

Oregon Socialist

<http://www.thesocialistparty.org/>

Autumn 2006

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Some of Our Allies in the Struggle

We may not all agree on labels, but there are many people, many groups, who believe strongly in doing the work to make the world a better place.

Oregon Consumer League
<http://www.orconsumer.org>

Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste
<http://www.pcun.org>

Oregon Public Power Coalition
<http://www.oppc.net>

Oregon Food Bank
<http://www.oregonfoodbank.org/>

Community Alliance of Tenants
<http://www.oregoncat.org/>

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Socialist Part of Oregon Update

by Michael C. Marino

Meeting in Convention, the Socialist Party of Oregon elected a new State Committee, including the following:

Michael C. Marino, re-elected as Chair

Chuck Wynns, elected as Vice-Chair

Michael Huff, elected as Secretary

Beverly Honeycutt, elected as Treasurer

The meeting minutes are in dispute as to whether we re-elected Charley Nims as State Organizer.

Our sister organization, the ballot-qualified political party Socialist Party of Oregon, is no longer quite so ballot-qualified. The Party failed to meet with ORS 248's requirements and may have lost the remaining ballot access. Some will mourn, some will do cartwheels, but democracy loses when people lose representation in the form of the political party of their choice.

The Freedom Socialist Party may have met the same fate as well. (The Secretary of State does not send out a letter to

inform a group when they have lost ballot access, which is why it is somewhat vague as to who has ballot access and who does not.)

We have not had the benefit of a State Committee that better represents the SPUSA chapter in some time. For several years, all of the SEC officers have been from the Multnomah County Local, long the most active Local in the state. The addition of SEC members from the Mid-Willamette Valley Local (multi-county) does not extend us to Southern or Eastern Oregon, but it extends our representation, and, hopefully, our participation.

The Chair (and that would be Yours Truly [sheepish grin]) is currently derelict in setting up a way for the SEC to operate when it covers a wider area -- I became too accustomed to the ease of having an SEC all in the same city.

The Party should not be constrained by geography, so I welcome the challenge.

The Deepening Crisis

by David McReynolds

Reprinted from Edge Left

This current crisis flows not only from relatively old quarrels between Israel and the Palestinians, but from recent Israeli policy toward the Palestinians. When Hamas won the election in Palestine, one could deplore their refusal to recognize Israel, but one should not have been surprised by it, given the long policy of Israel of "targeted assassinations" which too often had high civilian casualties. (If one counts the number of Israelis killed by terrorists attacks and stacks those deaths up against the terrorist attacks by Israel on the Palestinians, the death rate is very much higher for the Palestinians - something the US media seems never to get clear).

One can feel a deep concern for the fear the Israelis have - I have that concern - but also one must be aware of the problem, which is that since Israel has a very powerful military machine (built up in part by US aid), it has tended, almost always, to think of all political problems in military terms. This was true of Lebanon where Sharon invaded and carried the invasion all the way to Beirut, trying once and for all to destroy the PLO. It was Hezbollah which, over a long period of time, eroded the Israel will to occupy Lebanon or even the "security zone" which for some quite mad reason Israel thought it had a right to create from Lebanon's territory. It was Hamas which, over

a period of time, wore down the Israelis in Gaza and led Sharon to carry out the evacuation.

But again and again Israel has compounded the problems. There was a small edge toward some kind of negotiations between Israel and Hamas (this is before any rockets were fired at Israel) when Israel began more military attacks in Gaza. Then came the rocket attacks, then came the appalling Israeli attack on Gaza, the destruction of its power stations, its water supplies, etc. This is inhuman. It is also illegal under international law. This is collective punishment. Which is immoral, illegal, and stupid.

The last country in the world which should be surprised at the various "terrorist" attacks on Israel should be Israel itself.

Others may think Israel is acting in concert with the US - I don't think so. That Bush is incompetent to deal with this is obvious, and that he tends to take the Israeli side is also true. But the US is trapped at the moment in Iraq, it doesn't have military options against Syria and Iran. A wider war is not in the interests of the US. Already oil prices are going up.

My own guess is that Israel is acting without thinking. That the current government (which in theory is not a "right wing"

government) feels a need to prove its toughness, and has let itself provoke a situation where it has now foolishly escalated the war to the point where everyone will be the losers, including a lot of Israeli young men and women in addition to the civilians in Lebanon and Gaza. If anything, this is a replay (though history never repeats itself precisely) of Sharon's folly in marching into Lebanon. Israel is doing it again.

Folks getting this should be thinking of demonstrations calling for the immediate end of Israel's actions, those in other countries should press their own governments to insist that the UN continue the pressure to stop Israel (thus far it is the US which has vetoed the UN actions). All of us can be in contact with our members of Congress.

There is an increasing urgency to this situation. Alas, when I listen to the Israeli spokesmen I feel, once more, that lying is almost a requirement for service in the Israeli foreign office. Syria and Iran did not cause this crisis - Israel did. The basis of that crisis is not the capture of an Israeli soldier - it is the continued Israeli Occupation of Palestinian territory.

Peace,
David McReynolds
former chair, War Resisters
International

"If universal peace, civilisation, and commerce are ever to be the happy lot of man, it cannot be accomplished but by a revolution in the system of governments. All the monarchical governments are military. War is their trade, plunder and revenue their objects. While such governments continue, peace has not the absolute security of a day. What is the history of all monarchical governments but a disgusting picture of human wretchedness, and the accidental respite of a few years' repose? Wearied with war, and tired with human butchery, they sat down to rest, and called it peace." -Tom Paine

GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING: RACE AND ETHNICITY

by Hunter Gray (with comment and reply)

When I look back on it now, I realize that I was no kid in those times -- though I was still a Teen who could skip facial shaving for several days and still pass inspection. Even then, I, as well as my peers in that very rigorous Army basic training cycle -- most of them older and draftees whereas I was a volunteer -- were all traveling, growing up-wise, at an increasingly accelerated pace. Some of my buddies went AWOL or even, sooner or later, cracked and went home. But most of us were tough -- sometimes tougher than even we thought.

I was sitting by myself one evening in fatigues in a shabby Post Exchange [PX], reading the Army Times and sipping what passed for Army-approved beer. A voice, loud and hearty, called out to me.

"Salter! Mind if I join you for a few minutes?"

I looked up, mildly surprised but agreeable -- actually somewhat honored. Master Sergeant J. Hawkins sat down with his beer. He had taken military interest in me early on. Once, during a five hour full field march [with super heavy backpacks and M1 rifles] he asked us all generally if anyone could tell him just how far we were from base. Some said more than five miles, a few said ten. I finally said, "One mile and a half. We've been marching in circles." It was an extremely accurate assessment and he smiled broadly. Soon after that he and others especially and formally noted my expertise as a rifleman.

Sergeant Hawkins was Black -- very Black -- and from one of the deepest tiers in the Deep South. In fact, the C.O. and most cadre were Black. The First Sergeant was a genial Irishman and one 2nd Lieutenant, an Anglo -- and a "Ninety Day Wonder" fresh out of Officer Candidate School -- was cold and often hostile.

I'm half American Indian -- the other half being mostly Scottish, but with some Swiss. The Army had been interested from the beginning in the Native part, noting -- along with a youthful and

civilian drinking peccadillo and some very positive words, that "SALTER'S father is a full-blooded Indian ." [If anyone is interested in the drinking episode, that official Army document is in the Narrative page of our large Lair of Hunterbear website.]

I grew up in Northern Arizona with our "mixed" family -- three tribal nations of the Northeast from Dad's side, Mother from the West -- deeply involved with the Navajo and the Laguna with which our ties still remain extremely close. In addition, all sorts of other people of courage and good will came to our house, then on the far northern rim of Flagstaff: Hopi, Apache, Black and Chicano, Chinese and Cuban.

I should note, however parenthetically, that in the family I "head" [at least in a titular fashion], things are pretty well mixed indeed. In addition to me, Eldri is Norwegian and Finnish, heavily laced with Lapp [Sami or Saami], and some Swedish as well. Maria's oldest, Thomas, is one-half Mississippi Choctaw and her other child, Samantha, is a quarter Spanish Basque and a quarter Jewish. Thomas, a couple of years ago, brought in a far away international dimension when he married Mimie [Yirengah] Chilinda, from Zambia.

All of this brings to mind:

In a great little 1950 classic by the gifted American writer, Edmund Wilson, *Apologies to the Iroquois* [With a Study of the Mohawks in High Steel by Joseph Mitchell], a veteran Mohawk worker in high steel and a pillar of the mostly Mohawk Iron Workers Local in the NYC area tells writer Mitchell, an Anglo:

From Mr Orvis Diabo [O-ron-ia-ke-te or He Carries The Sky] -- "My mother was half Scotch and half Indian," he says. "My grandmother on my father's side was Scotch-Irish. Somewhere along the line, I forget just where, some French immigrant and some full Irish crept in. If you were to take my blood and strain it, God only knows what you'd find."

Back now, at the PX of so long ago,

Sergeant Hawkins, after only a very few words of small talk, looked at me sharply and said, "This is tough duty for me." There was a long pause and he went on, "How am I doing?"

He was a man who, in addition to having more helpful accounts than even General Rommel's classic book from World War I [Infantry Attacks, copy of which I have], was a very balanced mixture of sternness and pleasantry.

But I certainly knew precisely from where he was coming. It had been only relatively recently that the process had begun in earnest to make the U.S. Armed Services racially integrated. Our training company was transitional, mostly Black-led. And, while the trainee/troopers fell into a variety of racial/ethnic categories, most were White.

And most of those were Southern Whites.

Without hesitation, I looked at him and said, "You're doing O.K. -- in fact, just fine." I went on, "You're fair, and you know everything that you're talking about."

He smiled quickly, appreciatively, and we then talked of hunting in our respective "down home" settings.

In my "Organizer's Catechism" -- based on about 50 years of grassroots work and in which I consistently stress the importance of democratic, local leadership -- I point out, among other qualities that make up a good and effective Organizer :

"4] Formal academic training in the higher ed sense can certainly be useful to any Organizer [or, as far as that goes, for anyone] -- but it isn't absolutely critical. The Organizer, among other attributes, should be fully literate [including computer literate], with finely tuned sensitivities, with one hell of a lot of good sense. And almost anyone can do much self-teaching.

Race and social class factors are not usually critical for a good

Organizer. [I'm a Native American who has worked comfortably with Indians of many tribes, Chicanos, Southern and Northern Blacks, Puerto Ricans, low-income Anglos. I've also never pretended to have proletarian origins.]

In a word, be sensitive -- but be yourself."

That little Catechism [the Link to which is attached to my e-mail signature] was immediately, and continues to be, reprinted in social justice print journals and websites. One journal asked to run it -- I agreed as always -- but, when it did not appear, I asked. I was told that some [unidentified] people had objected to certain things and that it would, maybe, be run when several differing views could be assembled. But I was not surprised when that particular publication never did print it. The shrill edges of "political correctness" -- however eloquently written and rationalized and sometimes insufferably sanctimonious -- have certainly been known to trump the hard, tedious realities and experience of truly effective grassroots organizing.

While I have no way of knowing with certainty because the "objectors" in that lone journal instance [lone, at least to my knowledge] and their ostensible concerns were never identified, I have a hunch it was that just quoted component of my little piece that upset them: working sensitively and well across racial and class lines -- with grassroots people who need and want activist assistance. Ignored, apparently, is the endless flow of cases throughout the blood-dimmed centuries of Humanity where good people of all kinds have worked with good people of all kinds with very effective results. [A few may still now now the name of Frank H. Little, Oklahoma Cherokee, who, as the chief organizer for the IWW in the decade preceding and just into U.S. entrance into World War I, worked smoothly and excellently with every kind of dispossessed in the West -- ultimately being lynched at Butte on August 1 1917 by thugs employed by Anaconda Copper.

In my book, anyway, it's "the people of the fewest alternatives" who count. Last July [2005], Bruce Hartford, the indefatigable webmaster of the

genuinely great Civil Rights Movement Veterans, trekked up here and spent that hot day doing a very long [51 typed, single-spaced pages] on my Life and Times. We covered all of the essentials -- and they are many indeed -- and, along toward the end, he had several very apt questions and some of the most basic follow. [The whole interview is on Civil Rights Movement Veterans and also our Lair of Hunterbear website.]

"Bruce: How do you feel about Black Power?"

Hunter: Well, that's a very good question. If you're talking about grassroots power, that's really what all this is about. And if you're talking about separatism for the sake of separatism, - that's where some of it began to go, - the people that began to make a business of separatism, - no I don't buy that at all. But I don't think it affected the grassroots that way.

But I think we do have to recognize the importance of self-determination. This is very important in a Native American context. But what I've noticed is that if a person is a good person, and has something to offer and is willing to listen, - underlining that about a hundred times, - they can find themselves working with all sorts of people.

In Chicago, in the period of '69 to '73, we worked mostly with Black people, but also with Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, and others, down in that area. One of our most successful community organizers, in fact my senior community organizer, was white, a red-head with a master's in social work. He worked with Black ghetto youth very, very successfully. When it came time to arrange the peace parley between the Young Lords and the Disciples and the Black P. Stone Nation and so forth, he was one of the key figures in that. Everybody trusted him.

So my sense of this is that your question is complicated. I think we're all for self determination. I don't think we like people who come in to a situation, - whoever they are, - and announce they have all the answers. But I'm wary of people who make

separatism a vocation, - a career.

I'm very supportive of grassroots people, whoever they are. I like a situation where people, - whoever they are, - can recognize that there are people who might be a little bit different, who are still good people, and who may have some worthwhile ideas. I don't know if I've answered this.

Bruce: We have a section on the website called "Frequently Asked Questions," in which different Movement veterans give their views on questions such as Black Power, non-violence, and so on. But those are not questions that have definitive answers, different veterans have different opinions.

Hunter: We don't have an orthodoxy in that sense. But my thing is going back to the people. Black people in Jackson showed tremendous courage against the greatest odds, the cruelest repression anybody could imagine. The people in Eastern North Carolina, - lonely and isolated, - the Klan very much a threat, to say nothing of [White Citizens] Council, and "Birchers," every other Goddamn thing, - they showed tremendous courage.

So basically, I go back to the grassroots people, back to the concept of self-determination, of democratic social movements. But I like the idea of people being able to work together. And ultimately, I think we're all going to have to work together if we're going to save this wretched world. And I think we're going to see movements come that learn from the mistakes of what's gone before. Every damn movement you can point to has been built on the wreckage of preceding movements.

Bruce: And the reason you're stressing everybody work together was that there was an element of some Black power advocates who said whites should not be involved in the Civil Rights Movement.

Hunter: That's right, yeah, which made no sense, particularly if those so-called whites had risked their lives. In my case, it's kind of an interesting situation, with a white parent and an Indian parent. In that sense, I'm half and half. I move back and forth and all sorts of

things. You know, I could go to the Navajo reservation and fit in very nicely. A lot of people know me. I could go here, I could go there.

So I've got a white side and an Indian side. If you have to ask where does the loyalty go, I'd say the ultimate loyalty goes to the human race, but probably the immediate loyalty goes to the Native side. In other words, I stand with the Indians. But I'm also quite aware that there have always been plenty of people who helped Indian people who haven't been Indians. "

Master Sergeant J. Hawkins knew what he was doing and always respected all of his Basic Trainees. And we always respected him enormously -- whoever and whatever we were.

In [Real] Solidarity - H

COMMENT:

Reber Boulton writes [and my answer follows]:

Hunter observes "I'm very supportive of grassroots people, whoever they are. I like a situation where people, - whoever they are, - can recognize that there are people who might be a little bit different, who are still good people, and who may have some worthwhile ideas." I agree and I wonder what about all those people in all those fundamentalist Christian right wing churches. They seem grassroots to me. They're definitely organized. But I don't support a lot of what they're organized to do, like elect Republicans, support big business war and imperialism, turn the country into a theocracy, and a bunch of infringements on individual liberty (and they sometimes promote racism, too).

- Reber Boulton

Reber: [from Hunter]

You've raised interesting points, Reber, and while -- on this pleasant snow-falling Idaho mountain day -- part of me is inclined to smoke my pipe and go further with my gallon of coffee and commune with my Cat, I do have, of course, a word or two.

First, as you know, I'm consistently

committed -- always have been, always will be -- to careful organization with democratic form and structure and ethos in the context of bona fide social justice. That's threaded thru the piece I just posted on race/ethnicity and organizing, it's found throughout my little "organizer's catechism," and it's been an integral part of virtually everything I've written and tried to accomplish.

I don't get involved in the intricacies of other people's theological beliefs. My syncretic Catholicism is mixed with some traditional tribal dimensions and I am now a member of the Ethical Humanist Society as well; Mother was Anglican; Eldri is a mainline Lutheran. I grew up intimately exposed to rich and quite satisfying Navajo and Laguna ceremonials. And, of course, almost all of our extremely supportive neighbors hereabouts are Mormon, LDS folk. Religious fundamentalism doesn't bother me at all -- many of the consistently cordial Black churches at which I spoke in the Southern campaigns were quite fundamentalist. [Despite constant disclaimers on my part, I was often introduced as "Reverend."] Religion [or the lack of it] is the business of the person and the trails to the Creator are more myriad than the leaves on an Aspen tree.

I, too, am quite troubled by noisy enclaves of any right-wingers. But I also see people -- and, frankly, I like people. While I don't think there is much I could do to further secular reality within -- I say, within -- the collective bodies of many fundamentalist white right-wing churches, I am not [and I don't think you are either] going to write those people off individually as blithely as some are prone.

Eventually, the Pied Pipers are going to fade -- maybe via financial or personal scandal or simply because those things cannot keep it up Forever.

Long before those Big Huckster balloons burst, we need -- as many are doing -- to reach out to those folks in other settings and see if we can broaden and deepen their savvy and lengthen their horizons. Integrated community action groups focused around the common local concerns of many, interracial unionism, even single-issue groups such as NRA

[not nearly as inherently conservative as its adversaries feel, and always with some "minority" members throughout] can be very productive arenas.

Sometimes things can be responsibly forced: the desegregation of the Armed Services and then schools at all levels and much, much more. In the latter 1960s, the [white] Alabama-born International President of the Chemical Workers [ICWU], Walter Mitchell, ordered the immediate integration of those Southern locals that were still segregated -- with the alternative being "jump ship". The holdouts immediately integrated.

The last time I spoke to a Mine-Mill gathering as Mine-Mill [as differentiated from other speaking stints where Mine Mill members and officials were part of a broader attendance], was in late '63 [and I have referred to this before] at Superior, Arizona [Local 938 was host]. Under the auspices of the wide-ranging [and powerful] and very multi-local Arizona Mine-Mill Council, the locals from all over the central and southern part of the state sent large delegations to hear me on the civil rights struggle. I spoke throughout the night, as groups -- which had often traveled great distances -- came and went. Most of the people to whom I spoke were Chicano, reflecting the general composition of production and maintenance work forces, but there were -- in that hardworking context -- a number of tribal Indians and Anglos as well. Many of the people were Catholic, some were LDS, others were other things -- and probably "southern fundamentalist" as well. The gathering, which also had several key union organizers in attendance, had -- as a major convener -- a veteran organizer, an Anglo originally from Tennessee and Alabama and who had been with Mine-Mill for ages. He had formerly worked for years building and maintaining the racially integrated Mine-Mill iron locals in the Bessemer and Fairfield and environs setting. He was a major target of Federal witch-hunting. The other key convener was the sharp and hardworking business agent of the Superior local, who was up from the ranks. He was Chicano. Not far from our meeting was the Enemy -- the massive works of Magma Copper. Anyway, that was Real Solidarity. Mine-

Mill had practiced that kind of interracial [and effectively militant] unionism since the days of the Western Federation of Miners [sparked in North Idaho in 1893.]

As the director of a large organizing project for four very turbulent years [1969-1973] in the bloody Chicago South/Southwest side, I had an excellent staff and the community people were generally just fine. We accomplished a good deal in that long stretch -- among other things, helping people organize about 300 block clubs. Occasionally, there were problems. One interesting one arose when a crack community organizer of ours [Jim, a young Anglo] wanted to shift his primary focus away from a fascinating and very effective anti-urban renewal coalition of Chicanos and Lithuanian-Americans that he had helped develop and with which he had worked painstakingly. Our working turf was fast expanding and a number of Black and Hispanic youth gangs wanted him badly -- and he wanted their arena. I was quite agreeable but our staff was stretched thin across much of the South/Southwest Side. At the same time, Jesse, Black and a first rate organizer from one big stretch of the Black/Hispanic gang setting, was interested in finding new horizons. In our broad-ranging mix of all sorts of neighborhoods and ethnicities, with danger high and heavy, we had a policy that no organizer could be unilaterally transferred: he or she had to fully agree. Jesse was willing to spend a fair amount of his time with the [Chicano-Lithuanian] Neighborhood Redevelopment group [anti-urban renewal and successfully so.] I spoke first with the Chicano leaders. No problem with Jesse, none expected. Then I went to The Dragon, George, the Lithuanian spokesman, a saloon owner, and someone who had angrily viewed the marriage of one of his kids to an Italian as a "mixed marriage." George, like everyone, liked Jim and he liked me. But he had his racial hang-ups on Blacks and exploded when I told him we were transferring Jesse in as Jim's replacement. Even the fact that Jim [with Jesse's ready concurrence] was willing to occasionally visit his old group, was not even a sunny scratch as

far as George was concerned.

Finally, after his fires had subsided somewhat and knowing exactly how to proceed, I told George, "It's either Jesse or no one." He wilted but, before he fell, I played my next card: "Tell you what," I said cheerfully.

"Let's try it for a month." On that, he agreed.

In less than a week, they were all good friends -- and Jesse often had a congenial drink or two after the formal working day was over and he had it right there in George's heavily White Ethnic drinking spring. And things continued to proceed very nicely with the Neighborhood Redevelopment organization. In the end, all the neighbors were able to remain in their homes, industry was kept at arm's length, and the City had to build a small but attractive park in the setting.

Best, H

HUNTER GRAY [HUNTER BEAR/JOHN R SALTER JR]
Mi'kmaq /St. Francis
Abenaki/St. Regis Mohawk
Protected by Na'shdo'í'ba'í'
and Ohkwari'

Check out our massive social justice website: www.hunterbear.org

Honored with The Elder Recognition Award by Wordcraft Circle of Native Writers and Storytellers:
http://www.hunterbear.org/elder_recognitionAward_for_2005.htm

In our Gray Hole, the ghosts often dance in the junipers and sage, on the game trails, in the tributary canyons with the thick red maples, and on the high windy ridges -- and they dance from within the very essence of our own inner being. They do this especially when the bright night moon shines down on the clean white snow that covers the valley and its surroundings. Then it is as bright as day -- but in an always soft and mysterious and remembering way. [Hunter Bear]

Write for Oregon Socialist

by Michael C. Marino

Submitting an article is none too tough. Here, released for the first time, declassified by the federal gummint, is how to submit YOUR article to us:

Write it and send it. Sheesh,

Yes, it may be dangerous for my own safety, but, whistle-blower that I am, I have just revealed the secret handshake.

Send by e-mail (ODT or TXT format) to:

info@thesocialistparty.org

Send by mail to:

Socialist Party of Oregon

PO Box 5633

Portland, OR 97228

Thousands, or maybe as many as a few dozen, might soon see your argument, theory, rant, heckling, and/or diatribe.

WHEN your article will show up: that's a tough one. I have an issue of Oregon Socialist for Autumn of last year which is still incomplete due to a hard drive crash. I know it is there; I got the hard drive recovered (thanks, CBL Tech!), and I have found the file, and now... Well, anyway, your article might see print someday.

Our Struggle and Progressive Events in Salem

by Bob Rossi

Maggie and I went to hear Sarah Harkness and Francisco Lopez talk about immigration issues at this evening's Salem-area Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) meeting. Sarah works with a United Methodist project dealing with immigration issues and Francisco is a Salem community activist.

Sarah detailed a recent trip she and Francisco made to the Mexico-US border with a compelling talk and slides. They had the opportunity to talk to migrants, Native Americans living along part of the border, border patrol agents, and people seeking to help and protect migrant workers moving northward. Francisco dealt with the structural roots of what we have seen become a full-blown immigrant labor and migration crisis. He also made clear the distinction between charity (which church people are good at) and addressing issues of justice which requires a deeper analysis.

Sarah's slides of the border area are especially interesting for someone who has never been there. Her account of the package travel deal a migrant worker might get in order to move from southern Mexico to the US without documents and the statistics dealing with migrant deaths, social dislocation and deportations shatter some of the widespread and long-standing myths about undocumented workers. Churches and unions need to hear this. Francisco made the numbers human by asking us to reflect on the experiences of a real two-year old child who was caught trying to cross the border with his family. Francisco's analysis went to the heart of the crisis by dealing with NAFTA and globalization and what it has meant for Mexican workers. He gave a strong power analysis of why we aren't doing a better job of dealing with this crisis in our churches and in

our Salem-Keizer community generally.

FOR is a long-established religious-based pacifist organization which tends to appeal to the very best instincts among liberal and middle-class Christians. Sarah appealed to this tradition and these instincts by talking about the need for "compassionate listening" and building community and by emphasizing how complicated immigration issues are. She also talked about the compassion of the border patrol agents and offered as a way forward from the crisis an example of a fair-trade coffee co-op (www.justcoffee.org).

The audience struggled with what we heard. People told stories of the mistreatment of migrant children in the Salem-Keizer schools and exploitation of the undocumented by unscrupulous businesses. There were questions about legal status and guest worker programs. At some point our frustration with the crisis began to take over and someone offered up as a solution rethinking how and what we consume. This seemed to give some people some hope; it makes sense to liberal church people that some social problems can be ameliorated or solved at the point of consumption-- in the stores, by buying locally and by buying goods which are produced without horrific exploitation.

I tried (without much success) to point out that the problem is not fundamentally one of what we buy or where we buy, but fundamentally about how and why things are produced. I tried to say that almost any guest worker program will deprive workers of our rights, that a deal on amnesty for undocumented workers will also bring a guest worker program under current political conditions and that we need

to emphasize union and class struggles in the farms, nursing homes and construction sites above all else. People migrate for work, we are exploited at work, our ability to win concessions from the bosses at work determines our quality of life and unions still remain the only legal avenue we have to unite people at work and win better wages, hours and working conditions. This isn't abstract: immigrant workers are leading a number of workplace struggles in Oregon right now and they need labor rights and our support in order to win. And the issue isn't so complicated; this is monopoly capital and imperialism at work. I don't think that I was heard or understood.

A number of community events are coming up we need to turn out for. The struggle continues!

St. Vincent DePaul Catholic Church will sponsor a forum on immigration on November 30 at 7:00 pm.

Willamette University's Witness for Peace group will do a forum on the impact of the drug war on Colombia and the US on the 30th at 7:30 pm.

Sarah Harkness and Francisco Lopez will talk about making a group journey from Oregon to El Salvador and Oaxaca on Saturday, December 2 at 10:00 am at Queen of Peace Catholic Church.

The Oregon Peace Works state board will meet at 2:00 pm on December 2 at the Salem Friends' meeting house.

December 10 is Human Rights Day. There will be a speak-out at Salem's First United Methodist Church starting at 2:00 pm.

Losing Ballot Access – And Getting it Back!

by Alexandra Maximova

In October 2006, the Socialist Party of Oregon had three candidates poised to run for office, and on the day before the deadline for candidates to certify their documents with the Secretary of State, one of our group volunteered to take the forms for signatures, which would either be faxed that day, or delivered the next day.

Walt Brown, the designated emissary, had to have his truck towed home from the airport, and as he alighted from the tow truck, he took a mis-step, fell, and broke his arm and hip. He was taken to University Hospital, where his treatment was complicated by the medicines he is taking for metastasized cancer. With a second pin in his arm and lots of physical therapy, he is back on his feet.

"Hail Mary" faxes were attempted from the hospital the next day; none got through.

Cde. Marino has devised a plan to regain our ballot line. Rather than attempt statewide access by obtaining approximately 18,000 signatures, the plan is to go back on the ballot by petition one State House District at a time. There are 60 House Districts. Our strength is in HD 42, inner southeast Portland, and we will start there. The number of signatures on the petitions will vary, based on votes cast in the last election for governor, but averaging 300. Since our candidates have received thousands of votes in HD 42, this petition method is quite do-able.

A map of the district on the back of each petition for that district will help signers identify which HD they live in. Although signers need to be registered voters, they do not have to be registered with our party to sign. We will have a wallet-size card to hand out, to help people remember they have signed this petition, and there will be space on the card to record signatures on other Oregon petitions where signing more than once can be punished by the loss of many legitimate signatures.

When the Secretary of State has approved our petitions, we will spread the word on pdxrouge@yahoogroups.com, at thesocialistparty.org, to registered Socialist voters, and to SPUSA members.

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