

June Update 2012 Part #1

Gail and I just returned from Ohio and New Orleans on June 1st. We traveled to Columbus, Ohio for Curtis Austin and Leslie Alexander's wedding. Many comrades know Curtis from his fantastic book, "Up Against the Wall." It took Curtis 10 years to write that book. Gail and I helped him with it. Gail helped edit the book and I provided most of the photos. We met Leslie a few years back when she came to Sacramento with Curtis. Curtis and Leslie currently work at Ohio State University.

The wedding was wonderful. They make a great couple. Leslie is a very caring person, bright, funny, smart and is a history professor. A few comrades attended. Harold Taylor, formerly from the Southern California chapter and SF8 member and Ray Boudreaux, formerly of the SF chapter and SF8 member were there. Many people from the academic world were there also. Michelle Alexander, author of "The New Jim Crow" was there as she is Leslie's sister. I had worked with Michelle about 10 yrs ago when she was in the Bay area. At that time, Michelle was head of the civil rights division of the ACLU for Northern Calif. and we worked on the issue of "Driving while Black."

The weather was hot. It was in the high 80's everyday, so moving around was kind of slow. We checked out downtown. Columbus is the capital of Ohio. We had a chance to see a butterfly exhibit in Franklin Park and came back the next day and attended the Asian Festival there. We enjoyed the food and exhibits.

On to New Orleans for the three day evidentiary hearing for one of the Angola 3 members, Albert Woodfox.

New Orleans is one of my favorite cities in the world. Orissa Arend, author of "Shoot Out In Desire," opened her home for us (we have stayed there often while in New Orleans). She lives by Tulane University, which is a beautiful neighborhood. I love driving down St. Charles Street which is lined by some of the biggest and most beautiful homes in America. I love seeing all the mardi gras beads hanging from the trees and seeing the trolley on St Charles Street. What I don't like about New Orleans is the

HEAT. Morning to night, New Orleans was worse than Ohio. When we landed at 8:30 pm it was still 86 degrees.

The first thing I did on the first day there was to go to the Oak. St. Café for breakfast. It is a great place in walking distance from Orissa's. They play live music while you eat and the food is good. Most people are locals from the neighborhood. After breakfast, we drove over to Mwalimu's house. Brother Mwalimu is a great warrior who has been in Angola Prison and knows everything about the prison system. He broke the color line when he was younger by being the first Black to rob a bank in New Orleans. We all laughed about that. The brother has health issues, but he is still strong. The next day was the start of Albert Woodfox trial.