

SEEKING VALIDATION

One can find an argument which validates virtually, any position. No matter how righteous one's cause is, the degree to which we fault others in justification of our own position directly reflects the degree to which we not only disempower ourselves, but also the cause we hold dear.

Dylan Freeman
Eugene

GETTING GOATS

Thank you for printing the nice article (2/17) about our raw goat milk. Over the years we have sold several goats to decrease our goat herd size. After talking to other goat herd owners, many of us have decided to screen the buyers. There are too many ignorant would-be goat owners.

Contrary to popular belief, goats DO need access to water. They also need shelter — a

simple lean-to can be sufficient, except in harsh winter weather.

Tethering goats out to eat brush is not necessary and leaves them wide open to being the prey of large predators. Tethered goats have been slaughtered by cougar and stray dogs even at the city limits of Eugene. Goats are sensitive yet hardy, industrious and entertaining, as well as very intelligent. Simple, solid fences are usually adequate to curtail

their wandering. Don't expect a blackberry hedge to be a decent fence. They will eat their way through in a short time.

Goats do love to eat brush, but their diets need to be supplemented with a small amount of grain and a mineralized (selenium) salt block. Above all, keep them away from rhododendron, dry or green. It is very poisonous to goats.

They should *never* be a lone animal.

Kumbaya Dammit BY DAN CAROL

Rebuilding Labor

An open letter to SEIU President Andy Stern

No, I am not weighing in with any thoughts on the internal "future of the labor movement" debate roiling on in Vegas this week. You think I am crazy? That's not my gig. But I did want to flag some emerging, *massive* opportunities that SEIU, and all unions, can capture in areas that aren't traditionally the province of labor. I'm talking about building the union halls, community centers and even the malls of the 21st century.

Because right now, as you well know, Wal-Mart is winning.

Now don't misinterpret my message: It's awesome that you are seeding smart bi-national organizing strategies, embracing online technology, leading the charge against Wal-Mart, targeting younger workers and immigrant populations on the rise, and aggressively pushing the labor movement to do more organizing.

I hate to add to your to-do list, but now is the critical time to have a serious re-examination of what exactly "organizing" is. Because it's time to get busy with non-traditional organizing models designed to develop deep citizen/worker engagement strategies and build sustainable new models to refuel worker advocacy for the next 50 years.

In the growing free-lance economy of some 10 million independent workers and 25 million part-timers, workplaces are no longer where as many people gather. They gather at the movie theater, on the soccer field, or in their church, or online. Worse, they don't gather at all. They cluster in their own apartments. They retreat to the safety of the walls they know. They home school.

They also turn off — after all, the average American is bombarded by about 4,000 marketing messages a day. So who wants to be sold on joining anything, let alone a "union"?

Given these trends, unions will keep declining in size and influence unless they use the most sophisticated techniques to market and deliver on a vision of community broader than simply workplace organizing and better benefits.

So how do we reach "non-traditional" audiences and start a conversation about career, or college, or child care, let alone the need for workers to organize?

I'm talking about a Purple Bank to match Wells Fargo, the appeal of Apple's iPod stores, creating places for mixing together — and mixing music. A new union hall that combines child care and after school programs and job training and urban theater — all in one.

I'm thinking about a reverse AARP model — where instead of reaching out to 50-year-olds, we offer a hand out to new parents with support services and then grow a



trusted relationship with thankful parents from there.

I'm arguing for patience — because sweaty palms, "paleese, join the union" marketing will scare most folks off. We can't rush these conversations until they're ripe.

I'm envisioning a new union/SEIU media and membership network — constructed in partnership with community technology centers in 140 cities, in tandem with mayors like John Street who want community-owned wireless Internet access rather than cable companies to be the last mile to citizens, with new voices from the streets and the barrios who'll learn the ropes in your studios. Say the word and we'll sell the music and the gear on a jacked-up Purple Ocean internet radio system operating at a fraction of the cost of the old UAW radio network.

In other words, let's not just reorganize the AFL, let's re-brand it, dammit.

Think about home shopping networks and imagine a Progressive QVC. Think about our own purple-clad "Avon" ladies and gentlemen going door-to-door for more than just voter turnout and a traditional canvass.

To make it happen fast, I'd suggest partnerships with Rodale, Costco or other progressive companies. Did you know Rodale alone has a lifestyle database of over 20 million subscribers?

We can't really fight Wal-Mart without offering serious shopping and lifestyle alternatives — and that means corporate partners and new capital strategies. Any company that wants to sell to your members will need to sign on to a new Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval, a hybrid union bug, evincing their support for a living wage and Starbucks-level health care or whatever fundamental fairness and open dialogue can bring.

This stuff is a little fuzzy and you will need to experiment and fail. But can anyone argue that a \$2,000-per-member acquisition cost for a \$300-per-year union member that pays off in seven years is a business model that can work well all by itself?

This new union hall/community center/media hub model isn't hard to imagine. Local 1199 in New York looks that way now. But now we need to do it in 150 more cities, creating not only community media centers but urban-labor-environmental and business alliances around community economics, clean energy jobs and new capital strategies driven by Steel, Solidarity and the SEIU.

So no matter how things turn out in Vegas, let's not just fight about how much "organizing" bucks are spent and who controls them, but what they are spent on.

And let's remember what sometimes 16th Street has forgotten over the years in saying no to exploring new terrain: The perfect is the enemy of the good.

Dan Carol is founding partner of CTSO, a rehabilitation center for paleo-liberal causes, based in Eugene and Washington, D.C.



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SWIZZLE

EUGENE'S BOOZE, BAR & NIGHTLIFE ISSUE

NEXT WEEK!

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