

FROM THE GROUND UP

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Boycott of US Tobacco-Owned Wines Called

Mexican-American vineyard workers at the Chateau Ste. Michelle and Columbia Crest wineries in Washington have decided to take on the UST (formerly US Tobacco)-owned company in order to win higher wages and better working conditions. More than 200 workers, represented by the United Farmworkers of Washington State (UFWWS), called the nationwide boycott in June of 1991 after the winery did not honor workers' requests to unionize. Farmworkers are urging consumers not to buy **Columbia Crest or Chateau Ste. Michelle** wines and asking proprietors to discontinue selling the wines.

Some of the conditions workers seek to improve:

- Vineyard workers often work up to 90 hours a week in extremely dangerous and demanding conditions—but do not receive overtime pay
- In 1992, US Tobacco reported a profit of \$450 million, while vineyard workers real wages have decreased 15% since 1987
- Women vineyard workers earn 30% less than males workers; there are no female foremen
- Since 1987 the workers have requested that the company abide by the results of a union election. UST has aggressively denied this request. (See "Boycott", page 4)

SAF ORIENTATION: A Short Journey

During the last week of May, 21 unsuspecting college students walked through the doors of the Short Journey Center in Smithfield, NC. For many of these eager people, the trip was long. Many would be meeting members of the group for the first time. "... Am I in the right place?"

Ice-breakers marked the beginning of the **SAF 1993 Summer Internship and Leadership Development Program**. From "Duck, Duck, Sarah" to flying tennis balls, everyone learned the names and interests of their fellow SAF interns. Through fun and games, the interns made new friends and rekindled old acquaintances.



photo by C. Corrie

On the other hand, the week focused on the interns' purpose for being there: to learn more about farmworkers and their needs. Scheduled throughout each day were speakers representing the various areas that encompass a migrant or seasonal farmworker's life. Pam DiStefano, attorney from Farmworkers Legal Services of NC, explained and answered questions regarding the legal rights (See "Orientation", page 6)

SAF interns learn about pesticides through skit.

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A word from the director . . .

I'm discovering that it's not easy to put down on paper all the emotions of a year of work and learning that have been my experience with Student Action with Farmworkers. We want this newsletter to be a forum for ideas from across the country about the ways young people can best become involved with farmworker service, advocacy and community organizing efforts. In this issue, I will start at "the beginning" and give an overview of the history we are now all a part of—students, farmworkers, sponsoring agencies, funders, and other friends of SAF.

The idea of bringing college students together with migrant and seasonal farmworker families for mutual learning is not new. SAF grew most directly out of a summer internship program sponsored by the Center for Documentary Studies (CDS) at Duke University in which thirteen other students and I participated in 1990. The faculty advisor was Dr. Robert Coles, a documentary writer, child psychologist, professor and advocate for the poor, who had been concerned since the 1960s with the situation of migrant children and families. In addition, Dr. Coles has inspired college students over the past twenty years to take time to enter the migrant world—both to learn and to help.

The first group of students effected by Dr. Coles' teaching on migrants ventured into rural North Carolina in the summer of 1976. Duke undergrad and graduate students documented farmworker conditions across the state which formed the basis for a US Civil Rights Commission hearing. The administration of the program transferred among other student groups, but for the next 7 years students from Duke and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill worked in eastern NC in the areas of health, education and legal services.

In the mid-eighties, the Leadership Program of Duke's Public Policy Department began a summer internship program called Interns in Conscience. One of the sites was south Florida, where Duke students worked with the

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farmworker community until 1989. In 1990, the CDS started its summer program in eastern North Carolina, modeled after the Leadership program but including a documentary component.

The CDS program was funded by a grant from the US Department of Education. One interest of Coles and the USDE was to see how college student volunteers could have an impact on the education of migrant children. We soon discovered that education involved many more aspects of children's lives than the schoolroom, and expanded the program to include legal services, health, ESL, ministry and advocacy. After graduation in 1991, I wrote a resource manual to help students at other schools start similar programs and began to develop plans for SAF. I discovered a network of young people committed to public service and a network of farmworker-related nonprofits, yet few if any connections between them—a gap we hope for SAF to fill. I spent last summer talking to a variety of people involved in student service and with farmworkers. There seemed to be interest in the idea of SAF, and all of a sudden things started to happen. We formed a board, applied for our non-profit, tax-exempt status, and started trying to raise funds.

It is hard to believe that SAF has made it this far in one year: thirty-two interns from 11 schools for our very first summer. We have learned a great deal about how to be an effective organization, one that I hope will continue to provide support to our nation's farmworkers. Of course, we must never forget that our ultimate goal is to work ourselves out of a job, and dissolve SAF. If we are truly effective in our work, farmworkers will one day have the respect, rights, income and opportunities they deserve and the need for Student Action with Farmworkers will be about as great as the current need for a Student Action with Dentists or Student Action with Lawyers.

Until that day, much work remains for us all. Please continue to support SAF, and throughout our newsletter you will learn about other ways we can each have an impact on improving conditions for farmworkers. If you ever have any questions, please call me.

Carolyn



NOTES FROM THE FIELD

S.C. STATE RECEIVES GRANT

This summer South Carolina State University students are meeting the needs of migrant education within the Midland area. This project resulted from a grant, entitled *Migrant Education—A Cooperative Effort in Cross-Cultural Understanding*, awarded by the Department of Health and Human Services in October 1992. This grant was offered by HHS specifically to historically black colleges and universities so as to foster healthy multi-racial relations.

Under the leadership of Dr. Patty Pollard, Assistant Professor of Modern Languages at S. C. State, the project offers ESL classes to Latino farmworkers, as well as aid to African-American workers who have educational needs. Assisting Dr. Pollard in these classes are two other SCSU faculty members and a student team. The team will also:

- assist workers in accessing governmental agencies and health clinics
- translate and distribute appropriate Spanish materials (SC drivers' study guides, facts about AIDS)
- offer guidance classes to migrant women and children on nutrition and health

The team office is located at Hope Lutheran Church, Vance, South Carolina.

Enthusiasm Drives UVa Volunteers

It is the last Tuesday of classes at the University of Virginia, and the volunteers who have come to teach at the migrant camp all semester return to mark the end of the program. These young "teachers" leave their offerings of chips and egg salad on the large picnic table. Soon these items are joined by a large pot of beans, a stack of tortillas, a dish of rice, and a pot of chicken in hot sauce. Before dinner, Miguel, who lives at a different camp but has come for the picnic, works to put up the pinata with Estabon, a UVa student from Argentina. After everyone has eaten, it is time to break the pinata, and the blindfolded children are misled by cries of "Higher! Higher!" and "Bajo! Bajo!"

The Migrant Aid tutoring and literacy program serves everyone at the camp. Laura Yamhure, the director of the volunteer program and a student at UVa, explains that the "purpose of the tutoring program is really to provide them with instruction at the level they need. So for some people it's a matter of understanding how to fill out forms and for some people it's conversation. Some people aren't literate in Spanish and we're just doing basic literacy skills." On a typical evening, some volunteers help children with their homework, others go over basic shopping vocabulary with couples, and others play spelling bingo with the single men. All the volunteers are UVa students recruited through Madison House, the office of volunteer services for the University of Virginia.

The Migrant Aid Program is the joint effort of Madison House and Albermarle County. Even though the county can provide certain amounts of funding, structure, and continuity, (See "Enthusiasm", p. 4)



photo by Judy Leeman

Shannon, Adrian, and Tammy moments before the tickling broke out.

