

Visionary Green lives in whirlwind of controversy

Winner of non-binding vice presidential primary

By Mike Recht
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HANCOCK, N.H. (AP) When George Bush picks a running mate for the GOP presidential ticket, he's not likely to consider the landslide winner of the non-binding vice presidential primary in New Hampshire: Wayne Green.

Green, whose only competition was a teacher from New York City, failed to arouse a groundswell of support nationally.

Besides, Bush will be looking for someone to balance the ticket, to attract votes; Wayne Green is better known for keeping people off balance, and it's doubtful he could carry his own towns of Hancock and Peterborough.

He's a publisher, not a politician.

And, though he made Peterborough — population 4,876 — a major publishing center by pioneering such highly successful magazines as Digital Audio, 73 and, he says, BYTE, residents like to say he also has fired half the town.

A few years ago, a Wayne Green ex-employees association sprung up, and about 50 people showed up for a dinner to swap anecdotes. Even Green attended.

Green has had his problems elsewhere, too. He's been sued by the IRS, CBS, the telephone company and his former wife.

Wayne Green, 65, seems to make a lasting impression on almost everyone he meets. The descriptions range from visionary and brilliant to whacko and flake.

"He foresaw the future of computers in the early 1970s and ran articles on the application of computers," said one former Green executive, who asked that his name not be used. "He was a decade ahead in foreseeing what computers could do."

"In the early 1980s, he started a magazine on compact disks. He was two years ahead of the others. He has astonishing vision."

He played a role in the growth of fledgling industries such as microcomputers, compact disks and the repeater relay business for ham operators by giving manufacturers a place to advertise and hungry consumers a place to learn about the new products.

Green said he has started 25 magazines, many of them still being published. After selling out to International Data Group, one of the largest



Wayne Green sits in his Hancock, N.H. home.

AP photo

computer magazine publishers in the world, for a reported \$16 million several years ago, he started another publishing house, Wayne Green Enterprises in Hancock, which he claims is worth \$20 million.

He writes industry newsletters, bi-annually publishes a yearbook on compact disks, puts together foreign travel tours for ham operators, has written a \$100 video for businesses to teach proper public relations and is thinking about producing classical music tapes.

His wife of 12 years, Sherry, meanwhile, has produced 22 dance videos that are "selling like crazy," he said.

He has mingled with King Hussein of Jordan — the king always sends a Christmas card — and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India, fellow ham radio operators, and said he has

convinced Hussein to introduce ham radio in schools to get youngsters interested in electronics. Another goal is to sell electronics magazines to students in China.

"Oddly, widely connected," the anonymous executive called him.

And Green is one of the four founders of Mensa, an organization of people who score in the top 2 percent of an accepted intelligent test, such as IQs.

He is a man of a thousand ideas, a solution to every problem. His vice presidential campaign gave him a chance to air his thoughts on how to improve the quality of education, increase the number of electronic experts in the country, solve the drug abuse problem and get people off welfare.

His ideas and opinions often be-

come editorials that he writes for all of his magazines out of his 18-room farmhouse. Subjects range from God and religion to drugs, welfare and travel tips, and cover one to seven pages under the title "Never Say Die," derived from his ham call letters NSD. He frequently encourages readers to self improvement.

"As long as I can remember, he was always pushing, pushing people to get out and be creative and to use their talents to get ahead in the world," said another former employee, Jeff DeTray of Troy. "He doesn't believe there's any excuse for any educated person to go through life punching a clock."

He said he has helped hundreds of people get jobs in the computer and audio industries, and has lectured on entrepreneurship at schools including Yale, alma mater Rensselaer and Boston University.

"I get great satisfaction out of encouraging people to make money, to be successful," he said.

DeTray said Green has 10 ideas a day "and any one could be a \$10 million idea. You just need to sort out which one."

"He's happiest when new things are starting up and growth is taking place," DeTray said. "He seemed less happy when new projects become routine."

Life has been far from routine for Green since he left New York City 27 years ago. Two years earlier, he was fired as an editor of a ham radio magazine, so he started his own, 73.

"I sold everything I had, my 22-foot Chris-Craft for \$1,500, my plane for \$2,000 and my Porsche for \$3,500, enough money to print my first issue," he said.

He moved to Peterborough in his native New Hampshire — he was born in Littleton — because of nearby 2,200-foot Pack Monadnock Mountain, a ham radio center.

He found a 40-room house on the outskirts of town, and stayed for 25 years, providing room and board for many of his employees; he often did the cooking. The barn was full of animals. It was a family affair.

Green provided jobs, refurbished the building, paid taxes on a multi-million dollar business and put the town on the map with "a good grade of magazines," Selectman Merton Dyer said.

He was elected president of the Chamber of Commerce and, by his own account, raised attendance from eight to 100 within two months by presenting, he said, more interesting speakers.

But, as DeTray put it, "He's not your average taciturn New En-

glander. He probably grated on a lot of townspeople."

"He can be tough on people if he's stuck with an idea that doesn't work," DeTray added.

"He has bright ideas, but no depth to them," said Tom Westheimer, another former employee. "He hires people to implement them, and when it doesn't work, he fires them."

"I don't think he goes out to screw people. He really wants to help them. He gives people without experience a chance to learn."

Green could have been a billionaire, but "he has no business sense," the anonymous former executive said.

He also has had personal problems. Green said he was convicted of tax evasion in the early 1970s after writing editorials critical of the Internal Revenue Service.

Then Bell Telephone in Los Angeles sued after he published a circuit number — he claims he was only repeating something that had been published elsewhere — that enabled readers to make toll-free calls.

The case ended when he agreed not to publish any more information on various telephone company devices.

In the early 1980s, he was sued by CBS, which claimed the use of the name Digital Audio for one of his magazines was too close to one of their trademarks, Green said. He said CBS later dropped the suit.

And there was the disagreement with his first wife, Virginia, over who created BYTE, considered the oldest and most successful computer magazine. Green said the magazine, begun in the mid-1970s, was in her name because of his tax situation.

A lawsuit and countersuit ensued, and Green wrote about the dispute for years in editorials. He even put up a billboard in front of his office that read, "Merry Christmas To All But One."

For Green, the issue probably was more recognition than money.

"I've accomplished a lot of things, and not many people know about it," he said. "That bothers me."

"I've never been interested in money," he said, his office appearance in white dungarees, white socks and tennis shoes offering confirmation.

He also has little interest in retirement.

"One problem with retiring is no one takes you seriously anymore. I don't see any benefit," he said.