

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.

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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), to post a story to the web site (<http://www.ucimc.org>), or to contact one of the editors.

- Become a citizen journalist; write a news story or opinion piece.
- Make a tax-deductible contribution.
- Help distribute the public i around the Champaign-Urbana area.
- Help with fund-raisers.
- Join the editorial board.

UPCOMING EVENTS

A Visit from KATHY KELLY of Voices in the Wilderness

Kathy Kelly is a Nobel Peace Prize nominee who has worked tirelessly to end the sanctions against Iraq.

MONDAY, SEPT. 29

Noon Rally on the Quad

4pm Talk at the University YMCA

Kathy will share her experience of being in Iraq before, during, and after the current war.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 30

10am: WILL AM 580

Kathy will be the Guest on "Focus 580"

NOON: Lunch and informal conversation at the Channing-Murray

1209 West Oregon in Urbana

GrrrrFest 2003

September 12-14, All over CU

Featuring female-taught, hands-on workshops for girls and women.

For schedule information, visit

www.grrrrfest.com

www.prairienet.org/girlzone

Urbana Street Theater Festival

Saturday, September 13, 9am-11pm, Downtown Urbana

Featuring FOOD, GAMES, BEER GARDEN, STOCKADES, RAFFLE & PRIZES

The Prompting Theater, for whom this festival is a fundraiser, is a local theater troupe comprised of adults with developmental disabilities.

Build Your Own! Permaculture Conference

October 12-18 2003

Presentations, Workshops, and Symposium with the City of Urbana. Meals provided at the School for Designing a Society.

Suggested donations: \$125/wk, \$20/day, \$10/session. For more information, email robscott@freeshell.org or call (217)384-0299 (SDAS).

Sustaining Contributors

The *Public i* wishes to express its deep appreciation to the following sustaining contributors for their financial and material support:

SocialistForum: An Open Discussion and Action Group, *Meets 3rd Saturdays of the month, 3-5 pm, at IMC, 218 W. Main St. (U)*

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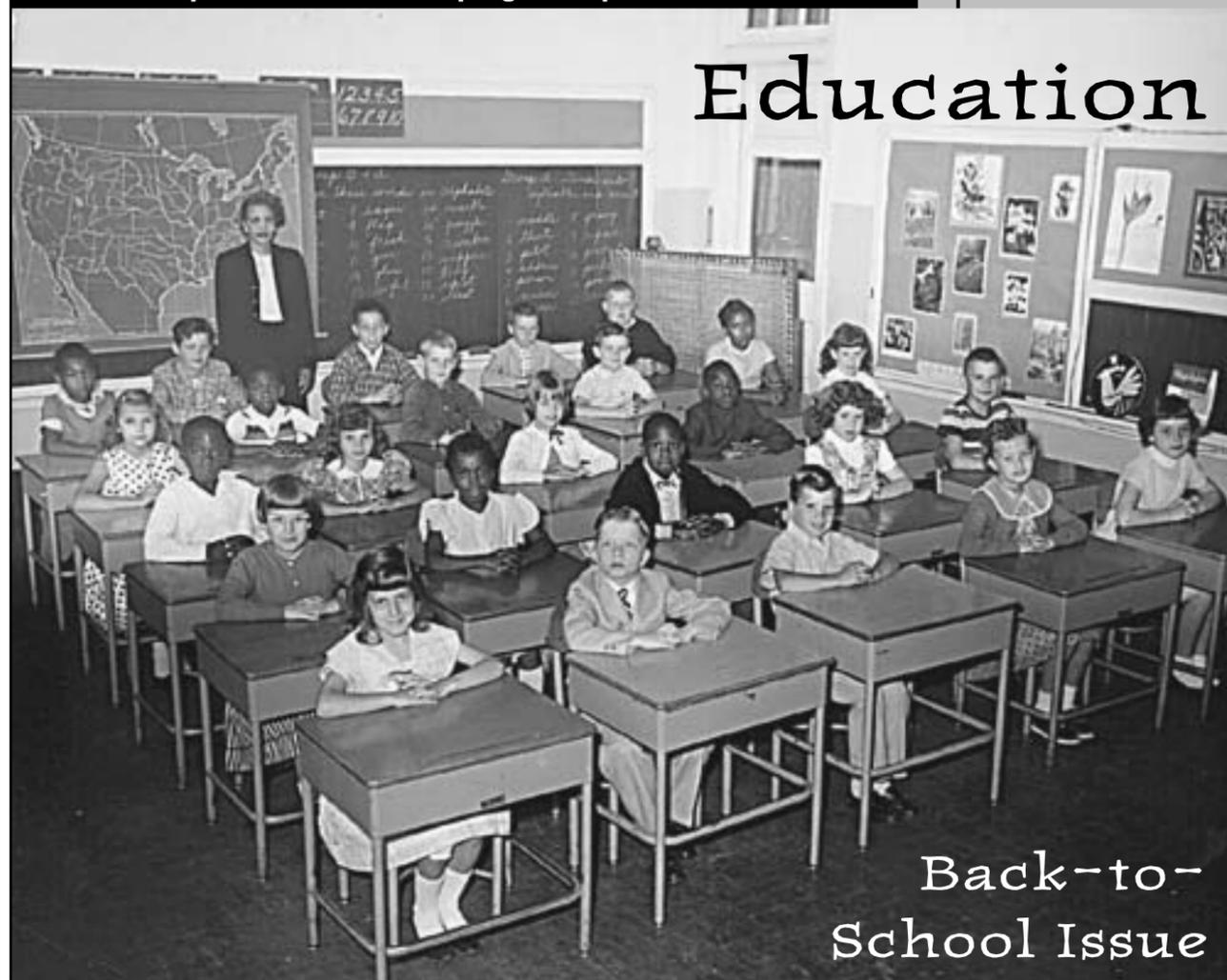
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The *Public i* would also like to extend thanks to the following individual sustainers:

David Green and Harriet Bursztyn, Urbana

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Published by the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center September 2003 • V3 #7



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The PUBLIC



Libraries and the USA PATRIOT Act

September 2003 • V3 #7

by Leigh S. Estabrook



Leigh Estabrook is professor of Library and Information Science and of Sociology at UIUC. She currently directs the Library Research Center of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science and oversees a series of studies on the impact of the USA PATRIOT Act on libraries.

ON AUGUST 19, ATTORNEY GENERAL ASHCROFT began a national tour to defend the USA PATRIOT Act. The complex 342 page law, passed less than 7 weeks after the events of September 11, 2001, gives law enforcement wide authority to monitor citizens. It also expands governmental powers under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) of 1978, breaking down barriers between foreign and domestic surveillance. Section 215 of the law allows agents to obtain a search warrant without having to demonstrate "probable cause" or the existence of specific facts to support belief that crime has been committed or that items are evidence of crime. An agent needs only to claim he or she believes the records requested may be related to terrorism or intelligence activities.

Once a search warrant is served--i.e, a business is asked to provide information--that business may not tell anyone about the warrant, not even the person about whom information was requested. Authorities may find out what someone has purchased at a bookstore, what a person checked out from the library or how an individual may have used the Internet at their local public library--all in the name of preventing terrorism. Librarians themselves may not know that records are being used since many libraries' records are kept on computers managed by others--by a city manager or a campus computing center, for example. Under the USA PATRIOT Act, law enforcement officials are less accountable for their actions, library records are more vulnerable and domestic and international issues become blurred.

Librarians see the USA PATRIOT Act as an attack on fundamental beliefs of the profession. The Act unnecessarily lowers the legal standard for obtaining patron records, records that are deemed confidential under the law of 48 states. Illinois law, for example, states "The registration and circulation records of a library are confidential information. Except pursuant to a court order, no person shall publish or make any information contained in such records available to the public." The law also exempts patron records from Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

Using library circulation records as a way to hunt terrorists assumes the questionable connection between what someone reads and how one acts. It would be foolish, for example, to assume the millions of readers of Tom Clancy novels of the recent *The Last Jihad* are reading these a manual for terrorism. The greater danger is that readers will be nervous to inquire about politics, history or current events, lest their intellectual curiosity make them suspects in terrorist investigations. A librarian, Jamie LaRue, tells the story of his own search for information shortly after 9/11/01. To try to understand what was happening and why, LaRue went to various websites about terrorism, Osama Bin Laden and even to pornography sites, after reading on CNN that terrorists were hiding instructions in such places. He reflected afterward that just such a search would make him a prime candidate to be

investigated as a potential terrorist.

The Freedom to Read statement of the American Library Association begins "The freedom to read is essential to our democracy...We, as citizens devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read." It has been adopted by a number of other groups including the American Association of University Professors, the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and the National PTA. The statement concludes, "We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours."

Libraries also worry they may become the target of a court order requiring the library to cooperate in the monitoring of a user's electronic communications. Under Section 216 of the

A website provides suggestions of signs libraries might use warn patrons while "respecting" the gag rule that prevents staff from informing a user if the FBI has asked for the user's library records. For example, The FBI has not been here (watch closely to see if this sign is removed).

Librarians and the American Library Association have been active in informing the public about the USA PATRIOT Act and in working on legislation to overturn some of its provisions. In a recent survey by the Library Research Center at the University of Illinois, 20 percent of public librarians said that if law enforcement asked for information about one of their users they probably or definitely would violate the gag order by notifying someone of the request.

Public opposition to the USA PATRIOT Act grows. To date 152 communities and 3 states (Alaska, Hawaii and Vermont) have passed legislation opposing the USA PATRIOT Act as a threat to the civil rights of the residents of their communities. On March 6, 2003, Democratic Representative Bernie Sanders has proposed the "Freedom to Read Protection Act" - HR

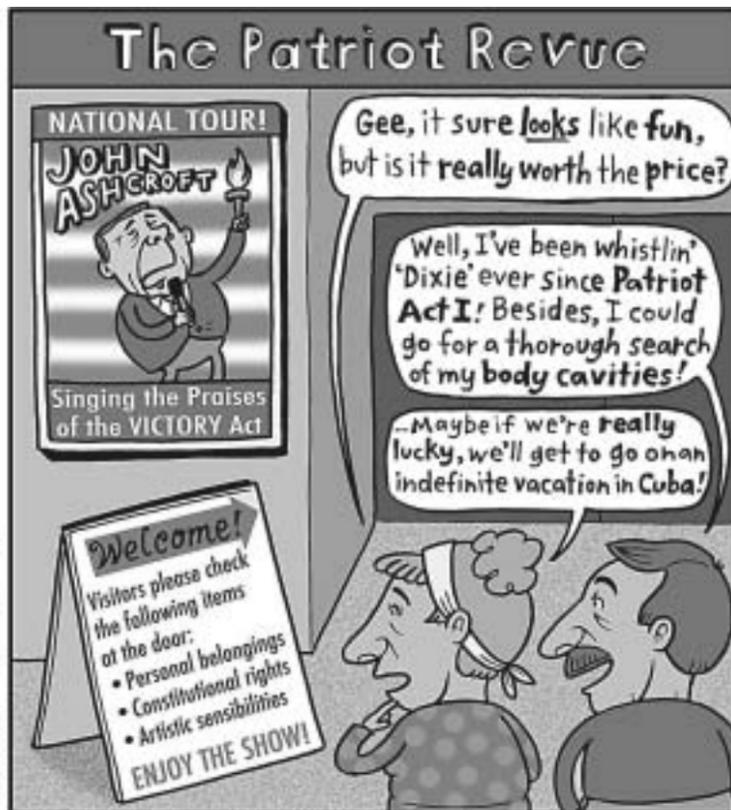
1157. It would return to pre-PATRIOT Act standards the standards for the FBI to obtain FISA court orders and warrants to investigate library patrons and bookstore customers. In July, the House of Representatives approved (309-118) a Republican sponsored amendment to the Sanders' bill to block the Justice Department from using any federal funds for broad searches. Other legislation includes the Surveillance Oversight and Disclosure Act (HR 2429) that would require regular disclosure to Congress by the Attorney General about authority he has granted under the USA PATRIOT Act.

On July 30, 2003 the American Civil Liberties Union filed suit on behalf of six advocacy and community groups from across the country whose members and clients believe they are currently the targets of investigations because of their ethnicity, religion and political associations. The lawsuit names Attorney General John Ashcroft and FBI Director Robert Mueller as the defendants. In a report, *Unpatriotic Acts* issued at the same time, the ACLU stated that Section 215 of the PATRIOT Act violates constitutional protections against unreasonable searches and seizures as well as the rights to freedom of speech and association.

The opposition is having an effect on the Attorney General's office. On August 19, Ashcroft began a public relations tour--not speaking to the public, but to law enforcement agents. Ashcroft is insisting on the importance of the USA PATRIOT Act and he minimizes the threats to civil liberties caused by enforcement. The PR campaign includes a Department of Justice website called "Preserving Life and Liberty" (<http://www.lifeandliberty.gov/>) with a header of a section of the Declaration of Independence. Among the assertions on the website is that the USA PATRIOT Act makes "only modest, incremental changes in the law. Congress simply took existing legal principles and retrofitted them to preserve the lives and liberty of the American people from the challenges posed by a global terrorist network." It mercifully does not have an attached audio file of the Star Spangled Banner.

Websites maintained by the American Library Association (www.ala.org), Bernie Sanders (<http://bernie.house.gov/>) and the ACLU (<http://www.aclu.org/>) provide rich and up-to-date information about opposition to the USA PATRIOT Act.

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PATRIOT Act, libraries that provide access to the Internet and email service to patrons may be required to monitor a user's electronic communications sent through the library's computers or network. Because computers in libraries are often the only source of Internet access for the poor, librarians also worry that surveillance under the USA PATRIOT Act may differentially affect the poor.

Librarians have become activists in fighting provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act. Some have put signs in their libraries, warning users of these provisions. Santa Cruz Public Library, for example, posts the following:

WARNING: Although the Santa Cruz Library makes every effort to protect your privacy, under the federal USA PATRIOT Act (Public Law 107- 56), records of the books and other materials you borrow from this library may be obtained by federal agents. That federal law prohibits library workers from informing you if federal agents have obtained records about you. Questions about this policy should be directed to Attorney General John Ashcroft, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. 20530.

COMMUNITY FORUM



Be the Media! Word on the Street at Sweetcorn Festival

The Question: What should be covered in the mainstream media that isn't?

After a period of confusion about whether any local media outlets other than *The News Gazette* would be allowed to distribute their materials during the annual Urbana Sweetcorn Festival, members of the *Public i* collective were granted a permit and took their place under the August sun, amongst the many other booths and vendors lining the streets of downtown Urbana. We were lucky to have been visited by a number of interested passers-by, some of whom paused long enough to give thoughtful consideration to the question above. Their responses and pictures, in no particular order, appear below.

RICKY BALDWIN



I think it's appalling that millions of American citizens are denied their most basic democratic right: to vote – because they have been convicted of perhaps minor felonies, or were incorrectly listed along with felons (as in Florida). Meanwhile election difficulties are reduced in the media to "hanging chads" and dismissed.



DANIEL LEWART

Investigative reporting. Corporate media maximizes profit and avoids offending advertisers by avoiding investigation, which is labor-intensive and time consuming. Most papers just

run wire stories and corporate press releases.

006 JAMES ONDERDONK

No particular subject, but more alternative points of view. Less conservative articles and stories. More coverage of both sides of the story.



007 TARA MCCAULEY

More coverage of international issues – especially the impact of US foreign policy (wars, etc.) on other countries.

008 LESLIE SHERMAN

International affairs from a non-US point of view.



DAVID YOUNG

Bills before Congress and your state legislature concerning telecommunications which seriously affect consumer choice.

DANIELLE CHYNOWETH



Accurate investigative reporting on local prison authority's handling of sexual assault cases, and the desires of local public housing residents about the future of local public housing.

AL KAGAN

The mainstream press is only just

starting to question the statements that come out of the Defense and State Departments. The US press is way behind the European press in questioning the fundamental assumptions behind the wars on Iraq and Afghanistan.



and politicians, and between media and the corporations that own them.



SI MURREY-INSKEEP

More in-depth coverage of baseball games.

WHAT'S HER NAME?

When media outlets cover international news they think analyzing the politics of other countries is sufficient. However, by covering the news in this manner they are missing the real stories. People are what makes up countries – their cultures, problems, struggles and how they cope with all this is what's really interesting – not what their political leaders say and do.



FRANCIS JOHANNES

More showing of pro-soccer, not only on satellite.



GABE MURREY-INSKEEP

More war coverage.

PAUL PATTON

Bush's misrepresentation of intelligence information to argue for war with Iraq.



JAN NEDERVEEN PIETERSE

Intelligence on weapons of mass destruction fudge – reported in the UK, Australia – where are US media?



ROSE MARSHACK NEWS.

MICHAEL SCHULER

Issue: living wage. Import: the first line of pre-emptive defense against violence and terrorism, at home and abroad.



ANNE AND SARAH PHILLIPS, VIJAY SINGH

Facts! Alternative viewpoints! Anything not fear based, ala Michael Moore and *Bowling for Columbine*.



C. MANN

Connections between corporations

LETTERS:

The Conflict Between the First Commandment and the First Amendment

Chief Justice Roy Moore of the Alabama supreme court is courting controversy by defying a federal court order to remove a large monument to the Ten Commandments from the rotunda of the state courthouse. So why is there a conflict between the chief justice of the Alabama supreme court and a federal judge?

After all, Justice Moore's supporters argue that the Ten Commandments are a simple moral code, completely compatible with the American legal system. And at first blush, the Commandments certainly seem like the kind of rules any judge would gladly honor and routinely enforce. Obviously "Thou shalt not kill" (Sixth Commandment, Exodus 20:13—the King James version of the Bible is used for citations in this article) and "Thou shalt not steal" (Eighth Commandment, Exodus 20:15) easily translate into our modern criminal codes. Even more applicable to a court of law is the Ninth Commandment: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." (Exodus 20:16)

The chief conflict between the Ten Commandments and the Bill of Rights arises in the First Commandment: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:3) By "me" the Old Testament is referring to the deity "which have brought thee out of Egypt." (Exodus 20:2) Clearly this is referring to the God of Jews, Christians and Muslims. These three groups combined make up a clear majority of the Amer-

ican polity. According to a 1999 Gallup poll, 74% of Americans supported displaying the Ten Commandments in public schools. (<http://www.gallup.com/poll/releases/pr990709.asp>) With such overwhelming public support, what is wrong, in a democracy, with displaying the Ten Commandments in a government building like the Alabama supreme courthouse? The Constitution.

The First Amendment states, in relevant part, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion..." This is commonly known as the Establishment Clause. The Framers inserted this provision because they recognized, as did de Toqueville, the dangers of the "tyranny of the majority." The fact that a majority of Americans hold a particular religious view does not mean they can impose that view on their fellow citizens. This was why the First Amendment, which also protects unpopular speech and the free exercise of minority religious practices, was added to the Constitution—to serve as a bulwark against politicians like Justice Moore who seek to trammel upon the rights of minority groups for political gain.

Consider, for example, the hypothetical case of *Abramson v. Patel* (I am using the names of two of my college friends, one of whom happens to be Jewish and the other Hindu) before the Alabama supreme court. Mr. Abramson might walk into the courthouse, see Justice Moore's monument and be pleased with this government vindication of his personal religious beliefs. But what about Mr. Patel? He will see not only the First Commandment's admonition, but by implication, that of the Alabama Supreme Court, to "have no other gods" but "thy God, which have brought thee out of Egypt." Mr. Patel, a Hindu, does not worship the God of the Old Testament. In essence, the Alabama supreme court has already

ruled against his personal spiritual beliefs before he even steps into the courtroom. What confidence can Mr. Patel feel about his prospects of a fair hearing before Justice Moore's court?

Supporters of Justice Moore argue that our nation's legal system was founded on Judeo-Christian principles and there is therefore nothing wrong with posting the Ten Commandments in a courthouse. In fact, the Bill of Rights' "Congress shall make no law" language is strikingly similar to the Ten Commandments' "Thou shalt not" language. Although there has been recent scholarship indicating that Founding Fathers Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin were deists rather than practicing Christians, the fact remains that a majority of the Framers were Christians. But it was these same Christians who added the Establishment Clause to the Constitution to prevent the legal codification of their (or anyone else's) religious beliefs.

Moreover, the Ten Commandments are not the only basis for our legal system. Justice Moore's monument does not include homages to Hammurabi's Code, Roman civil law or Blackstone's Commentaries, all significant forebears of modern American jurisprudence. The Ten Commandments are displayed in the Alabama Supreme Court not for their historic value but for their religious value.

Justice Moore has a right to follow the Ten Commandments. He has the right to post the Ten Commandments in his home or office. He has the right to go door-to-door passing out copies of the Ten Commandments to his neighbors. He has the right to shout the Ten Commandments in the streets to anyone who will listen. But he does not have the right to impose his views on the people of Alabama under color of state authority.

Matt Hlinak



What's good for the goose...

The current brouhaha between Illinois Comptroller Dan Hynes and many of the state's judges over the latter's financial compensation finds all of our political leaders tiptoeing around a fundamental hypocrisy underlying the debate. Article 6, Section 14 of the Illinois Constitution begins, "Judges shall receive salaries provided by law which shall not be diminished..." The judges argue that by not paying a regularly scheduled COLA (cost of living adjustment), Mr. Hynes is violating this provision of our constitution. The Comptroller and the Governor have never denied the merit of this claim, but say that in tight fiscal times, everyone has to tighten their belts, including the judiciary.

It certainly makes sense to adjust income levels annually and automatically with a COLA. Even at the relatively low levels we've seen in the past decade, inflation eats away slowly but surely at the purchasing power of a dollar. Funny, then, how this common sense principle is discarded when laws affecting taxpayers, and not just politicians, are considered in Springfield. In May, many a public servant took credit for raising the minimum wage from the federally-mandated minimum of \$5.15/hour to \$6.50/hour with all the usual palaver about how this act puts more money in the pockets of hard-working citizens and don't forget who took care of the little guy at the next election. The original version of that bill in the General Assembly also included an annual COLA, but in the labyrinth of committees and corridors

that is the State Capitol, that provision was eliminated from the final product.

Unfortunately, that watered down law leaves us in the same place we were before, where the minimum wage never catches up with inflation. It's like the Looney Tunes, where Wile E. Coyote gets a package from the Acme Company that gives him almost but not quite the boost he needs to catch that darn Road Runner. When the real value of the federal minimum wage over the past 40 years in today's dollars is graphed, it falls from a high of \$8.25/hour in 1969 to a low of just under \$5.00/hour in 1989. Though the line occasionally spikes back up when an increase is passed, the trend is ever downward.

The most basic principle of fairness is that what holds for one should hold for all. When the judges argue that their salaries

are diminished without an annual COLA, I completely agree with them, because inflation affects everybody. The minimum wage acts as a floor to ensure that every worker has at least a minimal standard of living. Without an automatic annual adjustment, not just a booster whenever the politicians get around to it, the already too low floor is falling out from underneath the poorest among us in slow motion.

[All statistics contained in this essay come from a wonderful summary of the case for minimum wage increases indexed to inflation by the Center for Urban Economic Development at the University of Illinois, which can be accessed at <http://www.uic.edu/cuppa/uicued.>]

— Michael Feltes

Adjunct Professors Organize, Demand Recognition

by Dan Chambers and Steve Vaughan

Dan Chambers and Steve Vaughan both live in Urbana. They are organizers for the Illinois Education Association, have worked on organizing drives at ISU and the City Colleges of Chicago, and are now involved in organizing the academic professionals at the U of I. Dan is a frequent contributor to the Labor Hour on WEFT.

BEING AN ADJUNCT INSTRUCTOR IS HARD WORK.

Educators, regardless of where they fit in, work harder than most folks at their professions. Adjunct instructors in today's universities and colleges face extra hurdles that most educators would balk at. Built into the system are difficulties unique to the adjunct experience in higher education.

For starters, the pay per course is far less than tenured faculty, job security is a figment of the instructor's imagination, and health insurance coverage doesn't generally exist. As a "guest lecturer," you may not know if you'll be re-hired until a few weeks before classes start.

Because they can't count on keeping a job at any one institution, adjunct instructors have to keep prepping for courses with all kinds of focuses. People may float from department to department. Tenured and tenure-track instructors generally don't face this problem. They stick to the subjects they are most familiar with, and so.

For instance, if an instructor were to go to the trouble of preparing a syllabus for a survey history course, she could find out she had been "bumped" out of her class by a full-time instructor. In addition, many such lecturers don't have offices, instead pushing classroom materials, books, graded papers, and maybe dinner on push-carts.

Despite teaching the same course for years, your name doesn't appear in the course catalog. When applying for tenure-line positions, you discover that hiring committees don't seriously consider long-time adjuncts for open regular positions. After all, if you had the tenure-track talent, you would have been hired somewhere. Right?

When we were organizing a union for non-tenure track instructors at ISU we encountered one instructor who taught at three schools. After scheduling an office hours visit with a student, he found himself waiting alone. He emailed the student, asking her where she was, only to find out he had gone to the wrong campus.

Despite facing these (and other) obstacles, non-tenure faculty remain dedicated to their students, their fields of study, and their professional development. Unfortunately, the trend in higher education for the past twenty years has been to replace full-time tenured faculty with multiple adjunct instructors teaching the course load of one tenured instructor. According to the Education Resources Information Center, over the past decade the numbers of adjunct instructors have risen dramatically. According to the Department of Educa-

tion, between 1995 and 1997 two-thirds of all newly hired professors were adjuncts.

WHY?

The scene in American higher education is the result of some national factors. One is that there is a very real budget crunch in federal and state government. The other is that college is increasingly viewed as mandatory for anyone looking for gainful employment. So numbers of students have increased, especially as high-paying jobs in the manufacturing sector have drastically decreased due to NAFTA and other agreements.

The actual process of hiring adjuncts is a low cost one for the institutions. Eager instructors facing the prospect of adjuncting often distribute their resumes to the schools in their immediate area (and beyond). Search committees aren't formed, prospective hires aren't flown in, high-level meetings between deans and professors are not held. A chair that needs a lecturer to fill a slot can run down a list of names and generally call and hire one on a week's notice. Contrast that with the average year it can take to hire tenure-track professors. Adjuncts are the higher education equivalent of Manpower Inc., employees. They are disposable, cheap, and their concerns are largely invisible to university decision-makers.

In the background of all these issues, education is increasingly treated like a commodity to be bought and sold. Market forces (as opposed to any inherent value in the material) determine the value of teaching and research. Where historically instructors taught and learned a subject for its own sake, the influence of today's corporate values is hard to miss.

It's easy to see why university officials with this perspective aren't embarrassed by their own out of control salaries; after all, they only match what's common in the private sector.

As part of that corporate view of education, state funds are more commonly being used to fund public-private partnerships where the university may pay for facilities, equipment, and land and provide a pool of cheap labor—students who are only too eager to add extra credentials for their own post graduation employment plans. The effect is that the state subsidizes labor for private companies through collegiate research parks.

Ultimately, many fear that the system that views education as a product will reduce learning to transmission of the latest greatest thing. What will be lost is the concept of the intellectual community that fosters growth and understanding. When faculty works as a community, they become better researchers and teachers.

Within this framework, it's important to provide the stability for adjuncts that enables them to create that kind of intellectual community. Some might ask, why bother? Adjuncts are generally viewed as lecturers only, a

stopgap solution to a shortage of teachers. Such arguments ignore the fact that many adjunct lecturers work on their own research to further their careers and their subjects. Poor treatment and exclusion of adjuncts creates a caste system within universities, separating the tenured and the tenurable from the non-tenurable.

SO WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT THIS?

Since 1999, the Illinois Education Association has organized unions representing adjunct and non-tenure track faculty at Illinois State University, the City Colleges of Chicago, Columbia College, Roosevelt University, and the College of DuPage County. The IEA has had a local for adjunct faculty at Oakton Community College since 1986. This year, two bills were passed by the legislature and signed by the governor that would make it easier for education workers to organize and increase the number and types of part-time faculty who may organize their own unions to represent their interests.

Through collective bargaining, instructors at College of DuPage won a standardized workload. Adjuncts at Roosevelt University won timely notification of reemployment, a fair grievance procedure, and class cancellation stipends. Columbia College adjuncts won an average 68% increase in their pay per course. City Colleges of Chicago and ISU instructors are busy bargaining their first contracts now.

Instructors at these colleges typically viewed their victories as victories for their students as well. Many adjuncts we have encountered equate their issues with poor learning conditions for their students. Instructors who have to hurry from campus to campus (they are often jokingly referred to as "road scholars" since they typically work at more than college) may not have much time for office hours or extra student support. Instructors working two and sometimes three jobs risk cutting into preparation and grading time for their students.

After working several years for a graduate degree (or two, or three...) the lack of respect adjuncts face is demoralizing. Faced with all the issues common to the profession, and with little hope of attaining tenure-track positions, instructors are increasingly turning to unionization as a concrete way of improving their conditions. Beyond bread and butter issues like pay and benefits, unions provide adjuncts with an opportunity to reclaim their self-respect. Unions can force universities and community colleges to the realization that adjuncts are valuable members of the academic community and should be treated accordingly.

For more information on this issue, visit the following websites:

<http://www.cnn.com/2001/CAREER/trends/01/11/adjunct/#chart>

<http://www.eric.org/crib/parttime.html>



Children's Liberation

by Gina Cassidy



Gina Cassidy is a Champaign resident and mother of three.

"We don't need no education/We don't need no thought control/No dark sarcasm in the classroom/Hey, teacher, leave them kids alone."

— Roger Waters, *Another Brick in the Wall, Part 2*

HERE'S A THOUGHT EXPERIMENT FOR YOU. Suppose every day you were forced to go to a job you did not apply for and had absolutely no control over.

You were kept in a building under surveillance in a subordinate position for thirteen years, being commanded by a relative stranger where to physically be at all times; who to associate with; when you could speak, shit, stretch, eat, stand up; what you could read, what you could think about. Your personal interests, aspirations, religious beliefs and values are considered inconsequential. Additionally, you'd have to be constantly vigilant to the arbitrary nastiness of bullies, cliques and disgruntled superiors. The longer you work, the more humiliating things get: searches of your locker and briefcase, merciless teasing, violence, security guards watching you at all times, random drug tests. In all these years, you will never be the equal of your managers and supervisors.

As your tenure progresses, you come to the realization that everything you are given to do is busy work. When you are asked questions, the answers are already known. There are no real problems to solve; nothing you do is useful, meaningful or productive to the society in which you live.

Sound appealing? Of course not. But this is what we subject our children to when we institutionalize them in the prison called school.

No one gets to choose how to spend all her time. This is true enough. But free adults are not forced to take particular jobs. They are not answerable for every movement they make; chastised or browbeaten for each lapse of attention from things that don't interest them; prevented from beginning or ending a conversation. Free adults have free minds – even in a menial job, a supervisor hasn't the right to invade a worker's thoughts. A job cannot force conformity of belief, pigeon-hole your aspirations, label you a failure. Compulsory schooling does all these things.

Schooling is not education. "Once a man or woman has accepted the need for school, he or she is easy prey for other institutions." So writes Ivan Illich in his eloquent *Deschooling Society*. "...medical treatment is mistaken for health care, social work for the improvement of community life, police protection for safety, military poise for national security, the rat race for productive work."

By accepting compulsory schooling, we are swallowing the myth of institutional superiority and of our subordinate place in it. We are prepared to hand over major life decisions and public policy to institutional "experts."

I am not an advocate of homeschooling. Homeschooling conjures up images of workbooks on the kitchen table, packaged curriculum and hiding children away from the rest of the world. I am an advocate of no schooling. The idea that schooling is necessary shows how effective the propaganda of compulsory education has been in this country. Compulsory schooling in the United States did not exist until approximately one

hundred and fifty years ago when the need for conformity to sustain an industrialized society became alarmingly evident. Those who would train children in school to be unquestioning automatons found unlikely support in social reformers who embraced compulsory education as a means of ending child labor. Before this time, people went to school when they and/or their guardians deemed it appropriate; and then only to receive the basics.

John Taylor Gatto, a contemporary, much-prized teacher who turned his back on the system, relates that it takes 100 hours of instruction to teach basic reading and math to an interested student. This instruction does not have to come from anyone with specialized certificates or training. From this foundation, children can use these tools to seek out any knowledge in the world. Gatto also tells us that most educational research points to the undeniable fact that human beings only learn on their own or in a one-on-one situation. Mass schooling is known to be ineffective as an instrument of education.

The facts are easy to see: compulsory education in the U.S. coincided with the need to train workers to be subordinate and "know their place" in an industrialized society; the national literacy rate was higher before compulsory education; most of the people we collectively idolize as brilliant had little or no formal schooling: George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt, Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, Andrew Carnegie and Henry Ford to name a few.

All of these people were free-thinkers. They sought out knowledge and directed their own educations. They decided what to study and what to pursue. They learned one-on-one or on their own. Most of them were versed in a multitude of intellectual pursuits – their learning was diverse and dynamic. They did not choose a predetermined slot to settle into. They were not labeled and tracked. These people would never have sacrificed their individuality and independence to a soul-deadening system.

So, if kids today were not in school, what would they be doing? On a large scale, wouldn't this upset the order of things? What will we do with children hanging around all day? How will we accomplish our jobs?

Children who are not schooled are devouring books that interest them; they are asking questions about what they see, hear and experience; they are observing people and nature; they are learning to identify plants, animals and rocks; they are learning to deal with people of different ages and viewpoints; they are building things; they are making art; they are collecting things; they are seeking people with common interests to learn from and share with; they are visiting museums, libraries, state parks; they are learning to balance the checkbook and cook; they are helping with household tasks; they are playing; they are spending time alone; they are resting when they're tired. They are exploring the possibilities of who they are and what interests them.

Yes, the order of things would be enormously upset, to say the least. It would be nothing short of a revolution. There would be no more business as usual. We would have to adapt. For example – instead of segregating children from adults, we would need to make accommodations for them to accompany us to meetings and sometimes to our jobs. Children would have to learn to be respectful of others and adults would have to

loosen the demand for absolute silence and "businesslike" behavior. We may have to allow puzzles or quiet toys in the conference room. We may have to repeat, explain or illustrate a point. We may have to take time out to discipline – "that isn't something you should be doing now," or "please wait until she's finished talking to ask your question." Parents would have to assume responsibility for their children.

We could not accomplish our jobs in the same way as our current society demands. We will have to accept informal observation and apprentices. We will have to take our children with us more and not filter their learning experiences. We cannot be soulless cogs in a corporate machine or production-line robots. We will have a lot of explaining to do.

We will have to allow children to try out and eventually take on new responsibilities. We will have to integrate them as members of society and not just visitors.

All the tortuous hours and millions of minor (and major) humiliations adults remember from our own school experiences; Ritalin; and all the books on how to help children cope with the problems created by the school environment would be relics of a discarded social philosophy.

Such a revolution requires sacrifice on the part of adults. Sacrifice a little of your productivity to answer a child's questions. Sacrifice the two-wage household for a real connection with your children. Sacrifice some of your leisure time to work on a project with a child or young adult you know. Sacrifice television watching for meaningful activities you wish to model for your child. Sacrifice some free time to help a single parent household. Include children in adult activities as much as possible. Let them learn to be members of society by participating in that society. Deschooling requires a radical altering of priorities. It requires a painful, self-critical look at how we live. It requires slowing down, negotiation and hard work.

How can we cope with wild, undisciplined children running around our towns day and night?

Children who are not schooled learn self-discipline and self-control. They generally do not run rough-shod over other people's rights and feelings. They know there are times to keep a low profile. This is not because they are drugged with behavior-modifying pharmaceuticals. It is because they do not have all their energies and interests repressed or disregarded and because they see considerate behavior modeled in the adults they interact with and respect. It is not natural for successive human generations to dismiss their elders as irrelevant; if such were the case, we would already be extinct.

The drive to learn is inborn. Watch a baby learning to walk. Watch a toddler trying to imitate her older brother's actions or repeatedly dress and undress. Think of how your head hurts after your child asks you question after question. As John Holt reminds us, we need to trust that drive to learn. Have faith in your child, not in institutions.

Aside from the fact that it is the right thing to do, what can we hope to gain from child liberation? A better democracy with a more critical, discerning citizenry; a reawakening of our own drive to learn; a more compassionate community; more creative solutions to our problems; cultural and artistic proliferation – and people to actively care enough about adults to include us when we're old because we cared enough about them to include them when they were young.

Alternative Education Resources: *The Educational Journal Review*

By Jan Kruse: *First Grade Teacher Mattoon, Illinois*

Now more than ever teachers and those interested in questioning the current educational reform movement mandated for our public schools may want to turn to the non-profit, independent publication: *Rethinking Schools*.

This publication has offered ideas and inspiration for 17 years by stressing a grassroots perception on issues of equity and social justice. *Rethinking Schools* endeavors to link classroom issues to broader events and to focus on true educational reform efforts at both local and national levels.

To find out more about this publication you can go to www.rethinkingschools.org

Or call 1-800-669-4192. A variety of resources and materials are available to assist teachers, parents and students to regain a voice within the current local, state and national top down efforts to stifle and narrow curriculum and bury creativity under an array of increasing paper work and testing. Now more than ever educators as well as the public in general should be *Rethinking Schools*.

Warning: Nearby local community fearful of *Rethinking Schools*.

The last time this educational journal was shared with teachers and educators in a nearby community some critics found it problematic.

A controversy arose and the issue of the publication found its way to the superintendent's office. The complaints seem to have come from a few who thought the journal contained too much information and could lead teachers to share less than patriotic views with their students. The journal does pose questions about many current political and international events. Isn't that what education should be about? The journal's information was also seen as a possible cause for sympathy toward the Muslim world and to not be in line with the current position of the US government.

Rethinking Schools is just right, however, if

you want to be challenged to think and to challenge the lies and misinformation often dispersed as facts by many mandated school curriculums from the US Department of Education on down.

Many resources are available from *Rethinking Schools*. Topics include questioning overuse of technology in schools, high stakes testing, federal mandates, creativity and art, factually accurate history, professional development and evaluation, and the role of parents in schools.

This quarterly journal is a good way to start rethinking schools in your community and the cost is just right too, at only \$15 a year. Or borrow it from the IMC library.



Annual Journalism Conference Will Focus on Indymedia

by David Porreca



David Porreca is a teaching associate and newspaper adviser at the University of Illinois Laboratory High School in Urbana. He is executive director of the Illinois State High School Press Association. He is serving his third term as president of the Illinois Journalism Education Association. A graduate of Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, Porreca has taught at Uni High since August 1995. His students have won more than 400 awards in state and national journalism contests since the spring of 1997. Both the 2002 and 2003 Illinois State High School Journalists of the Year were his students, the latter of whom (Noah Isserman) was one of four runners-up for National High School Journalist of the Year. He can be reached at dporreca@uiuc.edu. He credits his students for making him aware of the IMC. "They love the concerts," he says.

THANKS TO VOLUNTEERS from the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center and other indymedia outlets, some 500 high school students from around the state will be exposed to alternative ways of doing journalism.

The occasion is the fall conference of the Illinois State High School Press Association (ISHSPA), an annual event hosted by the University of Illinois journalism department. This year's conference will be held Oct. 3 at the Illini Union, 1401 W. Green St., Urbana.

Consisting of about 45 sessions spread out over three 50-minute time slots, plus lunch and a keynote address, the ISHSPA conference has traditionally presented practical advice to high school journalists on topics such as news writing, feature writing, sports writing, opinion writing, investigative reporting, photojournalism, interviewing, copy editing, and publication design.

For more than a decade Dana Ewell, a U of I journalism professor, organized the conference. She did a splendid job, energizing students and advisers alike with her passion for a story well told. Unfortunately, Dana was diagnosed with leukemia in the spring of 2002 and passed away in January. I've succeeded her as ISHSPA's executive director. Last fall I organized the ISHSPA conference while Dana was on medical leave. Now that I'm organizing it again, I wanted to move in a direction that I know Dana was interested in — that of broadening the scope of the conference sessions to include offerings

from representatives of the independent media.

I was especially interested in offering sessions with a strong Do It Yourself bent. High school is a time when talented students burst with creativity. They enjoy writing for a school publication (assuming their adviser and principal give them the freedom to express themselves), but many of them also seek additional outlets. As the newspaper adviser at the University of Illinois Laboratory High School, I myself have had students who edited our school paper (the Gargoyle) and also published their own zine. In fact, I currently have students who work for our paper and, on the side, publish their own blogs.

My experience has been that DIY media and school publications are NOT mutually exclusive — in fact, they benefit each other. School publications become energized by the tremendous vitality that DIY student journalists bring to their work. In turn, by producing school publications, those same students acquire the discipline that comes from writing for an audience — their peers — who will give them immediate feedback. Did they write something that makes no sense to anyone but themselves? Are they being too insular? Too self-indulgent? Their peers will tell them without hesitation. Those students become better journalists from the experience, and their own DIY publications improve. I've seen it happen. And it's a beautiful thing.

In that spirit, this year's conference will feature DIY sessions on zines, blogs, cartoons, radio, video, and media activism. Our speakers will include a number of IMC members, as well as representatives from WEFT, The Paper, Partners In Ink, Tales Press, In These Times, Punk Planet, ZineGuide, the Chicago Reader, The Chicago Reporter, and the Chicago Independent Press Association. In no particular order, here are just a few indymedia folks who have agreed to give sessions:

- Sascha Meinrath, community activist and co-founder of the UC-IMC;
- Paul Riismandel, IMC activist and mediageek.org publisher;
- Zach Miller, IMC activist and
- Darrin Drda, IMC activist, cartoonist, and production manager of *The Paper*;
- Clint Popetz, IMC activist and Radio News Coordinator
- Ed Mandel and Kayleigh van Poolen, WEFT;
- Jenny Southlynn, arts and entertainment editor of *The Paper*;
- David L. Felts, news editor, *The Paper*;

- Chuck Koplinski, movie editor and circulation director, *The Paper*;
- Ray Elliott, novelist and founder of *Tales Press*;
- Daniel Sinker, editor and publisher, *Punk Planet*;
- Brent Ritzel, editor and publisher, *Zine Guide*;
- Ethan Michaeli, founder and publisher of *Residents' Journal* (a bimonthly publication written entirely by residents of Chicago Public Housing) and founder of the Urban Youth Journalism Program (a journalism training program for teens who live in Chicago public housing);
- Charles Willett Jr., circulation and marketing manager, *The Chicago Reporter*;
- Jeff Epton, publisher, and Jessica Clark, managing editor, *In These Times*;
- Jackie Lalley, president, Chicago Independent Press Association;
- Karen Hawkins, free lancer and contributor to *In These Times* and *the Windy City Times* (which covers Chicago's gay and lesbian community);
- Michael Miner, "Hot Type" columnist, *the Chicago Reader*.

Although that's quite a lineup, our conference will also have an abundance of more mainstream journalists, including U of I professors such as Ron Yates, a longtime Chicago Tribune foreign correspondent before he became head of the U of I journalism department, and Leon Dash and William Gaines, both of whom won Pulitzer Prizes (Gaines, in fact, won two for his investigative reporting); reporter and editors from *The News-Gazette*, including managing editor Dan Corkery; and editors from the Chicago Tribune, including Timothy McNulty, who coordinated the paper's coverage of the Iraq war. Indeed, our keynote speaker will be Tony Majeri, the Tribune's senior editor for innovation and one of the founders of the Society for News Design, who will speak about media convergence and new ways of storytelling.

All in all, it should be an extraordinary conference — one that Dana Ewell would be proud of. If you are interested in attending, the cost will be \$3 per person. The sessions will run from 9:30 to 10:20 a.m., 10:30 to 11:20 a.m., and 1:30 to 2:20 p.m. Tony Majeri's keynote address will be given in Illini Rooms A & B from 12:30 to 1:20 p.m.

Our registration table will be set up in the Green Street lobby of the Illini Union. Drop by, and I'll be delighted to give you our conference schedule. I'm sure our indymedia representatives will be glad to see you as well!

Alternative Education resources: *The Teenage Liberation Handbook*

by Sevilla Mann

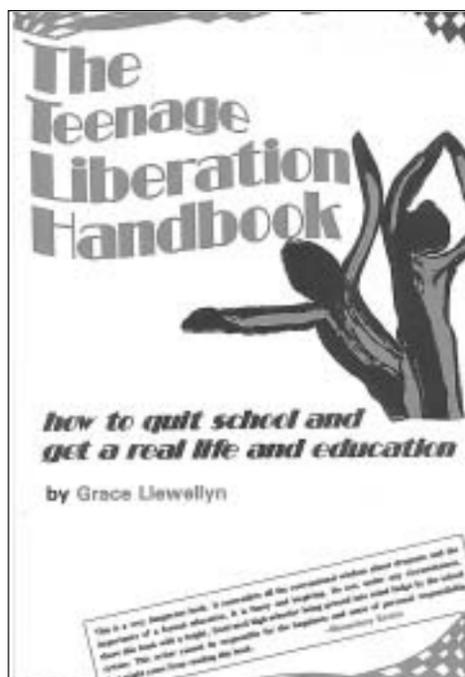
The Teenage Liberation Handbook is one of the most important books I have ever read. For me, like hundreds or possibly thousands of other teenagers, this guide gave me the essential empowerment I needed to decide to leave the compulsory school system during my eighth grade year in 1999, and become an unschooler. ("Unschooler" is the term used throughout the TLH to describe home schoolers whose education is largely self-directed, independent, and often comes mainly from their experiences in the world around them and their pursuit of activities that they find interesting).

Written directly to middle school and high school students, the TLH not a curriculum guide. It is partially a resource book, with many chapters devoted to detailing options for "studying" various "subjects", as well as giving teenagers jumping-off points for pursuing real-life educational possibilities in travel, volunteering, and activism. To me, though, the absolutely essential, unique thing that sets this book apart from all other home

schooling manuals is that it is a complete guide to going from being a frustrated compulsory-school student with no meaningful influence over your education, to becoming an empowered, informed, full-fledged independent learner with a world of possibilities for learning at your fingertips.

The first chapters of the book define the problem of the status quo of compulsory education in America. The essential message of the *Teenage Liberation Handbook* is that middle and high school students have the right to make meaningful choices

about the direction of their lives and education — in other words, they have the right to exercise their freedoms. However, the TLH holds, the basis of the compulsory school system, the educational status quo in America, is that it has power over students' lives. No matter how many wonderful teachers a school has and no matter how well meaning the administration, it cannot offer its students real control of their lives. (See Chapter 2, "School is not for learning"). This book presents the alternative: to "quit school and get a real life and education".



For most teenagers who have been in the school system most of their lives, the change from having always had one's time structured by someone else to having all the freedom in the world, feels overwhelming. The former student will most likely be confronting many feelings about their past schooling as well their new environment. The great thing about the TLH is the middle chapters that guide you through this tough spot, saving countless months or years of frustration.

When the unschooler is ready to move into her or his new life, the TLH provides for them chapters of great resources for all subjects and activities. It will provide the basis for the unschooler to become an independent scholar of whatever they are interested in pursuing. Students build their own education.

I am profoundly grateful to the *Teenage Liberation Handbook* for the difference it has made in my life. This book makes the world outside schooling accessible to anyone. I highly recommend it.



Troubled Waters

by Anna Barnes

Anna Barnes is a free-lance writer and a former agricultural magazine editor. She has written for Science Now, the online magazine of Science, in addition to producing educational materials concerning food, agriculture, and science for the University of Illinois. Her photographs of Broadmoor are part of a solo exhibition, Full Circle, at gallery virtu cooperative in Monticello through September 30. See www.galleryvirtu.org for details.

AS A CHILD, I WOULD OFTEN FIND MYSELF staring at the name on the front of the barn on my family's farm. At some time, I reasoned, someone must have painted over an E at the end of the name and never bothered to replace it. I repeatedly quizzed my parents, "What happened to the E?" Their answer was always the same, "There wasn't one." I thought they were playing a joke on me. Years later I learned the joke wasn't just on me, it was on everyone in East Central Illinois. My family's farm wasn't named for distant relatives named Broadmoore, it was named for the land itself, the broad moor.

Born from prairie wetlands, East Central Illinois' relationship with water has rarely been a concern of too little, but rather too much. Those who complain about the area's lack of forests and hills, would do well to look at what the glaciers left in the bargain. Acres of ancient buried rivers have provided water for generations; rarely does one dig more than six feet to find water. Yes, California and Colorado have mountains, but they also have the graves of farmers and ranchers who died fighting over water to irrigate their crops and feed their livestock. This legacy continues in Arizona today, where houses are falling into cracks created by aquifers that are being pumped out faster than they can recharge. With lengthy droughts reappearing in parts of the U.S. in the last decade, we have to wonder how long our liquid treasure will last in the face of global warming and population growth. Will there be enough safe water or are we destined to become a Mitsubishi desert?

Like most of the farmland in East Central Illinois, Broadmoor exists because of an extensive system of drainage tiles and ditches which shuttle rain to small streams and rivers, and ultimately to the Gulf of Mexico. At times, this system is overly efficient and shuttles not only rain water, but topsoil washed from fields unprotected by crops or mulch. This churning sluice gouges deep ruts through pastures and fields. The resulting in the sedimentation makes lakes and rivers less navigable and less liveable for the native species of fish whose food sources can't survive the resulting turbid conditions. This problem has been exacerbated by the conversion of flood plains to farmland. Without buffers to catch it, the sediment has no place to go but the rivers. Unfortunately, dredging rivers and lakes to remove wayward topsoil provides a temporary solution at best.

TOXIC RESIDUES

Field runoff and the shallow groundwater of our area both carry another form of residue – pesticides and fertilizers. For years, debate raged over just how much fertilizer pollution from Illinois agriculture contributed to the destruction of fishing areas in the Gulf of Mexico. Agricultural lobbying organizations and fertilizer industry representatives maintained that little of the 2 billion pounds of nitrogen annually applied to Illinois farms reached the Gulf. Further, the chief of the Illinois State Water Survey argued in a controversial research paper that historical levels of nitrogen entering our waterways from decaying prairie plants and buffalo feces were underestimated and current nitrate levels were comparatively better than they appeared. However, experiments using fertilizers with tracer elements have proven beyond doubt the culpability of Illinois agriculture in the Gulf's "dead zone." Perhaps as University of Illinois professor of biogeochemistry Mark David contends, Illinois should regulate fertilizer as was proposed by the state's pollution control board in 1971. Though state agencies opted not to revisit this issue in the nearly three decades that followed, today they not only have to look at, but implement, ways to reduce Illinois' contribution to Gulf hypoxia under the mandate of a 1998 federal act.

The costs of fertilizer contamination aren't being borne solely by far-off fishermen. Closer to home, many Illinois drinking water sources routinely exceed standards for nitrates, such as Bloomington, Danville, Decatur, and Georgetown. All primarily rely on surface reservoirs susceptible to field runoff. When nitrate levels exceed federal standards, water suppliers must provide bottled water for infants, as well as pregnant and nursing mothers. To remedy the situation, Decatur is spending \$6.7 million to construct a nitrate removal facility for its water supply; Georgetown and Danville spent \$3.5 million and \$6 million respectively to construct their facilities. Removing pesticides from water comes with a price for the residents of Springfield as well. Water there must be treated with activated carbon to remove atrazine.

But these measures are not enough, contend organizations like the Environmental Working Group. For water to be considered contaminated, levels of regulated water contaminants must average in excess of federal levels on the basis of four quarterly measurements. A herbicide violation in spring coinciding with farm pesticide applications could get factored out when averaged with several lower readings from the rest of the year when pesticides aren't applied. Additionally, not all pesticides used to grow food are federally regulated in drinking water.

Further, the regulatory status of some pesticides and other chemicals previously recognized as carcinogenic has been changing. In 1998, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency took a bold step and, in doing so, created a model for the U.S. EPA. Using available scientific literature, IEPA began classifying substances linked to disrupting the



endocrine system – the complex system of glands that secrete the hormones that regulate body functions such as reproduction, growth, and digestion, via organs like the kidneys, liver, and pancreas. Linked substances were ranked as known, probable, and suspected carcinogens.

Since 1998, industry groups from the styrene manufacturers to Monsanto have attempted to get their products off the list or at least downgraded. At the same time, lobbying and lawsuits have interfered with and thwarted the U.S. EPA's ability to set lower levels for arsenic and surface water chlorination by-products, such as trihalomethanes, respectively. Although these battles grabbed headlines, one of the biggest blows to area water safety occurred this winter when the agency issued its review of atrazine, a herbicide banned as a carcinogen in Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland.

Atrazine is one of the most commonly-used herbicides in the U.S. and, by no coincidence, one of the cheapest. In a statement issued in February, the U.S. EPA stated that "endocrine disruption, or potential effects on endocrine mediated pathways, cannot be regarded as an

atrazine regulatory endpoint at this time." The agency further claimed that appropriate testing protocols needed to be established before it could reach a conclusion regarding atrazine's endocrine effects. In the interim, the EPA is allowing the manufacturer of atrazine, Syngenta, to monitor contamination and implement drinking water limits. If the level of atrazine in an individual drinking water source exceeds specified levels, the EPA has given Syngenta the responsibility to conduct monitoring and develop a voluntary compliance plan among atrazine users to lower the contamination level.

Cancer is no stranger to Broadmoor. Nearly every household within one mile of Broadmoor has been affected by cancer. In 1988, Charles Edward Barnes II or "Ed" as friends called him died at the age of 70 from surgical complications resulting from the treatment of pancreatic cancer. Ed was the third generation of his family to till the soils of Broadmoor. He was the first to use atrazine.

In the late 1990s, an elderly woman living less than a mile east of Broadmoor and a woman in her early twenties living less than a mile west of Broadmoor both developed benign tumors ranging from

eNviRoNMeNt



19 to 20 pounds. The elderly woman had worked as a secretary at a local elementary school in addition to assisting her husband with some of the work on their farm. The woman in her twenties was not involved in farming, nor were her parents who lived at the same address. The only thing these women had in common was that they drank water from wells drilled into the same shallow aquifer.

Since 1984, Ed's cancer and those of his neighbors have been recorded as part of the Illinois State Cancer Registry. However they will likely never be officially correlated to the substances that may have caused them. In 1984, the state legislature failed to fund the Illinois Health and Hazardous Substances Registry Act. This act was to "monitor the health effects among the citizens of Illinois related to exposures to hazardous substances in the work place and the environment."

BREEDING BUGS

Closer to Bloomington, near the growing number of large-scale hog farms, residents must not only contend with pesticide and fertilizer residues in their ground water, but potentially with antibiotic resistant bacteria based on the findings of a study published in *New Scientist* in April, 2001. Using DNA testing, University of Illinois microbiologist Rustam Aminov and his team determined that bacteria from the soil near large-scale hog farms and the ground water reserves below these farms can acquire tetracycline-resistant genes from bacteria originating from pigs given the antibiotic as a growth promoter on these farms. This practice is banned in the European Union.

Back at Broadmoor, the pigs and the pasture are now gone. Like many rural farmsteads, Broadmoor still has a house built at ground level with a bermed basement – a vestige of the days when builders knew better than to dig basements in swampland. Other vestiges of the area's wetland past can be found on the headstones of Stearns cemetery five miles away along Interstate 74 near Fithian. A walk through the old part of the cemetery reveals that countless people died not during East Central Illinois' frigid winters, but during its blazing summers. They died not because their drafty farmhouses couldn't keep out the heat, but because their houses couldn't keep out the mosquitoes. They died of malaria.

Before it was drained, Central Illinois was second only to Africa in malaria deaths, says University of Illinois medical entomologist Robert Novak. Whether the incidence of malaria will increase or already has increased due to global warming is a source of debate among entomologists. At present, many of the projection models for global warming call for climate conditions to become warmer and wetter – ideal breeding conditions for mosquitoes. Novak, who serves as a World Health Organization Vector Biology and Control expert panelist, studies the effects of global warming on the mosquito populations that carry malaria, dengue fever, and St. Louis encephalitis.

According to Novak, East Central Illinois hasn't had a case of non-imported malaria since before World War II. However, the mosquitoes that typically carry the disease are still here. Moreover, cases of malaria already appeared in New York and Louisiana. A more immediate concern is West Nile Virus. In 2002, Illinois led the nation with 900 human cases, including 66 deaths. As of mid-August, in the middle of a wide-spread education campaign to remove sources of standing water, no human cases of West Nile had been reported to Illinois health officials.

It is easy to empty bird baths and remove old tires and other sources of standing water which provide habitats for disease-carrying mosquitoes. However, it is more difficult to combat the often unaerated, man-made ponds used to replace wetlands displaced by housing and shopping developments. Despite a grand history in so-called green development a century ago, Illinois has all but abandoned the practice of using large green spaces to provide recreation and temporary water retention in and around urban areas.

PAR BUT NOT PARITY

"Most climate studies project the world's climate to become warmer and wetter, on average," says University of Illinois professor of environmental systems Wayland Eheart. "On average is the key to that statement. In between, we are likely to see more droughts and more floods."

More frequent droughts could cause water quality problems for communities that depend on surface sources for their drinking water. EPA-permitted discharges for industrial wastes are based upon average flows. If a drought reduces the water level in a river, then potentially toxic substances in a legal industrial discharge will be at higher concentrations. Dilution levels could be further affected if more of the state's farmers decide to install irrigation equipment.

While Eheart says he isn't placing a lot of stock in global warming models just yet, he is a strong advocate of the precautionary principle. "You should do whatever you are going to be satisfied with even if climate change doesn't occur," he says. "At present we have no control over how much water is being withdrawn in Illinois."

"We need policies that specifically state how much people can take and a legal framework behind it, not just voluntary reporting like we've done with other things," says Eheart. "A shared system needs to be set up to allocate ground water, as well. Relying on lawsuits to allocate is very inefficient and inconsistent," he says, noting that water battles have already occurred. "A few years ago Danville wanted to access area ground water to dilute nitrates in its drinking water. Area farmers complained that this would harm their water supplies. The farmers won."

How much the fields of Broadmoor share in the blame for this irony is unknown. What is known is that they share the same watershed.

MITSUBISHI DESERT?

Surface water and ground water are intrinsically connected. The giant Mahomet aquifer, which spans all or portions of Champaign, DeWitt, Ford, Iroquois, Logan, Macon, McLean, Piatt, Sangamon, Tazewell, and Vermilion counties, charges with rainfall in northern Champaign County, as well as, the Sangamon River near Allerton

Park in Piatt County. As such, the cities of Champaign and Urbana supply their residents some of the youngest water in the aquifer -- water only a few thousand years old. Water in other areas of the aquifer is 5,000 to 7,000 years older.

Though smaller, shallower aquifers supply water to many individuals and communities, at 4 trillion gallons, the Mahomet is regarded as the most vast and productive. Just how productive, however, isn't fully known, explains Samuel Panno, a geochemist with the Illinois Geological Survey (ISGS), "Aquifers are renewable resources in that they can be recharged. Water that is pumped can be replaced by precipitation at a given rate." But the Mahomet's recharge rate is still unknown. "I think most people who know anything about the aquifer and groundwater hydrology feel it is foolhardy to continue to develop the Mahomet aquifer without knowing its approximate recharge rate," says Panno.

According to Panno, if the aquifer is pumped too heavily in some areas, it could bring down the water level in others, possibly below the level of some communities' pumps. This could result in water being unavailable to communities with shallower wells for extended periods of time. Just how much water can be pumped safely has yet to be determined and funding to study it is still being sought. In the meantime, development plans, such as the one in Bloomington to add another manufacturer like Mitsubishi, worry some residents in other communities.

In 1999, Panno, and ISGS researchers Keith Hackley, David Larson, and Edward Mehnert published a study of the water level of the Mahomet aquifer west of Champaign. According to Mehnert who led the study and heads ISGS' ground water geology section, the water level in this area dropped over 40 feet between 1953 and 1995. At the same time, water use in Champaign-Urbana increased from 7 million gallons a day to an average of 21 million gallons a day, with peak usage as high as 34 million gallons. Since 1995, the water level has stabilized, though the reasons for this are unclear, says Mehnert. "We don't know whether we'll be looking at additional decline in the long-term, or whether the level will remain static," he says.

The Mahomet's water quality also may be threatened long-term. Buried 100 to 200 feet down in most areas, the Mahomet is largely protected from external pollutants. However, it is being contaminated from within in some areas. West of the Piatt-Champaign County line, arsenic is leaching from the iron sulfide deposits in concentrations from 20 to 70 parts per billion. Commercial-scale water-treatment systems can remove arsenic from community water supplies. However, arsenic also is showing up in shallower rural wells in Piatt County, where removal comes with a considerably higher cost for individual residents. While pitcher and faucet filters can remove nitrates and some pesticides, they don't remove arsenic. Removing arsenic, which has been linked to skin cancers, involves whole-house filtration systems that can cost thousands of dollars and must be frequently monitored by homeowners.

LASTING IMPRINTS

At 20 to 70 ppb the Mahomet's arsenic levels near Monticello exceed new federal standards. Amidst public outcry, lawsuits from environmental organizations, and a National Academy of Sciences finding that the U.S. EPA had substantially underestimated cancer risks from arsenic, the Bush administration reversed its previous course and allowed a 10 ppb standard to stand in June. Never mind that the 10 ppb standard was originally proposed in 1962. Whether similar intervention will cause the agency to reassess its policies regarding atrazine remains to be seen. As of June 18, the EPA's inspector general began investigating whether the agency is deliberately misleading the public by overstating the purity of U.S. drinking water.

In the meantime, I fear for the man who now tills the soils of Broadmoor. With the death of my mother in 2000, my family's ties to the farm were legally severed. Yet by any damage or benefit we imparted to the land, our legacy remains. We can never be truly separated from the land any more than the land can be separated from the water. This is the nature of the moor.

