would be nominated by the GPVA and the Reform Party of Virginia and would identify himself or herself as a candidate of both parties. Seven voted yes and Brandon opposed.

The Reform Party has offered this position to Sherry, who declined. Eric suggested these possibilities: Linda Martin, Mark Yatrofsky, and Eli Fishpaw, who agreed to pursue this slot and his own delegate campaign at the same time. Linda, in response to a phone call, declined, affirming she does not meet the residency requirements. We nominated Mark with Eli as backup, and agreed to try to contact Mark before Saturday's meeting. We nominated these candidates in a vote, with 7 voting yes and 1 no based on Brandon's blocking concern (he had left the meeting earlier, and left a proxy with Charley).

6. Endorsement of Tex --- Charlie asked for a clarification of our endorsement policies and the confusion caused by our by-law wording on this subject. He would like us to endorse Tex Wood as the Lt.-governor candidate. Eric said that if we nominate a Green, that candidate will support the Green platform, but it is not clear that Tex will remain the candidate, that he would support our platform, and or that a Green will be the governor's candidate, so we decided to wait until the next meeting.

7. Candidates --- Six candidates have qualified for fall races: Kathy O'Hara and Darrell Crosson for Rockbridge County Soil and Water Conservation Board, Eli Fishpaw for House of Delegates 18th district, Daniel Metraux for House of Delegates 24th district, Sherry Stanley for House of Delegates 25th district, and Dale Diaz for House of Delegates 26th district. Most candidates have formally announced and asked for help from other members of the GOV. Charlie suggested that our web page should be linked to other web sites to benefit the candidates; Eric agreed to try to coordinate this with our web site manager. We reached consensus on using the GOV mailing list to ask for financial support for our candidates; we could use this as an appeal also to donate money for the GPVA. We would have to list the candidates separately but could use Sherry's address as a central mailing address, therefore, allowing us to use return envelopes.

8. Press secretary --- Peter said he would give a conditional resignation as press secretary until we find a new one. Eric responded that we have gone too long without press contact and our need is especially great at this time; Peter agreed to resign unconditionally. Jana volunteered to try this position until the next fall meeting; we elected her.

9. Gay and lesbian parade --- Stephen Jones has asked us to donate \$50 for a table at September's parade in Richmond and to find volunteers for this table. Because of our low funds right now, we cannot do this, but individual members could donate the money. Sherry said that she has a few people she thinks could be free for this, but unfortunately it occurs during campaign season.

10. Getting out there --- Sherry expressed the need for Greens to be present at various functions and activities, much as NOVA Greens have suggested in the past. The Richmond parade would be a good opportunity, and there is an upcoming African-American Festival in Charlottesville. Paying for a booth can be prohibitive, but she encouraged members to find opportunities and use them.

11. Fall meeting --- Co-clerks Sherry and Eric will make arrangements for the fall meeting and include this information in the next newsletter.

12. GPUSA Delegates-- We appointed Jim Lowenstern, Peter Robinson, and Jana Cutlip as GOV delegates to the GPUSA congress in Laurence Mass.