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PUBLIC INTEREST

Guatemalan Voices: The People's Story

by Guy Burton

Those who derive their livelihood from the land comprise the majority of Guatemala's population. Land ownership in Guatemala is among the most inequitable in Latin America; it is the fundamental barrier to achieving a just society.

During Guatemala's "Ten Years of Spring," 1944-1954, urban and agricultural workers were the most organized in Guatemala's history. At the end of the period peasants were beginning to benefit from the land reform of President Jacobo Arbenz. But in the aftermath of the CIA-organized coup that overthrew Arbenz, the agrarian reform was reversed and land returned to the United Fruit Company and other previous owners. The trade union and peasant movements were virtually destroyed and many leaders killed or exiled. The pattern of land ownership has remained the same since that time and today two percent of the farms own 72 percent of the land.

In Guatemala today, despite the unimaginable government violence against the population, grassroots organizations are mobilizing once again for their basic economic and democratic rights. Agricultural workers and landless peasants are marching to demand land; workers are demanding wage increases and union recognition; slum dwellers are calling for decent housing, electricity and potable water; families of the disappeared are demonstrating for the return of their loved ones. All these contribute to a reemerging popular movement.

As part of its Second Annual Campaign for Human Rights in Guatemala, the Committee in Solidarity with the Central American People

(CISCAP) is sponsoring the appearance of a person who is uniquely qualified to speak about these promising new developments. Francisco Cali—Cakchiquel Indian from Chimaltenango, Guatemala—will be in Eugene as part of a national public speaking tour called "Guatemalan Voices: The People's Story." He is a leader of a regional Guatemalan peasant organization (the Peasant Committee of the Highlands) and has been in exile for about five years. He is currently a member of the Guatemalan Indian Working Group (along with Rigoberta Menchu) which participates in international forums on indigenous peoples' rights in Geneva and at the United Nations in New York.

In two Eugene appearances, Mr. Cali will speak on efforts to form an alliance between poor Indian and Ladino peasants, the struggle to maintain indigenous cultures in Guatemala, and the current popular movement to obtain land and land reform. His first appearance will be a talk on Thursday, October 29, 7:30 pm at First Congregational Church. The next day, Friday, October 30, at 7 pm, he'll be guest of honor at a potluck, co-sponsored by the University of Oregon Native American Student Union and CISCAP, at the Longhouse, 17th and Columbia St., Eugene. Both events are free and open to the public. For more information call CISCAP at 485-1755.

Pumpkin Contest

This year your Halloween pumpkin could make you a prize winner. Red Barn Groceries, 357A Van Buren Street, is having a pumpkin carving contest. First, second and third prizes are \$100, \$50 and \$25 respectively.

Get out your knives and your creativity and get your pumpkin to the Red Barn by October 28. That's the deadline for all entries. Customers will vote for the winners and ballots will be counted on October 31 in the parking lot.

Any size pumpkin and any style are OK, and all ages may enter. No store employees will be eligible.

AIDS Walk-a-thon

The Willamette River AIDS Walk-a-thon on Sunday, November 1, is a community-wide fundraiser for AIDS care and practical support. It will involve scores of people from all walks of life in Lane County. There are currently an estimated 241 cases of AIDS statewide and about 42,000 nationwide.

Proceeds from the walkathon will go directly to Shanti in Oregon, a regional volunteer based non-profit organization headquartered in Eugene. Shanti provides practical and emotional support services to persons living with AIDS/ARC and their loved ones.

The event will begin at 11 am with registration and a giant outdoor aerobics rally. The 10K (6.2 miles) walkathon starts at noon and will follow a leisurely loop along the river path beginning and ending at Alton Baker Park. A celebration with refreshments for all participants and supporters will conclude the walkathon in late afternoon.

For information and registration, telephone Willamette River AIDS Walkathon at 344-0563.

LETTERS

Congratulations!

Congratulations on five well-deserved years of success and growth with *What's Happening!*

In the two years I have now had the pleasure of being in Eugene and working with the arts on a daily basis, I have been continually delighted with your timely, appropriate and sensitive approach to the arts. Your coverage often goes beyond reportage by providing the nurturing insight and sustaining recognition that is so vital to artists and to creative endeavor.

Admittedly, *What's Happening* doesn't give all the coverage I would like to see for the arts. Nonetheless, it is, I believe, currently the finest source of arts reviews and reportage available in our community. And I believe your publication will continue to be extremely important for the arts in the Eugene area because it has a tradition of sensing the unique fabric that binds the arts and the people of a community together.

And, of course, I appreciate the special link that has been forged, through *Arts Calendar* and *Pacifica*, between the Arts Council and *What's Happening*. I hope that these not only continue to thrive, but that we will find more arts enhancing projects to jointly develop.

As *What's Happening* expands in size and distribution, as is inevitable, its importance to the arts will increase. For that reason I often find myself urging others to support your efforts in whatever way is possible. Don't hesitate to contact me at any time if you think I can be of help.

So, thank you! And spirited wishes for the next Big Five.

—Douglas Beauchamp
 Executive Director
 Lane Regional Arts Council

Riverfront Picnic Successful

The Second Annual Riverfront Picnic (Saturday, Oct. 10) was a GREAT success! The co-sponsors—ASUO, the Survival Center, Land, Air & Water (LAW), and the Student Cooperative Association—would like to thank the musicians, Shumba, Beat Soup, and others very much for their great musical spirit.

We would also like to thank the following local businesses for their generous and much-appreciated food donations: The Bagel Factory, The Beanery, Cafe Central, Genesis Juice Co-op, Humble Bagel, the Kestrel Cafe, Monster Cookie, New Frontier Market, Oasis Fine Foods, Organically Grown Co-op, Prince Puckler's, Sam's To Go, Springfield Creamery, Sundance Natural Foods, Surata Soyfoods, The Tofu Palace, Vinnie's Pizza, Wildtime Foods, and the many others who wanted to help but were unable to at this time.

We would also like to thank the following individuals without whose valuable energy this event would not have happened: Kasey Brooks, Nan Cohen, Rick Gold, Nancy Kincaid, Katherine Larsen, Tom Lester, and Mike Walker. Thanks also to all those people who showed up to share this wonderful day and event in the Riverfront natural area (playing fields) which we are all trying to protect.

We especially like to thank: *What's Happening*, KVAL & KLCC for their important coverage of this community event.

—Richard Gold

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