

July/Aug U.S. Immigration Alert!

A Monthly Newsletter from National Immigrant Solidarity Network

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No Immigrant Bashing! Support Immigrant Rights!

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Updates on Civil Liberties and Immigrant Rights

National Immigration Forum

August 4, 2005

URL: <http://www.immigrationforum.org>

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IG Detention Audit: As you may know, the Inspector General (IG) of DHS has been conducting an audit of five detention facilities housing immigrants. Advocates continue to track/identify concerns with the audit. In response to these concerns, the IG has modified its public flyer about the audit to include a mailing address/fax/e-mail, clarified the scope of the audit to include detention standard compliance and mistreatment, and stated more clearly that all interactions between auditors and detainees will remain confidential. However, numerous concerns remain, most recently with audits at the Hudson and Passaic facilities. The modified flyer for the detention audit indicates that the review process will run through the end of September. On a related note, Richard Skinner was confirmed last week to be the Inspector General of DHS. Advocates will meet with Skinner and the audit team later this month.

Detention Beds and Due Process: There are several legislative proposals that contain provisions for increasing the number of detention beds for the purpose of keeping aliens in custody. If you would like a copy of our 2 pager regarding these proposals, please e-mail me.

Feinstein Amendment: For the past several months, Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) has pushed for an amendment that would expand 1996 immigration laws, further tipping the balance that has been our tradition as a nation of immigrants and a nation of just laws. This amendment expands the types of passport and document-related offenses that constitute an "aggravated felony." While this amendment was successfully defeated during congressional debates around "must-pass" legislation, we predict that this amendment will come up again. If you would like a copy of our 2 pager on this amendment, please e-mail me.

Minutemen Watch: Latest Updates

Please Visit our Minutemen Watch Webpage!

URL: <http://www.immigrantsolidarity.org/Campaigns/Minutemen.htm>

Minutemen organizing in Falfurrias

Group remains unsure of plans for Brownsville

By Sara Inés Calderón The Brownsville Herald

Brownsville Herald (Texas)

FALFURRIAS, August 10, 2005 — The Minutemen have arrived in South Texas but major operations are still not expected to start until October, group officials said Tuesday.

About 20 members of the civilian border patrol group met here last weekend to develop strategies to halt illegal immigration in Brooks and Jim Hogg counties.

The group remains unsure whether it plans to patrol near Brownsville.

"Right now we are in our reconnaissance and planning stage," said Minutemen organizer and local ranch owner Michael Vickers. "We are getting our communication equipment together and we're getting our maps ready."

Vickers said the South Texas group is between 50 and 100 strong – but growing. He expects 150 people deployed here the first weekend in October and 400 to 500 the second weekend.

The weekend began with an orientation at Vickers' ranch and 50-mile tour of pick-up and drop-off points and pathways for illegal immigration, he said.

Brooks County Sheriff Balde Lozano said he has not been

contacted by either the Minutemen or the ranchers who want to work with them.

He said the Minutemen would encounter a much different climate in Falfurrias where his department has its "hands full" with illegal immigration.

Among Lozano's concerns were conflicts with the Minutemen patrolling near privately owned lands, encountering armed passersby during hunting season and dealing with criminal activity along the border.

Vickers acknowledged the dangerous elements in Falfurrias but maintained that his group would end illegal immigration here.

"There is no question that we're going to shut this traffic down," he said. "This weekend volunteers will be deployed in the Falfurrias area to test communication equipment."

He said most people at the weekend meeting were not from the area.

"Volunteers will be deployed before, during and even after October," he said, "because the aim of the Minutemen is to impact the big picture.

"Eventually ... we'll have a line from Baffin Bay to Laredo and beyond."

Border Patrol spokesman Roy Cervantes would not comment about the Minutemen's operations in Texas.

Immigration protesters joined by neo-Nazis in California
Southern Poverty Law Center
<http://www.splcenter.org>

Anti-immigration activist Joe Turner may be one of the best things to happen to the Southern California white power community in years -- a man whose group is seen as a "Trojan horse" allowing radical infiltration of mainstream politics.

Turner, a Ventura, Calif., man who founded the immigrant-bashing **Save Our State** organization in late 2004, insists that he's no racist, even though his self-described "aggressive activism" includes claims that undocumented Mexican workers are turning California into "a third world cesspool" and his Web site vilifies a variety of prominent Hispanic officials in a "Racist Hall of Fame."

But neo-Nazis have found in Turner a tolerant master of ceremonies. In rally after rally this year, Turner and other SOS officials have failed to turn away racist Skinheads and likeminded white supremacists who have joined their protests.

Swastikas and sieg heils aren't usually welcome on the streets of Southern California, but Turner's followers, including SOS spokesman Don Silva, have been photographed standing alongside Skinheads clad in high black boots with red laces. Most recently, **swastika pennants and Confederate battle flags** were hoisted alongside Turner's own picket signs during a July 30 protest outside a day laborer center in Laguna Beach. One group in the crowd sieg-heiled repeatedly.

Turner has told members of his Web site's forum that he opposes white supremacists joining his protests, and he wrote to the Intelligence Report "there seems to be very little we can do to keep them from piggybacking off our activism. ... [W]e are unable to really do anything about it."

He has also banned a few white supremacists from his forum. But many others have posted racist attacks on Hispanics -- attacks that are left on his Web site as long as they don't directly advocate violence.

SOS forum member "Chris 2005," for instance, offered this up on July 25: "Mexicans are like pigs. They are by far the filthiest f-ing animals. I have also felt like I needed to get into a hot bathtub of water and soap and just soak until the filth comes off me after being near any of them. I hate them, I hate them, I hate them!"

Nine days later, the statement was still there.

And then there are Turner's own statements in his forum. "I am sick and tired of all the white bashing that goes on through the use of political correctness as an indoctrinating tool," he wrote on July 16.

"I am sick and tired of multiculturalism, meaning, let's celebrate every culture as long as it isn't a European/white culture." During the same exchange, Turner also wrote that "just because one believes in white separatism that does not make them a racist."

All in all, white supremacists are delighted.

Posting on the neo-Nazi Stormfront Web site forum, one person described Turner's operation as a "Trojan horse" that radical racists can use to infiltrate more mainstream political discourse.

"The tide is turning in our favor in the movement against illegal aliens," this poster wrote in March. "The grass roots sentiment against this invasion is finally making its voice heard and [at] many different levels. This is a movement every WN [white nationalist] should support and be active in. It moves in our direction even as it does not even acknowledge, or even know, that the WN movement exists. Anti-alien activism is a no-loose [sic] for WN."

Immigration News Briefs From Across The Country

Immigration News Briefs is a weekly supplement to Weekly News Update on the Americas, published by Nicaragua Solidarity Network, 339 Lafayette St, New York, NY 10012; tel 212-674-9499; fax 212-674-9139; wnu@iqc.org.

1. ICE OFFICER CHARGED IN SEX ASSAULT

ICE detention officer Kevin Richard Carlisle was arrested July 29 on charges of kidnapping and sexual assault involving a 16-year-old Guatemalan immigrant detainee in Phoenix, Arizona. Carlisle, a 15-year veteran of the immigration agency, denied the charges; he was released on \$15,000 bond and placed on paid administrative leave.

A 16-year-old Guatemalan girl who entered the US illegally told Phoenix police officers that Carlisle detained her on July 14 at a house where he was searching for a fugitive. She said Carlisle handcuffed her and put her into the back seat of a vehicle, where he touched her inappropriately. He then took her to an ICE facility in Phoenix and escorted her to an isolated room, where a video camera captured him touching her inappropriately, according to Maricopa County Superior Court documents. Carlisle told detectives he put his fingers along her waistband to search the girl but didn't sexually assault her. Phoenix police spokesperson Sgt. Lauri Williams said such search procedures "certainly wouldn't fall into any policy of any law enforcement agency I know." Citing the ongoing investigation, ICE spokesperson Russell Ahr declined to describe the agency's routine search procedures. [*Arizona Republic* 8/5/05]

2. JUDGE THROWS OUT TRESPASS CHARGES

On Aug. 12 in Jaffrey, New Hampshire, District Court Judge L. Phillips Runyon III dismissed state trespassing charges against eight immigrants from Mexico, Colombia and Brazil, putting an end to attempts by local police to define unauthorized presence in the US as trespassing.

"The criminal trespass charges against the defendants are unconstitutional attempts to regulate in the area of enforcement of immigration violations, an area where Congress must be deemed to have regulated with such civil sanctions and criminal penalties as it feels are sufficient," Runyon ruled.

Police questioned the defendants in traffic stops and issued trespassing citations after the immigrants allegedly admitted to being in the US illegally. The defendants pleaded innocent to the citations, which carry a fine and no jail time if convicted. Some of the eight still face motor vehicle charges; Runyon said those charges, and motions relating to evidence, will be heard later. [*AP* 8/5/05, 8/12/05]

Saying they were frustrated by a lack of federal enforcement, police chiefs W. Garrett Chamberlain of New Ipswich and Richard Gendron of Hudson began using the state's trespassing law this past spring to crack down on out-of-status immigrants. Chamberlain devised the tactic last year in consultation with a local prosecutor, and his officers used it to cite a man in New Ipswich this past April; Hudson police later cited eight people, though charges against one of them were later dropped without comment.

Claire Ebel, executive director of the New Hampshire Civil Liberties Union, called the trespass cases "an embarrassment to the state of New Hampshire" and "a thin disguise for racial profiling." "I am a 62-year-old white lady. If my car had broken down, or if I had pulled over to use my cellphone, I would not have been arrested for trespassing." The population of New Hampshire is 96% white. [*Los Angeles Times* 8/6/05]

Immigrant Solidarity Actions Across the North America:

Immigrant rights movement grows in Connecticut
John Lugo
People's Weekly World
August 11, 2005

Three years ago, people in Connecticut started talking loudly about something many believed was just a condition experienced by states bordering Mexico.

Undocumented workers found themselves facing the beginning of an anti-immigrant sentiment at some state offices here, particularly the Motor Vehicle Department.

For many years anyone passing the exams in Connecticut was able to get a driver's license. Since the new waves of immigrants in the 1990s, some authorities started taking the law into their own hands, refusing to provide much-needed driver's licenses and, on some occasions, calling the Immigration and Naturalization Service about applicants they termed "illegal aliens.?"

Things got worse after Sept. 11, 2001.

Some individuals and groups began calling for stronger laws to prevent immigrants from coming to this country. Fortunately, groups that support immigrants' rights began forming around the state.

Recently, immigrants here have faced renewed attacks, including racial profiling by the police, murders and assaults.

Two months ago, Danbury Mayor Mark Boughton asked for a prohibition on playing volleyball outdoors in the city. This was an attack on the city's Ecuadorian community, which has a strong volleyball tradition.

Boughton went further, asking that state police be deputized as immigration officers. The area's Republican congresswoman, Nancy Johnson, supported this proposal, which was rejected by Democratic state Attorney General Richard Blumenthal.

This nasty climate set the stage for the formation of a small anti-immigrant organization, Connecticut Citizens for Immigration Control. Some of the group's leaders had traveled to Arizona to join the Minuteman vigilantes attacking immigrants at the border.

In response, immigrants and their supporters began to come together. The Ecuadorian Civic Center organized meetings, supported by other organizations. They formed DACORIM (Danbury Area Coalition for the Rights of Immigrants) and called for a peaceful march to protest the mayor's policies. Groups around the state began organizing for the march.

The negative publicity forced the mayor to moderate his aggressive anti-immigrant stance, but he never issued an apology or backed down on his proposal to deputize police officers. After first agreeing to take part in the march, he withdrew, saying participation by the Connecticut Civil Liberties Union and labor organizations made it more than a local Danbury issue.

More than 1,500 people made history June 12 when they marched down Danbury's Main Street calling for "unity, tolerance and respect for diversity."

Immigrants, elected officials and activists called for an end to discrimination and for immigration law reform.

At the end of the march, amid flags and patriotic music, speakers talked about the need to bring together all of Danbury's communities. A message from Hartford Mayor Eddie Perez was more blunt in blaming corporations and the free trade agreements with Latin American countries for destroying economic opportunity there and forcing the poorest of the poor to cross the border.

On July 12, over 100 activists and immigrant workers joined together at a rally co-sponsored by the Western Connecticut Central Labor Council. They marched near the American Legion Hall in Watertown where Connecticut Citizens for Immigration Control was meeting. The marchers, undaunted by the watching police, far outnumbered the participants in the anti-immigrant meeting.

Immigrants are human beings, Labor Council Vice President Kit Salazar-Smith told the crowd. Warning that the corporations try to divide workers by saying the immigrants are taking away jobs, she explained, "They move their businesses overseas and exploit the workers there.?"

"Everyone here has immigrants in their family history who helped build the United States," she said.

Assailing the unjust conditions experienced by immigrants today, Salazar-Smith said, "We must join hand in hand with our brothers and sisters and help fight for the respect and justice they deserve."

As the rally ended, participants chanted, "We will be back," vowing to gather in greater numbers whenever the anti-immigrant group meets.

These events have shown the need and potential for organization in the immigrant community. The attacks forced immigrants to organize themselves and coalesce. Groups focused on assimilating, as immigrant groups have done in the past, began working alongside groups emphasizing retaining their cultural identity, linking the struggles of citizens in Latin America and in the U.S. and fighting back against anti-immigrant forces.

And as immigrant groups have joined together, solidarity in support of immigrant rights has continued to grow.

John Lugo lives in New Haven and is chair of Unidad Latina en Accion. Dorothy Johnson contributed to this article.

Women and Immigrant Labor: Invisible to Most, Immigrant Women Line Up for Day Labor

By NINA BERNSTEIN

New York Times

August 15, 2005

The women are not noticed by the weekday morning crowds that rush past Eighth Avenue and 37th Street, in the heart of Manhattan's fashion district. They arrive in twos and threes after 8 a.m., shrinking against the buildings on both sides of the avenue, until scores of them are waiting, small, dark-haired Mexicans, Ecuadoreans, Hondurans.

By noon they have vanished. In swift, discreet sidewalk negotiations, perhaps half have been hired for a day's work at the minimum wage or less in some of the neighborhood's last struggling garment factories. The rest have given up until tomorrow.

A few miles away in Williamsburg, commuters on the busy Brooklyn-Queens Expressway are equally oblivious to the similar scene unfolding on an overpass above them. There, the work at stake is \$8-an-hour housecleaning, and those vying for a day's scrubbing, mainly for Hasidic homemakers, stand in a crude ascending hierarchy of employer preference: Mexican and Central American women in their 30's at the back, Polish immigrant women in their 50's and 60's in the middle, and young Polish students with a command of English at the head of the line.

At a time when male day laborers have become the most public and contentious face of economic immigration to the United States, these two rare female shape-ups have doubled in size almost unobserved in recent years. Their growth reflects a larger overlooked reality: Women make up 44 percent of the nation's low-wage immigrant work force, and worldwide, studies show, more and more women are migrating for work.

Often invisible and undercounted, experts say, female economic migrants are an increasing presence, especially in big cities like New York, where the demand is not for men to pick lettuce or process poultry, but for women to pick up the scraps of a collapsed manufacturing sector, or to serve in the vast underground economy of domestic service.

Although more women across the country are showing up in day-labor hiring halls, often run by grass-roots labor groups, experts say that these two female shape-ups may well be the only significant ones of their kind in the nation - places where women are willing to put their personal safety in jeopardy for a few hours of work.

"What else is there to do if you have nothing to eat?" asked Rosario Jocha, 49, still standing on Eighth Avenue at 11 a.m. on a recent Wednesday. She said she had recently grabbed a day's work cutting threads from jackets even when the employer, a Chinese immigrant subcontractor, insisted he could not pay more than \$5.75 an hour, 25 cents below the state minimum wage. "I've been here 11 years, and I still haven't found a stable, steady job."

At both locations, some of the women waiting for work had been in the country as little as a few months; others, like Ms. Jocha, a Queens resident from Ecuador, were old-timers who spoke of better jobs lost when small-business employers could not pay rising rent. On Eighth Avenue, merchants said that 100 to 150 women regularly sought work six mornings a week year round - double or triple the number when the intersection first emerged as an informal female hiring site about six years ago.

Yet May Chen, a vice president of Unite, the garment workers' union, whose headquarters is only a dozen blocks away, said she was unaware of the shape-up's existence until she was asked about it for this article. And Aaron Adams, a veteran garment center landlord who passes by every day, said he had assumed the women standing there "were just shooting the breeze."

Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, a sociologist who has written extensively about the feminization of migration, said she was not surprised. "The space that these women occupy, the public spaces in the city, are just like fleeting moments," she said. "They don't really have a place in the city that's visible, so it's easy to ignore them."

Even the discussion of legal guest worker proposals in Congress centers on male migrants, she said. But though nationally men account for about two-thirds of labor migration among illegal immigrants, primarily because of agricultural demand, she said, global patterns indicate that women are easily half the immigrant workers flowing to large metropolitan areas like New York.

(For the complete story, please visit New York Times online URL: <http://www.NYTimes.com>)

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ISN is a coalition of community, immigrant, labor, human rights and student activist groups, founded in 2002 in response to the urgent needs for the national coalition to fight immigrant bashing, support immigrant rights, no to the sweatshops exploitation and end to the racism on the community. Please visit our website:

<http://www.ImmigrantSolidarity.org>

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