

The PUBLIC

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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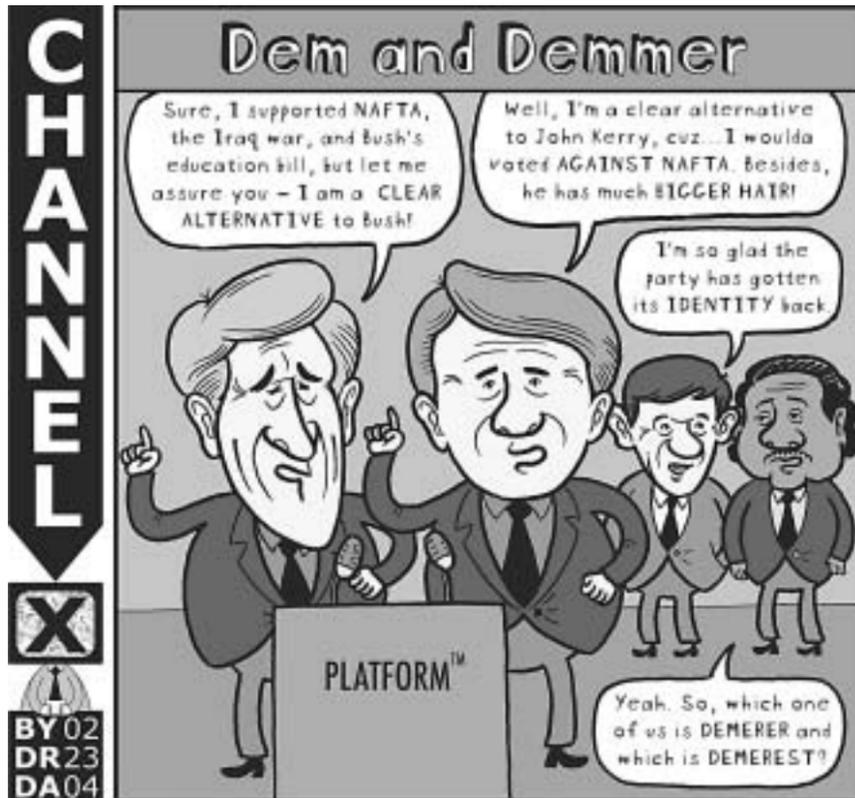
Get Involved with the Public i

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), 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.

Open Stage at the Red Herring

March 11th and March 25th starting at 8pm.
 Come out and do your thing!



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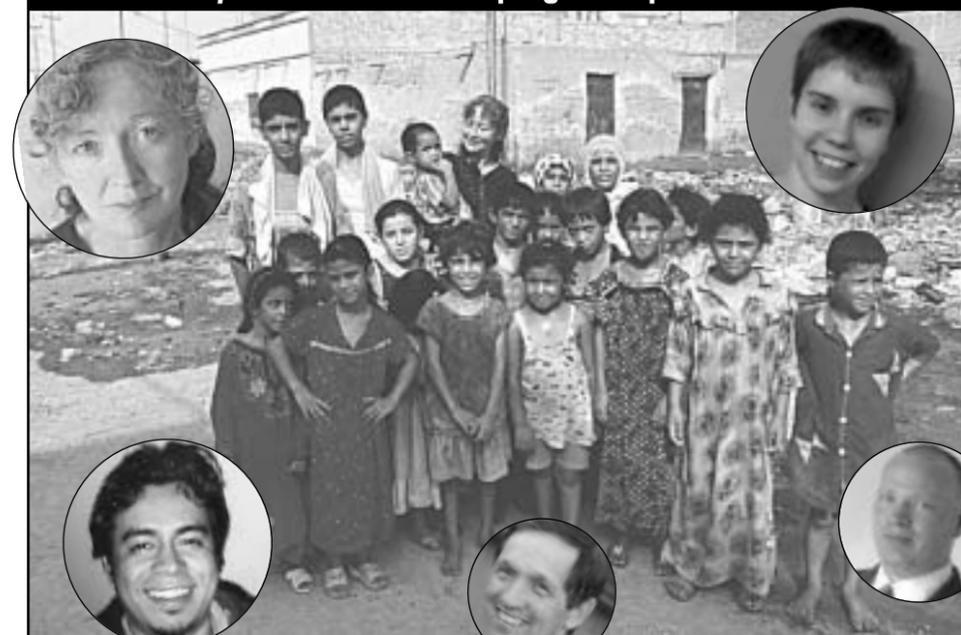
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The PUBLIC

A Paper of the People

Published by the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center

March 2004 • V4 #2



Putting a FACE on POLITICS



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The PUBLIC



A Paper of the People

This month's theme for the *Public i* is "Putting a Face on Politics," in honor of those made invisible and in response to that which is overwhelming and sometimes faceless. Within this rubric we present the people who make up the UIUC Board of Directors, as well as stories from activists connected to Champaign-Urbana who are working around the world. We are proud to publish these stories

here, and to present a perspective on world politics, economics, human rights, government, and the environment that is grounded locally. In this issue, we seek, as always, to convey a sense of what happens behind-the-scenes, whether it be in corporate or university board rooms, prison cells, or literally backstage.

The Editing Team

March 2004 • V4 #2

The Smiling Face of Government Waste

By Jay Hansen



Jay Hansen is a local grass roots organizer who is also a teaching assistant in the History Department at U of Illinois. He has been active locally in several campaigns, including "UIUC for Dean,"

Barak O'Bama for Senate and Dr. David Gill for U.S. House.

AT A RECENT GATHERING OF Republican state leaders in Carmi, IL, 15th district U.S. House Rep. Tim Johnson criticized his Democratic rivals for believing that the government best knows how to distribute the nation's assets. Republicans, he argued, believe in free enterprise and rewarding people who succeed in the face of risk. At the same time, however, Johnson also cited the need to pass massive new spending legislation, recommending (among other things) using Federal funds for work on the Wabash River bridge in Mt. Caramel and spending millions more on ethanol subsidies contained in a national energy bill. In fact, Mr. Johnson has proven quite supportive of massive government spending, voting most recently for an \$820 billion omnibus spending bill packed with pet pork projects (my favorite being a \$225,000 swimming pool restoration in Sparks, Nevada, included in the bill because Rep. Jim Gibbons felt bad about having put tadpoles in the pool's drainage system when he was a teenager in the 1950s). Apparently in these particular cases, Johnson has no problem with the government distributing the nation's assets.

But why should we worry about such behavior, especially when such projects usually mean jobs and money for the local economy, which sorely needs them? Mr. Johnson will no doubt cite his ability to secure such funds as a very valid reason for his re-election come November. But there's a slight problem with this argument, which all incumbents seem to make this time of year. What he isn't telling you (and what will no doubt go unmentioned during the campaign) is that in order to get that money, he made similar deals with most of the other members of Congress, arranging for them to take home millions of dollars too. And you can bet your bottom dollar that Johnson—who is a relatively

insignificant figure on Capitol Hill—has brought home far less money than congressional big wigs like House majority leader Tom Delay (TX) or Senate appropriations chairman Ted Stevens (AK). When all the bills are tallied, the people of East Central Illinois will end up spending a lot more on their pork projects than we will get back, money that would be better spent on things like intelligence gathering or paying down the national debt.

This, however, is not the only flaw in the incumbent argument. A second major fallacy is the idea that the money is actually coming back to "our" district. While the individual work may be done on that Wabash river bridge, there is absolutely no guarantee that the firm who wins the contract will be locally owned or operated. Profits from such a venture, like those obtained by the large agri-business farms that benefit from the ethanol subsidy, will go to large corporations headquartered in Chicago, Texas, or perhaps the Bahamas (which thus enables them to avoid paying taxes). So not only are American jobs and tax revenues rapidly being outsourced, but so also is most of the money the government spends on economic stimulus packages.

The problem among politicians today is not really a question of party or ideology, though, but that their re-election is so dependent on spending as much money as possible, (and then spending more). Currently, there is no political incentive for elected officials to be fiscally responsible, or even to put badly needed programs like national health insurance ahead of the somewhat less urgent needs to build a rainforest in Iowa (\$50 million), to get inner-city kids playing golf in Florida (\$2 million) or to store potatoes in Madison, Wisconsin (\$270,000)—all of which the anti-government spending legislator Tim Johnson voted for in H.R. 2673. And unless we find a way to make our voices heard on the ridiculousness of such waste and

corruption, politicians will go on throwing our and our children's future down the drain. But there is hope for the future.

One of the most amazing developments of the last ten years—the internet—has revolutionized the way politics works. Today, the acquisition and distribution of information is more accessible than it has ever been before. With just the click of a mouse, one can instantly access the records of a particular politician's statements on the floor of the House or Senate (<http://thomas.loc.gov>), compare their voting record to positions advocated by major interest groups (www.vis.org) or locate and search through local newspaper archives. A process that once took days is now reduced to mere seconds. Additionally, non partisan watchdog groups like Citizens Against Government Waste (www.cagw.org) sift



through lengthy and often times difficult to understand bills (such as the \$820 billion, 1,448 page omnibus spending bill that just passed through Congress), identifying those pork items your representative probably didn't want you to find out about. Other organizations, like the more partisan MoveOn.org, have proven to be particularly effective at exposing corporate and political corruption. What makes these organizations so revolutionary is not simply their ability to catalogue political information, but the power they possess to deliver it instantaneously to mass numbers of potential voters. The internet has removed the logistical veil that has so long obscured the political machinations ongoing in Washington, placing in effect a giant poster above every incumbent inscribed "Big Constituent is Watching You."

Yet the wondrous powers of the internet do not stop there. Regardless of how things turned out for former presidential candidate Howard Dean, his campaign revolutionized the practice of fundraising, which had previously been limited to wealthy individual donors and soft

money from special interest group Political Action Committees or PACs. Dean's campaign raised \$50 million, largely through individual contributions that average only \$77. To put that number in perspective, Al Gore only raised \$45 million from individual donors during the entire 2000 election, with the benefit of being the party nominee and having a unified Democratic party behind him (Dean faced eight other democratic opponents and didn't win a single primary). What Dean's campaign has suddenly revealed to longtime political strategists is that there is a very large and affluent group out there—Joe public—who has the financial resources to compete with the larger more organized special interest groups. Thus the internet has also reduced the financial divide between ordinary people and their candidates, to the extent that they are now only an email or credit card donation away. And that is great news for our Democracy.

Finally, however, none of the advances described above will ever be able to fundamentally change Washington and the way it operates, unless we take action. Politicians will only get the message if they feel their most precious possession is in jeopardy—namely their jobs. But here too, the internet is proving to be a most useful tool. Through internet chat rooms, web "blogs" and organizations like Meetup.com, political organization has become easier than ever. One can connect with millions of people, across a wide range of geographic locations, with relatively little time, effort or money. There is no reliance on newspaper advertisements, no need to find accommodations in which to hold meetings, nor does one even need to find a babysitter to watch the kids after a long day of work. In short, the internet is providing the power to mobilize ordinary citizens for participation in the Democratic process. And the more people who become involved, the more difficult it will be for special interest groups to monopolize political resources.

With deference to Mr. Johnson, the only way to stop government (or more specifically the interest groups that run it) from directing the nation's assets is for more of us to become involved in the political process again. Luckily for us, however, technology is daily making that an ever more realizable phenomenon.



Letters

"Boring" Politicians

I wish that Peter Rohloff (in the February edition of *Public i*) had chosen a different word, besides "boring," to describe Dennis Kucinich. Peace is boring; war is exciting. Conservation is boring, flagrant disregard for our life support system is exciting. In fact, King George II may be the worst head of state in recent history (or ever, considering the mind-boggling power he wields), but he certainly isn't boring. I can understand Peter's desire for an African-American President. Such a president would bring a sorely missed perspective to leadership of a country plagued by the not-so-distant ghosts of slavery and

genocide. Al Sharpton has a winning way of speaking, and he is certainly not boring. However, his platform is not well-defined. He has yet to be specific on his views about many important issues, such as trade agreements, agriculture, and energy policy. Kucinich has specifically outlined thoughtful responses to these and other pressing needs in our society. Kucinich has experience working with Congress. He has experience saying "no" to corporate America. Sharpton may do a credible job, but there is no doubt that Kucinich is more than qualified for the position. As for the reality of having to choose between Sharpton and Kucinich – as any bubbie would tell you, "You should be so lucky."

– Gina Cassidy

Correction

The February issue of the *Public i* contained an error on page 5 in the sidebar article entitled "How the Prison-Industrial-Complex Threatens Democracy in America." The statement containing the error reads, "1 in 32 americans and 1 in 3 blacks are incarcerated," and the corrected version should read, "will be incarcerated in some form in their lifetime."

Local



U of I Board of Trustees: Who Are They?

by Lisa Chason and Ricky Baldwin



Both Ricky Baldwin and Lisa Chason are recent-comers to Champaign-Urbana. Their surprise at the intransigence of the Chief controversy led them to wonder about the decisionmakers and their underlying interests and interconnections. This piece of power structure research is hardly an exhaustive study but rather a contribution to making the invisible visible, by turning the light on the University of Illinois' Board of Trustees. Those with other information and insights are invited to add to the story.



THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS BOARD OF TRUSTEES has once again postponed their decision on "honorably retiring" the controversial Chief Illiniwek mascot, scheduled for their March 11th meeting. Trustee Frances Carroll, the recent Blagojevich appointee who had proposed the mascot's removal, made the announcement. Carroll had withdrawn her proposal once before, just prior to the November meeting, saying the votes were no longer there. What happened to them at that time is the subject of much rumor and speculation since, just two weeks before, Carroll had expressed confidence that she had six out of ten votes lined up. The vote was rescheduled for the March meeting, the next that would take place in Urbana-Champaign.

Then a series of events occurred that were bound to affect the way trustees see the issue. President of the University James Stukel unexpectedly announced in January that he will take early retirement next year. Chancellor Nancy Cantor, who became the subject of organized vitriol within the local community for suggesting it was time to eliminate the mascot, resigned effective in July. And the student government, which previously took a position in line with Cantor's, announced that it was preparing a student referendum on the issue that is expected to reflect the local forces that have dogged the Chancellor. Several Board members expressed publicly that they would like to postpone their decision until after the student referendum, and, shortly thereafter, Carroll again withdrew her proposal.

Regardless of these events, the Board of Trustees remains the final arbiter of the issue, and public attention is now focused there. Yet few outside the tight-knit community of administrators, lobbyists and interlocking committees that govern the Illinois system of higher education can say they know much about the trustees, their authority or what influences them. Far from an independent committee of disinterested public servants, or educators who have risen to positions of authority, the Board is made up of well connected political appointees who are mostly lawyers, doctors, construction contractors and political operatives, and many of them or their employers are big campaign contributors.

THE POWER OF THE BOARD

Established over a hundred years ago as the one body responsible directly to the legislature for the University of Illinois system of public higher education, the Board of Trustees has almost unlimited authority to run the University as it sees fit. In fact, the regulations, known as the "Statutes," that govern the Board's activities were written and passed by the Board itself, and only the Board can amend them. The same goes for the "General Rules" that supplement the "Statutes." All the authority of the University's president, the chancellors of each campus (Chicago, Springfield and Urbana-Champaign), and their respective administrations are delegated by the Board.

For most of the Board's history, individual trustees were elected to staggered six-year terms. The Alumni Association kept the closed nomination process entirely within its grip, filtering names through the alumni in each political party to the respective legislative committees and onto the statewide ballot. The fact that almost no one outside the inner circles of university alumni and administration knew much about the nominees hardly seemed to matter – voters scratched their heads over who they were and voted their party's slate.

Then in 1996 the Legislature threw out the process of election altogether in favor of appointment by the Governor, effectively deposing the Alumni Association – reportedly a source of continuing friction behind closed doors. The Legislature still approves the appointments, and the Governor still theoretically maintains a balance between Republicans and Democrats. But critics have charged that the Board, and thus the U of I system, is now for all intents and purposes an arm of the Governor's Office. Only the three student trustees, one from each campus, are now elected. But only one – selected by the Governor – gets to vote.

Of the current nine non-student trustees, five were appointed by former Governor Ryan. Of these only Jeffrey Gindorf had previously been elected, then appointed when his term expired. In the past fourteen months, Governor Blagojevich has appointed four, including Frances Carroll, maker and unmaker of the recent ill-fated proposal on the mascot. Four are Democrats, three Republicans. Two are Independents, but both of these have substantial Republican connections. Most attended the University of Illinois at some point, but Marjorie Sodemann did not attend college at all and Robert Vickrey did not attend a university. Sodemann and Vickrey are also the only two not based in Chicago. None except Carroll is an educator.

Three trustees – Lawrence Eppley, Sodemann and Vickrey – have been outspoken defenders of Chief Illiniwek. All three are Ryan appointees. Except for Carroll, all four Blagojevich appointees have stated publicly that they are undecided on the issue. One of these – construction CEO Niranjana Shah – has been conspicu-

ously absent during recent discussions of the mascot issue. In November Shah was reportedly in the building when the discussion was going on, but only took his seat when the Board had moved on to other business. The current voting student trustee, Nate Allen, once supported keeping the mascot but has stated that he has changed his mind.

MEET THE TRUSTEES



Considerable power is vested in the chair of the Board, a position held by Lawrence C. Eppley since former chair Gerald Shea's abrupt retirement last year with two years left on his term. Shea reportedly had close ties with former Governor George Ryan and is very close to the current Governor. Eppley in turn is said to be quite close to Shea.

Eppley is head corporate lawyer for the Chicago-based law firm of Bell, Boyd & Lloyd. A Ryan appointee in 2001, Eppley describes himself as a political Independent, but his firm's "GOP connections," as Crain's Chicago Business points out, "are impeccable." Among the firm's partners is Lee A. Daniels, a former Illinois House minority leader who resigned two years ago as his party's state chairman after allegations that staff members did political work on taxpayer time, and Jeffrey Ladd, who served on the Metra board with Donald Udstuen, a co-defendant of former Governor George Ryan.

One of the largest investment company practices in the US with over 200 lawyers in its Chicago offices alone, Bell Boyd occupies seven floors of its building and represents upwards of 600 mutual funds or their boards worth well over \$400 billion. The firm has recently absorbed a number of smaller firms and attracted lawyers from others, including the intellectual property boutique Rockey, Milnamow & Katz, which represented the University of Illinois until the firm dissolved in 2002.

Eppley's firm has made a priority of intellectual property (patent prosecution), especially in biotechnology, in the years since Eppley joined the Board of Trustees. One patent attorney with Bell, Boyd & Lloyd, for example, is Robert M. Barret, President of the Intellectual Property Association of Chicago, whose membership includes almost 900 attorneys. And the firm's involvement in intellectual property ranges into venture capital, too, particularly in medical and biotechnology – which is related to Eppley's work on the Board.

Eppley made the news before becoming chair for his involvement over the last couple of years in the University's venture capital debacle. The original idea was to funnel state money directly into "start-up" businesses, especially spin-offs of state-funded university research, but political backlash forced a shift to less direct funding.

LoCal



Frances Carroll, appointed by Governor Blagojevich in 2003, is serving the remainder of Thomas Lamont's term after Lamont resigned to become vice-chairman of the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Carroll is an award-winning public school teacher, counselor and principal, who has administered programs for the mentally handicapped, staff development for special education teachers and other divisions in the Chicago Public Schools.

Carroll's appointment opened the way for legislative confirmation of three earlier Blagojevich appointees, which had been held up by Sen. Ricky Hendon's (D-Chicago) insistence that the Governor appoint a black woman. Carroll is a Democrat.



Marjorie E. Sodemann, a local Republican Party committeewoman and former Champaign County Board member, was appointed by Ryan in 2001.

She has been a policy staffer in the Governor's Office, a department head and manager for the Secretary of State's Office and a state auditor, as well as supervisor of Champaign Township for many years. Sodemann is the only trustee without any higher education. She has stated publicly that she was surprised at being asked to serve on the Board, but is pleased to do so.



Devon C. Bruce, born in Champaign-Urbana, was appointed by Governor Blagojevich in 2003. He is an attorney with Power, Rogers & Smith in Chicago, which donated about \$135,000 to the Governor's campaign. Bruce personally donated \$500. The firm seems to primarily deal in malpractice and personal injury, but not only individual cases. They represented the Center for Auto Safety, founded by Ralph Nader, and Trial Lawyers for Public Justice against Goodyear Tires in a tread separation case they claimed involved almost one hundred accidents and forty deaths.

Bruce helped his firm's lead attorney in the Willis family's lawsuit after the fatal accident that led to the "licenses for bribes" scandal involving former Governor Ryan's tenure as secretary of state. Joseph Power, a partner with the firm, received the Illinois State Bar Association's highest award for that investigation, which led to dozens of indictments and is credited with resulting in the state's new ethics bill. Another partner, Todd Smith, has been elected president of the American Trial Lawyers Association. The firm won more in settlement dollars last year than any other area firm with 11 cases worth \$145 million.



Niranjan S. Shah, appointed by Governor Blagojevich in 2003, has been CEO since 1974 of the well-connected Globetrotters Engineering Corporation, which gave nearly \$30,000 to Blagojevich's campaign. Shah's company came under fire late last year for this contribution because of its involvement in the \$6-15

billion expansion of O'Hare airport in Chicago. Globetrotters Engineering is part of a construction consortium that stands to take in \$15-20 million for designing three new or expanded runways.

Shah has served on the Board of Regents, the Chicago Economic Development Commission of Chicago and the transition team for former Governor Jim Edgar, among other high-profile activities. He is also a Democrat and the only person of color on the Board other than Carroll.



Robert Y. Sperling, a partner at the bicoastal law firm of Winston & Strawn, which held a Blagojevich fundraiser and donated \$15,000. The firm is 150 years old, with

offices in L.A. and D.C., and has a long history of representing big corporations. Almost from their start, Winston & Strawn represented railroads in their juggernaut drive west, eventually inventing the "air rights" concept that allowed railroads to sell off chunks of property without losing deed to the land. During World War II, the firm defended retail giant Montgomery Ward when the company refused to accept a government-mandated labor deal. Most recently, Winston & Strawn defended Microsoft against federal anti-trust charges in 2001. James Thompson worked for the firm before becoming Governor of Illinois, and afterwards returned to the firm as chair. Sperling is a political Independent.



Robert F. Vickrey, a Ryan appointee (2001) and Republican committeeman, has been vice president of Legislative Affairs and Economic Development at Miller Group Media in LaSalle, IL, since 1968. Miller Group Media is a large media conglomerate, owning several newspapers and radio stations around Illinois and Indiana. The company was founded by Peter Miller, a former head of the *Washington Times-Herald* who returned to Illinois to expand his media holdings, according to his recent obituary. Miller was also involved in promoting business and education, including Interstate 39 and Illinois Valley Community College.



Jeffrey Gindorf, M.D., is the only current trustee who was elected under the old system, in 1992. Gindorf's first term ended in 1999, at which time then-Governor Ryan appointed him. Gindorf is a Democrat. He earned his M.D. from the University of Illinois at Chicago after first graduating from UIUC with a BS in Mechanical Engineering. In addition to his own practice and other activities, Gindorf volunteers at McHenry County Health Department Clinic, which provides free health care to the indigent.



Another doctor, Kenneth D. Schmidt, was also appointed in 1999 by then-Governor Ryan and also earned his M.D. from UIUC. Schmidt is a

Republican.

OPEN AND CLOSED

The question, then, is what effect these connections have in a state whose political culture has been described as one in which "personal loyalties" and "horse-trading" dominate "ideology" (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, 10/4/02). The answer is we do not really know. Though trustees meetings are open by law, all this means is that anything anyone doesn't want heard gets said outside the meeting or in executive session. There are of course the occasional conflicts, but most of the horse-trading seems to happen over the phone between meetings. Witness the sudden evaporation of Carroll's votes to "honorably retire" the UIUC mascot in November. The trustees and other insiders deny that the call came from the Governor, upon whom the trustees depend for reappointment and possibly other business, but the suggestion persists. It is even suggested that the issue of the Chief will not be seriously confronted until after Governor Blagojevich has secured a second term, four years from now, due to his deep concerns over losing southern Illinois votes.

A related question concerns the influence of former Board Chair Gerald Shea, a vocal proponent of the UIUC mascot whose "connections" were considered "extensive enough that his influence [was] unlikely to wane considerably after Governor Ryan's term end[ed]" last January, according to Charles Wheeler who covered Illinois politics for the *Sun-Times* for 23 years (*Chronicle* 10/4/02).

Shea, a Democratic lawmaker for many years and former majority leader of the Illinois House of Representatives, started his own powerful lobbying firm after leaving office in 1977, representing Anheuser-Busch and General Motors among others. Governor Ryan reportedly considered Shea a close friend and confidant. Insiders insist Shea exerts influence almost as an invisible member of the Board.

How much influence the Alumni Association is still able to exert, even though the nomination process is for-

mally out of their control, is another question. They have their influence on the Legislature, which approves the Governor's appointments to the Board and decides the University budget. Shea is an alumnus, and, as Board chair, was by all accounts intimately involved in this process, using his political connections and other lobbying resources to garner more money from Springfield, particularly in the area of construction and high-tech investment on the three campuses.

Pressure is also coming from the Legislature itself, where conservative lawmakers are quivering over the Board's recent decision to grant health benefits to same-sex partners of University employees. Proposals bouncing around Springfield include bringing back statewide election of trustees, some say with the effect that the Board could become more conservative as a result of representing more regions of the state outside Chicago.

As it stands now, Chancellor Cantor has taken the most public heat over the UIUC mascot, even as pro-mascot trustees like Eppley admit that the writing is on the wall and it is only a matter of time before the Chief is gone. Members of the public who question the Chief tradition are affronted in the local press, as is Frances Carroll, while the rest of the trustees remain largely invisible. Yet it is precisely the Board that can lift the decision above the local divisiveness, affirming that the UIUC is not merely a venue for local sports and entertainment but an institution with national, even world, standing, for which they are ultimately responsible. And they must choose to act not simply as an instrument of Illinois state government but in the interest of higher learning.

When the trustees will actually make a decision is anybody's guess, as is whether the University will actually suffer the predicted dropoff in donations as a result. In any case, one thing is certain: the contours of this process will almost surely never be known.



CHANNEL
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Clowning, Not Swimming, to Cambodia *

By Susan Parenti

Susan Parenti studied music composition in Rome with Goffred Petrassi, and received her doctorate at the University of Illinois. Along with loved friend Herbert Brun and other co-conspirators, she participated in the Performers' Workshop Ensemble as a performer, composer, and instigator! Unbidden, she continues to write music that requires thinking in listening, and to assemble a community that can listen so that there's thinking. She has two published books, *The Politics of the Adjective "Political"*, and *"I" and My Mouth and Their Irresistible Life in Language*. She teaches at the School for Designing a Society in Urbana, and tours with Patch Adams.

IN DECEMBER I WENT TO CAMBODIA for "humanitarian clowning." This is an account of the trip.

**(the title is a reference to the movie Swimming to Cambodia, made in 1987 by Spalding Gray, while he was working on the movie, The Killing Fields. Swimming to Cambodia is really worth seeing).*

Thirty six hours to get to Cambodia from Washington, D.C (four planes). I grumbled to the other clowns: "why do we have to go so far in order to clown with suffering people? Seems like the US is full of them, we can stay right here."

Who are we? We are "humanitarian clowns" which means we use the antics of clowning for purposes of change. Like activists and medical practitioners, we try to change the condition of suffering, going to hospitals and orphanages as well as checkpoints and refugee camps. In the airport we arrive in full clown costume, some accordions and fiddles, and clown with the airline staff, waiting passengers, and at the security stations (NOT in the US, we'd be guillotined). Pain? Boredom? Deadly serious power over? Here we come. We try. I'm an accordionist, a beginning clown.

On this trip, we were 13 people: 11 clowns (two from Italy) and two cameramen from Chile (who couldn't resist clowning at times).

In the Phnom Peng airport, a French journalist angrily said to our clown group, "I don't know how you Americans have the nerve to come to Cambodia. Are you aware the US bombed this country for 180 days, night and day? That bombing ruined the irrigation system that had been so carefully set up here for centuries?!!!"

I recognized in his voice a performance that I would have done, too, if I were he: helpless anger, accusation, in confronting the revolting innocence of the perpetrators. "Yup, yessirree, we're just a bunch of carefree americans going on a tour of this here oriental country, heard it was cheap, women are purty, gee did people die here, don't know anything bout that, lots of old feuds I guess, barbarians fighting barbarians, I'm an american, I pay a lot for my ignorance, yup."

So the French journalist was right to be mad. Right on, brother.

Only in this case, I told him we WERE aware; we humble clowns went to places to counteract the damage done by our bullying country. He was mollified, almost friendly. I think the sheer fact that Americans KNEW about the US bombing in the 1970s was a relief to him.

When we finally arrived in Phnom Penh, the country took

my eyes: the streets wildly busy with motorbike travel (up to six people on one bike), the people seeming small to me, slender, graceful, and not pugnacious. A common Cambodian greeting gesture: people put their hands together to their chest in a prayerlike position, which looks like a gentle "At your service" gesture.

How could one out of four people have been killed in this country, mostly by Cambodians themselves (Khmer Rouge soldiers), between 1970 and 1995?

Statistics I was told: in 2003, 60% of the population is under age 24; and of that, 50% are under age 15, a consequence of the terrible last 30 years of the country. 1 out of 4 people were killed in the time period between 1970-1995, partly as a consequence of US foreign policies (excuse me, I mean the foreign policies that the US people do not know about but the men in power do) which killed between 300,000 to one and a half million people, and partly as a consequence of the dictator Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge. 24% of the women can read; 36% of the men can read. There is 80% poverty, with people living on 50 cents a day. Rachel Snyder, our guide, said: "Women and children have no rights. There is law, but no justice. Cambodia is riddled with corruption" (but who will solvethis riddle, who?).

Beggars all over, some sliding on the ground when without legs. The voices of beggars, of shop women in the market, trying to get your attention (your 50 cents, their food, their survival).

What if you were too shy to beg? To starve from shyness.

(There is a story by Chekhov of a starving father and son, and the father too ashamed to beg, and starving son who on a dare eats oysters fed him by rich men). Financially, our trip was sponsored by the actress Angelina Jolie, mother of an adopted Cambodian child, refugee camp visitor, and poster child for UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees). Organizationally, the trip was sponsored by Patch Adams and Wildman Adams of the Gesundheit! Institute, who both did a huge amount of detail work to bring 13 people to Cambodia, and who had the vision for it. On the first morning of our visit, we visited the actual "killing fields" and the prison camp where thousands of Cambodians were murdered. I was grateful to our guides Rachel and Paul for starting the trip this way - showing us the traces



Susan Parenti and Patch Adams

of suffering created by power over and violence. Though visiting hospitals also puts us into contexts of suffering, illness is quite another thing from avoidable humanly-caused misery. And that we witnessed. A detail I can't forget: we were shown a tree against which babies were killed - in order to save precious bullets, the Khmer Rouge battered the babies against the tree until they died. "In order to save precious bullets."

We visited children with AIDS (Cambodia has the highest rate of AIDS in Asia), people who had been hurt by landmines, children who had birth defects (some a result of the chemicals used in warfare). We clowned in a huge school (formerly a factory) for street children where they learn trades. The organization that runs this school has three parts: one part is out in the streets trying to help the children, the second part is the running of the school, and third part is follow-up work to keep the children in jobs and not going back



Members of the international clowning delegation at the Genocide Museum in Phnom Penh

into the streets (they said this was the hardest part--drugs, despair, and poverty working more quickly than education). We ate in a fine restaurant, run by street kids.

The strangest sight, the one my eyes won't easily digest, was our clowning at a school which is IN the city dump for the children who scavenge there. As a huge number of kids spend their lives in the city dump looking through the huge, thirty feet high mounds of garbage for salvageable things to sell, this French agency set up a school right there, IN the dump. When our bus of clowns arrived, hundreds of smudged and seminaked kids ran towards us. Normally I bend down, accordion to my chest, to meet the eye level of the kids. In this place, I was so overwhelmed by anger (hiding inside was grief), I couldn't meet the eyes of the children. I couldn't look at any one of them directly. In the background were the mountains of garbage smoking with dust, with little figures on them (the kids). Who is to take care?

Eating a nice dinner in a hotel, and the dinner's cost is \$2.00. What is this? My stinginess gratified (wow, a bargain), my brain kept thinking, What? What? What? Take care? Maybe the garbage is taking care.

Who is to take care?

It's tricky, this "humanitarian clowning"--my impression is so strong when I'm there, the desire to help so strong, and then I come home, and Christmas in this country is brewing, I get a stomach flu and other things happen, and there I am. TV and newspapers smirk at me in their slick grind of producing one more day of expensively calculated ignorance.

POLITICAL ANALYSIS/PARALYSIS

Why? Why did this happen to/in Cambodia? Why this genocide?

The question "why" arises strongly if you're thinking while you're in Cambodia. Or if you think about it afterwards. The people seem especially unwarlike.

The explanations that people give you constantly bring up Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge, and very rarely the US or other countries. I don't trust the question "why."

Why? (ahem,hmmm, errr, whoops, walked into my own trap).

Herbert Brun was more interested in the results of the question "when," than in "why." "Why" is answered by means of "because," "when" is answered in terms of specifying conditions - not "why was there genocide," but "when does genocide happen?"

If it was Pol pot and the Khmer Rouge who killed all the people, then under what conditions could this have happened?

When does genocide happen? Under which conditions? The subject of a future article...



Bill Taylor: Local Activist with an International Reach

by Belden Fields

Bill Taylor is a longtime activist in Urbana-Champaign. He has made remarkable contributions to this community and beyond. He was a founder of, and long time programmer on, WEFT. He is also a co-founder of the Kalyx Center, an alternative retreat center next to Allerton Park. Some main thrusts of the

Center include promotion of alternative energy and building methods; permaculture, especially of indigenous plants; exploration and promotion of the fine arts; and celebrations based in non-mainstream religions. Lastly, he is the founder of Primary Communications Project (PCP).

Bill writes of the PCP:

"The Primary Communications Project is an organization whose goal is to promote the advancement of community radio in developing areas, especially in Latin America. PCP does this by providing broadcasting equipment for community radio stations to popula-



Indigenous People Assert Their Rights in Honduras

by Belden Fields



THE LAST WEEK IN JANUARY, Carlos Euceda visited our community where he spoke and granted interviews. Carlos is a Lenca Indian. He is concerned about the lands that he and his people inhabit in Honduras. And he is trying to do something to protect them. Carlos is finishing a law degree at the University of Honduras in order to better equip himself to do battle for the rights of indigenous people. I was pleased to have the opportunity of interviewing Carlos on January 30. This article is based on what I learned from him and from working with the Peoples Alliance on Central America here in C-U in the 1980s.

SOME BACKGROUND: HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE 1980S

Those of us who were involved in the Central American solidarity movement in the 1980s were familiar with the genocide against the indigenous people of Guatemala which resulted after the United States' overthrow of the democratically elected Arbenz government in 1954 (the year after it did the same thing in Iran). Some 200,000 people, mainly Highland Indians, lost their lives at the hands of the subsequent military dictatorships. We were also familiar with the conflict between the Miskito Indians and the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Many of the Miskitos, who lived in the eastern coastal area of Nicaragua, received U.S. assistance in their armed resistance to the Sandinistas.

While some Miskitos were native to Honduras, and other Nicaraguan Miskitos used that country as a refuge or base for armed incursions into Nicaragua, there were not similar conflicts between the Honduran indigenous peoples and the government of Honduras. This is not to say that there were not serious human rights abuses in Honduras. It is just that these abuses centered around opposition to the real control of the country being in the hands of the Honduran military and the U.S., the latter using Honduras as a base for the anti-Sandinista Contras that it had created. The major player for the U.S. was Ambassador John Negroponte, presently George Bush's ambassador to the United Nations. Among the Honduran armed forces, which was headed by Colonel Gustavo Alvarez who was on the CIA's payroll, the most vicious unit was the U.S.-trained Battalion 316, or the Special Investigations Directorate. It was fond of "disappearing" and killing Hondurans who protested the control of the army and the army's doing the bidding of the American government. Human rights workers were also their prey.

A CHANGED SITUATION

Conflict between the Miskitos and the other Contra forces and the Sandinista government ceased when the Sandinista government lost the 1990 elections. In the 1990s, there were U.N.-brokered peace agreements in Guatemala and El Salvador. With the cessation of these conflicts, the Honduran military felt less urgency to commit human rights abuses against the civilian population. But a new crisis was looming. If the United States no longer saw Central America as a region that required its military intervention, either through support of army-death squads, like those of El Salvador, Guatemala, or Honduras, or of a counterrevolutionary force like the Nicaraguan Contras, it continued to see it as a site for economic exploitation. In fact, one could say that the conserva-

tive governments that were left in place after the armed conflicts were much more conducive to the implementation of the U.S.'s economic plans than the U.S.-supported military governments and counterrevolutionaries. Nevertheless, the latter were necessary. They paved the way by eliminating those who resisted U.S. control. But the best of all outcomes for the U.S. was that the Central American countries were now ripe for economic exploitation without the need to support expensive wars against such exploitation. The populations had been largely pacified.

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

Largely, but not entirely. In El Salvador, whose Indigenous population had been almost entirely killed off in the massacres of 1932 (La Matanza), the rebel groups formed a political party and continue to struggle through elections and through labor and peasant organizational activity. In Guatemala, former rebels have organized politically and in labor groups. But there is also a strong movement for indigenous rights. In Honduras, where there was no organized armed rebellion against the military government, the major force of resistance comes from the Indian population.

There were two factors that led to this struggle. The first was the greater penetration into Central America by neo-liberal institutions. These include corporations like St., Louis-based Monsanto and Novatis (a bio-technology firm), the IMF, World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, the projected CAFTA (a NAFTA for Central America), and Plan Puebla Panama that plans a whole complex of coordinated manufacturing, shipping, mining, and tourist activity that will transform the natural environment in such a way as to threaten any semblance of the people's control over their own land and resources.



Carlos Euceda

The indigenous people are particularly vulnerable. First, they live off of the land and the waterways, so their very way of life is threatened by the planned transformations of these two crucial environmental components. Second, they do not have individual titles to the land. They have a form of collective ownership. They are under pressure from the financial institutions to transform their social and economic relations by splitting up the land into individually owned tracts. Breaking up the land also breaks up their solidarity and makes them easy prey to corporations that will offer them attractive prices for the land. Then, they will either have to migrate to already overcrowded cities (a further break in solidarity and traditional cultural ways of life) or sell their labor very cheaply to the multi-national enterprises that locate in their former lands.

The second factor that led to the resistance against this imposition of neo-liberalization was a real life-model for action. At the end of the 1970s, a first organization of Miskitos and Garifuna (people of Afro-Caribbean origin) was formed in Honduras. In 1988, the Miskitos and the six other Indigenous peoples joined with Garifuna people to create the Confederation of Aboriginal Peoples of Honduras (CONPAH), the organization with which Carlos works. The spark that ignited the CONPAH into militant action was the uprising in Chiapas that began in 1992. There, indigenous people showed that they did have a power of resistance, even armed resistance. In addition to armed resistance, the Zapatistas in Chiapas asserted the right to autonomy over the areas in which their communities were located.

The CONPAH has not engaged in armed resistance like the



Carlos Euceda with Bill Taylor, who helped bring Carlos to C-U.

Zapatistas. But what they have done is organize marches on the capital to demand the following: programs of bilingual and cultural education; the development of productive agricultural projects that will offer food security without environmental degradation; and compliance with the International Labor Organization's Convention 169, which is the strongest international agreement protecting the rights of indigenous peoples.

The response to the actions of CONPAH has been brutal. Carlos informs us that since 1992, 53 key indigenous organizers have been murdered--a huge loss considering that indigenous people constitute well under 10% of the approximately six and a half million people in Honduras. Carlos further informs us that six indigenous people who defended their land rights have been sitting in jail for 2 years without a trial. Aside from the killings and the jailings, the army has militarized certain of the areas and villages. Families are intimidated by the presence of military patrols on the ground and helicopters in the air. Moreover, the United States is adding to the military presence in the countryside. The U.S. presently has two bases operating in the country and is building a third in an area populated by the Miskito people. The bases offer some services to the population, such as health exams, but Carlos claims that there is a quid pro quo extracted from the indigenous population. That takes the form of collection of hair, blood, and teeth that generates data for genetic experimentation, causing deep fear and resentment among these people who desperately need health care.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Carlos was here not to just tell us about the plight of the indigenous people at the hands of the Honduran and U.S. governments and the multinationals that are after their land; he was also here to ask for our help. Sixty percent of the indigenous people in Honduras are illiterate. There are no phones, but almost everyone has transistor radios.

Communication within sparsely populated and rugged areas is crucial if their struggle is to be effective. Bill Taylor, a member of our community, has collected radio transmission equipment that would be of great value to their effort. But it is expensive to prepare and transport. If you would like to aid this struggle, you can donate cash or equipment to Bill Taylor's 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the Primary Communications Project, to enable him to get this material to the people who so badly need it. Tax-deductible checks can be made out to the Primary Communications Project and sent to Bill at the PCP, 442 E. 1300 North Road, Monticello, IL 61856. Bill can be contacted via e-mail at btaylor@prairienet.org or via phone at 762-9561. Spanish speakers who would like to contact the CONPAH directly can do so at conpah@sduhon.org.hn

tions in areas which lack these resources; it then provides appropriate technical design and support services, and assists with installation of the equipment.

"PCP is an organization which provides resources in partnership with community groups which are doing development in their local area of the developing world. Equipment provided by PCP is to be used specifically to address the needs of the community included within the coverage of the sta-

tion." Thus, the services of the PCP entails considerable obligations on the part of the receiver.

The PCP has assisted community radio networks in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala as well as in Honduras. His next project is Radio Lenca for the Lenca Indians of southwestern Honduras and the adjacent areas of El Salvador. The intention is to place a large one-kilowatt AM transmitter in the center of the Lenca area. But this will

entail some major financial commitments. The preparation of the equipment will cost \$3,500; additional equipment and spare parts \$500; transportation to, and setup in, Honduras \$2000, and the purchase of a Honduran broadcast license \$2000. This means that Bill needs to raise \$8000.

Bill is determined to make this work. His political commitment has a spiritual underpinning. In his own words: "I have a strong opposition, founded in my reli-

gion (Buddhism) to unequal treatment of people, based on accidents of nationality, race, class, religion, etc. This is a strong driving force in my solidarity work with the people of Central America against the destructive policies of NeoLiberalism."

If you would like to help Bill Taylor and Carlos Euceda realize their project, use the contact information provided at the end of the adjacent article on the situation in Honduras.



Living Peacefully in a Violent World

Laura Stengrim



Laura Stengrim is a graduate student at the U of I. She has written on the so-called anti-globalization movement and the media, researched and written on WMD, and is studying the politics of free trade. She would like to thank Lisa Chason, who connected her with Carol Inskip, who connected her with Laurie Hasbrook of Voices in the Wilderness, who said, "Laura, why don't you just interview Kathy yourself?"

KATHY KELLY WAS A NOBEL PEACE PRIZE NOMINEE in 2000, again in 2001 with Dennis Halliday, and also in 2003 with Voices in the Wilderness; she is one of the founders and coordinators of Voices in the Wilderness, a Chicago-based campaign since 1996 to end the United Nations sanctions against Iraq; she was a member of the Iraq Peace Team, spending October 2002 through April 2003 (except for a break of several weeks in January 2003) in Iraq, and was therefore present when the American bombs started falling in Baghdad in March of 2003; she has traveled to Haiti, Bosnia, and Jenin on the occupied West Bank, and she was part of a peace team located on the Iraq-Saudi border during the 1991 Gulf War; and she has spoken in Champaign-Urbana on many occasions. What is clear when seeing her speak, conversing with her in interviews, and in listening to others sing nothing but praises about her is that she embodies – and puts a face to – activism.



Kathy Kelly

I had the pleasure and honor of speaking with Kelly on February 24th to discuss her work as well as some of the fundamental questions in our current world when it comes to peace and justice. Through anecdotes and evidence of her commitment to pacifism and especially the plight of children worldwide, we gain a picture of world politics and social activism that is devastatingly real, yet persistently hopeful.

HOGTIED AND ABUSED AT FORT BENNING

Kelly's treatment upon her most recent arrest and her impending sentence indeed punctuate a lifetime of peaceful protest and leave a question mark lingering over the state of civil liberties in this country. She will serve a 90-day term in federal prison this spring, probably starting in late March, for trespassing onto military property at Fort Benning, Georgia to protest the School of the Americas (SOA, now WHISC) last fall. Each year thousands of nonviolent protesters gather at the gates of Ft. Benning and ask that the SOA be shut down. Names of the murdered Latin American innocents are read in a funeral procession, after each of which the word *présenté* is spoken in solemn remembrance of the hundreds of

thousands murdered by SOA graduates.

This is not the first year Kelly has participated in actions at Ft. Benning. In 1990, she did a water-only fast for 28 days, an action she says was "commensurate with the crimes being committed" in Latin America and in the Middle East, where people lack basic necessities and live in constant fear. Late at night, soldiers would come to the gate and talk with Kelly and the other protesters, asking questions about where El Salvador was, or why they might be sent to protect a small country like Kuwait.

Kelly sees the annual protest at Ft. Benning as an opportune place to participate in nonviolent resistance, because there is predictability in the consequences for "crossing the line," or stepping beyond the (literal) strip of white paint marking the beginning of military property. In the past, arrests have been made and widespread citations for trespassing issued. The arrests in 2003, however, make Kelly part of the SOA 28, a group harshly prosecuted for their actions on November 23rd, when some 14,000 people gathered at Ft. Benning, now facing a police force funded by the federal defense budget and a military engaging in trans-Atlantic training with the U.K. on how to deal with large groups of protesters. While normally, Kelly says, white, middle-class, educated peace activists are treated with kid gloves, those arrested this time suffered the kind of brutal treatment by authorities more typically seen when cops confront urban people of color.

Kelly was pushed to the floor and called "fucker" by four angst-filled soldiers who held her on the ground by kneeling on her back. In her words, she was "hogtied," with her wrists and ankles cuffed and chained together, and dragged around the jail. She claims, in a widely-distributed editorial entitled *Hogtied and Abused at Fort Benning*, "We now live in a country where Homeland Security funds pay for exercises which train military and police units to control and intimidate crowds, detainees, and arrestees using threat and force." Kelly now faces 90-plus days in federal prison, with another month possibly tacked on for a different direct action in Wisconsin; she has chosen to self-report when it comes time for her incarceration, spending her remaining weeks on speaking tours and doing interviews such as this one.

U.N. SANCTIONS AND THE AMERICAN WAR ON IRAQ

Kelly, perhaps best known for her work in Iraq, spoke at a rally at the U of I as well as the Champaign Public Library in September 2003 at a "Town Meeting" regarding on the War on Iraq. She retold her experience of "A-Day" in Baghdad,



Kathy with Iraqi children

the third day of War during which the U.S. dropped 1000 bombs on the city, costing \$1 million apiece; that's one billion dollars worth of murder and destruction in one day in a war that continues, with the U.S. spending \$4 billion each month to finance its occupation of Iraq. What would Kelly have done with a billion dollars to spend in 24 hours in Baghdad? "Lift the economic sanctions," she says, "so people could go to work and have purchasing power and strengthen their own infrastructures, including education, social services, and communication," so they could realize their collective potential.

As a result of 12 years of sanctions, Iraq was left with a starving, oppressed, and dying citizenry, whose story Kelly worked tirelessly to bring to the attention of American media. With Voices, she was instrumental in making the anti-sanctions campaign into a national conversation here in the U.S. But mainstream media repeatedly refused to cover the story, much less dare walk into a hospital or school in Iraq. It is estimated that tens of thousands of Iraqis died each month – many of them children and elderly people, from malnourishment and diseases caused by unsanitary water and living conditions – during the sanctions period between the Gulf War and War on Iraq. Some estimate 1 million deaths attributable to the sanctions – half of them children. Moreover, the sanctions only worked to strengthen Hussein's regime, making him richer and giving his Baathist regime more power and leverage while sacrificing an impoverished citizenry.

After September 11th, 2001, as the War against Terrorism began in Afghanistan and the Iraq War was sold to the American public via falsified claims of weapons of mass destruction, Voices decided to change its agenda from anti-sanctions to anti-war, launching a new project called the Iraq Peace Team that has sent approximately 150 "ordinary" people to Iraq so that they could return home to tell their neighbors and friends about what they witnessed. In late summer and fall of 2002, members of the

Iraq Peace Team visited hospitals and schools, bannered electric facilities, bridges, and other infrastructural sites, and experienced the terror of war for themselves. Upon returning to the U.S., the volunteers toured widely, sharing experiences and reiterating that Iraqis are just like us, that they need the same resources and depend on the same facilities as we do.

In March, the bombs started falling. Housed in the Al Fanar hotel in Baghdad, Kelly saw the city transformed almost instantly into a "deserted ghost town." People who had only hours before roamed streets and visited markets were afraid to go anywhere. As she puts it, the constant barrage of "earsplitting blasts and sickening thuds" on A-Day signaled "a defeat before it was even spoken of as a victory." An ironic victory indeed, as the occupation continues with daily attacks and slayings, sewage seeping into hospitals, and an infant mortality rate that has doubled in less than one year, according to the most recent reports. Kelly calls the sanctions and War on Iraq the "most egregious instance of child abuse on the planet." While prior to 1990 obesity was the number-one killer of children in Iraq, since then there has been a five-fold increase in cancer and massive deaths due to malnutrition and poor sanitation, and to the sanctions as well as U.S. bombings throughout the decade that used arms tipped with depleted uranium.

"Democracy is based on information," she says, yet mainstream media refused to report on the consequences of the sanctions in the 1990s, and the beloved journalistic embeds were overwhelmingly hawkish during the Iraq War and months leading up to it. For example, corporate media was quick to report that Colin Powell's speech before the U.N. in February of 2003 cinched the cause, and we know now that his fancy visually-enhanced presentation relied on false evidence. And while the Peace Team relentlessly invited journalists into hospitals and schools during the sanctions and prior to the war, America refused to listen.

iNteRNaTioNal



During the Gulf War of 1991, Kelly joined a group of pacifists who stationed themselves along the Iraq-Saudi border, hoping to bring attention to the violence of war, with little result. But hope was not lost. By 2001 the peace movement was renewed, educated, and highly aware of the situation in the Middle East and Iraq. Kelly is proud that although we didn't stop the war, "the international movement came closer than ever," and "should be heartened." We need to keep telling people about this war, to "refuse to be fearbound and further bamboozled."

A COMMITMENT TO PEACEFUL LIVING

Local librarian and community member Carol Inskeep has known Kelly for 20 years. They worked together at a Catholic Worker house on the north side of Chicago that served as a soup kitchen, drop-in center for women, house of hospitality, and alternative school. What impresses Inskeep most about Kelly is that she "lives her life by her deep convictions;" she is compelled to speak out against injustice and in the name of peace in any manner possible, including illegal acts of civil disobedience, yet "she is personally modest and warm, and she has a wonderful sense of humor."

"Don't make a virtue out of necessity," Kelly told me when I asked her how she prevents herself from the despair that would succumb most of us if we were to devote our lives as she has to peace, nonviolence, and simplicity. She is truly happy--happy to always be thinking about and finding ways to build a better world, happy to see fresh voices and renewed

commitments to peace and justice, happy to live without the burden of corporations, institutions, and taxes (she refuses "war taxes," and thus does not own a car or home nor earn an annual salary -- the IRS serves, in other words, as her "spiritual director"). "The grass doesn't look greener elsewhere," she says, and she looks forward to a world where people stop racing around and keeping up with the demands of a consumer society.

The burden of consumerism in America is especially poignant for young people who don't feel loved or accepted unless they have the right things. To Kelly, this is a form of terrorism, the inescapable pollution and waste that we are creating every day with our shopping, consumption, transportation, and pollution. To her, peace begins with a change in self-perception, a recognition that what is best for the future begins with taking care of ourselves and our environment right now, working toward sustainability and resisting the "terrific antagonism of having to acquire goods at the lowest possible prices." She is not a victim, but an advocate, a woman who, as she is shuffled off to prison, says with optimism and sincerity that this is an "extraordinarily opportune time to make a change in human history."

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

On the SOA/WHISC, see www.soaw.org; on Iraq, see www.occupationwatch.org and www.vitw.org; on the sanctions, see Amnesty International and Unicef; on the Catholic Worker, see www.catholicworker.org.

The World Still Says NO to War

AWARE (Anti-War, Anti-Racism Effort) is planning an event on Saturday, March 20, 2004 at 3:00 PM to mark the anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. The event will consist of an indoor gathering at the Urbana Middle School cafeteria to commemorate the casualties of the war, both of Iraqis and U.S. military; a walk from the indoor service to the federal court house in honor of those who have lost lives; and a rally at the courthouse. Mohammed Al-Heeti and Danielle Chynoweth will be among the speakers at this event. Please check AWARE's website at anti-war.net for further information.

Anti-"Chief" March Events from PRC

March 7th WILL-TV

1:30 & 11:30pm: Black Perspectives 'Why the Chief Has Got to Go'

March 10th UIUC Quad:

12pm Prayers and Pipe Ceremonies
1pm Flag Songs
2pm Press Conference
4pm Open Mic
6pm Rally Against the "Chief"
9pm Vigil

March 11th UIUC Student Union:

7:30am Prayers
8am Flag Songs
8:30am Board of Trustees Meeting

A Local Activist Writes from Guatemala

by Meridith Kruse

January 30, 2004

Dear Friends and Family,



I hope this letter finds you well. I have just finished my third month of human rights accompaniment here in Guatemala and I feel myself full of stories and thankful for this space to reflect on my experiences...

For those who have not heard, none of the candidates for the presidency of Guatemala received a majority of votes on November 9th and so there was a "segunda vuelta" or "second round" on December 28th between Oscar Berger (of GANA) and Alvaro Colom (of UNE). Reports I read in the international press presented Colom as the more liberal of the two, while admitting that both favored free trade and included former military officials in their proposed cabinets.

On the ground, community support for candidates was based on more tangible issues. In Ilocom, all of the witnesses in the genocide case supported Oscar Berger and were elated, yet cautious, when news came that he had won. Given that only two parties actively campaigned in Ilocom (FRG party of Rios Montt and GANA of Berger) one can understand why people had chosen the lesser of two evils... [T]hey also held no illusions that the government would make drastic changes to improve their lives in the future. Witnesses were definitely relieved when Rios Montt was defeated but, like Berger's victory, this event seemed to reinvigorate, rather than lessen, their participation in organizations like CALDH (Center for Human Rights Legal Action) as a means to pressure and hold accountable a government structure still deeply distrusted.

And what about news from the holidays? For the first time I spent Christmas and New Years away from friends and family but was not lonely since I felt welcomed into the lives of those I live with in Xix and Ilocom. Many of you may be familiar with the Catholic tradition of holding "posadas" during the nine evenings prior to Christmas Day. After years of being overwhelmed by the excessive consumerism of the holidays in the United States, I found myself, for the first time, able to relate to the Christian message of this season. On Christmas Eve Brad (my new partner) and I hiked into Xix in the pouring rain to arrive (cold, wet and seeking refuge) at the house of one of the witnesses, Don Crecencio. As Mary and Joseph had done, we asked for a place to stay the night and were immediately welcomed, given food, and allowed to warm ourselves by the fire. Later that evening there was a posada in Don Crecencio's house where two groups re-enacted the story of Mary and Joseph. While one group gathered outside and asked for refuge (in the form of a song) those inside first denied, and then granted, their entrance. No presents were exchanged, but warm drinks and a discussion about how to engage young people in community organizing was shared. That night I was left thinking about how great Don Crecencio's hospitality for companions from around the world has been and how enriched all of our lives become when we open ourselves to providing and receiving assistance from others.

And who is this Don Crecencio? Don Crecencio is a small farmer, a harvester of corn and beans, a tender of three cows, and a flock of sheep. He is also an organizer who cares deeply for his community and has been working to improve the schools and roads of his town for many years. In the early 1980s Don Crecencio



was persecuted by the Guatemalan Army for his involvement with Catholic Action. He tells us that soldiers came looking for him during the night, but the barking of his dogs afforded him enough time to escape with his wife and two small children. He returned home only to be persecuted again, and then on the third time the soldiers came he decided to flee for good to the mountains of Santa Clara where he lived in a Community of Population in Resistance (CPR) for fourteen years.

One day, as he was looking for food, Don Crecencio was captured by the Army and accused of being a guerilla leader. He was ruthlessly tortured and at one point forced to live for months in a hole without enough food or water. He finally escaped by convincing his captors he would return to his CPR community and bring family members to live in an Army-controlled model village. He says it was only by a miracle he survived and

was able to find his family again in the CPRs. Finally he was able to return to Xix, reclaim his land, and is now a witness in the case of genocide against Lucas Garcia for the massacre that happened in Xix on February 16, 1982.

Last time we visited Don Crecencio he took us to cut dried corn stalks with his machete. As we helped him weave the stalks into a fence that would protect his squash from being eaten by wandering sheep, he pointed to rocks nearby that marked the foundation where his parent's home once stood. "The army came and burned their house with everything inside, but my parents were able to flee," he tells us. Further down the hill he points to another patch where his own house had once stood, telling us, "This is where the army came to search for me three times during the night." As the sunlight mixed with the calm breeze it was hard for me to grasp the horror of what

(continued on next page)



Letter from Guatemala *(continued)*

occurred on this site, but Don Crecencio lives these memories and walks among their markers everyday. Given the unspeakable suffering of the past it is no wonder his commitment to the slow, tedious, and potentially dangerous search for justice runs so deep.

Overall it feels good to have "returned" to both communities several times and still have three months stretching out before me. It has been important to get to know people and places well enough to be able to notice when things change or remain the same. The corn and coffee harvest has been collected and those in Ilom are replanting again, the school year has started and children now run up the dirt roads with notebooks in their hands. The holidays have passed and new mayors have taken their positions. I notice scars healing on the faces and arms of young children and am aware that the pig at Domingo's has given birth and that the runt did not survive past the first week. Juana has weaved two new morrals (shoulder bags) for her younger brother to carry their notebooks to school and after a long period of decline her grandfather, perhaps the oldest living man in Ilom, passed away. Time flows and I slowly feel myself being accepted and making connections.

And then on other days I find myself introspective and quiet. Thinking of forces that continue to threaten the well-being of our world or simply feeling helpless in the face of ongoing sicknesses that plague the children around me. For several months now, and despite taking the free medicine from the Cuban doctors, Juana and Magdalena's deep chest colds persist as I see them grow tired and weary. I also come to honor the patience of Mario, who has been working for decades to recover land stolen from those in Ilom from the nearby Finca La Perla. I am amazed at his persistence despite repeated setbacks (divisions within the community, election of conservative mayors, threats from Finca owners) and my respect for him deepens as he extends great efforts (walking for hours over the mountains just to make one phone call). In all, I have developed much patience with regards to the time it takes to effect social change and have come to see small steps forward as victories definitely worth celebrating.

I have also been challenged in the last two months to think differently about international development projects. In what seemed like rapid succession, my conversations with witnesses revealed a series of misdirected and ultimately harmful projects that, despite their best intentions, only furthered divisions within already conflictive communities. From organic coffee beneficios to projects funded by the Rigoberta Menchú Foundation, from a program of the European Union to help those wounded in the war to the creation of a Bio-reserve on communally-owned land without local consultation -- nothing was black or white, nothing was without complication, nothing seemed easy, reliable, or to be blindly



trusted anymore. Suddenly, what I would have accepted at face value in the United States as a worthy project towards which to donate money (organic coffee cooperatives, environmental reserves, etc) began to raise a whole host of questions in my mind. Did the idea for the project come from the community? What part of the community did those asking for the project represent? Will there be follow-up once the project is put in place? Is the project sustainable and will it promote self-sufficiency?

I acknowledge that finding answers to these questions is not easy, but taking the time to build relationships and hear many sides is essential. In rural Guatemalan communities recovering from war, international aid projects are highly sought after and unfortunately often meet their end due to corruption and internal conflict among local administering groups. This is not to say that international aid should cease, but only to stress that the giving of aid is rife with potential complications which must be seriously considered. And so, although I am sometimes frustrated by my inability to meet immediate needs in my role as an accompanier, it is conversations like those I have been recently having with the witnesses that reinforce the importance of creating space for Guatemalans to determine their own goals, organize from the grassroots, and be carefully included in any effort to administer international aid.

As I step back from my life here and wonder from what standpoint many of you are reading my letter I remember that what concerns most Guatemalans is far from that which occupies the minds of many living comfortably in the United States. Families I live with

spend most of their energy meeting basic needs (getting enough food to eat, taking care of animals, worrying about how the weather or fluctuating prices will affect their future). Along this line, most of my interactions with young men involve inquires about how to get to the United States, where they could find jobs, if Los Angeles is close to Florida, if I have heard if things are any safer after several immigrants died crossing the desert. These men are desperate and full of energy to make something of their life. Yet everywhere they look they are faced with a lack of opportunity. So they leave many things behind, wives and children and the rural highland mountains, and pay a coyote \$1,000-2,000 to take them to the Mexican border. From here their families wire another \$1,000-\$2,000 to the coyote to complete the deal and "boom," if they are lucky they cross over into the "promised land"-- ready to work unwanted jobs for slave wages without any security. Some stay for several years, wiring money home and calling their family on Sundays (like Juan), others have only short term plans for 6-months in order to raise enough money to pay for continued schooling in Guatemala (like Jesus). I have only peripherally followed George Bush's proposed changes to U.S. immigration policy but from here it is clear that without more sustainable work opportunities in Guatemala those looking to provide for their families will find it hard to resist the pull of the "land of riches." In so many ways I sense the divide between the United States and Guatemala is growing wider, not only in terms of financial wealth but also in terms of daily lived realities. How can it be that so many in the United States remain unaware of how the majority of the world's population struggle daily to survive?

I thank you all for taking the time to read and reflect on the issues that have challenged and continue to push me during my time here in Guatemala...

So, best wishes as the month of [March] begins. Brad and I head into community tomorrow and I find myself looking forward to picking up my weaving on the back strap loom, helping bring in the last of the coffee cherries, and hearing updates from Don Crecencio and Mario about their latest organizing efforts. While the pickup rides continue to be long and adventurous (radiators breaking and batteries dying to leave us using flashlights at 4am to guide the truck around steep mountain curves), I realize that even these moments have much to teach me! In the midst of an incredibly challenging and complicated environment the witnesses I accompany continue their struggle. I know that their work is just and I continue to feel honored to be a part of this effort.

Thanks again to all of you who have monetarily or otherwise supported me in my work... You are all amazing and I look forward to spending time with many of you in person when I return this May.

In peace,
Meridith

"The Most Comprehensive Conference on Autism Ever Assembled," Autism One Returns for Second Year in Chicago

Conference Focuses on Treatment and Recovery of Children with Autism; Congressman Dave Weldon to Deliver Keynote Address

Chicago, IL - The second annual Autism One conference is scheduled to return to Chicago on Thursday, May 27th through Saturday, May 30. The event will bring together the best and the brightest across a variety of disciplines featuring many of the world's leading autism scientists, researchers, educators, and practitioners.

Congressman Dave Weldon (R-FL) is expected to deliver the keynote address. Also a physician, Congressman Weldon has been one of the autism community's staunchest advocates on Capitol Hill, pushing for additional research, greater funding, and better access to educational opportunities.

With over 100 presentations to help parents and professionals make the most

informed choices and decisions, Autism One will cover four tracks including biomedical treatments; behavioral therapies; complementary and alternative medicine; and government and legal issues.

Autism One was started by a small group of parents in California with children with autism. Ed Arranga is the primary coordinator for the comprehensive three-day event. With the success of last year's Autism One, Arranga hopes even more will be in attendance this year to learn about the latest autism treatments. "Contrary to popular belief, many children with autism do recover, or improve tremendously, given the proper treatments," says Arranga. "It is our hope that Autism One will enable more parents to become their child's most effective caregiver, advocate, and healer."

Those attending the conference will have the opportunity to hear from a broad list of leading autism experts including Dr.

Andrew Wakefield, Dr. Boyd Haley, Dr. William Walsh, Dr. Jeff Bradstreet, Dr. Arthur Kriegsman, and Dr. William Shaw among others. Topics will include allopathic, naturopathic, osteopathic, homeopathic and chiropractic treatments, traditional Chinese medicine, applied behavioral analysis, verbal behavior, floor time, specific carbohydrate diet, gluten/casein free diets to name a few. Dr. Laura Mamounas, Program Director of the Autism Portfolio at the National Institute of Health/National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, will be presenting a segment on how to write grants. Discussions on other pressing topics such as IEPs, puberty and beyond, dealing with insurance companies, the legal system, choosing a practitioner, and best practices will also be available.

Along with getting up to speed on the most effective treatments and therapies, attendees will also have the opportunity to

meet officials from Centers for Disease Control, National Institutes of Health, and the Institute of Medicine. Not only will high-ranking members from these federal agencies present, they will also be available to answer questions and offer explanations on the government's present and future projects for fighting autism.

Unlike last year's conference, Autism One 2004 will feature a special conference prep day on Thursday, May 27th, to help bring parents quickly up to speed in biology, anatomy, and nutrition, as well as the history of medicine, the history of autism, and philosophy of science. The conference will be held at the Westin Hotel on Michigan Avenue.

For more information on Autism One, or to register, visit [AutismOne.org](http://autismone.org) <http://autismone.org/>, call Ed at 714.680.0792, or write to earranga@autismone.org.



Scared Straight? Media Cycles and the "War" on Drugs

by Daniel Larson



Daniel Larson is a graduate student at the University of Illinois. His interests include the United States prison system and drug war.

APRIL 9, 1970, 1600 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE – surrounded by executives from the major television networks, production companies, and advertising agencies, Richard Nixon somberly asked his audience for their support to help “warn our youth constantly against the dangers of drugs.” Nixon declared, “if this nation is going to survive, it will depend to a great extent on how you gentleman help raise our children.”

For many historians and political scientists, this moment marks the birth of America’s war on drugs. For others, the war on drugs was born with the passage of the Boggs Act of 1951, which for the first time in U.S. history mandated minimum sentences that specifically targeted drug trafficking. Other scholars point to Ronald Reagan’s reminder that “the newsrooms and productions rooms of our media centers have a special opportunity to send alarm signals across the nation” and quickly added the promise of an “unshakable commitment to do what is necessary to end the drug war.” And still for others, George H. W. Bush’s declaration during his first televised address as president that “the gravest domestic threat facing our nation today is drugs” marks the beginning of the war on drugs. Despite this historical disparity, that April day in 1970 cemented the partnership between the media and the White House, and created the archetype that would come to dominate the media coverage and political response to drug use in America.

Prior to Nixon, the presidency had fluctuated between long periods of ignoring drug use and blasts of hype and concern. But coming out of Woodstock, protests against the Vietnam War, and the hippie culture at the end of the 1960s, drugs became a staple of White House rhetoric. Of course, there were the histrionics about True Crime pulp fiction involving the dope fiend and the hysterics over films like *Reefer Madness* in previous decades, but it is in the last thirty-four years that drug use has been employed as a powerful and principal agent in politics and news media coverage.

As Washington and the mainstream media moved drugs to the forefront of their rhetoric, public concern soon followed. Psychologists researching media effects would come to understand this phenomenon as the availability heuristic. According to University of Minnesota professor David Fan, this research concluded that people will most likely give top billing to whatever issue the media emphasizes since it is the issue most likely to come to mind. Thus, as presidential rhetoric and media coverage descended on drugs, most notably during the late 1980s crack scare, drug use sounded the loudest alarm with the public. Unfortunately, this national alarm produced (and continues to produce) a lopsided rhythm of false information, distorted consequences, heightened panic, and ultimately led to the marginalization of whole groups of fellow citizens.

“American Vice: The Doping of a Nation.” “48 Hours on Crack Street.” “Cocaine Country.” This is a small sample of the headlines

and television news shows that hit the pages and rode the airwaves of the United States in the mid-1980s. The arrest of automobile mogul John DeLorean for cocaine trafficking, the overdose deaths of actor-comedian John Belushi and basketball star Len Bias, and the “othering” of the disenfranchised drug user were just some of the key elements that produced a moment ripe for political gain and increased circulation and television ratings.

Cocaine, the drug of affluent partygoers, had now trickled down into lowest socioeconomic rungs of the country in the form of crack; cocaine’s innocence lost and replaced by the morbid fear of crack. Television and print media produced several generalizable chronotopes in the form of the crack house, crack mother, and crack baby to scare the reading and viewing public into demonizing the crack user as a diabolical criminal. The three major networks and the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* quadrupled their news coverage of crack between the years of 1983 and 1986. At the height of this frenzy, in 1986, public opinion polls leaped from 2% of the population considering drugs to be the nation’s most serious issue to the finding that drugs were the number one problem on the U.S. agenda. Yet, crack use was primarily isolated to just a few metropolitan areas, like Los Angeles and New York. Still, the message from the media and the White House screamed of a crack tide flushing across all four corners of the United States.

The image of America under attack from within would come to dominate the drug narrative produced by Washington and the media. The public face of this threat was embodied by Ronald and Nancy Reagan, as the two appeared in more news coverage of the crack problem than any other representative of the government or medical establishment during the 1980s. This combination of media coverage, public tragedy, and official condemnation produced the appearance of a nation on the brink of destruction or what Jimmie Reeves and Richard Campbell coined as the “siege paradigm.” America was exposed, pulled apart by little white rocks.

But what do we know now? At the peak of crack hysteria in 1986, overall drug use, including crack, had actually been in steady decline for four years. The media’s blatant exaggeration of the drug problem as America “under siege,” “torn apart,” and “ravaged by a medieval plague” rhetorically escalated the situation to a frenzied onslaught. Thus, *Newsweek* claimed that crack is the “most addictive drug known to man ... producing an instantaneous addiction” in March of 1986 only to quietly admit in 1990 that “there’s a dirty little secret about crack, as with most other drugs, a lot of people use it without getting addicted.” The crack mother was a figurative scapegoat to blame for the breakdown of the nuclear family, and the myth of a generation of crack babies permanently lost has been proven false as research now shows that with the proper care and education, a “crack baby” has the same chance to fully and naturally develop as any other child.



The crack scare of the 1980s hid from public sight the shrinking of the middle class, the loss of American jobs, out of control national debt, and on and on.

Although most of the hype has been corrected, rescinded, or simply forgotten, the legacy of the crack scare is not so comforting. The 1980s witnessed an unprecedented ratcheting up of law enforcement and a concurrent boom in the prison population. Thus, if we follow the National Drug Control Budgets over the last thirty-four years, we find that in 1969, \$65 million was spent by the Nixon administration on the drug war, in 1982 the Reagan administration spent \$1.65 billion, in 2000 the Clinton administration spent more than \$17.9 billion, and in 2002, the Bush administration spent more than \$18.822 billion. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, between 1984 and 1999 the number of

defendants charged with a drug offense in U.S. district courts increased almost 3% annually. The total number of state and federal inmates grew from 400,000 in 1982 to nearly 2,100,000 by 2002. This was accompanied by the opening of over 600 state and 51 federal correctional facilities. The number of local jail inmates also

tripled, from approximately 200,000 in 1982 to 600,000 in 1999. Adult probation increased from over 1.3 to nearly 3.8 million persons. Overall, corrections’ employment more than doubled from nearly 300,000 to over 716,000 during this same period. Consequently, the drug war is one of the most advanced examples of the “panopticon” in recent history, Michel Foucault’s theoretical understanding of the method of surveillance that produces a new governmentality of centralized and increased government power employed to execute and regulate control of society.

Hence, drug coverage has produced a culture with a distinct purpose. Drug use and abuse has been systematically individualized. The user bears all responsibility. Society no longer has any responsibility to its citizen, other than locking them up in prison. The crack scare of the 1980s hid from public sight the shrinking of the middle class, the loss of American jobs, out of control national debt, and on and on. This model has been recreated, albeit on a smaller scale, to the same effect. Remember “ice” and “CAT” from the early 1990s, proclaimed by U.S. News and World Report as the “new drug of choice” that was “chilling the nation’s law enforce-

ment.” Then again, ice was almost exclusively used in Hawaii and CAT rarely left the borders of Michigan. It would turn out the new “sieges” that popped up just happened to occur during election years in both states. Likewise, the media has just wound down its cycle of coverage regarding ecstasy. Without the full backing of Washington and the media, these stories did not reach the heights of the crack panic of the 1980s, and soon quietly disappeared from the national radar.

Why does all this matter? On January 30, 2004 the Chicago Tribune’s front page declared in its boldest letters “Flood of Heroin Ravaging City.” Tragically, two men died from a heroin overdose on the same night, January 7, in Chicago, which appears to have been the impetus for this article. There is no doubt that Chicago has a heroin problem, but unfortunately, the problem has been ignored for the last eight years. According to the Domestic Monitor Program, the purity of heroin sold on the streets of Chicago has averaged between 20 and 25 percent every year for the past six years, indicative of a steady supply of high-quality heroin. Heroin use is at alarming levels in Chicago, with DAWN (Drug Abuse Warning Network) reporting that there were more estimated heroin-related emergency department mentions in Chicago during 2001 than in any other U.S. city for the fourth consecutive year. In 2000, more drug-related deaths in Chicago were attributable to heroin than to any other illegal drug. So, what compelled the Tribune to break this story now? Maybe because it is an election year, or state and federal funds are at stake, or maybe the Tribune lets the reader know in its last paragraph when it states that “today’s users are more likely to be suburban teens or professionals.”

This pattern of media hype and the government’s militarized response to drug use only works to silence the dialogue that should be taking place. A conversation that goes anywhere close to decriminalization or treatment instead of imprisonment is stopped by the drug hysteria manufactured by the government-media cartel. Soft on crime? Society needs to revisit what is classified as a crime. Instead, society is left with General Barry McCaffrey’s (former director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy) twisted confession, “we must have law enforcement authorities address the issue because if we do not, prevention, education, and treatment messages will not work very well. But having said that, I also believe that we have created an American gulag.”



Environmental Impacts of the FTAA

by Richard Besel



Richard Besel is a graduate student in the department of Speech Communication. His research interests include rhetoric of science, environmental communication, and political communication.

BY NOW, MOST OF YOU HAVE READ OR heard about the litany of problems associated with the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Critics have usually noted some or all of the following in their lists of negative impacts: The FTAA will (1) force some countries' workers into unfair working conditions due to cross-border competition, (2) decrease health benefits offered to workers by large corporations, (3) create unfair trade practices between developing and developed nations, (4) harm monopoly protections in some countries, and (5) contribute to hemispheric-wide environmental destruction. For details about the first four problems listed, I encourage readers to review *The Public i* article by Laura Stengrim and Stephen Hartnett in the last issue. Although all of these problems are important to consider, it is the fifth one that usually receives little attention. Most people are unaware of the extent of environmental damage the FTAA's multidimensional assault will entail. In this article, I want to make some of these FTAA environmental dangers transparent for all to see.

NONEXISTENT ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS

The FTAA has woefully inadequate protections for the environment. Last November in Miami, during the last round of negotiations, ministers adopted an advanced draft of the agreement that explicitly states their position on the question of environmental protection: "Environmental issues are not contemplated in the TCI mandate or in the FTAA negotiation mandate. Therefore, no provisions on this issue should exist in the FTAA Agreement." The attitudinal resistance to incorporate environmental issues into the negotiation process has made its way into the document, despite widespread outrage on the part of Latin American nations and environmental groups. As if the lack of environmental protections were not enough, the agreement also has rules in place to actually make the environment worse. According to Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch, "Proposed FTAA rules also would provide tools for polluters to attack vital environmental and health regulations that we all rely on to keep our families safe." The bottom line is that the FTAA not only ignores environmental concerns, but actually contains regulations that will make it easier for corporations to engage in environmental degradation. From these lax regulations, a threefold problem will emerge.

THE THREE-HEADED HYDRA

Three key potential environmental effects associated with the FTAA's careless environmental policy exist. The first involves corporations suing nations over environmental laws. Chapter six, section five of the latest draft reads that each party has the right "to sue another person under that Party's jurisdiction for damages under that Party's environmental laws." Although the intent of such phrasing is to protect companies from being victims of unfair trade practices exercised through unreasonable environmental protection, the loophole further harms countries by

depleting funds that could have been used to protect the environment. As an example; Chilean Senator Jorge Lavandero, in a recent edition of *Newsweek*, argues his country could not be free to change their laws without fear of legal action under the agreement and would not be capable of defending its environment from mining companies. He notes, "We are practically giving up our sovereignty." If Chile were to be sued, under the FTAA rules, they would not be entitled to an open hearing. In essence, these environmental laws are interpreted as "non-tariff trade barriers" that must be circumvented behind closed-door tribunals. Language loopholes such as this have also been seen in other multi-nation agreements, like NAFTA. Of course, I am not the first to observe the similarity between FTAA and NAFTA. Georgetown Law Professor, William Warren estimates that under the NAFTA chapter eleven rules, rules similar to the FTAA's, companies have already filed claims totaling over more than \$13 billion. Take the example of California-based Metalclad. When prevented from dumping toxic waste in an "ecological zone" by Mexican authorities in Guadalupe, they sued the city under NAFTA rules. Metalclad was awarded more than \$16 million. Some companies

apparently believe if it is not possible to put things into your environment, they can take money out of your coffers. Many critics have attempted to make comparisons between the FTAA and NAFTA when analyzing potential negative effects. I wish to also point out one way the FTAA and NAFTA are not alike. NAFTA, although environmentally harmful like the FTAA, at least had a supplemental environmental trade arrangement (but as the previous paragraph demonstrates, it was never really enforced). The FTAA doesn't even bother to give the appearance of caring about the environment. Unfortunately, our government is partly responsible for this alarming omission. According to *Foreign Policy In Focus*, "Washington suggested even weaker language" than what was used in NAFTA for the FTAA. The FTAA ministers show no sign of discontinuing these free, but environmentally unfair, trade practices.

Second, the FTAA also provides an additional incentive for countries to continue destructive environmental trade practices. It should come as no surprise that economic development is often accompanied by environmentally questionable production practices. However, if nations engage in tariff reductions at an accelerated pace, corporations will feel the unfettered pull of capitalism. As the Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch notes about the South American effects of the FTAA, "Tariff reductions on raw materials (such as wood) would trigger higher levels of trade and consumption of these items, accelerating already rapid rates of deforestation in the Amazon and in old growth forests across the continent." In other words, corporations see the chance to make more money, thus fueling their desire to hasten logging, drilling, and mining efforts. Along with this increase in industry also comes an increase in

pollution and health problems.

Finally, the FTAA has a problem in terms of environmental justice. Industries, as we have already seen, are advantaged in the pollution wars that will take place throughout the hemisphere. Where will the battleground be? Suburbia? No. Environmental justice advocates have long noted pollution is generally located in areas near citizens who are in lower economic brackets. Both the lax environmental regulations and the free trade pull factors will allow additional pollution to be released near those who have already taken on the brunt of capitalism's burden. We can look to the maquiladoras (border factories) along the U.S.-Mexican border after the passage of NAFTA as the harbinger of things to come with the FTAA. According to the Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch, more than 3,000 maquiladoras have left the predominantly poor Latino populations across the 2,000-mile border "with a toxic legacy of polluted air, contaminated land, and poisoned water that has yet to be addressed." Maybe this is why *Sierra Magazine* called the U.S.-Mexican border the "world's longest toxic-waste zone." Another example of environmental injustice has to do with garbage management along the border. Depressed wages keep services at a

Both the lax environmental regulations and the free trade pull factors will allow additional pollution to be released near those who have already taken on the brunt of capitalism's burden

minimal level due to low amounts of revenue gathered from taxing, but the increased worker population has nearly tripled the amount of trash in some areas. Workers are literally being killed by their own waste because NAFTA, and the FTAA, have no mechanism to deal with this environmental issue. Of course, some scavengers at the Rio Grande dumpsite on the Mexican side of the border came up with the bright idea of setting the garbage on fire. It lasted four months because no one could figure out how to stop the blaze from spreading. Trade ministers need to realize that clean air and clean water are not infinitely available and are not goods that should be restricted to those who can afford to buy them. These resources, and the people who use them, must be protected regardless of how much money someone makes. Although the various injustices would differ from location to location, the injustices would nonetheless be rampant across the entire hemisphere.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Not only does the FTAA allow corporations to sue nations over environmental laws, but the FTAA also provides incentives for countries to engage in additional environmental degradation while simultaneously harming the working poor. What can we do about it? For those of us who cannot attend protests, other options do exist. As cliché as it may sound, writing politicians does make a difference. Use the voice you have, and make sure that it is heard. It will take less time to type out a letter or an email than it took you to read this article. However, even if you do not feel you have the time to write, you can still make your voice heard by voting. With an upcoming Presidential election, some candidates have made their positions on multilateral agreements a part of their platform. Both

Kerry and Edwards have taken positions against NAFTA and the FTAA in their current forms for a variety of reasons. Educate yourself on their positions and vote accordingly. Finally, stay informed about the issue. Even if you do not act now, you may discover you will need to act later. For those of you who want more information, see the references below. Most of them are easy to track down and some can be found directly through the web. It is my hope that you will continue to keep up with developments surrounding the FTAA's environmental impact since it will most likely be one of, if not the most, important trade-related issue in this century.

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April 1: Veterans and their Families Speak Out

On April 1, 2004, AWARE will host an event where veterans and the mother of a soldier killed in Iraq will speak to the public. Featured speakers include Rosemarie Dietz Slavenas, an Illinois mother who lost her son Brian in the Chinook helicopter crash outside Fallujah, Iraq last November. She is a member of the national organization "Military Families Speak Out". Also speaking will be Joe Miller of Vietnam Veterans Against the War and Paul King, a local veteran from Champaign.

Regional Planning Commission Open House

Sprawl is becoming a reality for Champaign-Urbana as new subdivisions on the edges of town are being approved daily. This means more roads and therefore more cars will inhabit our communities. Traffic congestion, depleting air quality, encroachment of agricultural lands and green spaces, is all inevitable if we continue to grow this way. One way YOU can make a difference is by getting involved in the planning process. The transportation division of the Regional Planning Commission is holding an Open House on March 11th from 4-7pm at Illinois Terminal in Champaign on the region's Long Range Transportation Plan. This event is open to the public and the staff is seeking public input.



IMC Library Zine Review: RACE

by Adam ?

WITH A MOTTO LIKE "Breaking Out of Activist Ghettos since 2001," the RACE collective is sure to turn quite a few heads within activist communities across the world. RACE is "a collective of people of color with revolutionary anti-authoritarian politics. [They] seek to raise critical questions about race, gender, class, sexuality, age, culture, and anture and explore how these issues intersect with various struggles against authority and capital." Their new zine, simply entitled "RACE: Revolutionary Anti-Authoritarians of Color," does just that. In issue No. 1, you'll find everything from moving poetry to an amazing article on race, anarchy, and punk rock; from a critique of whiteness within social movements to excerpts from Lorenzo Komboa Ervin's "Anarchism and the Black Revolution."

One of my favorite articles in RACE is a narrative of anti-authoritarian hip hop culture by "Otto Nomous." In his article, Otto Nomous focuses on the attributes of both the punk rock scenes and underground hip hop scenes in Los Angeles and Oakland. Though the author finds some similarities between the two, s/he noticed that "while being full of politically conscious people, [the underground hip hop scene] didn't have a thriving network of disseminating information or low-cost do-it-yourself projects." This became the impetus for the beginnings of Arise, a monthly open mic event whose proceeds benefit the RACE collective. The creation of such a political and uplifting venue has transformed the underground hip hop scene in the Bay area into "a place where a new revolutionary culture is born." It is also an inspiring testament to the power of organizing one's community in the spirit of creativity and radical change.

Also featured in RACE is an article by and a biography of



Lorenzo Komboa Ervin. Born in Chattanooga, TN, in 1947, Ervin took a very active role in the Civil Rights Movement, joining the NAACP when he was 12, taking part in the sit-in protests against racial discrimination in 1960, and being court-marshalled for being an anti-Vietnam war organizer while serving 2 years in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. In the excerpt from his book, Ervin illustrates why he's a Black revolutionary, an anti-imperialist, an anti-racist, a Libertarian Socialist, an anarcho-syndicalist, and an anarchist. His powerful words will inspire the reader to take action. Especially in times like these, it is encouraging to learn from activists who not only have fought and won some of the freedoms we enjoy today, but who continue to fight until ALL peoples are free. If your interests lie more within the realm of poetry, you will be blown away by the political prose of El Compay Nando and Solidaridad diCosta. "Our New War" mourns for the state of the world: "This nation color codes its slaughters / so the cells of sons and daughters / still remember trails of tears and / homestead harlems, even as their / mind's eyes wave at red, white and / blue fighter planes as they go by -- / 'bye-bye.'" And "Siglo Veintiuno" celebrates our dream for freedom, "¡Pero éste! Año Cero, será nuestro!" (But this Year Zero will be ours!). Needless to say, I couldn't put this zine down, and I venture to say that you'll also want to read this one from cover to cover.

For more information on the RACE collective, check out: <http://passionbomb.com/race>, and come by the IMC library, find a comfortable seat, and be prepared to be mesmerized by this amazing zine. RACE can be found in the "political zines" section of the IMC zine library.

Capital Campaign Update

The UC-IMC Capital Campaign has raised over \$56,000 toward its goal of \$100,000 and will wrap up on April 30th of this year. All of our donations have been made by individuals and members of the community who believe the dynamic work the IMC does and its potential to continue enriching our community for decades to come. If you have not yet made a donation to the campaign or would like to increase your donation, you can contact the campaign at capital@ucimc.org or make a donation on our website at www.ucimc.org by clicking on the 'donate now!' icon on the front page of the website. The capital funds will be used to purchase a permanent home for the UC-IMC with an all-ages performance venue, permanent art gallery space, media production spaces, community meetings rooms and more.

Potential buildings are all ready being researched in Urbana Champaign and exciting developments are unfolding. Be a part of IMC history and make a donation to the building of a physical foundation for our community's independent media revolution!

aNNouNCeMeNts



Acorn Active Media, Growing a New Kind of Business in Champaign-Urbana

A seed planted last fall is starting to grow – the Acorn Active Media Foundation is a group of highly skilled programmers and designers who are putting their skills into building a new type of business: one driven by the workers' ethics and their active interest in fostering positive social change. Acorn Active Media is a non-profit organization – ensuring the funding raised through its work goes back to our community – and runs the <http://www.chambana.net> community webhosting service.

Acorn Active Media accepted its first client-projects in January 2004 and is accepting work with other interested individuals and organizations. The price of technical and computer services are often prohibitively high for those working on economic and social justice issues – technical support and infrastructure for this work is often ignored – creating a persistent need for a strong communications interface. Acorn Active Media was created to address this very problem.

AAM's mission is "to engage in software, website, and technical development in support of the global justice movement." As an employee-owned collective whose members are themselves activists, the projects AAM works on are chosen based on members' interest in working on them. AAM works with clients with small or no budgets to provide solutions at affordable rates or, in some cases, pro bono.

While focused on providing services to the various social change projects in its home community of Champaign-Urbana, IL and the midwest region, Acorn Active Media offers its services internationally. AAM engages in professional website design, organizational database development, web application development, general technical consulting, and hardware support. Current projects include clients from Colorado to New York City, as well as the Champaign-Urbana community.

Community Engagement Through Media

AN ONLINE SALON FOCUSED ON OUTREACH
FEBRUARY 23 - MARCH 12

Moderated by Robert West of Working Films (workingfilms.org) with special partners: Sally Mason-Robinson, National Video Resources; Jim Sommers, Independent Television Service; Kibra A. Yohannes, MediaRights.org

Independent film & video speaks in compelling, persuasive and personal ways – vividly illustrating the struggles and triumphs that tell the stories of our lives. While some people believe that outreach "preaches to the choir" or is only about advocacy and being politically correct, we think the best models for outreach look for new constituents, broader audiences, unexpected partners, balanced choices for response and real engagement. Good outreach also creates truly interactive experiences for our audiences, not just one-sided, "from us to them" passive ones. And when motivated audiences are successfully engaged, their expectation of independent media rises. They'll come back for more!

WHO SHOULD SUBSCRIBE?

Curators, programmers, development directors, publicists, outreach coordinators, community development practitioners and other NAMAC members who have an interest in developing outreach projects.

SIGN UP NOW!

If you are a current NAMAC member in good standing, please send an email to dan@namac.org that says "subscribe namac-members" with your name and affiliation in the body of the message.

Coalition for Citizen Police Review Boards Meeting

When: Tuesday, March 9, 2004 from 7-9PM

Where: Wilcoxon Room (2nd floor) of the Illinois Disciples Foundation

The Coalition for Citizen Police Review Boards will be holding its monthly meeting on Tuesday, March 9, 2004 from 7-9 PM in the Wilcoxon Room of the IDF. This coalition of several community groups is working to establish a just system of police review in Urbana and Champaign. At this meeting, the Coalition will be furthering details on the planning of a community forum on the issue in early April and trying to find more groups to support this effort. Anyone is welcome to attend.

For more info visit www.prairienet.org/cprb or e-mail cprb@lists.groogroo.comm

"Behind Closed Doors" Benefit

March 13th from 5:30pm to 9:30pm in the Wisegarver room of the Illinois Disciples' Foundation, there will be a benefit dinner to raise funds for the Champaign area broadcastings of the vegetarian commercial, Behind Closed Doors. Dinner catered by The Red Herring Vegetarian Restaurant and live music featuring the bands Free Beer and the Sacrificious Groove Congregation. Donations accepted at the door.

Q and A with Presidential Candidate Dennis Kucinich

Monday, March 15th at 8pm at the Illini Union there will be a question/answer forum featuring Presidential candidate, Dennis Kucinich, and US Congressional candidate, Dr. David Gill. Bob McChesney will introduce Mr. Kucinich and Dr. Dill. Someone from the Campaign for National Health Care may speak as well.

