



Our Global Obligation

Presented By: Student Advocates for Social Justice

**“We are workers, not master builders: ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets of a future not our own.”**

Archbishop Oscar Romero

Local News

CLEVELAND — As the Treasurer of Cuyahoga County in Ohio, Jim Rokakis spends a lot of his time trying to deal with Cleveland's foreclosure crisis.

When asked recently just how bad it is, Rokakis unfurled a six-foot by four-foot Cleveland city plot map. Each lot was covered with dots of red ink where foreclosed homes filled the plots. From a few feet away, the map looked heavily freckled, while some neighborhoods nearly melted together in crimson masses.

Foreclosures hit Cleveland early and hard. By the summer of 2007, it had four of the top 21 ZIP codes for foreclosure filings in the United States. According to RealtyTrac, the city's 44105 ZIP, known as the Slavic Village, was the hardest hit U.S. community with 783 filings. What made Cleveland the nation's foreclosure epicenter?

Like most rust-belt cities, it's suffered serious economic setbacks. The city

lost jobs at more than three times the national rate during 2001 through 2003 and has not had a meaningful recovery since, according to Richard DeKaser, chief economist at Cleveland-based mortgage lender National City Corp. The state of Ohio recorded a quarter of all U.S. manufacturing job losses since 2001.

Add considerable population shrinkage: With 450,000 people, Cleveland has fewer than half the residents it boasted in 1950, when only six cities in the nation were larger.

According to Rokakis, Cleveland got hammered because lax governmental oversight from the state allowed Wild-West lending. "No one was watching," he said. "There was no sheriff in town. The state legislature was dominated by banking interests."

For more please visit http://money.cnn.com/2007/11/12/real_estate/Cleveland_foreclosure_factors/

- **S.A.S.J. meets every Wednesday at 4:00 in the chapel. Please come and join us.**

National News

APPALACHIA — As many coal mining companies move out of the region after years of creating economic and environmental havoc, more and more area residents find themselves unemployed or working at low wage jobs.

June 17, 2004 — Almost 40 years since the Johnson administration announced a program to fight poverty in Appalachia, many people there struggle to afford basic food and shelter.

But for people like Larry and Iva Barkley, little has changed. The couple, interviewed by the AP, lives in Lower Turkey-foot Township, Pennsylvania. Larry has been on disability for two years and needs a heart transplant. His wife, Iva, who

was severely burned in a fire as a child, cannot get a job because she fears losing her husband's government-funded health coverage. Once their youngest son graduates from high school, their monthly income -- in the form of a Social Security check -- will be just \$810.

The family survives by hunting and eating deer and pheasants. "If it wasn't for shooting a deer and a few pheasants, we wouldn't have any red meat except for maybe a piece of beef once in a while," Larry told the AP. Iva cans food from the garden for the family to eat during the winter. The couple spends about \$45 a month at the grocery store.

For more please visit http://newstandardnews.net/content/?action=show_item&itemid=565

Student Advocates for Social Justice

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A Note from the Leadership Team,

The leadership team of S.A.S.J. is excited to publish Our Global Obligation, an ongoing weekly bulletin that will inform and educate the St. Martin's community about social justice issues. So, be on the lookout for upcoming issues, and feel free to email the leadership team with any questions or comments.

God Bless!



International News

VENEZUELA, South America — Venezuela is undergoing massive social change, to the delight of many and the alarm of some. The changes have important political and economic as well as social implications, because the intention of President Hugo Chavez is to move from a deeply unequal society based on a neo-liberal economic model to a socialist model which he hopes will transform the lives of the poor. The rejection of a neo-liberal model is due partly to the disastrous impoverishment of the Venezuelan people after the previous oil boom ended in the late 1980s, when the percentage of poor Venezuelans rose from 28% to 68 per cent in 2003. In the developed world it is often hard to understand the huge social and economic shocks developing countries are vulnerable to, particularly when they are dependent on one or two main export products, income inequalities are acute and social institutions are weak.

Chavez has been in power since 1999, and has weathered a variety of crises. These include an unsuccessful coup (2002), a crippling oil strike (2003) which resulted in the firing of 20,000 oil workers and technicians and the nationalization of the oil industry, as well as constitutional election recall via a petition signed by 2 million citizens in 2004, the outcome of which was his re-election.

More recently university students were at the forefront of demonstrations against a proposed new constitution which they perceived as anti-democratic. People in the world of finance and business also expressed concern that the Central Bank might lose its independence.

For more visit http://www.share-international.org/archives/social-justice/sj_venezuelan-revolution.htm

Beacon of Light

NEW YORK, New York — Marilyn Bergman, President of The ASCAP Foundation, today announced that legendary singer, recording artist and songwriter Judy Collins will be presented with The ASCAP Foundation Champion Award for music in the service of vital causes dedicated to a better world on Wednesday, December 10, 2008 in New York.

The presentation will highlight the thirteenth annual ASCAP Foundation Awards Ceremony to be held at the Allen Room, Frederick P. Rose Hall, Home of Jazz at Lincoln Center in Manhattan. The invitation-only event will honor a wide variety of Scholarship and Award recipients, all of whom benefit from programs of The ASCAP Foundation.

Judy Collins has a long and distinguished

record as a social activist and humanitarian. In the 1960s, her beautiful voice rang out for civil rights and in opposition to the Vietnam War. An early environmentalist, Collins dedicated her best-selling 1970 album, "Whales and Nightingales," to saving the endangered humpback species of whale.

For many years, Collins has served as a UNICEF representative with a special interest in the campaign to destroy existing landmines and abolish their use. In recent decades, Collins has also become a visible and outspoken advocate for the prevention of suicide and for the understanding of victims of depression and substance abuse.

For more visit <http://www.marketwatch.com/news/story/Judy-Collins-Be-Recognized-With/story.aspx?guid=%7B262FA15B-6186-48E4-8533-22688747DA8C%7D>