

# EL OBSERVADOR

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## Five Years Of Fighting For Worker's Rights!

WOC Convention And Celebration To Be Held December 12

The Workers' Organizing Committee (WOC) will hold its annual Membership Convention and Community Celebration on December 12, 1998. A membership meeting will be held from 4-5 PM. The entire community is invited to the celebration, which starts at 6:30 PM and ends at 11 PM. The event will be held in their new location, 722/734 East Burnside Street. The convention celebrates five years of active organizing for workers' rights, and will include updates on current campaigns, awards, food, activities for children, a raffle, music and entertainment, and dancing. About 250 people are expected to attend.

In advance of the Convention, WOC will hold an Open House on December 10, 1998 from 7-9 PM. Current and potential members are invited to learn about the work we are doing in the community and opportunities for involvement.

The Worker's Organizing Committee is an organization run by and for low-wage workers in the Portland metro area. WOC is funded through grassroots contributions and by several foundations, including the Catholic Campaign for Human Development. Their mission is to improve living and working conditions for low-wage workers through dynamic organizing, leadership development,

and the promotion of solidarity and understanding between different groups of people. WOC is an outgrowth of the Hotel Workers Organizing Committee, which was founded in 1993.

Two special guests have been invited to entertain at the convention and celebration. Los Jornaleros del Norte is a 6 person musical group from Los Angeles composed of day laborers. The band composes much of their own music, writing about their experiences as day laborers and immigrants. The music is lively, insightful and reflects the diversity of Latin American cultures from which they come. The band also represents a new way of organizing, using their highly accessible music to motivate and educate people around the issues that day laborers face. This will be the first time that Los Jornaleros del Norte will perform in Portland.

United Voices is a youth group that performs spoken word, poetry, rap and traditional dance. The performance group is part of the American Friends Service Committee's Latin American/Asian-Pacific youth leadership development program, and provides a positive avenue for communication around and involvement in different social and political issues.



The Los Jornaleros del Norte band was invited to perform at the Membership Convention and Committee Celebration on December 12.

## Hispanic Labor Force Shows Significant Gains

**Salem**—A groundbreaking report released today by the Oregon Employment Department shows tremendous growth in Oregon's Hispanic work force, and significant contributions to the state's economy by Latinos. The first-of-its-kind report, Hispanics in Oregon's Workforce 1998, details employment, income, education, unemployment, and related information to describe the Latino work force in the state.

Oregon's Latino population grew by 66 percent between 1990 and 1997 compared with less than 15 percent growth in the state's total population. During that same time, the Hispanic labor force in Oregon more than doubled to 132,000, while the total labor force grew by only 16 percent. Oregon's Latino population is much younger than the total population with 62 percent under age 30 compared to 41 percent for all Oregonians.

Latinos made up just over three percent of the Oregon labor force at the beginning of the 1990's, but jumped to more than 7.6 percent in 1997.

The Employment Department report finds the growing Hispanic population is contributing to the economy in several ways. For example, the buying power of the population is about \$1 billion in the Portland-Salem area alone. Also, new businesses catering to Latinos are being established in the state. And Hispanics continue to make major contributions to Oregon's \$3.1 billion-a-year agricultural industry.

Agriculture was the dominant industry for Latino employment in 1990, but by 1997 it trailed manufacturing and trade. Since 1990, Hispanic employment outside the farm sector has increased

by 165 percent, while Hispanic employment in farm-related occupations increased by 67 percent.

Latinos are moving into jobs requiring higher levels of skills and education, but an employment gap remains in professional, executive, administrative and managerial occupations. These occupations represented 26 percent of employment for all Oregonians in 1997, but only five percent of Hispanic employment. Another gap exists within the government sector, which has three percent of Hispanic employment versus 13 percent of all Oregonians.

1990 Census data showed Hispanics had per capita personal income of \$6,996 in 1989 compared to the all-Oregonian level of \$13,418. In 1996, there was little difference between household income among Hispanics and all Oregonians, with 49 percent of Hispanic households earning less than \$25,000 compared to 48 percent for all households. However, household size among Hispanics is larger than that for all Oregonians.

Although some labor force-related gaps have narrowed between Latinos and the population as a whole, certain differences remain great. For example, Oregon's Hispanic high school dropout rate was 15.7 percent during the 1996-97 school year while the all-student rate was 6.7 percent. A similar difference occurred over the past several years.

In addition, the unemployment rate for Hispanics consistently was above that of the labor force as a whole over the past seven years. In 1997, 7.6 percent of the Oregon labor force was Hispanic, while almost 11 percent of the unemployed were Hispanic.

## Festival de Navidad

The Miracle Theatre Group, the Northwest's largest Hispanic arts and culture organization, presents its 10<sup>th</sup> annual Festival de Navidad, a collage of holiday sketches and songs sharing the joy, revelry, and solemnity of Christmas. Performances are Fridays and Saturdays at 8 PM and Sundays at 2 PM from December 4 through the 20<sup>th</sup>. Miracle Theatre is located at 525 SE Stark St., between Grand and

Sixth. Admission is \$10. For reservations or further information, call 503/236-7253.

Inspired by the late Rubén Sierra's conceptual work, Voices of Christmas, a show he created while artistic director of Seattle's Group Theater, the Festival de Navidad follows the journey of Tony, who is on a quest for the meaning of Christmas. As he searches for understanding, torn between images of cold commercialism

and saintly selflessness, he encounters a medley of individuals, each revealing a unique cultural perspective of the holiday. The Festival de Navidad is a delightful and passionate synthesis of outlooks from people of different ages, genders, ethnic and geographic backgrounds, helping Tony to find the common ground that unites humanity for the holidays.

During the Festival,

Miracle will be collecting donations to aid the people of Honduras, in need from the devastation of Hurricane Mitch in November.

Herlinda Martinez, from Honduras, is organizing the drive to support Honduran artists in their efforts to rebuild the morale and spirit of their countrymen.

There will be information about the benefiting organization in the theatre lobby during the run of the show.

## Con o sin el PRD debe reanudarse la legislación indígena

Integrante de la Comisión de Concordia y Pacificación (Cocopa) y de la subcomisión encargada de elaborar el dictamen sobre la Ley de Derechos y Cultura Indígenas, el senador panista Benigno Aladro advirtió que los trabajos para legislar en esa materia no pueden seguir más tiempo detenidos.

Si el PRD insiste en su negativa a participar en la

elaboración del dictamen, PRI y PAN tienen que valorar la posibilidad de discutir y aprobar por mayoría la reforma constitucional indígena, agregó.

Hizo notar que ese punto debe definirse en la reunión programada para el próximo 17 de septiembre, en la que los coordinadores parlamentarios discutirán los avances en torno de las iniciativas sobre los

pueblos indios y sus derechos.

Aladro resaltó que incluso en la pasada reunión de diputados y senadores con el secretario de Gobernación, los representantes del Ejecutivo y el Legislativo acordaron que de no lograr el consenso en los temas de la agenda nacional, buscarían la aprobación de las leyes por mayoría, lo que, a su juicio, tendría que aplicarse en el caso de las iniciativas

indígenas.

Dijo luego que difiere del planteamiento perredista de que legislar en estos momentos sobre los derechos de las etnias interfiera en las negociaciones entre Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) y el gobierno. 'Son dos asuntos distintos, porque las propuestas no sólo son para Chiapas y sus etnias, sino para todos los pueblos indios del país.'

## Buscan a miembros del ERPI que emboscaron a policías

Agentes judiciales y militares que integran la Base de Operaciones Mixtas (BOM) asentada en el municipio de Ayutla empezaron la búsqueda de los presuntos guerrilleros que ayer emboscaron a policías de Tecoaapa, con resultado de dos uniformados muertos y dos heridos. Los operativos incluyen la instalación de retenes en la región.

El director de la Policía Judicial del Estado (PJE), Marcos Román Bahena, confirmó hoy la muerte del director de Seguridad Pública

de Tecoaapa, José Carmen Nava Carranza, y la del segundo comandante de la Policía Preventiva municipal, Raúl Diéguez Teresa, en tanto que resultaron gravemente heridos los agentes Sidronio Ayodoro Roque y Alfredo Gómez Aquino.

Los policías fueron emboscados la tarde del viernes presuntamente por miembros del Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo Insurgente (ERPI), a la altura de la comunidad de Las Mesas, cuando regresaban de un operativo.

Román Bahena dijo que "aunque

existen indicios de que si fueron ellos (el ERPI) los que llevaron a cabo esa acción", aún no puede adjudicarse al grupo guerrillero el ataque.

Señalo que para dar con los responsables de la emboscada, la Policía Judicial Federal y la del estado, así como grupos especiales del Ejército Mexicano de la BOM asentada en Ayutla, peinan la zona e instalaron retenes en los principales caminos, en busca del grupo armado. En tanto que los grupos de judiciales con sedes en los municipios de Florencio Villareal,

San Marcos y Ayutla también realizan investigaciones por separado.

En las declaraciones ministeriales de los policías preventivos sobrevivientes, se asienta que la emboscada ocurrió a las seis y media de la tarde de ayer, cuando regresaban de un recorrido por la comunidad de Chacalapa, y en el tramo de la carretera federal Tecoaapa-Chilpancingo, entre las comunidades de El Limón y Las Mesas, unos diez sujetos armados, vestidos con ropa café, les dispararon, y en el lugar quedaron casquillos calibre 7.62 de rifles AK-47.