



The *Public i*, a project of the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center, is an independent, collectively-run, community-oriented publication that provides a forum for topics underreported and voices underrepresented in the dominant media. All contributors to the paper are volunteers. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to submit articles or story ideas to the editorial collective. We prefer, but do not necessarily restrict ourselves to, articles on issues of local impact written by authors with local ties.

*The opinions are those of the authors and do not reflect the views of the IMC as a whole.*

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You don't need a degree in journalism to be a citizen journalist. We are all experts in something, and we have the ability to share our information and knowledge with others. The *Public i* is always looking for writers and story ideas. We invite you to submit ideas or proposals during our weekly meetings (Thursdays at 5:30pm at the UCIMC), or to contact one of the editors.

**Reader Feedback**

Comments on *Public i* articles may be emailed to print (at) ucimc.org. Send the email with the word "comment" in the subject line.

**Coming Black History Month Events**

**February 17**

Processional!, SDRP, 5 p.m.—Ebony Umoja Jazz Night, Townsend A Lounge (ISR), 7 p.m. Black Chorus Sacred Music Symposium Opening Plenary, 6:00 p.m. Krannert Center for Performing Arts

**February 18**

B.A.T.S. Fashion & Dance Show, Foellinger Hall, 7:30 pm (doors open at 7:00 pm) Black Chorus Sacred Music Symposium, Krannert Center, 6:00 p.m. Music Building

**February 19**

Cotton Club, Foellinger Hall, 6 p.m., doors open at 5:30 p.m. Black Chorus Sacred Music Symposium, Luncheon 12:15-2:00 p.m. Illini Union

**February 20**

Black Chorus Sacred Music Symposium Concert, Krannert Center for Performing Arts, 7:30 p.m.

**February 22**

African American Read In, BNAACC, 12-1:30 p.m.

**February 23**

Food for the Soul: Douglas Ewert, Unit One Artist in Residence, BNAACC, 12 noon

**February 24**

Inclusive Illinois Diversity Roundtable: Just Skin? A Conversation on African & African American Relations, 11:30 a.m. \_ 1:30 p.m. Illini Union Ballroom a/b

**February 26**

Masquerade Ball, SDRP Ballroom, 7 p.m. (No entry with out a mask) Black Hisory Bowl, University YMCA, 9 a.m.

**February 27**

The Ritual featuring Speaker: The Judge Greg Mathis. Topic: "Mapping the Road to a Better Life with our Education, Union ABC Room 5 p.m.

*Please feel free to call 1-217-333-2092*

**SUSTAINING CONTRIBUTORS**

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**This quilt was made collectively by students directed by Kathryn Fitzgerald at the Campaign County 2011 MLK Essay Contest Celebration**



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## In Search of Coretta Scott King

By Courtney Suzanne Pierre



Courtney Pierre is a first year doctoral student in the History department. Her inspirations include Angela Davis and Llanick Pierre (her mother).

They say that behind every great man lies a great woman. This popular phrase holds true in the case of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King. As Martin led marches and protests during the Civil Rights Movement, Coretta was by his side every step of the way. An activist in her own right, she often spoke at rallies in her husband's place and continued to fight for the rights of oppressed people after his death. What was it like to be married to the leader of the movement? How did Coretta handle the expectations of being Martin's wife?

I find answers to these questions in Coretta's autobiography/memoir, *My Life with Martin Luther King Jr.* The narrative exposes Coretta's personal experiences both positive and negative as Martin's wife and partner in the movement. Coretta met many of the important leaders of the time, like President John F. Kennedy and Malcolm X. She was also afforded the opportunity to travel around the country and the world, including the 1964 trip to Norway for the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony. Coretta describes the joy she felt in sharing this experience with Martin:

"[W]hat a great privilege it had been, what a blessing, to live at the side of a man whose life would have so profound an impact on the world. It was the most important thing I

could have done, and I had wanted to do it."

Coretta reveals her important role as Martin's support system, providing reassurance and comfort when her husband needed it most. When Martin experienced public and media backlash, he turned to Coretta for strength and encouragement. After the Kings' home was bombed in 1955, Coretta stood by her husband's decision to continue in the movement:

"Afterward Martin said to me, 'Coretta, you've been a real soldier. I don't know what I would have done if it had not been for you.' [...] I had always been a strong person, but I had not realized that Martin, so strong himself, did need me. I was very moved that he recognized this need."

These personal anecdotes reveal the joys of being Mrs. Martin Luther King, Jr. She served as the leader's confidante and partner while experiencing the Civil Rights Movement at the front lines. We also learn about Coretta and Martin's deep love and respect for one another through the romantic anecdotes found in the narrative. It becomes evident that Coretta was very content and happy as Martin's wife.

At the same time, Coretta reveals the trials and tribulations of being married to Martin. Specifically, the narrative provides important insight into the ways in which she sometimes felt marginalized and left in the background. For instance, Coretta wrestled with the decision to marry Martin, understanding the career sacrifices she would have to make:

"It was not until later in the fall that I finally decided that because I really loved Martin, I would go ahead and marry him and let the question of my career take care of itself. However, I was determined to go on and get my degree. I

would finish that much, so I would have a sense of accomplishment, even though I would not have the kind of career I had planned."

Coretta opens up about being marginalized as a wife and as an activist. It is no secret that women were relegated to background roles during the movement, and Coretta was no different. When detailing the momentous March on Washington, she describes how she felt when she was not allowed to join Martin at the front of the procession:

"I must confess... that I felt that the involvement in the Movement of some of the wives had been so extensive that they should have been granted the privilege of marching with their husbands and of completely sharing this experience together as they had shared the dangers and hardships."

These quotes present some of Coretta's contention in her duties as Martin's wife. The tension between Coretta's autonomy and gender expectations adds depth to the narrative. While she handled her role graciously, Coretta also dealt with many struggles and sacrifices.

Coretta's autobiography provides a glimpse into her marriage with Martin. She portrays a relationship built on love, faith, and friendship. At the same time, she highlights the difficulties of the marriage, although she never discusses Martin's alleged infidelity. I imagine this deeply personal and painful topic did not fit into the positive tone of the memoir. Nevertheless, Coretta's personal story emerges, and readers learn about an important black female activist. As we celebrate Black History Month, let us take time to remember Coretta as more than just the woman behind the man.

## Bigger is Better! Help WRFU Erect Epic Radio Tower

By Tatyana Safronova



Tatyana is a volunteer of WRFU and IMC Production. She has a program on WRFU called The Big Boom.

It happened one weekend in November five years ago. Some 200 people swarmed the Independent Media Center. By the end, when the clouds gathered over Urbana, a radio station was born. The volunteers had traveled from across the country to Champaign-Urbana. They hoisted a radio tower 65 feet into the air, placing it on the roof of the building, set up the station equipment and wired together what became WRFU 104.5 FM. Through direct action, our community and the wider community-radio network said, We are the media!

Now our not-for-profit community radio station is broadcasting in English and Spanish, promoting other non-profits through public service announcements, and talking about everything from sports and local politics, to Native American issues, experimental music and the blues, with shows about God, children's bedtime stories, democracy and

revolution. Of course if classical music or food's more your thing, you could walk into the IMC today and pitch a show about pastry cooking, or an all-Bach hour. And if you really like comic books or travel you could do a show about that too.

The original radio tower was always considered a temporary structure, designed to get us on the air, but we aimed higher, looking to our FCC license which permits us to operate from up to 100 feet. Now, we are working to build the permanent tower and it's time for the community to organize again and act.

On March 7th, the Urbana City Council will meet to decide on our proposal to put up a 100-foot-tall, permanent, free-standing radio tower next to the IMC building. Our low-power station operates at just 100 watts, like one or two light bulbs, and must remain in the center of our community to be heard. But from 65 feet in the air, the signal often gets blocked by buildings and interrupted by the rise in the land as the signal travels from Urbana to Champaign. So, the view is surely better from one hundred feet up.

A taller antenna would allow us to broadcast further in every direction, reaching deeper west into Champaign and even

beyond Savoy to the south. It would also allow us to reach more Spanish-speaking residents for whom we already have 12 hours of Spanish-language broadcasting.

Mainly, however, the increased listener base would allow us to make a greater impact in the community as a hub for citizen journalism. The IMC is known as a place for education, activism and arts where volunteers can learn about media technology and produce media that's important to them.

To help us with this project, participate and speak out. Come to a WRFU station meeting with a friend and suggest your own radio show, or ask for a tour. Meetings are held regularly on the first and third Tuesdays at 8 p.m.

On March 7th at 7 p.m., come to the Urbana City Council meeting to show your support for the new tower, for citizen journalists and for your local community.

And finally, show your support by donating to WRFU. We have raised almost \$12,000 for this project, which has taken priority in our long-term vision, but we also pay operating costs and rely on gifts and support from community members like you. For information about both the

tower and how to donate, check out our website at [www.wrfu.net](http://www.wrfu.net).

To restructure one famous activist's quotation, let's be the media we want to see in the world.





# A Letter To a Black Girl

By anonymous

To Whom It May Concern (and those who may think it doesn't):

So, when exactly did it start? As I sit and ponder on when I can recall my first moment of interaction with sexuality, I realize I can't do it. I can't remember. It's as simple as that.

Sooner than later, I come up with the idea that I first came across sexuality when it was taken from me. I had never realized who I was sexually or if I was even a sexual being when a man decided he was confident in his sexuality enough and would affirm his ego. At that moment, sexuality had me. I didn't have my sexuality.

The moment after my sexuality was taken, I wasn't aware of exactly what was happening, but believe it or not, there was a secret decline in my spirit. My own personal sexual identity was stripped before it bloomed. At 6 years old. I hadn't even realized that I had it, never got a chance to use it, identify it, locate or plan for it. Instead, mine was chosen by someone else and used strictly for his disposal, with no regard to the fact that I was his flesh and blood.

The interesting thing about all of this is that, it was someone old enough to understand and realize exactly what he was doing. See, he knew. I didn't.

As I sit on this plane, I realize exactly how pissed I am. I'm deeply hurt actually. I mean, think about it. It's disgusting. A grown man decided to introduce a 6 year old to the harsh realities of life. I wasn't born on July 4th, 1988. I was born into society on that day, in my day bed, at 6 years old.

I didn't have the opportunity to make my own decision on whether or not I was even ready or able to engage in such behaviors.

It troubles me sometimes to think that at such a young age, something can be bestowed upon you like that, but I realize that it is a part of a broader narrative that other black women face as well; young black girls in their adolescence, all the way up to grown black women in their dealings with the real world.

I realize it's not only a struggle I had alone, but it's also a struggle that unifies us, silently of course, because we never seem to be able to talk about things like that. Even as I write this, I realize I wasn't able to talk about it, my mom wasn't able to talk about it for me. My family still has no clue about it. Now, its time to talk about it.

## I'M TALKING ABOUT IT.

As I reflect, I realize that I didn't know how that experience shaped how I think about my sexuality and things in that regard.

It's almost like, after that happened, I went through years of a frozen consciousness so to speak; of thinking and feeling and realizing that experience was essential to how I thought and felt about sex and sexuality.

It's only now that I can remember, not remember as in recount the past, but remember and realize how that experienced shaped, shapes and influenced certain decisions and opinions about sex for me.

You know, it's almost scary.

I wonder what that frozen period is called.

Is it blocking out the memory of pain?

Is it simply not existing in the consciousness of what happened to me sexually?

What is that?

Is that being silenced?

You will be surprised to know that I still don't know what that is.

To all US Black girls who still don't know what THAT is or are still lost there, remember:

They have ignored what we say.

Our hopes.

Our truths.

The tangled web that's woven.

For us, on behalf of us.

Know that their ears and minds cannot comprehend the navigation.

Instilled in the fibers of our being.

To possess the power to dismantle the matrix.

WE speak a language, seldom translatable.

In the name of ourselves.

In the name of being Black girls, speak and know.

And to society and everyone else involved, Recognize The Revolution.

In complete openness, honesty and humility,

—A Black Girl.

# 2011 Martin Luther King, Jr. Essays

By Various Authors

What is your dream for a Beloved Community?

Since 2003, over 2200 local students have been challenged to examine the legacy of Dr. King in their lives, and their role in social justice. This year, students between 4th and 12th grades presented their thoughts about their dream for the beloved community, and what they can do to bring it about. Students were asked to describe a problem in their community that needs to be fixed for their dream to become a reality. Here is what a few of them had to say.

## ON APATHY

ELIZABETH ATKINSON, 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE, YANKEE RIDGE ELEMENTARY

If I was asked, "What is a problem in our society?" perhaps, for an answer, you might expect homelessness, or the economy, or maybe even homework. But I would simply smile and nod for all your suggestions, and when you were done, I would voice my opinion. Apathy. Not trying. Doing the bare minimum. Sure, you could get through school that way. Not great grades, but yeah, you could. But you probably wouldn't get that job you wanted. Or your second choice. Or third. Or seventeenth. You could survive. But think about the big picture. No great novels would be written. No diseases cured. No important pictures. See what I mean?

The cause of this problem is simple. Kids do not understand the importance of education. In some places, education is rare and a luxury. In others, even knowing how to read is rare.

(Note: As you read the following sentence, please imagine a drum roll. Thank you.)

And now! "the moment you've all been waiting for" How to prevent it. (or at least make it a rarity.) One way is for the parents to be involved with the school. Also it would probably help if the parents helped the kids with homework. Another thing would be simply the student having responsibility for his or her own learning, as my teacher puts it.

My dream is a community where everyone tries hard and succeeds, and where education isn't thrown away like an old sock. Apathy is a problem that must be approached if this dream is to become a reality.



## The Beloved Community Begins Here

### ON CLASSISM

EMMY ALAMEDA, 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE, CAMPUS MIDDLE SCHOOL

I never understood why the laborer who spends hours vacuuming and cleaning or waiting at a cashier station gets paid less than someone who sits on a chair all day at an office and barks orders at people.

### ON RACISM

OMEED MIRAFTAB-SALO, GRADE 5, BOOKER T. WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY

Thousands of people are hurt and exploited because of a system of classifying people into unfair racial categories. This system unjustly regards of European descent as "better," than blacks and Latinos everyday. Sadly, this happens in every community and is affecting ours too. I believe our community can become one of the few who are fighting against it.

**Step 1**, as the public we need to raise awareness about racism. Everyday many people are hurt and abused simply because of their race. Their lives are deeply affected by this whether it's in school, work, or in their neighborhood. Our residents need to talk and alert people to the fact that this is happening in our society. Many people don't know that there still is prejudice in their district!

**Step 2**, as a group we can speak out. If people don't know how this is wrong, they can't react to it. . . . This year I went to Detroit, Michigan to the 2nd annual U.S. Social Forum. It showed me how much we can achieve by coming together to fight. One of the workshops in the Social Forum took some of the racist all-white neighborhoods in the city and rented out houses. Then, they gave them to mixed and black families. Two months later, many people's views in that neighborhood changed for the good. This method not only costs next-to nothing. But also, it is a lot more efficient in getting large groups of people to come

together and fight injustice compared to other ways.

**Step 3**, help and encourage those who are guilty to stop. Instead, forgive them and help them to cease to continue doing it. We must not shout and accuse them of prejudice, and simply acknowledge it and go on. Also, we must HELP them change their selves for the better. It is our job to encourage and change and support people who are making this change of character.

### ON THE PRISON SYSTEM

MARINA SHAH, 11<sup>TH</sup> GRADE, UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL

If we as a community really care about all our fellow citizens, we should be spending money on rehabilitation programs and education to help people, rather than prisons simply to punish. Prisons succeed only in creating further problems for society.

### ON MALNUTRITION

ELENA NEWMARK, 10<sup>TH</sup> GRADE, URBANA HIGH SCHOOL

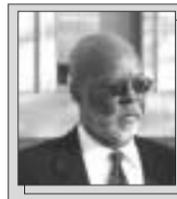
Since I was little, I have loved food; I have also been lucky enough to be able to eat amazing food. I have been blessed to have access to the Urbana Farmer's Market, and the wonderful community of farmers and vegetables that come together every Saturday morning. But sadly, not everyone in Champaign-Urbana has access to such rich food, or can afford the ingredients required to make good food. One place that everyone aged 5 to 17 has access to, is the public school lunchroom. Public school lunchrooms have a bad (and well-earned) reputation for horrible food. The disgusting food served in school lunchrooms is a major problem because unhealthy school lunches are a major factor in the pandemic of childhood obesity. For

Continued on page 6



# A Response From Civil Society

By Rev. Dr. Eugene Barnes



Rev. Dr. Eugene Barnes is board president of National People's Action, Vice-president of Illinois People's Action and Executive Director of Metanoia Centers in Champaign. He can be reached at [Info@metanoiacenters.org](mailto:Info@metanoiacenters.org) or 369-5720.

Our vision at Illinois People's Action (IPA) is to live in a state where our shared core values of justice, empowerment and family become the norm. To bring this vision into reality, we engage in faith-based community organizing and leadership training with congregations, labor, ethnic and grassroots groups across the state of Illinois.

Is there a shared language that business and community leaders need agree upon in order to serve the interests of both groups in ways that ensure growth; provide a well-trained workforce; build good reputations; and that will provide an inclusive, webbed-infrastructure that develops leadership capacity among historically marginalized groups? Will this language require more than good intentions, demanding a high level of skill, a frank acknowledgment of power disparities, and a major investment of time and effort? And, if there be such a language, how receptive will it be to the huddled masses?

George Hegel proposed that the truth is found neither in the thesis nor antithesis but in an emergent synthesis that reconciles the two. My friend and colleague, Vince Martin (author of *Blessed are the Peacemakers*), penned; "Synthesis was Dr. King's great strength in philosophy, theology and civil rights issues. He had the ability to pick out valid elements of seemingly mutually exclusive points of view to reach a higher degree of truth." Richard Niebuhr framed King's dialogue, responsible action in society, as the response to the other person within a community context; and, theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer called it, "living for the sake of others," that spoke to the humanity within each of us.

Unlike the synthesizing approach of King and others, the contemporary political philosophies known as liberal-

ism and conservatism-born of socialism and capitalism respectively-appear more interested in "beating" the other side than in coming to a higher, more complete truth. This higher truth reconciles the dichotomy of man being both steel and velvet; who at times can be quite stern, but as resiliently needed, also be sensitive to the needs of others. I can embrace my enemy in love and I can still abhor his aberrant societal behavior that seeks to tear asunder the bonds of the human pact.

Becoming that man or woman of steel and velvet prepares one to face today's headlines replete with a buffet of issues ranging from the subprime debacle that has resulted in mass foreclosures to record unemployment exacerbated by the foregoing. Through it all we have come face to face with the demon in the abyss that lets us know that no one is coming to save us but we, us! What is the character of civic engagement in a democratic society and what is the common currency that compels us to buy into this debate? Robert Putnam highlights the reliance of representative government on a healthy civil society, yet the inability of government to address fundamental social problems continues to gnaw at the heels of our consciences. There has to be a response from civil society and that response must address the inadequacies of the present pattern of unmet responsibilities.

Community organizing, that "living for the sake of others," solicits a membership base from a broad spectrum of the community that is concerned with the well-being of the community rather than a specific issue. Community organizing believes in building its leadership from the bottom up and through a prescribed methodology, transforms its citizenry into an urban taskforce for change. New skills are learned, abilities are honed and couch-potatoes become advocates. Cardinal to organizing is the belief, "Never do for others what they can do for themselves." Rev. Eugene Williams, former union organizer and founding editor of *Organizing Magazine* believes that all Americans have the right and responsibility to participate in the public policy and program decisions that affect their daily

lives. He envisions a time when congregations/community organizations commit themselves to building broad-based, multi-issue organizations to revitalize, protect and service the communities where they live, work and worship. Enter National People's Action (NPA) and its branches all across the country.

Over the last year, NPA called for actions in Chicago, New York City and Washington D.C. that turned out 30,000 people and led to negotiations with Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, FDIC Chair Sheila Bair, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, and U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Hilda Solis. Issues ranged from financial reform, worker rights, immigrants' rights, to affordable housing. Together with allied community organizing networks, unions and local organizations we held more than 100 actions in 2010, including an action that led to the 60th vote in the Senate for financial reform, and helped pass the biggest overhaul of the financial system in 75 years.

We need a growing and united movement that is about fighting FOR a new economy that works for everyone, a democracy of the people, and racial justice. The NPA is one example of the ways we can come together. In the battle of big ideas we believe in community over individualism, a fair market over free market, equality and equity over the belief that equality already exists, and a government of the people instead of limited government. Those that have been left out in the past must be lifted up in the future.

Governance is not just for the government; there has to be a response from civil society and civic engagement means more effective governance from we the people. Examples like the NPA demonstrate that the average citizen can challenge entrenched power brokers and claim a victory.

For information and questions, please visit us at [illinoispeoplesaction.org](http://illinoispeoplesaction.org) or [info@npa-us.org](mailto:info@npa-us.org). Join us as we hold our national conference March 5-7 in Washington, D.C. This year's theme is Taking Back Our Democracy.

# Timothy Kendrick's Legal Nightmare Finally Ends

By Mark Enslin

A Texas man's two-and-a-half-year-old drug case in Champaign County finally came to an end on February 9, 2011 in Judge Tom Difanis' courtroom after State's Attorney Dan Clifton suddenly dropped the case. The alternative was for Judge Difanis to rule on an 8-page Motion to Dismiss for lack of a speedy trial. Had the State not dropped the case and the judge not granted the Motion to Dismiss, then the trial would have commenced.

Timothy Kendrick was arrested on Sept. 4, 2008 when coming from Houston, Texas to pick up his brother in Champaign to go see their mother in a Chicago hospital. The apartment where Kendrick went to pick up his brother was raided within that half hour by the Drug Enforcement unit of the Champaign police with a search warrant. Kendrick claims that of the five adults who were either present on the scene or brought in from the parking lot, one of them was let go and Kendrick's fingerprints were the only ones taken. He says his photo id was taken from his pocket while he was handcuffed and a crime scene photo was taken with his ID propped up in a kitchen cabinet, above a drawer where drugs were found.

According to Kendrick, police made deals with others at the apartment, including the leaseholders, as well as someone arrested on a different warrant, the following day. Kendrick had no knowledge of the drugs found in the apartment and was not open to "working for the State." Kendrick spent a lengthy 21 and one half months in the Champaign County jail on a \$100,000 bond. He was originally charged with one count of Manufacturing and Delivery of 100<400 grams of cocaine.

During the first nine months of his incarceration, he was not allowed to come to court, although the docket

erroneously reported him as appearing with his lawyer three times. "This was a violation of my due process rights," said Kendrick.

The Speedy Trial Act requires an automatic 120 (court) days or 24 weeks from arrest to trial, excluding continuances for the defense. On June 22, 2010, Judge Clem remanded his case to the court of Judge Blockman who dismissed it for lack of a speedy trial. The State's Attorney asked for the case to be dismissed "without prejudice," which allowed them to bring new charges.

Kendrick remained in jail and the following day (June 23) was arraigned on a new indictment of 3 counts: controlled substance trafficking, unlawful criminal drug conspiracy and unlawful possession with intent to deliver a controlled substance, but the dates were extended backwards for a year from Sept. 4, 2008 to September 4, 2007. The following day, June 24, 2010, Timothy Kendrick was still in jail when deputies came to him with orders for him to be released on his own recognizance. He was to return to Houston, Texas to report to his parole board.

Kendrick was given a court-appointed attorney, Michael Zopf, in July of 2010. Kendrick had to travel to Champaign County from Houston seven times for court appearances. His lawyer filed a motion demanding a "Bill of Particulars" from the State to explain what he supposedly did in the year before he was arrested, i.e. the new charges. Judge Difanis gave the State a time limit of 40 court days to answer the demand and still they twice asked for a continuance. The second time, December 22, 2010, Judge Difanis sanctioned the State by barring all the informants' testimony from appearing for the State. Thereupon, Zopf prepared a motion demanding dismissal on the



Timothy Kendrick

grounds of lack of a speedy trial, linking the two cases, which both center on the day of arrest on September 4, 2008. That motion would have been heard on February 9, 2011, but the State dropped the charges before the decision could be ruled upon.

Today, Kendrick is free, but it has been a difficult path. "It has been a long hard fight," Kendrick said, "but I knew I was innocent and never gave up."



# Racial Microaggressions and its Impact on Campus Climate at the University of Illinois

Co-authors: Stacy Harwood, PhD—Associate Professor, Urban & Regional Planning, Ruby Mendenhall, PhD—Assistant Professor, Sociology & Afro-American Studies, and Margaret Browne Hunt, PhD—Research Specialist, Center for Democracy in a Multiracial Society all at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

On November 4, 2008, the first person of color was elected President of the United States of America and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. It is true that President Obama did break down some racial barriers, However, many Americans have the inaccurate notion that racism no longer exists in post-civil rights America. Although civil rights legislation ended the legal exclusion of African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and Native Americans from various social and political spaces, barriers still exist that perpetuate racial inequalities. Contemporary racism includes more subtle and indirect forms, found embedded in day-to-day actions, social relations and institutional rules and regulations.

These more invisible forms of racism are called racial microaggressions. Racial microaggressions are derogatory indignities that demean, exclude, and invalidate people of color and their experiences. Individuals often perpetuate racial microaggressions without consciously knowing they communicate or behave in this way when interacting with racial and ethnic minorities.

Our research focuses on how racial microaggressions occur on predominantly white campuses. We conducted focus groups with students of color attending the University of Illinois to gather a more detailed understanding of the subtle and complex phenomena of racism on campus. Three types of microaggressions provided a window into what students of color experience as they walk from the dorm to the classroom. We learned how the individual interactions between two people become part of a large landscape on campus, where some spaces become known as white spaces and other as safe spaces for students of color.

Derald Wing Sue and his colleagues break down racial microaggressions into three types of microaggressions: microassaults, microinsults and microinvalidations. Microassaults are “explicit racial derogation characterized primarily by a verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions.” What makes these different than old-fashioned racism is that microassaults often occur in more private settings, away from public scrutiny.

The most controversial racial microassault on campus is the continued presence of the Chief Illiniwek mascot.



UIUC's Center on Democracy in a Multiracial Society's Racial Microaggression Research Group: From left to Right: J. Michael Wallace, PhD Student, Recreation, Sports, and Tourism; Jioni Lewis, PhD student, Educational Psychology; Ashlee D. McLaughlin, Graduate student, Urban and Regional Planning; Ruby Mendenhall, PhD, Assistant Professor, Sociology & Afro-American Studies; Sang Lee, Graduate student, Urban and Regional Planning; Stacy Harwood, PhD, Associate Professor, Urban & Regional Planning and Margaret Browne Hunt, PhD, Research Specialist, Center for Democracy in a Multiracial Society

While no longer an official mascot, students, university staff and community members still wear t-shirts and sweaters with the mascot, additionally; the local establishments have posters and stickers of the mascot on their windows, walls and doors. Other examples of microassaults include the theme parties, such as “Tacos and Tequila,” where students dressed as Mexican gardeners and nannies. Despite efforts to curb these parties, racially motivated events continue on the university campus, and many go unpunished. Students of color also report white students making blatant racist comments, for example, an undergraduate in our focus group told us “...a block away, he turns around and gives us the finger and tells us, “Asian motherfuckers to go back into your Asian fucking house!”

Microinsults are behaviors and “communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity.” Many times the perpetrator is unaware of the insult. Taken alone these statements might not appear to be insults, but when a person of color hears them repeatedly, they become insults. For example, when a professor comments to a black student, “you are so articulate,” this seems to be a compliment, but when the student hears this repeatedly it suggest that perhaps that people are surprised that a black person can speak with intelligence.

Students in the focus groups shared many examples where instructors, staff and peers made assumption about

their intelligence based on their race or ethnicity. Student spoke extensively about having to deal with double standards. They have to work harder in class to prove themselves to the instructors and peer, they have to dress nice to avoid be treated like a criminal or harassed by the police both on and off-campus.

Microinvalidations are “communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experienced reality of a person of color.” One student told us “On most occasions with people I will say what I have to say but in my classes I would be quiet, I didn't want to say anything, I was afraid to mess up because every time I would go into class, I would have to prepare for battle. I had to prepare to go in and defend myself. They would ask me, why and where did you get that? I was like, I don't have to tell you where I get it from. It's my life. I was like “do you need me to write a book so I can cite myself? If you want me to, I'll do it. I'll cite myself.”

Similar to microinsults, the perpetrator is often unaware of the racial microinvalidations. Examples of racial microinvalidations include when a white person says they don't see race or denial of racism. Asian and Latino/a students in our focus group told of having to respond to questions about their birthplace and citizenship status despite being born in the United States, the student feels as though they've become a foreigner in their own home.

Students in the focus groups also talked about the police closing down a popular campus event attended by students of color, particularly African Americans. Some students felt race had a lot to do with the police response to a fight outside of the party. Those inside the party expressed concerns about excessive use of force, the police yelling at students and being treated like criminals even though they were not involved in the altercation.

As racial microaggressions become “normalized” they embed themselves into policy making and organizational culture. These macro-level microaggressions occur systematically and create environmental racial microaggressions, such as when students of color feel unwelcome and invisible in specific classrooms, dorms, offices, events, fields of study, and other spaces on campus.

Racial microaggressions provides us a way to talk about what students of color experience daily at the University of Illinois campus. While some brush these things off as “kid being kids” or claim it was just a joke, the impacts are cumulative. Our study helps to unpack these often hidden racial processes and expose the fact that students of color often deal with the negative effect that

Continued on next page

## Upcoming Channing-Murray Foundation Film Events

Wednesday, March 16 7PM  
The Channing-Murray Foundation  
1209 West Oregon, Urbana

Double feature! *La Marcha* tells the story of the extraordinary Santa Fe Living Wage Campaign, which emerged through the efforts of diverse community-based organizations to build a grassroots coalition, enlist business allies and illustrate core U.S. values of teamwork, fairness, opportunity, responsibility and respect.

*Tony & Janina's American Wedding*, is a preview of a feature length documentary that gets to the heart of the broken U.S. immigration system. After 19 years in America, a Chicago family is torn apart, as Janina Wasilewski is deported back to Poland. Set on the backdrop of the Chicago political scene and the comprehensive immigration reform movement, this film follows the Wasilewski family's struggle to be reunited, as their Senator Barack Obama, rises to the Presidency. By focusing on this family within the larger context, the film reaches into larger issues of Migration, Citizenship and Human Rights while removing the racially charged, negative stereotypes that have often become synonymous with immigration issues in the country.

Wednesday, April 20 7PM  
The Channing-Murray Foundation  
1209 West Oregon, Urbana

*War On The Family: Mothers in Prison and the Children They Leave Behind*

A few appalling statistics: Illinois' rate of re-uniting an incarcerated mother and her children after prison is only 28%. In Illinois, 73% of the women's prison population are women of color. While over 80% of women in the Illinois Department of Corrections need drug treatment, it is available to only 16% of them.

This film puts a human face over the statistics: haunting first person narratives, coupled with analysis from passionate advocates, paint a devastatingly clear picture of the effects imprisonment has not only on the women who are locked away, but also on the children who have been left behind.



# Home Street Home

By Alexander M. Roth



Alex is a Communications major at the University of Illinois. He is the News Media intern for the IMC this semester.

CONSIDER THIS: AS I WRITE THIS ARTICLE, I can look out my balcony and see a number of homeless people asking for food and money on Green Street in Champaign. People pretend to send text messages or cross the street just to avoid confronting dingy-looking adults. We all have problems, so why not ask someone, "Will you allow me to help you?"

It took a first-hand perspective and some guidance from a man named David Pirtle for me to understand the gravity behind this concept. Pirtle started his journey here in Champaign, where he once attended Parkland College. While battling with schizophrenia he wandered the country for several years and found himself homeless in Washington DC. Someone finally reached out to him, helped him get cleaned up, and he now works with the National Coalition for the Homeless advocating for the rights of individuals within the homeless community of the District of Columbia.

I met Pirtle in January, during which a sponsored group of University of Illinois students pretended to be homeless for 48 hours in the nation's capital. He asked the thirteen students in my group for a ballpark estimate of the number of homeless people in Champaign County. Over 550 people are homeless, one-third of those are children, and the number is increasing. I was stunned. How could I be so unaware of such enormous misfortune in my own backyard?

I got to know many incredible people associated with the National Coalition because of the opportunity presented by The University of Illinois' Alternative

Spring Break. The program provides students with seasonal opportunities to travel somewhere in the US to volunteer for a social cause. I chose the DC trip because it uniquely offered the opportunity to directly confront both a local and universal issue: homelessness. I'd traveled before and accustomed myself to foreign cultures. Never, though, had I sat down and considered the devastating nature of the oft-overlooked homeless community.

I prepared for my Alternative Spring Break by eating less and reading statistics about poverty. My bags were packed, but I was far from ready for the next seven days. Our trip began when our group arrived in downtown DC and made our way to hear stories from a Faceless Panel at the National Coalition for

the Homeless (NCH). On the way, I experienced a moment of tremendous impact. Outside DuPont Circle Station, a homeless man sold Street Sense newspapers for a suggested \$1.00. On the pages, I noted a verse from Walt Whitman's 'The Wound Dresser', "...I sit by the restless all the dark night. Some are so young, some suffer so much. I recall the experience sweet and sad." I felt remorse for all the longing people suffered I'd never even acknowledged. Anthony, homeless and now a friend, made his money selling issues of Street Sense. I share Whitman's bittersweet sentiment when I heard from the vendor that even though few city residents buy the paper, homeless people feel empowered by the voice it provides. Street Sense is an NCH-founded publication, written and distributed by the homeless people of the city in an attempt to spread awareness of the homeless community and raise money for its cause.

Later that day, my group heard 'How I became homeless' stories at the NCH from Dave Pirtle and 'Little' Steve Thomas. The two mentors moved us with their narratives, hailing the importance of keeping an open mind with strangers. With pride they told us how happy they were



"Richie," by Tammy Grubs

for Ted Williams, the homeless Clevelander who found a new life thanks to a passerby's consideration.

"Stories like this are great," they said, "but many [homeless people] are out there with serious mental and physical problems. The key here is that one homeless man found his way, but the spotlight is quickly lost for the homeless community." Not all homeless people have marketable skills, so walking by a 'normal' homeless person and thinking, "Isn't it a shame," won't cut it. The way Steve told his story, I could see into his past; I could see his memories in his thousand-yard stare. He told us about his missed opportunities and how he didn't appreciate them.

"You're one bad decision away from homelessness," he told us. "I probably started over more times than any three of you will." It was on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, the most powerful place in the world, that Steve first understood the reality of homelessness. His voice was so traveled, it was hard to imagine what he looked like thirty years ago. "Has he ever been on a vacation?" I wondered. Hard times stole a piece of his personality for a time, but Steve eventually found his way back to a healthy mind with the help of a caring stranger. Forever indebted to the man, Steve now helps others.

For the next two days, my group embarked upon our 'vacation'; we begged during the day and slept on cardboard



NCH volunteers

at night. There were mixed feelings about our motives, to be certain. We were on our own, with no way to contact anyone, buy food, or even sit comfortably for a prolonged period of time. Nobody wanted us anywhere. Some of our group members even got yelled at when they were trying to rest at a church. Library cards, job interviews, and Neosporin for a hurt friend were all out of the question. I felt humiliated asking for food and money, but I didn't know what else to do. The spark in our eyes faded quickly.

With little to do, no sense of location, and people refusing to acknowledge our existence as panhandlers, we began to live moment by moment. Our hunger, lack of sleep, and low body temperature kept us from doing anything really productive. There wasn't a single point where we were able to do what we really wanted to do. There was no privacy and we felt terrible about begging all the time. We certainly weren't living the lives of homeless people, but we got a brief glimpse into their reality.

One of the happiest moments in recent memory was when an employee named Marquat disregarded a long customer line to sneak me and my friend some warm food. After a long, cold, hungry day walking around the city, this was a godsend. Though few and far between, these Samaritan acts gave us hope. Imagine going years without anyone knowing your name, though.

I am by no means Mr. Perfect when it comes to lending a hand to the homeless. But after experiencing homelessness on a first-hand basis in DC, I've realized it's possible to be a perfect friend to those in the most trouble, even if just for a moment. Of course, it will take institutional reform to reduce the effects of homelessness on a larger scale. However, you – and I mean YOU – can take Steve's advice and acknowledge that "inside every homeless person, there's a superstar waiting to get out." Help them rediscover their identity.

## Some Suggested Resources

Find out more about advocacy, projects, facts, and news from the National Coalition for the Homeless at [www.nationalhomeless.org](http://www.nationalhomeless.org). On the site, you can find a link to an NPR interview featuring David Pirtle.

To find out about Homeless shelters in your area, check [www.homelessshelterdirectory.org](http://www.homelessshelterdirectory.org).

Street Sense, the magazine by homeless people in DC, can be found at [www.streetsense.org/](http://www.streetsense.org/)

Check out [www.hud.org](http://www.hud.org) for national, state, and local government-sponsored projects and news regarding homeless people.



Roth with a NCH guest

# Racial Microaggressions

Continued from previous page

racism can have on their academics, which is a burden that their white peers do not have to experience.

While we have focused on racial microaggressions occurring on the university campus, we can easily extend this work into the Champaign-Urbana community. Racial tension in

schools, racial profiling by the police, and residential segregation can be explained in part by the existence of environmental racial microaggressions. While much has been gained concerning equality since the Civil Rights Movement, socially and institutionally there is still much work to be done.

If you are interested in reading more about racial microaggression, please contact the Center for Democracy in a Multiracial Society at the University of Illinois. Web: <http://cdms.illinois.edu>, Telephone: 217.244.0188, or E-mail: [cdms@illinois.edu](mailto:cdms@illinois.edu).



# 2011 Martin Luther King, Jr. Essays

Continued from page 2

schools trying to promote healthy lifestyles, the food that they are serving undermines what they are trying to teach.

Why do schools serve these unhealthy and disgusting lunches? Many of the reasons are cost and resources. Processed and packaged foods are much cheaper than buying raw ingredients; not only because they cost less to buy, but because they are cheaper to prepare. In Illinois, in the Midwest United States, there are hundreds of farms and farmers looking for business, and the schools in Champaign-Urbana could have local farms provide the meat and vegetables for their lunch program. The Farm to School program is a program that connects schools up with local and regional farms that will then provide the schools with fresh food for their lunches. It is a competitive grant program that is funded by the federal government with support from the USDA.

If our community decides to take these vital steps, not only will it help stop the growing problem of childhood obesity, but it will teach a generation of kids how to eat healthily and stay healthy throughout their lives.

## ON THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

**BLAKE DONALDSON, 11<sup>TH</sup> GRADE, URBANA HIGH SCHOOL**

No student should have a learning disadvantage because of minimal access to technology.

## ON VIOLENCE

**VANESSA FRAZIER, 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE, BOOKER T. WASHINGTON**

My beloved community of Champaign Urbana has a problem. Many kids, teenagers even grown ups are fighting. Violence is really messing up our community, because shooting can go through people windows and hurt them and kill them. It can hurt children more than anything that's not fair. Many people I know have been out there fighting in my local community; it is really messing up and tearing apart black on black crimes. Hate we shouldn't fight we should leave it alone it's not worth losing your life over a fight. Adults and teenagers are influencing kids to fight telling kids it's okay to fight.

We should have more people to persuade them not to fight teenagers and adults not to fight. We should do more community service about fighting is not right. Stop all that that hate we should just get together and tell teenagers, adults fighting isn't right you are setting a bad example for us kids. Having more community service would really help people stop fighting. It would really hurt relatives to hear or see that one of their family members got shot or hurt. Bad things really happen to people always fight it would really help mothers and relatives not to cry and be hurt if their kids don't fight. We should have a new law that says if you fight you have to do 40 hours of community service.

**ERIN SHEAHAN, 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE, JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL**

But then, shining through the night  
Came a righteous glowing light  
That covered over all its plight  
And cast a glint among the dim  
For deep inside the lily knew  
That the end to all the sadness  
All the hatred, all the madness  
To bring light through the darkness  
That it must begin with you.

## ON HOMOPHOBIA

**EMILY JANE WARREN, 10<sup>TH</sup> GRADE, URBANA HIGH SCHOOL**

There is an issue in our community that has remained under the surface for years. It has not gained much exposure in general media, and has been overlooked by those with the most power to eradicate the issue. Homophobia, though thankfully not as prevalent in our community as in others, is an issue that hits home and, believe it or not, affects everyone in a society. Homophobia, and sexuality as a broad topic, has come to be a taboo subject, dispelling most chances of solving it just for the sake of peoples' shallow comfort levels.

Homophobia can take many forms. Bullying consists of violence or harassment, such as sexual harassment, nagging someone to disclose their sexual orientation, name-calling-like "faggot", "dyke", "homo", "queer", etc., other derogatory language-phrases like "no homo", "that's so gay", etc., excessive and intrusive questioning, and endorsement of negative stereotypes... On a larger scale, the enforcement of inequality, like job discrimination, the illegality of gay marriage, and the banishment of gays in the military, is blatant homophobia. Sometimes one knows what homophobia looks like, but might not be able to locate it. Society shows constant displays sometimes discrimination are active, and media, including films, television programs, the internet, music, magazines, advertisements, and other publications. Media can also shed light on LGBTQ issues, but are often contributors to public homophobia. These two areas can be especially harmful, because teens' two main sources of information are friends and the media.

## ON EDUCATION

**UMA BASOLE, 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE, STRATTON**

Books lead to wisdom, wisdom leads to knowledge, and knowledge is power. Smart children lead to smarter communities, smarter communities lead to smarter cities. Smarter cities lead to smarter states and smarter states lead to a smarter nation.

## ON POLLUTION

**CURTIS CHUNG, 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE, WILEY ELEMENTARY**

A problem of my community, perhaps even the world, is pollution. A few years back, my mother took me back to her hometown in Southern Vietnam. The neighborhood was severely polluted. The ground was covered in litter, people wore crude masks to cope with the smoke and sulfurous smell and the water in little streams smelled terrible and could easily be mistaken as black ink. (YEEUK) After that horrific experience, I studied pollution and ways to prevent it. Sometimes you may read or hear about pollution. But there's a lot of pollution you don't know about. Water pollution: You might think, "Oceans are huge! We have plenty of water, right?" Guess again. Only 3% is fresh water. The rest is contaminated with salt. Out of this 3%, less than 1% is available. That's why we must keep water clean. Dumping waste into clean water is called water pollution. Water can be polluted by many things like run off from soilid, industrial waste and sewage.

My dream is to have a clean community. So next time, bike to your next destination, have a carpool, don't litter and don't throw stuff in a nearby lake. We could make a huge difference.

## HOMELESSNESS

**IMMANUEL HAN GRADE 8, UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL**

...If I were to state such a problem, I would tell the reader that it is people out on the streets with no homes, no family, and no love. Everywhere I go, there are so many people out there that wander the streets of our community. They have no destination; no purpose. I believe that the saddest thing to witness is people who have no purpose in a place except for to worry about the next day.

My solution that I present to you is change. We, ourselves, must change our views of those who need help. We need to break our prejudices of these people who need our help. No one else is going to build homeless shelters for us. No one else is going to feed our own community's people for us. No one else is going to want to solve our problems for us. I know that it is only then when we can even begin to consider giving spare change or offering people an extra sandwich. Change is the first step we, as a community, must take to try to tackle this problem.

To do this, I believe that the first thing that needs to be done is altering our views of the people in streets. We first need to break the prejudices we have of these people. These people may have all kinds of reasons of becoming that way. But I believe in a second chance.

## TEACHER'S PAY

**ALICE HU, GRADE 8, UNI HIGH, RAYBURN**

Our teachers are not getting paid enough. They do much more beyond the call of duty, something the community should be thankful for.

## EATING DISORDERS

**ANWEN PARROTT, GRADE 11, UHS, MRS. HOGAN-CHAN**

Eating disorders in young women, often caused by the unrealistic standard of beauty created by the media, has an enormous and widespread impact on our nation's youth.

## JOBLESSNESS

**MIKHAYLA EVELAND, GRADE 11, UHS, MRS. HOGAN-CHAN**

Many families suffer due to the recession. When the economy began to go downhill, many companies were forced to lay off a certain number of workers which meant no incomes for some people.

## DIGITAL DIVIDE

**JOHN SEYLER, GRADE 11, UHS, MRS. HOGAN-CHAN**

In the long run, being on the wrong side of the digital divide can affect a person's future.

## POLLUTION

**SARAH STELZER, GRADE 4, LEAL, HUFF**

The environment is the community of the world. BRIANNA PIERSON, GRADE 7, URBANA MIDDLE SCHOOL, SEARING  
Last year in 2009, we used enough bottled water that can stretch the earth three times.

**MOHAMMAD SWEID, GRADE 4, STRATTON, MS. NEWMAN**

The thing that creates littering is when people are lazy to throw it in the trash so they throw it on the ground. If people stop throwing trash on the ground and throw it in the trash can they will make the world a better place for animals and for you and me.

**PRITHVI DHARMARAJ, GRADE 4, BOOKER T. WASHINGTON**

You want to stop pollution? Well you can help stop pollution NOW! How? We can protest. Another thing is that littering is a problem of pollution. We can get more litter patrol in the park to get rid of littering. Also we could get more trashcans so litterbugs can throw away trash not litter.

**BINH LE, GRADE 4, BARKSTALL, MRS. PALMER**

Don't you want to have a clean place to live? If you do, then help to stop pollution. There are many things you can do to stop pollution. You can walk instead of driving.

**DANIEL DRISCOLL, GRADE 7, URBANA MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Another thing we should have is a bullet train. Almost every other major country has one like Japan, England, Belgium, and Germany.

**HUNTER FITZWATER, GRADE 4, BARKSTALL, PALMER**

My dream of a perfect community is kids playing safely on the sidewalk, animals freely roaming the forest, flowers blooming in the parks, fresh air, and clean water to drink. Pollution stops my dream from happening because it hurts animals and destroys their habitats. It also poisons the water and intoxicates the air.

**NICK SMITH, GRADE 7, URBANA MIDDLE SCHOOL**

People need to walk or bike instead of taking their car so that people are not polluting the air we breathe.

**ESTHER CHUNG, GRADE 4, BARKSTALL, MS. PALMER**

My perfect community is when the planet is clean and the birds are singing and everybody is happy. But that won't happen if people keep on littering.



# UC2B and the Digital Divide in Champaign-Urbana

By Laura Allured



As the Broadband Access Advocate at the UC-IMC, Laura Allured has been following UC2B since before the application, and is a contributing author for the Champaign Broadband Connection. She is the Public Outreach Coordinator for the UIUC Informatics Club and regularly volunteers to teach basic computing skills with Real Computing Help. Laura is finishing up her last year at UIUC in French Commercial Studies and Informatics.

In recent years, there has been a lot of talk about universal access to and affordability of high-speed internet services. In the 2009 stimulus package, \$7.2 billion was allocated for broadband development and employment in underserved (rural) and underserved (generally low-income) areas. Last year, the Federal Communications Commission created the National Broadband Plan. Already this year high-speed internet was again discussed in the State of the Union address, which put an emphasis on wireless internet access.

Why all the fuss? Because high-speed internet access creates economic, educational and political opportunities. Communities that are trying to get by without a reliable broadband connection are at an enormous disadvantage nationally and even globally. There are also many barriers that technological illiteracy could pose to an individual's life. For example, it is nearly impossible to find employment without using several types of technology to create a resume, fill out a job application, and send them to an employer.

Champaign-Urbana is not unserved by any stretch of the imagination, but there are underserved areas. A survey done in the summer of 2009 found that, in about 10% of the two cities, less than 40% of homes have an internet connection. It is a travesty that the town hosting *PC Magazine's* Most Wired Campus in 2008 has so many people on the disconnected side of the digital divide.

In an attempt to help solve this problem here in Champaign-Urbana, the two cities and the University applied for and won a \$27 million federal grant to build a network,

known as UC2B, that will connect homes in the underserved areas of town, and community anchor institutions such as schools, libraries, churches, and city buildings citywide. The grant is targeted at underserved areas (so the network will only immediately serve a small portion of Champaign-Urbana), but we all expect the project to continue further build-out following the completion of the first phase.

Another goal the cities had for UC2B was to create construction jobs during its creation, and other economic opportunities later, with an emphasis on areas that are currently economically disadvantaged. In order for that goal to be realized,

the community will have to fight for those jobs and make sure that opportunities are accessible to local companies.

These initiatives will improve the quality of internet access, how many people that access reaches, and the practical benefit that technology provides to our community.

These intertwined issues of access to technology and economic power can't be solved without the community's involvement and direction. Luckily, there are many ways to get involved. Of course, you can contact your city council member to let them know your position on these issues. But more interactively:

Other organizations are also doing projects that will improve broadband access in Champaign-Urbana.

- The Graduate School of Library and Information Science's Community Informatics students provide technical expertise to nontechnical innovators, through a variety of programs.
- The Independent Media Center has a selection of programs like the Champaign.net datacenter, the CU Community Helpdesk, and Makerspace Urbana.
- Comcast (comcast.com) is expected to develop a low-cost tier of service as part of the agreement it made when it acquired NBC, and it will use its recently rolled out DOCSIS-3 to offer faster internet access than is widely available today.
- Volo Broadband (volo.net), a local Internet Service Provider, is rolling out enhanced wireless infrastructure in some areas and providing fiber-based access in others.
- On the jobs side, Metanoia Centers (metanoiacenters.org) is promoting a "community benefit" approach to building UC2B.
- Backbone Builders (backbonebuilders.com) is working to ensure that the people that work on UC2B and similar projects come from the local population, and that the jobs create long-lasting benefit for the local economy.

- Since UC2B is funded with tax dollars under supervision of public entities, all of the UC2B Policy Committee meetings, and many other meetings, are open to the public. You can make your voice heard in person (see <http://connection.volo.net/calendar> for a full list of UC2B meetings and events).

- UC2B's website ([www.uc2b.net](http://www.uc2b.net)) has background information about the project.

- The Champaign Broadband Connection ([connection.volo.net](http://connection.volo.net)) is a blog about UC2B, national broadband news, and technology tips and tricks run by Volo Broadband.

- Finally, eBlackCU ([eblackcu.net](http://eblackcu.net)), a project aiming to create a strong African American community in Champaign-Urbana, has been very active in the discussion of UC2B. They will be holding a meeting on March 19th at the Champaign Public Library on technology, UC2B, and the future of Champaign-Urbana.

Attend a meeting, comment on a blog, or show up at an event, but make your voice heard to ensure broadband develops in a way that solves real problems.

## Technology and African-American History

By Noah Lenstra

As the Urbana-Champaign Big Broadband (UC2B) \$30 million high-speed Internet infrastructure is constructed throughout Champaign-Urbana, we must come together as a community to find ways to use this technology to support all sectors of our local population. eBlackChampaign-Urbana is a project that investigates how the stories and struggles of the local African-American community can be aggregated online from multiple archives, libraries, museums and personal collections and whether this aggregation could inspire local individuals in the present and future to see technology in a new way. We are interested in helping individuals not only download content, but upload content as well, about themselves, their families, churches and community histories so that when the community goes online it will find itself.

Our latest project is to find ways to utilize the most common data-set that every community has: Yearbooks! We already have digitized the Cotillion Yearbooks, a program of Gamma Upsilon Psi that since 1972 has organized college scholarships for young African-American women in our community. The Cotillions were started by Phi Beta Sigma and Zeta Phi Beta in 1972, under the leadership of Alvin Griggs, Willie Summerville and others. In 1974, Kathryn Humphrey and Margaret Smith founded Gamma Upsilon Psi Society to assist the fraternities with the Cotillion. In 1977 Gamma Upsilon Psi became the sole sponsor of the program, and has continued it to the present day.

Visit the Society's website for more information on their upcoming Ball, to be held April 23, 2011, [www.gesociety.com/](http://www.gesociety.com/).

The Yearbooks of these events are an amazing resource, as every year they feature not only biographies of the Debutantes and their escorts, but also brief notices from area churches, businesses and individuals who sponsor the young women's education. We are currently

seeking the Cotillion Yearbooks from 2004-2008. If anyone has a copy they could lend to us to digitize we would be grateful. These digitized files will be backed up at local archives and libraries for long-term preservation.

We are currently looking at ways to make this very large collection of digital information more accessible. The digital yearbooks contain nearly 10,000 pages on local African-American history and we are experimenting with various ways to index the collection, which is already full-text searchable, transparent so that individuals can access them by name, church, school, or business. In addition to making what we have already digitized more accessible, we are also looking to extend our work by beginning a project to digitize an even larger source of information, the high school yearbooks of Champaign and Urbana public schools. This project is just getting started and we welcome all to join us. We would be happy to lead digitization workshops for groups to continue this process.

### COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY

In addition to digital history, the eBlackCU project has also lead a series of events on community technology in Champaign-Urbana. Over 250 people have attended these events, held November 5 and 6, 2010, and January 8, 2011, and the full record of them is available online at eBlackCU.net. We need to continue this momentum and involve more people in the process of embedding digital technology into our local community. The next event in this series will be held at the Champaign Public Library, Robeson Room A & B, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, March 18. This event will feature: Informational panels/discussions on: UC2B ([www.uc2b.net](http://www.uc2b.net)); the eBlackCU digital library ([www.eBlackCU.net](http://www.eBlackCU.net)); Jobs and technology; Youth and technology; and Churches and technology. Light refreshments will be served.

We will have computer stations with volunteer instructors set up for you to: 1) Get an e-mail account/Facebook account if you don't have one and want one; 2) Learn how to digitize information and take home a free CD of your digitized material. Bring in your own material (scrapbooks, flyers, photographs, books) or digitize texts we will have on site.



You can find the full 2011 MLK Essays, extended articles, links to related material... and much, much more!

## SOLHOT Saving Yourself First

By Porshe Garner

*Porshe Garner is a graduate student in Educational Policy Studies Organizational Leadership Program at the U of I.*

Here in the local community, I am a part of a phenomenal group called Saving Our Lives Hear Our Truths (SOLHOT). SOLHOT is a space organized for and by Black women and girls. Within SOLHOT, female student volunteers from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign come together with Black girls (6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade) in the Champaign, Urbana, and Rantoul communities to share their stories and lived experiences, sing, dance, and cry through celebration of self.

In my two years of working with SOLHOT I have had the pleasure to witness the growth and development of all SOLHOT spaces. Currently, SOLHOT operates in 2 middle schools and 2 high schools, not to mention the many conferences and performances that are attended and given yearly, all in the name of Black girlhood celebration.

Each meeting, the volunteers and girls return to SOLHOT for a refreshing way to start or end their week while delivering new and invigorating discussions and activities. How is SOLHOT able to deliver something new and stimulating every week? Bringing something new to the table is accomplished through daily reflections that enable women and girls to fully participate and engage in the celebration of individuals and the collective space. Doing daily reflections is the most difficult task when trying to improve the group as well as oneself. Some of the hardest moments in the space include stories about past/present relationships, learning to unlearn, racism, facing and breaking traditions, recognition about the ways in which we are affected by our institutions, fears, insecurities, and many more deep and heart felt experiences. However, through these “difficulties,” everyone has the opportunity to mature, self-reflect, and celebrate our own lived experiences as well others. These most difficult times contribute to many projects, activities and discussions that challenge us to

think more critically and analytically about why self-reflection and celebration affect every day lived experiences (positively or negatively).

One major principle of SOLHOT is to “save yourself first.” This particular principle is how SOLHOT differs from most girl groups, we are not in the practice of girl saving. In the vein of “saving yourself first,” volunteers in SOLHOT do not come into the space with the mis-conceived notion that the issues we face are more important than those the girls face. Nor do we enter the space trying to hide our concerns. If we do enter the space believing that our issues are more important, that we have all the answers or trying to hide our own struggles, SOLHOT will become unproductive and stagnant. SOLHOT cannot and will not function fully unless our truths are re-vealed, acknowledged and respected. Since we (volunteers and girls) are all human, this can happen; however, this is when self-reflection and saving ourselves first is critical. Although I have been working with SOLHOT for two years now, it is still refreshing to be reminded of the importance of self-reflection.

Since I do SOLHOT as a way of life, meaning I do not just participate in SOLHOT in the loosely structured afternoon space, I am always thinking about SOLHOT. While watching the movie *Devil* (2010), I was reminded of self-reflection. This horror film is about 5 individuals who are trapped in an elevator and realize that the devil is amongst them. One of the trapped individuals was able to save himself because he confessed a sin he had tried to cover up and forget. Once he was honest with himself he was able to evade the devil and death. Of course this resonated with my experiences in SOLHOT. In my mind, I screamed, “save yourself first!” When you address your own issues without trying to save others from theirs, then and only then will you be able to help others. Unlike the movie, however, it may not be the actual devil you evade, but the meta-phorical demons (issues) that we try and hide and forget. In SOLHOT, we recognize that it is imperative that we all actively engage in self-reflection for the sake of black girl hood celebration and personal well-being.

I myself have experienced the difficulties of addressing those “demons,” but managed to confront them when I took the time to reflect on the space as well as myself. A perfect example occurred during a SOLHOT session. Both volunteers and girls spent time sharing who we REALLY are as a way to really get to know each other and for us all to be vulnerable in the space. From the discussion we, the volunteers, initially thought we had had “the breakthrough” we had been striving for, however, the more I reflected the more uneasy I felt. Then it dawned on me in an “ah-ha” moment. The reality of my reflection hit with full force and I feared what it truly meant. This “breakthrough” session started to look more and more like the ‘girl saving’ model we were trying so hard not to follow. I realized while reflecting on the space and my personal intentions that I had become so wrapped up in how I thought the space should work for the girls that I didn’t take the cues they were giving me. In that moment, the space was not about the girls in SOLHOT and that is NOT SOLHOT. All the girls wanted to do was come to SOLHOT and discuss and hangout, yet we had required that they come and share despite not being totally comfortable. From that reflection I learned that it is not about me and how I feel the group should work. SOLHOT is about the girls and how they can learn from the space by just being there. As adults, we cannot justly inflict our own expectations and try and make them work out our way. SOLHOT expects us to be ourselves-period. Without self-reflection I would have continued to run the space how I saw fit and not how it needed to be run. As a result, I took a step back, re-grouped, and improved the space based on the girls’ needs not my own.

Reflection is difficult, but so very necessary, especially when working in spaces like SOLHOT. It is through reflection that our work is able to grow and improve. It is through self-reflection and “saving oneself first” that SOLHOT will be relevant and exist for years to come.

## The School for Designing a Society is in Session!

By Snow Leopard



Established in 1991 in Champaign-Urbana, the School for Designing a Society is an ongoing social experiment by teachers, performers, artists, students, activists, and others in making temporary living environments where the question “What would I consider a desirable society?” is discussed in serious, playful, and thoughtful ways and the entire process is incorporated into creative responses.

How does the school, and its approach, offer an important and unique opportunity for our community? For those people who sense, that something is wrong with the world we live in (both in how we have to live it here in the United States, and how the United States is treating the rest of the world), the question remains: what are we supposed to do about it? It’s not enough just to notice how increasingly impossible it seems to find any leverage point to jam the Machine. Since the election of President Obama and the wave of relief that seemed to bring with it a sense that all problems were now essentially solved, it seems harder than ever to convince anyone that something needs to be done. Even when we convince people and find a leverage point, the all-devouring apparatus of neoliberal capitalism and fast-reacting markets seem to co-opt all socially beneficial innovations and turn them against us in an eye blink.

It can seem hopeless. And to be honest, most efforts will continue to be idle (if not complicit) gestures so long as we refuse to reject the premises on which the whole mess rests. Addressing those premises is doubly challenging because they appear to shift as our world circum-

stances change. How then can we know what to do or where to start? This is where the School comes in. We move from the idea of thinking outside the box to rejecting the box.

The School for Designing a Society provides a framework for approaching seemingly intractable current social problems and offers an alternative vantage point. What one does with this can’t be known in advance, but it’s at least certain that one’s efforts, if made from a real commitment to create a more desirable society, will not be simply another idle or complicit gesture.

### CURRENT COURSES

From 7 February to 2 May 2011, the School will be offering three “foci” as well as weekly “community” meetings at the Independent Media Center in Urbana. Not your conventional classes or seminars, the three foci will investigate Connecting Cybernetics and Social Change, Feminist Composition Design and Performance, and Microtonal Design and Performance.

**Connecting Cybernetics and Social Change.** Cybernetics as an interdisciplinary field of study was proposed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by scientists who wanted to fight fascism. From this study there ensued various unexpected theoretical and practical attempts and tendencies. A starting point for this course will be the view of cybernetics as a praxis for generating radical projects, where radical means getting at the roots of a problem; changing whole frameworks. The questions of cybernetics—regulation, self-regulation? observation, self-observation? stability, dynamics?—are invited to help actively answer the questions of social change: which social? how change? This

focus meets every *Tuesday and Thursday from 1:00PM–2:30PM.*

**Feminist Composition, Design and Performance.** The area to be explored concerns the articulation of connections between feminist ways of thinking, and composition, design, performance. Women, men and other feminists are invited to participate. We’ll compose, design and perform, asking ourselves, what does it mean—what does it do—to think of ourselves as feminist in 2011? And what does it do—what does it mean—to think of ourselves as composers in the radically commercial and communicative environment of 2011. In addition to composing, we’ll hone our notions and commotions in at least two major practical projects: we will design Urbana’s first ‘Sound & Arts Garden’ for the Boneyard Arts Festival, April 7—April 10th 2011; and we will compose the Betty Beethoven and Coco Coltrane Composer Camp for girls, to take place at the Urbana Independent Media Center, during the summer of 2011. This focus meets *Tuesdays from 3:30PM–6:30PM and Wednesdays from 12:00PM–5:00PM.*

**Microtonal Design and Performance.** Microtonal Design is a seminar for unsticking the ear and everything attached to it. To design in Microtonal systems is to offer an alternative to what everyone already knows, to sing “out of tune” with conventional wisdom. It is a unique contribution to the question of designing a society. We don’t have to accept our culture’s One True Tuning. You don’t have to be an expert. You do have to be willing to experiment! Domains to design in include: new and modified instruments, scales, scores, language, tools, and concert formats.

*Continued on page 1*



## "To the Tyrants of the World"

English translation of the poem "Ela Toghat Al Alaam" (To the tyrants of the world) This poem was written by the Tunisian poet Abdul-Qasim al-Shabi during the French occupation of Tunisia before World War II. It has since been chanted by North African Arabs against Israel's Sharon, the U.S.'s, Bush, deposed Tunisian Ben Ali, and most recently, the Egyptian dictator Mubarak.

### TO THE TYRANTS OF THE WORLD

Hey you, the unfair tyrants...  
 You the lovers of the darkness...  
 You the enemies of life...  
 You've made fun of innocent people's wounds; and your palm covered with their blood  
 You kept walking while you were deforming the charm of existence and  
 growing seeds of sadness in their land  
 Wait, don't let the spring, the clearness of the sky and the shine of the morning light fool you...  
 Because the darkness, the thunder rumble and the blowing of the wind are coming  
 toward you from the horizon  
 Beware because there is a fire underneath the ash  
 Who grows thorns will reap wounds  
 You've taken off heads of people and the flowers of hope; and watered the cure of the  
 sand with blood and tears until it was drunk  
 The blood's river will sweep you away and you will be burned by the fiery storm.



Selections from a Zulu aphorism told by Jordan Ngubane In his book, *Conflict of Minds*, Books in Focus, 1979, pp. 98-100. He was taught this aphorism reflecting on the individual and the community as a young boy growing up in South Africa. He contrasts the insights of this aphorism with the ideology of white-dominated Apartheid under which he grew up.

I evolve forever, in response to the challenge of being human.  
 I have a mind to light my path in the mazes of the cosmic order.  
 This mind has many sides;  
 It comprehends all things;  
 It establishes my right to latitude; to being heard;  
 It makes me feel at home in the cosmic order.  
 My neighbor has a mind.  
 It, also, comprehends all things.  
 My neighbor and I have the same origins;  
 We have the same life-experience and a common destiny;  
 We are the obverse and reverse sides of one entity;  
 We are unchanging equals;  
 We are the faces which see themselves in each other;  
 We are mutually fulfilling complements;  
 We are simultaneously legitimate values;  
 My neighbor's sorrow is my sorrow;  
 His joy is my joy.  
 He and I are mutually fulfilled when we stand by each other in  
 moments of need...  
 I have no right to anything I deny my neighbor...  
 I define myself in what I do to my neighbor.  
 No community has any right to prescribe destiny for other communities...  
 Equals do not prescribe destiny for each other;  
 They hold conversations of minds.

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## CU In Solidarity With the People of Egypt



C-U stands in solidarity with the Egyptian people



C-U stands in solidarity with the Egyptian people



## Spirit of the Dance

By Isak Griffiths



Isak Griffiths is the the events coordinator at the IMC, a life coach, singer/songwriter and Orthodox Christian. She has been married (happily!) for 13 years with David, and studies West African drumming with master djembefola Bolokada Conde. They will be drumming at the IMC at 7:30PM on February 25th.

Imagine six weeks without running or potable water, a common language, or toilet paper... where rats commonly nibble on children at night... where no one else believes your god exists... where your shower is a bucket and the only bathrooms are public huts over room-sized holes in the ground topped with concrete slabs with four-inch holes in the middle... where a medical ward looks and reeks like a hospital from the Dark Ages...

The highway through the capital city is lined four feet high with trash. Sewage trickles in small streams throughout marketplaces and flies eat away at your food in the marketplace for hours or days before it is cooked and served to you. The school system is so broken that the few who get through the eighth grade are usually eighteen to twenty years old; and when they do there are no jobs. Yet Guinea has the third largest river in Africa, a seaport, gold, uranium, coconuts, bananas and more.

Somehow the people not only endure, but they do so with strength of character, and a sense of interconnectedness, boundless beauty, creativity and grace.

This was my destination. I was to set out in December of 2009. Guinea was a country immersed in turmoil and political unrest. Almost exactly one year prior to my visit, the ruling dictator died and a new tyrant named himself President. The year of 2008 was one of protests and violence. Three months before I left there were multiple massacres and two days before I got on the plane, the "President" was shot.

I went anyway. I've had an odd life. It didn't faze me to be frequently surrounded by young men wearing bullet straps and carrying assault rifles. The severity of poverty was essentially what I expected to see, heart-wrenching at times but not shocking. There were times I was stunned, overwhelmed, surprised or amazed, but I was most often intrigued.

I never dreamed I would deal with money changers, be a woman at the well toting water on

my head, cook in a cauldron on ancient stones while feeding the fire six-foot logs, or be physically cowed by 200 children who both wanted to touch me, and were terrified of me. Having heard of the corrupt police system, I took the precaution of hiring a local cop (who was great) to escort me through the barrage of checkpoints.

People spend two to five minutes every time they greet someone asking how each person in the family is, how things have been, how they slept, how the morning is, etc. It's the only way people in Guinea know how to say "hello." The community makes nearly everything by hand and can fix anything. A car may have half a frame, no door handles, missing fenders and no stuffing in the seats, but it will corner like it's on rails.

I watched people make clothes, shoes, jewelry, farm equipment and makeshift car parts. I watched an artisan craft beautiful and perfectly smooth, circular dinner plates from what was probably once a crumpled car door. The clay huts they build using sun-dried hand-made bricks are cool and breezy on the hottest summer day. There are no street or store signs because people do not read or write; they must simply remember correctly what they need to know and where everything is. To travel, people stand on the side of the road shouting their destinations; if that's where you are going you stop and take them with you.

There are no wheelchairs, no special schools, and people cannot afford special doctors. You either adapt or you don't. For those who can't, their families take care of them as best they can. But those who find a way to contribute and participate are full—and I do mean full—members of society. I met a man over 6 feet tall who was extremely well educated; he would collapse himself and somehow fold up his body to walk or climb with his hands and not require assistance for any task. People with Down Syndrome, mental retardation, missing or distorted limbs, and more... no one stared at them, spoke to them any differently, or failed to acknowledge their existence.



Artisan in Conakry crafting lid to a pan

For the few there who write, it is a slow, difficult and painstaking process. Yet there was no more shame in being illiterate than there was in being naked. Clothes and reading are both tools; highly useful tools sometimes, but tools. I met a girl about 9 years of age wearing a three-year-old's dress as a tank top, and a chief of three villages who was wearing a complete woman's ensemble: pants, blouse, winter coat and granny glasses. Spade blades were common dustpans, fishing nets tied baggage to the tops of cars, and a system of drawn lines instructed exactly when and how many medications to take. Tools didn't come with rules; use and fit were paired as needed.

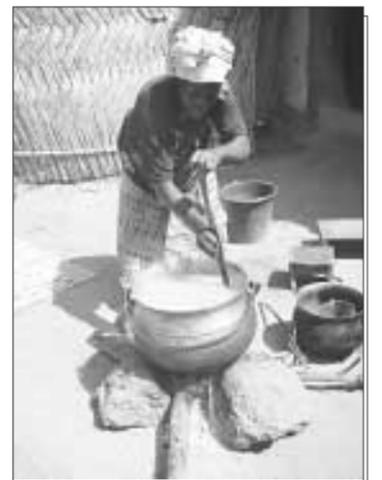
### NOT "SIMPLE," IT WAS SENSIBLE.

Without cars, cell phones and western underwear, life in Guinea feels like antiquity. Men walk along dusty roads in sandals and long robes; and women nurse babies while sifting chaff from grain. When villagers gather to talk, it is like sitting inside early scriptures or Homeric odysseys: circular and repetitious patterns, rhythmic rise and falls, poetic pacing. I've seen great speeches and wonderful storytelling, but this is different. Individual men could talk nonstop for hours and not only keep the people engaged, but keep them hungry and clamoring for more. I couldn't understand a word, but even I could become enraptured, barely breathing and not wanting the moment to end. Between the sun and the dust, drawing water from the wells, sifting grain, endless walking, flocks of children, and the true power of the spoken word, I have had a glimpse of the life of generations before me, and that has changed me.

I went to Guinea to study drumming. What I brought home was the spirit of the dance. Babies who couldn't stand without support would dance. Tiny, ancient people would stand to stretch their arms to the sky, smile, and dance. By ones, by twos, by entire villages, they would dance with every ounce for each other, for the heavens, for themselves. These are some of the poorest people in the world, and they have so much joy they have to dance.



Welcome to village of Leah Dula



Dinner in village of Morowaya

## The School for Designing a Society is in Session!

By Continued from page 8

Microtonal Design is taught by members of OddMusic U-C. All levels of experience are welcome. This focus meets *Wednesdays from 8:00PM-9:30PM, Thursdays from 3:00PM-4:30PM, and Saturdays from 11:00AM-5:00PM.*

**Community Plenary Meetings:** Along with these foci will be plenary community meetings *Mondays from 5:30PM-7:30PM.*

These weekly meetings are for all students and organizers, include presentations on topics fundamental to designing a society, and serve as check-ins for design groups. Out of this meeting arises the reflective 'we'—a school-community of learner-livers looking out for one another.

In addition, monthly public performances will share traces and works-in-

progress from the foci. These performances offer "fail-safe" opportunities to explore new skills in composition, performance, acting, directing, program sequencing, and other aspects of public performance. A final "grand finale" is planned as well, as an opportunity to display the first fruits of long-term projects undertaken by participants and organizers alike.

Visit the website at [www.designingasociety.net/](http://www.designingasociety.net/) for more information about participating in these foci. Currently enrolled students may be able to arrange independent contracts for credit from their respective colleges.



# Chicago Renaissance Woman Margaret Burroughs Dies at 93

By Brian Dolinar

*Magnificent black women  
the poets and singers have been remiss  
have sung too few poems and songs of you  
And the image makers have not recorded your beauty.*

On November 21, 2010, long-time Chicago artist and activist Margaret Burroughs died at age 93. Producing poetry, block prints, paintings, sculptures, and participating in theater, she was a modern day renaissance woman. She leaves behind two major institutions the Du Sable Museum and the South Side Community Art Center that are her legacy to a life dedicated to promoting African American art and culture.

In 1917, Margaret Taylor was born in St. Rose, Louisiana not far from New Orleans. In her autobiography *Life With Margaret*, she tells how her family left the South after the Ku Klux Klan visited their house one night. They moved to Chicago where there were “no lynchings.” Her parents wanted to find out if “the democracy promised by America existed, somewhere.”

After graduating from Englewood High School, she earned a teacher’s certificate. She went on to become an art teacher at Du Sable High School, in the heart of Chicago’s South Side, for more than 20 years. While teaching art, she was also making it. She found that there were virtually no opportunities for black artists to exhibit their work in the Chicago galleries. It was the Depression and few could afford to take classes at the Art Institute.

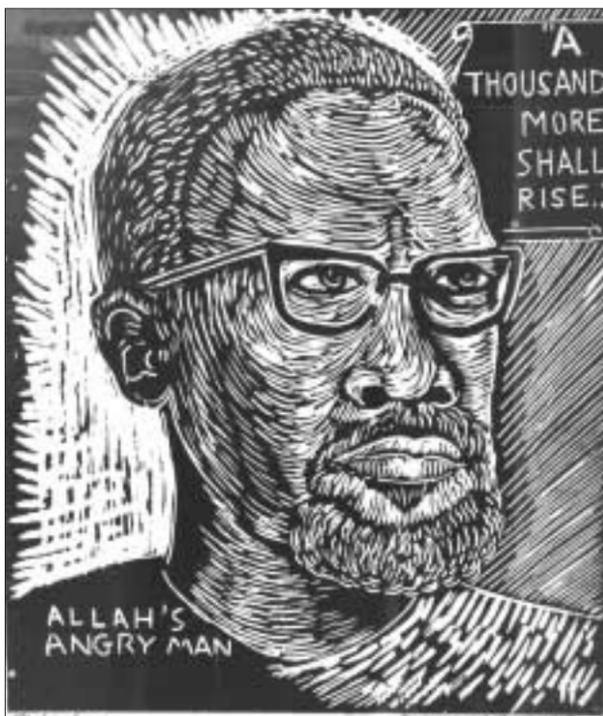
She helped to found the South Side Community Art Center (SSCAC) as a place where aspiring artists could attend art classes and show their work. With backing from the Federal Arts Project, one of Roosevelt’s innovative New Deal programs, it was one of dozens of dozens art centers across the country dedicated to taking “art to the people.” The organizing committee purchased an old mansion at 3831 Michigan Avenue built by baseball magnate Charles Comiskey. The ground floor was turned into a gallery, the rooms on the second floor were used for workshops, and the top floor was a performance space. When the art center was officially opened in 1941, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt was at the dedication ceremony. Crowds of people filled the street for two blocks to witness the event.



*The Extended Family*—by Margaret Burroughs

The SSCAC became a meeting grounds for artists in the period now known as the “Chicago Renaissance,” a literary and artistic awakening that took place a decade after the “New Negro” movement in Harlem. Burroughs was part of a group of artists that also included Charles White, Archibald Motley, Charles Sebree, Elizabeth Catlett, Marion Perkins, and George Neal. She was married for a short time to Bernard Goss, fellow artist and co-founder of the SSCAC. She was remarried later to Charles Burroughs, her life-long partner.

Also an activist, Burroughs was in the local branches of the NAACP Youth Council and Carter G. Woodson’s Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. She associated with both liberals and leftists. In the 1930s, she participated in rallies for the Scottsboro Boys, part of a campaign fought by the Communist Party to free nine black



*Malcolm*—by Margaret Burroughs

youth accused of raping two white women in Alabama. During the McCarthy era, she did not back down. When she was questioned by the Board of Education about the “Communist sympathizer” Paul Robeson, her teaching job was at stake, yet she still openly expressed admiration for her good friend. In 1958, she fought to bring W.E.B. Du Bois, who had also been called a “red,” to Chicago. A lengthy FBI file was kept on her. Although she believed in changing the system, what she called a “racist capitalist society,” she denied ever being a communist.

Burroughs is perhaps best known for her role in establishing the Du Sable Museum, located at 57th and Cottage Grove in Washington Park. Named after the black founder of Chicago, Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable, it is a must visit for anyone interested in African American history. The museum draws from its collection of 15,000 pieces and also hosts travelling exhibits. In the summer, there are jazz performances and films held in the park.

Burroughs visited Urbana-Champaign several times. Her prints hang on the walls of the Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center on campus. She was last here on January 31, 2009 to kick off Black History Month.

Throughout her life, Burroughs was a champion of art. In her later years, she went into Illinois prisons to teach creative writing classes. She continued to mentor young artists. “When you don’t keep moving, you die,” she said. At age 90, she visited Venezuela to witness first-hand the socialist government of Hugo Chavez.

After she passed away, President Barack Obama said that Burroughs was “widely admired for her contributions to American culture as an esteemed artist, historian, educator, and mentor.”



*A Black Girl*—by Margaret Burroughs



## Coming Events at UCIMC

### African Diaspora Traditional Socials

5th Annual African New Year celebration in Illinois music like ndombolo mapouka, zouk, reggae, coupe decale and many more. Join us! Food provided. December 31, 11pm-4am, then again January 1, 11pm-4am

### Ben Bedford & Tom Irwin

Bedford allow you to hear, see and feel what it is like to be homeless, the plight of a Confederate soldier’s wife during the American Civil War, the aerial triumphs of Amelia Earhart, the life of Jack London, and the murder of Emmett Till in 1955. With Tom Irwin you might laugh and cry, chuckle and squirm, tap your foot and nod your head, but you won’t ignore or walk away untouched by this talented country-folk influenced teller of stories. \$10/\$7. January 15, 7:30pm-10:30pm

### The Foghorn Stringband & The Dust Busters

The Dust Busters are an old-time string band who integrate a wide range of old-time songs, ballads, fiddle tunes and jug band blues with old-time feeling and freewheelin’ high energy. Foghorn Stringband plays old time string band music that could be coming to you from an Appalachian front porch. January 23, 7:00pm-10:30pm

### AMS, Organic Flow, and Vanattica

Line up subject to change. “Music is Love” public concert to honor the joined birthdays of Morgan Prestage and Sara Goodman. Come join us and bring your friends! \$5 cover. January 29, 8pm-12am

## Get Involved with the *Public i*

You don’t need a degree in journalism to be a citizen journalist. We are all experts in something, and we have the ability to share our information and knowledge with others. The *Public i* is always looking for writers and story ideas. We invite you to submit ideas or proposals during our weekly meetings (Thursdays at 5:30PM at the UCIMC), or to contact one of the editors.