

A Seasonal Publication of News, Politics, And Counter-Culture For The Working Vermonter, Fall/Winter, 2008-9 #21

VERMONT'S 2008 GENERAL ELECTION And the Future of the Green Mountain Electoral Left



By David Van Deusen

Montpelier, VT, November 10th, 2008- If there were ever a year for an incumbent Republican Governor to be shown the door it was 2008. With President George W. Bush's Vermont approval rating hovering in the



mid 20s, with two ongoing, unpopular wars afoot, with the economy crashing harder than the US has seen since the Great Depression, and with droves of Vermonters going to the polls to enthusiastically place their bet with the now



Democratic President-elect Barack Obama (who received 67.4% of the VT vote), this was the year that the left hoped to demonstrate definitively that *Jim does not equal jobs* and that Jim represents the same
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GREEN MOUNTAIN EARTH FIRST!

Takes Action Against VT
Yankee/PSB

By Slug

Brattleboro, VT, November, 3rd, 2008- Demanding the closure of Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant in Vernon, a group calling themselves Green Mountain Earth First! challenged the Vermont Public Service board at their State Street office in Montpelier Monday morning. Dressed as elves and Santa Claus, the group entered the office insisting that the Public Service Board (PSB) revoke
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VERMONT'S ECONOMY IN CRISIS THE SHRINKING JOB MARKET & THE REAL NUMBERS

Part 1 in a 2 part series

By Vermont Economist Doug Hoffer

Burlington, VT- I don't pretend to know what's happening on Wall Street (who does?). But I do know something about what's happening in Vermont and I would like to share some information with you. Some of it is a little wonky but almost everything seems complicated compared to the superficial coverage we get in the mainstream media. Stay with me.

What little we hear about the Vermont economy from TV or newspapers is limited to a few simple measures such as the unemployment rate, job growth, and per capita income. But these are all terms of art and can be misleading. For example, the unemployment rate is a very limited measure.

*If you have not actively looked for work in the last four weeks, then you are not considered part of the labor
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Catamount Tavern News
Vermont's Only
Union Affiliated
Newspaper,
Lithographers Local 1L
Teamsters
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Statewide
Est. Winter 2003

VT POPULATION: 623,908

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RALLY AT STATE HOUSE MAY 1st, 2009. HEALTHCARE!



The Catamount Tavern

What is The
Catamount
Tavern?

In the 1770's there was a pub in Bennington, VT called the Green Mountain Tavern (informally known as the Catamount Tavern because of a stuffed mountain lion located outside). It was within it's walls that the Green Mountain Boys planned a revolution. . . . The rest is history.

Notes From The Editor,

With the election of Democrat Barak Obama to US President, hope is running high among working people that we, as a nation, will turn a corner, get out of Iraq, and put the people, and not the rich, first. But is Obama, the first Black President, up for the task? Can he turn back the looming Depression? Will he tow the line of his Wall Street big money supporters, or will he take the road of FDR & a New Deal? Would Black Panther Fred Hampton have voted for Obama? My guess to the last question is no, although he certainly would have distained McCain. Real change, if it does come, will come from below anyway. So let us keep the heat on. -CT



Catamount Tavern News

Is a worker-owned, union affiliated newspaper (Lithographers Local 1L-Teamsters). We, the Staff of CT News, believe that journalism best serves the community when it *challenges* capitalist policy and power; not when it repeats it as spoken by its advocates. With this in mind, CT News pledges to print factual, honest, hard hitting news which is written from the perspective of the working class Vermonter.

Our publication supports the building of a Vermont wherein regular and frequent Town Meetings, in cooperation with directly democratic worker and farmer unions, are the basic decision making bodies of the Green Mountains. We intend on helping to build this society based on basic principles of equality, wherein all persons have, among other things, access to decent housing, healthy food, acceptable health care, quality childcare, higher education, and meaningful jobs.

THIS IS FREEDOM & UNITY

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& GENERAL STORES IN BETWEEN!



VERMONT WORKERS' & FARMERS' NEWS

VT Milk Commission Falters



Staff Writer

St. Johnsbury, VT—The Vermont Milk Commission is currently considering whether or not to mandate a premium for retail milk sold in Vermont. The proposed premium would be paid by the milk processors, and would be transferred directly to farmers as a way to stabilize their income. Advocates contend that this fund

would go a long way in helping farmers get through bad times, and would kick the processors in the ass a bit for the ongoing and historical low pay given to farmers for their raw milk. The original findings of the commission were that the processors would be able to afford this charge, and that it would not need to be passed on to consumers.

However, at a recent hearing the processors and the large grocers provided "professional" testimony stating that they could not afford to pay the fee and that if it were implemented, they would be forced to pass the cost down the chain to consumers. After listening to this not-so-surprising testimony,

the Milk Commission, headed by Roger Allbee, a Jim Douglas appointee, appears to be second-guessing their own figures and have decided to hold more hearings before they decide what, if anything, to do.

The next hearing will be held on November 18th, others are expected to follow. CT News strongly urges all dairy farmers to attend these meetings and to make their voice heard! For detailed information on the hearings (location/time/etc) go to the Vermont Milk Commission's web page at: www.vermontagriculture.com/milkcommission or call the Department of Agriculture at: 828-2426 —**CT**

Faculty Union Wins Victory at UVM

By Helen Scott and Nancy Welch, United Academics-AFT/AAUP



BURLINGTON, Vt.—Members of United Academics-AFT/AAUP won an important victory at the University of Vermont, voting 214-to-1 in favor of a new three-year contract for full-time faculty on September 25.

The contract not only defeated administration attempts to roll back retiree benefits, reduce paid sabbatical leaves and undermine fac-

ulty governance and academic freedom but it also *gained* ground in crucial areas for both tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty.

The deal includes a 15 percent salary increase over three years, a 37-percent increase in professional development funds and new paid parental and family leave provisions that bargaining team member Beth Mintz called "the best in the country."

"[The administration] realized that faculty were prepared to fight long and hard over these issues, and that the ensuing discussion would revolve around the millions the university has chosen to spend on matters that do not significantly affect teaching and research," said union

leader Tony Bradley.

These lessons--strong rank-and-file involvement, preparation for a public battle, rejecting the logic of concessionary bargaining--will be important for the part-time faculty union as well as the staff union on campus, and for other upcoming regional labor struggles.

Colin Robinson of the Vermont Livable Wage Campaign said, "With multiple contracts coming up this year in Burlington, it is exciting that United Academics has reached a contract that sets such a great precedent in the struggle to make Vermont truly livable for workers."

**To read the full text of this article on the web check out the Socialist Workers at: socialistworker.org*

Other Vermont News

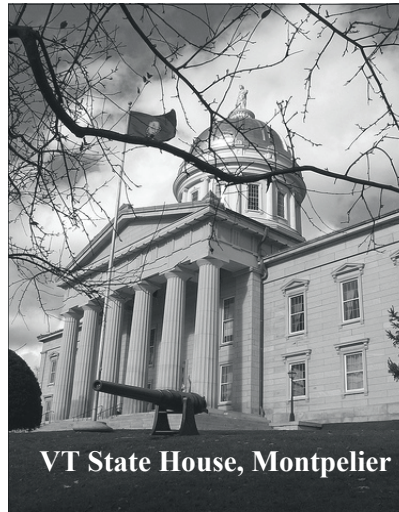
SECOND VERMONT SEPARATIST CONVENTION HELD IN STATE HOUSE

By Jeremy Ripin

Moretown, VT- The results of the latest national election show that people want change. It is no wonder with the ever growing economic crisis, large federal bailouts to Wall Street corporations, and the continuation of two foreign wars, that people feel the United States is a "sinking ship". On November 2nd about 150 people gathered at the Vermont State House for the 2nd Vermont Secession Convention to discuss and rally support for Vermont independence.

The convention sponsored by the Second Vermont Republic (SVR) and the Middlebury Institute for the study of separatism, secession, and self-determination, featured many speakers. The list included many of the usual faces associated with Vermont separatism; Kirkpatrick Sale, Rob Williams, and SVR founder Thomas Naylor. Other speakers included author James Howard Kunstler, Alaskan Independence Party chair Lynette Clark, as well as performances by Bread & Puppet and Pete Sutherland and friends.

Despite widespread advertisement for the event and even a plug by social-



VT State House, Montpelier

gubernatorial candidate, Peter Diamondstone (Liberty Union Party), attendance was down from a reported 300 attendees at the first convention in 2005.

A poll conducted by UVM in 2006 suggested that 8% of Vermonters supported secession. That number grew to 13% in 2007 poll also conducted by UVM. However, controversy entangled SVR when an anonymous blogger revealed the organization's close ties to the southern white supremacist group the League of the South.

Although Thomas Naylor has re-

cently publicly denounced the League of the South's racist stand, questions still arise about the sustainability of the Vermont secession movement. With the last eight years almost behind us and a new Obama administration around the corner, will Vermonters still look to secession?

When asked if the movement is continuing to grow and the effect the new presidency will have, separatist and WGDR radio commentator Jim Hogue stated, "The secession movement per se is not growing, but the aspects of survival (sustainability, etc.) are growing." "The Obama presidency will have no effect I hope...Obama was supported by Wall Street and has chosen those who caused the collapse to run the country."

Many acknowledge that an Obama presidency will not likely bring radical change to the country. The convention theme "The Vermont Village Green: Alternative to Empire" invokes imagery of greater localization and self-sustainability. This is an idea that is growing in the wake of the recent economic events. It seems as long as the United States continues on the same course there will always be people looking to "jump ship." -CT



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170+ Attend VWC Workshops on Anti-racism & Building A Social Justice Movement

By VT Workers' Center

Burlington, VT- From October 25 - November 2nd the Vermont Workers' Center held seven workshops around the state on Anti-racism & Building A Social Justice Movement with trainers from the Catalyst Project. Participants included high school and college students, teachers, union leaders, state employees, retirees, Americorp volunteers and Vermont non-profit staff. Here's what one participant sent us:



"I just got back from the Anti-Racist Conference with the Catalyst Project and am so energized! I brought 8 kids and an ELL teacher, all of whom are interested in taking the knowledge they learned today and bringing it back to our school. Barre has not traditionally been kind to people of color, even though they have a history of heavy immigration to the area, including radicals from Italy and France. For most of us, it isn't fear or not liking those that are not like us that creates the racism, but sometimes a pure lack of knowledge or ignorance. I've seen an increase in behaviors from students who are listening to some incredible hate filled attacks on Blacks and other people of color in the media and are not real sure what to do with this information. They are confused. This conference has helped me harness some ideas to help direct these students with the help of our now core group of anti-racists! One student said she learned more about history today than she has in entire classes. Another said her head was spinning she learned so much. There was learning on the part of the adults in the room, as well. Our students brought a perspective that could not have been replaced. Thanks Worker's Center for bringing this important Anti-Racism Conference to central Vermont."

- Amy Lester, School Counselor, Spaulding High School and Barre Technical Center

The VWC is holding a major statewide Human Rights Conference on December 13th at the University of Vermont, which will feature workshops on anti-racism & Healthcare. Online registration will begin soon. www.workerscenter.org —**CT**

"I am resolutely determined to defend the independence of Vermont... rather than fail I will retire with hardy Green Mountain Boys into the desolate caverns of the mountains, and wage war with human nature at large." - Ethan Allen

STUDENTS DEMAND DIVESTMENT FROM WAR PROFITEERS/ VERMONTERS RALLY AT STATE HOUSE



By S. JAKE

Winooski, VT -On October 24th, over 100 UVM students held a demonstration against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in front of the university's administrative building. The protesters, led by a group called Students Against War, soon entered the Waterman Building and approached the President's office. There they delivered a list of six corporations (DynCorp, General Dynamics, Halliburton, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman and Raytheon) which they demanded be divested from UVM's investment portfolio. The students contend that these corporations are war profiteers, increasing their profits as the body count grows higher, and that UVM has no place piggy backing profit off their immoral capitalist activities. The demands were accepted by the university's Vice President of Finance, Richard Cate, which said their concerns would be taken under consideration.

The rally hosted a number of speakers including Charlotte Dennett of the Progressive Party & VT AFL-CIO, as well as Anthony Pollina. Student leaders also addressed the crowd. "From now on, we're making demands on them, and they're compromising to us, and that begins right here!" declared student Ben Silverman before a cheering crowd.

Three days later, on October 27th, another anti-war demonstration was held in the Capital, Montpelier. There, over 50 Vermonters gathered in front of the State House demanding an immediate end to the wars. Present were a number of union members, as well as folk from the Progressive Party. In 2003 more than 3000 people rallied against the war in Iraq also at the State House. Polls indicate that Vermonters overwhelmingly are in opposition to the continuing conflict in Iraq. —**CT**

BURLINGTON FOOD NOT BOMBS FEEDS HUNGRY, BUILDS COMMUNITY

By Will Bennington

Burlington, VT- Hunger is a serious problem worldwide and locally in the Green Mountains. Anyone who says otherwise is ignoring the facts. According to the Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger, 70,600 individuals in Vermont, including 19,000 children, are "food insecure" (vtnohunger.org). Many households and individuals, while having access to some form of food, do not have access to *nutritious* food. Think about this for a minute.

Now, go to your local Hannaford's or other supermarket, or any restaurant, and check out the dumpster. What do you see? Most likely, especially if you live in Burlington, you see a bountiful garden of produce that, while not acceptable to the paying customer, is perfectly nutritious and safe to eat.

While policy makers may take years to realize that there is a simple solution to hunger problems in Vermont, a group of dedicated individuals—students, farmers, artists and other community members—have gotten together to help out their community members in need.

Acting under Food Not Bombs International, a group founded in the 80s in Cambridge, MA around protests at the Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant, these activists get together every Saturday night to turn a friends kitchen into a scene familiar to anyone who has spent time in a commercial kitchen: food scraps everywhere, even more food, chopping, stirring, mixing, hot ovens, and good conversation. What is



being cooked? Salvaged food donated from City Market, the local food co-op, Digger's Mirth and Pitchfork farms, Boloco restaurant, and, of course, the friendly Hanna-

"They have been threatened with shutdowns multiple times, reasons varying from violation of municipal permit codes to attracting too many homeless people."

ford's compost.

"We are an anti-authoritarian, non-violent disorganization," says Amy Doolittle, one of the founding members of Food Not Bombs in Burlington. "We are people helping people."

Food Not Bombs, which has been largely associated with anarchists in the past, operates under consensus: what few decisions that need to be made are agreed upon by everyone, or the group does not move forward. Operating with little to no funding (outside of the occasional donation) and no permits, Food Not Bombs is standing up to the military industrial complex and bureaucracy that many people feel

so entrapped by. "We are saying 'we don't need your money' says Kylie Vanerstrom, a student and dedicated FNBER, "Politicians can fund billion dollar a day wars, but they can't feed the people. This is a failure of democracy."

While the group has received an outpouring of community support, the authorities do not embrace FNB as openly. They have been threatened with shutdowns multiple times, reasons varying from violation of municipal permit codes to attracting too many homeless people. However, the members assert their right to serve free food, and are currently discussing the issue with the District Attorney and the Mayor's office. "We may move for the winter, but we will not go away," says Doolittle.

Food Not Bombs serves a free, hot vegetarian meal every Sunday at 1 p.m. in City Hall Park, Burlington, VT. Food Not Bombs is also available for large events such as protests and other non-violent actions, celebrations or other events. —CT

**Contact Burlington Food Not Bombs via email at: wbenning@uvm.edu*

[Note from CT News: It seems a travesty that such a group should be faced with legal hurdles and harassment by city officials and police given the fact that the Mayor of Burlington as well as many City Councilors are members of the Progressive Party. CT News implores the Major, Bob Kiss, and the City Council to do the right thing and publically support the efforts of Food Not Bombs.]

Brattleboro Demands Healthcare!

Citizens Testify on Healthcare Crisis/Demand Reform



By David Van Deusen

Brattleboro, VT – It is estimated that 11% of Vermont's population (600,000+) is without health insurance, and many tens of thousands more who are insured are struggling to finance skyrocketing premiums, and co-pays. On the evening of September 25th the Vermont Workers' Center held its first of a series of public hearings on the issue of healthcare at the St. Mi-

chael's Episcopal Church in Brattleboro (pop. 13,000). And based on the testimony of many citizens, Brattleboro wants healthcare for all.

The Workers' Center, itself a coalition of labor unions and community organizations representing over 25,000 working Vermonters, is seeking to engage the public in the healthcare debate. Besides the public hearing in Brat-

tleboro, others are being planned for the Northeast Kingdom, Barre, Rutland, & Burlington. The Workers' Center openly advocates on behalf of common Vermonters, who they say have a basic human right to healthcare. And since last May 1st 2007, volunteers and allies of the Center have been on the streets of most the larger towns and on many job

(Continued Next Page)



Vermont AFL-CIO Backs Healthcare Campaign

Staff Writer

Catamount Tavern News Service, Colchester, VT- On September 14th the Vermont AFL-CIO (10,000 members) unanimously passed a resolution reaffirming their support for a state based single payer healthcare system and went on to give their full backing to the Vermont Workers' Center "Healthcare Is a Human Right" campaign. The campaign, among other things, has been building a grassroots organization across Vermont and has called for a statewide "Call In Sick Day" to coincide with a planned demonstration in the capital on May first, 2009. -*CT*

CALL IN SICK! May 1, 2009

SMALL BUISSINESSES, CLOSE DOWN!

Demonstrate in Montpelier, at State House for Healthcare For All!

BE PART OF THIS HISTORIC DAY!

Vermont Liberty Union Party Endorses 'Healthcare Is A Human Right' Campaign

Staff Writer

Norwich, VT- On September 7, 2008, the Vermont Liberty Union Party (which is affiliated with the Socialist Party USA) unanimously passed a resolution stating their support for the 'Healthcare is a Human Right' campaign as being organized by the Vermont Workers' Center and allied labor organizations. Leading up until the 2008 election, the Liberty
(Continued Next Page)

(Liberty Union, From Previous Page)



Union was one of the four recognized “major parties” in the Green Mountains. Their strongest candidate in 2008 was Jerry Levy, who ran for State Auditor and received 10,788 votes or 3.7%.

The Healthcare is a Human Right campaign seeks to build a grassroots movement

towards the establishment of a universal, single-payer healthcare system at the state level. To date the Vermont Workers’ Center, located in the Old North End of Burlington, has surveyed over 800 Vermonters regarding their current healthcare, or lack thereof. In addition, the organization has held a number of healthcare hearing across the state, and plan to hold more in the coming months. On December 13th their findings will be presented to the public at a healthcare conference to be held in Burlington at the UVM Davis Center. Workers’ Center organizers are already anticipating a massive rally for healthcare at the State House in Montpelier on May 1st, 2009. The Center is also calling on all Vermont workers (union & non-union) to “call in sick” on the day of the anticipated rally.

The full text of the Liberty Union resolution on healthcare is as follows:

“The Liberty Union Party supports the ‘Healthcare is a Human Right’ campaign of the Vermont Workers’ Center and Further:

“We require that government ought to move in the direction of assuring that the wealth and resources of the world will be used to provide a materially secure life including socialized medicine for all the people of this planet, simultaneously preserving the planet and its resources for future generations.” -CT

*To read the Vermont Liberty Union Party platform, and to learn more about the organization take a look at: www.libertyunionparty.org

*To learn more about the Healthcare is a Human Right campaign or to get involved call the Vermont Workers’ Center at; (802) 861-2877, look on the web at: www.workerscenter.org, or stop by 284 N. Winooski, Burlington.

(Brattleboro Demands Healthcare From Previous Page)
sites asking folk to fill out a survey about their experience with healthcare. They are on pace to have over 1500 done by December, and are planning a Healthcare is a Human Right convention at UVM in Burlington on December 13th where their findings will be unveiled.

The Brattleboro hearing, co-sponsored by Vermont the Citizens Campaign For Health organization & the Child Labor Education and Action group, had more than 50 local people in attendance. Those assembled gave testimony about their experiences with healthcare to a listening panel composed of Bonnie Chase, RN, Nurses Union President at the Brattleboro Retreat, Kathleen Clark, RN, Vice President of the Brattleboro Federation of Nurses at the Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, Daniel Herlocker, RN, also a union member at the Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, the Reverend Lise Sparrow, minister at the Guilford Community Church, Rosa Palmeri of Child Labor Education & Action, and Dianne Champion Brattleboro District Director of the Vermont Department of Health.

One of the first Vermonters to speak was Nancy Hodecker. She told the panel that her husband had to have his tongue cut out, and soon after died, because he did not have health insurance. He first noticed a small sore on his tongue. But since he did not have health insurance and because money was tight, he resisted going to a doctor for four months. It turned out that he had developed class four cancer.

Dwayne Young, a local logger, testified that it is ironic how he has one of the most dangerous jobs around, but since he is insured while on the job, he doesn’t worry about it. What scares him is the thought of something happening *out on the streets*, out of the woods –where, until recently, he was not insured. Young explained that he recently signed up for Catamount Health.

Besides Nancy and Dwayne, many Vermonters talked about the problems poor & working people face with the current healthcare system, about experiencing discrimination for having Medicaid/Medicare, about undue burdens of paperwork and bureaucracy, about being hard working people and still not being able to afford medical treatment.

The final person to present testimony was Leah Swanson. Leah, a Brattleboro High School senior, read a moving letter to the panel from a local woman who wished to remain anonymous. The letter recalled in chilling detail how she was compelled to stay in a relationship with a man who beat her so that her 6 year old daughter could continue having life saving treatments for her cancer. Although the abusive husband was also the little girl's father, he told his wife that if she left he would cancel his family healthcare plan; this would be akin to a death sentence for the child. —The battered mother, in the shadow of 7 recurrences of the child's cancer, stayed in this nightmarish relationship for 22 years.

"The time has come to provide some relief for victims of domestic violence. If that one hurdle of the health insurance had not been placed in my way, I not only could have gotten my child through her cancer treatments, but she would not have been subject to all those added years of having to witness domestic vio-

lence," Leah read.

The testimony concluded



with, "Somehow, somehow, we must gather enough support to provide health coverage for everyone so that stories like mine never happen again. You have the capability to do something about this. Please don't turn away."

The overall message of the evening was that Vermont has many good reasons, both moral and economic, to establish a socialized universal single-payer healthcare system whereby every Vermonter can get the medical treatment they need.

The hearings were brought to a close by James Haslam, Director of the Vermont Workers' Center. Mr. Haslam called healthcare a "human right" and declared that these hearings would be held all across the state, culminating in the healthcare convention at UVM. According to Haslam, the Workers' Center is seeking

to change the political discourse across the Green Mountains whereby what is right *becomes* what is possible —not the other way around; i.e. *healthcare for all*. The Vermont Workers' Center is also planning, what they hope will be, a massive demonstration in the Capital, Montpelier, on May 1st, 2009 in support of single-payer healthcare. In collusion with the demonstration the Center is calling on *all* working Vermonters, both union and nonunion, to "Call In Sick" on that day, and for small independent businesses to voluntarily close down. To date this campaign has been endorsed by the Vermont AFL-CIO and the socialist Vermont Liberty Union Party. It is expected that other unions, community organizations, and political parties will follow suit in the coming months.—*CT*

**For more information on the Healthcare is a Human Right Campaign & the Vermont Workers' Center look them up on the web at:*

www.vermontworkerscenter.org



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(Election Cont. From Cover)

failed policies that have doomed us from DC on down. After all, Douglas was the chair of the local Bush election team in 2004, and has consistently supported Republican endorsed privatization schemes (the latest being the failed attempt to lease the Vermont Lottery to a for-profit, out-of-state corporation). But with more than 1.25 million dollars in his re-election war chest, and with Pollina having to fight with Symington for the anti-Republican vote, Douglas, once again, won out over all common sense with 53.4% of the vote.

In the number two slot Republican incumbent Brian Dubie also won his 4th for Lieutenant Governor, capturing 55%. The Douglas & Dubie victories were expected, although a number of polls, some as late as October, predicted Douglas would finish with less than a clear majority (therefore sending the race to the VT Legislator). The remainder of the statewide races went solidly Democrat, with some minor in-roads (as far as vote percentages are concerned) made by a slate of social-democratic oriented Progressive Party challengers. The Vermont Liberty Union (which is affiliated with the Socialist Party USA) also ran a full slate but failed to win any races. The political make up of the General Assembly (overwhelmingly Democrat, with 6 Progressives, and less than a third of the remaining seats taken by a Republican minority) remains largely as it has been for the last two years; *on the center-left*.

The plate tectonics of Vermont politics did not drastically shift in this election, but if anyone felt some soft tremors (as the Democratic Party leadership surely did!), it was brought on by Progressive turned Independent Anthony Pollina who, on a shoe string budget and with a solid grassroots effort, beat out the Democrat (and 4 other folks) for a second place finish in the contest for Governor. Pollina (who was endorsed by the Abenaki Nation as well as the Gun Owners of Vermont) finished with 21.8%, or approximately 300 more votes than received by former Democratic VT House Speaker Gaye Symington. Pollina's campaign centered around supporting small farmers and working Vermonters through state investment in agriculture & infrastructure, establishing a livable minimum wage, state sponsored universal healthcare, and Vermont owned renewable green energy. But Pollina only managed to raise \$233,000 to support his cause (mostly by small in-state donations), while Douglas held over a million, and Symington \$494,000. These fundraising disparities ultimately hurt Pollina. Early on Anthony informed CT News that he felt he needed to raise something close to a cool million to be competitive –a figure that was solidly out of reach once Symington entered the contest.

Democrat Gaye Symington, for her part, ran one of the worst gubernatorial campaigns in recent memory. She failed to articulate an interesting or believable alternative

to the Douglas juggernaut, and appeared amateurish and uncomfortable in the debates. Her failure to connect with working Vermonters, her inability to speak to the concerns of regular people, perhaps, has been equaled only by such fellow millionaires as Jack McMullen and Richard Tarrent. Reflecting these failures, the usually solid Democratic labor unions lined up not behind Symington, but behind Pollina. While Gaye did manage to gain the endorsement of the Teamsters (representing more than 1000 Vermonters), all other major unions (NEA with 10,000 plus members, VT AFL-CIO 10,000 members, and VSEA 8000 members) backed Anthony. Running a campaign as she did, Symington would have been lucky to win a seat on her local Select Board, let alone the State's top job. In short, she could not have done a worse job of ousting Douglas if she intentionally tried. She, and not Anthony, played the role of spoiler, not so much as her combined vote totals would have otherwise thrown Pollina over the top (it would not), but more by siphoning off money, media coverage, and other resources that would otherwise have fallen to the advantage of the Pollina camp. Pollina, running against Jim with no Democrat nipping at his heels, may not have won (Vermonters are known to stick with incumbents), but he could have made it interesting. As for Symington, insiders are whispering that this was never about winning. This was about the Democratic leadership attempting to marginalize the Progressive Party, and, more personally,

about Symington setting herself up for a position in the new Obama administration. Speculation? Time will tell, if this rumor has any legs.

In the aftermath of the Douglas victory, both Progressives and Democrats are already jockeying for political positions in the 2010 general election. Pollina, who as recently as 2007 served as the party's chair and who was actively supported by the party even as an Independent, has gone on record saying that he will *consider* another run. In the days immediately following the election Pollina told WDEV and Vermont Public Radio that Progs and Democrats should get behind a consensus candidate, based on small 'p' progressive issues. Undoubtedly, he is placing himself on the short-list of such potential uniters. Concretely Anthony has said that he will spend a few weeks thinking about what to do next, and is yet to lay down the hard conditions upon which a Progressive-Democratic alliance can be made. Undoubtedly Anthony is looking at the recent fusion ticket in the Chittenden County State Senate race, where Progressive Burlington City Councilman, Tim Ashe, successfully captured both the Democratic and Prog nomination, and went on to win a seat in that body (becoming the first Prog to do so). With Pollina already dropping the "Progressive" label and opting to present himself as a Independent, it is not a far stretch to imagine him trying to gain the Democratic endorsement by entering that party's primary in 2010. However, Anthony has

enough guts and political foresight not to jump in the shark pool as a "Democrat" alone. Rather, it is more likely that he will follow Ashe's example by seeking both the Prog and Dem nods.

As to whether or not this option becomes a realistic possibility will depend on who the Republican candidate will be in the next election. If Douglas goes for a 5th term, the Democrats will believe that he cannot be beat, and may support a Pollina Prog/Dem fusion ticket. In this scenario the Democratic Party leadership will bet on a solid Pollina defeat, and they will further calculate that a loss under those conditions (where the Dems cannot be painted as obstructionist by those to their left) will drive the death nail into Pollina's electoral coffin. This is what they will figure, but they have been known to be *very* wrong in the past. Remember, it was the same party that thought Bernie Sanders, our current socialist US Senator, was a one term phenomena as Burlington's lefty mayor back in 81').

If, on the other hand, Douglas is not running for the top spot, the alleged heavy hitters of the Democratic Party will crawl out from the proverbial donkey's ass and not only will they turn their back on Pollina, but they will have a tough primary contest amongst themselves. In this scenario look for a primary matching former State Senator Matt Dunne against State Treasurer Jeb Spaulding. Pollina could, in theory, enter the Democratic primary against these two, but the odds would be against him (as would the

Dem power brokers), and a loss there would make him, and the left in general, appear weak. In this scenario Pollina would be wise to stay out of the inner party Democratic showdown. And, for reasons further discussed below, he would do well to keep out of the contest altogether, if it turns out to be a Democratic free-for-all.

Why would Douglas not run again? CT News has been informed by a *very reliable source* that Democrat Pat Leahy is strongly considering retiring from the US Senate in 2010. If this were to happen smart money is that Douglas will seek a ticket to Washington. But could Douglas win? It depends on who is running against him. If Democratic Congressman Peter Welch enters the fray, it will be close, with Welch likely coming out on top.

And if Welch's US House seat were again up for grabs? The Vermont Republican Party bench is not on the major league level. Few politicians come to mind that have more than a minor league future. Beyond Douglas and Dubie, only State Senator Dianne Snelling, Representative Randy Brock, former Adjutant General Martha Rainville, and NEK Senator Vince Illuzzi appear ready to step to the plate of a statewide election. Of these, Rainville and Dubie would be the top likely contenders for the Congressional seat. On the Democratic side one should look to Windom County State Senator Peter Shumlin or State Auditor Tom Salmon, with the labor allied Floyd Nease as the dark Horse. If the Pro-

gressives choose to field a viable candidate, the list is also short. Popular Burlington Representative David Zuckerman, an organic farmer, has expressed interest in the office in the past, but seems more poised to assume an in-state party leadership position. What is likely is that the Progs will not run in the race. Again, without a serious Prog in the contest, the advantage would be toward the Democrat over the Republican (as Vermonters tend to like their Congressmen left-of-center).

Specific candidate speculation aside, the question remains; can or even should the Progressives seek to form an alliance with the Democrats in 2010? And if so, what would such an alliance look like? Many liberal leaning Democrat Party activists have been clamoring for a merging of the two parties (the Progressive Democratic Party of Vermont?). Such a possibility is not without precedent. The old left wing Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota, who rose to prominence electing many members to state office in the 1920/30s, eventually merged with the state Democratic Party, forming the center-left Democratic Farmer-Labor Party that continues to operate (at least in name) to this very day. Former US Senator and Vice President Walter Mondale hailed from this hybrid party, as did the late US Senator Paul Wellstone. But so far no one in the Progressive Party leadership is talking full merger. And even if such a merger were proposed it would most certainly be resisted by grassroots Progressives who would fear the likelihood of themselves being

absorbed by the massive Democratic Party as a relatively powerless sub-caucus.

If an alliance is to be forged it will probably consist of deal concerning any open statewide races. If Leahy decides to run again, and/or if Douglas also decides to try for a 5th term, there will not be much room for either party to maneuver. This being said, in a status quo election the Dems may give Pollina the nod, but only because they believe it to be in their long term benefit and because they think he will lose. However, if the field opens up and Douglas is out of the picture for Governor, it is possible that an agreement can be reached whereby the Progs keep out of the Governor and Congressional races, in exchange for a free run at any open down ticket races (Zuckerman for LT Gov?, Former VSEA President, Ed Stanic for State Treasurer?). A reasonable chance for Progressive down ticket victories would be the reward for keeping Pollina out of the Governor's contest.

And again, if Anthony does not enter the race for Governor in two years, what will he do? Among other things there should be little doubt that he will continue to organize farmers and give support to labor as he has constantly done for the last 20 years. But in the electoral arena Pollina should strongly consider a run at the Vermont State Senate for Washington County. Anthony, a resident of Middlesex, did very well in Washington County in 08.' He won the capital city of Montpelier outright as well as a number of other towns. He



Pollina

is well known throughout the area, thanks in large part to his WDEV AM radio talk show *Equal Time*, and has very positive relations with area labor councils, farmers, and organizers. He could win this race (much as Bernie won the Burlington Mayor's race in 81) and use this post to position himself as the "conscience" of the General Assembly. As a high profile State Senator he would still have the ear of Vermonters, and he could bring many of his innovative ideas to the State House (i.e. the Vermont credit card, the 2% institutional investment in local infrastructure, built in preferences for in-state union bids) and back them up by pressure from a motivated constituency from below. He would also be in a good position to re-enter statewide contests in the future if and when the conditions appear ripe. But after three major runs at statewide office, and two decades of community organizing, it is hard to say if Pollina would ultimately find a legislative role to his liking.

Regardless of who the eventual left candidates are in 2010 and no matter what deal (or no deal) the Progs strike with the Democratic Party, there are other realities that the Progressives will have to address, if they are to grow their political base and push their social-democratic agenda forward. First, the mixed results of the 08' legislative races have to be looked

at. While the Progs retained four House seats, gained a new one (from Brattleboro), and sent their first party member to the State Senate, they also suffered a number of harsh losses. Former party staffer Chris Pearson lost his post as State Representative from Burlington to 22 year old student Democrat Kesha Ram. In the Northeast Kingdom, dairy farmer Dexter Randal was unseated by a Republican. And in half a dozen other races, they failed to win new ground.

Person's loss was due to a massive UVM student turnout which strongly favored recent student body president Kesha Ram. What should be disturbing to the Progs is not the fact that Pearson lost *per se*, but that he clearly lost the student vote. This district, it must be recalled, was an early stronghold of the budding Progressive movement for the very reason that they could count on the students for their support (both Pearson and Zuckerman, who is also from this district, are UVM graduates). The fact that the students rejected Chris in favor of a Democrat (even if it is one of their own) speaks poorly of the Progressive's efforts to reach out to young voters in the last few years. In order to stem this tide the Progs will have to double up their efforts regarding this constituency by working through such groups as the Student Labor Action Project and the Students for a Democratic Society. They would be well served to maintain a highly viable role on the college campuses. But the youth vote is by no means stationary to the campuses. The Progs should also look to

build strong relations with young apprentices in the labor movement, and other working class youth who are commonly employed in low wage service jobs. One way or another, the Progs need to chart a course guaranteeing that a new generation is ready and able not only to support them in their campaigns, but capable and willing to fill new leadership roles as circumstances demand. Failure to do so would be detrimental to the party's future (and a boon to the Democrats).

As far as other local losses are concerned, there is no clear one-size-fits-all answer. Every party over the course of several elections will have its ups and downs. However, when your party is only a decade old, and when you only have half a dozen seats in government, you cannot afford too many down elections. And again, in this year of economic troubles, it seemed natural that Progressive candidates for the Legislature would do better than two years ago. This was not altogether the case. Perhaps Pollina's calculated move to drop the Prog label had the negative effect of shortening his coattails.

What does appear clear is that statewide the party has a core vote of about 6% as demonstrated in the five down ticket races. The Progs, running candidates not necessarily to win, but primarily to retain their major party status (which requires one race with a 5% showing or better) finished as follows; Kemp's 4.5% For Lt Gov, Power's 4.5% for Secretary of State, Schramm's 7.6% for Treasurer, Martha Abbotts' 12.2%

for State Auditor & Dennett's 5.1% for Attorney General. Of these, only Charlotte Dennett ran an active campaign with a minimum of small radio ads. When compared to similar races in 2002, where the party's nominee for Governor finished with less than 1%, and its candidate for Attorney General ended with 4.9%, a modest upward trajectory appears clear.

Beyond its core vote the party has a peripheral or qualified constituency of upward of 25% (based on Pollina's last two campaigns). This, on top of the fact that they can rally a majority in a number of small towns and large population centers (i.e. Brattleboro, Montpelier, & Burlington), makes them a serious player in Vermont politics; especially so in Windom, Washington, & Chittenden Counties. But the goal is not to reach one fourth of the people. The goal is to win concrete gains for working people and farmers. And if this party is to play an electoral role in such victories (however they may shape up), it should not only deal with the Democrats (be that in an alliance or in clear unrestrained opposition), but the party should also come to terms with those on their left, who, although electorally weak, are capable of taking 1%-4% away from them in important races.

It is no secret that Senator Bernie Sanders, Martha Abbott, and a number of other Progressive leaders can trace their political lineage back to the early 70s and to the socialist Vermont Liberty Union Party. It is also no secret that some of the old elements

of the Liberty Union (LU) harbor resentment towards the Progs, and are quick to charge them with selling out their more radical socialist ideas in exchange for relative electoral success. And finally it is also true that the only way the LU can get more than 4% of the vote in any race is for there to be NO other challengers to the given incumbent. All this being established, the LU is still good for 1% of the vote on any given day in any given race and with little to no campaigning (the latter of which they consistently prove). With this in mind, if the Progs were to make a serious run for a state-wide office, victory or defeat could easily hinge on this 1000-2000 vote difference. Therefore it would seem sound that the Progressives should make an effort to sit down with the LU before the next election in order to hammer out a side deal. Perhaps in exchange for not running against Progs in certain targeted elections, the Liberty Union could be offered a number of races where they would almost certainly be the only other party of opposition, or where their only opponents would be cut from the Democratic and Republican (i.e. capitalist) cloth. This could appeal to the LU in that their top 2008 vote getter, Jerry Levy 10,788 votes or 3.7% for Auditor, fell below the floor for major party status. Hence they may have a desire to win this standing back. However, the thought of the Progs trying to make deals

with the Liberty Union would almost certainly amount to pissing in the wind. Even so, it is worth the attempt. And in the long run, the Progs (and the left in general) are best served by keeping the LU in as many debates as is practical and possible insofar as their more radical policy positions not only speak to a segment of the current Vermont electorate, but also have the effect of making the social-democratic positions of the Progressives appear much more moderate than would otherwise appear to the common voter. And with this, the entire political dialogue shifts ever so slightly to the left. Perhaps, to sweeten the deal, the Progs could also agree to advocate on their behalf, regarding inclusion in debates (which they are often unfairly excluded from). And perhaps they could also come together to support such common issues as establishing IRV or Run-off elections (which would help both parties), creating a health-care system whereby all Vermonter had access to quality medical care, livable wages, free higher education, and truly affordable housing. But I go too far. It would be a small miracle in and of itself for the two solidly left parties to even so much as to sit down and agree not to run against each other in a strategically important race or two, let alone form a Popular Front!

Back room wheeling and dealing aside, the truth is that the ultimate fate of

the Progressive Party is intimately linked to the social, non-electoral, movements which underline it. As long as the Progs continue to climb into the trenches with organized labor, the farmers, the environmentalists, and the healthcare reform advocates, they will be in a position to grow alongside the movements which they support. If, on the other hand, they forsake such activities or come to see their own rise as an end in itself, their fate would seem destined for historical obscurity at best or popular betrayal at worst. And here it is important to not lose sight of the fact that the goal may be to win, but the goal cannot become simply winning elections. The Progs, if they stand for anything at all, must stand for the worker, the family farm, the disenfranchised, and the hopes and dreams of a people smothered by too many generations of capitalist domination, economic hardships, and the erosion of democratic participation in the world around them. The end that must be kept in sight is not one where a majority is achieved in the State House, but rather one where the people themselves are the masters of their own fate and where the wealth of society and means of production are owned and controlled by the many and not the few. Even if the Progressives won 100 seats in the Vermont House of Representatives and the Governorship too, there is no reason to think that this alone

would translate into the re-em-



Dave Zuckerman

powerment of the Town Meeting system or the establishment of worker and farmer cooperatives on a meaningful scale. At best the Progs, as an electoral, social-democratic force, can help alleviate some of the pains which our inequitable social and economic system necessitates. Folks need housing, good jobs, healthcare, education, and healthy affordable food. However, rent control, union solidarity, socialized healthcare, and reasonable social services are all reforms that a successful Progressive Party could conceivably help deliver. But as to the basic structural changes that a more free and equitable society would call for, that is a task for the people directly, and all an allied electoral political party can do in this regard is not to act as an obstruction. Real *fundamental* change for the better will never come out the other side of a voting booth or a legislative bill (no matter how well intended). But in the meantime folks need to live, and to live better than the old parties of the establishment are willing to concede. So until the revolution, comrade, good night and good luck. -CT



(Economy Continued From Cover)

force; you are invisible. Some have temporarily given up because there are no jobs in their field; some don't have reliable transportation or child care; some are caring for sick relatives; some need more education or new training. These folks are referred to as "discouraged workers" and the "marginally attached". They are counted at the national level but not for the states.

*It doesn't tell us how many of those employed are working part-time even

though they want full-time jobs ("involuntary part-time workers").

*It doesn't tell us anything about the duration of unemployment.

*It doesn't account for the under-employed who can't find work in their chosen fields.

Thus, if we are interested in knowing whether the economy is producing enough challenging, full-time, livable wage jobs for all those who want them, the unemployment rate cannot answer the question. Yet it is presented as if it does.

Here is an example of how the data is misused. In her most recent press release, the Commissioner of the VT Dept. of Labor said, "The nation's housing and financial services crisis continues to impact Vermont's labor market. Seasonally adjusted employment improved a bit in September, but the unemployment rate ticked up to 5.2%."

While it's true that the national downturn is affecting VT, the slide began long before these recent events.
(Continued Next Page)

"The gods of the valleys, are not the gods of the hills."

-Ethan Allan

"Man is truly free only among equally free men; the slavery of even one human being violates humanity and negates the freedom of all."

-Mikhail Bakunin



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(Economy From Previous Next Page)

After rebounding from the last recession, VT's private sector job growth peaked in Nov. 2006 and it's been downhill since then.

And the only reason "seasonally adjusted employment improved a bit in September" is because of government jobs. There were no net new private sector jobs last month. Indeed, we've had either zero or negative private sector job growth for 14 of the last 21 months.

The Commissioner's characterization of the increase in unemployment ("ticked up to 5.2%") is an interesting choice of words. We've only had a monthly "tick" like that - an increase of 0.3% - five times in the last 72 months. And it should be viewed as a percentage of the change over the past year: the 1.3% rise from a year ago is a 34% increase!

Finally, if we step away from percentages and get back to real people,

there are almost 5,000 more Vermonters unemployed now than one year ago. Although it's on the web site, the Commissioner didn't mention that in the press release (and neither did the media).

Vermont's rate is often compared to the national rate. The governor is fond of saying that it's lower than the U.S., which implies that things are going OK (and that he is somehow responsible). But the Vermont rate has been lower than the national rate for most of the last 30 years. We don't know why but it appears to be structural and has nothing to do with current economic development policies.

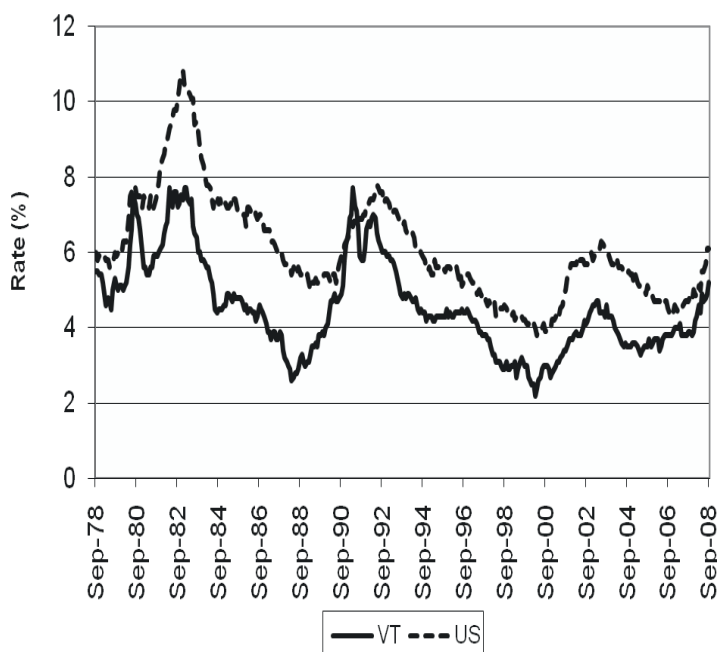
We also hear elected officials refer to the number of jobs created. Sounds good, right? But it's tricky. First, are they talking about "employment" or "jobs"? Employment includes the self-employed, most of whom have no security, get no paid sick time or holidays,

pay double payroll taxes, and have no employer-assisted health or retirement benefits. It works for some but for many it's a stop gap between jobs and does not really pay the bills. Most people need the security and benefits of a job. So why focus on a measure that includes self-employment? I suspect because it allows officials to use a larger number.

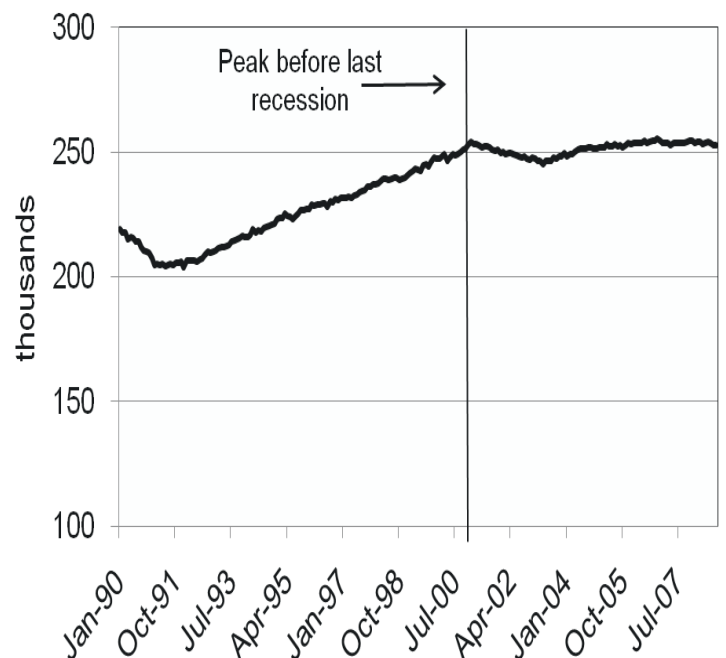
As for "jobs", that can be confusing too. If you hear someone say "jobs" without more information, it probably means total jobs, which includes government jobs (federal, state & local). But economic development policy is not directed to and has virtually no impact on public sector job growth. Furthermore, why would a conservative Republican governor (who's eliminating state jobs) try to brag about the number of government jobs?

The only measure that matters is private sector jobs. Here are

VT and U.S. Unemployment Rates



Vermont private sector jobs



the facts. After recovering the jobs lost during the last recession (a normal bounce back), we gained some jobs but peaked in November 2006. Since then, we've lost 2,700 private sector jobs and now have fewer than we did before the last recession.

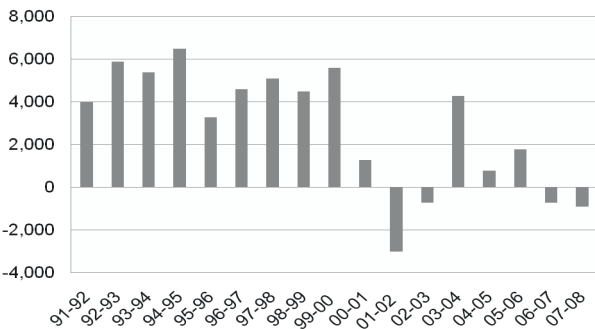
As for wages, we often hear about per capita income. But it's simply total income divided by total population. It tells us nothing about the distribution of income. And that's important because almost a quarter of all income in VT is "unearned" –

measure up. Achieving parity with the U.S. average wage would be an improvement, but it does not tell us if it's a livable wage sufficient to meet basic needs.

In any event, Vermont's average wage has tracked with the U.S. over time but the gap remains (see graph below). But just as the state's comparatively low unemployment rate cannot be attributed

median household income. [Note: This too can be confusing because some economists use median "family" income, which is a term of art and only includes households with people related by marriage, blood, or adoption. This excludes over 90,000 households.] The differences in these measures are clear: per

VT net private sector job growth Sept. to Sept.
(seasonally adjusted)



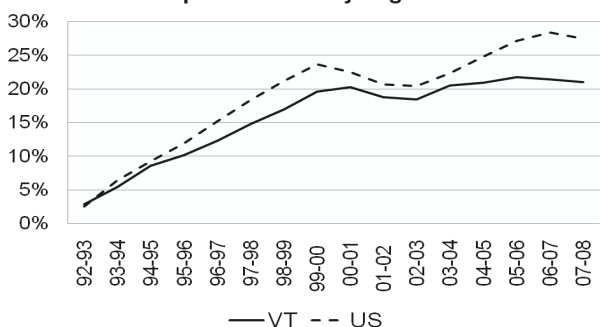
And what kind of new jobs? Over one third of all net new private sector jobs are in "social assistance" which has an average wage under \$18,000 per year. What about context? In the five years prior to the last recession, private sector jobs grew by 22,400 -- almost three times the number after the most recent recession. Prior to that, Vermont's private sector job growth tracked with the U.S. Since then, we have not kept pace.

that ignores income distribution distorts our perception of the health of the economy.

Average wages are a better measure but still have problems. Industry averages include everyone from managers to janitors and a few high paid staff can skew the number. Industry averages are useful when comparing wages across industries (e.g., retail vs. manufacturing) but little else.

As with unemployment,

Cumulative percent change: VT & U.S.
Net private sector job growth

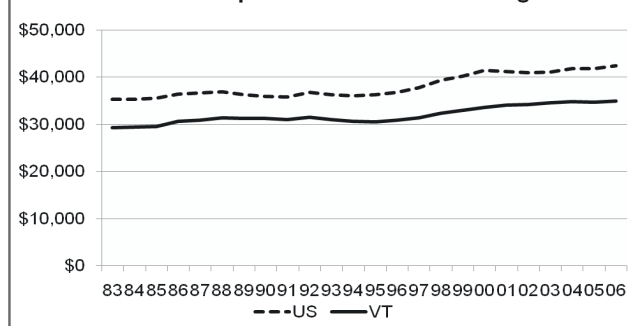


some make a point of comparing VT's average wage with the U.S. On that score, we don't

to State policies, the fact that Vermont's average wage is persistently lower than the U.S. wage suggests structural causes rather than a failure of specific

capita makes things look pretty good; average wages have increased (but don't tell us if they're sufficient to meet basic needs); in the end, the purchasing power of a median household has only grown by 5% in seventeen years. It's clear

U.S. and VT inflation adjusted avg. private sector annual wage



policies. Thus, you can't have it both ways: unemployment lower than the U.S. – my good; average wages lower than the U.S. – not my bad.

If we're interested in how families are doing, we should use

that things are not going well. This raises the question of how much the state is spending for economic development and for what. This will be the subject of a future article. —*BT*

(Earth First! Cont. From Cover)

Entergy Vermont Yankee's certificate of the public good and instead sign a large cardboard certificate of the "public bad". "We've talked with Santa Claus and clearly Entergy Nuclear has been up to no good." Said one of the elves entering the office. The group held photographs of Vermont Yankee's 2007 cooling tower collapse and 2004 transformer fire as well as giant banner reading 'Do the public a service, close VT. Yankee!'

While the Vermont Public Service Board considers granting Entergy Nuclear a Certificate of the Public Good to continue operating the 30-year-old Vernon reactor until 2032, many Vermonters question the reliability, safety and costs associated with clean up. "Due to accidents, leaks and decay Entergy is regularly having to power down, decontaminate workers and scramble to keep a clean image in the media. They want to keep this kind of behavior going for another 25 years! We say no way!" exclaimed Bill Smith, an impassioned Vermonter at the demonstration.

In an effort to receive a twenty-year license extension, Entergy is claiming that it will not have the money to pay for decommissioning the plant until 2026. According to Green Mt. Earthfirst!er Erik Gillard "Entergy is leading us on. They haven't given a penny to the decommissioning fund since they bought the place, yet they're promising \$60 million twenty years down the road. They're trying to bribe the state to renew the license." Earlier this month, Entergy said the decommissioning

fund was valued at \$397 million, that's \$43 million short of where the fund stood before the stock market fell in October. "And the bribe isn't guaranteed!" Gillard adds.

The Public Service Board refused to sign the group's 'certificate of public no good' and was met with a blizzard of 'styrofoam snow' —which exuded an extreme stench. "Bad decisions around this issue have brought the PSB an early and cold nuclear winter." said one demonstrator. Concerned about possible toxicity the PSB called the Fire Department and temporarily evacuated two floors. "if they are worried about potentially hazardous substances they ought to close VT Yankee. That place dumps radioactive waste on Vermont land daily." said Gillard.

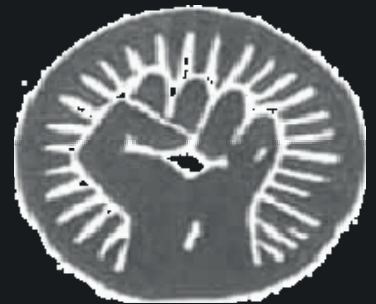
When asked about the event, the man posing as Santa Claus responded, "Entergy Nuclear Vermont Yankee is dangerous, dirty and out of control. They've been lying and cheating Vermont for years. They are on the bad list and deserve a certificate of the public no-good. The PSB needs to know-ho-ho this."

The PSB reported that clean up after the action cost them \$800. No protesters were arrested, and Montpelier Police Chief Anthony Facos said that no further investigation is planned.

The action came on the heels of a major Earth First! Gathering (Oct. 30-Nov. 3rd) in Southern Vermont, which was held on a farm just outside Brattleboro. The gathering drew supporters from

across the Northeast and included activist workshops and plenty of beer. —*ET*

*[*Note from CT News: Many Vermonters would like to see Vermont Yankee replaced with publicly owned, union run, green energy facilities such as large scale wind and additional hydro. CT News believes that Entergy & the State should be compelled to retrain Vermont Yankee workers, many of whom are unionized, to build and operate these new green facilities. These workers must be part of our energy future too.]*



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U.S. NATIONAL NEWS

DECLARATION OF WAR, OR CEASE FIRE? EARTH LIBERATION FRONT CHALLENGES OBAMA ON ENVIRONMENT

Washington, D.C. - The North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office (NAELFPO) challenged the incoming Obama Administration Tuesday to take



immediate action to reverse the trend of global warming and environmental destruction.

"The incoming Obama Administration's plan for the environment, or lack thereof, may very well influence the activities of the Earth Liberation Front throughout the next four years," stated Lisa Nesbitt, one of four new press officers for the NAELFPO. "The \$150 million in damages caused by the ELF in the last decade to environmentally destructive corporations was, in part, a direct response to the refusal of the U.S. Government to take necessary measures to stop environmental destruction."

The Earth Liberation Front (E.L.F.) is an international, underground movement consisting of autonomous groups of people who engage in direct actions to protect the planet. Formed in 1992 in Brighton, England as an offshoot of the

Earth First! organization, the E.L.F. has been active in the United States since 1996. Since that time the group has conducted dozens of actions across the coun-

try and North America resulting in over \$150 million in damages. Notorious E.L.F. actions have included the \$24 million arson attack at Colorado's Vail Ski Resort in 1998 and the \$50 million arson attack on a five-story condominium project in San Diego, CA in 2003.

Since the year 2001, the E.L.F. has been considered the top domestic terror threat by the F.B.I.

"The U.S. Government has refused to sign the Kyoto Protocol, refused to permanently protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), refused to stop the logging of national forests, and refused to heighten the Energy Act standards for light cars, trucks and commercial vehicles - the greatest contributor to global warming," Nesbitt continued. "We have one message for the incoming Obama Administration: act to protect the environment or the E.L.F. will." -*et*

THE 2008 REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION RIOTS & PROTESTS:

WHAT IS TO BE LEARNED?

By Will Dunbar

Middlesex, Vermont- When activists, liberals, and radicals descended on St Paul, MN, to protest the 2008 Republican National Convention a couple of months ago, they arrived with the hopes of disrupting the Convention, voicing their distaste for the platform and tactics of the conservative movement, and demonstrating to the powers that be that they will not sit idly by as our world is sold off to the highest bidder at the expense- and exploitation- of working people the world over. At the end of the week, nearly 1,000 people had been arrested, thousands had been injured by police violence, thousands more had been given a first-hand showing of how little the “rule of law” matters to police forces, and the program, comfort, and message of the GOP and other authoritarian elements of the State had been shaken.

Throughout the past decade, the anti-authoritarian left has gone through some rapid changes in the United States. The “summit hoping” street demonstrations that began at the 1999 Seattle WTO enjoyed several years of increased militancy and sophistication before slowing to near non-existence and ineffectiveness over the second half of the past ten years. Partially, this



slowing was the result of several key elements of the movement re-assessing the effectiveness and long-term strategy of such actions within the overall goal of building a popular movement capable of challenging and dismantling capitalism and the State; partially this slowing came as the increasingly formulaic nature of such demonstrations limited the effectiveness and creativity of street actions while simultaneously strengthening the (police) State’s ability to respond and squelch such protests.

Organizers for the RNC protests sought to change all this. Over a year and a half before the RNC, a coalition of local radicals joined with committed organizers from other corners of the country in order to plan, coordinate, and implement a multi-layered and diverse array of actions and street tactics which- they hoped- would allow for an optimal amount of disruption of the RNC and the city of St Paul. They sought to plan and coordinate, not in a top-down and controlling manner but in an open and embracing one, a week of demonstrations that could serve to effectively challenge the illusion of the State’s authority, discredit the Republi-

can vision of what our world should look like, and expose to the light the horrific and anti-human nature of the State itself. In many ways, they were more successful than any street protest in the U.S. in recent memory.

The RNC Welcoming Committee, as this organizing body named itself, had a few things going for it that were not so much their own doing but which they nonetheless were able to capitalize on. Most glaringly, after eight years of rule under the far-right Bush regime, dissent and militant rejection of the status quo is at a high unmemorable to millions of Americans. Along with this, the relatively progressive and “common sense” nature of the people of Minnesota’s Twin Cities meant that not only were there a number of solid and experienced resources and organizations already on the ground, but expanding popular support for radicals and radical action throughout the population was easier than, say, if the RNC were being staged in Houston or Atlanta.

One thing that the RNC Welcoming Committee was able to accomplish quite successfully was to allow differing groups of

radicals- with differing priorities and preferred tactics- to engage on the streets without having to solidify through spokescouncil meetings into a larger body with a unified plan of action. The RNCWC did develop a mission statement and a document of unifying principles under which participating factions could operate, but the decentralized nature of this structure allowed those interested in closing down highway ramps to do so, those interested in holding intersections to do so, those interested in marching on the convention center to do so, and those interested in other tactics to do so. Of course, this was only possible as a result of the large numbers that were preparing to go to St Paul, but it illustrates the effectiveness of the nature of anti-authoritarian organizing.

And the results on the ground were impressive. The RNCWC was able to successfully coordinate with various blocs which groups would take which tactics, and so amongst the pagan bloc, the IWW anti-capitalist bloc, the black bloc, the student-oriented “funk the war” bloc, and others there was a consorted effort to hold various different main thorough fares leading into downtown and to the convention center itself. Along with this, smaller affinity groups were enabled, and given the umbrella support of RNCWC coordinated support networks such as legal, media, and medical teams, to “lock down” and block highway off ramps and other secondary arteries with very small numbers. The de-centralized nature of hitting the streets on multiple fronts enjoyed the effect of splitting police forces and bringing near chaos to their efforts to control protestors.

In addition, the RNCWC was able to successfully coordinate the more militant blocs in a manner

that gave room- notably without insurmountable conflict- to less militant protest groups which were also in the streets to protest the RNC. Chiefly among these, the “Poor People’s March”, consisting of thousands of local working class people (predominantly African Americans) who wanted to march on the RNC and demand an end to the poverty which Republican rule had exasperated upon them, was able to plan their march in a manner which did not place them directly in danger of street clashes between anarchists and police. As one militant bloc, attempting to outmaneuver riot cops in the streets, joined up with the Poor People’s March, march organizers spoke into their megaphones: “for you folks dressed in black, if you’re going to join us on our march, we welcome you! we just ask that you remain in the back so that we don’t get attacked by the police- we’ve got children and elderly people up here”.

Among the various militant blocs on the streets, the IWW anti-capitalist bloc and another, fairly classical looking black bloc, both demonstrated levels of maturity and tactical sophistication that seem noteworthy in the recent history of street militancy. Both these blocs marched in tight formations, employing banners on all four sides to demarcate their ranks and keep-out, as best as possible, agent provocateurs who were running rampant throughout St Paul, and both these blocs worked with internally established goals, signals, and roles for various individuals. The relative sophistication of their structures allowed for these two blocs to successfully operate on the streets of St Paul throughout the entire week of the RNC, and at various times to successfully hold major intersections and in fact blockade a number of delegate buses on their way to the

convention center. Less militantly focused groups were provided with other outlets- such as the “party empire away” oriented “Funk the War” bloc, so that these more militant blocs were able to operate along lines which allowed for more confrontational- and coordinated-tactics. This, in turn, left police units in chaos and unable to adapt accordingly to the varying tactics of differing blocs, which turned into a PR nightmare for the SPPD and the Ramsey County sheriff office, who over the course of the week were increasingly being asked to be accountable for the heavy-handed tactics.

George Bush never made it to the RNC, and in fact the entire schedule of events was largely thrown out of order. The GOP blamed this on hurricanes in the Gulf, and no doubt Bush’s failure to show came down in part to the simple fact that no one, not even Republicans, are interested in aligning themselves and their reputations with such an unpopular president, but the simple fact of the matter is that for an entire week anti-authoritarians and other demonstrators were hugely successful in exposing the illegitimacy of the government’s claim to have “control” of the population, and the shocking degree of violence which they’re willing to wield in order to stamp-out decent. Most importantly, anti-authoritarians demonstrated that such a strategy can prove highly successful in confronting police forces on the street as well as moving the mainstream press- albeit very slowly- in line with our message. When reporters for Fox News find themselves being swept-up in police riots and mass arrests, it becomes hard to spin the story.-*et*



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-PINE-

By Jagelyn Rieke

Pine Tea

This winter, if you can't walk on a beach in Florida and pluck fresh citrus from an orange tree, then get your vitamin C from a hearty Vermont pine. White pine or black spruce needles can be finely chopped and steeped in hot water for an aromatic tea rich in vitamins A and C. (What a widely available, inexpensive way to keep your tea cupboard stocked! It's not free though; for maximum nutritional value, pay your respects.) According to Peterson's Field Guide, pine needles can be gathered for tea all year round, but the light green needles from the Spring shoots make the best tea.

Spruce Masseuse

A tea of Black Spruce needles can be added to bath water to soothe aching muscles. This tip came from *The Uses of Wild Plants*, an excellent resource recently published by Frank Tozer. I picked up my copy at The Book Garden in Montpelier.

Cedar Therapy

Evergreens are a sacred family of trees that produce a wide variety of foods and medicines. Cedar spirit is particularly regarded across a wide range of Native American peoples as ancient and healing. Keep your eye out for downed cedars. If you come across one, honor the life it led, gather some of its needles dry them, grind them in a coffee grinder and keep in an airtight container. Light a small pile of this aromatic powder, (commonly referred to as "smudge") for cleansing the energy of people and spaces.

Until the Spring, Enjoy!

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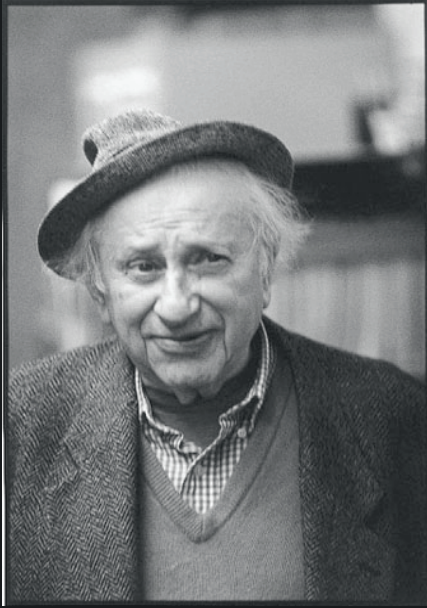
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STUDS TERKEL

Peoples' Historian 1912-2008



By Stephen Lendan

Mostly Water News Wire, Chicago, IL- Despite his advanced age, the news came as a shock. An era had passed. On October 31, author, activist, actor, broadcaster, and mensch for all seasons Louis "Studs" Terkel died peacefully at his Chicago North Side home at age 96. Already weakened by other ailments, his health declined further from a fall in his home two weeks earlier.

His son Dan paid tribute to his father. He "led a long, full, eventful, sometimes tempestuous, but very satisfying life." He was the master of oral history. Calvin Trillin called him "America's pre-eminent listener" that was "all the more remarkable when you consider that he (was) a prodigious talker." On jazz to world affairs. His soap-opera days to the state of the nation. Interviews with entertainers, artists, politicians, philosophers and social critics. Figures like Bertrand Russell, John Kenneth Galbraith, Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, Zero Mostel, and Margaret Mead. Others he knew like Mahalia Jackson, David Dellinger, Nelson Algren, and Eugene Debs. The greats and near-greats but mostly ordinary people.

Whose lives and experiences he docu-

OBITUARIES

mented in his oral histories. Guerrilla journalism he called them. What he's best remembered for. In books like *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression*. *Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do*. *The Good War*. *The Great Divide: Second Thoughts on the American Dream*, and his 2007 book, *Touch and Go*. His memoir. Of a professional listener, talker, author, actor, and "conscience of long memory" as *The New York Times* described him. Beloved by many and by his friends. A final book coming out in November. *PS: Further Thoughts From a Lifetime of Listening*. It includes a collection of radio show transcripts, short essays and other writing.

Studs was for the little guy. Our voice of America. Against war and "in-bed-with" journalists. For a New Deal kind of country. More "reg-u-la-tion" as he said. To reign in the kind of abuses now rampant. Hold the powerful accountable. Support the public interest. Do it as our "quintessential American writer" as Congressman Dennis Kucinich called him. Our "Boswell, our Whitman, our Sandburg." Our one and irreplaceable Studs.

His Background

Born in New York in 1912, and as Studs put it: "As the Titanic went down, I came up." In 1922, his family moved to Chicago. From 1926 - 1936, they ran a rooming house at which he credits his worldly knowledge. From its tenants and people who gathered in nearby Bug-house Square. A meeting place for workers, labor organizers, dissidents, the unemployed, and all sorts of others of many persuasions. A place to speak publicly. They did and still do today. A few blocks from this writer's home.

In 1934, Studs got philosophy and law degrees at the University of Chicago but chose other endeavors. He worked briefly in the civil service in Washington. Then back to Chicago in a WPA Writers Project's radio division. It got him into soap operas, stage performances, and a

radio news show.

After one year in the Air Force he was discharged with perforated eardrums. A condition resulting from childhood surgeries. Back home, he wrote radio scripts. Then did news and sports commentary. A show of his own followed, and a television program called *Studs Place*. Another radio show called *The Wax Museum* primarily for jazz, but it also included opera, gospel, country and folk music. He promoted artists like Mahalia Jackson, Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie and Burl Ives. Interviewed jazz greats like Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong and Billie Holiday. Wrote about them in his *Giants of Jazz* book.

Interviewing came accidentally on his award-winning *Studs Terkel Program*. It led to his "transforming oral history into a popular literary form....a serious genre" as *New York Times* writer William Grimes put it. He had a remarkable ability to get others to talk about themselves, their lives and work. That combined with his diverse knowledge of many topics gained his program widespread popularity.

In the 1950s during the McCarthy era, he was blackballed from commercial radio but found work in the theater. In 1952, he joined Chicago's WFMT. The city's preeminent fine arts and classical music station.

He was honored with many awards including the Pulitzer Prize for *The Good War*.

Tributes and Eulogies

After his death, praise followed. The *London Guardian* called him a "master chronicler of American life in the 20th century, veteran radical and vibrant soul of the midwestern capital of Chicago." *Chicago Tribune* writer Patrick Reardon called him a "voice (for) the voiceless" and said he was the only white writer to be inducted into the International Literary Hall of Fame for Writers of African Descent at Chicago State University. By unanimous approval after being nominated. The man who did it called "America a better place as a result of Studs Terkel being here." -CT

"I am a hardy mountaineer and scorn to be intimidated by threats. If they fright me, they must absolutely produce some of

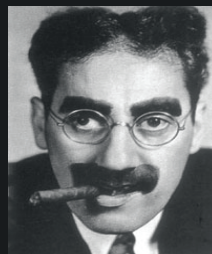
Their tremendous fire, and give me a sensitive scorching." -Ethan Allen

"The gods of the valleys are not the gods of the hills." -Ethan Allen



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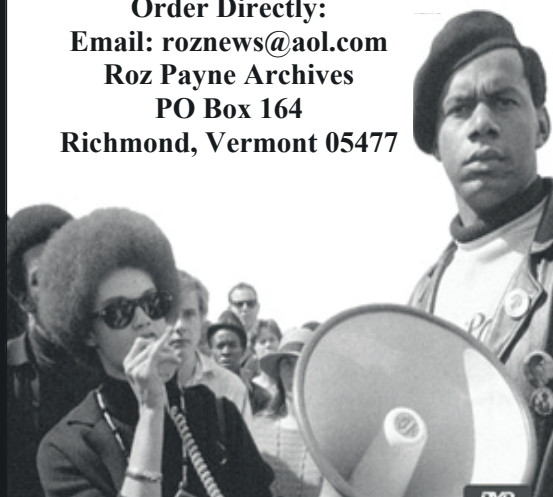
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