UPDATE OF

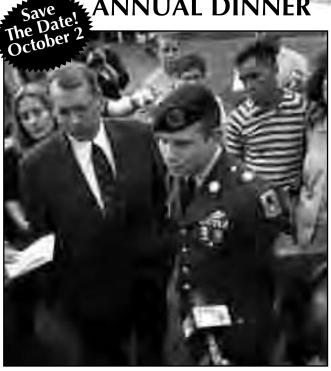
A bi-monthly publication of the Rochester Committee on Latin America

A Metro Justice Task Force

August 2005 Edition

OF LATIN AMERICA

www.rocla.org A STUDENT'S VIEW METRO JUSTICE'S ANNUAL DINNER



Featuring war resister Camilo Mejia.

Sunday, October 2, 6 PM.



by Bob Kaiser

On Wed. Sept. 7 at the regular ROCLA meeting, Kelly McCarthy, a senior at SUNY Geneseo, will share some of her observations regarding conditions and culture in South America. Kelly has spent the last year studying and traveling in several countries. Her studies took her to Chile, and from there she had a chance to visit Bolivia, Argentina and Uruguay. In her spare time (!), she had an opportunity to teach English in an elementary school.

Kelly is a graduate of Pittsford Sutherland High School. Her major at Geneseo is International Relations with a concentration in Developing World Studies and a minor in Spanish. This Fall, before her final college semester, she will be working in the US Embassy in Guatemala.

At a ROCLA program last spring several young people from the First Unitarian Church who had gone to Mexico presented an incredibly insightful analysis. Now there is an opportunity to hear a broader perspective rom another young person. It is a rare chance and we hope you will pass the word.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 7 AT 7 P.M. AT THE DOWNTOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

121 N. Fitzhugh. Free, open to the public, looped for hearing impaired and wheelchair accessible. Free parking at City Hall lot across the street.

Metro Justice of Rochester, Inc. THE ROCHESTER COMMITTEE ON LATIN AMERICA 167 Flanders St. Rochester, NY 14619

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION U.S. POSTAGE **PAID** PERMIT #1812



Latin America News Round-Up

Compiled by Peter Mott

Compared to 20 years ago— when many of us were working to help limit US-backed wars in Central America — US-Latin America relations appear to be more complicated and dangerous. For example:

- Corporate globalization ("neo-liberal" economics) is now seen to be the main US goal and Latin America's biggest problem. The Sandinistas introduced an alternative system – and we crushed it. The Zapatistas rose up on day one of NAFTA – and we trained and equipped the Mexican army to suppress them. The "Washington Consensus" led the neoliberal "reforms," including privatizing the water supplies in Bolivia and Nicaragua – but popular resistance is winning. Same for the move to privatize health care workers in El Salvador: The people have won – so far. Anti-neoliberal, "leftist' presidents have been elected in Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Haiti – and the US supported an attempted coup in Venezuela and a successful military coup in Haiti (where the people are still rising up to demand their democracy back). The people have forced out Ecuador's president for his neoliberal views.
- "Free" trade agreements are being pushed by the US. The people have resisted the FTAA (Free Trade Agreement of the Americas) in many Latin countries; but the US is now pushing Andean and Central American "free" trade agreements. Hemispheric resistance to FTAA is championed by Cuba and Venezuela what will the US do to hamper those efforts?
- US interference in democratic elections: By our State Department in Nicaragua, and our National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in Venezuela. Where next?
- US militarization increasing (1) for the army and paramilitaries of Colombia and others; (2) for the police training in many nations with a new US-supported academy to be built in El Salvador.
- As poverty has increased in Mexico under eleven years of NAFTA, so too has illegal immigration to the US. But as we militarize our border, migrant families die in the desert. We've had successes: The Taco Bell boycott, to force better working conditions for tomato pickers, has won! Locally, the Rochester Migrant Ministry and CITA continue to press Albany for basic farmworker rights.
- While calls for relaxing the Embargo and travel ban against Cuba have increasingly received more support over the past few years in both houses of Congress, this summer we saw the effects of energetic lobbying and political contributions from pro-embargo groups. All the amendments offered to the House Appropriations bill were defeated.

Toward a More Pro-Active ROCLA

(Your input requested)

In view of this, what should the role of ROCLA be? How much can we do to become more pro-active, either on our own or by networking with national groups, including the new Latin America Solidarity Coalition (LASC)? What kinds of political action – local or national – shall we plan?

We put these questions to a Steering Committee/Consultants retreat that came up with the following suggested priorities and procedures – and questions for the membership:

Priorities:

- Concentrate on hemispheric-wide issues (rather than country-specific), e.g., water privatization, trade, US intervention in elections, anti-imperialism.
- Support and publicize efforts of local farmworker organizations, such as CITA; and the related subject of immigration.
- Work on Fair Trade locally.
- Concentrate on urgent actions: Amnesty International, support progressive legislation, organize delegations to our legislators, etc.

• Educate:

- through Speakers Bureau to schools and universities regarding both facts and ethics/values;
- through Labor-Religion delegations to the Border and further into Mexico and Central America;
- through the new ROCLA website

Procedures:

- Define our mission. Is it education? Is it changing policy?
- What work can we do in common as a movement?
- Have both short-term (e.g., lobbying on threats to Latin America) and long-term (e.g., educational) agendas.
- Outreach:
 - Get our message out to all media and to faith communities.
 - Sponsor films.
 - Use every opportunity to educate.
 - Be professional in outreach.
 - ROCLA brochure for facts about issues and opportunities to become involved.

What are your thoughts about how ROCLA can become more pro-active in the next two years? Please comment on the ideas above and/or submit your own. E-mail them to Bob Kaiser, Convener, at mbkaiser@juno.com



Haiti: Amnesty International Urgent Action

(PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.)

Catholic priest Gérard Jean-Juste (age 59) was taken into custody at a police station "for his own protection" on 21 July, after he was assaulted; but while he was at the police station he was accused of murder

He was abroad at the time of the murder of which he has been accused, but he is a prominent opponent of the government.

Amnesty International considers him a prisoner of conscience, detained solely because he has peacefully exercised his right to freedom of expression.

He risks spending a long time in custody awaiting trial on apparently trumped-up charges.

Rev. Jean-Juste has been an outspoken supporter of former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and critic of the present government, in his sermons and in radio broadcasts.

On 21 July he attended the funeral of journalist Jacques Roche, at a church in the Pétionville suburb of the capital, Port-au-Prince. He was assaulted and threatened by a mob outside the church, who said he was one of those responsible for the violence that is sweeping the capital.

He was taken to Pétionville police station by officers from the Haitian police and the UN civilian police force, CIVPOL. None of his attackers is known to have been detained.

At the police station, officer Jean-Daniel Ulysse, from the Central Command of the Judicial Police(Direction Centrale de la Police Judiciaire, DCPJ) accused him of the murder of the journalist.

Although he was supposedly there simply for his own safety, he was locked up in a cell at the police station with another 43 detainees.

The following day he was transferred to the National Penitentiary, where he is in solitary confinement.

According to his lawyer, he has reportedly been charged with the murder of Jacques Roche. However, Rev. Jean-Juste and his lawyers were not shown an arrest

warrant or any other official statement of the charges. He is one of dozens of Aristide supporters who have been arbitrarily detained in this way.



Catholic priest Gérard Jean-Juste (age 59) was taken into custody at a police station "for his own protection" on 21 July, after he was assaulted; but while he was at the police station he was accused of murder.

Journalist Jacques Roche was kidnapped on 10 July, and murdered when the full ransom demanded was not paid. Rev. Jean-Juste was in the U.S. at the time, returning from Miami on 15 July.

Rev. Jean-Juste has been a target for government repression for some time. On 13 October 2004, he was arrested by police without a warrant at his church, Saint Claire's, in Port-au-Prince. A warrant issued on 18 October accused him of "plotting against the internal security of the state." He was released on 29 November, after six weeks in custody.

When he flew in from Miami on 15 July, he was stopped at Port-au-Prince airport, searched and questioned.

He was ordered to present himself to the judicial police on 18 July, and two days later he was questioned by the investigating magistrate, regarding the accusation leading to his October arrest.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was ousted on 29 February 2004, after an armed rebellion led by former military officers took control of the whole country.

The same day, a US-led multinational force was deployed in Haiti, authorised by the UN Security Council.

An interim government was put in place in early March with Gérard Latortue sworn in as Prime Minister

In June 2004, the UN Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) was sent to assist the interim government in securing the country, reforming the national police and protecting human rights.



Haiti: Urgent Action (continued)

Since October 2004, the violence has escalated, particularly in the capital, where armed gangs, some of which allegedly have political affiliations to Aristide's party, are responsible for numerous killings and grave human rights abuses.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in French or English:

- expressing concern at the arrest and detention without formal charges of Rev. Gérard Jean-Juste;
- pointing out that he appears to be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for the legitimate expression of his opinions, and urging the authorities to release him immediately and unconditionally;
- calling on the authorities to put an end to the arbitrary detentions that are prevalent throughout Haiti.

APPEALS TO:

Prime MinisterGérard Latortue, Ministère de l'Intérieure, Villa d'Accueil,

Delmas 60 Musseau,

Port-au-Prince, HAITI (W.I.)

Fax: 00 509 298 3901 (Salutation: Monsieur le Premier Ministre / Dear Prime Minister)

Minister of Justice and Public Security, Me. Henri

Dorléans

Ministère de la Justice

19 Ave. Charles Sumner,

Port-au-Prince, HAITI (W.I.)

Fax: 00 509 245 0474 (Salutation: Monsieur le

Ministre / Dear Mr. Dorléans)

General Director of the Haiti National Police, Mario Andresol

Directeur Général de la Police Nationale d'Haïti Grand Ouartier Générale la Police

12 rue Oscar Pacot,

Port au Prince

HAITI (W.I.)

Fax: 00 509 245 7374 (Salutation: Monsieur le

Ministre / Dear Mr. Andresol)

COPIES TO:

Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Juan Gabriel Valdés United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH)

385, Ave. John Brown,

Bourdon, B.P. 557,

Port-au-Prince, HAITI (W.I.)

Fax: 00 509 244 3512 (Salutation: Monsieur le Représentant spécial /Dear Special Representative Valdés)

Head of Human Rights Division, Thierry Fagart Human Rights Division, MINUSTAH 385, Ave. John Brown,

Bourdon, B.P. 557

Port-au-Prince, HAITI (W.I.)

Fax: 00 509 244 9366 / 00 509 244 9367

Background: Why Haiti Must Be Crushed

by Ed Kinane

Let's begin with 1492. Since that year, when it was "discovered," no country in the Caribbean has suffered more pain per capita than Haiti.In the 15th century, according to Columbus, Haiti was an island paradise. Now it is an ecological disaster. In the 18th century Haiti was the richest colony in the New World. Now it is the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere.

In the early 1500s Haiti's indigenous people, the Taino, were rendered extinct. Alien disease took its inevitable toll. But it was the Spanish obsession with gold and Columbus' brutal ways of extracting and extorting what little gold there was that sealed their fate. Soon thousands of West Africans were being imported every year to fill the labor vacuum. Africans, under the lash, were put to work raising indigo and then cane sugar.

So savage was the slave regime, at first under the Spanish and then under the French, that a slave's life expectancy in Haiti was only several years. Slaves didn't live long enough to assimilate "Western civilization." To this day Haiti remains essentially an African country.

Haiti's Original Sin

In the 1790's, the Afro-Haitians revolted. In 1804, led by the slave Toussaint L'Ouverture, the Africans succeeded in whupping Napolean's army and driving it off the island.

This was the world's first successful slave revolt. Ignored in our history books, it was an event and an accomplishment as significant and as liberatory as the French or U.S. revolutions.



Haiti: Urgent Action (continued)

Western civilization -- France and the other white colonial slave-holding powers -- has yet to forgive the Afro-Haitians. Like Sandinista Nicaragua and like Castro's Cuba, liberating itself was Haiti's original sin. Two centuries later the forces of counterliberation are still being relentlessly applied against it.

For years few would recognize Haiti's independence. The United States, despite the lofty sentiments of its founding documents, did not recognize Haiti until our own slave regime crumbled in the 1860s. France, despite the ideals of its 1789 revolution, would not recognize Haiti until it paid a crushing multi-million dollar indemnity.

President Aristide's Mortal Sins

In the Catholic theology of my youth, we are all born -- like Haiti -- with original sin. And many of us go on to commit grievous sins of our own. These are called mortal sins.

In the last dozen or so years unrepentant Haiti and President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, whom it keeps electing, has committed a number of these. This is why the so-called "international community"— especially the U.S. and France— are determined to keep Haiti in hell.

In Haiti's 1992 presidential election the U.S.-financed candidate, Marc Bazin, was pre-ordained to win. At the last minute, however, a Catholic priest preaching liberation theology entered the race. Fr. Aristide won the election by a 67% landslide.

Within eight months Aristide was toppled by a U.S.-sponsored coup. The next time Aristide stood for election — in 2000 — he won by an even greater share of the vote. And this was an election internationally certified as fair. Aristide was, and continues to be, the choice of the vast majority of Haiti's people.

But on February 29, 2004 Aristide was again overthrown. The U.S. military abducted Aristide at gunpoint, transporting him to the Central African Republic, one of the most isolated countries on the planet.

Why does the U.S. government hate Aristide so? For five centuries the imperial powers have seen Haiti only as a dark, placid pool of super-cheap labor. Upon first becoming president, however, Aristide sought to raise Haiti's miserable minimum wage. A major no-no.

Aristide kept up his offensive behavior. In 1994 when he returned from exile and resumed his presidency, Aristide abolished Haiti's brutish military. As in many Latin American countries under gringo influence, the Haitian military's only function had been to topple one president or another and to bully and exploit its own people.

And, finally, consider this brazen deed. During his second term Aristide sued France for reimbursement of the aforementioned indemnity. Aristide presented France with a bill -- corrected for inflation and with 5% interest compounded. The bill, still outstanding, totals \$21 billion.

For the time being President Aristide lives in South Africa. Aristide's party, Lavalas, has once again been forced underground. Even so, it insists there can be no elections in Haiti without the return of its President and the democratic Constitutional order he embodies.

The author is a long-term Syracuse-based activist for peace and justice who revisited Haiti in April. In the nineties Ed worked in Haiti with Peace Brigades International. Contact him at edkinane@a-znet.com.





90% Victory for the Cuba Caravan (Need everyone's help for remaining 10%!)

Ed. Note: Your action is urgently needed to help persuade the US government to release the Pastors for Peace computers. Check the PfP website at www.ifconews.org and then contact your Congressperson to put pressure on the Commerce Dept. to release all computers now.

Thanks to many supporters, ROCLA raised \$2,586 for the IFCO/Pastors for Peace Friendshipment; and on Friday, July 8, with two TV crews, one radio reporter, and the D&C watching, many of us packed and shipped medical supplies for Cuba. The sixteenth Friendshipment moved along 13 routes through North America, speaking out in 130 cities against the 45-year-old US embargo of Cuba.

This year the Ecumenical Council of Cuba wanted medical supplies especially for the elderly. And so we

sent out the word. John and Debbie Locke located wheelchairs, a Hoyer Lift and a VERY heavy therapeutic bathtub at the Geneva General Hospital where Debbie works; our friends at the Rochester Orthopedic Lab provided and packed prostheses; other friends brought in specially equipped wheelchairs, walkers, canes and other supplies. The Downtown Presbyterian Church stored it all - over 45 boxes plus many oversized items. The therapeutic tub spent two weeks in the choir room!

On July 21 150 Caravanistas in 100 vehicles with 140 tons of material aid converged at Hidalgo, Texas, on the Mexican border, for the crossing. They expected trouble from US customs. And, indeed, at first everything was denied passage. Rev. Lucius Walker and his NYC staff —who refuse to apply for a license on the grounds that the embargo is immoral and illegal—activated the international support network. Locally e-mails went out asking for phone, fax and e-mail messages to the Departments of State, Commerce and Treasury. Later that day the government relented, gates were opened, and most of the caravan moved to a Mexican port and onto a Cuban freighter. However, US Customs seized computers and accessories. This aid was placed in one of the donated "little yellow school buses" and, as of this writing (8/6), the computers have not been released. Caravanistas with the bus say they are committed to staying until the 43 seized boxes are relased and all the aid is on its way to Cuba. Meanwhile, Caravanistas who spent time in Cuba returned to almost five-hours of interrogation and search of all their luggage by Customs. Nothing was seized.

As many of you know, for years we've been sending computers to Cuba as part of a UN-sponsored health care



Local ROCLA members and supporters loaded 45 boxes of medical supplies and various pieces of medical equipment on July 8th. The truck transported the aid to Buffalo, where it was transferred to the Pastors for Peace Cuba Caravan.

network linking Cuban hospitals and rural clinics. So this is simply harassment by the US government.

PLEASE CALL the Cuba desk at the State Department, 202/647-9273. (They are going through a transition in staff; talk with whoever is available.)

PLEASE CALL Jayson Ahern, assistant commissioner for field operations at Customs, 202/344-1620.

PLEASE KEEP CALLING Michael Turner, director of export enforcement at the Commerce Department, 202/482-1208, ext. 3.

PLEASE KEEP CALLING CONGRESS. CALL YOUR SENATORS AS WELL AS YOUR REP. (Congressional switchboard: 202/225-3121)



US authorities confiscating donated items from the caravan. Pastors for Peace is organizing an international campaign to secure the release of the seized items and to deliver them to their intended recipients.



ROCLA Night at the Rochester Labor Council Labor Film Series (Free ticket enclosed)

For the past five years, ROCLA has been a proud sponsor of this important annual cultural event at the Dryden Theatre. This fall, ROCLA night will be Friday, October 14, at 8 PM, featuring the film *BOLIVIA*. This is a touching story of an immigrant worker in Argentina—recalling the situation of immigrant workers here in the US but presenting a whole new dimension of a familiar situation in this age of globalization.

BOLIVIA (Adrián Caetano, Argentina 2001, 75 min., Spanish with subtitles) With his wife and children 1,500 miles away, a Bolivian cook working illegally in a Buenos Aires greasy spoon forms an alliance with his co-worker, a sympathetic waitress. Their friendship and gradual romance, however, are not enough to protect them from the harsh realities of living and working in a city facing dire poverty and unemployment issues. This modestly budgeted but emotionally powerful drama is a prime example of an exciting new wave of Argentinian cinema.

One Film Series ticket (for use at any film in the series) is enclosed with the newsletter. If you would like another ticket look for ROCLA steering committee member Marilyn Anderson, who will have one for you at the door of the Dryden (900 East Ave.)

List of Series Films – all on Fridays at 8:00 PM: (Go to www.rochesterlabor.com for their descriptions.)

9/2. CLOCKWATCHERS

(Jill Sprecher, US 1997, 105 min.)

9/9. *TASUMA* (Daniel Kollo Sanou, France/Burkina-Faso, 2003, 88 min., French and Dioula with subtitles) **9/16.** Rochester Premiere. *TELL THEM WHO YOU ARE* (Mark Wexler, US 2004, 95 min.)

9/23. THE WOBBLIES (Stewart Bird and Deborah Shaffer, US 1979, 89 min)

9/30. MAN IN THE SHADOW

(Jack Arnold, US 1957, 80 min.)

10/7. *REDS* (Warren Beatty, US 1981, 200 min.)

10/21. *TIME OUT*

(L'EMPLOI DU TEMPS, Laurent Cantet, France 2001, 134 min., French with subtitles)

10/28. *THEY CAME BACK* (LES REVENANTS, Robin Campillo, France 2004, 105 min., French with subtitles.)



Scene from Adrián Caetano's Bolivia.

End the War On Iraq! Join us in DC Sept. 23-26!

Massive March, Rally & Anti-war Fair/Worships/Actions Ride the Metro Justice Bus for the Demonstration on Sept. 24!

Events include:

Friday, 9/23:

• International Tribunal on Haiti

Saturday 9/24:

- United for Peace and Justice: Gather 11:00AM at the Washington Monument for march (www.unitedforpeace.org) Or join the ANSWER Coalition.
- SOAWatch: educational workshops and panel discussions on the history, legal considerations, and security consequences of U.S. involvement in torture. Plan to close the US Army School of the Americas (www.soaw.org).

Sunday 9/25:

- United for Peace and Justice and Clergy and Laity Concerned about Iraq (clnnlc.org): Interfaith service and Grassroots Training.
- SOAWatch: Citizens' Trial of Mr. Rumsfeld, Mr. Gonzales and Mr. Tenet for violations of international and U.S. laws prohibiting torture.

Monday, 9/ 26:

Grassroots Lobby Day and Mass Nonviolent Direct Action

(To get your seat on the Metro Justice bus send your check payable to *Bus Metro Justice*, 167 Flanders Street Suite D12, Rochester, NY 14619. NOTE: This is for the march and rally on Sept. 24 only.) The bus probably will leave late on Friday evening (9/23), arrive in DC in time for the 9/24 demonstration, and then leave DC late that afternoon. For more information call 325-2560. Seats are \$70 (partial scholarships are available. Call Mike at 377-7983 or send an email to griot@frontiernet.net to find out more about scholarship info) To help provide scholarships please send your check, payable to Metro Justice, to BUS SCHOLARSHIP.



Join the CITGO Buy-Cott (excerpted from Jeff Cohen's 5/16 Common Dreams article)

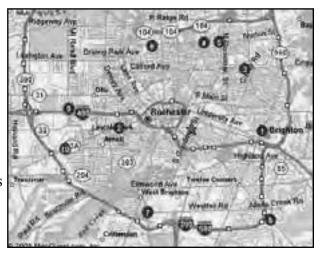
Venezuela, one of the top oil producing countries in the world, is a democracy whose president, Hugo Chavez, was elected on a platform of using his nation's oil revenue to benefit the poor. He stopped privatization of oil, thus antagonizing the U.S.

Citgo is a U.S. refining and marketing firm that is a wholly owned subsidiary of Venezuela's stateowned oil company. Money you pay to Citgo goes primarily to Venezuela. By buying your gasoline at Citgo (see map for locations in Greater Rochester), you are contributing to President Chavez's programs which already have produced:

- 600 news schools.
- health services to many rural areas,
- loans to farmers and new enterprises,
- land reform, cooperatives,
- subsidized food.

So this is the opposite of a boycott. Call it a *BUYcott*. And spread the word.

Of course, if you can take mass transit or bike or walk to your job, that's even better! And we should all work for political changes that move our country toward a cleaner environment based on renewable energy.



1. METRO TIRE III 211 N WINTON RD ROCHESTER, NY 14610 Phone: (716) 482-0190

2. HAAG'S SERVICE 715 WEST MAIN ST ROCHESTER, NY 14611 Phone: (716) 235-9736

3. SURJIT SINGH 2179 CLIFFORD AVE ROCHESTER, NY 14609 Phone: (585) 288-4915

4. CFM 1404 NORTON ST. ROCHESTER, NY 14621 Phone: (716) 467-5685

5. AK FOOD MART, INC. 1686 NORTON ST. ROCHESTER, NY 14621 Phone: (716) 342-6630

6. CONVENIENT FOOD MART 1430 N CLINTON AVE ROCHESTER, NY 14621 Phone: (585) 266-5284

7. COOK'S E HENRIETTA 335 E HENRIETTA ROCHESTER, NY 14620 Phone: (585) 271-2960

8. METRO TIRE AND AUTO 2852 MONROE AVE ROCHESTER, NY 14619 Phone: (716) 473-3374

Photo Exhibit

Nosotros Sufrimos Mucho, a beautiful, poignant photography exhibit by Joseph Sorrentino. At the First Unitarian Church of Rochester until August 29. For times call 271-9070.



©2003 Joseph Sorrentino

ROCHESTER COMMITTEE ON LATIN AMERICA (ROCLA)

ROCLA for many years has sought to be a bridge between the Rochester community and the people of Latin America. Monthly meetings on the lst Wednesday of each month at the Downtown Presbyterian Church provide an opportunity to learn more about what is going on in that part of the world. In addition to providing information, ROCLA is committed to working for systemic justice and supports numerous organizations that are on the front line of this endeavor. School of the Americas Watch, the Mexico Solidarity Network, Rights Action and the Rochester Labor Film Festival are among the many groups that receive financial encouragement.

ROCLA Steering Committee

Marilyn Anderson, David Eisenberg, Hernan Escalante, Marilyn and Bob Kaiser (convener), John Locke, Gail and Peter Mott, Vic Vinkey, Mike Wahl, Tom Ward. Update on the Americas is co-edited by Gail and Peter Mott and designed and produced by John Locke. Please send inquiries or suggestions to them at interconnect mott@frontiernet.net

Sports News

Soccer: Zapatistas vs. Inter Milan. Italy's premier football club will arrive for the fall match bearing's \$5000 (from Italian soccer fines), a load of soccer balls and an ambulance – all for the Zapatistas.

