

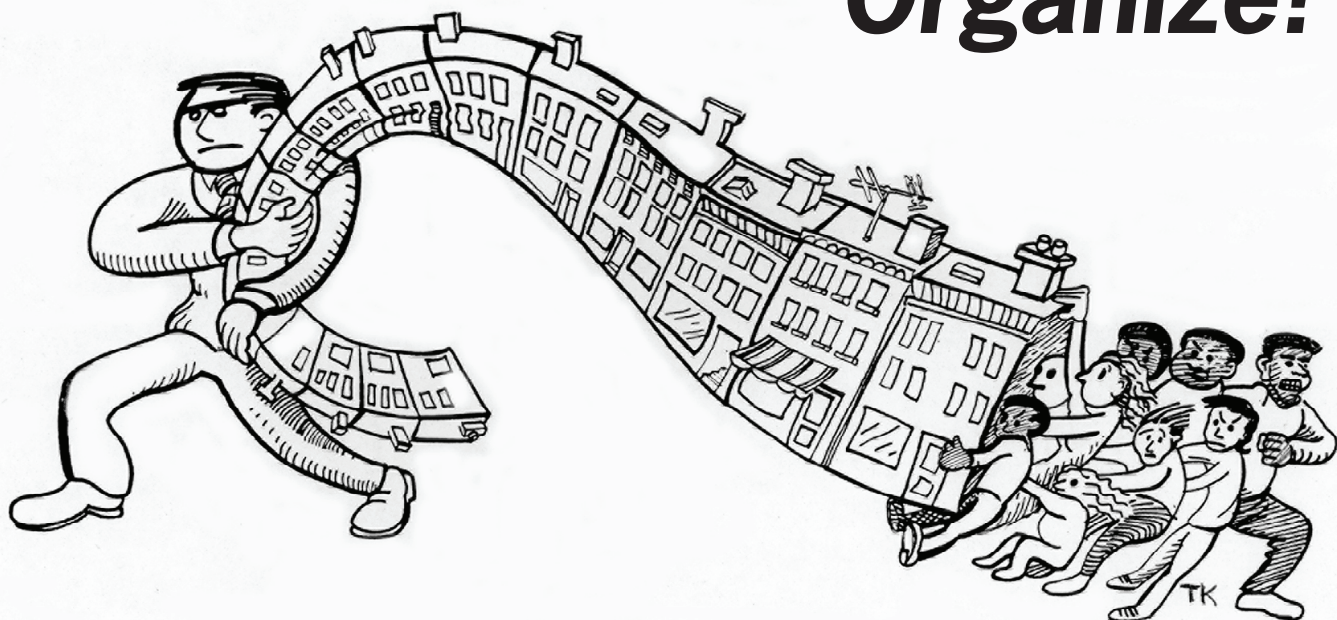
Socialist Women Mujeres Socialistas

Publication of the Socialist Party Women's Commission

Summer 2006



Organize!



In This Issue ...

Community Organizing Can Start at Work

Susan Dorazio p. 3

Myths of Nonprofits

Ron Patenaude p. 3

The Cage Door Is Open

Cass Martinez p. 4

Brooklyn Fights Back

Bill Reed p. 4

Building Campus Community Through Organizing

Tina Phillips p. 3

Nuclear Re-licensing: a Great Opportunity to Create a Sustainable Energy Future

Deb Katz p. 7

Albuquerque Springtime

Amanda Veile p. 8

Socialist Women Mujeres Socialistas

Publication of the Socialist Party
Women's Commission

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Socialist Women welcomes articles,
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ABOUT THIS ISSUE ...

Community and workplace organiz-
ing is at the heart of a movement
for social change. What sustains our
efforts, as democratic socialists, is our
vision of a global society organized in a
fundamentally different way from that
of a capitalist society.

There are many documents that point
the way toward this goal. Two of these
resources are the Statement of Prin-
ciples and the Platform of the Socialist
Party-USA. Both enable us to measure
our organizing actions against the stan-
dards being set by democratic socialists
worldwide.

The following articles were written by
community activists representing a range
of political orientations and organizing
tactics, but with a common commitment
to defending the rights and meeting the
needs of the working class. In the hope
that someday we will unite around a
democratic socialist program, we invite
you to think about the organizing work
of our authors in the context of the fol-
lowing introduction to the 2006-2007
Socialist Party USA National Platform.
We think it is a statement that can help
guide and inspire us all.

*The Socialist Party stands for the abo-
lition of every form of domination and
exploitation, whether based on social class,*

*gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation,
or other characteristics.*

*We are committed to the transforma-
tion of capitalism through the creation
of a democratic socialist society based on
compassion, empathy, and respect, as well
as on the development of new social struc-
tures. Socialism will establish a new social
and economic order in which workers and
community members will take responsibil-
ity for and control of their interpersonal
relationships, their neighborhoods, their
local government, and the production and
distribution of all goods and services.*

*For these reasons we call for social own-
ership and democratic control of productive
resources, for a guarantee to all of the right
to participate in societal production, and
to a fair share of society's product, in accor-
dance with individual needs.*

*As we pursue a socialist transformation
of society, we join with others in making
radical demands on the existing system:
demands that challenge the basic assump-
tions of a capitalist market economy while
pointing the way to a new society.*

*Although reforms will not in themselves
bring about socialism, the fight for them
will advance the cause by demonstrating
the inherent limitations and injustice of the
capitalist system. As we build the socialist
movement, we organize around a platform
committed to our common and interdepen-
dent struggles and aspirations. ●*

Wayne State University
Detroit, MI
Aug 5 and 6, 2006
www.sp-usa.org/conference/

Community Organizing Can Start at Work

by Susan Dorazio

Workplace and community organizing is not necessarily an either-or proposition. By making use of all that we know about our life on the job, we can forge important links with other workers, and come together in our communities around projects and actions that confront common problems. This is a process critical to our lives and work as democratic socialists, on and off the job.

For example, in Western Massachusetts, we child care workers have been making a lot more contacts with other activists, with good results. These days, people in our communities seem not only more aware of the child care needs of young children and their families; but also of the basic rights of children and families, and of the dynamic between these needs and rights and those of child care workers. There is also much more consciousness about the role of societal factors, military spending in particular, in the deterioration of human services and public education.

What our coalition of workplace and community activists has come to realize about an organizing model that emphasizes the interdependence of economic, political, personal, and social issues is the importance of coming up with a variety of opportunities for people to get involved. This entails calling upon our own particular support network. Mine includes my union (UAW Local 2322), my Socialist Party local (Tom Mooney/Western Mass), the parent-staff child care advocacy committee where I work, and an ad hoc feminist-activist group I coordinate called the Connecticut Valley Coalition for Women's Lives. The cooperative effort of members of all these groups enhances the possibility that both short-term needs and long-term solutions will be addressed in ways that integrate issues, encourage analysis, and lead to a coherent program for social change.

A series of actions and events I helped organize this past Spring illustrates this approach. On March 8, for International Women's Day, the Coalition for Women's Lives sponsored a rally and

speaking-out that featured an organizer from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, talking about the intimidation and murders of women workers that have occurred there over the past 15 years. The first week of April, my union and my center's child care advocacy committee collaborated on a forum for The Week of the Young Child, featuring assessments by a teacher, a union organizer, a social worker, and a community activist as to how well "the village" is raising our children.

Soon after that, I and Betty Maloney, from the New York City branch of Radical Women, brought a socialist feminist perspective to the annual abortion rights/social justice conference at Hampshire College in Amherst, Mass. Our workshop on linking women's rights and workers' rights was well attended and well received. And on May Day, members of the Western Mass Local of the Socialist Party drove up to Brattleboro, Vermont, to join our Southern Vermont comrades in a lively celebration of International Workers' Day, and to support the candidacy for US Senate of Socialist Party member Peter Diamondstone.

All these events called for the immediate withdrawal of US troops from Iraq, an end to the exploitation of women and of workers throughout the world, a redirection of funds from military spending to domestic needs (including child care, health care, housing, and education), and independent political action.

As grueling as this progression of events turned out to be, I knew that many more people were connected to complex issues and exposed to a socialist analysis than if it had not happened, and that was a good feeling. So... look at your job, talk with people at work and in your community, form a coalition, and plan an action (or two, or three). This is one of the ways we will build a mass movement for democratic socialism. ●

Susan Dorazio is a child care worker and convener of the Socialist Party Women's Commission. She resides in Montague, Massachusetts.

Myths of the Nonprofits

by Ron Patenaude

At UAW Local 2322, my staff and I represent human service workers in such fields as daycare and early education, mental health, and mental retardation. Having worked ten years at Sisters of Providence Behavioral Health Hospital (SPBHS) in Holyoke, Massachusetts, before being elected president of my local, I am intimately familiar with the nonprofit field. As is my staff. As union organizers, we are concerned with the issues of how the nonprofit system is supposed to work, who it's supposed to serve, and who actually benefits from it.

In Massachusetts there are 28,000 organizations that have nonprofit status and that the Attorney General's office oversees. Since we as a society own them through our support in the form of tax exempt status and public funding, nonprofits have a responsibility to provide the services they claim to. We contribute to organizations through our personal donations and public funding to help segments of our society in need. One would hope that it would be the poor and suffering that benefit from this arrangement. Unfortunately that is not always the case.

In Massachusetts, nonprofit agencies employ 13% of the state workforce. That is nearly double the national average of 6.9%. Are our services superior to that of other states? I doubt it. I believe there might be a disproportionate number of management positions relative to direct care workers, demonstrating Paul Kevill's theory that the management class assists the ruling class in attaining more wealth.

In his book, *You Call This a Democracy?*, Kevill asserts that money flows up in our capitalist system through the ruling and management classes. The ruling class is about 1% of the population and controls 47% of the wealth, the management class about 19% of the population and 44% of the wealth, the middle class 20% of the population and only 8.3% the wealth, the working class 20% and just 2% of the wealth, with the dependent and working poor making up 40% of the population and a mere 1% of the wealth. According to Kevill, the ruling

Nonprofit, continued on p. 8

The Cage Door is Open

by Cass Martinez

1. A public utility movement grows up in response to high electric rates, the stolen pensions of Portland General Electric employees, the failure of the company to pay its taxes after having billed and collected said taxes from its customers, and the bankruptcy and criminality of the parent company, Enron. Two City Council members advocate the public purchase of PGE through eminent domain.

2. Many locations/days for farmers' markets in the state, the Chef's Collaborative (to get fresh organics, fresh line-caught fish for upscale restaurants), Oregon Country Beef (a co-op of ranchers seeking survival by switching to no-hormone beef), CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) programs: you buy an annual share of fruits/vegetables/meat/flowers from a specific farmer.

3. The local and national biodiesel movement, with 20% bio fuel/80% diesel available at retail pumps; Albina Fuel delivers a biodiesel/oil home heating mix.

4. Portland Peak Oil meets every Wednesday at St. Anthony's dining hall. The group assembled itself from the grassroots, exists to educate, and has no formal structure, so any prepared speaker can represent the group. This is a movement that has sprouted everywhere, from national curiosity and need.

5. The 9/11 group. The End Corporate Personhood group. The peace and justice committees of the downtown churches. The ministries involving themselves in unionization and work issues at Threemile Dairy, a corporate scofflaw in Boardman, Oregon. PCUN, a union and social movement for farmworkers and tree-planters and their families in Oregon.

6. Co-op groceries, co-op bookstores, co-op coffee shops.

Everywhere there are people working on projects designed to make life better. The Bicycle Alliance. The StreetRoots newspaper. The Ecotrust Building and its Tidepool newsletter.

I concede that Money is working enthusiastically to make life worse. But look, the cage door is open, and we have our backs to it, rattling the bars on the window.

The people of Portland, Oregon, and beyond are so intent on socialism that they are proceeding without the revolution.

Cass Martinez is a retired postal worker.

Brooklyn Fights Back

by Bill Reed

There's been a huge upsurge in community organizing in Brooklyn in the past 3 years because of a huge increase in very serious problems. In many sections of Brooklyn, and the rest of N.Y.C., expensive high-rise condos are being built with tremendous community opposition. This "development" means that large sections of the present communities are being destroyed. Private homes, apartments, much needed parking lots and small businesses that people have spent their lives building are being destroyed. Many of these real estate schemes are highly subsidized. City and state taxpayers are giving several hundreds of millions to some of the wealthiest companies on earth including the Mets and Yankees who will tear up neighborhoods to get new unneeded stadiums. In almost all of the new building, there has been almost total disregard for common sense or obeying any laws--especially safety, labor, or environmental laws. In the past year, four construction workers have been killed on these jobs in Brooklyn. Many have been hospitalized and neighbors near an unexpected illegal demolition were almost buried in bricks. Hundreds of neighbors have cracked walls and foundations. Developers have repeatedly broken underground gas lines, water pipes, sewage pipes, and electric lines knocking out service sometimes for days.

The fight back has been intense. People first responded by calling some city government office in charge of the particular problem, such as the Department of Buildings. In most cases the people quickly learned that the government response is a complete refusal to enforce the laws that exist to regulate or investigate problems. This means we have two sets of problems: the developers, and trying to get the government to enforce the laws.

Brooklyn, continued on p. 5

Brooklyn, continued

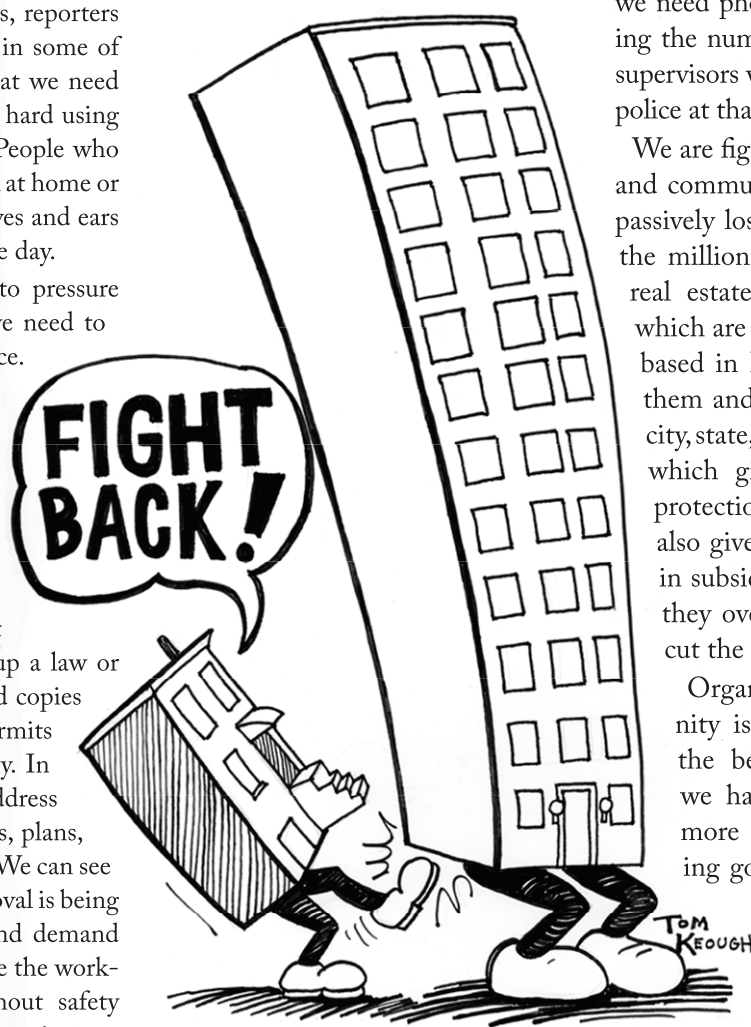
We only get justice when very large numbers of people are involved. The most important step is talking to friends and neighbors and getting everyone to talk to as many others as possible. This is done with door to door petitioning, block meetings, bigger public meetings, and letters being put in every mailbox.

In the more successful neighborhoods this evolved into phone trees, list serves, newsletters and web sites. Brooklyn has so many people that when a neighborhood is threatened all kinds of people are threatened: construction workers, architects, lawyers, photographers, reporters and even people who work in some of the government agencies that we need to deal with. We all worked hard using our skills and connections. People who are retired or folks who work at home or at the corner store are the eyes and ears of the community during the day.

To be effective we need to pressure government agencies and we need to have very specific evidence. This means that we need to learn about each agency. What are their laws, how do they operate, how are they supposed to operate, who can put pressure on them? A lot of this can now be learned on government web sites. When you look up a law or a specific permit, print dated copies of that web page because permits and laws can change rapidly. In NYC we can look up each address and see if it has any permits, plans, or legal problems on record. We can see if work such as asbestos removal is being done legally. We can call and demand that an inspector come to see the workers removing asbestos without safety equipment. We may not get an inspector to arrive but we can get a complaint number from the phone operator. We need this to file complaints against the agency if no inspector arrives.

If we get enough complaints against a builder, and inspections that result in violations issued, we can sometimes get a stop work order. We then

work to see that the stop work order is enforced. That gives us time to get zoning laws changed which prevents 12 story buildings from going up, even ones being started. This also helps in some law suits which would be useless if the building was already built before the case was heard. In our big city there are lots of city agencies so we can try many ways to deal with the problems. A big step is teaching your neighbors what you learn about a city agency, and about how to get



information or make them enforce a law. We can't waste time having each family learn everything on their own. We also need to compare notes since an agency can tell different people contradictory things.

We had many meetings and nobody wanted to waste time. The immediacy made people hurry along.

We needed a lot of very accurate evidence to show government officials. We needed photos, news clippings, and the exact dates of permits being issued. People living near many building sites recommend video cameras set up with the date and time showing on the images. We need names and numbers from inspectors or police who arrive at a site. In some precincts we need photos of police cars showing the numbers to contradict police supervisors who say that there was no police at that site.

We are fighting to keep our homes, and communities. We don't want to passively lose everything we have to the millionaires and big banks and real estate corporations--many of which are multinational companies based in Europe. We are fighting them and they are allied with the city, state, and federal governments which give them carte blanche protection from obeying laws and also give them billions of dollars in subsidies with our taxes while they overcrowd our schools and cut the school budgets.

Organizing in our community is making us all work to the best of our abilities and we have become smarter and more creative. We are making good friendships with our wonderful neighbors in the process. We are learning more than we could have imagined about how our govern-

ment works day to day and how to make some reforms and get enforcement of reform legislation. We will continue to build solidarity and to demand our rights. ●

Bill Reed is a community activist from Brooklyn, New York.

Building Campus Community Through Organizing

by Tina Phillips

Since graduating from my university I've continued to organize on my campus. Most people think that once you graduate you move on and get a job. Not so in my case. It has been very difficult to find meaningful work in the field I desire to work in. So rather than sitting on the sidelines as I look for employment, I decided to continue the work I had been doing on campus for the past two years. This work is meaningful to me, even if I'm not paid for it.

I was asked to co-advise the student group I founded: Alliance for Social Justice. I also decided to restart the Queer/Straight Alliance (QSA), which had folded the last year I was a student. I was able to recruit enough officers to restart the club by posting flyers around campus. Later the QSA made me their co-adviser as well. Through these two student organizations I have been able to do some important work on campus.

The first event that Alliance for Social Justice tackled was an event on "Not Your Soldier Day" in early 2005. We tabled with anti-military recruiting materials in front of the student union. Gregg, the president of the club, lay down in the walk way with a sign on his chest reading "Another dead college student sent to war." It was very effective.

Our next event was held around the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. We set up a table for outreach before the counter march to an anti-choice march being held in San Francisco. We put out coat hangers on the ground that featured notes attached to them that read in big black lettering "For coats, not abortions." We passed out women's health materials and flyers encouraging people to come out to the protest the following day. We received local press coverage from our town newspaper. Three members of the club and myself attended the march the next day. For one of the participants this was her first demonstration. Our acts on campus were proving to be effective and powerful.

The QSA put on a two-week event, unprecedented in campus history. It was titled "Out and Proud: a Queer Festival," and featured a kick off party, open mic, career event, and two film showings. It was the first time that the whole campus had come together to collaborate on

a queer-themed event, and many people came out to each other. The combined attendance of the two weeks of events was over three hundred people. It was a good demonstration of the fact that a small group of people can really make a difference. Our campus has been known to have an icy attitude toward queer people. So this event, although not outwardly political, was definitely a step forward for our community and visibility for queer people.

More recently, QSA took on the Day of Silence (www.dayofsilence.org) by handing out materials and putting up a mock grave display of people murdered in queer-related hate crimes. We also



piloted a queer paneling program that brings members of QSA into classrooms to talk about queer issues and answer questions. This has been our main way of raising awareness, doing outreach, and recruiting allies.

This quarter, Alliance for Social Justice and the Queer/Straight Alliance joined forces to demonstrate against the military recruiters on campus when they came to the career fair. We made our own signs and passed out information to inform people of what the military really offers you when you enlist.

Our protest was small in numbers, but it was high in spirit. We realize that we do not have the strength that UC Santa Cruz has, as they have effectively shut military recruiters out of their campus altogether. We are proud of the fact that we even show opposition at all. It's a

fine achievement for our campus and it's something we celebrate.

Although we've encountered some set backs as student organizations, we persevere. Recruiting is an ongoing challenge. It is very difficult to get students involved in activities on campus when they are so busy going to school, working, and being with their families. We know that just our visibility and our actions will attract people as we go along. We do not fear being small because we are dedicated people who find pleasure in our activities and each other. We also know it makes an impact. A small impact is better than no impact at all. Occasionally, we encounter some interpersonal conflicts. There is conflict in all organizations. We learn conflict-resolution skills and how to better understand and work with each other through these groups.

Campus organizing is a very worthwhile endeavor. It is tough to get apathetic people sleep walking through life to pay attention and think sometimes. However, it's rewarding to raise issues on campus that would not otherwise be talked about. It's also very rewarding to find and work with others who share similar values with you and have common goals. We hope we drift into the consciousness of our campus community and make it richer and more diverse. We feel our actions are worthy in and of themselves as testaments to the power of transformation. We see our university slowly changing before our very eyes and we know we are a part of that positive change.

We want our campus to be more than just a place to go to class and get a degree. We want our university to be a place where people fully engage and form an active learning community. We feel we are well on our way toward this end. We are building a community of compassion that cares for its fellow human beings. It's truly a sight to behold and worthy of experiencing. ●

Tina Phillips is a young activist organizing in the Bay Area of Northern California, and a member of the Socialist Party National Committee. She has a BA degree in Social Justice and is looking for work in the non-profit field.

Nuclear Re-licensing: a great Opportunity to Create a Sustainable Energy Future

by Deb Katz

The 34 year old Vermont Yankee Nuclear Reactor (VY) in Vernon, Vermont, is one of five Northeast nuclear power plants owned by the Entergy Corporation. The public's concerns about daily radioactive emissions, the lack of adequate evacuation plans, and the possibilities of an accident or terrorist attack led to the formation of the Citizens Awareness Network in 1991. These concerns remain ignored by the Vermont Public Safety Board, the governor and the legislature despite massive demonstrations, community referendums, and legal initiatives. While the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) approved a 20% power increase (called an "uprate" by the nuclear power industry), and is eager to approve a 20-year license extension without an Independent Safety Assessment or an adequate evacuation plan, town and state officials act helpless.

The pending uprate, daily radioactive releases, and increasing despair and hopelessness engendered by the NRC and Entergy combined to ignite the first non-violent civil disobedience direct action in November 2005. Each month since then, CAN has organized affinity groups of five to eleven women and men, and has supported an array of creative actions at Entergy headquarters. For example, in February 2006, New England Peace Pagoda monks and nuns led over 125 walkers 3.5 miles through downtown Brattleboro to Entergy's headquarters. In April 2006, to demonstrate the danger of radiation and the lack of security at VY, six women, including the indomitable 87 year old Frances Crowe, drove to the plant entrance in broad daylight, unloaded a truck-full of life-sized homemade effigies, placed them next to Entergy's sign, and left without being challenged. Recently, a 3-day fast commemorated the 20th anniversary of Chernobyl. These actions are strengthening the public's resolve to end VY's license in 2012.

It is essential that people realize that only they can change the course of history. We have a great opportunity to transform energy production in New England, close reactors, and create a sustainable energy future. Finally heed-



Left to right, Hattie Nestel, Brother Temm Bickel, Brother Toby Keyes at Wells Fountain in Brattleboro on April 26, 2006, the 20th anniversary of Chernobyl.

ing the coordinated efforts of a coalition of environmental and anti-nuke organizations, Vermont state legislators passed Bill S.124 requiring a legislative vote, by July 2008, on license extension. Additionally, Massachusetts residents are petitioning the Attorney General and the state legislature to amend the power contract with the national grid in 2007 to disconnect VY.

It will take persistent grassroots organizing and direct action to keep the Vermont legislature accountable, and to maintain the momentum of the anti-nuke movement. To accomplish these goals, monthly trainings, known as "Nukes 101", prepare people for canvassing and for leading information sessions. Maps and other CAN literature are distributed at local events and town gatherings in Vermont and Massachusetts. Documentary film showings on various nuclear issues generate much discussion. Our team of activists and volunteers are spreading information about what is wrong with nuclear power and how our actions can create a sustainable energy future for our communities.

As we work to shut down Vermont Yankee, we must lobby for state and federal initiatives to implement conservation and energy efficient technologies that will reduce our energy needs and provide safe, affordable and sustainable energy.

Our vision statement clearly represents the will of the people. "We envision a future of safety, prosperity, and health for all where people generate electricity in their own homes and communities; local energy production creates local jobs; renewable energy is integrated into all of our buildings--our homes, businesses, schools and public facilities; it is easy for everyone to access sustainable and affordable energy sources; clean, efficient energy use is standard practice. Family farms and locally owned businesses are the backbone of our communities, and we have what we need to provide for our future."

Please join CAN and support our ongoing work. We can be reached at Citizens Awareness Network PO Box 83, Shelburne Falls, Ma. 01370 www.nukebusters.org <<http://www.nukebusters.org/>> or email can@nukebusters.org, or call 413-339-5781 ●

Deb Katz, the Executive Director of CAN, is a mother, social worker and community organizer in Western Massachusetts. She has traveled to Utah, Nevada, and South Carolina, participating in nuclear waste protest tours and demonstrations with local organizers. Along with other CAN members, Deb functions as a pro se litigator for the organization in NRC interventions.



Socialist Women Mujeres Socialistas

Summer 2006

Nonprofit, continued from p. 3

class maintains the management class so that they will make decisions that will channel even more money to the top.

I think that much of what he presents is applicable to nonprofit and charitable areas as well as for-profit entities. Nonprofit managers often have very generous salary and benefit packages way out of line with what direct care workers make. A director at even a relatively small nonprofit child care or human service agency typically makes a six figure salary while the direct care workers aren't even provided a living wage.

Healthcare is one predominantly "nonprofit" system that has a large impact on society financially and is ripe for exploitation and abuse. One example is the hiring of consultants to stretch the rules. My former employer, Sisters of Providence Behavioral Health Hospital (SPBHS), hired a consulting group to help them "optimize" their intake process so that they could charge an additional \$2,000 per admission.

Another inappropriate use of our tax dollars and contributions are the tens of thousands of dollars nonprofits spend on antiunion law firms. Almost all of the agencies we deal with hire lawyers. SPBHS spent \$135,000 on the antiunion consulting firm, the Burke Group, out of Malibu, CA, to fight an organizing drive at a sister facility called Brightside for Families and Children. In another instance, the YWCA of Western Mass has spent \$115,000 over two years to fight the union; and the Hampshire Educational Collaborative, with whom we've been in negotiations, has spent \$92,000 with the same antiunion law firm as the YWCA.

Politicians often treat these situations as they would any other fight between the business interests and the workers'

interests. They pontificate on how they believe in workers' rights, but they can't tell an organization how to spend their money. Politicians rarely seem to care about how these funds are used even though they are often tax-payer and contributor funds.

In the experience of our union, the operation of nonprofits is often blatantly at odds with their ostensible altruism. The CEO of Catholic Health East (CHE), which claims the Catholic Church of North America as their sponsoring organization, makes about a million per year while CHE conveniently ignores church teachings on the rights of workers and labor. My former CEO at SPBHS makes over \$700,000 per year, having received over 285% in raises in 8 years. Our union members fared less well, with about a 50% increase in the base wages during that same period. And money that could have been spent on care has gone into the pockets of management instead.

This situation is not unique to these few organizations, but endemic in the nonprofit industry. The Washington Post documented these abuses in an article, "Tax Abuse Rampant in Nonprofits, IRS Says", June 5, 2005. Yet our politicians bury their heads in the sand, fearful they will upset their contributors who spend millions on lobbyists and on personal contributions to these politicians' election campaigns. ●

Ron Patenaude is president of UAW Local 2322 in Western Massachusetts. He has also served on the State CAP (Community Action Program) Council, and was chair of the Massachusetts Civil Rights Committee, working on domestic-partner benefits and marriage equality, along with more traditional civil rights issues.

Albuquerque Springtime

by Amanda Veile

*You can build bombs or flip burgers,
It's hard to make a living in Albuquerque
these days.*

The west is not so wild anymore,

*We water our lawns, as we suck the
desert dry,*

*And kill it slowly with the weight of our
pavement.*

I drink coffee on my front porch,

*Sounds of war, muffled, in the background
of my mind.*

*I remember the riot squad, fumbling,
uncertain.*

I remember the veteran's face,

*When he pulled over to tell me a
thing or two.*

The war is not in my backyard.

The war is a world away.

We carry its burden with discomfort-

We are opposed to the war!

But it reflects who we are.

*I woke up with a strange man on my
swamp cooler,*

And the police surrounding my house.

They told me to stay inside.

Their helicopter scared my cat.

*I went back to bed, having already dis-
covered mortality.*

*I am accomplished and stubbornly
independent.*

I know how to hold a wounded man.

*I'll take care of it, but who will take
care of me?*

When will someone hold me,

*Not out of sexual desire, but out of com-
passion?*

Saving the world used to seem like fun,

I even knew just how to do it.

*I didn't know about endless jungle rains,
or about betrayal,*

*Or loneliness or self-doubt, or the
limitations of science.*

*I take care of myself because no one
else will. ●*