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GREEN NATIONAL CONVENTION

BLACK CAUCUS REPORT

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2004 REPORT OF THE BLACK CAUCUS ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

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Submitted by Michele Tingling-Clemmons, Co-Chair

The Black Caucus has faced many challenges in the past year since the Convention in Washington, DC, surmounting many and working on others. We have expanded our membership, finalized our by-laws and moved forward to full accreditation, which we anticipate have been approved by the 2004 Convention in Milwaukee. This process has further strengthened our organizational capacity and outreach.

We began the year with great plans and anticipation of a year of hard, productive work to implement the proposal as approved by the CC last year, and to be able to report on a corollary increase in African-American GP membership. However, we found that despite our best efforts and those of some of the GPUS leadership to move forward on this unique opportunity in this presidential election year, these goals were ultimately thwarted. The process itself was to prove instructive, and to provide an alert to serious problems within the GPUS, problems that will need to be addressed by this body, the Coordinating Committee, and the serious minds and people it represents.

The obstacles faced by the Black Caucus Organizing Committee were of a nature that gave the appearance of reasonableness, but the results demonstrated their true goal – to delay, deter, detain, distract and finally deny the forward motion of the BCOC to achieving the tours. Much of this problem resulted, we believe, because the GPUS had not anticipated the accommodations necessary for the BCOC to be able to move forward on the tours, and certain members of the SC were unable to envision the need for or importance of making the accommodations.

The delays eventually led the BCOC, under the leadership of Co-Chair Michele Tingling-Clemmons to determine that it was necessary to opt for a strategy that would capitalize on the skills and talents of its members to develop materials, conduct outreach,





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and otherwise expand on doing the work we already knew how to do. This strengthened the resolve leading to our attaining the particulars for accreditation. It also exposed an internal problem within the BCOC with members who had previously assumed leadership in the group and who, despite extended absences from the work and meetings, wanted to insist on privileges based on their prior participation. Those efforts failed.

Nonetheless, this disaffected element in the BCOC then appealed to those members of the GPUS SC who had most distinguished themselves by consistently presenting obstacles to moving the tours forward. There have been several compilations of the particulars between the BCOC and the SC, and within the BCOC that are available on the Black Caucus list serve.

This experience has demonstrated that we have a responsibility to monitor those we choose to lead us, and to demand accountability of them at every step. To abdicate this responsibility is the height of un-Green behavior.

We look forward to meeting the upcoming year as a fully accredited caucus and are committed to building our membership, and lifting as we climb.

