

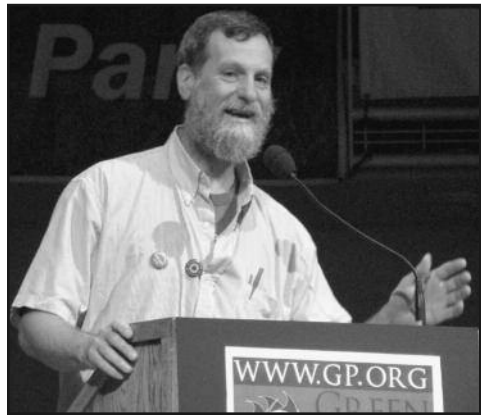
# Spotlight on a founding member

## Greg Gerritt reflects on his life as a Green and his new direction

By Greg Gerritt, Green Party of Rhode Island and founding member of the Green Party in the United States

After 25 years of actively working within the Green Party apparatus in the United States, I have decided to step out of the bureaucracy and devote all of my Green Party time to working with Green candidates. My colleagues have asked me to reflect a bit on my work as a Green over those years, so here is the very short version.

I first heard about the Green Party when I learned of the initial success of the German Green Party in 1980. I immediately noted we needed a Green Party in the U.S. Early in 1984, John Rensenbrink and a few colleagues called the first Green Party (GP) meeting in the U.S. in Augusta, Maine. I did not know about that first meeting, but I went to the second meeting in February 1984, and until November 2008 I have been continually involved in some sort of Green Party bureaucracy.



In 1986, I was the first Green in the U.S. to run for state legislature. It was the right-sized district for a shoe leather campaign, about 8200 people, and after knocking on about 90 percent of the doors in the district, I received 16 percent of the vote in a three party race, nearly winning in my own community and coming within 6 percent of placing second. To this day I maintain that state representative races, especially in states with relatively small districts, are excellent for Greens to win with shoe leather campaigns.

In my campaign, I focused on bad forest practices, a bad economy, and credibility on economic issues. The ability to demonstrate that a Green economy can lead to prosperity is what will determine our long-term success. Unless Americans believe a green economy works and can provide a decent living for them and their neighbors;

we do not get elected. Good candidates address this daily.

In 1991, the Green National Gathering in Elkins, West Virginia, was a tumultuous affair. I was chosen to lead a committee coming out of this event that would explore what type of structure the GP should use for its national committee. In 1992 each committee member wrote an essay on what they thought would be best. I compiled the essays and submitted them. My suggestion was that we become a federation of state parties, with each state party being fairly autonomous. I maintained this was useful because it could partly compensate for the ridiculous array of election laws we face and would prevent a small number of state parties from controlling the whole party.

The federation approach was continued when we transformed from the Association of State Green Parties to the Green Party of the United States. Although some Greens still advocate for individual membership, which would give California dominance, the association of state parties has proven to be a viable structure.

While the GP caught a wave with Ralph Nader in 2000, the world and the party has changed, and for 2008 we needed a candidate dedicated to the party. As a member of the Presidential Campaign Support Committee, I led efforts to educate the state parties and the potential candidates about the nomination process, and helped them prepare for a crazy year.

I was proud of the four candidates who made it to the convention, Jesse Johnson, Cynthia McKinney, Kent Mesplay, and Kat Swift, all of whom used their campaigns to build the party. I am also proud that my last major action for the Green Party was to lead the workshop at the national committee meeting the morning after the nomination to help our nominee, Cynthia McKinney, integrate her campaign into the party structure.

As I step away from the bureaucracy, my next Green project will be to create a consulting business called the Green Party Candidates and Campaign Resource Center. It will be a small network of experienced Green campaigners and former candidates who will work with Green candidates, campaign teams, and state parties to help them run better campaigns. I have already lined up a number of cooperators for this project, and,

now that I no longer have any official positions, I am moving swiftly on the project, recruiting Green campaign consultants, and publicizing it so by the time the 2010 election season rolls around, many months from now for winter elections, we shall have a team in place, ready and able to help every Green candidate who can use it. It will have no bureaucracy and no nay-sayers and, after 25 years in the bureaucracy, I am really going to enjoy that.

Anyone who wants to be involved, drop me a line at [gerritt@mindspring.com](mailto:gerritt@mindspring.com).

**April 10, 2006 (New York City)**

By Steve Bloom  
Green Party of New York State

Sometimes politics proves to be as strange as poetry.

Never thought that I would feel at home in a demonstration where one American flag follows another, after another, after another. But today it's not the usual "my country can beat up your country" crowd. No, this time it's the invisible people, speaking out loud for a change.

"I am Haitian;  
I am Korean;  
I am Pakistani,"  
they tell me.

"I am Dominican;  
I am Mexicana;  
I am Filipino;  
I am Ethiopian;  
I am Jamaican;  
I am Guatemalan and  
I live here too.  
I will not be less of a human being than you.

"I fly the flag of my country.  
And I fly the flag of my other country;  
for whether I am there or here  
your nation would collapse  
without the work I do."

So I stand here watching, ask myself whether we have, perhaps, just taken one small step toward the day when every human being will, at last, fly every flag of every nation and still feel at home.

# GREEN PAGES

the national newspaper of the Green Party of the United States

Vol. 13 No. 1

<http://gp.org/greenpages-blog/>

## McKinney speaks out for Gaza at massive rally

### An excerpt from the Green presidential candidate's speech

More than 20,000 people rallied in Washington D.C., January 10th as part of an international call to action with protests simultaneously occurring across the county and around the world to support people in Gaza and call for end to its destruction. A keynote speaker in Washington's "Let Gaza Live" rally was 2008 Green presidential candidate **Cynthia McKinney**.

Only days before, McKinney narrowly escaped when the boat she was on to bring humanitarian aid to Gaza was intentionally and repeatedly rammed by the Israeli military in international waters. The Israelis then sprayed gunfire around her boat; despite the envoy's broadcast they were unarmed. McKinney's boat was able to make it to land safely, but was unable to deliver the much-needed medical supplies.

Still reeling from her own personal experience, McKinney's speech in Washington pointed out the role of the U.S. government in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and called citizens to speak out and to vote.

Here are Cynthia McKinney's words at the "Let Gaza Live" Rally:

We don't see the images. They are neatly censored from our view in this country. But everywhere else around the world the carnage that is Gaza is being seen and the people are revolted by what they see.

They see dead babies, decapitated bodies, defenseless relief workers killed. Maimed men, makeshift morgues, mortified mothers.

They see exploding white phosphorus shells, cluster bombs, depleted uranium munitions.

They see what is reportedly the world's fourth most powerful military using all of its power against a defenseless people.

In fact, they are witnesses to 15 days of war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and genocide.

They see Hugo Chavez expel Venezuela's Israeli Ambassador and they see lawmakers in Ecuador condemn Israel's actions, call-

ing for an investigation into Israel's crimes against humanity.

And despite the obvious facts of an Israeli-sponsored terror campaign against Palestinians in Gaza, a piece of territory roughly twice the size of the District of Columbia, they see the U.S. Congress support a resolution totally supporting Israel, even though Israel is in violation of U.S. and international law.

They see Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, swaggering in insult to black America by initially refusing to seat Roland Burris from Illinois in the Senate, yet that same Reid



covers before the pro-Israel lobby, and they wonder why.

And sadly, they see the U.S. President-elect, who roared onto the scene like a lion, remain as quiet as a lamb in the face of the utter inhumanity of Israel's actions, and they wonder why.

And then, they see us. Gathered here in front of the White House, reaffirming our own humanity. The tears of the Palestinians roll down our cheeks, even as we bury our own victims of police murder.

A new day is coming in U.S. politics. We will use the power of our vote to change U.S. policy. We will no longer check our values at the door and support politicians and political parties that fail to deliver.

Not one more bomb to Israel.

In defense of humanity, we will not give up, and we will win.

## Giving Bush the boot!

By Jamilla El-Shafei  
Maine Green Party and event organizer

Hundreds of protesters, many Green, hurled shoes as they marched in Washington, D.C on President Bush's last day in office. On January 19, several thousand ended up gathering at DuPont Circle for a rally and march to the White House for a day of action called "Shoe Bush" ([www.shoebush.org](http://www.shoebush.org)). This references the Iraqi journalist Mutadhar Al-Zaidi, who hurled his shoes at President Bush during a press conference in Baghdad.



# Vigorous Green growth in Arkansas

## Green candidates make records, elect first state legislator

By Abel Tomlinson, Green Party of Arkansas

The 2008 election year was quite remarkable for the Green Party of Arkansas. A record number of candidates for national, state and local offices were fielded, and for the first time a Green candidate was elected to the Arkansas legislature.

Before discussing the various races and outcomes, it is vital to understand some background information about Arkansas politics. The major parties are generally aligned on the most fundamentally important issues, such as economic ideology, the corrupt healthcare system, corporate subservience, and the costly permanent military complex. Primarily Republicans emphasize abortion and gay marriage issues to emotionally distract voters from deeper issues like the economy, environment, energy, healthcare, and peace. These politicians act like moral crusaders during the campaign but subsequently stab their supporters in the back with policies benefiting the wealthiest one percent.

In Arkansas, conservative “blue dog” Democrats adopt these tactics as well. Democrats have long dominated Arkansas politics and by mimicking Republican political “morality.” As a result, the Republican Party is weak in Arkansas. Typically, Arkansas progressives have no genuine electoral choice with only conservative Democrats or con-

servative Republicans on the ballot.

As the major parties are so similar, there is rarely opposition or real debate, perpetuating an uninformed voting public. As a consequence, the political landscape is largely a stagnant cesspool lacking new ideas in what many consider an exclusionary “good ol’ boy” system.

The 2008 election was a break away from business as usual, thanks to the Green Party of Arkansas. A record of fifteen candidates ran for office at all levels of government, not including presidential candidate Cynthia McKinney. The election results broke several records for Greens, partly due to over 80 percent of Arkansas races lacking major party opposition or democracy.

Rebekah Kennedy broke the record for a Green candidate running for U.S. Senate with 207,076 votes at 21 percent. Kennedy’s sole opponent was incumbent Democrat Mark Pryor, one of the most conservative Democrats in the Senate and a supporter of Bush’s Military Commissions Act.

Of the four U.S. House districts in Arkansas, all of them lacked major party opposition, but Greens provided democratic opposition in three of the four districts. Candidate Deb McFarland also broke the record for a Green running for the U.S. House. In her race against Democrat Vic

Snyder, McFarland received 64,398 votes at 23 percent. Joshua Drake and I, Abel Tomlinson, also did considerably well with 32,603 votes at 14 percent and 58,850 votes at 22 percent.

Arkansas Greens also succeeded in running six candidates for the state legislature with one win. Richard Carroll was the shining star by winning his race for Arkansas State Representative in District 39 with 89 percent of the vote. Carroll is the first Green elected to the Arkansas legislature, the third Green to be elected state legislator nationally, and the only Green state legislator currently holding office. Wendy Crow and Conrad Harvin did well in their races with 20 percent and 11 percent of the vote. Candidates Gene Mason, Brian Barnett, and Mary Boley each received four percent of the vote in their races.

Arkansas Greens ran five candidates for local offices. Two candidates were fielded to run in the county races for Justice of the Peace. Green candidates also ran for city council and school board offices. However, the most interesting local race was for Chicot County Assessor. Candidate Elizabeth McCoy came very close to winning this office and lost by only 30 votes after a recount.

Abel Tomlinson is a 28 year-old Political Science graduate student at the University of Arkansas.



The leading members of the “Committee to Vote No on the Charter” (CVNC) who defeated a Charter Commission’s efforts to abolish Town Meeting in Topsham, Maine. From left to right, Angela Twitchell, John Rensenbrink, Jim Howard, and Liz Armstrong. Photographer: Charles Crosby

### Highlights from all U.S. Green 2008 election results

Total Greens elected: 48

Total candidates running: 300

Total candidates receiving 20 percent or more: 68

**Arkansas:** Richard Carroll elected State Representative - 89 percent of vote. Rebekah Kennedy ran for U.S. Senate receiving the highest vote total ever for a Green for this position at 21%.

**California:** Seven elected, including Bruce Delgado, Mayor of Marina City—53.7 percent and Ross Mirikami, re-elected to San Francisco Board of Supervisors—77%.

**Colorado:** Art Goodtimes elected County Commissioner—48%.

**District of Columbia:** Seven Greens elected to Advisory Neighborhood Commissions.

**Florida:** Cara Jennings re-elected to City Commission of Lake Worth—55.1%.

**Illinois:** Ran 52 Green candidates for a variety of offices with 10 for U.S. Congress.

**Massachusetts:** Five elected to Town Meetings and one to County Assembly.

**Maine:** Two elected, including John Eder, former state legislator, to Charter Commission of Cumberland County. Four of six candidates for state offices received more than 25% of the vote.

**Wisconsin:** Eleven out of fourteen county board candidates elected, including four in Dane County (Madison).

# Green Parties gain in elections around the world

By Mike Feinstein, International Committee, Green Party of the United States

**October/the Americas:** Making a Green Tax Shift their primary campaign issue, the Green Party of Canada received their highest results ever in Canadian Federal Elections October 14th. Led by Green Party Leader Elizabeth May, the Canadian Greens argued the way to turn the economy around was to see the natural connection between environment and economy. Vision Green, the GPC’s platform, called for a revenue-neutral \$50/ton carbon tax, arguing that only a change on this level would be sufficient to promote needed environmental and economic goals. The GPC also proposed to eliminate poverty through a guaranteed livable income, as well as to pursue nuclear disarmament, review Canada’s NATO commitments, strengthen its health care system and eliminate and/or tax toxic substances that compromise human and ecological health.

Competing in an electoral system in which there are three major parties to compete with (four in the province of Quebec), the Greens saw their percentage of the vote rise by more than 50%. In an election with the lowest national turnout ever for Canada, the Greens were also the only party to see its number of total votes rise. Because Canadian law awards \$1.95 per vote for every party that receives at least 2% nationwide, the Greens will receive almost \$2 million in public financing annual until the next election.

Perhaps the biggest Green highlight of the campaign was May’s inclusion in the two Leaders Debates (one in French, one in English), where according to many political pundits across Canada, she was the clear winner because of her command of the facts and her ability to challenge the other leaders.

May also made a cross-country whistle-stop rail tour from British Columbia to Nova Scotia, the first Canadian leader candidate to do so since the 1960s.

**November/Asia-Pacific:** On November 8th, the Green Party became the third largest party in the New Zealand Parliament, winning 6.7% and nine seats, up from 5.3% and six seats in 2005.

Led by party Co-Leaders Jeanette Fitzsimmons and Russell Norman and featuring a nationwide television ad campaign, the Greens pointed to their record in parliament in tackling climate change, including improving New Zealand’s emissions trading scheme, securing a \$1 billion fund to energy efficiency retrofitting of private homes and improving the country’s public transport and rail system. They also pointed to their record of raising the country’s minimum wage and promoting flexible working hours. Going forward, the Greens pledged to continue to work on these issues and others, including keeping New Zealand free of genetically-engineered food, promoting organic farming and sustainable agriculture.

Pointing to limitations of the establishment major parties, National (center-right) and Labour (center-left), Fitzsimmons said, “Why would you change from grey to grey, from Mother Coke to Father Pepsi? The change we need is Green. A strong Green voice in Parliament will change any government.” Apparently an increasing number of New Zealand voters agreed.

**January/Europe:** On January 18th, the Greens in the German state of Hesse received 13.7% of the vote, the highest percentage ever for



Tarek Al-Wazir, Hessian Greens co-chair

Greens in any German state (Land) parliamentary election (other than city-states). In the process they almost doubled their number of representatives and as usual, were also the only party to elect a majority of female MPs.

Led by charismatic party co-chair Tarek Al-Wazir, who is perhaps the most popular politician in the state, The Hessian Greens’ platform emphasized education, climate change and green energy, gender equity, confronting poverty and increasing democracy and transparency in state government.

Hesse was the first state in Germany in which the Greens went into coalition government – back in 1985 with the SPD, with Joshcka Fischer becoming Environment and Energy Minister. This time however, a coalition government was not possible because of the failing popularity of the Social Democrats, with whom the Green were in coalition during parts of the 1980s and 1990s. As a result, the Greens now provide perhaps the strongest opposition to the Conservative government led by Roland Koch, who repeatedly campaigned with blatantly anti-immigrant positions.

## Malik Rahim

Green Party candidate Malik Rahim, a former Black Panther and community activist in New Orleans who co-founded the Common Ground Collective to distribute aid to people in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, finished third in the Louisiana 2nd Congressional District special election held December 6. Running against the scandal-tainted William Jefferson Clinton, Rahim finished third with 2.8 percent of the vote. Republican Anh “Joseph” Cao won. Rahim was the 2008 recipient of the Thomas Merton Award, given to individuals struggling for justice. The campaign is seeking funds to pay remaining debts. Contributions may be made at: [www.facebook.com/l.php?u=http://votemalik.com%2Fcontribute%2F](http://www.facebook.com/l.php?u=http://votemalik.com%2Fcontribute%2F).

