

We must deal with the earth on the earth's terms

THE CENTER FOR REFLECTION ON THE SECOND LAW  
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Circular # 112 THE NATIONAL GREEN GATHERING

June 30, 1989

The South Willamette Green Alliance sponsored the second national green gathering in Eugene Oregon during the period June 21-25 and I went to it. It was a grand event, attended by over 300 persons, representing the many members of the Green Committees of Correspondence. A lot of old friends were there, people from the earliest gatherings, from the later ones and a lot of new people. The sense of comradeship and common purpose was strong.

As one must accept, the Greens are only loosely bound together in a network of local groups dedicated to the Green principles, ecological wisdom, grassroots democracy, personal and social responsibility, non-violence, decentralization, community based economics, feminist values, respect for diversity, global responsibility, sustainability. Those principles, which were adopted at the original meeting at St Paul, in August 1984, have survived pretty well over the years. There are a couple of changes in the wind but basically they set out the Green approach.

What happened at Eugene was this: Some twenty working groups went into session over Thursday and Friday and produced papers which were presented to a plenary session which met Saturday afternoon and evening and Sunday morning. It was made clear that these papers were not position papers or planks in a platform. They are steps toward the achievement of solid Green positions, which may occur in Boulder, August 1990.

However the papers do provide an insight into the Green outlook, Green perspective, Green philosophy. If one wants to know how the Greens think about something, just about anything, these papers give the basic approach. They did not all get consensus at the plenaries, (many of them received considerable criticism) but most got general support with dissent indicating that more discussion was needed or that specific detail should be altered. A few got clear agreement from everyone. I do not remember any instance where there was a general rejection. Some highlights:

*Economics workshop 1: Greens favor fundamental structural change so as to incorporate economic democracy in production, distribution and consumption under the control of an informed and empowered public, constrained by the principle of sustainability and committed to the integrity of the Earth and its regenerative powers. Our society is dominated by an economic structure based on a perpetual growth imperative that threatens to destroy life as we know it. It is based on the rule of elites and unbridled profit-oriented competition that leads to the oppression and dehumanization of people and the vast destruction of the biosphere.*

*Land Use workshop: All land use policies, plans and practises should be based upon the following: Sustainable development and production; the reduce/reuse/recycle ethic; the encouragement of a balance between optimum and diverse use of land, recognizing the natural character of the land (e.g., fertile soil, wetland, aquifer recharge area, critical habitat); the inherent right of nature to exist for its own sake; the assurance of social justice in the formulation and implementation of land use policy.*

*Organizing workshop: We Greens are committed to a value based politics. We believe that we must put our values in practise - not only in what we do but how we do it. These values reflect our ideals and can be a reference point upon which we can solve problems, clarify goals and meet our practical needs. We believe these values must temper our actions and behavior and form the basis by which we organize and carry out our programs and decisions.*

*Strategy workshop: The cornerstone of our strategy is the creation of a tangible and highly visible Green presence in as many communities as possible. We strongly affirm the grassroots focus of the Green movement. ... need to share information...coherent strategy for building alliances with Native people and other people of color...not undertake electoral campaigns until we have laid the groundwork with like-minded groups .... strong focus on social issues and support for ecologically and socially positive local enterprises....*

**Human Needs: Food/Agriculture workshop:** *The Greens strongly believe that agriculture must be transformed from its industrial form and chemical dependency so that it truly meets human needs and is an active part of healing the Earth. Green program calls for: sustainable agriculture based on regional/bioregional self-reliance... preserve the health of the human and the land... resettlement, redesign of rural communities... phase out import of agricultural products which can be produced in this country... end ownership or control of agricultural lands as well as production, distribution or marketing by corporations based outside the state or region... a Green lifestyle that promotes light living in terms of food consumption.*

**Energy workshop:** *Our global ecological crisis is a direct result of an energy-use lifestyle based upon the consumption of non-renewable fossil fuels and nuclear energy. This form of society through which the common individual must consume this energy is not simply one of personal choice, but rather is substantially dictated from above by government and corporate interests who profit from it. The planet is dangerously unhealthy.*

**Forests workshop:** *The principle that forests and forest ecosystems have an intrinsic value in and of themselves, over and above their economic value is the foundation of the Green program for forestry.*

**Politics workshop:** *We see the Greens as a long term, evolving political movement dedicated to creating a just, prosperous and equitable society in harmony with (and within the natural limits of) ecosystems. In the short term, the Greens have a clear responsibility to defend humanity and fragile ecosystems from destruction... The Greens must strictly maintain an independent political and electoral identity and must not compromise its explicit principles nor facilitate its cooptation by other parties.*

The final report will include complete statements in all their considerable detail and it will appear on ECONET, the system for posting information on an electronic bulletin board accessible to home computers with a modem. I will tell of its availability as soon as I can. It will be a reference document for the Greens until the next meeting revises it. The next Green Gathering will be in Boulder Colorado in August 1990. If you want to be involved, form your own Green group and join the Green Committees of Correspondence. There are now something like 200 of them. I have basic info on how to do that. Write me. I will be proposing the formation of a Raleigh Area Green Alliance or some such in the near future. Let me know if you are interested. We should seek an expression in upcoming elections.

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There have been a few inquiries about the November conference. More to come soon. Meet at Camp New Hope November 3,4 and 5. Miriam Therese MacGillis. Subject yet to be developed. She interprets the world and the human presence in it much as Thomas does. It will be a time and a place to wonder about just why it is that we are here at this time and what is it our duty to be doing, particularly as it pertains to air and trees and soil and rivers and animals, and maybe some way to include our duty to our own species. There will be reflection and since it is so close to Halloween, maybe we will remember ancestors and call on the spirits in that unique forest near Chapel Hill. Suppose we were to reflect on the words Thoreau said in his later days, "If I repent of anything it is likely to be my good behavior. What demon possessed me that I behaved so well?" (Quoted from a letter by Ed Abbey printed in the EARTH FIRST! Journal.)

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Help! The Center for Reflection on the Second Law is badly in need of clerical/secretarial assistance. The trouble is we don't have enough money to pay for the work done. Somebody might get an introduction to the Green/bioregional/ Thomas Berry way of looking at the world if they put in some volunteer time straightening out the library and the files and the accounts and helping to get the mail answered.

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I have a few copies of THE DREAM OF THE EARTH. \$18.95

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Contributions to the Earth First! Legal Defense Fund may be mailed to LDF, POB 4666, Salem, OR, 97302

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