

New Ground

#171

March – April, 2017

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<http://newgroundcdsa.wordpress.com>

2017 Debs – Thomas – Harrington Dinner to Honor Larry Cohen and Adriana Alvarez Keynote by Alderman Carlos Ramirez Rosa

by Bob Roman

The 2017 Eugene V. Debs – Norman Thomas – Michael Harrington Dinner will be held Friday, May 19, at the Crowne Plaza Chicago West Loop, Madison & Halsted, on Chicago's near west side. This will be the 59th annual dinner. We have a great evening lined up, and you are invited to attend!

For those of you new to the movement, the Dinner is something of a Chicago institution that predates DSA. It began in 1958 under the auspices of the newly merged Socialist Party – Social Democratic Federation (SP-SDF) as Chicago's Debs Day Dinner, much as Republicans had (and often still have) Lincoln dinners and Democrats likewise Jefferson – Jackson dinners. It quickly gained some success as a platform for notable speakers such as Sid Lens, Bayard Rustin, Chicago's Leon Despres, James Farmer, Norman Thomas and Michael Harrington. After Norman Thomas died, the event became the Norman Thomas – Eugene V. Debs Dinner. In 1971, it became an awards dinner as well as a speaker's platform. The SP-SDF fell apart and the event was taken over by Michael Harrington's Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee. When they merged with the New American Movement, it was taken over

by the resulting Democratic Socialists of America. You can find more the history at chicagodsa.org/dthdin.html.

(Dinner continued on Page 6)



A. Philip Randolph and Norman Thomas at the 1959 Debs Dinner. Photo by Syd Harris.



Michael Harrington speaking at the 1986 Thomas – Debs Dinner. Chicago Teachers Union President Jacqueline Vaughn was also honored at that Dinner. Photo by Syd Harris.



Italian labor leader and socialist Egidio Clemente (left) accepts the award from DSOC's Carl Shier (center) while soon-to-be Chicago Mayor Harold Washington looks on at the 1981 Thomas – Debs Dinner. Ed Broadbent of the Canadian New Democratic Party and feminist UAW leader Mildred Jeffrey spoke at that Dinner that is remembered to this day for the length of the speeches. Photo by Syd Harris.

CHICAGO DSA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING • JANUARY 14, 2017

Co-chair Bill Barclay called the meeting to order in the Chicago DSA office at 12:10 PM.

MINUTES of the December 10, 2016, meeting were approved as presented.

TREASURER: Strobel presented a written report showing a balance of \$12,786.45 in all accounts.

NATIONAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE: Strobel made an extensive report on national developments including the receipt of a large bequest and several large donations, the hiring of additional staff, the availability of graphic design services for chapters, political priorities, the proliferation of DSA organizing committees, working groups and commissions.

DEBS DINNER: Roman presented a written progress report. The meeting was comfortable with the proposed price increase. Discussion of proposed honorees and speakers. Roman noted that while we had some Dinner envelopes in stock, we were generally out. Authorized to have more printed. Next Dinner Committee meeting Tuesday, January 31, 7 PM @ CDSA office. DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM 101: Barclay presented a progress report. Discussion of publicity. Roman to do Facebook event page. Strobel to find what graphics are available from the national organization. Roman to provide Hudson with phone list of new members for possible phone bank. Roman to do email blast. Discussion of Facebook advertising. Consensus was to do Facebook advertising if the turnout looked lame by the week of. Discussion of Twitter. Volunteers for set-up: Broderick, Winegar, Roman.

INAUGURATION PROTEST: Hudson reported. Discussion of DSA speaker, banner and poster logistics, and meet-up (Dearborn & Washington near flame?).

WOMEN'S MARCH ON CHICAGO: Greater Oak Park is meeting at the Ridgeland station; Alcott will handle the banner and designate a meeting spot.

TABLING: Broderick reported on the Farmers' Market on Sunday,

February 5. Took names of more volunteers.

ANTI-RACISM TRAINING: Schlatter gave a positive review of an anti-racism workshop done by Crossroads Anti-Racism that she had attended.

NEW GROUND: Roman reported.

TALKIN' SOCIALISM: The date for episode 72 on the economy is still undetermined. Discussion of interview with Thomas Grace; Barclay will follow up. Roman will follow up re: Early.

CAF BOWLATHON: Strobel is looking for volunteers to organize a Chicago DSA team in this fundraising event.

RAPID RESPONSE TEAM: Barclay proposed; Schlatter agreed to coordinate.

The meeting was adjourned somewhat after 2 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Roman, secretary

CHICAGO DSA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING • FEBRUARY 11, 2017

Co-Chair Bill Barclay called the meeting to order in the Chicago DSA office at about Noon.

MINUTES of the January 14, 2017, meeting were approved as presented.

TREASURER: Strobel presented a written report showing a balance of \$11,413.46 in all accounts. Discussion of branch finances, including a proposal that the branches each have their own budget line under the program line that would work something like a revolving fund to encourage branches to do their own fundraising. Branches representatives are to come back with estimates of how much they would need.

NATIONAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE: Strobel and Adair presented reports on the current state of affairs, including raising money, new swag, incorporating new members, skills training, anti-racism and other working groups.

DEBS DINNER: Roman and Winegar reported. We have honorees. Speaker and theme are yet to be determined. Will be setting up an Eventbrite account. Haven't ordered envelopes yet.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES: Discussion of outcomes of completed projects: Introduction to Democratic Socialism, anti-Trump demonstrations, Women's March, Farmers Market tabling, the north side Education Summit, activism calendar.

Broderick discussed the Oak Park sanctuary ordinance as compared to the proposed State law being backed by ICIRR that supporters contend is the best that's likely to pass, and what our position should be. The consensus seemed to be that we should continue circulating the current petition but not directly oppose the proposed State law.

Payton-Carrillo noted the upcoming south side Valentines Day happy hour and branch meeting.

Broderick reported on a recent Fight for 15 meeting and creating links between labor and the environmental movement.

Barclay reported on Our Revolution Chicago.

There was an extended discussion of a coalition being formed by Socialist Alternative for a May Day demonstration. Consensus seemed to be that the DSA members involved in the planning meetings are encouraged to continue participating and bring back any concrete plans for possible endorsement. Noted that the proposed May Day demonstration is not likely to be the only event in Chicago for the occasion.

SECURITY: Barclay and Adair reported on right-wing infiltration and hacking.

RESISTANCE: Barclay noted that this would be extra-parliamentary in the long term; leadership would come from targeted groups

and the need for a broad coalition.

MEETINGS: the need for child care at DSA meetings was noted and there was a discussion as to how that might be accomplished. Discussion whether subsequent Introduction to Democratic Socialism meetings should be branch based or by a through a planning committee.

LA SALLE STREET TAX: Barclay explained what it was, noted the coalition that Chicago DSA is a part of has found an Illinois Senate sponsor. NNU has a lobbying system that will allow phonebankers to connect people with their legislators.

NEW GROUND: Roman noted deadlines & solicited articles.

CAF BOWLATHON: Strobel is looking for volunteers.

ANTI-RACISM TRAINING: Sakol noted an upcoming informational meeting by Crossroads Anti-Racism about their training workshop. Urged DSA participation.

The meeting adjourned at 2:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Roman, secretary

CHICAGO DSA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE • MARCH 11, 2017

Co-Chair Bill Barclay called the meeting to order at Noon in the Chicago DSA office.

MINUTES: The minutes of the February 11, 2017 meeting were approved as presented.

TREASURER: Strobel presented a written report showing a balance of \$8,982.93 in all accounts. The months of February and March are difficult as we have major Dinner expenses and no income from the event.

CHICAGO JOBS WITH JUSTICE: Roman noted an invitation to join Chicago Jobs with Justice, annual dues \$100. Winegar and Roman explained JwJ and our history with it. Approved.

COMMUNICATIONS: James outlined ideas for improving communications and coordination between Chicago DSA organizations. [missing follow-up] More at the April meeting.

CDSA GEOGRAPHIC TERRITORY: Barclay presented a proposal developed by Barclay, Roman and Strobel, to revise Chicago DSA's territory motivated by the formation a West Suburban chapter. DSA's National Political Committee needs to have our proposal before April 3rd. In short, the redefined territory is Cook County minus the northwest panhandle zip codes requested by West Suburban DSA, specifically: 60017, 60019, 60022, 60025, 60026, 60027, 60029, 60043, 60053, 60062, 60065, 60068, 60076, 60077, 60082, 60091, 60093, 60104, 60105, 60130, 60131, 60141, 60153, 60154, 60155, 60160, 60161, 60162, 60163, 60164, 60165, 60171, 60176, 602*, 603*, 60402, 60406, 60409, 60411, 60412, 60413, 60415, 60419, 60422, 60425, 60426, 60429, 60430, 60438, 60443, 60445, 60452, 60453, 60454, 60455, 60456, 60457, 60458, 60459, 60461, 60462, 60463, 60464, 60465, 60466, 60467, 60469, 60471, 60472, 60473, 60475, 60476, 60477, 60478, 60480, 60482, 60497, 60499, 60501, 60513, 60524, 60525, 60526, 60534, 60546, 60547, 60558, 606*, 607*, 608*.

Regarding New Ground, the print edition has been sent to all members in Illinois. After the May – June issue, we would ask for a subscription or contribution from members outside the Chicago territory for the print edition.

Regarding the Dinner, the Dinner Committee had recommended we continue offering the member rate tickets for our old 600 through 609 territory for the 2017 Dinner.

After discussion, the proposal was approved.

BRANCHES: Barclay proposed an apportionment of branch delegates

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The opinions expressed are solely those of the authors. Contributions welcome, including letters to the editor. Letters should be less than 300 words. The deadline for the next issue is May ??, 2017.

Robert Roman, Editor
CDSA Executive Committee

*Bill Barclay, Male Co-Chair,
[vacant], Female Co-Chair,
Robert Roman, Secretary,
Peg Strobel, Treasurer*

*Alex McLeese, Political Education Director,
Aaron Armitage, City of Chicago
[vacant], City of Chicago
Alec Hudson, City of Chicago
Sandra Shimon or Tom Broderick,
Greater Oak Park DSA,*

to the Executive Committee based on the December 31, 2016, census of members: North Side – 5, South Side – 2, Oak Park – 1. The branches to provide the names of their representatives by the April meeting, and the apportionment will be revisited at the June membership convention. Approved.

The branches also need to provide estimates of monies they'll need in the FY 17-18 budget.

MEMBERSHIP CONVENTION AND ELECTIONS: Barclay announced he would not be running for re-election as Co-chair. The officers up for election in June will be male co-chair, secretary, and (as the office is vacant) female co-chair, and any other officers should vacancies occur. Discussion of venue. The ground floor of ITT is a possibility; Pierce to follow up. The meeting will be Saturday, June 10, at Noon.

NATIONAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE: Strobel reported. Discussion re: 2017 National Convention at UIC and media coverage.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING EDUCATION: Alcott and Tobin. Discussion of what do DSA members want to know? Outline of basic curriculum. Working group: Alcott, Tobin and 3 others. Target class size 40 to 60, no more. Target date April 8 or later.

ALLIANCE FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE: Winegar and Tobin presentation on the lead-up to a possible AFSCME strike against the State of Illinois. The Alliance for Community Service strategy is to build alliances between the State workers providing services and their clients. Training workshop Thursday, April 6, 7 PM, location TBD for those wanting to work.

DEBS DINNER: Roman reported. Discussion: MC, presenters, awards (plaque or trophy?), music, mailings, photography, recording.

INTRODUCTION TO DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM: Reilly reported on organizing a class in Homewood. Is reserving space in the library that can hold up to 120 for Sunday, May 7, 1:30 PM.

NEW GROUND: Roman reported.

TALKIN' SOCIALISM: Discussion of future programs. CIW episode has been recorded. Anderson will do post-production on that episode.

Boycott the Braids!

Episode 73 – Recorded March 10, 2017.

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers' (CIW) Fair Food Program in the tomato fields of Florida has eliminated modern-day slavery and sexual violence, improved farmworker wages and guaranteed basic protections for tens of thousands of workers. In this episode, Tom Broderick interviews **Lupe Gonzalo**, member and leader of CIW about how the Fair Food Program works, how it has benefited the workers in the field, the history of CIW, and just why CIW is leading a boycott of Wendy's.

Translation is provided by **Yaissy Solis**, national co-coordinator for the Student/Farmworker Alliance, a national network of students and youth working in partnership with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers.

To listen go to talkinsocialism.wordpress.com, but it's also available through the iTunes store and Stitcher.

Payton-Carrillo is doing alternate version of the theme. Broderick is working on a program for Earth Day / People's Climate March Chicago. Roman is meeting with another volunteer on Monday. **CAF BOWLATHON:** Reid outlined DSA's participation nation-wide. Chicago has a team the Chicago Abortion Fund. Reid to do an article for New Ground. Possible use of Eventbrite? DSA members actually bowling?

MAY DAY: Andrew reported that events are being consolidated. There will be a rally and march and rally beginning in Union Park. April 8th educational event, details TBD. Between Executive Committee meetings there had been some email discussion about endorsing. Roman proposed CDSA formally endorse the May Day march and rallies. Agreed.

LA SALLE STREET TAX: Barclay reported the bill has a Senate sponsor, Omar Aquino. The LaSalle Street Tax Coalition (CDSA is a member) is focusing on the Illinois Senate Finance Committee members. NNU is lending its phone banking system. Barclay proposed CDSA focus on Silverstein, District 8, starting by having DSA constituents set up a meeting and, depending on outcome, do one or more phone banking events. Roman to provide District 8 list.

BRANCHES: Kaderbeck reported on PAC discussion on procedural issues. Pierce reported on data needs and member survey.

FIGHT FOR 15: Broderick reported on minimum wage bill. He has

been attending organizing meetings but solicited a stand-in for 3/15.

WELCOMING ILLINOIS PETITION: Broderick noted legislation introduced in Illinois and Ruane's verbal support of the idea. Solicited participation from branches. Broderick and Barclay authorized to decide on petition printing; Broderick has already gotten quotes.

UNITED WORKING FAMILIES: Hudson followed up on an earlier (2016) discussion of possibly affiliating with United Working Families. Hudson to come back with specifics. Strobel requested more background. Post script: Hudson has reported that the dues for non-union organizations is a dollar per member per year with tiered numbers of votes on the board, depending on the number of members. If we were to vote to join, the United Working Families board would have to vote to accept our membership.

PEOPLE'S CLIMATE MARCH: Alcott reported on the April 29 event. There will also be busses going to the main event in DC. Solicited a volunteer to attend planning meetings.

SOCIAL: Strobel made a pitch for group tours (e.g. the Waldheim cemetery where the Haymarket martyrs are buried).

The meeting adjourned sometime after 2 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert Roman, secretary

Chicago DSA v. 3.0

by Bob Roman

You have probably heard that DSA has tripled its membership since the November election, reaching 19,000. The same is true for Chicago. Last year at this time, membership was at 250. Now, in the Chicago metropolitan area, it's over 750. Even within Chicago DSA's redefined borders, membership is just less than 600. These are not huge numbers, but they are record highs. Moreover, this growth has been matched by a notable increase in people willing and downright eager to take responsibility. This is manifest in the proliferation of DSA chapters across the nation; we're very nearly a 50 state organization now. In Illinois, we have a West Suburban Illinois chapter, and organizing committees in the Quad Cities, Northern Illinois and Champaign-Urbana. In Chicago DSA, we now have three branches: Greater Oak Park, Northside Chicago and Southside Chicago. Within our chapter, we also have a number of self-organized working groups, some of which are mostly notional while others, such as the Rapid Response group and the Labor group, have staged useful interventions in Chicago politics. The Labor working group, for example, recently blitzed CTA stations in support of the Amalgamated Transit Union's negotiations with the CTA. The Rapid Response group has made sure that DSA has been visible at several recent demonstrations. (We really do need to be better
(Chicago DSA continued on Page 7))

The Bowletariats

by Caroline Reid

The Socialist Feminist Working Group is raising funds for women who seek abortions but need financial help. This is an annual event we do through Abortion Bowl-A-Thon fundraisers around the country in April. This is a great way for chapters to have a fun social event while helping raise money for the Chicago Abortion Fund (CAF). CAF is under the National Network for Abortion Funds whose mission is to "remove financial and logistical barriers to abortion access by centering people who have abortions and organizing at the intersections of racial, economic, and reproductive justice," which aligns with our values at DSA of reproductive justice.

For Chicago, the event is Sunday April 23 from 2:30-5pm at Burnt City Brewing, 2747 N. Lincoln in Chicago. All are welcome! Please sign up to be a Bowletariat with the DSA team or donate to us at: <https://bowl.nnaf.org/IllinoisDSA>.

If you have any questions please feel free to email IllinoisDSABowl@gmail.com.

[Editor's Note: For more information about the Chicago Abortion Fund's work, see Peg Strobel's interview with Brittany Mostiller-Keith, Lindsay Budzinski and Sekile Nzinga-Johnson at Talkin' Socialism Episode 59. As of March 23, we had raise \$610.05 of our \$1,500 goal.]

Debs - Thomas - Harrington Dinner

The Dinner Program Book is an ideal place to express your appreciation for the honorees' work or to post a message of importance to Chicago's democratic left community!

- Full Page*** (4w x 7 h) **\$600**
- Half Page** (4w x 3.5 h or 1^{15/16} w x 7 h) **\$250**
- Quarter Page** (1^{15/16} w x 3.5 h or 4w x 1.75 h) **\$125**
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- Text Only Greeting (Maximum 15 words)** **\$25**

*Special Full Page rate for inside front cover, inside back cover or back cover: \$700. Please specify with copy.

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____
(contributions are not tax deductible)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ **Zip** _____

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Email _____

Please attach the copy you would like to appear in the program book, or print your message on the back of this form. We can accept copy in a variety of electronic formats: JPEG, TIFF, or GIF most reliably; PDF can work also. Word documents are not recommended. Other formats are possible. Sorry, no color. Please feel free to call or email with any questions. Please have **copy** in no later than **Wednesday, May 10**. Make checks payable to the

Debs - Thomas - Harrington Dinner Committee
Chicago DSA
3411 W. Diversey Ave, Suite 7
Chicago, IL 60647

• (773) 384-0327 • chilidsa@chicagodsa.org •

Half

These are pretty much the actual sizes (see dimensions, opposite). The important thing to remember is proportions; for example, copy designed for 8.5 x 11 will not reduce to 4x7 very well.

Quarter

Eighth

You are invited to attend the
59th Debs – Thomas – Harrington Dinner

Beyond Resistance:

A Way Forward!

• Our Featured Speaker:

The Hon. Carlos Ramirez Rosa

Alderman, 35th Ward, Chicago

• Please Join Us in Honoring:

Larry Cohen

Adriana Alvarez

Board Chair, Our Revolution
Senior Fellow, Campaign for America's Future
Chair, Democracy Initiative
President, Communication Workers of America, retired

Activist and International Spokesperson,
Fight for 15

Friday, May 19, 2017

CROWNE PLAZA CHICAGO WEST LOOP, MADISON & HALSTED, CHICAGO

Cocktails at 6:00 p.m. • Dinner at 7:00 p.m. • Tickets @ \$90

Tickets must be reserved no later than **Tuesday, May 16**. A limited number of tickets may be available at the door at \$100 per person. Make sure you and your organization appear in the program book! For more details: call 773.384.0327 or visit <http://www.chicagodsa.org/d2017>. Auspices: Chicago Democratic Socialists of America, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation with 501c4 IRS status; contributions are not tax-deductible.

Name: _____

Please send:

Organization: _____

_____ Dinner Tickets @ \$90 each: _____

Street Address: _____

_____ Reserved Tables¹ @ \$900 each: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

_____ page Program book *display ad*³: _____

Phone or email: _____

_____ Program book *greeting*^{2,3} @ \$25: _____

_____ I can't attend; here is a contribution of: _____

Make check or money order payable to:

Total Amount Enclosed: _____

Debs-Thomas-Harrington Dinner Committee
 Chicago DSA
 3411 W. Diversey Ave, Suite 7
 Chicago, IL 60647

¹Reserved tables seat 8.

²Maximum of 15 words per greeting.

³We need to receive copy for greetings and ads no later than **May 10** (our printer *insists*). Please contact us for prices and sizes of display ads. There are special rates for inside and back cover ads.

Honorees 1971 - 2016

Patrick Gorman
Brendan Sexton
Murray Finley
Ralph Helstein
Leon M. Despres
Dolores Huerta
Charles Hayes
Robert Mann
Addie Wyatt
Rosemary Ruether
Egidio Clemente
Carl Shier
Joyce Miller
William Lucy
Edward Asner
Vicky Starr
Michael Harrington
Jacqueline Vaughn
Heather Booth
Jacquelyn Grimshaw
Saul Mendelson
Joe Jacobs
Milt and Sue Cohen
William Winpisinger
Arthur Loevy
Steve Culen
Kathy Devine
Sue Purrington
Quentin Young
Mollie L. West
Julian Bond
Louis Pardo
Carole Travis
Rosetta Daylie
Harold Meyerson
Maxie Hill
Deborah Meier
George Becker
James Weinstein
William Adelman
Marilyn Sneiderman
Jackie Kendall
James K. Tribble
Janice D. Schakowsky
Henry Bayer
Kim Bobo
Barbara Hillman
Thomas Balanoff
Mitch Vogel
Sydney Bild
Bernice Bild
Eliseo Medina
Lynn Talbott
Linda Rae Murray
Hal Gullett
US Labor Against the War
Calvin Morris
Henry Tamarin
Joshua Hoyt
Leo Gerard
Laurie Burgess
Mardge Cohen
Les Orear
Timuel Black
Jane Ramsey
People's Law Office
Carl Rosen
Jeremy Schroeder
John Cameron
Chicago Jobs with Justice
John Bouman
Chicago Teachers Union
William McNary
Keith Kelleher
Robin Potter
Larry Spivack
Gerry Hudson
Amisha Patel
Michael Lighty
Jorge Mújica

(Dinner, from Page 1)

That was then. The theme for this year's Dinner is, *A Way Forward!* There's no doubt that most of what is decent about our country is in peril. But Trump's failure to win the popular vote is a clear indication we can go beyond resistance, beyond stalemate to where democracy is victorious and we are on the path to social and economic justice. Our honorees, each in their own way, have made significant contributions to this fight for equality.

Larry Cohen may be familiar to you as being the recently "retired" President of the Communication Workers of America. CWA members have been willing to confront some truly gargantuan corporations, but



Cohen's contributions have not stopped there. He correctly judged the mood of insurgency in our country and was a leader in Labor for Bernie and he's continued that struggle as Board Chair of Our Revolution. Cohen is the Chair of the Democracy Initiative, a coalition of national organizations confronting the corruption of our democracy by corporate money. And he's a Senior Fellow at the Campaign for America's Future. He's also been serving as a rabble-rouser about town, grabbing the bullhorn by the mic in protest of the latest Trumpian outrage.

Adriana Alvarez may be less familiar to you. She is a rank-and-file leader in Fight for 15, a worker at McDonald's who has been willing to be arrested in support of her fellow workers, opens her home for meetings and, in between raising a son, does what needs to be done in the grand left tradition of a "Janie Higgins". Alvarez also serves as one of the public faces of the campaign for a \$15 / hour minimum wage (and a union), representing that movement on the web, across the nation, and in countries as various as Canada, Brazil and the Vatican. In honoring Alvarez, we are also honoring a movement that, while in the process of exploring alternative organizing strategies, has already made a huge difference in the lives of those at the bottom of our economy.



Our featured speaker is **Alderman Carlos Ramirez Rosa** from Chicago's 35th Ward. Rosa is one of Chicago's crop of outstanding new leaders in the City Council. Rosa has confronted the problem of governing head on. He has not complacently waited for a movement to begin in his ward around election time. He has taken leadership in making one happen.

Please join us in honoring these two outstanding activists for they deserve your recognition as well as ours. I hope to see you there on Friday evening, May 19.

If you cannot attend or if money for politics is scarce, please consider getting a greeting or an ad in the Dinner Program Book. This is the truly cost-effective way of participating while publicly recognizing the work our honorees have done on behalf of the movement.

The favor of your reply is requested.

Introduction to Democratic Socialism

Sunday, May 7, 1:30 PM

Homewood Public Library
17917 Dixie Highway,
Homewood



Save the date!

Chicago DSA's workshop, "Introduction to Democratic Socialism," will come to south suburban Homewood on Sunday, May 7, 2017. The workshop starts at 1:30 p.m. at Homewood Public Library, 17917 Dixie Highway.

New DSA members, young people and anyone interested in a fair and prosperous society are encouraged to attend.

Homewood Public Library is easily accessible by the Metra Electric passenger rail line.

For directions and more information, contact Bob Reilly at reillylaw319@gmail.com.

(Wage Theft, from Page 8)

Council member Carlos Ramirez Rosa (35th Ward) was introduced as a member of the Latino and the Progressive caucuses. He added "and a proud member of the Gay and Lesbian caucus." He spoke of being approached by ARISE Chicago to help a worker facing wage theft in his ward. "We need stronger citywide enforcement, connected to community groups on the ground . . . Chicago won't have the first Office of Labor Standards, but working with experts, groups on the ground and workers, we can have the best Office of Labor Standards." Carlos Rosa will be the keynote speaker at the Chicago DSA Debs-Thomas-Harrington Dinner on Friday, May 19, 2017 at the Crowne Plaza Chicago Hotel.

Council member John Arena (45th Ward) was also introduced as a member of the Progressive caucus. Along with Rev. Hawking and Adam Kader who directs the ARISE Chicago Worker Center Program, Arena visited with some of the staff in the Seattle Office of Labor Standards to understand how their program operated. He said "it's important to bake in" enforcement mechanisms covering workers under Chicago's employment laws. He said he met with Samantha Fields, Commissioner of the Dept. of BACP and feels she is open to understanding what the COoLS would do.

Robert Reiter is the Secretary-Treasurer of the Chicago Federation of Labor (CFL). He said that the labor movement is greater than organized labor and that local protection for worker standards is necessary. On a national level, national the current

administration is looking to roll back labor standards, so local offices like the proposed Chicago COoLS would be critical in protecting workers. If employers are allowed to steal workers wages, "we need a way to get that money back." The City Council has passed important employment laws. The next logical step is to create a Chicago Office of Labor Standards."

The final speaker was Sophia Zaman, the Executive Director of Raise the Floor Alliance, a collaborative effort to amplify the voice of workers. Raise the Floor Alliance was launched in December, 2015. The founding members are ARISE Chicago, Centro de Trabajadores Unidos, Chicago Community & Worker Rights, Chicago Workers Collaborative, Latino Union of Chicago, Restaurant Opportunities Center, Warehouse Workers for Justice and Workers Center for Racial Justice. Ms. Zaman indicated Raise The Floor Alliance would be in a strong position to bridge the gap between workers and the Chicago Office of Labor Standards.

What can Chicago DSA do to promote the creation of a robust Chicago Office of Labor Standards? If you live in Chicago, contact your elected city council member. Tell them that labor laws recently passed by the Chicago City Council need to be vigorously enforced. Advise them that workplace violations will continue unless the city creates a strong Chicago Office of Labor Standards that is fully funded and dedicated to enforcing Chicago's employment laws.

(Chicago DSA, from Page 3)

about blowing our own horn.) This is the good news.

The less good news is that on the local level, most of this work is being done out-of-pocket whenever there are expenses. Furthermore, our new members are predominantly younger adults who have grown up on the web. Combined with meager branch finances, this means that nearly all the organizing and communication is being done via Facebook, email, Twitter, and other social media. Basically, if you're offline or if we don't have your email address then you're a second class member. (But really, apart from holiday cards, how often do you get personal letters these days?)

Chicago DSA was moving in this direction before the avalanche. The percentage of members lacking an email address had been dropping, and it's dropped radically with this influx of new members. There are ways of working

around these mismatched modes of communication, and we'll find ways of doing it, especially if those of you off-line insist.

Other changes are on the horizon. If money allows, we may move the office again as our Executive Committee meetings have been drawing capacity crowds. You will see new leadership at Chicago DSA. The terms of office for our CDSA officers are staggered, but also there are vacancies. There is also an Executive Committee expanded by more representatives from branches.

But the most important change will be when Chicago DSA becomes a player that intervenes in politics in a strategic way on behalf of a particular constituency. This will require your participation. This will require your contributions. Remember, your continued support is important, and I do appreciate it.

Join DSA — To Change the USA!

You are invited to join this grand enterprise of fundamentally changing our civilization! Dues include subscriptions to DSA's national magazine, *Democratic Left*, and Chicago DSA's *New Ground*. Dues are:

___ \$200 Sustainer; ___ \$60 Regular; ___ \$27 Low-Income or student; ___ Busted (\$1 to \$26) \$ _____ (Cook Co. Only)

On the other hand, send me:

___ 1 year subscription to *New Ground* (\$10.00); ___ More information about DSA; ___ enclosed is a contribution of \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____ Email _____

City, State, Zip _____ Phone _____

Return to: Chicago DSA, 3411 W. Diversey, Suite 7, Chicago, IL 60647, Please make your check payable to Chicago DSA. Contributions and dues are not tax-deductible.

Wage Theft Must End

by Tom Broderick

From 2013 through 2016, the Chicago City Council enacted three new employment laws. In 2013, the Wage Theft Ordinance was passed. The Minimum Wage Ordinance was passed in 2015 and in 2016, the Council enacted the Paid Sick Leave Ordinance.

Who is minding the store on this legislation? In Chicago, the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) is supposed to protect workers' rights. The Department's web site states: "The Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection licenses, regulates and empowers Chicago businesses to grow and succeed as well as, receives and processes consumer complaints."

Faith – Labor – Action is the motto of ARISE Chicago. The group's mission is to end workplace abuse. ARISE Chicago announced their campaign to have the City of Chicago create a Chicago Office of Labor Standards (COoLS) at a press conference at Roosevelt University on Thursday, February 23rd. It appears that ARISE is calling for the COoLS to be under the Dept. of BACP and take responsibility for enforcing Chicago's employment laws.

Data obtained by *The Chicago Reporter* through a Freedom of Information Act request, shows that between July, 2015, when the Chicago minimum wage law took effect, and December, 2016, the Dept. of BACP received 454 complaints about violations regarding the minimum wage. Of those, 112 complaints led to investigations, just shy of 25%. Workers are required to submit affidavits attesting to violations. The Dept. of BACP forwards a copy of the complaint and the affidavit to the employer: A recipe for employer retaliation against the worker.

While 51 workers recovered wages totaling \$82,000 according to *The Chicago Reporter*, not a single fine was assessed to any Chicago business, even though the law states that businesses shall be subject to fines of \$500 to \$1,000 per day. Nor has the business license been revoked for any company found in violation of the ordinance: Not a successful track record of enforcement.

In her opening remarks, Reverend C. J. Hawking (Executive Director of ARISE Chicago) welcomed us as a "congregation of believers." She said we gathered in the spirit of Jane Addams (who along with Ellen Gates Starr opened the settlement house known as Hull House for arriving European immigrants in 1889) and Frances Perkins, the first woman appointed to head any U. S. Cabinet position – the Department of Labor. Rev. Hawking continued "We rise up against the current political climate of hostility toward workers and unions."

She was followed by Maria Leon, a restaurant worker who spoke of how her former employer regularly refused to disperse tips that had been added to restaurant bills that were paid with a credit card. After repeatedly asking for the tips that restaurant patrons had charged, she was fired. Tips, whether paid in cash or charged have been earned by the worker. Tips are not donations to the bottom line of those who manage or own restaurants. The denial of earned tips is wage theft and the firing is illegal.

Janice Fine, PhD, Professor of Labor Studies at Rutgers University took to the podium and said that municipalities, large

and small, have established Offices of Labor Standards with enforcement capabilities. She stated that Chicago could join San Francisco, Los Angeles, the County of Los Angeles, Seattle, New York City, Minneapolis and Austin, Texas in working to shore up workers' rights. As a major center for the economy in the mid-west Chicago could lead the way in regional support for promoting and enhancing the rights of workers.

Local enforcement of existing laws/policies must be handled by local governmental agencies working in collaboration with worker centers. Workers are often hesitant to go to governmental agencies for fear of being reported to their employers. Workers may not even understand that they have rights as workers. Worker centers are well known to low-wage workers. These centers provide support to workers and that builds trust among the workers and with the centers. The centers can be a bridge between the workers and the governmental agency tasked with enforcement.

According to Dr. Fine, workers will know which industries or segments of industries regularly violate the rights of workers: wage theft, including "working off the clock," overtime pay, minimum wage payment and the theft of tips as well as accrued sick leave pay violations. Industries with a record of violations could be taxed a percentage of profit to finance the Office of Labor Standards.

According to a University of Illinois, Chicago (UIC) report published in 2009 (*The Breakdown of Workplace Protections in the Low-Wage Labor Market*), nearly half of the sampled low-wage workers experienced at least one pay-related violation in the previous work week.

The average worker lost \$50 out of their weekly earnings of \$322. That's a 16% loss in earnings. The report extrapolated that low-wage workers in Chicago and suburban Cook County lose more than \$7.3 million per week as a result of employment and labor law violations. Not only do the workers lose, but the taxing bodies also lose. Wage theft cheats workers, families and communities.

Four members of the Chicago City Council took part in the press conference. Council member Ameya Pawar (47th Ward) said he is in fear of the current federal administration. He is concerned that at the federal level as well as the state level, there is no concern for the rights of every day working people. The creation of a Chicago Office of Labor Standards is about decency and human rights. The Office must have enforcement capabilities to protect and safeguard justice for the working people of Chicago.

Ameya Pawar has announced his candidacy to become the next Governor of Illinois. Pawar is not just another rich white guy running for re-election or election to the Governorship of Illinois, he has staked out a clear position as to which side he is on when it comes to the 99%.

Council member George Cardenas (12th Ward) was introduced as Chair of the Latino caucus. He said he is product of his neighborhood and that his family suffered workplace problems. "The Latino community is hard hit by wage theft." Cardenas called for establishing a regulatory framework to protect workers.



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