



Bad timing and blue skies conspired to lower attendance at the Network's annual meeting in Columbia on Sept. 12. Several member groups had scheduled meetings of their own on the same day; other folks no doubt were seduced by the perfect weather.

About 40 people turned out for the Network's first statewide gathering since the Grassroots Leadership Conference held at Penn Center in June. To those who were there, thanks for joining us. To the rest of you, we offer this newsletter to bring you up to speed.

The coming months promise to be busy for the Network. We are planning GOTV efforts, including a rock-the-vote rally in Columbia. The DHEC campaign is gathering steam and will go public in October. Several smaller projects are in the works, as outlined in this newsletter. Find out how you or your group can get involved.

Netnews is an occasional publication of the S.C. Progressive Network. Copy and distribute freely. Send items and comments to: PO Box 8325, Columbia, SC 29202. Questions? Complaints? Call Becci at 803-808-3384.

The Color of Money

Campaign cash is mostly white, new report finds

The Progressive Network is taking part in a national action to draw attention to the need for campaign finance reform that reduces the influence of money in American politics.

The Network has joined with Public Campaign—a national nonprofit, nonpartisan organization working for comprehensive campaign finance reform—to help raise public awareness and lay the groundwork for a serious discussion in South Carolina about money in politics.

A report recently released by Public Campaign shows that a disproportionate amount of the money fuelling federal elections comes from whites. In fact, the financing of federal elections is essentially a

“whites only” world of campaign cash.

The report's findings are significant because those who can afford to give the most money to election campaigns are those who have the most influence over politicians and policy.

The report provides an analysis of all 50 states, including comparisons between the highest-giving zip codes and zip codes where people of color reside. Maps of each state illustrate these stark contrasts. In state after state, the same pattern is pain-

fully evident: the people who can afford to “vote with their dollars”

(See next page)

The world of campaign finance is as segregated as any other area of society. It is essentially apartheid by checkbook.

So money subverts democracy — what do you want *me* to do about it?

Glad you asked.

1. Educate yourself. The Network has information about comprehensive campaign finance reform. Call us for materials.

2. Get mad.

3. Spread the word. Talk to your family, your group, your church, your school. Write letters to the editor and guest editorials to raise the issue of money in politics in South Carolina.

4. Get political. Write or call your congressional representatives.

5. Repeat steps 2-4.

To help organize a meeting or press conference about The Color of Money report in your town, call 803-808-3384. ♦

(From front page)

(mostly white and wealthy) live in certain neighborhoods; while those who can't afford to give, including most people of color, live elsewhere.

The report is part of a national action in which South Carolina and 20 other states will participate. The events are designed to underscore the link between the historic struggle to win the right to vote and the current struggle to get private money out of politics. This kind of campaign finance reform is viewed by many as the crucial next step in the voting rights movement.

Data for the report includes individual campaign contributions (of \$200 or more) to federal candidates, political parties and PACs for the 1995-1996 election cycle, and was obtained from the Center for Responsive Politics. The U.S. Census Bureau provided data for populations by zip code, including racial composition.

In the 1996 elections, 92 percent of the House races and 88 percent of the Senate races were won by the candidate who spent the most money. People of color — because they generally have less wealth and lower incomes than whites — cannot afford to make substantial campaign contri-

butions and therefore are politically disenfranchised.

This not only goes against the promise of political equality contained in the concept of "one person, one vote," but it has direct consequences on the daily lives of all people — from the wages they earn and the taxes they pay to the quality of schools their children attend and the air they breathe.

If you lay side-by-side maps showing where the bulk of campaign contributions come from compared to where people of color live, one is almost a photonegative of the other. The people who can afford to contribute money (primarily white and wealthy) live in one area; while those who cannot live in other parts.

The 100,000 residents of just one elite zip code in Manhattan (10021) gave nearly twice as much money as the 9.5 million residents of all the zip

codes throughout the country in which people of color comprise well over half the population (483 zip codes in all).

If you take the nearly 2,500 zip codes where over half the population is people of color, the political contributions from their 41 million residents were matched by the political contributions of just 26 elite zip codes whose population numbers less than 700,000. Each resident of those cash-rich zip codes "votes" with 60 times as many dollars as each resident of all the majority people of color areas in the whole country.

The Network is building a coalition to host press conferences in mid-October to release the Color of Money report in South Carolina. This is just a first shot in what will be a long war to reduce the influence of money in politics. ♦

What "The Color of Money" shows us, is that 30 years later, the Kerner Commission report's conclusion is still painfully true: "Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white — separate and unequal."

Nine down, six to go

Officers were elected at the Network's annual meeting on Sept. 12. A motion was passed to extend the existing Executive Committee's service an additional year. Three open seats were filled, adding Diane Shockey and Maris Parmerter as co-secretaries and Lamondre Pough as member at large.

A motion was also passed to expand the Executive Committee to include coordinators from the six congressional districts in South Carolina. The motion contained a provision that the coordinators reflect the Network's commitment to being a grassroots-driven organization. Nominations for these seats will be taken until Oct. 1. The Executive Committee will vote on the matter by Oct. 15. To make a nomination, call 803-808-3384, fax 803-808-3781 or email net@scpronet.com.

The Executive Committee to date includes:

Co-chairs: Joe Neal and Donna Dewitt
Co-vice chairs: Harriet Hancock and Kamau Marcharia
Co-secretaries: Diane Shockey and Maris Parmerter
Treasurer: David Lemmond
Communications Director: Becci Robbins
Member at large: Lamondre Pough ♦

Cop Watch

Task force to investigate police brutality in Upstate

The SC-ACLU, a Network member group, has announced a Cop Watch program to respond to the alarming number of deaths of black males at the hands of police in the Upstate over the past several months.

Rev. Calvin Harris, who chairs the SC-ACLU's Racism and Criminal Justice Task Force in Columbia, said Cop Watch will document the nearly dozen killings in the past year in Greenville and Spartanburg counties, as well as solicit information about similar incidents across the state.

People with information or concerns about police brutality should contact Rev. Harris at 803-896-9449 in Columbia or Efa Nwangaza at 864-242-3039 in Greenville. You may Fax information to Efa at 864-242-2560. ♦

SAY NO TO Racism, Sexism AND Union-Busting

Crown Central Petroleum which owns gas stations in South Carolina and throughout the South is a symbol of oppression and recalls the dark days before the emergence of the civil rights movement.

Don't Buy **CROWN** Gasoline

A major civil rights lawsuit has been filed against Crown Central Petroleum. The lawsuit charges that Crown Central Petroleum, operating Crown gas stations and Fast Fare and Zippy Mart convenience stores throughout the South, routinely discriminated against African-Americans and women in hiring and promotions at its oil refineries, and that its supervisors distributed racist and sexist handbills.

Some of the handbills that workers say were distributed by Crown supervisors include:

- An application for "Jesse Jackson Staff Positions" asks: "length of last jail term," and "number of convenience stores robbed."
- An employment application, targeted at African-Americans, asks: "How many words do you give in a minute," and "Place of birth: charity hospital, free public hospital, cotton patch, back alley, or zoo?"
- A printed announcement states: "Sexual harassment in this area will not be reported; however, it will be graded."

Crown workers also charge that Crown supervisors:

- Paid women and African-Americans a salary below the minimum for particular pay grades and placed them in lower pay grades than their Caucasian male counterparts with similar experience and qualifications.

- Denied female employees a separate restroom facility.
- Expected female employees to give the Crown CEO a kiss upon receiving service awards.
- Passed over women and African-Americans for promotions by concealing information about job openings; misrepresenting the qualifications needed for promotions; using different qualification tests than those given to Caucasian males; and preventing them from acquiring skills and experience.
- Told female employees that they were "dumb," "would never learn," "lack initiative," and "if you want a job done, get a man to do it."
- Subjected an African-American male employee, a highly-decorated Marine veteran and former White House guard, to ridicule and humiliation through racist jokes, handbills and comments.
- Denied opportunities for promotion to another African-American

Vietnam veteran, a former Air Force captain, who went to work at Crown's Pasadena refinery in 1979 - believing he had excellent opportunities for advancement. Despite holding an MBA degree, he never saw a promotional opportunity posted in 17 years and was passed over for promotions by less-qualified Caucasian candidates.

Crown has also been sued for health and property damages by the mostly Latino neighbors who live in the shadow of Crown's largest refinery. Some of the health effects which are being linked to Crown's pollution and environmental racism include cancer, convulsions, bronchitis, and increased illness in children and the elderly.

Finally, Crown recently reined in 252 union workers from its Pasadena refinery in February, 1996 after they refused to accept the company's demands to eliminate 40 percent of the work force, contract out skilled jobs, and gut contract provisions protecting older workers. After Crown replaced the skilled unionized workers with lower-paid, less-skilled contract workers, pollution from the refinery increased almost three-fold.

You can help end these disgusting and uncivilized practices by Crown Central Petroleum. Please don't buy Crown gasoline and don't shop at Zippy Mart and Fast Fare convenience stores.

Please call
303-987-5349 for
further information.



The campaign against Crown has been endorsed by the SCLC, AFL-CIO, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Coalition of Labor Union Women, Southern Organizing Committee, National Black Caucus of State Legislators, Gens Club, Natural Resources Defense Council and the Environmental Defense Fund.

Nix MOX

Activists resist plutonium proposal

Twenty-years-ago, nearly 300 people were arrested for blocking the gates of a proposed plutonium reprocessing facility in Barnwell to protest the use of plutonium, the most deadly substance known, as a commercial reactor fuel. President Carter later issued an executive order banning plutonium fuel, and environmentalists declared a victory.

A new proposal by the Department of Energy to bring 50 tons of nuclear weapons grade plutonium to the Savannah River Site (the bomb plant) to make reactor fuel is a new

twist on this old bad idea. The new plan is to grind up the plutonium and mix it with enriched uranium to make a mixed oxide reactor fuel, or MOX. DOE would then give the MOX to Duke Power to use in four of their reactors in South Carolina.

The government's rationale for MOX is to "dispose of surplus plutonium" to prevent it from being used in nuclear weapons. But the MOX plan doesn't really "dispose" of the plutonium; it just spreads it around, increases the chance of exposure and creates more radioactive waste.

The Southern Coalition Opposed to Plutonium Energy (SCOPE) has been formed to educate the public about the environmental and financial risks posed by MOX. The Network has joined SCOPE, and encourages our membership to:

- Attend a MOX forum on Tuesday, Sept. 22, 7-10 p.m., and a MOX workshop on Sept. 23, 8-11 a.m., at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 2701 Heyward St., in Columbia.

- Call the DOE's Office of Plutonium Disposition at 1-800-820-5156 and ask for another public hearing in Columbia on the MOX proposal. The only DOE hearing in South Carolina was held in North Augusta in August, at which hundreds of bomb plant employees were given paid leave to attend and cheer for the proposal. ♦

We want YOU!

The Network meets each month in Columbia, Charleston and Greenville. Meetings are informal and open to all interested groups and individuals.

- Charleston: 2nd Monday, 7 p.m., ILA Hall, 910 Morrison Dr.
- Columbia: 4th Tuesday, 7 p.m. (NEW TIME!), 2214 Hampton St.
- Greenville: 4th Thursday, place and time TBA (Call 803-808-3384)

Reinventing DHEC — an update

The Network's campaign to restructure the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) has received buy-in from all of the major environmental groups in the state and the support of several key legislators. Some 20 of these critical players met at Donnelley Wildlife Management Area in August for a day-long strategy session. At the meeting, they reviewed draft legislation and made suggested changes. A second draft is in the works.

The campaign has received grant money to help ensure that the effort remains grassroots-driven and involves the people of South Carolina in shaping environmental policy. The campaign is in the process of gathering first-person accounts detailing community battles with polluting industries and DHEC, which more often than not sides with corporate interests. These narratives will be used to help educate and involve the public in the campaign. A four-page tabloid will be published and circulated in late October. For information on the campaign or for copies of the tabloid, call 803-808-3384.

The South Carolina Progressive Network

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