



**Helena International Affairs Council  
08/18/09 Minutes**

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE	MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE	AFFILIATES IN ATTENDANCE	GUESTS
Jessica Peterson, Chair			Diego Rivas
Anthony Warren, Vice Chair			Rachel Carroll
Will Garvin	Doreen Kutufam		Carla Wambach
Shahid Hague- Hausrath	Campbell Pryor		Kim Ranger
Ersun Ozer	Vacant		Jennifer Daly
Mark Annas, Sect.			

**Review Agenda, Approve Minutes For June, July 2009:**

June, July 2009 minutes approved unanimously.

**Guests to HIAC:**

Diego Rivas, Rachel Carroll, Carla Wambach, Kim Ranger, Jennifer Daly

**Sponsoring an event in Helena for Rachel and Diego:**

Jesse introduced Diego and Rachel who traveled to Nicaragua as part of the Witness for Peace organization. This organization began working in Nicaragua in 1983 to help native peoples by bearing witness the impact of US policies in that country, particularly during the Contra wars and most recently with a focus on US economic trade policy. Since that time over 10,000 delegates have gone to Nicaragua, on tours lasting from 1-3 weeks in duration.

Rachel and Diego would like to share with citizens of Helena what they have witnessed. Diego and Rachel focused their time in country examining policies as they related to coffee and the new trade agreement, CAFTA. Diego stated coffee is an unregulated commodity; which results in the grower receiving a fraction of what the product sells for even at wholesale rates. During their time there, they visited a dump near Managua, where approximately 1200 individuals live. They scavenge for scrap metal and recyclables.

They were also given the task of going to the market to purchase all the food items needed for a family of 6 on the equivalent of US\$2.00. Rachel works for a Human Rights organization in Helena, and this is where her interest and passion for this organization began. She also stated that she was involved in similar groups in Missoula, and there is rich history of delegations going to Central America from Montana.

Diego, whose father is Cuban, was introduced to this organization through Rachel. They also visited a woman in the community who effectively (informally) is the community pharmacy and clinic, “she holds all the medicine” for a community.

They also met with representatives from the US Embassy. They left this meeting with the feeling there is disconnect between these officials and the reality on “the street”. The official line is CAFTA (Central America Free Trade Agreement) has resulted in many opportunities; it is the belief of Rachel and Diego that jobs have actually been lost due to NAFTA policies. They were also able to visit an enterprise in “free trade” zone, where taxes that come with CAFTA policies are not assessed.

Jesse asked how their event would focus on international economics and how it would impact Helena specifically, and Montana in general. Jesse also stated the event should be dialogue oriented, rather than speak out against or for U.S. economic policies. She stated there may be parallels between farmers in MT and in Nicaragua. Diego stated the event would be to share their experiences on Oct. 12, 2009. An “expert” would be at this event. This expert would likely be in the arena of economics, and specifically on NAFTA (and possibly CAFTA). This is a day that coincides with the day to re-examine/ renegotiate NAFTA and CAFTA. Mark suggested they develop a written proposal that would identify a target population, how much they are requesting from HIAC, what they hope to accomplish at the event, and action steps beyond the event. They could email that proposal either to Jesse or to Mark, and an email vote could be taken.

#### **Watch Neighborhood of Nations, Baseball Program: Anthony and Will**

Council members and guests watched the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of Neighborhood of Nations, the Baseball Program. Will Garvin and Tony Warren did an excellent job. Will was going to show the program to the Brewers staff the following day to get any last minute edits. The program is scheduled to air on four different dates thus far.

#### **HCTV/HIAC Fee for Service Contract:**

Tabled

#### **HIAC Budget:**

Tabled

#### **Past and Future HIAC Events:**

Ersun and Jesse will meet with the Governor’s Office of Economic Affairs upon request by the City Commission. Paul Cartwright will set up the meeting.

#### **Public Comment:**

Carla Wambach was present and complimented the Council on the excellent progress it’s made since she was an active member. Thanks Carla!!