

Jill Stein wants to Occupy the Oval Office

The Green Party presidential candidate talks about third party potential and the influence of Occupy on her politics

BY ALAN PRESTON
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Jill Stein, the Harvard-trained physician who is the Green Party candidate for president, knows what, and who, she is up against.

In 2002, Stein ran against Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney in the race for governor of Massachusetts.

She lost the contest, but Stein won credibility among voters, which she parlayed into other bids for Massachusetts office under the Green-Rainbow Party banner, one for state representative in 2004, and one for secretary of state, in 2006.

In that race, Stein received the votes of more than 350,000 Massachusetts citizens, the most votes ever received for a Green-Rainbow Party candidate.

Now Stein is traveling the country on a grassroots campaign for the nation's highest elected office. She's on the ballot in Oregon and Washington and seeking a ballot line in others. In Georgia, Indiana and Missouri, she's a write-in candidate.

On a recent stop on the campaign trail, Stein answered a few questions about her candidacy.

Alan Preston: Why are you running for president?

Jill Stein: We are in a crisis. People are losing jobs, unemployment is going up, not down, and it's been outrageously high for years. There are no solutions. Wages are declining as they have been. People are losing homes by the millions, and there are no solutions. (While people suffer) and the climate is in meltdown, a wealthy few are making out like bandits, and the political establishment is making it worse with austerity politics and tax breaks for the wealthy.

People are nearing a breaking point, and I'm running to turn that breaking point into a tipping point.

A.P.: Do third parties have a chance to win?

J.S.: That's like asking, will we live to see tomorrow? We are on a trajectory that is taking us over the cliff. Jobs are going overseas, the president is negotiating the latest free trade agreement that will cut wages and undermine American sovereignty, every day there is a new Wall Street fraud, we continue to see healthcare costs

skyrocket, students are turned into indentured servants, the climate is in meltdown, our civil liberties are under attack. We can't grin and bear it. Our economy and planet can't survive.

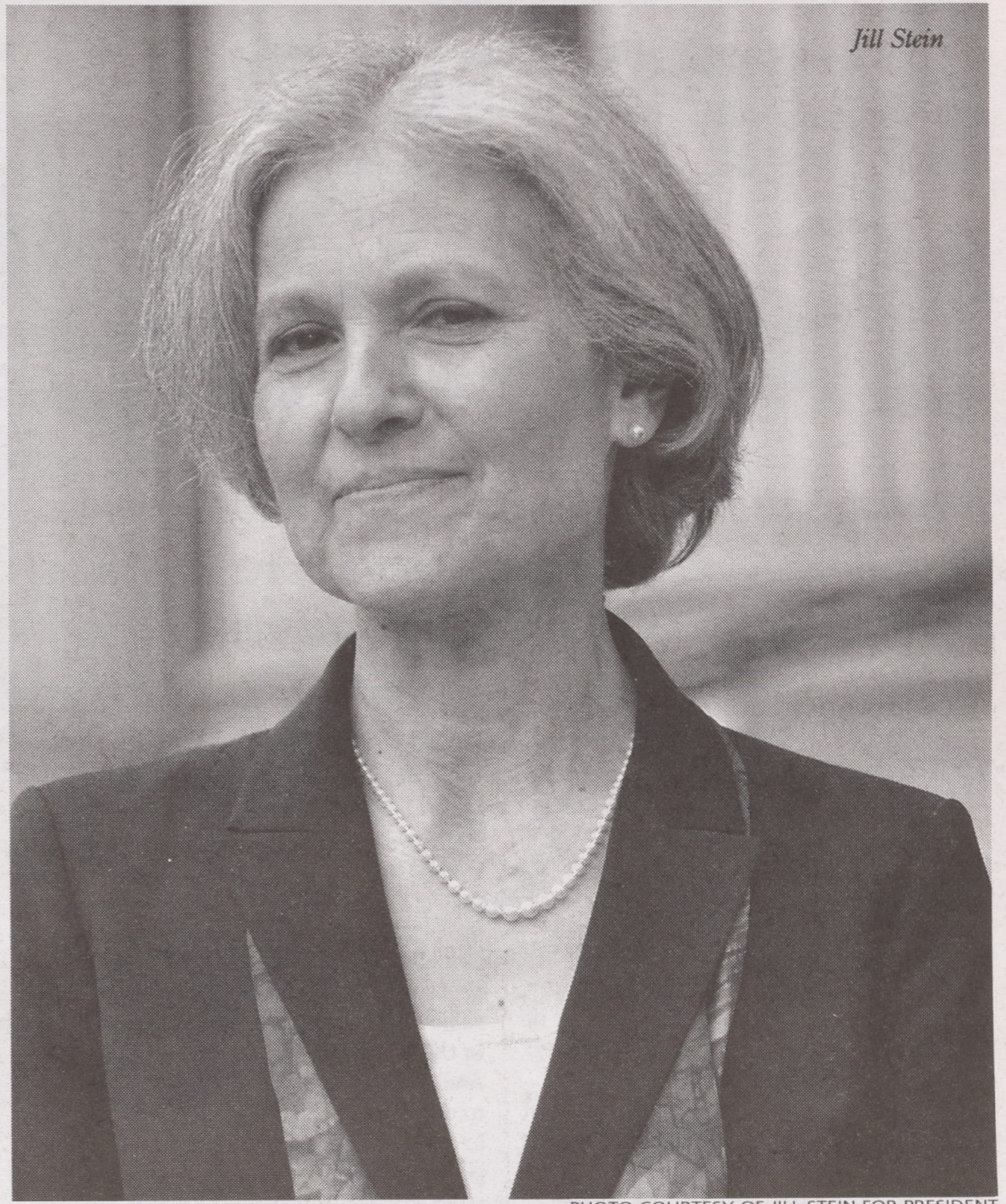
Every step of that fight is critical. The idea that we can't vote for ourselves is really dangerous. (Those in power) want to assert politics of fear. Look at where politics of fear has brought us. If we silence ourselves, the voice of public interest, all we are left with is the public relations campaigns of the Wall Street-sponsored candidates.

It's not just OK to vote your values, it's life-saving, job-saving and planet-saving to do so.

This propaganda about throwing away your vote has it backwards. To vote for either Wall Street candidate gives them a mandate for four more years. Let's cast a vote for ourselves and a vision for our future. Politics is like an abusive relationship where so many people have been taught to speak the apologies of their abuser. They can just walk away and walk into a healthy mutually respectful political relationship. That's where we need to be going.

A.P.: Many say that candidates who get elected president end up being limited by politics and partisanship to what they can actually get accomplished once in office. How could you avoid this?

J.S.: By not selling your soul to get to office to start with. People like Obama, who seem to be switching allegiances the minute they get elected, had sold those allegiances in order to get to office. The president has been paying back his corporate sponsors, especially Wall Street, defense contractors, fossil fuel goliaths and the health insurance and pharmaceutical industry. They all got a good return on their investment. My campaign and the Green Party does not accept corporate money. We do not accept money from lobbyists. We don't accept money from CEOs of private industry who hire lobbyists. If you have an agenda to your contribution, we don't take it. Most of our money comes in pretty anonymously over the Web. I do very little fundraising. To get things done in office, I will rely on everyday people to be the engine of our democracy. Let me give you an example. Recently the SOPA (Stop Online Piracy Act) bill was stopped in its tracks. SOPA would have



Jill Stein

PHOTO COURTESY OF JILL STEIN FOR PRESIDENT

privatized the Internet. It was supposed to be a slam dunk. Word got out, and people called and emailed their elected representatives to tell them 'Don't vote for the bill.' We the people stopped it in a blink of an eye. This should be the process for all the important bills. The president should be a whistleblower and let people know what bills are coming up that matter ... and encourage them to contact their elected reps. The president could represent the United States for a change, not lobbyists.

A.P.: How was your campaign influenced by and accountable to the Occupy movement? What do you think the movement has accomplished?

J.S.: We have been supporting Occupy from the get-go and continue to do so. I share the gratitude of so many Americans to the Occupy movement for reviving hope, democracy and justice in America.

I rely on Occupy as an engine of a social movement. An electoral movement can do nothing without a social movement to work with hand in hand. Throughout history, it is the alliance of a social movement on the ground with an independent political party that has worked together to make transformational change.

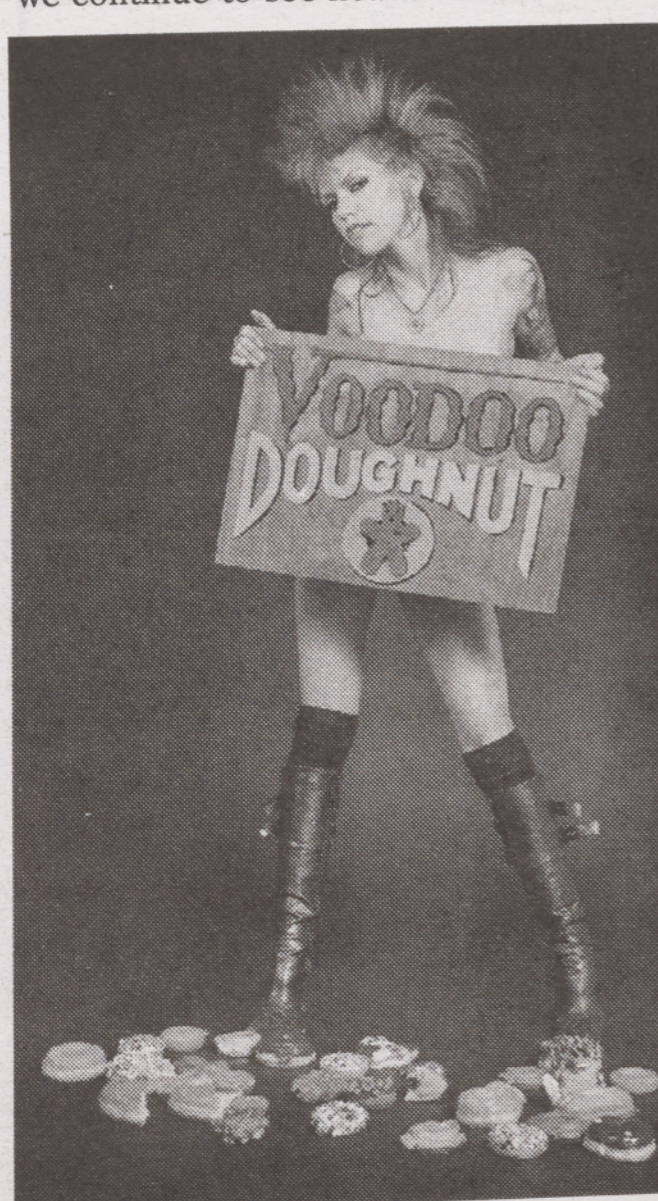
A.P.: What are a couple examples of this

collaboration?

J.S.: (One is) the abolition of slavery. There was a social movement for abolition, and the Liberty Party drove the abolition agenda to the Republicans, which became a political party under Lincoln and carried the issue into the mainstream. Another example is women's suffrage. A strong social movement worked hand in hand with (the) Women's Party, which helped make the right to vote for women a political issue and drive it forward. Another example is the labor movement, where a social movement on the ground was strengthened by the Socialist party, Progressive Party and Communist Party, all of which forced workers' issues and drove forward the agenda of a 40-hour work week, safe workplaces, social security and the New Deal.

These reforms were all the product of a partnership between a social movement on the ground and an independent political party that could drive that movement into a broader political agenda. As Frederick Douglass said: "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will."


Reprinted from Real Change, Seattle, Wash.



VOODOO DOUGHNUT
THE MAGIC IS IN THE HOLE!
22 SW 3RD & BURNSIDE
1501 NE DAVIS
SUPPORTING STREET ROOTS SINCE 2003

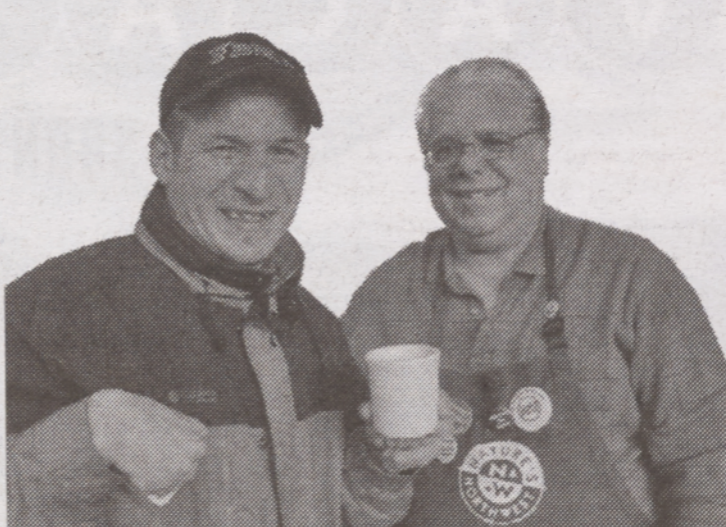
OPEN 24/7!

Sisters Of The Road
creating community, creating change, together



We are—

- } Hospitality & friendship
- } Community change through the Dorothy Day Community School
- } Working together for nonviolence & justice
- } And don't forget: fun!



All are welcome ~
Monday-Friday, 10am - 2:30pm

133 NW 6th Ave. in Portland
503-222-5694
www.sistersoftheroad.org