

What is NoBAWC?

by Dave Karoly

The Network of Bay Area Worker Cooperatives or NoBAWC (pronounced “no boss”) is dedicated to building workplace democracy in the San Francisco Bay Area. We are a membership organization comprised of 34 Bay Area democratic workplaces representing over 1,200 workers. NoBAWC includes small and medium-sized workplaces employing from a few to over 200 workers, representing diverse industries and sectors of the economy. Although all are democratic, their legal and organizational structures vary. Most are for profit while some are non-profit, most provide a living for their workers while some are volunteer-run, and many utilize direct democracy while others use both direct and representational structures.

Although there is organizational diversity among our membership, NoBAWC member workplaces must be democratic. NoBAWC membership is available to worker cooperatives (workplaces owned and controlled by their workers), transitional workplaces (workplaces that are not yet worker-owned and controlled, but are making verifiable progress toward that end) and workplaces that are democratically run despite not being worker-owned (e.g. consumer cooperatives or non-profits that are democratically run by their staffs).

NoBAWC provides support for our members and promotes worker cooperatives in the community as sources of meaningful employment, providers of quality goods and services and viable alternatives to conventionally owned and managed workplaces. Support for our members includes maintaining and sharing information relevant to democratic workplaces, providing some technical and organizational assistance, offering joint marketing & promotional services and strengthening ties

The Network of Bay Area Worker Cooperatives is dedicated to building workplace democracy in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Although we have been a loose-knit volunteer-run organization for most of our 11 year history, we have spent the last couple of years developing our organization into a formal one with a budget, paid staff, and dues-paying membership. This transformation is a necessary step toward better serving the needs of democratic workplaces and more effectively promoting workplace democracy in the Bay Area and beyond. NoBAWC's elected Steering Committee has coordinated this transition and will serve until a Board of Directors is elected this December. If you have questions or would like more information, please visit our website at www.nobawc.org, email us at info@nobawc.org or give us a call at 510-835-0254.

NoBAWC MEMBER WORKPLACES for more information on each workplace, visit www.nobawc.org

- AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power San Francisco—ACTUP SF
- AK Press
- Alvarado Street Bakery
- Arizmendi (Oakland, San Francisco, Emeryville)
- Arizmendi Development & Support Cooperatives.
- Berkeley Free Clinic
- Berkeley Worms
- Bound Together Bookstore
- Box Dog Bikes
- Cheese Board and Cheese Board Pizza
- Childcare Collective
- Collectively Explorative Learning Labs or CELLspace
- Cupid Courier Collective
- Design Action Collective
- Electric Embers
- Good Vibrations (Berkeley, San Francisco: Valencia Street, Polk Street)
- Heartwood Cooperative Woodshop
- Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) San Francisco Bay Area General Membership Branch
- Inkworks
- Juice Bar Collective Restaurant
- LoveMore Gourmet
- Lusty Lady
- Modern Times Bookstore
- 924 Gilman Street
- Other Avenues Food Store
- Outformations
- Pedal Express
- Rainbow Grocery Cooperative
- Red Vic Movie House
- Suigersukan Martial Arts School
- Woodshanti

THANK YOU to the following NoBAWC newsletter committee members for making this happen:

CHRIS DUNLAP *Bound Together Books* • GORDON EDGAR *Rainbow Grocery* • MELISSA HOOVER *Inkworks* • BERNARD MARSZALEK *Inkworks* • MISS MUFFY *Lusty Lady* • MIMI SCHIFFMAN *Rainbow Grocery* • DENNIS TERRY *NoBAWC Steering Committee*
 Thanks also to CECILIA SAINZ *Argentinian journalist*
 Layout and Design *Design Action Collective* • Printing *Inkworks Press*

■ Lusty Continued from pg.3

straight and narrow, it can be a real challenge. Sex work has a lifespan. There are only 15 or 20 people here who have been here since the co-op began. Most people work here for a year or less,” said Miss Muffy. The high turnover rate has detracted from the potential success of the business. A successful co-op, like any successful business requires dedication and a knowledge of past triumphs and failures to run smoothly. “I have a lot of fear of huge institutional memory loss. There are some really strong awesome people who have come in here recently but there are some things that you can't communicate, you can't write down, you just had to be there,” said Miss Muffy.

The cooperative is staffed by three overlapping groups. The dancers; a currently all-male support staff of janitors and cashiers; and a financing department. To hold these bodies together and make cooperative-wide decisions, the Lusty has an internally-staffed and elected 7 member of Board of Directors. A 3 member crew of “Madams” work with performers on hiring, firing, scheduling and worker evaluations among other personnel issues. A two member League Team works with the support staff on similar issues. All Madams and League Team members also work regular shifts at the club as performers and support staff respectively. The Lusty has recently begun hosting monthly membership meetings that will allow for business-wide pro-

■ Alternative Continued from Pg.1

posals to be aired in the presence of all workers. At the time of incorporation there were no workers with significant cooperative knowledge in the group. Within four months of learning that the Lusty was to close its doors the workers purchased the club and began the process of incorporation as a worker-owned cooperative. “We just made it up as we went. We didn't have to time to get a business plan together, it was like Hey we bought a co-op now get it together,” said Miss Muffy, “A lot of things that need to be changed haven't been changed. Its hard to find time to do things that we need to do when we have to be so focused on making money.”

honor worker's rights instead of trampling on them.

promote worker solidarity instead of divisiveness.

encourage the development of skills and worker responsibility, instead of fragmenting workers' abilities or deskilling them.

strive for equality in worker income as opposed to creating greater inequality.

allow for workers' control over their work instead of alienating them from it.

develop processes for democratic participation in decision-making rather than reducing workers to cogs in a wheel.

offer local people job opportunities as opposed to outsourcing jobs to other countries.

help create a sustainable environment instead of waste or toxic dumps.

build community instead of abandoning it.

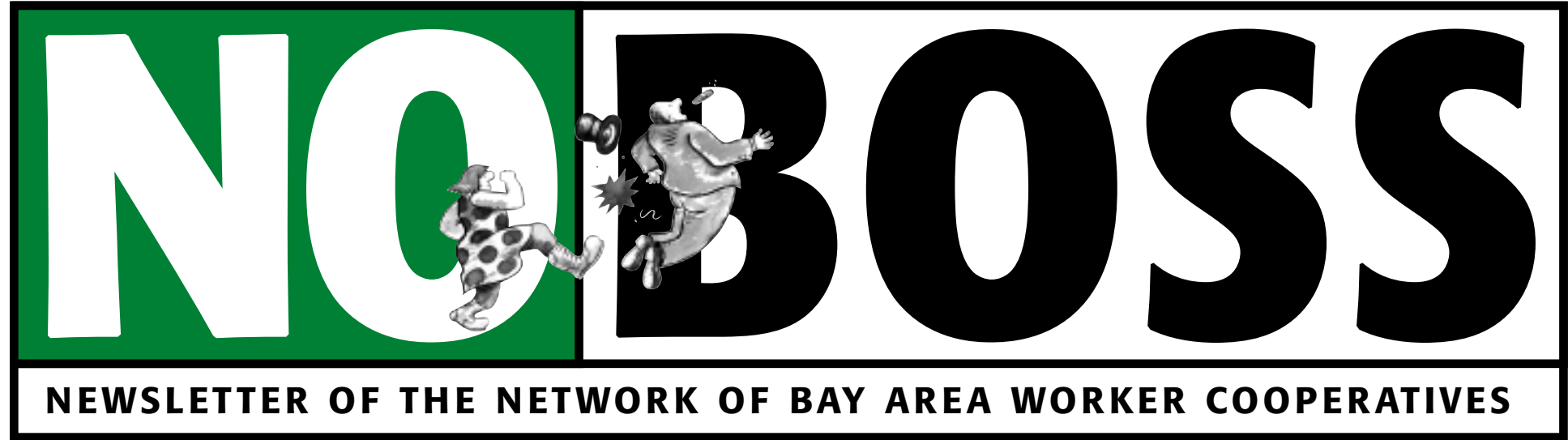
However, an alternative way of organizing economic activity exists which can bring about social and economic justice for people beyond the corporate capitalist model. Worker cooperatives, worker self-managed enterprises, are that alternative. All over the world worker cooperatives have been gaining ground as a means of solving economic hardship. Working people are finding them useful as a response to factory closings, declining welfare state programs, and neoliberal globalization policies. Cooperative development is connected to a worldwide grassroots democracy movement where ordinary people, no longer dependent on political elites, are learning to take their lives into their own hands.

Over the last few decades many have learned, especially from the very successful Mondragon cooperatives in the Basque region of Spain, how to effectively network enterprises, create technical and financial institutions, and gain the support of the larger community. But worker cooperatives are more than efficient economic entities. They can be the means to more humane relations. They can be the means of genuine personal self-development. Among the many ideals that they aspire to, cooperatives:

■ Alternative Continued from Pg.1

The Lusty straddles the divide between the highly organized world of the democratic workplace and the highly disorganized and marginalized world of the US sex industry. The brightly colored bridge being built in the chasm sets a clear example that cooperatives are possible in any business. In the face of financial hardships, a dedicated and talented group of worker-owners has navigated the Lusty Lady into a third year as a cooperative. ■

The Lusty Lady is located at 1033 Kearny between Broadway and Pacific in North Beach. The Lusty is open 7 days a week. The private pleasures and live show are available daily from 11am-3am, private video booths available 24hrs daily. To reach the Lusty, call (415)391-3126 for the front desk or (415)391-3991 for a recording of the days' events and performers. Find the Lusty on the web at www.lustyladysf.com



CO-OP OF THE ISSUE

In the Spotlight: The Lusty Lady

by Mimi Schiffman

The Lusty Lady is dancing its way into its third year as a worker-owned cooperative. Named “Best Strip Club” by the San Francisco Bay Guardian, the Lusty is the only peep show left in San Francisco and the only unionized and worker-owned strip club in the country. Their dance is an interpretive one, constantly changing and redefining itself.

The Lusty sits on Kearny street just off Columbus, North Beach's main drag. A brightly lit sign boasting “Lovely Lusty Ladies” beckons customers into the dimly lit club. Entering the club provides the customer with a complete sensory experience. Loud music thumps through the burgundy carpeted hallways that stretch out in three directions. A scent of cleaning products, frequently and liberally applied by the janitorial crew wafts out from the booths as customers enter and exit the tiny, private rooms.

Twelve doors to small, black-painted cubicles surround the main stage. Upon inserting a quarter into the machine inside of the booth, the shade draws up from the window and the customer is treated to 17 seconds of three nude dancers wandering from open window to open window or dancing

in the center of the room. A pocket full of quarters buys one a fair amount of time in the fantasy world of mirrors, poles, and female attention. Currency of a larger denomination buys a customer time in the private pleasures booth which features a much larger window and guarantees specialized attention from the individual dancer that occupies the booth.

A customer base of mostly men punctuated by an occasional couple, walks back and forth between the booths and one of three quarter machines. The hallway scene diffuses whatever types of behavior are exhibited behind closed doors. The customers become the spectacle as they wander between the main stage peep show, private video booths and the

Lusty Continued on Page 3

The Cooperative Alternative

by Dennis Terry

As the U.S. and the world enter the 21st century, a sense of dread and anxiety engulfs us regarding our economic future. For more than thirty years the economy has been in a period of ‘contraction’ (or a falling rate of profit) that has led to a series of negative developments.

We have been living in an era of deindustrialization, corporate downsizing, capital flight in the form of neoliberal globalization, and a process of work outsourcing to other countries. Living standards decline as the nation experiences jobless “recoveries” after recessions and the replacement of good paying jobs with low wage ones. The gap between rich and poor continues to expand as the wealth produced is con-

centrated into fewer and fewer hands. Who can believe that their children's lives will be better than their own in the years to come?

Dominating this economic reality are the giant corporations which are committed only to the process of unceasing accumulation of capital with no loyalty

Alternative Continued on Page 4

Welcome to NO BOSS!

by Chris Dunlap

Welcome to the first issue of NO BOSS, the newsletter of NoBAWC – the Network of Bay Area Worker Cooperatives.

We'll be publishing a quarterly tabloid with articles of interest to both worker co-op members and to customers curious about our peculiar way of doing business. We'll try to explain why worker co-ops are important models for the progressive political movement in the San Francisco Bay Area. We'll try to situate NoBAWC's local goals in a worldwide framework with articles about the wider American labor movement and reports on international self-management initiatives. We'll open our pages to discussion and debate on co-op issues, providing a forum for theory and practical advice as well.

As the NoBAWC federation becomes a more formal organization it has become more important to present our ideas to the greater community and to get down to the business of starting new co-ops in different sectors of the regional economy. To do this we'll try to inspire people with tips on how to quit their square jobs and find like-minded people to start up a small worker-owned business. We'll feature a different NoBAWC co-op in each issue, telling how it came about and what issues the present workers are concerned with. We'll compare cooperative practices between our member businesses to see what works well and what improvements can be made in the meetings or on the shop floor. We'll have some articles on how to start a co-op business, set it on a legal cooperative foundation, and how to make decisions in this small group democratic workplace. We'll have opinion columns, polemics, reviews – we'll even set ourselves the dangerous goal of original artwork. Do forgive us, however, if we draw the line at worker poetry!

July's NoBAWC general meeting gave us the opportunity to meet several members of the Mondragon University delegation. We've seen what fifty years of organization has done for them. We've also taken some inspiration from the factory workers in Buenos Aires who are just starting to take their working lives back from the bosses. San Francisco can be a difficult place to make a living, but we can make it a better city by uniting on cooperative principles and dumping the bosses off our backs!

We hope that NO BOSS will grow into a vital resource and community forum. If you'd like to contact the newsletter committee to submit an article, add info to our events calendar, or to just give feedback on the NO BOSS rag, here's our email contact info: nobawc_newsletter@yahoogroups.com. ■

INSIDE this Issue

- International Cooperative Newswire by Miss Muffy2
- NoBAWC Technical Assistance Group forms by Gordon Edgar2
- US Federation of Worker Cooperatives update by Melissa Hoover.....4



Special: Recovered Factories Movement Reshapes Argentina

Movie Review: The Take

Recent Updates from Argentina

"THE TAKE"

by Bernard Marszalek

Year-Old U.S. Federation Prepares to Take on New Members

by Melissa Hoover

Has it already been a year since 300-plus enthusiastic cooperators gathered in Minneapolis to found a national worker co-op federation, under the watchful eye of the creepy Montgomery Burns portrait at Hubert Humphrey Center at the University of Minnesota?

Yes, the U.S. Federation is already a year old! It's been a busy year, one that's about to get a lot more fun as the Federation starts taking on nationwide members this fall and becomes truly a federation of members, and not only a board.

Since last June, the board that was elected at the conference has been busy navigating bureaucracy, writing bylaws, setting a budget, raising money, negotiating member benefits, building alliances, all the fun stuff that first boards do—and doing it all by conference call. Some highlights of the year are below. So far the USFWC has:

- Joined CICOPA, the international organization of worker cooperatives, in time to be a voting member for the fall conference in Cartagena.

- Started a survey of U.S. worker cooperatives to create a national database, begun a collaboration with GEO (Grassroots Economic Organizing) to update the Economy of Hope directory.

- Started the process to incorporate the Federation as a 501c6 membership and a 501c3 non-profit organization, with an anticipated Fall filing date for the final paperwork.

- Created a website: www.usworker.coop is up and running, hosted by the local NoBAWC members Electric Embers. Soon we'll add a "Forum" feature for posting events and having online discussions, and resources available for download.

- Begun negotiations with the National Organizers Alliance to provide their "Sustaining Social Justice" pension plan to all USFWC member co-ops.

- Hired staff member Melissa Hoover in San

Francisco for 10 hours a week to do fundraising, outreach, conference planning, and other foundational work.

- Started planning the 2006 national conference. The conference is a chance for worker-owners to share skills from their workplaces, and to hook up with lenders and technical assistance providers. It's also a time for people doing different regional work to meet in person and share organizing strategies and information.

- Board members Ajamu Nangwaya and Ajowa Nzinga Ifateyo appealed to the Kwanzaa community in late 2004 to make cooperative education a principle of Cooperative Economics.

- Held a national board meeting and co-hosted a social event with NoBAWC this October in San Francisco. The board drafted a five-year plan and finalized a membership and dues structure – look for a nationwide mailing to co-ops very soon.

There has also been new regional activity in the past year: PAWC in Portland, FWD-MN in Minnesota, the first NoBAWC conference in San Francisco, the Cascadia conference in the Northwest, as well as the usual Eastern and Western conferences, and plans for South Sound in Olympia and a first-ever Southern U.S. conference. This is an exciting time as the worker cooperative movement takes shape and builds momentum.

The U.S. Federation will begin membership in November. Get ready to join!

To find out more about the U.S. Federation, get information about other regional organizing efforts, or to donate money, contact *Melissa at info@usworker.coop or 415-379-9201.* ■

NOBAWC Technical Assistance Group forms

by Gordon Edgar

For all the talk of a "co-op movement," how do we build one without giving meaningful assistance to people who wish to work in co-ops? Figuring out how to do this will be our biggest challenge, but it seems like the most important next step in developing a real co-op movement in the Bay Area. Luckily, there is a lot of experience to work with from co-ops and individual co-op members.

As NoBAWC finally grows up, one of the projects we're taking on is to start a technical assistance group to aid in the development of other worker co-ops. One of the goals that many of us have always had with the creation of NoBAWC is to have a group of people ready to assist in the creation of new co-ops. That this group will be rooted in existing, successful co-ops seems like its greatest potential asset. Technical assistance is the unglamorous but critical work of providing help

with legal, financial, and infrastructural issues within co-ops. It's all those services that capitalist businesses have access to by the handful, and that co-ops scramble to find when they need help. It's experts and advice, and for co-ops it's also relevant and accessible shared knowledge.

The goals of the NoBAWC Technical Assistance group for 2005 are not lofty. We seek to take an inventory of our own resources as a community in order to figure out where we have necessary skills and where we need to develop allies. Hopefully together we can start building the cooperative movement we've been talking about for so long. If you are a co-op member and interested in helping with this committee, please contact *Gordon Edgar, gedgar@rainbow.coop 415-863-0620 x 424 or Melissa Hoover info@usworker.coop 510-845-7111 x 103.* ■

Recovered Factories Movement Reshapes Argentina

by Cecilia Sainz, reporting from Argentina

The nineties in Argentina saw an abrupt turn to neo-liberalism. The decision to link the national currency to the dollar meant that Argentine labor cost could no longer be competitive in the global economy. That decision, imposed by International Monetary Fund (IMF), caused hundreds of factories to shut down, forcing thousands of people to lose their jobs. In less than seven years, the unemployment rate rose from five to twenty-two percent.

The social and economic crisis unleashed in December of 2001, when the government defaulted on its debt payments, left the whole country in shambles. Without warning, from one day to the next, when the owners cut their financial losses, the workers found themselves locked out at the front doors of their work places.

After the initial shock, the workers decided to take concrete action. They occupied factories, resisting their bosses' pressure and ignoring their conservative labor leader's advice to leave. They had but one slogan:

Occupy Resist and Produce. A new working experience was born from necessity: La Autogestión Obrera or Workers' Self-Management. Their radical action took them by surprise and they are learning quickly as they move forward under this new situation.

This movement is alive and growing. There are more than 170 factories under worker control and ten thousand workers are living this new experience.

La Autogestión Obrera is an absolutely different way to view work. New relationships are created and a new vocabulary could be written to explain the process that is taking place. Like Alice in Wonderland, one day the workers crossed through to the other side of the mirror, and were transformed into workers without bosses. The key to the transformation is the general assembly. Decisions implying new rhythms of production are taken to the assembly of all the workers. Important issues such as productivity, how many hours to work, salaries, sales and marketing are all decided by a vote of the assembly.

Newsbriefs ARGENTINA

Helping the new worker cooperatives in Argentina

A fund has been established to direct funds directly to the co-ops in Argentina. Go to:

<http://www.theworkingworld.org/>

to learn more about this project. Currently over a dozen co-ops are benefiting from the monies raised.

■ Lusty Continued from Pg.1

private pleasures booth. Occasionally the thumping beats of music are interrupted by a gruff male voice demanding that the crowd in the hallway find their way into booths.

The Lusty has been the breeding ground and support crew for a great deal of sex worker activism. They were the first sex workers to organize with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and have spent the 8 years that they have been with SEIU challenging the union to view sex work as labor. There are writers and activists amongst the group that are working for deregulation of prostitution. And on a day-to-day basis, the Lusty Lady has set a standard for safety and fair treatment among dancers in San Francisco.

The fact that a large majority of progressive San Francisco residents support the Lusty in theory does not translate into a regular customer base or overwhelming financial success. The explosion of press that occurred during the



Direct democracy is played out in the recovered factories.

The process has been a difficult one. The workers are not only struggling against the expropriation of their places of work, they are also fighting against a tricky bankruptcy law when a businessman closes his factory. The workers are not only fighting the bosses. Their biggest rival is the government, which tips the fight in favor of the bosses time and time again. The locked-out workers in each empty factory have to fight separately to get legal status under the expropriation law.

This new process is a threat to businessmen. They are now aware that shutting down a factory may be the final chapter in one story but just the beginning of a new one. This cycle has become an epidemic, and the good news is that it is a contagious one.

It's a curious fact (but understandable) that most of the workers who recovered their jobs are over 40 years old. They knew that this is the last chance to be employed. But a new generation of labor leaders is being born in the midst of this struggle. Young workers are learning from this democratic process and finding new tools to fight for better salaries and better working conditions.

The working class in Argentina doesn't yet know what they want, but we are certain about what they don't want. ■

Zanon is legal

One of the newly recovered factories featured in "The Take," the Zanon Tileworks, has achieved legal status. Court approval came only after many years of lockouts and worker harassment, but with complete community support. The workers have renamed the ceramics plant FaSinPat (for Fabrica Sin Patron, or Factory Without a Boss).

transition to a cooperative including a 6 page article by the New Yorker managed to attract some diversified customer base but as a whole the clientele has not changed largely in the two years since incorporation as a cooperative. "A lot of people who come to the Lusty don't know that we're a cooperative. We don't get as much out of our worker-owned status as we could" said Miss Muffy, a hiring and staff coordinator called a "Madam," and a three year veteran of the Lusty. "It's a challenge as well because the progressive community doesn't feel comfortable coming to the Lusty as customers. Politically minded people don't feel comfortable with being... or more like admitting to being perverts."

The lusty ladies come in all different shapes and sizes, tattooed, pierced, full of hair and shorn. Because of the very specialized combination of sex work and cooperation, the Lusty enjoys a distinctively diverse group of worker-owners. For the same reason, they are faced with a unique set of hiring and personnel issues. "A lot of people do sex

Naomi Klein and her partner Avi Lewis, a Canadian journalist and TV producer, decided to do this documentary on the "recovered" factories of Argentina to show a positive response to the horrors of globalization.

They successfully focused on one tool and die maker who, with his buddies, decided to reopen their old auto parts factory. We not only follow Freddy as he takes the tortuous route through meetings and court appearances to regain his livelihood, but we also visit with him, as he plays with his three young daughters around the family dinner table. Sitting next to him, his wife passionately expresses what it means for them to have their dignity back.



Argentina, a weasel campaigning to regain his seat, and the decrepit boss of a closed ceramics factory who pompously spouts the well-worn notions of the rights of capital.

On the other side we meet the ordinary workers taking control of their lives for the first time and marveling at their vitality in the face of almost overwhelming odds. People leave this film with an emotional boost after witnessing the determination of the workers to overcome the social conditioning that places property values above human values.

There is no better film depicting the co-op slogan "People Before Profit."

Several NO BOSS writers informally interviewed Avi during Opening Night at the Red Vic Movie House (a NoBAWC member). He told us that not only was this a film about worker cooperatives, but that the documentary itself was filmed as a cooperative venture with a gender-balanced crew; furthermore, all the showings in Canada were collaborations with members of the local worker cooperatives. Avi and Naomi wanted to demonstrate that while the film depicted a struggle in a faraway country, the notion of democratic management of workplaces wasn't some utopian fantasy, but existed in many communities in North America. ■

Hopefully a DVD of The Take will soon be available in the States. Check this website for more information: <http://www.nfb.ca/webextension/thetake/>

work because it makes a lot of money in a short amount of time requiring no responsibility and no investment. None of that is true at the Lusty."

Wages are distributed each week based on a formula that takes into account the clubs income minus general expenses and divided by the dancers, janitorial and finance staff. Seniority earns a higher allotment of the wages. "You earn a percentage of your hourly wage, usually not 100% because we're still buying off our business."

Hiring has proven to be a challenge at the Lusty. While a worker may have a great stage presence, her commitment to the cooperative and co-ownership can prevent her from being hired and vice versa. Those who end up with a job at the Lusty often have to leave due to the limited hours that the club can give them and other life factors. "The Lusty is not a full time job. If you want to do something else, like being a teacher, having children, or anything that is more

Lusty Continued on Page 4

International Cooperative NEWSWIRE

From The South African Mail and Guardian Online:
10 AUGUST 2005

Faced with government apathy toward on-going human rights violations on the wine estates of the Western Cape, a few farms have taken matters of equity into their own hands. The wine estates of Bouwland and Beyerskloof—to mention but two—have pioneered shareholding initiatives aimed at providing workers with a tangible stake in the industry, serving as models of equitable employment. The slogan of the Fair Valley wine label, "the hands that work the soil feed the soul," encapsulates the spirit of worker-owned and driven initiatives.

Women's empowerment, in particular, has been bolstered by businesses such as Old Vines Cellars, South Africa's only women-owned and controlled empowerment winery. Old Vines has created jobs for women from historically disadvantaged backgrounds, with the 24-strong team made up (with one exception) of women—doing everything from picking to winemaking, bottling, and labeling.

■ ■ ■

From The San Francisco Chronicle:
22 JULY 2005

Wall Street embraced the former walnut grower cooperative Diamond's initial public offering, sending shares nearly 24 percent above the company's asking price of \$17 to close at \$21.05 per share. Diamond's transition from a 93-year-old farmer-owned cooperative, under the name Diamond Walnut Growers, into a publicly traded company created some strife among growers. Some farmers feared a loss of control under public ownership, while others argued that an influx of cash would allow the company to better compete in the global market.

This transition represents more than just a change in business model—it may be the catalyst for a change in culture. The tradition of family farms being handed down from one generation to another may be further eroded because the wealth of farmers will be tied to a stock price rather than their crops. In addition, farmers will lose their majority voting control because the nine-member board includes just three growers.

Critics of the cooperative's conversion expressed fears that new corporation would rely more heavily on cheaper nuts produced overseas and would reduce its demand for California walnuts. The company already purchases some nuts from foreign sources, such as hazelnuts from Turkey and pine nuts from China.

■ ■ ■

From The San Francisco Chronicle:
15 AUGUST 2005

Zipcar, the largest car-sharing company in the country, will begin operating in San Francisco on Sept. 1 as the first step in its planned West Coast expansion. Zipcar, based in Massachusetts, plans to have 150 cars available in San Francisco by the end of the year.

With 40,000 members nationally, Zipcar will provide the first direct competition to City CarShare, which has 4,000 members and more than 90 cars in San Francisco, Oakland, and Berkeley. Earlier this month, City CarShare announced a new chief executive officer and plans for up to 10 new rental sites.

■ ■ ■

From The Grand Forks Herald:
13 AUGUST 2005

Dakota Prairie (N.D.) schools became the newest member this summer of Northeast Education Services Cooperative, an area organization that is helping area schools band together for enhanced curriculum and other issues. NES - formed in January 2002 - now has 16 school district members and two colleges as sponsoring. The cooperative is part of a growing trend in North Dakota, where schools have begun using joint powers agreements to offer staff development, joint purchasing, student services, equipment, textbook sharing and more.

North Dakota's first joint powers agreement among school districts, the RoughRider Education Services Program, was formed about four years ago. Earlier this year, Grand Forks and about two dozen other area schools formed the Red River Valley Educational Cooperative.

by Miss Muffy