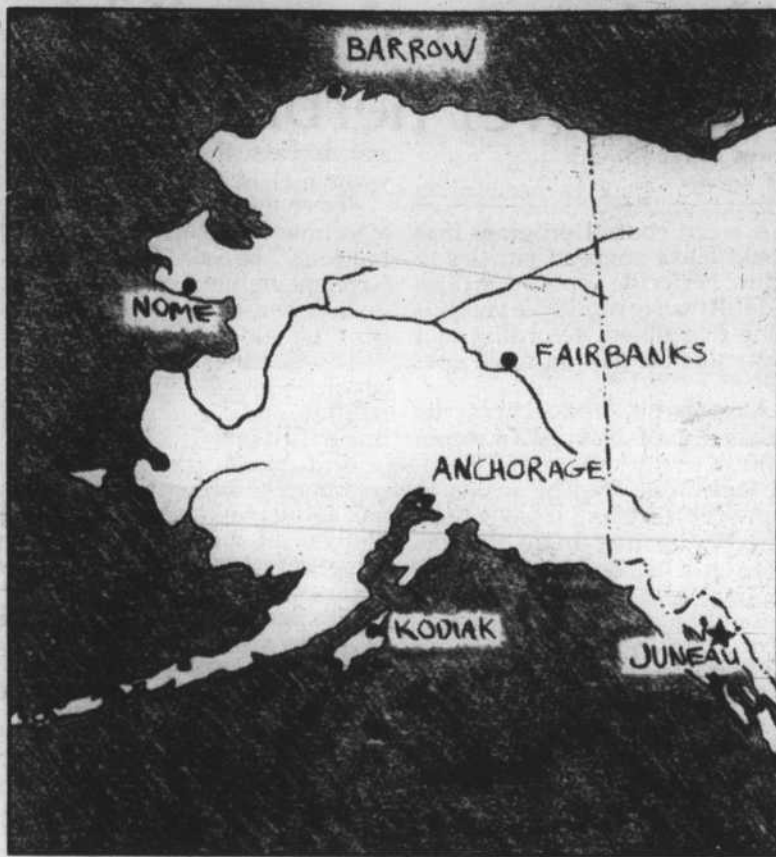


Alaska: 50th state designs official party from scratch



Tom Towner/Daily Nebraskan

By **Connie L. Sheehan**
Senior Editor

The distance from its lower 49 neighbors has not kept the state of Alaska from assuming a leadership role in the expansion of the political Green Party across America.

The Green Party of Alaska (GPA) became the first state-recognized Green Party in the nation after gubernatorial candidate Jim Sykes won slightly more than the required 3 percent in last November's election.

"Once you get 3 percent of the ballot turnout in any election, then you can go to the board of elections and become an official party," said Jim Hunter, public relations contact for the Tanana Yukon Greens, headquartered in Fairbanks.

Alaskans can now go down to the board of elections and register as a member of the Green Party rather than as an independent, he said.

And although Sykes lost in the general election, the members are still enthusiastic that the winner, an Independent Party nominee, also came from a splinter party, Hunter said.

"He proved you can elect someone out of the mainstream here in Alaska," Hunter said.

The party's immediate plans include registering people, he said, and becoming a viable party.

Hunter said the March GPA convention was mostly house-keeping — "administrative because literally the GPA had no structure... we had to create a structure."

Hunter said members were excited about having the chance to design the party from scratch and plan to take the best items from other parties in arranging their own structure.

Hunter, whose job was to approach the other parties for ad-

vice, said "those parties had their hand out and said 'sit down, we'll be glad to tell the Green Party how to (structure) it better. If they can do it better, more power to them.'"

"A lot of people, both Republican and Democrat, are feeling that the Green Party is a great vehicle for the future," he said. "That's our main thrust — the future."

Hunter said the GPA's platform reflects the Greens' 10 key values (see graph).

"With what's happening to the wilderness... we know we can't just keep on, and the people need a party that puts that kind of thing first," he said.

But because of the similarity in names with organizations like Greenpeace, the public perception seems to be that the Green Party is just an environmental party, Hunter said.

"But we're not, we're a global party and we see the future with global politics," he said.

Group members like the fact that there are already successful Green Parties in Australia and Europe and now in America, he said.

"We see that these are brothers that will help connect us to planetary work," he explained. "It's hard to pass a clean air law that's going to do any good when 90 percent (of the pollution) is coming from another country."

Hunter said the GPA has an awareness of the social things that need to be changed but the main focus, by virtue of Alaska's geographical location, is mainly environmental.

"Social questions are certainly a part of our platform too," he said. "but Fairbanks is not like a large metropolitan area where your social problems are more at the front."

Asked if the GPA suffers from being viewed as an extreme leftist organization, Hunter said the

public "perceives us properly now."

"Jim Sykes made such a wonderful spokesman," Hunter said. "When he spoke, he expressed himself so well that he gained so much respect for the Green Party in Alaska and worldwide."

Hunter said the GPA is drawing support from across the board, equally from Democrats and Republicans who are disaffected with what their own parties are doing about important issues.

The Green Party crosses all levels of society, Hunter said.

People think that the Green Party is the hippy movement of the '60s reborn, but it's not, Hunter said.

"I'm 54 years old, pretty conservative in my financial ways and own and operate my own business," he said.

"We have students from the university, yuppies and people coming to our meetings in suits, ties and short hair who are technocrats," he said. "But that's true of the Green Party throughout the planet."

"It's your moral outlook that's most important," Hunter said.

Although currently there's no direct connection between the European, Australian or American Green Parties, he said, there will be.

"We all operate individually but they read our stuff and we read their stuff," Hunter explained. "We see we're going our own ways, but it's all very similar — it's going to be a worldwide movement. It's that worldwide consciousness that's so necessary."

"Imagine somebody had stood in a field and threw out a bunch of seeds and all these little seeds are growing separately in different parts of the field," Hunter said.

"Ultimately, we'll all come together."

ATTENTION: SENIORS AND GRADUATE STUDENTS FULBRIGHT SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDY ABROAD

Information Meeting
Thursday, May 2
4:00 PM, Nebraska Union

Contact Joseph Stimpfl or Susan Dahm for further information
International Affairs -- 1237 R Street -- 472-3076

9th Street Blues

2nd Anniversary Celebration
Friday, May 3rd

\$1.00 16 Oz. Draws
5-8 Live Broadcast Q102
Colt Patrol Girls

"Too Smooth"
All Weekend

Champagne at Midnight!

Come Party With Us !!

Open Daily 11a.m.-1a.m. M-Sat.
Just Down the Block from P.O. Pears

Lunch Daily 11-2 9th & L 477-3467

Things may be looking up if you qualify below.

Participate in a Harris study and earn extra spending money.

- Study: 13003
- Sex: Female
- Age: 19-35
- Condition: •Healthy!
- Nonuser of tobacco products!
- Able to stay at Harris for two 48 hour periods.

Earn up to \$500

HARRIS 474-0627

621 Rose Street, Lincoln, NE 68502