

IMMIGRATION, from page 5

workers from Mexico to the central California valley and the Northwest to perform what was called “stoop labor.”

PCUN’s Ramírez said that now, as then, farmworkers must overcome huge barriers to become successful.

“Farmworkers are America’s most important workers because we’re the ones that put food on the table, but yet we’re not afforded the same rights,” Ramírez said. “We don’t have collective bargaining rights, paid vacation, paid holidays, seniority.”

“Christmastime is coming, and we’re going to have Christmas dinner, and we’re not going to think about where the food came from and who picked it. It’s out of sight, out of mind,” he said. “We have lived comfortably because farmworkers are paying the price.”

Reyes Pacheco giggled when recalling non-Latinos who joined laborers in the fields. Many lasted as little as a half-hour, she said.

“You can make good money, actually, doing farm work,” Moss said. “It’s just a matter if a typical American worker will do that manual labor.”

While migrant farmworkers are a population that tends to stay out of the spotlight – and farmers are hardly eager to talk about using undocumented labor – it’s possible the ICE crackdown has contributed to a shrinking farmworker labor pool and crop losses in Oregon.

Reyes Pacheco said six or seven workers who usually make the wreaths aren’t around this year.

“With the strawberries, before, there were 90 (workers), but this year, there were only 40,” she said. “A lot of berries were lost.”

Low unemployment and a strong economy may also be factors. Reyes Pacheco doesn’t pretend to have the answers, but she knows work can set you free.

“I don’t know why Mexicans work so hard, or why people don’t like us. I just wish some of those people who are so

critical would spend just one hour doing what we do to understand how indispensable we are.”

Outside a tiny town called Gales Creek, down a gravel road tucked behind tall stalks of corn, a few dozen people gathered under a structure that recalled a Mesoamerican palapa – an open-air, thatched-roof shelter.

They were there for an event, organized by Forest Grove-based Adelante Mujeres, featuring “meet the farmer” chats with immigrants who work in agriculture. Margarita Reyes Pacheco was one of them.

“She’s been the biggest producer of all,” Liliana Morgan said about Reyes Pacheco. Morgan is a sales distributor and marketing coordinator for Adelante Mujeres.

The event was about food and agriculture. But it also hinted at a growing “sanctuary” movement with deep roots in Oregon. In 1987, Oregon became the first state to pass laws barring state and local agencies from asking about an individual’s immigration status or disclosing information to federal officials, except in some circumstances.

“Part of the role of Adelante Mujeres is to function as interpreters – not specifically language, but experience, realities,” said Bridget Cooke, co-founder and executive director of the social service nonprofit. “Because talking about immigration status is so taboo, so risky, because immigrants are pushed underground, therefore we miss these incredible stories of courage, ambition, desire, hope that human drive and spirit bring.”

Cooke said the recent Immigration and Customs Enforcement crackdowns contribute to “toxic stress” for many immigrants, documented or not.

“It’s as if we use immigration as a tug of war,” Cooke said. “What if we had an honest conversation about this?”

A Rambling Thought

by Aileen McPherson

Who decided the words, “In God we Trust?”
Should be on our country’s currency?

I hear so many people exclaim, We live in a Christian Nation, a God Fearing Nation, however, I read the Bible and I know from this book that this God said Thou shalt have NO other gods before me and make NO graven images before me.

Yet these words are on our currency. Now, does this not mean that by doing that, you are placing money higher than God? Or maybe, the true God worshiped is money.

Don’t get me wrong, I use currency, cash, debit, barter, trade, and I’ve used credit, but I never Loved money or made it my life goal to accumulate wealth.

Because if you’re not in debt by having all the newest things and blings, you’re not good enough, not a good person, not prosperous, not happy, and that is all I seem to see and hear anymore.

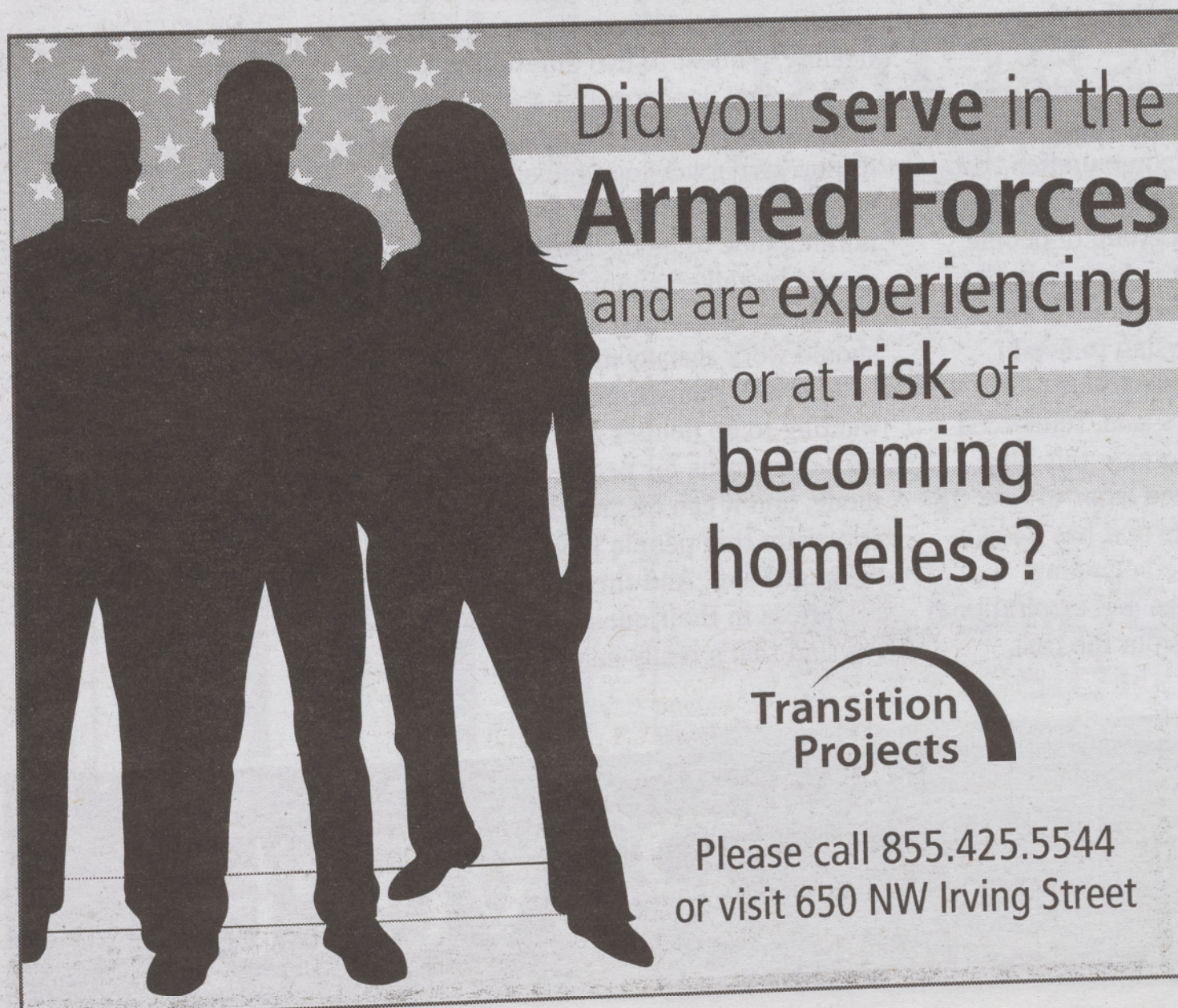
I have never understood this form of lustful avarice, a gluttony, consuming everything at any cost.

What happened to living comfortably?

Great Smoking Mirror

by Bryant King

Through the smoke
I see looking back
Another reflection of me.
Mirror of my inner-self
Who are you
If I am me?
Mirror of my outer-self
What do others see?
Is it truth in my
Human vanity?



Did you serve in the
Armed Forces
and are experiencing
or at risk of
becoming
homeless?

Transition
Projects

Please call 855.425.5544
or visit 650 NW Irving Street



How do you share health?

At **Health Share**, we believe good health is more than what happens inside your doctor’s office. Good health starts in your community and includes staying active, eating healthy food and getting regular check-ups.

Share your healthy habits with family and friends. We can all have better health when we share it together.

health share

Better health together.

www.healthshareoregon.org