LAWCHA
The Labor and Working-Class History Association

2015 LAWCHA President's Report

Posted on June 5, 2015 by Nancy MacLean

Drawing 450 registrants and featuring 3 days of exciting and informative panels the first joint LAWCHA-WCSA conference was a huge success. Thanks to all attended "Fighting Inequality" at Georgetown last week and made the formal sessions and informal discussions so stimulating!

Our next national meeting will be held in **Providence** in conjunction with the OAH April 7-10, 2016. We expect to have a big presence there, with lots of good sessions, an evening activist panel and reception and labor walking tour, so mark your calendars now to keep the conversation going.

In the meantime, some highlights of our work over the last year and plans for the coming year from the George board meeting and membership meeting follow:

- Thanks to our Program Committee, our presence is expanding at the OAH and the AHA, and we hope to reach **other national conferences**, including the Association for Asian American Studies, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, the Labor Research and Action Network, and the Latina/o Studies Conference, the United Association of Labor Educators, and the AAUP. If you would like to help expand our presence at a conference you regularly attend, let us know: lawcha@duke.edu
- Our project on the **history of teacher unionism** is being put to excellent use among teachers and community allies. We hope could all members will help in spreading the word on the web resources we've created to those in their local and national networks: https://lawcha.org//century-teaching-organizing/ We also have a pdf flyer you can take to conferences and events: just contact the office to get it sent for your use.
- Our **Membership Committee**, led by Talitha LeFlouria, now includes 32 State Organizers working to recover lapsed members and reach out to new folks who might want to join. It was suggested at the membership meeting that we should try to double our size; if each member recruits one or two people we can—with your help. If you are willing to help out in your state, please contact

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the LAWCHA office and we'll plug you in. Also, if you are traveling to a conference or event where you think others might be interested in LAWCHA, write the office a few weeks before to order as many free brochures as you can use.

- We are working to enhance and expand **our online presence**, particularly the blog LaborOnline, which has been particularly active over the past year, with one piece about the history of policing forwarded over 20,000 times (!) in the wake of Ferguson and the wider crisis of police abuse in African American communities. Please consider writing for it (ca. 300 words) and also commenting on and circulating others—and help spread the word through social media.
- We have awarded funds to enhance the superb labor history site developed and maintained by Rosemary Feurer as a LAWCHA project **Labor History Links**, The grant will pay for professional assistance to redesign and upgrade the site so that we can better serve the many teachers, students, and unionists who consult the abundant resources available there.
- Interested in expanding LAWCHA's reach internationally? Join our **Global Affairs Committee** headed by Shel Stromquist.
- Are there labor or working class history sites in your region that should be marked, or anniversaries coming up that call out for **commemoration**? Let us know. Our past efforts have included the Ludlow and Lawrence strikes, the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire, and the legacy of Mother Jones, and preserving and commemorating the history of workers is a core part of our mission so the national office will help local efforts as much as we can.
- We now have on the website **a brief history of LAWCHA**, produced by Shel Stromquist and Cele Bucki, that describes how the organization came together and how it has evolved over time.
- Can you **help us raise funds for graduate student travel awards**? To encourage the next generation of labor scholar-activists, nothing quite matches getting graduate students to a LAWCHA conference to share their work, get feedback from senior scholars, meet their peers, and socialize informally outside panels. Those experiences can lead to a lasting commitment to the organization and its mission. To enable more of the coming generation to attend, we are asking all faculty members to consider giving to our graduate student travel award fund.

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- In addition to direct contributions or signing over honoraria, **consider advertising** your book, film, or coming event in the issue of our newsletter that follows the conference at $150 for a 1/4 page ad. To place an ad, please email our executive assistant, Hannah Ontiveros, at lawcha@duke.edu, with the ad copy and send a check before July 1.
- Discussing a book by a labor historian in your class or union book group? You might want to **Skype in the author** and provide a modest honorarium they can donate to LAWCHA.

LAWCHA is in excellent shape, thanks to the commitment of our members and the generous service of outstanding leaders over the years. Yet especially in light of the daunting challenges working-class people, unions, and communities are facing today, we could be doing more to convey labor and working class history to wider audiences to energize them for the marathon ahead. Please help us grow so we can reach them!

Author

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