

Bob & Liz Maxwell — 1973

While we were working in Guatemala in the mid-1960s Liz and I had known many migrant farmworkers and visited them in their quarters on the *fincas*. Their situation was even more oppressive than that of the workers in California and their living conditions more dehumanizing. When we lived in Washington, D.C., it was natural that we become involved with the UFW. At first we helped in the D.C. boycott with Ramon Romero, but soon we traveled to California to look into full-time work. We went to La Paz and talked with folks on the picket lines and had interviews with Cesar Chavez and with Dolores Huerta. They invited us to come back and join the team.

Back in Washington, we sold almost everything we owned and rented out our newly purchased home. We drove back to La Paz in our compact Toyota with our few possessions piled in the backseat or tied on top.

We don't know who assigned volunteers to their jobs but our assignments fit our talents and personalities wonderfully well. Liz was assigned to the medical clinics and I was sent to the *Taller Grafico*. We were pleased with the responsibilities we were given and the freedom to do the work.

Liz was assigned as clinic coordinator, a job that had been held by Sr. Pearl McGivney. We both remember Pearl as dedicated, energetic, creative, and joyous. A large part of Liz's job was communicating with clinic staffs, handling requests for funds or supplies, and soliciting gifts of medical supplies from pharmaceutical firms. She did all she could to ease the difficulties of the clinics, which operated with small staffs and shoestring funds.

Liz also helped recruit medical students who applied to work at the clinics. Besides their humanitarian motives, they were able to get reduced tuition at some medical schools for having done public health work.

She remembers Cesar as a micro-manager but not intrusive in her work. He used to laugh at her cooking the day's beans in the office with a found electric popcorn popper.

I joined Kathy Olguin in the *Taller Grafico*. It had been housed in a tumbledown shed near the Southern Pacific tracks, but just as I came on board the large new building was opened. We moved our stock of posters, bumper stickers, jewelry, pins, and belt buckles and set up shop. We worked in close proximity with Venustiano Olguin, who edited *El Malcriado*, and Ruben Montoya and Brad Washburn, who ran the presses. When any operation hit a crunch time, all would join in and work overtime to get the job done. There was a lot of hard work done and a lot of good times too.

Repartee in the building was constant. While it seemed barbed to an outsider, it was hilarious to us. One day Brad and I were surprised to be summoned to Cesar's office. A wealthy woman from the East who lived briefly at La Paz had heard us, thought we were

having fight, and told Cesar he should intervene. Everyone except the woman had a good laugh over that.

The main objective of the *Taller Grafico* was to keep the boycott teams supplied with literature, but we had other customers as well. Daily, the UPS driver, a nice fellow even though he was a Teamster, would back up to the loading dock and we would load the truck with 50 or more outgoing parcels. We would also travel to various UFW meetings to sell items. The first convention in Fresno was a huge success for the *Taller Grafico*.

One day a parcel arrived from Sister Corita Kent, a well-known artist. It contained an original colorful poster with her permission to reproduce it if, and only if, we duplicated the colors precisely. It had a quote from Cesar. We took it to a big press in San Francisco and had 500 copies made. They sold briskly for \$5. We had to go back for reprints several times.

We decided to print Christmas cards. Sue Percy, a fine artist, drew four lovely designs, and I wrote a message over Cesar's name. We advertised in the liberal press and we were swamped with orders. We had to call all hands to help us after hours to pack the cards for shipment. I designed an appointment calendar for 1974 with union photographs and UFW anniversaries noted on it. It, too, was a big seller.

My own memories of Cesar are all good ones. I found him always congenial and always supportive of the *Taller Grafico*. My conversations with him are precious memories.

When our time was up we returned to Washington in early 1974, having given a little and having received a great deal.