



A PUBLICATION OF THE ROCHESTER COMMITTEE ON LATIN AMERICA

## ROCLA

### MISSION STATEMENT

Founded in 1973, the Rochester Committee on Latin America (ROCLA) seeks to build bridges between the Rochester, NY, community and the people of Latin America. Through its monthly presentations, speakers, films, and quarterly newsletters, ROCLA educates local residents about the culture, economics and politics of the countries of Central and South America, Mexico and the Caribbean and the ways globalization, US trade and drug-war policies impact the lives of their people. ROCLA also supports the work of frontline organizations involved in working for justice and democracy in the global south, including the Latin America Solidarity Committee (LASC), Nicanet, Committee in Solidarity with the people of El Salvador (CISPES), Network In Solidarity with the people of Guatemala (NISGUA), Rights Action and the Pastors for Peace Cuba Friendshipment. We also encourage our members and others to advocate for US policies that support human rights and reverse the often oppressive history of US involvement in Latin America. Annually, ROCLA presents its international and local White Dove Awards for outstanding leadership and service in the cause of human rights in Latin America.

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ROCLA members enjoy hearing highlights of their history.

## ROCLA 40TH ANNIVERSARY PICNIC A HUGE SUCCESS!

By Peter Mott

**O**n a sunny evening on Tuesday, August 27, 2013, ROCLA members and friends celebrated our fourth decade of solidarity with the people of Latin America at the Tay House in Cobbs Hill Park. More than forty members contributed to a wonderful dinner, proving once again that potluck

meals are the best! Latin music added to the festivities, as old and new members mingled. During the well-planned meeting, founding and long-time members were introduced and recognized for their effective activism over many years. Henrietta Levine and Alison Clarke and others told stories of both ROCLA's many initiatives over 40 years of its exciting history, and *(Continued page 7)*

## ROCLA ASKS FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT!

Ask people what's the hardest thing about organizing, and they'll usually say "fundraising." However, ROCLA, like every organization, needs money to carry out its work. It's unlikely that the US government will provide funds for ROCLA because much of what we do is to oppose and try to change US policy towards the nations and people of Latin America. So, each year we turn to our members and ask for donations. We deeply appreciate our members' support—watch for our membership letter in your mail, detailing the initiatives your contributions supported in 2012!

[Ed. Note] With this brief "spotlight" on Gloria Osborne, we are initiating a series of biographies of our members and their contributions to ROCLA that will be published in each newsletter.

## SPOTLIGHT ON ROCLA MEMBER GLORIA OSBORNE



Gloria Osborne first learned of ROCLA when she met Marilyn Anderson at a book signing for Marilyn's third book, **Granddaughters of Corn**, published in 1988. After Gloria moved to Rochester in the late 1980s, she began attending meetings when ROCLA met at the Episcopal Diocesan house on East Avenue. Gloria had previously spent time in Argentina, Guatemala and Mexico and was eager to connect with others who had lived or worked in Latin America and whose experiences there drove their continuing interest in the region. Through ROCLA, Gloria became more aware of the political upheavals and civil wars in Latin America in the 1980s, particularly in Central *(Continued page 7)*

# THE ROCHESTER COMMITTEE ON LATIN AMERICA A HISTORY, 1973-2000

*As part of the celebration of ROCLA's 40th anniversary, we are excerpting a history of ROCLA written for the October-November 2000 Update on the Americas by Michele Spring-Moore, with reporting by Jennifer Banister, David Eisenberg, Bob Kaiser, Tom Little-Moore and Gail and Peter Mott, and illustrations by Rini Templeton. We hope one of you will be inspired to write ROCLA's history since 2000! [Ed. Note]*

## MURDER IN CHILE: THE BEGINNING

Alison Clarke remembers standing with two other local activists on the porch of the Puerto Rican Arts and Cultural Center one evening nearly [40] years ago, waiting for someone to bring keys so they could enter the building and convene the first meeting of a Latin America human rights group that later became known as the Rochester Committee on Latin America.

At that time, Alison was the co-coordinator of the Rochester Peace and Justice Education Center (PJEC), a chapter of the national interfaith organization Clergy and Laity Concerned, (CLC) which was founded by Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. to work for peace in Vietnam. In those days, PJEC had a task force on hunger and human rights and Alison was coordinator of it. With the assassination of democratically elected president Salvador Allende in Chile in 1973, PJEC members became involved in related teach-ins on US corporate and government complicity in the Chilean government's downfall, and PJEC moved toward a focus on Latin American human rights.

Alison, Henrietta Levine, and Bob Malone held the first meeting at the Puerto Rican Center on Clifford Avenue. Early ROCLA members included Chileans living in Rochester and US citizens who had worked in the Peace Corps in Latin America, or who had traveled to Cuba and were concerned about U.S. intervention in the region. "The inability of people in those countries to grow their own food due to the inequality of land ownership brought the issues of hunger and human rights closely together within PJEC," Alison says, "and so ROCLA was born."

## EARLY PROJECTS

In the late '70s and early '80s, Alison recalls, ROCLA brought experts on the relationship between US foreign policy and the struggles of Latin American people, and [held] teach-ins at local high schools, colleges and other venues and meetings with the editorial board of the Gannett Rochester Newspapers... ROCLA also educated locally via public radio programs, and in 1975 held a fundraising concert at the Eastman School of Music's Kilbourn Hall for Chilean human rights work.

ROCLA's organization was "very loose" at first, Henrietta Levine recalls; the few members met at individuals' homes and channeled funds through other groups and churches, such as Calvary-St. Andrews. ROCLA itself was a small group, but was always supported in its education and fundraising goals by the larger local peace and justice community. "It was a time when you just sort of did what you had to do," Henrietta says, adding that today's ROCLA organization, with a steering committee that discusses and sets policy, is important.

When she helped found ROCLA, Henrietta had been involved in various political justice issues and movements for decades, and in 1969 was one of 13 members of the Women's Peace Delegation to Cuba at the invitation of the Cuban Women's Federation. In 1987, Henrietta helped found the Nicaraguan Sister City/Ciudad Hermana project with El Sauce, Nicaragua through the Rochester organization Metro Act (now Metro Justice, ROCLA's parent organization) and visited El Sauce with other Ciudad Hermana members. She continues to work with that task force today, and has done extensive work to encourage local contributions to the Pastors for Peace Cuba Caravans.



## THE '80s: BLOODBATH IN CENTRAL AMERICA

The main focus of Latin America solidarity activists in the 1980s was opposing the Reagan and Bush administrations' arming and supporting the murderous regimes in El Salvador and Guatemala, and destabilizing the democratically elected Sandinista-led government in Nicaragua through the Contra proxy war. Activists also opposed the ongoing US's neo-colonial policies throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

Each spring, ROCLA co-sponsored the local observance of Central America Week, a series of events all over the United States sponsored by a number of national religious groups that included prayer services, lobbying activities, demonstrations and reports from those who had visited and worked in Nicaragua and other countries. These observances also included commemorations of the assas-



sination of Archbishop Oscar Romero by a Salvadoran death squad in 1980.

Many ROCLA members traveled to Nicaragua after the 1979 revolution for study trips and cultural solidarity tours, to work on construction and reforestation projects, pick coffee beans, learn Spanish, and see the transformation of a country that had been suffering under the Somoza family dictatorship and US control for a century.

Others became involved in the Sanctuary Movement, in which US activists, many working with established churches, assisted Salvadorans and Guatemalans fleeing death squads and other repression in their countries. Sanctuary activist Gail Mott recalls that ROCLA was a strong supporter of the Sanctuary Movement in Rochester from 1984 to 1990, announcing events in its newsletter and participating in rallies, bus trips, fund-raisers, the Quilt of Martyrs, the Fast for Peace and events featuring Alejandro Gomez, a Salvadoran labor organizer who, with his family of five, fled for his life to the US in 1983. "During that period my main concern was to let people know that our tax dollars—\$3 million every day—were going to the murderous Salvadoran government whose army slaughtered over 70,000 of their citizens during the 10-year civil war," Gail says.

ROCLA's focus wasn't limited to Central America, though. Its 1984 program "Central America and the Caribbean: A Community Forum" included workshops about not only the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran issues, but also on Mexico and the politics of oil, the relationship between migrant farmworkers and US agribusiness, the damage to the small fishing industry in Puerto Rico because of

the environmental effects of the US Navy bombing of Vieques, and on the destabilization of the democratic government of Michael Manley in Jamaica.

In the '80s, ROCLA also turned to educating through the arts. In early 1984, the organization sponsored "Guatemala: A Testimonial," a national traveling photography exhibit that the editor of City newspaper, Mary Anna Towler, reviewed under the front-page headline, "Bringing Home the Horror." The exhibit was shown in conjunction with the forum mentioned above, and featured work by fine art photographers and photojournalists from the United States, Mexico, and Europe.

Long-time ROCLA member Marilyn Anderson's photography was included in the exhibit; she worked with photographer Leslie Locketz and other ROCLA members to bring the show to Rochester. At that point Marilyn had traveled to Guatemala nine times, for brief visits and longer stays, and had photographed indigenous weavers and weaving techniques and documented the devastating effects on rural traditional life of the Guatemalan government's murder and repression. By 1984, at least 100,000 Guatemalans had fled the country; most ended up in Mexican refugee camps.

For the next four years, ROCLA sponsored the Solidarity Arts Festivals, which annually included exhibits, concerts, readings, and other performances. Arts for Greater Rochester awarded ROCLA a \$1,000 grant to produce the 1988 festival. ROCLA also published arts calendars as a benefit in 1986 and 1987, and sold Guatemalan textiles for a number of years at the Rochester Museum and Science Center's annual International Folk Festival. The ROCLA steering committee also began to organize major fund-raising efforts in the mid-'80s, creating more formal plans to raise thousands of dollars to provide material aid for Guatemalan refugees, Nicaragua and the FMLN liberated zones in El Salvador.

In the late '80s, local teacher Bruce Handelman took advantage of the inclusion of Latin America in the New York State high school curriculum by working with other ROCLA members to review and recommend appropriate materials for the classroom. ROCLA also continued its work with Politics of Food, at that time another task force of PJEC coordinated by

Alison Clarke, by sponsoring a workshop, "Hunger and Latin America," for K-12 teachers. ROCLA member Bolgen Vargas, now the president of the Rochester City School District school board, did a presentation on "Debt and Development."

[ROCLA also organized] local boycotts of California grapes and Folger's coffee, which was produced in El Salvador and owned by Procter & Gamble; protest[ed] Rochester appearances by convicted Iran-Contra felon Lt. Col. Oliver North; and helped send 300 Rochester-area residents to the national Mobilization for Peace and Justice in Central America and Southern Africa in April 1987.

ROCLA began work with the labor movement in the late '80s. The speaker at ROCLA's first Rice & Beans Dinner, in 1988, was Dave Dyson, then a key member of the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador, which was composed of 20 US unions.

## THE '90s: WORKING AGAINST THE GLOBALIZATION OF CAPITAL

On New Year's Day in 1994, the inauguration day of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), a group of mostly indigenous Mayan rebels, calling themselves the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) after the Mexican Revolutionary hero Emiliano Zapata, rose up against the Mexican government. The fighting between the Mexican Army and the Zapatistas lasted about 10 days before the rebels decided on a cease-fire and began negotiations with the government that have continued on and off since. The Zapatistas were protesting the Mexican president's dismantling of traditional and constitutionally-protected peasant communal land holdings and attempts to open the rainforest in Chiapas to US paper companies and other corporations, in response to the passage of NAFTA.

In a manner reminiscent of solidarity work with Cuba in the '60s and Nicaragua in the '80s, several ROCLA members have visited Chiapas since 1994 to learn about the Zapatista revolution,

work as election observers, and help indigenous communities construct schools and other buildings. More importantly, ROCLA has been involved in educational and activist efforts against increasing global capitalism.

In the early '90s, Jon Garlock and Jeff Nieznanski of the Rochester Labor Committee on Central America spoke at ROCLA meetings about NAFTA, and by the middle of the decade, ROCLA was working with the Rochester Labor Council, individual unions and other groups to demonstrate at local corporations that contracted for clothing made in Mexican sweatshops, and to hold rallies calling for an end to sweatshops and loss of living-wage jobs around the world. Some ROCLA members and local unionists went on educational tours of the US-Mexico border to witness the horrible living and working conditions and environmental degradation in the maquila zones. ROCLA has also been a strong local supporter of the national 50 Years Is Enough campaign, which advocates an end to the World Bank and IMF's crippling "economic reforms" imposed on poor countries of the Global South.

## OTHER '90s PROJECTS

ROCLA members have also been involved in grassroots efforts to shut down the US Army School of the Americas, for decades the training ground for Latin American military regimes committing atrocities against their own people. ROCLA members have joined local college students, church members and others in protesting the SOA in Fort Benning, Georgia each fall. [ROCLA member John Honeck has served prison time for his acts of civil disobedience at the SOA.]

ROCLA returned to its work in Central America by helping refugees with resettlement. [In 1997, ROCLA's Western New York Accompaniment Project joined the national Guatemala Accompaniment Project to accompany Guatemalan refugees returning home after more than 15 years of living in Mexican refugee camps. Accompaniers provided the solidarity of their physical presence as outsiders to returnees and helped support them. ROCLA sponsored local accompaniers



Jennifer Banister and Todd Bauer, who served in the community of La Comunidad Esperanza 9 de Septiembre in Guatemala's northern frontier region.]

Throughout the 90's, ROCLA helped provide medical equipment and other material aid for the Pastors for Peace Cuba Caravans. One year, a ROCLA member broke the law crossing the US-Canadian border; the following year five Rochesterians did so. The next time, 13 people risked the 10 years in prison and \$250,000 fine. The US Treasury—like the FBI earlier—wanted ROCLA's membership lists and has gone to court twice in vain attempts to subpoena them.

The annual Rice & Beans Dinner has continued to be a popular fund-raiser and social event, bringing in speakers such as Charles Kernaghan, the director of the National Labor Committee, a non-profit human rights organization that exposes sweatshop abuses; Jennifer Harbury, the lawyer and human rights activist who revealed the CIA and US State Department cover-up of the murder of her husband and many other citizens by Guatemalan death squads; and Howard Zinn, author of *A People's History of the United States*. Each year ROCLA has presented the White Dove Award to honor local activists for their ongoing commitment to achieve social justice in the Americas.

During the 1990s, ROCLA member Peter Mott began a series of Latin American news capsules to counter US corporate media propaganda called "Report the Truth" in the newsletter. Peter served as ROCLA co-convenor with

Terry Lindsey for seven years during the 1990s. ROCLA has also supported bilingual potluck suppers at members' homes, as well as Spanish language classes taught by Linda Biehl and Benjamin Narvaez in their home. ROCLA members also marched with city churches in the Coalition for Jobs and Justice, joining the movement to oust the CIA from the Rochester Institute of Technology campus; helped the Genesee Valley/New York Civil Liberties Union bring out 600 people to hear Noam Chomsky speak on the corporate media; and examined the Columbus quincentenary and gay and lesbian rights in relation to Latin American solidarity groups in the US. ■

## 12TH ANNUAL SPANISH FOR ACTIVISTS CAMP

by Gloria Osborne

For 12 years, the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) and the Committee on US-Latin American Relations (CUSLAR) at Cornell University have sponsored the annual Jolie Rickman Spanish for Activists Camp, held this summer in Ithaca from July 5-7, 2013. As always, the participants enjoyed the many wonderful presentations, Spanish classes, shared discussions among the community of campers, including campfire songs and a workshop on the Nueva Canción genre of social justice music with singer-songwriter and co-founder of the camp, Colleen Kattau.

Gonzalo Martinez de Vedia and Carly Fox from the Worker Justice Center of New York (WJCNY) spoke about farmworkers and immigration reform, including the latest federal, state and consumer initiatives, the Dream Act and DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), and child labor and sex trafficking (Trafficking Victims Protection and Justice Act.) They reminded us that the Rochester office of WJCNY covers a five-county area and that much of their time is spent assisting women who are victims of domestic and workplace violence.

Gregory Wilpert, co-founder of venezuelanalysis.com, and Lisa Fuller, CISPES program director in Washington DC,

led a panel discussion on the direction of Latin American solidarity initiatives. They presented comparisons of old and new political systems in Latin America over the past fifteen years, including the declining legitimacy of neoliberalism, the geopolitically weakened US in the region and the rise of new leftist governments in countries whose economies and political regimes suffered partial or total collapse. Wilpert and Fuller posited that the growth of cooperatives, the decline of emigration, the increase in climate justice organizing, with emphasis on the importance of defeating the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and the relationships between populist and leftist movements and their ability to prevent attacks from the right, provide opportunities to counter US hegemony and allow solidarity to exist—preferably a two-way solidarity between Latin American countries.

The discussion with participants included what tactics and messaging should be used to communicate the urgency of Latin America's needs, such as at the World Social Forum. The panel issued a word of caution concerning the role of transnational NGO's and the breakdown in some Latin American governments' responses to the needs of the people.

Celia Regina Vendramini, a professor of education from Brazil doing a post-doctoral fellowship at Cornell with the Department of Development Sociology, gave a fascinating presentation on Brazil's Landless Rural Workers Movement—Movimento Sem Terra (MST), which seeks to acquire land through agrarian reform and social transformation and is now working with La Via Campesina, a huge international peasants' movement that works for food sovereignty.

As the poor are driven from the cities in Brazil, they create encampments that later become settlements. As these encampments become more autonomous, they eventually create communities similar to ecovillages, which they will eventually own when they have met the requirements for land usage. During this initial phase, the government subsidizes food until crops come in and buys land from private owners—often at exorbitant prices. These communities then strive to create solidarity with new settlements and encampments, as well as helping to

organize landless workers in cities while combining politics with production and providing school and policy training for activists. Creating infrastructure, remaining organized, obtaining access to quality public services and democratizing the media are only a few of the challenges they face.

I encourage other ROCLA members to attend next year's Spanish for Activists camp. For more information: <http://cuslar.org/index.php/events/spanish-for-activist-camp> or Gloria Osborne, [turtlekneader@hotmail.com](mailto:turtlekneader@hotmail.com). ■



**Sarah Brownell listens to SOL workers in Haiti.**

## **UPDATE ON SOL, GRASSROOTS HAITIAN ORGANIZATION**

Sosyete Oganize pou Lanati (SOL) is a Haitian grassroots organization that was founded in 2006. Its name translates loosely as "Society Organized for Nature," and it focuses on transforming wastes into resources, especially through ecological sanitation. Originally founded as a sister organization to a US group, SOL is now branching out on its own to become a full-fledged Haitian non-profit organization.

Sarah Brownell, a faculty member at the Kate Gleason College of Engineering at the Rochester Institute of Technology, began volunteering in Haiti in 1998 and lived there from 2006-2010. She has personally worked with SOL's core members since 2006 (some before)

and considers them close friends. SOL members have extensive training and experience successfully administering (to US standards) and implementing projects including community educational programs and construction of ecological toilets. Their Haitian board includes local citizens trained in agronomy, health, law and education, and they all are well-connected in their respective communities.

The growing ecological sanitation movement in Haiti, now taken up by multiple NGOs, is based on the foundation SOL laid working directly with grassroots community groups, through radio publicity and through sharing at national sanitation conferences. They also have much experience working cross-culturally and offering hospitality for international visitors.

The goal of SOL's latest project is to help SOL establish a business office in Cap Haitien, Haiti, so that they can offer their skills and expertise on a contract basis to other local and international non-profits interested in ecological sanitation, as well as to pursue their own funding through writing grant proposals, Sarah reports. "I hope to continue seeking funding for projects that they can implement in collaboration with my students at the Rochester Institute of Technology." They need to raise \$3,000 to establish [this] office, which includes renting a building for a year, purchasing a computer, printer, and office supplies, and establishing a communication system (internet, phone and website) for the group.

Sarah writes, "We have rented and furnished the office and SOL hosted seven student visitors and two faculty from RIT last June. [SOL was recently] contracted by the Engineers Without Borders group at the NJ Institute of Technology to help supervise implementation of a household slow sand filter project in Milot, Haiti, and [SOL members] will be attending a training to learn to build and install those filters themselves. SOL's long-term goals include starting a chicken project that utilizes waste (human or other natural) to make our own locally produced chicken feed, as well as [to provide] eggs and chicken."

The costs of imported feed are currently a block to expanding local production of chickens and eggs for most farm-

ers. Most chickens and eggs are imported from the Dominican Republic, and there have been multiple conflicts around the poultry trade between the two countries, including boycotts and blockades. SOL already owns some land that could be used. "We are currently researching ways to turn waste into food for chickens (and possibly fish) - worms, bugs, black soldier fly larvae in the compost heaps, as well as using the compost to grow corn," Sarah says, "and I'm continuing to try to understand chicken nutrition." ■

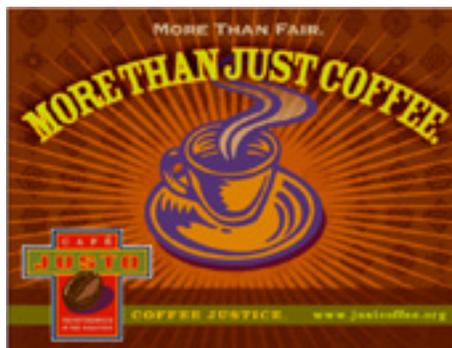
## ROCLA NOVEMBER PROGRAM: "HOPE TRAVELS WITHOUT A VISA"

In the national conversation about immigration, the human face of suffering of those who embark on the odyssey of crossing borders without papers is often forgotten, if not deliberately ignored. The drama of undocumented migration is even more problematic when the travelers are the most vulnerable of all, children and youth who follow the path of their parents or who fall prey to large multinational organized criminal gangs.

Based on first-hand accounts from Salvadoran children and youngsters who dared to make the journey to the US without papers, Nelson Portillo, who was born in El Salvador and holds a Ph.D., has heard not only the narratives of suffering and struggle, but also the stories of the pervasive failures in the immigration system and negligence at the hands of all countries involved in the journey. With an increasing number of children and youth crossing the borders to join their family members in the US, it is essential to make them more visible and recognize their vulnerability in any attempt to bring comprehensive and just immigration reform. Immigrant children and youth, regardless of their legal status, deserve better. They deserve informed advocates who can help advance their cause.

**On November 6, 2013, at 7 PM, at Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 North Fitzhugh St., Rochester,** Dr. Portillo will present the findings of his study of undocumented Salvadoran children and youth who

have made this perilous journey to the US. In the minds of people who oppose undocumented migration to the U.S., this issue has been reduced to "they broke the law." Dr. Portillo's work shows that the issue is far more complex--hope does not need a visa and hope is what propels even children to face countless risks and even death in their journey to the "American dream." ■



## TRY CAFÉ JUSTO, CAFFEINE WITH A CONSCIENCE!

Café Justo is a coffee grower cooperative based in Salvador Urbina, Chiapas, Mexico, founded in 2002 to address the migration of Mexicans from Chiapas by providing coffee farmers in Mexico a fair price for their coffee. It was founded at a time when the price of coffee worldwide had plunged. The cooperative markets a pure, organic coffee which is grown, harvested and roasted in Mexico and sold in the spirit of justice. Its goal is to provide incentives for people to remain on their family lands.

Café Justo's business model is simple and optimizes profit for the growers. The coffee is harvested, cleaned and prepared for shipping in Salvador Urbina, Chiapas. The beans are then transported to Agua Prieta, Sonora, where they are roasted, ground and packaged for shipment to their customers. It is Fair Trade certified and organic. In fact, because all of Just Coffee's value-added processes take place in Mexico, it is a more powerful development tool than simply fair trade coffee that is grown in Mexico, but roasted and packaged in the US. Several different types of coffee are available including 100% Arabica, Arabica Decaf, and Marago (a specialty coffee).

Café Justo's mission is to deliver the highest quality, organic, environmen-

tally conscious, fresh roasted coffee to its customers at a price that is fair and just. Just Coffee's staff and growers work to create a bond between the members of the coffee growing community in Salvador Urbina and their customers throughout the world. For more information and to order, visit [justcoffee.org](http://justcoffee.org) (The website is being updated) or, to order, contact Adrian Gonzalez, Director of Customer Relations, at (520) 364-3532 or email him at [adrian@justcoffee.org](mailto:adrian@justcoffee.org) ■

## HUMAN RIGHTS DAY 2013

### CLASS AND RACE: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE 'HAVE-NOTS' BECOME 'HAVES'?

By Gail Mott

Every year, human rights supporters gather as a community to celebrate the anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Its Articles describe the hopes of the peoples of the world for a successful and peaceful future for all. ROCLA has co-sponsored these programs since the beginning. **This year, the Human Rights Day program will be held on December 10, 2013, at 6:30 PM in the Downtown Presbyterian Church sanctuary, 121 N. Fitzhugh Street, Rochester, NY.**

For over a year now, the Rochester community has been focusing on racism's threat to a peaceful future. "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in an Era of Color Blindness," was the 2012 Human Rights Day focus. In 2013, that focus is being extended by inviting the Rochester community to consider how human rights are affected by race and social class. This will be done through the lens of art with a dramatic reading of the acclaimed play, "Palmer Park," by Joanna McClelland Glass. The community will be moved by the dramatic presentation, first to acknowledge the often painful conflicts between race and social class and then to imagine fresh ways to overcome such conflicts.

The format of the celebration has been changed this year to accommodate the length of the play. Instead of a pot-luck

supper, we will host a pot-luck cookie snack at the evening's conclusion. Beginning at 6:30 PM in the Downtown United Presbyterian Church sanctuary, the play will run for an hour and a half, with a brief intermission. There will be a Q&A afterwards with the actors, followed by a call for action. Representatives of local groups working on race and class issues will be available to suggest ways people can get involved in solving problems caused by the interaction of race and social class.

Bring your friends, neighbors, faith group and colleagues. Come, see, question the actors, the director, and one another—and then explore where you can make a difference in solving class/race conflicts here in Rochester! All of us working together as a community CAN make a difference. Please come!

For more information: Gail Mott, [interconnect\\_mott@frontiernet.net](mailto:interconnect_mott@frontiernet.net) or 585-464-0878. ■

## OSBORNE

(Continued from page 1)  
America, and the role the United States played in fomenting and funding them. She began actively working to help influence US public opinion and policy toward Latin America through petitions, letters and social activism, as well as by sharing information with her friends.

Subsequently, Gloria worked with the Guatemalan Accompaniment Project and spent two weeks with Jennifer Harbury as an accompanier in Guatemala; Jennifer's husband, an indigenous leader, had been tortured and killed by death squads in Guatemala. While she was an accompanier, Gloria completed a study for a holistic nursing course she was engaged in. She joined the steering committee in 2011 and continues to be amazed at the wealth of knowledge and participation shared by both the committee and ROCLA's membership overall, and the power we have to create change together. We are equally amazed and appreciative of Gloria's environmental knowledge, her reverence for the natural world, her contributions to the ROCLA newsletter and her wise participation in ROCLA's on-going work. ■

## PICNIC

(Continued from page 1)

both the challenges and fun they've had as ROCLA activists. See the fascinating history of ROCLA reprinted on pages 2-3 from the ROCLA October-November 2000 newsletter for more information, and the ROCLA website, [www.rocla.us](http://www.rocla.us) for more 40th anniversary photos. ■



**ROCLA founder Alison Clarke addresses members at ROCLA's 40th anniversary celebration.**



**Sami Sheehan, Metro Justice Operations & Development Director, chats with long-time ROCLA activist and Episcopal priest Phil Schaefer.**

*Pablo Neruda*

## SO IS MY LIFE: A POEM BY PABLO NERUDA

ROCLA member Jon Garlock selected "So Is My Life," a poem by famous Chilean poet and Nobel Prize winner Pablo Neruda, to be the first poem of those that we will regularly feature in ROCLA's newsletters to highlight the cultural gifts of Latin America. This poem appears in the book *Songs of Protest*, published in 1968, where Neruda writes about his wishes for the poetry in this book: "I swear, therefore, that my poetry will serve and sing of the dignity of the indigent, of hope to the hopeless, of justice in spite of the injustice, of equality in spite of exploiters, of truth in spite of liars and of the great brotherhood of true fighters."

Neruda's extensive writings are universally read and acclaimed. As a committed leftist and member of the Communist Party, his poetry speaks to his love of justice and empathy for the oppressed. Sadly, Neruda died on Sept. 23, 1973, of heart failure, shortly after the Sept. 11, 1973, coup in which Salvador Allende and countless other Chileans died or fled their country as refugees. [Ed. Note]

### So Is My Life

My duty moves along with my song:  
I am I am not: that is my destiny.  
I exist not if I do not attend to the pain  
of those that suffer: they are my pains.  
For I cannot be without existing for all,  
for all who are silent and oppressed,  
I come from the people and I sing for them:  
my poetry is song and punishment.  
I am told you belong to darkness.  
Perhaps, perhaps, but I walk toward the light.  
I am the man of bread and fish  
And you will not find me among books,  
but with women and men:  
They have taught me the infinite. ■

# ROCLA

METRO JUSTICE EDUCATION FUND

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## ROCLA UPDATE ON THE **AMERICAS**

### **ROCLA'S CULTURAL WORK**

*By Jon Garlock*

During the 1970s and 1980s, ROCLA sponsored many Latin American cultural events, including Latin American Solidarity Arts Festivals featuring the work of dozens of visual artists, poets, dancers and musicians. Other programs included concerts, readings and exhibits at Jazzberry's, benefit performances for Chile, *peñas* at Savory Thyme and others.

Since 1990, ROCLA has contributed extensively to the Rochester community's understanding of Latin America through its ongoing support of

the annual Labor Film Series at George Eastman House. Through its sponsorship, ROCLA has helped bring to the screen at the Dryden Theatre thirty-six films covering a wide range of topics encompassing Mexico, Central and South America and the Caribbean.

The films are listed here alphabetically, with screening dates added in parentheses. To get a real sense of these films' cumulative impact, you can read synopses of their content here: [www.rochesterlabor.org/filmschedule.html](http://www.rochesterlabor.org/filmschedule.html). If you wish to propose any of these films for consideration in next year's retrospective 25th labor film series, please complete an electronic survey at [http://laborfilms.org/25th-labor-film-](http://laborfilms.org/25th-labor-film-series-survey/)

[series-survey/](http://laborfilms.org/25th-labor-film-series-survey/). ROCLA would like to continue and reinvigorate its tradition of highlighting the importance of cultural expression as part of movements for social justice.

Alambrista (1994)  
Araya (2010)  
Battle of Chile (I, II, III) (1999)  
Bolivia (2005)  
Bread and Roses (2001)  
Burn! Quemada! (2003)  
Chile, Obstinate Memory (1999)  
Crane World (2006)  
Even the Rain [Tambien La Lluvia] (2011)  
From the Other Side (2003)  
Global Assembly Line (1991)  
H-2 Worker (1991)  
Heading South (2010)  
I am Cuba (1996)

Isle of Flowers (1991)  
La Camioneta (2013)  
La Ciudad (2002)  
Man in the Shadow (2005)  
Oblivion (2009)  
La Nana (2010)  
The Lips (2012)  
The Pope's Toilet (2009)  
Rebellion in Patagonia (1994)  
Redes (1993)  
The Revolution Will Not Be Televised (2004)  
Salt of the Earth (2000)  
Sleep Dealer (2009)  
They Don't Wear Black Tie (1991)  
Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada (2007)  
Valley of Tears (2004)  
Viva Zapata! (1997)  
The Wages of Fear (1995)  
The Women of Brukman (2008)