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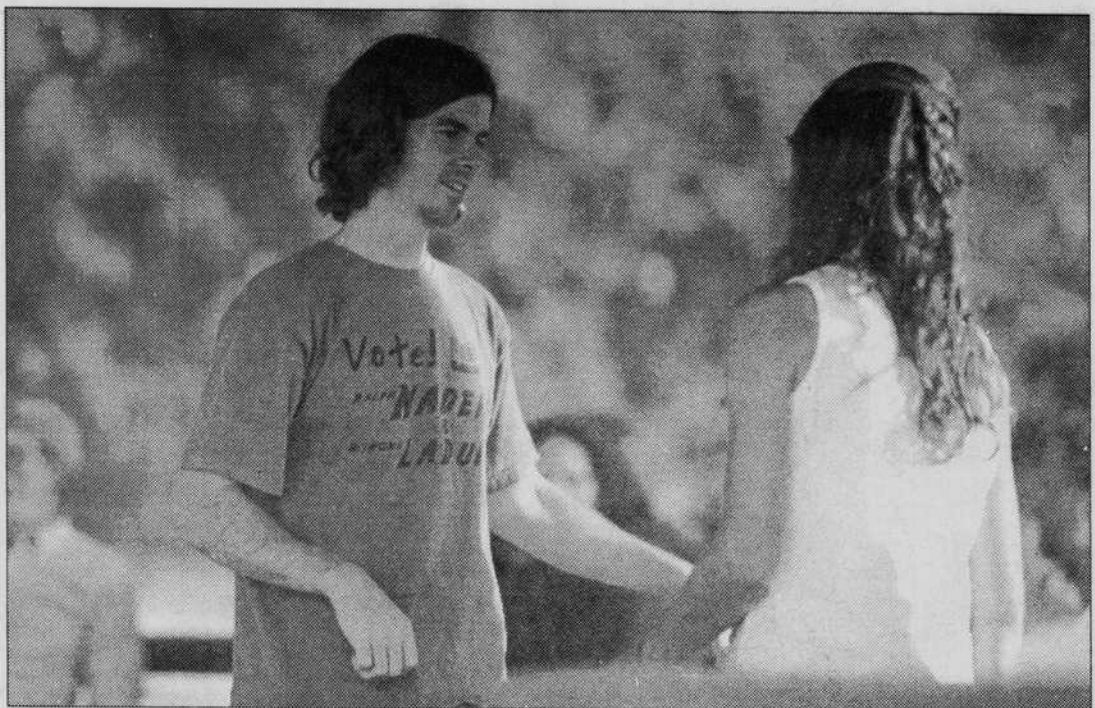
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Azle Malinao-Alvarez Emerald

Bradley Porterfield, left, a University graduate student, is Lane County's Green Party campaign chairman. He spoke with supporters of Green Party presidential candidate Ralph Nader at a Eugene rally in mid-August.

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## Green Party supporters rally interest in Nader alternative

■ Voters weary of the two-party system organize efforts for presidential hopeful Ralph Nader

By Jack Clifford  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Supporters of Green Party presidential candidate Ralph Nader may not be a very big bunch, but they are generating a lot of noise and expressing in clear terms their disappointment with the current political conditions.

"The two-party system feels like one body with two heads," Nader backer T.K. McDonald said during a mid-August rally at Alton Baker Park in Eugene. "There's no real alternative ... Both of them piss me off!"

*"We can't have a democracy if we don't participate, so participate. Get out and do something. Don't just eat your M&M's and watch action films."*

**Bradley Porterfield**  
Lane County Green Party  
campaign Chairman

McDonald joined about 150 others who were out in force to help kick off the Lane County Nader campaign season. August was the month for planning, said Ken Grimsley, chairperson for the Lane Victory 2000 Political Action Committee Supporting Ralph Nader for President, while September and October is the time for the group's big push.

Nader spoke in Portland on Aug. 25 and he outlined his perspective on the differences between himself and the two major party candidates, Democratic Vice President Al Gore and Republican Texas Gov. George W. Bush.

"Every vote [Green Party vice presidential candidate Winona LaDuke and I] get is a vote of rebuke of corrupt politics of the two-party system, and a positive vote for public financing of [political] campaigns, a strong environment,

universal health care insurance, an end to corporate welfare, a crackdown on corporate crime, fraud and abuse, and the facilitation of unionizing by low-income workers ... and I think those all resonate all over the country," Nader told the crowd of approximately 10,000 people in Memorial Coliseum, as reported in an Aug. 26 article in The Register-Guard.

The Eugene rally was the kick-off event for the Lane County campaign for Nader. Grimsley said that the organization is thriving thanks to a grassroots effort led by a cadre of volunteers.

"This year, more people, all the way from [Sen. John] McCain-style Republicans clear to far-left progressives are learning about Nader, his deep democracy, his civic democracy, his stance to end corporate control, and they are coming on-board," Grimsley said. "So, I think that Lane County is going to be an amazing turnout ... and we'd like to deliver it to Nader."

In 1996, a mostly invisible Nader won 4 percent of the vote in Oregon, his best showing in the nation. Now that the longtime consumer advocate is running a more serious campaign, Nader is attracting dedicated followers.

"He's very capable, he's shown us that, his record shows us that," said Bradley Porterfield, a University graduate student in community and regional planning. "He's worked his entire life in the public interest, protecting consumers and holding corporations and government agencies accountable."

Porterfield is Lane County's Green Party campaign chairman and he, similar to other attendees at the Alton Baker rally, said that the two major parties aren't offering him a future he desires. He also said that students shouldn't just watch the November election come and go.

"From my point of view, students should look at the world as a huge opportunity, not to step on people, but to help people, to make the world a better place," he said. "That's what Nader offers — it's a mobilized citizenry. We can't have a democracy if we don't participate, so participate. Get out and do something. Don't just eat your

M&Ms and watch action films."

A lot of debate has arisen over Nader's run for the presidency, mostly stemming from Democrats who say that a vote for the 66-year-old Princeton and Harvard Law School graduate with no foreseeable chance of winning the 2000 race is in essence a vote for Bush. But at least two registered Democrats at the rally said that Nader is the only "hope for the future" and their vote will go to him.

"I'm here because Bush and Gore make me want to Ralph," Eugene resident Craig Miller said. Miller stood with McDonald, who also expressed her irritation with Bush and Gore in regards to race issues.

"Neither one of them are representing me," McDonald, an African-American, said. "They give lip service to [race issues], but they're not on my side."

Nader also does a better job of addressing feminist issues, said Heather Jones, another University graduate student in community and regional planning. She said that as a volunteer worker she senses a lot of enthusiasm for Nader.

"Working in this campaign ... the energy I feel is much stronger, much closer to the heart — it's about people's ethics and morals and what they feel deep down," Jones said. "It's not just this grandiose political party, it's about people's true intimate feelings for what they want for this planet and its future."

"I [also] feel that Nader really understands eco-feminism and what that's all about. It's not about demanding equal rights so much ... it's more that there is equality amongst all people."

Grimsley said that even if Nader doesn't win this time around, the groundwork is being laid for a stronger attack in 2004 on the powerful two-party system.

"In four years, Bush would make a very easy target for Nader and the Green Party; in four years, Gore will be a good target, but a slippery one because he puts on a clever face to try to pull in the moderates and Democrats," he said. "Either way, in four years, when Nader's Green Party qualifies for \$15 million in public funding, the White House will be severely challenged by this third party."