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Monthly Planet

December, 1984

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A PUBLICATION OF THE ASSOCIATED STUDENTS
ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Green Party Invades America

Doug Price



The Northwest Green Network has recently been organized in Bellingham. This organization is striving to develop contacts with 'Green' movements across the states. Its goals are twofold: to educate and provide a forum for developing integrated, ecologically sensitive politics, lifestyles, and culture in our area.

The Northwest Green Network is a derivative of the Green Party that began in Europe. The "Green" movement was started in Germany in 1978 with the title "Green Action Future" and coined the slogan "We are neither left nor right, we are in front." In 1980 the Green movement became a recognized political party and in 1983 they had captured 5.6% of the popular vote and 27 seats in the German parliament in Bonn. There popularity has continued to grow throughout Europe and has now moved to North America.

On August 10-12, 1984 in St. Paul, Minnesota there was a meeting held to organize the American Green Party. People of various and diverse backgrounds came together to ask the question, "What would the future be like in a 'Green' society?" After discussion and arguments a number of issues surfaced. It was decided

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PLANET PEOPLE

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Special thanks to Jayne Shelley for her
love and devotion, and to Benjamin
Shelley for the special joy he brings

Editor's Note

Happy

Holidays!

Season's Greetings from the Environmental Center staff! It is during this time of year that people seem to consider others with more goodwill than at any other time. We hope that this is true for all people in all places.

This issue has been dedicated to doers—all of those people who act for the good of the rest of us. It may be recycling or perhaps demonstrating for a cause they believe to be honorable; it is these people who respond to social responsibilities that make life for all of us higher in quality. Personal initiative is what makes things work.

I cannot name the individuals here, but I think you know who you are. You have our greatest praise and blessings for this holiday season and those to come.

Thank you.

To Our Readers

The *Monthly Planet* is a publication that strives to inform, entertain and stimulate thought on environmental issues. We, the *MP* staff, know that environmental interest and concern is not confined to just the experts and the radicals. By broadening the focus of the *Planet* we hope to appeal to a community wide audience. Let us know what you like or would like to see in the *Planet*; reader participation is invited in all aspects of its publication.

The views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Associated Students or any of the advertisers.

Theory Into Practice

David Kuester

Nestled away in Skagit County's Cascade foothills is a bustling agrarian production. Squash, cukes, peas, beets, carrots, potatoes, raspberries, strawberries—all grow under the incredibly diligent care of Sarah Ross, Gene Kahn, and the seventeen employees of Cascadian Farms.

Cascadian Farm is not just another local farm; their story is one full of personal value combined with a sensitivity for the demands of health conscious people.

CF grows its crops organically without pesticides, chemical fertilizer, nor a heavy reliance upon fossil fuels. People that are health and environment conscious create a substantial market for the farm's produce.

The farm began in 1972 with a philosophy considered, at that time, quite idealistic and a willingness to overlock the status quo for agricultural practices.

Its success can be verified by the growth in staff on the farm. In 1983, just one year ago, the farm employed six people. One year later they now employ seventeen: "It's phenomenal how much it's grown," says Ross, "I never would have believed it!"

The members of this labor force have proven to their community that non-conventional farming methods can be used to a more profitable end than the conventional; profitable in terms of capital costs as well as long-term sustainability. "I think that the larger conventional operations are heading for a lot of trouble" says Ross.

To begin with, the farm's processing equipment runs completely off of electricity, electricity provided by their hydroelectric generator. The generator is pushed with water diverted from a nearby stream which is channeled down a steep

incline in order to build pressure.

The generator creates an average of fifty kilowatts per hour, of which only thirty are used at any one time. The owners have found a lucrative business in selling their excess power to local utilities.

When oil prices exceed a compatible level, the farm is capable of distilling ethanol for vehicular fuel. Scrap vegetation and unmarketable produce for distilling allows the farm to produce enough fuel for their needs. When gasoline is cheap enough, these scraps are sold as pig feed.

The Cascadian Farm is quite labor intensive which saves money compared to all of the capital costs and fuel consumption demanded by the more conventional mechanization.

The structures on the farm including the processing and storage facilities were constructed through the help of friends, neighbors and relatives. In addition, ninety-five percent of all service and repairs takes place on site with the help of the farm's drop-in mechanic.

When asked why she persists in laboring on the farm, co-owner Sarah Ross replied—

"I like to work outside. I like to be part of nature's cycle. I can't see myself doing anything else. Food is a basic need and I like to provide this need. I'm into working in a labor intensive atmosphere. It's a very cooperative venture and that's fulfilling in itself."



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that an interim be formed of interregional correspondence committees composed of regional representatives who would encourage a multi-level movement on the local and national political scene.

The Green Party is based upon ten key values. They include: 1. ecological wisdom 2. decentralization of government and economics 3. grassroots Democracy 4. cooperative economics 5. global responsibility 6. inclusiveness 7. feminist values 8. personal and social responsibility 9. non-violent change 10. focus on the future.

Ecological wisdom includes the idea that we are part of the ecosystem, not in control of it. The Greens say that we need to live within the ecological limits of our planet, improve the relationship between cities and countryside and to protect all



things from unnecessary harm. In other words, they see our role as guardians of the Earth rather than conquerors.

They also believe that we are too centralized; they fear we are becoming a monoculture; that there needs to be more decision-making activity on the local level, people need to be involved and in control of their own lives.

The Green Party also believes in employee ownership and workplace Democracy. They assert that we need to restructure income distribution to reflect the wealth

created by activities outside of the monetary economy such as housekeepers, parents, gardeners, and volunteers. In addition, they feel that we must restrict the size and power of major corporations.

The Greens want to reduce defense and use the excess capital to care for the disadvantaged, this means helping them to help themselves instead of creating a dependence on government handouts.

In general, the Greens are looking to create a society that has a vision of the future that is ecologically sound, has a high degree of personal, social, and global responsibility, peace and equality.

To find out more about the activities of the Bellingham Greens, contact: Northwest Green Network, P.O. Box 4036, Bellingham, WA 98227 for information.

FCDC — Hope For Economy

Dave McFadden

The Fourth Corner Development Corporation (FCDC) is Whatcom County's new hope in the battle against a declining local economy. The corporation is the result of an economic development strategy done by the Stanford Research Institute. The California think-tank felt greater coordination between the public and private sectors could help revitalize the local economy. The city and county governments represent the public sector within the FCDC. The Port of Bellingham and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry represent the private corners.

Since its conception last Spring, the corporation has taken steps by securing funds for two local economic studies. One study will research industrial diversification within British Columbia. The FCDC feels there are many possibilities to develop B.C. industries in Whatcom County. In order to facilitate Canadian

development, the FCDC must learn more about specific B.C. markets and companies. The industrial diversification study will hopefully help identify those companies that are interested in expanding to Whatcom County.

The second study will develop an overall marketing strategy for Whatcom County. The study will research the laws and attributes surrounding industrial development in Whatcom County. The study's findings will then be used to publish a guide that attracts and answers questions for prospective B.C. developers. The FCDC studies will run concurrently in the hope that their coordination will spark an interest in Whatcom County.

The Corporation is still in its infancy and their studies won't be completed until next summer. Nevertheless, expect the FCDC to create some big waves in Whatcom County. The corporation's decisions will undoubtedly affect the area's quality of life, and for this reason alone the FCDC deserves our attention.

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Uranium Hypocrisy

Doug Dobyns

The existence of an international cartel of uranium producers has been known since 1976, when the Friends of the Earth in Australia obtained secret documents from a mining firm in that country. Canada has been highly implicated since some of the meetings of the cartel were organized by officials from their Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. Canada went so far as to pass legislation making it a felony to have any public communication of material relating to uranium marketing. This law has since been limited only to industry and government, i.e., those already involved in the cartel.

Groups of Canadian Indians have been protesting the uranium mining on their lands for many years now. This past summer, an AIM (American Indian Movement) Survival Group toured Europe to express their position. To quote John Graham, spokesman: "It's an international struggle. If you can stop the "nuclear" industry in Europe, and if we can stop the uranium mines in Canada, we'll be helping each other." Members of the tour in Europe met with industry and government people to ask for such things as fences to curtail the mine sites and tailings and to pressure the Canadian government to supply adequate health coverage for the people living in the surrounding area.

Saskatchewan Indians have been particularly affected by uranium mining, and the Band at Walliston Lake in north-central Saskatchewan between Uranium City and Prince Albert is inviting people to come to visit them this summer to see for themselves what the conditions are. At some hearings this fall, government officials from Environment Canada told another group of natives not to worry; that they would have to camp right on top of the tailings day and night for 3 weeks to

receive a lethal dose of radiation!

The problems of radiation contamination from mines are not well understood. More radiation remains in the tailings than is extracted for use by industry and military yet pathways for this radiation are not well studied and money for research is negligible.

Canada has made a point of returning the last of their nuclear missiles to the U.S. this past summer; however, at the same time a government company, Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd., is preparing to build the largest 'non-military' tritium plant in the world. Tritium is necessary to replenish the active components in hydrogen bombs as well as for the



manufacture of new ones. Because tritium is in short supply in the U.S., this effort can be seen as a direct contribution to the arms production of the U.S. military. Indian people have been aware of the hypocrisy in the Canadian position of disarmament for quite a while—the evidence is in their back yard.

In a letter dated May 20th, 1984, twelve representatives from seven European nations representing the Green Party asked Prime Minister Trudeau to safeguard the lives and future of Canadian Indians living in the areas polluted by radioactive wastes. In a letter dated June 6th, 1984, a member of the Center Party in Sweden wrote: "Sweden gets a large part of the uranium for nuclear energy plants from Saskatchewan. We regret very much that we thus share in the responsibility of the destruction of

your environment. We are not willing to destroy our own land by uranium mining either. No uranium mines have been opened in Sweden because of strong local resistance." The letter was addressed to the Department of Energy, Mines, and Resources of the Government of Canada.

The Minister of Energy, Mines, and Resources during the early seventies was one of the key organizers of the secret uranium cartel which controls the supply of fuel to uranium plants around the world. Canadian policy has been cynically manipulated under to guise of national security to drive the price of uranium from seven dollars a pound in 1973 to over forty dollars a pound in 1978. The profit margin increased over tenfold. At that time, uranium was the fourth largest export from Canada. This year, Canada will overtake the U.S. as the largest uranium producer. Yet still, the requests of those people most closely affected by these operations are being ignored.

Just as there is no nuclear industry which is not married to military by security, technology, and overlapping resources—there is not such thing as peaceful uranium mining. In a paper written in Norway for the Earth Embassy Office in Vancouver, BC, Published this August, Miles Goldstick wrote: "—for close to a decade, armour piercing, incendiary bullets have been made out of depleted uranium (DU). Further, DU is used in bullets meant to hit people directly. This information has been a closely guarded military secret." The advantages of using depleted uranium are that it is cheap—a byproduct of the enrichment process, it is better (heavier than lead) for armour piercing, and it is a natural incendiary which burns with a toxic smoke that enters the lungs and causes a slow death. An

ammunition inventory of U.S. production indicates that a minimum of 6,500 tons of DU has been put into armament systems.

Going back to the suppression of information. Freedom of information does not yet exist in Canada under legal mandate. There is a law to the effect, but the date of implementation is a couple of years down the road. The responsibility of government officials is safeguarded in Canada by a method of created confusion and outright deceit, and the rights of Canadians to information on the processes of environmental review are regularly ignored.

It is known that there are specific food chains (lichen-caribou-man) which deliver doses of radioactive elements at much higher rates than the norm, but an integrated assessment is lacking and even in the cases of known toxins like Polonium (and other daughters of the highly mobile Radon gas which leaks out of the tailings) there is not enough medical data to predict the outcome of contamination on the people exposed.

We do know, however, of the history of the Canadian Government trying to coverup the truth. In the case of mercury poisoning of Indians in the Grassy Flats area of Western Ontario, the symptoms were dismissed as 'chronic alcoholism' by medical experts until a Japanese doctor was brought over by an environmental group to challenge the statements, saying that the levels being experienced by the Indians were high enough to kill people in Japan and that the Indians must have an incredibly high resistance.

The resistance of the Indians will be demonstrated in another fashion now. They will have to deal with the mines in Saskatchewan, and with shipments all along the uranium fuel chain. There is a time to discuss the problems, but if the government will not honor the true discourse and will continue to resort to tactics of tyranny, then those people being damaged will have to resort to other tactics also. In an open



declaration to the peoples of the globe, these people are asking for assistance.

People are now organizing to fight this industry. The Earth Embassy, Box 3183, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6B 3X6 is keeping in touch with a network of international organizations fighting uranium traffic. The American Indian Movement has a Survival Group Office Box 8536, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The Green Parties in Europe are also involved.

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Readers!**

Be more than an armchair environmentalist! The Environmental Center needs your ideas and your energy. We've got ideas too but your involvement is the important element. Action is what changes this world and you can help us to heighten awareness of environmental issues on our campus and in the community. Want to bring a speaker, coordinate a program? Visit us. We also urge you to visit the Resource Library on the fifth floor of Huxley College. We're located in the Viking Union in room 113 or call us at 676-3460, ext. 20. Laurie Stephan, Coordinator
Roger Taylor, Asst. Coord

Just Down the Hill...

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Recycling Benefits All

Rich Chrappa

Recently I joined the A.S. Recycle Center on a routine pickup run. As we worked, I couldn't help but feel that the people observing us thought of us as garbage pickers.

This was no wonder judging from the pizza crusts, plastic cups, and other garbage many people tend to throw into the recycling barrels. And on the other hand, I'm sure that much of the waste which is recyclable has been thrown into garbage dumpsters which are often further away than the recycling bins.

To me, this indicates that some people are uninformed or just don't care. Some people just don't think recycling is for them, that it is someone else's business.

Recycling is much more than a simple occupation for activists and so-called "granolas", it is economically judicious and environmentally necessary. Recycling is an aspect of community responsibility which calls for, and deserves, a higher rate of participation.

The Scribner-Bantam dictionary defines garbage as 1. kitchen refuse. and 2. worthless, vile, or inferior matter of any kind. These definitions are contradictory, for all kitchen matter is not "worthless, vile, or inferior." Vegetable waste can be composted for fertilizer. Paper is easily recycled into useful items such as fiberboard. Many bottles can be sterilized and refilled and all glass can be remelted for new products. Energy costs for recycled aluminum are ninety percent less than the same product smelted from raw ore. Tin, which is widely used for rust-proof plating is a "strategic" metal that must be imported and bartered for if not reclaimed.

According to 1982 figures in the Bellingham Waste Proposal, two million dollars per year is spent on waste disposal. Half this sum

is for incineration and landfill, the other half is spent to pay for collection and transportation. Added non-economic costs include air pollution from incineration, and leaching of toxic chemicals into groundwater at landfills.

Resources are lost by people carelessly discarding packaging and other materials that are considered disposable. Such practices cause a heavier reliance upon scarce virgin materials, more pollution through processing, and additional environmental damage from mining and timber cutting. In addition, aesthetic values are seldom considered in cost analyses. All of these effects are reflected financially when tougher pollution controls and cleanup fees are considered. Many of these costs could be reduced or eliminated through responsible disposal of "wastes".

This purpose is served by two recycling organizations in Bellingham— The Associated Students Recycling Center and Bellingham Community Recycling. The ASCR and the BCR are not competitive enterprises, but cooperative. They share facilities, market information and ideas. BCR is compensated for materials they deposit at the ASRC and pay them for shared labor and equipment. This joint effort demonstrates the possibility and value of a university-community interface.

The largest obstacle facing the recycling effort in Bellingham is the proposed Energy Recovery Facility which would produce electricity by burning trash. In spite of a 1982 resolution stating a goal of twenty-five percent solid waste reduction from recycling, the present plan sets the reduction at a constant rate of thirteen percent. The ERF plans are based on inaccurate figures. Figures provided by Advocacy Econometrics, a firm aiding the BCR in its recycling



politics, state that the present facility consumes one hundred tons of waste per day. They say the proposed facility would demand two hundred tons per day for operation. This city has not taken into account possible increases in recycling activity and if it is forced to, may have to curb recycling efforts in order to feed the generator.

Bellingham needs to look closer at recycling as well as other waste disposal methods. Recycling partially pays for itself through reduced waste to be collected and through sale of reusable materials. Advocacy Econometrics estimates that the new facility will cost twenty two million dollars to operate. Recycling efforts would cost less than a million in additional funds to significantly reduce waste.

Recycling cuts costs in waste disposal, lessens dependence on foreign markets, diminishes environmental damage, reduces pollution, and contributes to community cohesiveness and feelings of responsibility. It is a cause well worth our efforts.

For more information on how you can contribute to the recycling effort contact the ASRC at 676-3088 or Carol Rondello of BCR at 734-6201. Input and ideas will also be welcomed at the AS Environmental Center in VU 113.



Kiewit Gets Cut

Dave McFadden

On July 9, 1984 the state departments of Ecology and Fisheries denied the Peter Kiewit Company dredging permits it needed in order to construct an industrial plant at Cherry Point. It's the second time plans for dredging have been vetoed at the point, thus reinforcing the state's strict stance on shoreline development. The decision served to protect valuable marine resources. Unfortunately, it left Whatcom County with a growing employment problem.

Major industries, once the county's lifeblood, are in a state of decline, and local politicians are anxiously attempting to diversify the area's employment base. Cherry Point has figured heavily in the area's development plans for a couple reasons. Cherry Point is one of the few remaining sites along the West Coast that affords deep water shipping access. And Cherry Point already is the home for other major industrial plants.

The Kiewit decision dashed local politicians' hopes for an easy solution to the area's employment problem. But more than that, the decision forced county politicians to alter their economic development strategies. Up until now the county has been able to combat unemployment via industrialization along Cherry Point. But with the decline of natural resource based industries, this alternative has become increasingly hard to realize. County politicians must increasingly look for alternatives to the large resource intensive industries that defined prosperity only ten years ago.

The stringent standards surrounding development along Cherry Point have redefined priorities for economic development in Whatcom County. Ideally county politicians would like to attract export firms employing between 20-

100 people. This ideal was arrived at by matching national megatrends with the economic conditions in Northwest Washington. The growth industries of today are largely service oriented, and they generally employ fewer people than resource intensive industries. The push for firms that export their product is a result of local economic conditions. The county desperately needs to increase the amount of retail dollars in the area. Merchants are presently having to compete with one another for a quickly vanishing dollar. This situation is largely to blame for the 98 percent business failure rate in Whatcom County. Export firms do not compete for retail dollars because their products are sold outside the county. Thus, these firms can be used to combat the business failure problem.

Attracting these firms is easier said than done. Land use battles, complex permit processes, and outdated zoning codes have often combined to frustrate prospective developers. As if this is not enough, there are other problems staring development oriented people in the face. Real estate values are artificially high due to Canadian land speculation some years back. And many of the county's prime industrial locations lack improvements like roads, sewers, and lights. The cost of these improvements is staggering, especially to the developer.

Whatcom County politicians are currently trying to resolve these problems that create developmental inertia. The building permit process is being drastically simplified to accommodate the developer's needs. Firms seeking to relocate like a quick and easy permit process because they are often operating on a limited time frame. Zoning and land use statutes are also being revamped to clear up

ambiguities that have often led to quarrels in the past. Finally, Whatcom politicians are investigating state and federal financing options for road, sewer, and industrial improvements. They are hoping that government financing programs will help defray the cost of these improvements.

Aside from the feeling that local industries have blossomed, there are other reasons that economic development is a priority for local decisionmakers. Businesses and local government are busily preparing for visitors on their way to Vancouver for Expo '86. The tourist's dollar could open up a myriad of possibilities for development that last well past the exposition. Local politicians must, however, coordinate marketing programs that highlight the area's economic assets for prospective developers. This task may be challenging because it will require public and private sector support. It remains to be seen whether these sectors will get their heads together in time for the exposition.

The Kiewit decision may have turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Although development at Cherry Point is still an issue, the Kiewit decision has forced local politicians to reassess their priorities towards large industrialization along the point. As a result many creative alternatives for economic development have surfaced. These new priorities for development are especially encouraging because they have instilled an overriding concern to protect the area's unique and beautiful environment. The push for smaller industries exemplifies this steering away from projects with major irreversible environmental impacts. Creativity is often the key to success, and the Kiewit decision could be seen as a positive catalyst. It has forced local politicians to think about alternatives that may well usher prosperity into 21st century Bellingham.

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THE POPLARS ARE BARE-LIMBED
THE MAPLES UNDRESSED, SKELETAL
THE BIRCHES WIND-FLOWN AND THIN-HAIRED
ONLY THE ALDERS, STILL LEAVED AND GREEN
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REMINISCE WITH THE FIRS
ABOUT SUMMER AND SUN*

—Ernesto Padilla-Bay
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