

Newest political party sprouting support

By Connie L. Sheehan
Senior Editor

As the first Green Party congressional candidate in the country, Mindy Lorenz said she didn't expect to win the seat last November but did want to call attention to the political Green Party in California.

Lorenz, an assistant professor of art history at Cal State University at Northridge, said the party

wanted to use the media interest in the campaign and develop a model platform so the public and media could get an idea of what a Green Party candidate stood for.

The platform, which took four months to write, is now being used as a model for other platforms both statewide and nationally, she said.

Now, the party is trying to achieve official ballot status for 1992, she said.

"Alaska was first and we hope that California will be the next one," Lorenz said.

"There's an intensive voter registration drive around the state," Lorenz said. "To get the ballot qualification, we need about 80,000 to register with the Green Party by next primary '92."

This is not a petition drive, she explained, since people actually have to register as a Green Party member.

"The way the party has evolved, in the first few years in this country, there was a network called the Committees of Correspondence (CoC, whose name was changed to The Greens' Clearinghouse two days ago) which were the local groups loosely connected to the membership organization," Lorenz explained.

Within in the last year and a half or two years, several states, including California, decided to expand, she said. In addition to have a community network, people thought about the formation of official political parties.

"We don't want to be just a political organization that comes out during times of elections," she added. "We want people to work in their communities on the problems that concern them."

"The 10 key values associated with the CoC act as the founding principals," Lorenz said. California uses the original CoC values although some states adapt their own set of key values.

"We're in the process of writing a state platform which incor-

porates the principles in those values, then tries to translate that into specific policy approaches to every issue the state would face," she said.

"For me, (joining the Green Party) was an outgrowth of my work with social justice issues," she said. "I've been an activist since the Vietnam War era."

Recently, Lorenz said she has been working to oppose intervention of the United States military and government into Central America.

"At the time, I heard about the Green Parties in Europe, and became very interested," she said, "because I realized the problems that we face are so multi-faceted and interconnected."

"We have to address those all in relationship with each other, and when I found out about the Greens and the Green platform, I said, 'This is it.'"

Lorenz said she has been working for the Greens ever since.

"It's compelling — precisely what's not happening in the major parties," she said. Lorenz said the major parties use "kind of an old way of seeing things — looking at problems in isolation."

Green politics is kind of a systems approach to understanding the underlying causes of things so one could know better how to go about solving them, she said.

"We're just not interested in high ideals and great principles if they can't work in the real world," she said. "Then it's a philosophy; it's not a political party."

Lorenz said she thinks Green economics works as a sustainable economy.

"It's an economy based not so much on endless growth and endless consumption but realizing we have to have a finite balance between what's available and how much we can consume."

Decentralization is also a major platform issue, she said, but the party wants to sort out the short- and long-term goals first.

"We understand there has to be some federal oversight of different policies and programs for a long time to come," Lorenz said. "But we believe democracy is more and more about self-governing smaller units of people who take control of their own lives and not depend on some distant centralized government which rarely has their best interests in mind."

The party would want to sort through and look at what is most appropriate for local control right now, she said.

Lorenz said she also would like to demilitarize society's way of life, attitudes and the economy, especially since California has such a heavy dependency on the military and oil industry.

"We tried to relate those issues and once the gulf crisis started last August, they related very well," she said.

A lot of people got interested in the Green Party as a result of their total disgust with both the Republicans and the Democrats in regard to what was going on in the gulf and what the major parties weren't saying, Lorenz added.

Green Party not yet established in state

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The Green Party is not yet an established party in Nebraska, said Allan Beerman, Nebraska's Secretary of State.

Nebraskans still have to register on the Independent ticket and then write in their Green Party preferences, Beerman said.

Jim Richmond, coordinator for The Greens' Clearinghouse in Kansas City, said it has been

about a year since someone from Nebraska called, interested in information on the Green Party.

"A man from Omaha called and asked for information but I'm not sure if he ever got anything off the ground," Richmond said.

Otherwise, Richmond said he was unfamiliar with any other Green Party activities in the state of Nebraska.

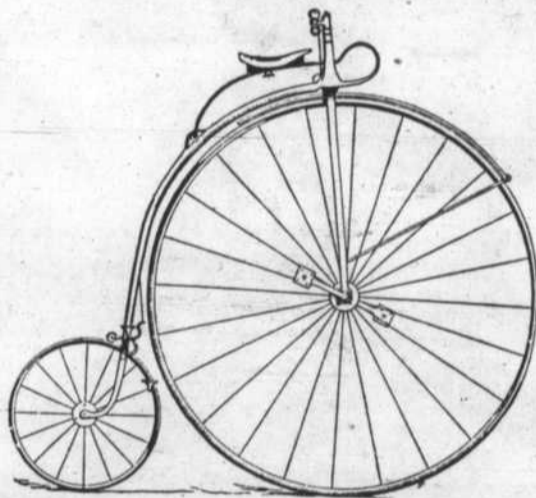
Richmond said the Ameri-

can Green Parties definitely receive their inspiration from the European Greens.

The first Green Party elected officials on the international-level began to take office in the late '70s in Belgium and Switzerland, he said.

But there were several fore-runners like the Ecology Party in Great Britain in the early '70s, Richmond said, and the Value Party of New Zealand in 1975.

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- community-based economics
- post-patriarchal values
- respect for diversity
- global responsibility
- future focus/
sustainable growth

Source:
The Greens' Clearinghouse