

UPDATE on the AMERICAS

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

A Taskforce of Metro Justice

Spring 2009



GROWTH TRICKLES UP: SUSTAINABILITY IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

After you have read Alison Clarke's report of her action-packed week in the Dominican Republic (right) you'll want to see her powerpoint presentation and hear more about the people who are making these successes possible (and also about some of the challenges) AT ROCLA's meeting on Wednesday, May 6, at 7 PM at the Downtown Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St.

Alison has been a community organizer working on sustainable food systems and sustainable community building for years. She currently volunteers with the NY Small Scale Food Processors' Association, the Center for Sustainable Living, and the Canandaigua Lake Association. She was a founder of ROCLA as co-coordinator of the Rochester Peace and Justice Education Center (PJEC) - staffing food and human rights issues. PJEC later merged with Metro Act to become Metro Justice.

MUD, Viveros and Nutrifort!

- by Alison Clarke

I've had a packed week, my fifth trip to the Haitian border area of the Dominican Republic, including a wonderful time working with the women, Mujeres Unidas en Desarrollo or MUD, Women United in Development. They are preparing Conserva de Marmalada (yes, like orange marmalade) and developing a recipe for Nutrifort, a delicious protein combination of peanut butter, honey, milk, oil and vitamins, to be packaged in a plastic envelop to squeeze out by malnourished children and seniors. The Health Promoters have weighed little ones in the community and way up in the mountains and learned the different stages of malnutrition needing this supplement. A similar patented product, Peanutty, has had amazing results in other parts of the world.

Conserva de Marmalada is already being sold by the women on area farmstands. It is a delicious, good looking product in 16 oz. plastic jars selling for about \$2 our money. Women sit in the backyard and peel oranges (knocked off the trees by a long stick), cut them up and cook them over a fire with sugar, nutmeg and cinnamon sticks.

(Continued on next page)

INSIDE

- Max's Birthday
- Cuba Caravan
- El Salvador
- Marilyn Anderson
- Immigration
- Farm Workers
- NY Times Feature on Sarah Brownell
- Migrant Workers
- Cecilia Moran
- Uncovering Haiti

ROCLA Programs and Actions every
First Wednesday 7:00 PM Downtown
Presbyterian Church 121 N. Fitzhugh
St. Free and open to the public.
Wheelchair accessible
Free parking across the street in
City Hall Parking Lot

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

Return Service Requested

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

TIME TO CELEBRATE!

MAX LEVINE LONG-TIME FRIEND OF
ROCLA, WHO TURNS THE WHEELS FOR
JUSTICE WILL TURN 90 ON MAY 24!!!

3 ARGYLE ST. #1 Rochester, 14607

*If you tremble indignation at every injustice
Then you are a comrade of mine.*

— Ernesto Che Guevara

*I do not hesitate one second
to state clearly and unmistakably:*

*I belong to the American resistance movement
which fights against American imperialism,
just as the resistance movement
fought against Hitler.*

- Paul Robeson

THE TIME IS NOW! FARMWORKER ALBANY DAY, TUES, MAY 12



JUSTICE FOR FARMWORKERS

On Tuesday morning, May 12th at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Albany, you are invited to stand with farmworkers. Join us as we send a clear message that New York must extend respect and equality to farmworkers.

THE TIME IS NOW!

To RSVP or for help with transportation,
contact Justice for Farmworkers Campaign at
info@justiceforfarmworkers.org

<http://justiceforfarmworkers.org/>

MUD, Viveros and Nutrifort! (continued)

The other economic development project I visited is the Panaderia or bakery run by one of the farmers' associations. The bakery farmers work 6 days a week and produce 19,000 -28,000 rolls of various shapes and some galletas/cookies each week. They sell to other towns and markets as well as baking special orders for several area schools of enriched bread and cupcakes. This same association also has one of the 17 viveros or agricultural nurseries growing avocados and citrus trees using organic methods of production. The proceeds of the fruit produced are shared, according to hours worked, after the trees are planted on barren hillsides against deforestation. They also have a green house/ hortiliza growing peppers for salads which get a good price in the mercado/market, and a cement pond where talapia fish are growing. Some of the agricultural nurseries and greenhouses are far up in the mountains, and whole other letter might tell of the water problems and the aqueducts being built by the people giving them more control of their scarce water supply.

This is just a glimpse of the amazing projects we have so much to learn from and with which we are partners through IPM. They all come out of the amazing reflection process, Comunidades de Basa/Christian Based Communities, where "growth trickles up".

[Alison wrote this for Calvary St. Andrews and Lutheran Incarnate Word congregations.]

Cuba Caravan Due Here July 7th

- by Vic Vinkey

This year's Friendshipment Cuba Caravan is scheduled to arrive in Rochester July 7th. This promises to be the most celebrated and successful caravan in it's 20 year history! Not just any caravan, this year the caravan will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution and a new era of US - Cuba relations under President Obama. Further, in addition to the usual medical and educational aid, the caravan will have an expanded focus on continuing the current hurricane relief work. This project initiated by Pastors for Peace in the wake of the devastating damage caused by hurricanes Ike, Gustov, and Paloma. Many organizations will be joining IFCO/Pastors for Peace in this effort.

Finally, we have great hope for steps to end the blockade and travel ban. Already President Obama has eliminated the Bush era's onerous restrictions on travel and remit-

Continued on last page

El Salvador's Historic Election

— by Mauricio Morales

[Ed. note: On February 17, 1980, then President Carter refused Archbishop Romero's plea "to forbid that military aid be given to the Salvadoran government; and to guarantee that the US government will not intervene directly or indirectly, with military, economic, diplomatic, or other pressures, in determining the destiny of the Salvadoran people..." Five weeks later Archbishop Romero was dead, killed by a soldier who had been trained at the US Army School of the Americas. "From the Carter presidency through the Bush administration, El Salvador was an obsession of United States policy. As a brutal civil war raged on the ground, Washington's cold war concerns ensured massive and continued U.S. support for the Salvadoran government and military against the guerrilla forces of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN)." (National Security Archives) The FMLN became a political party; in January of 1992 the United Nations brokered a peace accord; 17 years later El Salvador had its first democratic election.]



In March I took my vacation time from Wegmans to return to my home country, El Salvador, to vote. I had waited for this moment my whole life: to vote in a free election for a candidate I could support. All the way there I kept thinking about this opportunity; and I hoped that this election would change the country. Things had been so bad under ARENA – and in fact the government of El Salvador had been bad my whole life. I kept thinking about all the people who made this possible: all those who fought and gave their lives so we could have this opportunity.

My excitement only increased once I got to San Salvador. Cars and buses and trucks were decorated with FMLN flags and signs. People looked happy. It was such a joy to see that change was happening right there. People were not afraid any more. In past elections ARENA and the US government had scared people by saying that if they voted for the FMLN there would be deportations in the US and that remittances to El Salvador from the US would be stopped. The people knew this time that the people who threatened them were not in charge. But throughout the campaign (which ended the day before I got there) my sister had recorded lies and threats made by ARENA and spread by the media. The three TV channels and two main newspapers supported ARENA and refused airtime to the FMLN. Only one channel was impartial. The media reported, for instance, that Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez would govern El Salvador if the FMLN won; that the country would become socialist and how bad that would be. But I was confident. The polls all showed that the FMLN was ahead. It felt very different this time.

On March 15 I was very happy to be part of history. The traditional political parties of El Salvador joined with ARENA to try to defeat the FMLN. They were giving out rice and beans to people for their votes. It was reported that they were importing and giving false identities to people from Honduras and Nicaragua so they could vote. [Ed. note: See article below corroborating those reports.]

At 9:30 that night, while an ARENA representative claimed the votes were still being counted, Mauricio Funes went on television to declare that exit polls were clear that he was the winner. And he declared victory. By midnight ARENA conceded. Mauricio Funes won the election with 51.3% of the vote.

My sister lives outside of San Salvador, so we missed the big celebration but we joined everyone in the streets and celebrated in the neighborhood with firecrackers. In San Salvador the people started celebrating before the polls close and long after.

I hope that things will be better for the people – especially the poor people. Our new President Mauricio Funes, wants invest in agriculture so that people can grow their own vegetables and go from subsistence to sustainable farming. This is not going to be easy because there are so many challenges, but hopefully things will change.

[The author came to the US and was aided by the Sanctuary Movement. He lives in Rochester with his wife Sandy and daughter Nadia and is now a US citizen - and a ROCLA member.]

Information from the Literature about the election in El Salvador

Huffington Post: El Salvador's largest circulating daily, *Diario de Hoy*, published news of a letter signed by over 40 Republicans in Congress, denouncing the FMLN and warning of their links to Venezuela and Cuba.

CISPES: Two Republicans gave speeches in the House of Representatives threatening that Salvadorans living in the U.S. would lose their immigration status and be outlawed from sending money home to their families if voters in El Salvador elected the opposition FMLN party's candidate. According to one of them (Rep. Dan Burton), "25% of the Salvadoran population lives in the US, and 20% of the El Salvador's economy consists of remittances from those family members."

Why did they make these threats one day before the election?? Krista Lee, a US solidarity activist in El Salvador as an election observer, writes: "... so that it would come out on the front page of the Salvadoran papers just a few hours after the campaign officially closed, so the FMLN's ability to respond would be severely limited."

Added to external threats, CISPES reported that, "throughout the department of San Salvador, as well as in the interior of the country, buses were observed transporting Nicaraguans and Hondurans to government buildings. Trucks of mattresses then arrived, presumably in order to house the foreigners in these buildings. In Tejutepeque, Cabañas, a bus arrived at the Voting Center and citizens reported that Nicaraguans with DUIs were on the bus and intending to vote. A group of observers ... arrived at the bus to take photos and ask questions. At this point, the bus left and the supposed Nicaraguans did not vote.

Coloring Books for Guatemala - 2009!

— by Marilyn Anderson

Ten years ago I began consulting with Maya educators in Guatemala for the production of a Mayan/Spanish language educational coloring book. “Artes Y Artesanías Mayas de Guatemala”. It took a year and more for me to do the drawings and text. We printed it for the first time in 2001. You might have seen it at the Alternative Fair.

Next month a third printing of the coloring book will appear. I want to thank ROCLA for a \$100.00 contribution and several ROCLA members who contributed as individuals.

Guatemalans such as Ajpup’ Pablo Garcia of the Linguistic and Education Institute of the Universidad Rafael Landivar take on the distribution. And because the books go to children and schools with very limited resources, I take on -- as a personal commitment -- the task of raising the funds to produce it, including the sale of my prints and notecards

Educators and others in Guatemala say the coloring books are a valuable educational resource that fill a gap in what is available for teaching children about their traditional arts and crafts heritage. The value of these and skills and knowledge — lost in so many other places— cannot be measured! Books from the last printing were distributed to Mayan Schools, to 700 school libraries throughout the country and were used in teacher training and in summer vacation programs.

The collaboration of people and institutions is necessary to keep this project going. Over the years we have received grants from the Agostino and Puffin Foundations as well as help from individual donors. The \$2,540 needed to print 2000 new copies has nearly been reached. Sadly, with the tight money situation, it is unlikely foundation funding will happen now.

Happily, the non-profit organization Rights Action serves as our 501(C3), allowing donors to claim tax deductions. Checks should be written to our fiscal sponsor, Rights Action, with “Pro Arte Maya” on the “For” line. Mail to: Marilyn Anderson, 34 Nicholson St., Rochester, NY 14620. Please send before May 15. Your check will be forwarded to Rights Action in Washington D.C. For more information please call: Marilyn Anderson 271-4374 manderson@ igr.org. For more information about the Pro Arte Maya Education Project visit www.proartemaya.org.

TAKE ACTION on behalf of FARMWORKERS!

On April 4 Dr. Lory Ghertner reported: “Here in Wayne County, the senseless raids and detentions have not stopped, despite what you may be reading in the NY Times or other sources.

“Yesterday, two were picked up at the grocery store and I just received word that 72 were picked up at a farm/ processing plant in Wolcott. Plain-clothed Border Patrol agents have been in the laundromat and are seen around the area all the time. Please call the office of Janet Napolitano and say that the brutality and inhumane treatment of an entire population must be stopped. Remember, all rights afforded by our Constitution, Bill of Rights, and labor laws do not mention the word citizen; all residents are afforded rights, protections, and safety.”

Janet Napolitano Homeland Security:
Operator Number: 202-282-8000.
Comment Line: 202-282-8495

Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act:

Background: When the Democrats were in the minority in the state government they said they couldn’t get a Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act passed in a Republican-controlled legislature. Now Democrats are the majority, yet nothing is happening. Our legislators need to hear from us! Locally, Senator Joe Robach (R.) is a co-sponsor. Please thank him.

And please send a postcard to:

The Honorable Malcolm Smith
New York State Senate
Legislative Office Building, Room 909
Albany, NY 12247

Example:

Dear Majority Leader Smith,

For far too long, farmworkers have been wrongfully excluded from New York’s basic labor protections. I urge you to right this wrong by passing the Farmworkers Fair Labor Practices Act. This bill will afford our farmworkers the same rights that have been in place in California for decades.

Respectfully,

Name, address, zip.

Farm Workers' Rights, 70 Years Overdue

[Ed. note: See "Take Action on Behalf of Farmworkers," elsewhere in this issue.]

New York Times Lead Editorial: April 5, 2009

It is more than bank failures and rising unemployment that give these troubled times echoes of the 1930s. An unfinished labor battle from the New Deal is being waged again.

The goal is to win basic rights that farm and domestic workers were denied more than 70 years ago, when the Roosevelt administration won major reforms protecting other workers in areas like overtime and disability pay, days of rest and union organizing.

That inequality is a perverse holdover from the Jim Crow era. Segregationist Southern Democrats in Congress could not abide giving African-Americans, who then made up most of the farm and domestic labor force, an equal footing in the workplace with whites. President Roosevelt's compromise simply wrote workers in those industries out of the New Deal.

They were thus sidelined from the labor movement, with predictable results. Though the Dixiecrats have all long since died or repented, the injustice they spawned has never been corrected. Poverty, brutal working conditions and legally sanctioned discrimination persist for new generations of laborers, who are now mostly Latino immigrants.

In New York, advocates are pressing for passage of the Farmworkers Fair Labor Practices Act, which would give these workers the rights that others have long taken for granted, as well as seek badly needed improvements in safety and sanitary conditions in the fields. Domestic workers, meanwhile, are seeking a "Bill of Rights" in Albany covering things like overtime pay, cost-of-living raises and health benefits

A separate effort begun last week seeks to end these stubbornly lingering injustices for workers in all states by fixing federal law. It was announced on Cesar Chavez's birthday by old lions of his movement, including Jerry Cohen, who as general counsel of the United Farm Workers helped win passage of a landmark 1975 California law that secured unprecedented rights for the state's farm workers. The campaign has been joined by a growing number of labor groups and immigrant advocates, like Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles and the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, which represents migrant workers in the Midwest and North Carolina.

In both campaigns, advocates are counting on a changed political landscape to help their cause. But even with Democrats controlling the New York Legislature, the farm worker bill has languished. It faces fierce opposition from growers and has been eclipsed by the entropy and fiscal

crises of Gov. David Paterson's Albany. In Washington, labor advocates are preoccupied by different battles, like the fight for the pro-union Employee Free Choice Act.

Other long-sought immigration reforms have taken a back seat to the budget and health care.

But farm workers are used to long, hard slogs and pitiless heat and cold, with justice as their distant but inevitable destination. The advocates see President Obama and Governor Paterson as ideal candidates to take them there, and are not about to give up. "Any just national labor law reform must include farm workers and domestics," Mr. Cohen wrote to Labor Secretary Hilda Solis, stating an obvious and compelling truth. "If not now, when?"

New York Times Features Sarah Brownell

[Ed. note: Sarah and her husband Kevin received RO-CLA's Local White Dove Award in 2008. SOIL has just received a large grant from OXFAM.]

Excerpt of NY Times article (3/29/09) by Nicholas Kristof

On this trip, I met a couple of American women, Sasha Kramer and Sarah Brownell, both in their early 30s, who offer an example of outward commitment at a time when most of us are retrenching and focusing on ourselves. Sasha and Sarah run a hand-to-mouth aid group, called SOIL; they speak fluent Creole and get around on motorcycle taxis while waving back at legions of fans on every street.

I was interested in their work because it addresses two of the developing world's greatest but least glamorous challenges. One is sanitation, for human waste in poor countries routinely spreads disease and parasites. The second is agriculture, for poor countries must increase crop yields if they are to overcome poverty and hunger.

Sasha and Sarah create dry composting toilets that turn human waste into valuable fertilizer. They say that the yearlong composting process kills the pathogens in the waste, making it safe to use the fertilizer.

Frankly, I was taken aback when, 10 minutes after they had met me, they pulled out a Ziploc bag and proudly declared that it was compost made from their own toilet. They were so impressed with what they had accomplished that I felt obliged to take a whiff and hold it in my fingers; it simply felt and smelled like rich potting soil, and I would never have guessed its origins.

Continued on last page

Torturer Brought to Justice in El Salvador

[Ed. note: This information is from the Center for Justice and Reconciliation (www.cjr.org) and was sent by Cecilia Santos Moran, one of the “five courageous clients” mentioned below. She was one of the Salvadoran political prisoners who was freed and allowed to come to the US; and she lived with the Sisters of St. Joseph here in Rochester for a year. Since the early 1990’s she has worked for Centro Salvadoreño on Long Island.]

On November 18, 2005, after a three week trial, a Memphis jury held Colonel Nicolas Carranza, the former Vice-Minister of Defense for El Salvador, liable for crimes against humanity, torture and extrajudicial killing. Carranza was ordered to pay \$6 million in damages. The verdict represents the first time that a U.S. jury in a contested case has found a commander liable for crimes against humanity.

Carranza appealed the verdict and oral arguments were held on October 28, 2008 before the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati, Ohio. On March 17, 2009 the Sixth Circuit upheld the jury verdict.

Background

The year 1980 in El Salvador was marked by rampant human rights abuses. The Security Forces - working as or with plain-clothed death squads - carried out forced disappearance, sexual violence, torture and murder against civilians. Experts estimate that 10,000 to 12,000 unarmed civilians were killed in 1980 alone.

Colonel Nicolas Carranza, a naturalized U.S. citizen living in Memphis, was Vice-Minister of Defense of El Salvador from late 1979 to early 1981. In that position, he exercised command and control over the three units of the Security Forces - the National Guard, National Police and Treasury Police - that were responsible for widespread attacks on civilians. Despite being removed from his position as Vice-Minister due to U.S. pressure over his human rights record, Colonel Carranza was later brought back in 1983 as head of the brutal Treasury Police. After being forced out of the Treasury Police, Carranza immigrated to the United States in 1985. He became a U.S. citizen in 1991. In 1984, the New York Times reported that Colonel Carranza had been a paid informant for the CIA.

The case against Col. Carranza was brought by five courageous clients—survivors of the abuses committed under Carranza’s watch, **including Cecilia Santos. Cecilia was a student at the National University and employee of the Salvadoran Ministry of Education when she was arrested in a shopping center in San Salvador in September 1980. Cecilia was held in the National Police headquarters for eight days and tortured repeatedly. She was never given adequate legal representation or**

a fair hearing, and remained in prison for three years. She fled to the U.S. in 1983 after being released under a general amnesty. Cecilia now lives in New York, where she is the director of the Centro Salvadoreño, an organization that encourages socioeconomic and cultural progress among Latino immigrant communities.

Uncovering Haiti’s Hidden History

(from In These Times)

— By Judith Scherr

March 25, 2009

More than four years after President Jean-Bertrand Aristide went into exile, questions linger about Washington’s involvement.

*[Ed. note: Of all the disastrous US policies toward Latin America the worst has been the policy toward Haiti, especially the 2005 US military coup against democratically-elected President Aristide and the ongoing repression by the UN “peacekeeping” ministry in Haiti (MINUSTAH) which has massacred Aristide supporters - a policy pushed in the UN by the US, Canada and France. Why? To stop Aristide’s moves to end neoliberal/corporate globalization, including “free” trade, privatization and cuts in social spending. If you agree with this article please urge your Congressperson to support **H.R. 331.**]*

A congressional bill that would create a truth commission to explore the U.S. role in the 2004 regime change in Haiti is languishing in the House Foreign Affairs Committee with only 12 co-sponsors. But Rep. Barbara Lee’s (D-Calif.) H.R. 331 has sparked hope among some Haitians who think the bill might pass under a friendly Obama administration and bring needed change to the indebted island nation.

Lee introduced the bill Jan. 8 without fanfare. She has brought the same bill to the U.S. House almost every year since 2004. It has never advanced out of committee. The commission’s task would be to determine what happened on Feb. 29, 2004, and the months leading up to the removal of Haiti’s President Jean Bertrand Aristide, currently exiled in South Africa.

The official U.S. position goes something like this: In February 2004, an armed militia was poised to take over the capital, Port-au-Prince. To avoid a bloodbath, Aristide called on the Americans to airlift him and his wife to safety.

Continued on next page

Uncovering Haiti's Hidden History (continued from previous page)

Aristide "left the country with our assistance, which he requested," Mari Tolliver, spokesperson for the U.S. Embassy in Haiti, told *In These Times* in August. (Karl Duckworth, spokesperson for the State Department, said that he could not comment on the U.S. role in Aristide's departure, as the Obama State Department is doing a "complete evaluation of all the areas to see where we will be on issues.")

Aristide tells a different story. He says that a rag-tag band of some 200 rebels strong-armed poorly equipped police stations in several Haitian towns, but posed no threat to the capital, the president or the central government. Aristide says American officials forced him to board a plane whose destination was unknown.

Congress has only once formally addressed the question of the U.S. role in the coup. On March 3, 2004, the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee of the House International Relations Committee held a hearing, providing the opportunity for Congress to question State Department officials. Those testifying were not under oath; there were no follow-up hearings.

The week following the hearing, Lee introduced her bill on the House floor, explaining that the purpose of the truth commission was to "find out more about the events leading up to President Aristide's departure, the twilight activities of his alleged resignation, the current unconstitutional government, and the ongoing turmoil, fear, and misinformation that is still flowing out of Haiti."

In 2004, 49 representatives co-sponsored the bill.

Nicole Lee, executive director of Washington, D.C.-based TransAfrica Forum, an advocacy group, is an attorney who, before the coup, lived in Haiti. Lee (no relation to the congresswoman) says one of the key functions of the commission would be to document the role of the International Republican Institute (IRI) in destabilizing the Haitian government. The nonprofit IRI is affiliated with the Republican Party and funded, in part, by the nonprofit National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which Congress partially funds "to strengthen democratic institutions around the world through nongovernmental efforts," according to the NED website.

"The International Republican Institute all along really fomented a lot of tension between the Democratic Convergence [the anti-Aristide party] and the government," says Lee. "There were reports--and continue to be reports--that the IRI provided information and also provided funding and training to former Haitian military officials that ended up coming across the border with the Dominican Republic" leading to the February 2004 coup, she says.

Unless the truth about the coup is uncovered, Congress will write off the Bush policy of regime change as an anomaly, says Lee.

Meanwhile, the proposed bill has elicited response in Haiti. From exile, Aristide referenced the bill in a statement read recently on the radio by a representative: Lee's bill leads us to believe that the new American administration will not support the coup d'état as was the case for the previous administration, the statement said.

Yvonne Zapzap heads the Families of Political Prisoners Collective and spoke by phone from Haiti through a translator. She says Haitians are aware of the bill and believe a truth commission would help end the lingering effects of the coup.

People voted for [current President René] Préval so that the political prisoners would be out of jail, but people are still in jail, she says, referring to supporters imprisoned without trial during the 2004 to 2006 U.S.-appointed interim government. The impacts of the coup are still present since Aristide was snatched from Haiti, she says.

TransAfrica Forum's Lee puts it this way: "When Aristide was removed, water projects stopped, education projects stopped, healthcare clinics shut down. It wasn't just about removing a leader, it was about destroying a real democracy. And that really needs to be accounted for."

Judith Scherr is an independent journalist who has made four trips to Haiti. Her stories about that country have appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle, Counterpunch, Z Magazine, the Berkeley Daily Planet, The Progressive magazine and the San Francisco Bay View, among others.

MIGRANT WORKERS AND OUR AMERICAN BOUNTY:

June 18-July 18, 2009

(Thursday-Friday, 2-6 pm; Sat-Sun, 1-5 pm.)
RIT's Metro Showcase and Learning Laboratory
for the Arts, 775 Park Ave.

Reception on June 19, 7-9:30 PM will include a talk by Loreet Steinberg and others who have been especially vocal and eloquent in speaking about migrant workers and the issues that have had an impact on their lives.

Includes photographs, texts and other media responding to issues of immigration, migrant work, and the food we put on our table.

Curator: photojournalist Loreet Steinberg

UPDATE on the AMERICAS

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



El Campo

Images From Rural Mexico
by Joseph Sorrentino
Image City Gallery
722 University Ave
May 20-June 14

Opening Reception Friday May 22, 5:30-8pm

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 1st Wednesday of each month at the Downtown United 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 assistance and 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 Publishing Team

Editors: Gail and Peter Mott; Designer: John Locke

Cuba Caravan Due Here July 7th *(continued)*

tances of Cuban-Americans. And bills to remove travel restrictions for all Americans (S. 428) and (HR.874) have been introduced in congress. So far, the Senate bill has the support of the American Farm bureau, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Human Rights Watch and the House bill has 121 co-sponsors. We urge you to call your representatives in Congress (202-225-3121) and ask them to support these bills.

This will be like previous Friendshippments, only bigger. As always, we plan to collect aid and raise funds, to purchase medicines and help pay for transportation. Don't miss the opportunity to help in this historic effort by donating funds and aid, helping to load the truck, and celebrating. We want to pull out all of the stops to help the Cuban people and take advantage of this opportunity to bring a significant change in U.S - Cuba policy. Further details will follow.

New York Times Features Sarah Brownell *(continued)*

Sasha calculates that if half of Haitians' human waste could be used as fertilizer, that would amount to a 17-fold increase in fertilizer use, more than doubling the country's agricultural production.

Sasha and Sarah have deployed 45 of their toilets, and now they are trying to introduce a municipal composting system in Cap Haitien. I don't know if this is feasible. But I love the idea that even when the needs of the United States are so immense, a couple of young Americans aren't complaining or finger-pointing, but are hard at work to assist others whose distress is incomparably greater than our own.

ROCLA is now a Coffee Connection Partner!

We will be selling their coffee and taking orders at ROCLA meetings. So come prepared to get a treat for yourself while you support the work of ROCLA and Coffee Connection. (See article by Joseph Sorrentino in a future issue).

