

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 under-represented in the dominant media. All contributors to the paper are volunteers. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to submit articles or story ideas to the editorial collective. We prefer, but do not necessarily restrict ourselves to, articles on issues of local impact written by authors with local ties.

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

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THE PUBLIC I

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

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- Make a tax-deductible contribution.
- Help distribute the *Public i* around the Champaign-Urbana area.
- Help with fund-raisers.
- Join the editorial board.

Slam Jam Romp Stomp II

A Cultural Showcase to benefit the IMC and Books2Prisoners
Saturday, November 11 from 8pm-11pm
Independent Media Center, 202 S. Broadway in Urbana
Sliding Scale: \$5-\$20
Poetry, Music, Food & Dancing with Aaron Ammons, the Greg Spero Trio, DJ Victor Carreon, and much more...

Volunteers needed for... Books To Prisoners, Community Book Sale

Thursday, Nov 8 - Monday Nov. 12, 2006
Thousands of high quality books at absurdly low prices!
Urbana-Champaign (Independent Media Center),
202 E. Broadway
in the downtown Urbana Post Office
All proceeds fund postage and supplies for "UC- Books To Prisoners" which has shipped 7000 books into Illinois prisons and stocks and staffs the library at the Champaign County jail.
Please visit www.books2prisoners.org to volunteer to work a shift at the sale, to find out about other volunteer opportunities or to make a donation.
For more information: Sandra 217-367-6345, sandra.ahten@gmail.com

NET NEUTRALITY PANEL

What you need to know about your internet before the elections!
October 25, 2006, 7-8:30 pm
Main floor Independent Media Center
For more information contact: Marcia Zumbahlen drdoula@gmail.com

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

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C-U citizens demonstrate in front of the Champaign City Building in opposition to proposed changes to the current Human Rights Ordinance—Photo by Wendy Edwards



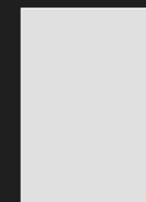
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"TODAY I VOTED"

By Marcia Zumbahlen



Soon after I began attending Print Group meetings I heard someone ask, "are you going to block consensus?" When I asked what was happening someone whispered, "we practice anarchy here." Immediately I expected a group with no structure, no organization, and no action. Contrary to my expectations the group accomplished a lot.

As I participated in more groups at the IMC, I routinely discovered how the anyone-can-join philosophy and the consensus-voting format enabled a kind of decision making that I had never witnessed in academia, the cooperative housing organization where I live, or the supposedly grassroots movements I had joined. In my previous experience, differences were often shut down rather than built upon. When voting we were left with winners and losers (all those in favor say 'aye'), little understanding ("You can spout off for the next 5 hours and my opinion will not change"), and a tendency for issues to resurface. At the IMC I was participating in a dialogical process whereby participants could seek to understand and to be understood, with unforeseen higher-level solutions to differences often arising from the dialogue.

Given my excitement to have finally found a less hierarchical, less bureaucratic, grassroots practice, I was eager to share this approach with others. Alas, others were not as excited as I. "The only reason consensus works for your group is because you all think alike" or "you are a small group" or "you have more time than those of us in the real-world."

Indeed, we do have many comparable values like harmony (not avoidance of conflict, but collective over competitive solutions). But we do NOT always agree. We believe that the dialogical process inherent to consensus decision-making can bring harmony about: differences are explored without categorizing views as inferior or superior.

Since such exploration inevitably spawns creative prospects, we respect the time that the dialogical process takes. We are not interested in efficient decision-making that ineffectively fits the people we represent: that would not be grassroots. Although a looser concept of time likely smoothes this process, one should not assume that we ignore time. Papers must be published. Grants have deadlines. Bills must be paid. Meetings must end. Instead, group members save time by searching for the intentions behind proposals and rephrasing proposals so they fit the intentions of all.

Obviously this will be easier to accomplish in a group of eight people than a group of 40, but it is not impossible for a larger group. Time and again I see IMC members who have honed the skill of "reframing proposals until creative solutions arise" assume the role of facilitator in larger groups. In other words, size does have an impact, but ultimately, it's what you do with it that counts.

After reflecting on how much goes in to making consensus-voting work, I had to reconsider my hopes for broader use of this method. After all, there is very little opportunity for our citizens to develop such advanced diplomacy. Political leaders are not very good models (you're either with us or against us). Robert's Rules of Order dominate most adult committees. Schools that are pressed to test by No Child Left Behind policies have little time for student dialogue. Early childhood educators plagued by large class-sizes find respite in teacher-directed class structures. Parents that are working countless hours to make ends meet have little time for family meetings or harmonious parenting: the "no ifs, ands, ors, or buts" is far easier in stressful moments.

In light of the degree to which children practice decision-making in early childhood (see interview insert),



Kids voting for anything. Teacher counting. October 6, 2006

early socialization should not be ignored. Most of us remember raising our hands to vote for this or that in school. But years of exposure to this winners-losers majority-voting may be one reason why citizens fail to question the voting styles in our country. I wonder what would happen if children were schooled in variety of group decision-making skills. Might we see a world with more mutual aid and voluntary cooperation?

The Project Approach is one early learning model that can foster collaborative decision-making. Teachers use responsive and inductive strategies to guide small groups of children through in-depth investigation of topics that interest them. Locally, professors like Lilian Katz have helped teachers finesse the art of problem-solving with children during these projects (exploring hypotheses, generating creative solutions, establishing joint goals, etc.). The Project Approach capitalizes on children's natural tendencies to organize and empowers children to develop views and integrate these views with others.

When you choose a book to If you're interested in creating school environments that teach peace through diplomacy, please come to the Assembly Hall on October 25 and join the Big, Small, All Education Committee. Registration begins at 7:30 am (www.bigsmallall.cc/).

EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEW WITH 4-YEAR-OLD WHO ATTENDS A LOCAL PRESCHOOL:

Today I Voted.

When you choose a book to go to the library? Tell me how that works.

We both raise our hand. Whoever has the most, we take that book to the library.

Can you give me an example?

If I say, "do we want to read this book or this book and take it to the library?" then we vote. And whoever has the mostest team gets to take it to the library. "Okay, this team has the most so we're going to take this one" (stated in teacher's voice).

What about the team that was the smallest? What happens to their book?

Some people are sad. Some people don't care.

Tell me about the sad ones.

I don't know if anyone is sad or not.

Has that ever happened to you, that you didn't get to take the book you wanted to?

Yup.

What happened?

I didn't care.

What about the kids who get to take their book with them? I think they're happy.

Are you happy when you get your book chosen?

Yeah. But I've never really gotten it (stated in a frustrated tone).

Why does the teacher only take one book?

Because we only take one book.

I wonder if there is another way to solve that problem? Voting like that is one way.

During the story at the library, they could think of their book while they are reading the other book.

They could think about it in their head?

They could tell it after the other story. Like when you tell an imagined story.

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Need a Reason to Vote? War and Impeachment

By Ricky Baldwin



Urbana-Champaign may be "Impeach Bush Central"- and one of the very few places in the country where voters can have their say directly on both impeachment and war. Local voters will see a referendum on each of these questions on the ballot this November 7.

Of course the local referenda are advisory only, not binding. But activists, including Yarbrough, hope there will be a ripple effect. "She is looking to broaden the appeal of her resolution," says Jan Kruse, an activist with the Anti-War Anti-Racism Effort (AWARE), "and we hope her resolution will help our referenda."

The big news about that is: the ripples could extend to Washington. If the state resolution passes, by federal law it must go directly to the floor of the US Congress for debate.

"Sometimes people think this is not a legitimate effort," says Durl Kruse, also an activist in AWARE, "but then they see that there is a way to impeach the President, and that changes."

Actual impeachment would be an uphill battle, especially in the current Republican-controlled Congress. But local activists think the debate itself is valuable as a platform to raise awareness on an illegal and immoral war, imperialist occupation and cynical assaults on the Constitution.

WAR AND IMPEACHMENT

Stated reasons for impeachment run very close to arguments against the war. Bush lied. Cheney lied. The Administration intentionally distorted intelligence reports to make them seem like reasons for war. They said they would go to war only as a last resort, and then kept raising the bar to ensure noncompliance. Finally, as millions marched against war in the US and around the world, the Bush Administration thumbed its nose and attacked.

The invasion was illegal under international law, which only allows for the use of force in self-defense, to prevent an imminent attack- as in, warplanes are on the way, can we shoot them down? (yes)- or as part of a UN-authorized action, which this was not. International treaties, such as those with these requirements, are under the US Constitution the highest law of the land, and the Bush Administration broke it. His Administration, arguably with the complicity of the Congress but nonetheless, has also undermined the US Constitution by essentially ignoring it.

If lying about having sex with an intern is cause for impeachment, Durl Kruse notes, then thousands of wrongful imprisonments and deaths, US and Iraqi, must count for something.

CITIES FOR PEACE

The Urbana City Council early on passed a resolution opposing the invasion of Iraq, joining over 100 other "Cities for Peace." At the time 300-400 area residents were protesting every Saturday on North Prospect Avenue in Champaign against the Bush Administration's plans to invade Iraq, which it was claiming was not the plan.

There has been a constant anti-war presence at local events, from the Martin Luther King Day celebration, to the Taste of Champaign, the Fourth of July parade, Sweet Corn Festival and Urbana Farmers' Market. And last year a new Urbana City Council passed another resolution, this time calling for withdrawal of US troops from occupied Iraq.

Residents again filled the Council chambers to speak up for the resolution, while a handful of opponents wrote bitter letters to the editor, portraying supporters as "activists", as if the designation somehow meant they couldn't also be neighbors, community members and voters. Opponents, including some at the News-Gazette, asked rhetorically: if anti-war council members were so sure their position represented the city populace, why not let the voters decide?

In the Spring, AWARE took their detractors up on this. At the founding conference of the Illinois Coalition for Peace and Justice, here in town, AWARE members learned that a little-known provision in Illinois law provides that every year in every township in the state, at one particular township meeting, a majority of voters who live in the township and attend the special annual meeting can choose to add up to three referenda to the November ballot. The annual meeting was about two weeks away.

The Mayor of Champaign would later accuse activists of a kind of stealth campaign, but in fact they acted openly within days of learning of the opportunity. AWARE organizers proposed two referenda, one calling for an immediate troop withdrawal, another for both Bush and Cheney's impeachment. Activists at both meetings, Cunningham Township in Urbana and Champaign Township in Champaign played to packed houses. These meetings usually consist of about two people, whose thankless job it is to attend. Participation for a change was welcome- at least in Urbana.

Spirits ran high in the Cunningham Township office, jammed with anti-war voters, as township officials patiently explained the process. The only debate was over specific wording and the order in which the referenda would appear.

In Champaign, Mayor Schweighart, upon learning of the effort, sent out a call for war supporters to attend and defeat the move, apparently unwilling to hear from voters on the issue. Anti-war attendees in Champaign did achieve the required two-thirds majority to place their items on the ballot for voters, after heated debate, by a single vote.

Anti-war activists in a few other Illinois townships added anti-war referenda the same night. Apparently no others succeeded in adding a referendum for impeachment, although some reportedly tried. In at least one township, officials blocked the item from the agenda.

THE CAMPAIGN

AWARE has purchased yard signs in support of the referenda (available at the Urbana Farmers' Market), sponsored signs in MTD busses, and attempted to purchase a billboard ad (but the company turned them away).

Door-to-door canvassing, voter registration up until October 10, and fundraisers small and large are helping to spread the word throughout the month of October.

Rep. Karen Yarbrough will speak in the Urbana City Council chambers October 17 at 7pm, and at a campus rally for impeachment the next day at noon.

Other events fill out the month. There may be a demonstration on October 28 to coincide with national protests against the war.

On November 7, it will fall to the voters to decide the referendum questions. It could go either way, regardless of popular opinion. Mid-term elections are typically low-turnout elections. Numerous studies have found that low turnout often means conservative turnout. In a local election such as this a single vote, as in the Champaign Township meeting, could decide.

National polls consistently show a clear majority in the US oppose the ongoing war, in line with polled majorities of US troops, including those currently stationed in Iraq. In forum after forum, activity after activity, campaign after campaign, local residents have shown that they oppose this war and they oppose the Bush Administration.

It appears that the support is there in the community for these referenda, but their success depends upon supportive voter turnout on November 7.

To get involved, see www.anti-war.net or stop by the Urbana Farmers' Market on Saturday. AWARE also meets downstairs every Sunday from 5-6:30 pm at the Independent Media Center at the corner of Broadway and Elm in Urbana. Enter from Elm St. All are welcome.

Kids Art Space at the UCIMC

On October 21st, 2006 the Independent Media Center is proud to announce the Opening of the Kids Art Space, located in the north-east corner of the sunroom. The KAS features lockers, cubbies spaces, a myriad of art supplies, and a special table for kids that has no corners and is low to the ground. The mission of the Kids Art Space is multifarious. The idea is that the space provides an area for children while parents/adults are engaged in IMC activities, and that it allows all children in Champaign-Urbana to have access to art supplies and an opportunity to release creative energies. Additionally, we hope that the space draws children and adults alike into the IMC and fosters the sense of the IMC as a public space. We encourage educators and caregivers to consider how they might use the space to hold art classes or after school programs. It should be noted however, that this space is intended for supervised activity, and is not a 'drop-off' for children.

The Kids Art Space is being opened in collaboration with the Krannert Art Museum at the University of Illinois. The upcoming exhibition *When We Were Young: New Perspectives on the Art of the Child*, which opens on October 26th, served as part of the inspiration behind creating the KAS. The opening of the Kids Art Space from 12-3pm on October 21st is intended to showcase the new space to the community and introduce the *When We Were Young* exhibition that will open the following Thursday. The Opening will feature a set of jazz for kids by the Boneyard Jazz Quintet, as well as speakers and other family entertainment. Additionally there will be various art activities, where drawings will actually be collected to be put on display at Krannert Art Museum for the duration of *When We Were Young* (Oct. 26-Dec. 31).

Children of all ages and families from the entirety of C-U are encouraged to attend this event. See you there!!



Torture Exposed In The Champaign County Jail

By Brian Dolinar



Many are now familiar with the infamous story of Sergeant Jon Burge in Chicago. In 2002, it was found that Sgt. Burge and his underlings had tortured over 150 Black men in Chicago jails. Burge had used a hand-cranked army field phone to deliver electric shocks to criminal suspects.

We often assume that these incidents of police brutality only occur in big cities like Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York. Yet the discovery of these abuses in Champaign-Urbana, a sleepy Midwestern college town in downstate Illinois, is a sign that they are going on all over the country.

As violence escalates overseas, with the United States tightening its imperial grip in the Middle East, we see a corresponding rise in violence at home. Like Sgt. Burge who learned his torture techniques in Vietnam, the use of hoods to torture individuals was discovered in Champaign County jails not long after the Abu Ghraib scandal broke in the media.

In November 2005, Sergeant William Alan Myers, a 14 year veteran of the Sheriff's office, was turned in by fellow officers for illegally using a Taser on an inmate in the Champaign County jail. The story also involved placing hoods over inmates. An investigation was conducted by the Sheriff's office and its report is where much of the following information was gained. In the investigation, it was also found that 21 year old Michael Rich was hooded and tased a year earlier in November 2004. These revelations are a textbook example of police corruption and what it takes for cops to cross the "blue line" of silence.

Sheriff Dan Walsh praised the "professionalism and integrity" of the correctional officers who turned Myers in. Yet the same officers who ratted on Myers had been involved in previous beatings of Michael Rich and willingly falsified police reports about the incident. Additionally, Sheriff Dan Walsh had already been notified about his rogue correctional officer.

HE LOOKED LIKE A TALIBAN PRISONER

Sgt. Myers is currently being prosecuted by State's Attorney Julia Rietz on charges of aggravated battery, obstruction of justice, and disorderly conduct (Case no. 05CF2105). The incident involved inmate Ray Hsieh, a 31 year-old Chinese man who was in jail for stealing a car. To stop an argument between Hsieh and another inmate, correctional officers sprayed a heavy cloud of pepper spray. Hsieh was cleaned up in a cell shower and placed in a restraint chair. Due to the amount of pepper spray he had inhaled, Hsieh could not stop spitting and officers had placed a "spit hood" on him for their protection. According to correctional officers Jeremy Heath and Joshua Jones, who eventually turned Myers in, Hsieh was always in handcuffs and was not trying to spit on them. Myers would later try to convince his fellow officers to say Hsieh was not restrained, was spitting on officers, and resisting their demands, hence his need to use a Taser to subdue him.

After hearing about an altercation between two inmates, Myers arrived at the downtown jail at approximately 8:00 pm on November 14, 2005. He had called Sgt. Mennenga from the satellite jail and requested the use of a Taser. When others saw Myers enter the shower room where Hsieh was being held, they say he had a look of determination on his face and was holding a Taser. Breaking police procedure requiring that other assisting officers always be present when handling an inmate, Myers sent officers Heath and Jones, as well as correctional officers Arnold Matthews and Craig Wakefield, out of the room. Sgt. Myers was their superior and they obeyed his orders. But they stood at the door and watched as Myers, by himself, tortured the fully restrained Hsieh.

When interviewed by investigators, Ray Hsieh recalls he had a "mask on" while he was attacked. An inmate who witnessed the incident told an investigator that Hsieh "looked like a Taliban prisoner" with the hood on.

Hsieh was tased four times at 50,000 volts, with several minutes between each shot. He was later found to be mentally ill and probably needed medication for his behavior

in the jail. But before he could be treated by a nurse, he was treated with the brutal shock therapy of Sgt. Myers.

One inmate told an investigator that the officers "were just kind of laughing it off and stuff." Another inmate who was interviewed said that officer Matthews joked, "He's going to have a bad headache."

Afterwards, Myers told Heath, "This is going to take some creative report writing." Myers typed up a falsified police report and emailed it to Heath, telling him "Make your report look like mine." Myers' report read:

"Hsieh stood up and spit on my shirt and I fired the Taser again. I had to fire the Taser one more time until Officers Mathews and Heath were able to handcuff Hsieh behind his back. We placed Hsieh in the restraint chair. The entire time we were doing this, Hsieh was spitting so I ordered a spit hood placed over Hsieh's head to prevent him spitting on us anymore."

When officer Heath saw the report, he was offended that Myers had included his name. "He says that I was there," Heath told an investigator. "The main thing that really bothers me is that he said I was there while he was being tased." Of course, Heath was not bothered by the torture of an inmate, but that he was implicated in the incident.

Officer Heath left the jail that night without finishing his report. His defiance angered Myers, who told officer Jones to relay a message to Heath: "You tell him his ass is mine tomorrow." This tale of police corruption reveals the power that superiors hold over their subordinates, as well as the routine practice of falsifying police reports.

That night the officers involved – Heath, Jones, Matthews, and Wakefield – met at Todd and John's bar for beers and discussed what they should do. Officer Wakefield told an investigator about their decision to turn Myers in, "we knew what we needed to do from the beginning. It was more a matter of, I don't even know what it was a matter of, but we knew what we had to do from the beginning. It was just a matter of doing it, I guess."

Officer Mathews was also named in the report. When he read it he responded, "the report kinda like made, I felt, kinda like made me look like a jack ass." Matthews also was not concerned for the health of Hsieh, but for the future of his job. He told an investigator, "I got a house and kids, I can't lie."

It was primarily Jones and Heath who decided to go to the police union representative, who notified Captain James Young that night. Sgt. Myers was arrested on November 16 and taken to the Piatt County Jail in Monticello for his own safety.

An internal investigation was conducted that involved interviewing several witnesses, whose testimony is included in Myers' criminal case file and is the basis of this account.

When investigators finally cornered Myers about his lying, they lectured to him, "when someone does that, then they question the integrity of us all." Myers claimed he panicked and said he didn't realize he had committed a crime, "I didn't think about it till now."

Ray Hsieh was one of two inmates Myers had tortured that very same week. According to Sgt. Mennenga, Myers later joked about torturing inmates, "I have had to Taser somebody twice within the past week, they might start thinking I am getting trigger happy." Myers had also used a Taser on inmate Michael Alexander that same week. He even bragged to Mennenga, "it seems like I am the only one with enough balls to use the Taser."

On September 19, 2005, Sgt. Myers also used a Taser on Trina Fairley, a Black woman who was one month pregnant. But Myers' use of Tasers and torture goes back even further, to an incident with Michael Rich a year before the Sergeant was turned in.

THIS IS THE WAY WE DO THINGS DOWN HERE

On November 6, 2004, just days after George W. Bush was reelected, Michael Rich was picked up by Urbana police at the Canopy Club. This was Rich's first visit to Urbana-Champaign. He had come down from Chicago to go to a show with some friends. Staff at the Canopy Club called the police on Rich, claiming he was drunk and had failed

to pay admission. Rich admits he had a few drinks that night but says he sobered up quickly after the police arrived. In the report, Urbana police officer Daniel Bailey writes that the staff member at the Canopy Club, "said Rich was just verbally abusive and not physically" (Case no. UU0407560).

Rich told me he was still reeling from Bush's reelection when he had his encounter with Myers. A 21 year-old, long-haired college student from Northern Illinois University, Rich was rebellious but not ignorant of his rights. Rich says when he entered the jail he still had not been read his Miranda rights. When he asked what his charges were, the response was "shut the fuck up." He called Myers a "fascist," and Myers proved Rich's observation to be true. Sgt. Myers grabbed Rich by his hair and slammed his head repeatedly into a wall. He told Rich, "This is the way we do things down here."

Already in handcuffs, Rich was placed in a restraint chair, what the police call being "hog-tied." A hood was placed over his head while Sgt. Myers and another correctional officer who Rich could not identify took turns hitting him in the back of the head with an open hand. As they were beating him, Rich asked how they were going to explain his bloody condition. The unidentified officer said, "You came in here like that."

In the supplemental report authored by Sgt. Myers it states, "Mr. Rich was bleeding from his mouth area from the altercation he had prior to coming to the jail" (Case no. S-2004-5123).

Ironically, also present were Jeremy Heath and Joshua Jones, the same two officers who turned in Myers a year later. This time Heath went along with Myers, even helping to cover up his torture and abuse. Heath wrote in his report on Rich, "his lip was bleeding a little when UPD brought him in."

After leaving Rich tied up for some time, Sgt. Myers returned to take him out of the restraint chair and uncuffed his hands. Rich immediately grabbed the hood, which was soaked in blood. Myers screamed at him to let it go, but Rich refused, believing the bloody hood was evidence of the beating. Myers drew his Taser gun and fired it at Rich, who fell to the ground. Myers, who is six feet, three inches tall and nearly 300 pounds, climbed on top of Rich. According to a complaint filed by Rich:

"Sgt. Myers then tasered me in the upper left side of my back and I fell to the ground. He then dropped to the ground and began tasering me in my chest and arms and I gave up and turned over onto my stomach so he could cuff me. He then tried to push the taser in the crack of my butt and I rolled back onto my side and pushed Sgt. Myers off me."

This account is included in a formal complaint Rich filed with Sheriff Dan Walsh's office, which I acquired from Rich himself. The complaint was filed in May 2005. Captain James Young wrote a letter to Rich dated August 3, 2005 in which he replied, "I have determined that the force used in controlling you while in the booking area was justified." Nevertheless, Rich met personally with Dan Walsh in late August and the Sheriff told him he would investigate the case. Walsh apparently did nothing.

Rich wishes to see Myers fully prosecuted and is willing to testify in the case against Myers. Still, Rich wonders why he was not asked to identify the second officer who participated in his beating. He was later contacted by Civil Division Assistant States Attorney Susan McGrath who offered him a cash settlement contingent upon his not pressing charges against Myers. Just recently, in July 2005, Rich had all the charges against him dropped.

Not only did Sgt. Myers physically abuse Rich, put him in a hood, but he tried to sodomize him with a Taser. This kind of sadistic behavior, the practice of hooding prisoners, has been banned by an Army Field Manual recently released by the Pentagon and is officially prohibited in the now notorious prisons of Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay. Are we going to let this be tolerated in our local jails?

Rich was just one semester from finishing his B.A. at Northern Illinois University, but after the November

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Independent in Illinois

By Jen Walling

Jen Walling is a third year law student and master's student in environmental science at the University of Illinois. She has assisted several local candidates in obtaining ballot access and has assisted attorneys in defending challenges to the candidacies of new party candidates. She considers herself an Independent voter.

David Lee wanted to run for office as an Independent in the 44th state senate district. He found that to even get on the ballot, he would need to collect 6,995 valid signatures. He would need to file his petitions 323 days before the general election (two and a half months before any other independent candidate in the country). And the signatures that he collected would need to come from voters who did not want to vote in the primary election. Discouraged by his chances, Lee gave up his bid for the 44th state senate district and sued the members of the Illinois State Board of Elections.

Lee won his suit in the 7th District Court of Appeals this September. In *Lee v. Keith*, 2006 U.S. App. LEXIS 23686, (7th Cir. 2006), the Court described Illinois's ballot access requirements in Illinois as "the most restrictive in the nation" and having the result of eliminating Independent candidates from the Illinois political scene. Indeed, the effects of this case may have a significant effect on the Illinois political scene.

In Illinois, there is a sharp distinction between independent candidates and third party candidates. Third party candidates, such as Joe Parnauskis, Socialist Equality Party candidate for state senate, and Tom Abram, are third party candidates. In order to get on the ballot, they were required to collect a number of signatures equal to five percent of the voters that voted for that office in the last election. In addition, these candidates must file in June the

year of the General Election, instead of the Independent filing deadline of 323 days before the election.

Independent candidates, those without any party affiliation whatsoever, were required to collect signatures from 10% of the number of voters that cast a vote for that office in the last election. There currently are no elected independent officials in the state. State Senator James Meeke is often described as an independent, but he ran and won using the third party ballot access requirements as an "Honesty and Integrity Party" candidate.

The prohibition on the ability of new parties and independents to appear on the ballot in the United States has only arisen in the last century. In 1896, twenty-two members of the People's Party were elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and five held seats in the Senate. Significant parties in the early 1900's included the Union Labor Party, the Socialist Labor Party, Progressive Party, Populist Party, and the Prohibition Party. Minor political parties have been attributed with the introduction of ideas such as certain rights (child labor laws, women's right to vote, minimum wage etc.) into the political debate.

Restrictions to ballot access in the United States arose for several reasons. Illinois, for example, raised its statewide signature requirements from 1,000 signatures to 25,000 signatures in the 1930's in an attempt to keep Socialist Party candidates off of the ballot. In other states, the reasons were more invidious; in many Southern states, ballot access restrictions were put into place to prevent new black political parties from gaining ground.

The restrictions to Independent candidates in Illinois are more recent. The signature requirement to get on the ballot as an Independent was increased from 5% to 10% of the number of votes in the last election for that office in 1979. Prior to 1979, 16 independent General Assembly candi-

dates qualified for the general election ballot from 1956 through 1978. After the enactment of the 10% requirement, three independent candidates qualified for the ballot in 1980, but since that time, not a single independent General Assembly candidate has qualified for the ballot in Illinois.

The U.S. Supreme Court has acknowledged that there is a First Amendment right to appear on the ballot with a person's party of choice, but more recent decisions have focused on the state having a "compelling state interest" to limit the number of candidates on its ballots. The Court in *Lee v. Keith* considered the compelling state interest of Illinois's Independent candidate restrictions and found that the restrictions, were "not sustainable based on the state's asserted interest in deterring party splintering, factionalism, and frivolous candidacies."

The debate over ballot access restrictions centers on the very purpose of elections. Is the purpose of our elections solely to pick a winner? Or is there a broader purpose to elections that involve the important role elections serve in the debate over policies in this country? If so, it's important that many viewpoints be represented in that debate and be given the opportunity to play a meaningful role in the political process.

That debate will play an important role in the future of Independent candidates in the state of Illinois, a future which will be determined by the state legislature. In other words, a future determined by a group of elected persons who chose to appear with the terms "Republican" or "Democrat" next to their names on the ballot in an election where the voters did not have the option of choosing an Independent candidate. The results of this debate could contribute to a friendlier atmosphere to those who want to appear on the ballot as an Independent or a new party candidate, leading ultimately to a livelier election process in Illinois.

E-CO Lab Hosts Training and Symposium

Non-Profit organizes energy efficiency and ecological design weekend to conclude with Ribbon cutting at the Fairview House

Urbana e-co lab, a local non profit Community Housing Developer, is hosting an Energy Efficiency Training Session and the 4th Annual Ecological Construction Symposium on October 13-15, 2006.

It will begin on Friday October 13 with Energy Efficiency training for local individuals, non-profit community groups and for-profit construction professionals. Learn about methods and techniques that, when implemented together, make homes or commercial buildings that uses 90% less energy than standard, are economical to implement and are nearly fossil fuel independent! (sponsored by City of Urbana/Cunningham Township)

Friday evening, The 4th annual Ecological Design Symposium will begin with a keynote presentation, by the architecture firm Farr Associates, on the planned green residential redevelopment of the Kerr Avenue site in Urbana. Via presentations on Saturday and tours on Sunday, the symposium will present and investigate different local design examples employing concepts based on creating an overall beneficial relationship with interrelated and surrounding aspects.

For more information on the 4th Annual Ecological Construction Symposium, the Energy Efficiency Training, or e-co lab in general; contact Katrin Klingenberg or Dave Stecher at 217-344-1294 or info@e-colab.org. More information can also be found at www.e-colab.org

Torture Exposed In The Champaign County Jail

Continued from page 3

incident, subsequent court dates, and personal trauma, Rich was expelled from school. His life was literally ruined by Sgt. Myers. Will State's Attorney Julia Rietz, who often speaks on conservative talk radio about her concern for victim's rights, ensure that Michael Rich sees justice?

I have personally brought these documents to the attention of Assistant State's Attorney Steve Ziegler, who is handling the Myers case. We will see if Rietz's office fully prosecutes Sgt. Myers or if he receives a plea bargain with no time served. Rietz herself is married to an Urbana police officer, an obvious conflict of interest in prosecuting cases. If the treatment of Urbana officer Kurt Hjort, who escaped prosecution for his alleged rape of a 25 year-old woman, is an indication of the special favors accorded to law enforcement officers in this community, we can expect no real punishment for Sgt. Myers.

What if Sgt. Myers had tortured a U of I

student? What if Officer Hjort would have raped a 25 year-old woman attending the U of I and not a gas station attendant? What will it take before we as a community are disturbed enough to take action?

Often, we refuse to believe that the those who are hired to "serve and protect" could beat citizens and falsify police reports to justify their abuses. The Myers story shows that this occurs regularly and is covered up by fellow officers.

To avoid a civil law suit, Ray Hsieh was paid an undisclosed amount of up to \$10,000 and his charges were dropped. We cannot let them buy us all off. We can no longer be silent. With over 2.3 million people in our jails and prisons, with massive overcrowding, abuse is predictable. Both at home and overseas, the United States is creating a culture of imprisonment that betrays the intentions of the founding fathers who wished to create a democracy where "cruel and unusual punishment" is a thing of the past.

This story is largely based on public court documents. For more information search the Circuit Clerk website at <https://secure.jtsmith.com/clerk/clerk.asp>

S.P.E.A.K. (Song, Poetry, Expression, Art, and Knowledge) Café

...Is an open-mic public space for socially conscious expression about Black Women, Gender, Family, and Community. The sub-theme is "Poets, Rappers and Clergy...we're in a state of emergency"

S.P.E.A.K. Café is a collaborative university and community project supported in part by African American Studies and Research Program, Krannert Art Museum, the 40 North/88 West Arts Council, and UC Hip Hop Congress.

Thursday, October 19, 2006

7-9 p.m.

Krannert Arts Museum Coffee House

500 East Peabody Drive

(217) 333-1861

For more information email Aaron Ammons at lifestratinst19@sbcglobal.net



No Room for Neutrality on Net Neutrality

By Victor Pickard & Sascha D. Meinrath



Imagine the Internet as being like cable television. To access websites of your choosing, you'll have to pay extra to your Internet service provider (ISP). To put up your own website or blog, you'll have to pay an additional surcharge to ensure that your website is easily accessible to your friends. If your ISP has a special relationship with, for example, Barnes & Noble, then you may not be able to easily access its rival Amazon.com, or independent booksellers like Pages for All Ages. There's even a chance that your ISP will decide to block certain content (like political websites challenging its authority) or ban certain devices (like free Internet phone service)—all for your own good, of course. If powerful interests get their way, this nightmare scenario could easily become the new reality. Up until now, a safeguard called "net neutrality" has prevented this from happening. But at this very moment, the fate of net neutrality rests on legislation pending in Congress.

The debate over whether to preserve net neutrality has become one of the most contentious policy issues of 2006. What began as an obscure telecom policy debate has spilled outside the rarefied airs of Congressional committees and the Federal Communications Commission to rage across the blogosphere as well as the business, editorial, and front pages of major newspapers, YouTube videos and multiple episodes of *The Daily Show*. Meanwhile, as Congress debates whether network neutrality protections should be written into current legislation, the battle lines have been drawn between large telecommunications companies who own the Internet pipes (like AT&T, Verizon, and Comcast) on one side, and Internet content companies (like Google and Yahoo) and public interest groups (like Free Press and Consumers Union) on the other.

WHAT IS NET NEUTRALITY?

But what exactly is net neutrality, and why the fuss? A tremendous amount of time, energy, and money is being spent to convince the public that it's a highly technical and complex issue—when in fact, net neutrality rests on core democratic principles that have guided U.S. telecommunications development for decades. Referred to by some commentators as the "First Amendment of the Internet," net neutrality is broadly defined as the non-discriminatory interconnection of communication networks. This allows Internet users to both access the content and run the services, applications, and devices of their choice, while forbidding preferential treatment by network operators. In other words, net neutrality prevents network operators like AT&T and Comcast from acting as gatekeepers and ensures that all users have access to the content of their choice. Net neutrality is the foundation for the Internet as we know it and has created the most vibrant communications medium of our generation.

Historically, net neutrality principles have encouraged rapid innovation and safeguarded the openness of the Internet. Stemming from telephone system development, the principle of "common carriage" mandated that telephone operators could not discriminate against certain types of content and could not treat different customers

differently. Moreover, telephone companies, given their monopoly status, were forced to lease their lines to competitors. These provisions were transferred to the Internet. But as the cable television industry got into the Internet game, it brought a different model. It lobbied the FCC to categorize cable broadband as an "information service" and not a telecommunications service, thus arguing that it should be exempt from common carriage requirements. This move was contested in the courts until, on June 27, 2005, the Supreme Court ruled (in the infamous *Brand X* decision) to allow the FCC to "deregulate" Internet service provision and phone lines, allowing service providers to refuse access to their networks.

These decisions marked a dramatic departure from nearly a century of telecommunications policy making. With the removal of the foundational democratic principle of common carriage, telecommunications companies have signaled that they are eager to create tiered Internet services paralleling the cable television business model. According to this "pay to play" model, those who "ante up" will reside in an Internet superhighway, while those who don't are relegated to a one-lane dirt road. Even though content providers are already paying for access to the Internet, network owners want to charge them a second time to have speedy delivery of their media. Lest there be any doubt about the intentions of these companies to set up tollbooths on the Internet, the ever impolitic CEO of AT&T, Ed Whitacre, offered his point of view to *Business Week*, saying "For a Google or a Yahoo or a Vonage or anybody to use these pipes for free is nuts!"

In addition to large content providers, Internet retailers like Amazon, software makers like Microsoft, and service providers like Google, large swathes of the public across the political spectrum have formed a diverse coalition in support of saving net neutrality. Net neutrality is supported by mainstream organizations like AARP, the League of Women Voters, and the American Library Association, as well as right-wing groups like the Christian Coalition, National Religious Broadcasters, and Gun Owners of America, and left-leaning groups like Move On and Code Pink. Net neutrality advocates count among their chief backers the "Father of the Internet," Vint Cerf, and the inventor of the World Wide Web, Tim Berners-Lee.

THE TELCOM INDUSTRY'S OPPOSITION

Unfortunately, the public discourse on this issue has been polluted by over 100 million dollars spent by telecom industry groups. In addition to campaign contributions and armies of lobbyists hounding key congressional offices, this money supports an extensive network of coin-operated think tanks, propaganda both in and outside the Beltway, industry-funded academics and PR flacks, and a bumper crop of aptly named "Astroturf groups"—fake grassroots organizations like netcompetition.org and "Hands Off the Internet." These machinations combine to obscure structural linkages (like the relationship between market failures and the digital divide) by obfuscating the terms of debate, ignoring empirical analysis that undermines their position, and outspending pro-network neutrality advocates 1,000 to 1. As has happened with other important social issues

such as global warming and evolution, these efforts help create a façade of contention, needlessly problematizing issues that are already settled in the scientific community, and propping up positions that would be discredited in any rational conversation or objective analysis.

The corporate capture of this public discourse is thrown into stark relief when certain sobering facts are considered. A recent report on the state of broadband connectivity showed the U.S. ranking globally 16th in broadband penetration and 15th in growth—a precipitous decline in just a few short years from being the number one connected country on Earth. This same report found that consumers in other countries enjoy broadband connections that are both far cheaper and an order of magnitude faster than what is available in the U.S. Thus, Americans pay nearly 200% as much as the Japanese for broadband speeds that are less than 5% as fast.

If the U.S. had true competition in service provision, the loss of net neutrality would be less dire. In a competitive business environment, if one company engages in price gouging, or blocking/degrading content, the consumer could simply switch to another provider. But the sad truth is that most Americans live in monopoly or duopoly markets where their only choice is often between one cable provider and one DSL provider—an inconvenient fact that's often left out of the equation.

FALLACIOUS ARGUMENTS

But it's relatively easy to identify purveyors of misinformation in this domain. Opponents of net neutrality almost always turn to one of several basic rhetorical themes. First, they point out that there's never been pure net neutrality. Technically, this might be true in some cases, such as the so-called "good discrimination" against spam, but it completely misses the point. Introducing the logic of tiering will irreparably change the end-to-end logic of the Internet.

Second, opponents of net neutrality argue that fears of content blocking and a tiered Internet are unfounded and we should wait until it becomes a problem before we invite the government to intervene. Yet already there's been extensive documentation of abuse of power from network owners. For example, in 2004, North Carolina ISP Madison River blocked DSL customers from using its rival Vonage's Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) services. In 2005, the Canadian telecom corporation Telus blocked its users from accessing a pro-union website during a Telus labor dispute. And in 2006, Time Warner blocked a mass-email campaign from its customers that was critical of AOL's proposed tiered email system.

Third, net neutrality opponents argue that creating a new category of preferential services will allow the telecoms to raise revenue necessary for building out and innovating new infrastructure. However, there's much evidence to refute this claim, especially the excesses systematically documented in Bruce Kushnick's book *The \$200 Billion Broadband Scandal*, which shows that even when publicly subsidized, the telecom industry diverts money away from infrastructure toward its profit margins.

Continued on page 8

What you don't know about the internet might hurt you!

NET NEUTRALITY PANEL

October 25, 2006, 7-8:30 pm

Main floor Independent Media Center

202 S. Broadway, Urbana, IL (Next to Lincoln Square Mall)

Moderator

Greg Kline (News Gazette Tech Columnist)

Panelists

US Congress: David Gill (candidate)

(Tim Johnson will send a statement)

Academic Voice: Victor Pickard (UIUC)

Alternative Media: Paul Riismandel (WEFT)

Access Provider: Peter Folk (Volo Broadband)

Local Citizen: Jim Hall

Questions will be opened to the audience.

Currently Hosted by IMC, AWARE, Free Press, and the Graduate School of Library & Information Science

Contact Marcia Zumbahlen at drdoula@gmail.com to co-sponsor this event, or arrange childcare.



Fair Elections? Impossible Under Winner Take All Rules

by Robert Richie

Abstracted by the Editors/Facilitators of the Public i from Robert Richie's "Full Representation" in the National Catholic Review, 2004.

What we ultimately must confront is our exclusive reliance on winner-take-all elections. Winner-take-all elections, whether in single-member districts or for at-large positions, require winning candidates to attract a majority or substantial plurality of the vote. By definition, candidates representing political minorities have great difficulty amassing such a large a share of votes and therefore stand little chance of being elected. The same holds true for minority candidates running in racially polarized districts, as evidenced by the fact that the 49 states where white voters are the largest group have 97 white U.S. Senators and the one state (Hawaii) where white voters are not the largest group has two Asian American Senators.

Under our current system, racial minorities and the poor have the right to vote but are often denied the equally fundamental right to representation. Most enduring democracies have rejected the winner-take-all model in favor of systems that ensure that any grouping of like-minded people—minorities and majorities—gets a fair share of power and representation in legislative bodies, whereas our current winner-take-all principle can award 100 percent of the representation to a 50.1 percent majority. If African American voters comprise 20 percent of the vote in a racially polarized county, fair voting systems would allow them to elect a representative to at least one of the five seats—rather than be shut out, as they would be in a traditional at-large election or in a single-member district plan that dispersed their vote across several districts.

A win-win for women, racial minorities and supporters of more partisan fairness and more competitive elections, full representation could be adopted for nearly all legislative bodies in the United States—including most state delegations in the House of Representatives—without having to amend the Constitution. One example consistent with

American traditions comes from Illinois. For more than a century Illinois voters elected their state legislature with a full representation voting method called cumulative voting, with candidates running in bigger districts that each had three representatives. Lowering the victory threshold for candidates from 50 percent to 25 percent did not overturn the two-party system, but it broadened representation within the parties, promoted more bipartisan policy and elected more women and people of color. The Chicago Tribune in 1995 editorialized that "Many partisans and political independents acknowledge that [cumulative voting] produced some of the best and brightest in Illinois politics."

More recently, in May 2000, the citizens of Amarillo, Texas, filled four seats on its school board for the first time

by cumulative voting. No black or Latino candidate had been elected to the board in more than two decades, despite Latinos and African-Americans making up more than 20 percent of the city's population and an even larger share of the student population. Instituted to settle a voting rights lawsuit in 1999, cumulative voting had an immediate impact: a black candidate and Latino candidate won seats with strong support in their communities; voter turnout tripled over the most recent school board election; and all parties in the voting rights settlement expressed satisfaction with the new system. A person of color — one African American and one Latina -- was elected in the two subsequent cumulative voting elections in 2002 and 2004.

In the past 20 years, nearly 100 American jurisdictions have adopted a full representation method to settle voting rights challenges, and federal judges several times have sought to impose them directly as remedies in voting rights cases. Perhaps the fairest of these systems, the choice voting method recommended as an option in the National Civic League's Model City Charter, has been used for decades to elect the city council and school committee in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Cambridge is famous for feisty local elections, good government and higher voter turnout than its neighbors and for decades has provided fair representation for African Americans. Fair racial representation was also typically true when choice voting was used to elect city councils in New York City, Cincinnati and other major cities before their repeal in the Cold War climate of the post-World War II era.

Significant organizations have grown to support full representation voting methods. In 1998, a National Black Caucus of State Legislators task force found strong interest among black legislators. The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) joined with local plaintiffs to win the adoption of cumulative voting in Amarillo, the largest city now using such a system. The National Conference of Black Political Scientists endorsed full representation in 1999. National and state affiliates of US PIRG, Common Cause, Sierra Club, National Organization for Women and the League of Women Voters adopted positions in favor of full representation.

This rise of interest in full representation in the 1990s obviously did not occur in a vacuum. Voting Rights Act provisions on redistricting divided and preoccupied the Supreme Court more than any other issue in the 1990s. The Court heard arguments in cases involving voting rights and redistricting nearly every year in the decade, often in bitterly contested 5-4 decisions that had the general impact of limiting states' use of race in drawing legislative district lines. Full representation methods solve many of the legal problems that arise in both political and racial gerrymandering cases, as has been pointed out by both Voting Rights Act backers like Lani Guinier and opponents like Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. By boosting representation of people of color without the need for race-conscious districting, full representation avoids the legal tightrope created by the combination of the Voting Rights Act, which protects minority voting strength, and Shaw, which weakens the ability to draw districts that would enable that protection.

Apart from legal battles over Shaw and philosophical concerns, civil rights attorneys have discovered, in states like Texas, Alabama, and North Carolina, that full representation can simply be a good fit with local conditions. Perhaps a minority community is more geographically dispersed than necessary for a single-member district plan. Perhaps a jurisdiction may want to avoid redistricting every decade. Perhaps there is frustration that most voters in a minority community are still left out of a chance to

Some Specific Alternatives to Our Predominant Single-Member System

• One-Vote System

In the one-vote system (also called "limited voting"), voters cast one vote in a multi-seat race. In variations of the system, they might cast more votes, but still fewer than the number of seats; the greater the difference between the number of seats and the number for which one can vote, the greater the opportunities for minority representation. Versions of limited voting are used in Philadelphia, Hartford and numerous other local jurisdictions. It has been adopted to resolve at least 30 voting rights cases in Alabama and North Carolina since 1987.

Example: In a race to elect five candidates, voters each cast one vote. Winning candidates are determined by a simple plurality: the five candidates with the most votes.

• Cumulative Voting

In cumulative voting, voters cast as many votes as there are seats to be elected. But unlike winner-take-all systems, voters are not restricted to giving only one vote to a candidate. Instead, they can cast multiple votes for one or more candidates. Cumulative voting was used to elect the Illinois state legislature from 1870 to 1980. In recent years it has been used to resolve voting rights cases for city council and county commission elections in Alabama, Illinois and New Mexico and for school board elections in Alabama, South Dakota and Texas.

Example: In a race to elect five candidates, voters can cast one vote for five candidates, five votes for one candidate or any combination in between. The five highest vote-getters win.

• Choice Voting

Also known as "single transferable vote" and "preference voting," choice voting is the most common candidate-based full representation system used in other nations. Each voter has one vote, but can rank candidates in order of choice (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.). Candidates win by reaching a "victory threshold" roughly equal to the number of votes divided by the number of seats. If a candidate has too little first-choice support to win, votes for that candidate are transferred to those voters' next choices. This transfer of votes facilitates coalition-building and allows a candidate to run without fear of being a "spoiler" splitting the vote.

Choice voting has been used for city council and school board elections in Cambridge, Massachusetts, since 1941. Ireland and Australia use choice voting for national elections. The city council in Cambridge (where blacks are 13 percent of the population) has had black representatives since the 1950s. Choice voting in other Americans cities, including for five elections to the New York city council from 1937 to 1945, also resulted in fair racial, ethnic and partisan representation.

Example: In a race to elect five candidates, voters can rank in order of choice as many candidates as they wish. Candidates win by gaining the support of about one-fifth of the voters. A ballot counts towards the election of that voter's top-ranked candidate who needs that vote to win.

CAS GLOBALIZATION INITIATIVE

Jonathan Elkind, independent energy, environment and security consultant will give a Globalization Initiative lecture entitled *The Globalization of Energy Resources: Tapping Caspian Oil and Gas*. The lecture will be given on Thursday, October 19, 2006 at 4:00 p.m. on the Third Floor, Levis Faculty Center, 919 West Illinois Street, Urbana. This event is free and open to the public. For more information, contact the CAS events line at 333-1118 or web information at <http://www.cas.uiuc.edu>.

elect a candidate of choice even with a district plan that provides for enhanced minority representation. Perhaps in a multi-racial community, a citywide full representation plan is the easiest way for different racial minorities to elect representation.



Some Pros and Cons of Making Decisions by Referenda

by Brian J. Gaines



Brian Gaines is a professor in the Department of Political Science and the Institute of Government and Public Affairs at the U of I. He specializes in electoral behavior.

INTRODUCTION AND A DEFINITIONAL POINT

Direct democracy has a natural appeal that transcends ideological schisms: both the left and the right frequently complain that institutional features of democracy thwart the will of the people, badly distorting public opinion in its translation to public policy. Why not, then, skip the legerdemain of lobbyists and legislators, and let the public decide? Plebiscites obviously have populist appeal, but serious analyses of how referenda work, where they have been most frequent, have raised a range of somewhat surprising conclusions about the merits and demerits of letting the people decide. In some contexts, "Referendum" is a specialized term referring to a subset of all policy issues put to public vote as ballot items. In this article, I will eschew technical usage, so that all references to plebiscites, initiatives, referenda, and the like will mean some variety of public policy question—including potential constitutional amendments—being put to a public vote.

TOO DEMANDING OR TOO PARTISAN?

An immediate concern about referenda is whether they aren't too demanding of the ordinary voter, whose interest and expertise in public policy is bound to be limited. On the plus side, there is some evidence that even fairly inattentive voters can navigate tricky policy matters without necessarily submerging themselves in the details. By relying on shortcuts (e.g. knowing whether the insurance industry is backing the "Yes" or the "No" side of a ballot question), people knowing few details about complicated ballot propositions are able to vote in pretty much the same manner as the (far less numerous) wonks, who've delved into the intricacies of the issue. That's not to say that they are voting the "right" way in the sense of some objective measure of public interest or by the standards of some commentator (me, for instance). But if commitment to democracy means taking your chances on your fellow citizens making mistakes, at least it is good to know that the low level of engagement in public policy does not necessarily signal that direct democracy is bound to fail.

It is also true that there is ample evidence that much decision making by ordinary voters is strongly colored by partisan leanings, so that a great deal of what strong Democrats and Republicans do when picking favorites is to rationalize their pre-determined partisan picks by concocting post-hoc explanations based on, say, issue contrasts. Accordingly, policy decisions stripped of overt partisan labels are perhaps helpful in the sense that they jar substantial numbers of voters out of routine adherence to party lines.

A HAPPINESS OR SPIRITUAL VALUE?

There is even some indirect (still debated) evidence that voting does a body good: in Switzerland, the cantons that have the most plebiscites also have higher average levels of self-reported happiness (in surveys), even after other predictors of happiness such as average wealth are taken into account. Some years back, as a paper discussant on an academic panel where a Swiss economist was presenting one such study, I couldn't resist quoting the speech delivered by Orson Welles in the character of scoundrel Harry Lime, from the film *The Third Man*:

In Italy, for 30 years under the Borgias, they had warfare, terror, murder, bloodshed, but they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and the Renaissance. In Switzerland they had brotherly love, they had 500 years of democracy and peace, and what did that produce? The cuckoo clock.

Despite my antics, happiness is clearly a valid goal of public policy, so if being allowed to exercise choice on more policy matters really does increase overall public contentment, that's a noteworthy argument in favor of the practice.

THE CALIFORNIA PARADOX: REFERENDA VERSUS ELECTORAL CHOICES

In the United States, direct democracy is a state-level phenomenon, with wide variance in how common are any referenda. Many states, most of them in the west of the country, have long histories of holding regular and frequent votes on ballot measures. But, as in so many other realms, California overshadows all others when it comes to evaluating direct democracy. What have academics learned from hundreds and hundreds of ballot initiatives stretched over nearly a century in the Golden State? The conclusions, and debates, are many, but a few interesting patterns stand out.

First, not surprisingly, special interests are not absent just because policies are being made in the ballot box, not in Sacramento. Many complain that the whole process of has become a mockery of grass-roots politics, as successful initiatives normally engage professional signature-collection firms to get on the ballot, advertising agencies to build support, and sometimes even get-out-the-vote operations. Frequently, a great deal of money is spent by both sides. There is also much loud complaint that campaigns feature as much disinformation as information, and that the public too often fails to understand the matters at hand, even though the state provides a neutral voter's guide offering arguments from both sides. One school of commentators urging that what is most needed in democracy is more and better deliberation has delivered mixed verdicts on whether the public at large seems to engage more fully in debates when they are choosing outcomes rather than choosing outcome makers. Turnout patterns reveal higher abstention on ballot initiatives—sometimes much higher—than on top-of-the-ticket races like Governor, Senator, or President.

Somewhat more interesting and much less obviously, there seems to be a curious asymmetry in what works in persuading voters. Both campaign spending and elite endorsements seem to work better at driving up the No vote to block initiatives than at persuading people to pass a measure. So for all the complaints that big money has taken over the ballot initiative, there are very few examples of measures passing because of skewed spending.

It is difficult quickly to summarize the policy directions endorsed by Californians over this long history. In some cases, measures opposed by both major parties have passed comfortably. Occasionally, shrewd interest groups have used direct democracy to break deadlock in the legislature. Perhaps the most famous proposition of all, 1978's Proposition 13, effected a major change in property tax law that has had the effect of greatly privileging those who purchased homes years back and have stayed put as against frequent movers and newcomers to the state. It isn't clear that this is an optimal way to limit taxation or for the state to discriminate amongst tax payers, and detractors often lament that the many of the state's budgetary woes originate in this "tax revolt." On the other hand, surveys continue to show strong public support for tax limits and it does not seem to be the case that Californians were fooled into passing a measure that was not properly understood.

A pattern that has gained more attention over time is that a surprisingly large number of all successful initiatives are never implemented, or are strongly modified by subsequent court decisions. To some commentators, this outcome is still more evidence that populism is folly: the public will fall for any nostrum, without regard for its constitutionality, practicality, or long-term consequences. Others take an antithetical view, regarding the trend as further evidence of excessive judicial activism being a severe constraint on American democracy, with judges forever trumping the people.

California offers some intriguing evidence that frequent

referenda may permit voters to straddle ideological divides by leaning alternate ways when selecting candidates and when choosing policies directly. Consider that 24 out of 32 statewide races (including presidential elections) from 1994 to 2004 were won by Democrats (and 5 of the Republican wins came in 1994, a year with a massive nation-wide swing in their direction). California's two Senators, Boxer and Feinstein, have each won election thrice, Feinstein seems certain to win easy re-election yet again this November, and the toughest race either has had to fight was a 5-point win by Boxer over right-wing commentator Bruce Herschensohn in 1992. Their liberal credentials are solid: over their 13 years in the Senate, Boxer has averaged an Americans for Democratic Action rating of 94/100 and Feinstein 90/100. Yet, over this same period Californians, while putting liberals into office most of the time, have repeatedly endorsed initiatives considered loathsome by the left, including Propositions 187 to deny public services to illegal immigrants (59% support in 1994), 209 to prevent the state from implementing affirmative action programs (55% in 1996), 227 to forbid bilingual education in public schools (61% in 1998), and 22 to restrict marriage to only heterosexual couples (61% in 2000). There are other explanations on offer, but it does seem possible that the existence of so many ballot questions allows voters step to the left in picking representatives, then shuffle back to the right when choosing policies themselves.

CONCLUSION: A MESSY BUT USEFUL POLITICAL COMBINATION

In the end, direct democracy is no panacea. In the US, there are probably more experts who think experience shows that plebiscites produce bad outcomes than there are keen supporters of the process. Elsewhere, Switzerland is Europe's California, the polity that has used referenda far more than any other. Although there are friends and foes of the process there, my sense is that the balance is slightly on the favorable side. The costs and benefits of allowing direct public policy making are complicated, but insofar as one believes in majoritarian principles, most of the complaints strike me as secondary to the fundamental promise. Representative and direct democracy needn't be competitors, and a mixture of the two is feasible and probably useful, even if the mixture is often times messy.

Champaign County Public Hearing About S.M.A.R.T. Act

"The War on Drugs" continues to have a devastating effect on our communities. The S.M.A.R.T. Act (Substand Abuse Management Addressing Recidivism through Treatment Act) is a bill that would replace incarceration with drug abuse treatment and education for low-level, nonviolent drug and prostitution offenders. It is proposed and written by the Developing Justice Coalition.

Panel discussion with Rep. Constance Howard, Reverend Patricia Watkins, Rami Nashashibi (IMAN), Professor Stephen Hartnett, and Community Activist/Poet Aaron Ammons.

Friday, October 27, 4:30-7 pm, Urbana City Council Chambers

Sponsored by CU Citizens for Peace and Justice, The Developing Justice Coalition (DJC), Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN), and Muslim Students Association.



Impeachment by Jefferson's Rules

by Jamie Storm

Citizens of the State of Illinois are leading the way in the movement to impeach the President of the United States. The confluence of state and local movements will occur in Urbana-Champaign in mid-October when State Representative Karen Yarbrough (D-Maywood) comes to town. On April 20, 2006, Yarbrough introduced into the Illinois General Assembly House Joint Resolution 125 which called for the impeachment of President Bush. Illinois thus became the first state in the Union to have such a resolution put forward. Although the impeachment process is usually thought of as a bill introduced by a member of the U. S. House of Representatives, Yarbrough was utilizing a different method for setting an impeachment in motion.

She followed a process laid out in 1801 by Thomas Jefferson in the Manual of Parliamentary Practice, a book of parliamentary procedure and additional guidelines for the United States House of Representatives. Jefferson opposed centralized federal power and frequently sought balances giving states greater liberties and rights. The House uses "Jefferson's Manual" as a supplement to its standing rules. Section 603 states:

Inception of impeachment proceedings in the House: there are various methods of setting an impeachment in motion: by charges made on the floor on the responsibility of a Member or Delegate; by charges preferred by a memorial, which is usually referred to a committee for examination; by a resolution dropped in the hopper by a Member and referred to a committee; by a message from the President; by charges transmitted from the legislature of a State or territory or from a grand jury.

Twenty co-sponsors in the Illinois House signed on to support HJR 125. It was referred to the Rules Committee and not reported out for a vote before the session was adjourned. Yarbrough has announced plans to resubmit the resolution in the upcoming session. Joint Resolution 125 reads as follows:

WHEREAS, Section 603 of Jefferson's Manual of the Rules of the United States House of Representatives allow federal impeachment proceedings to be initiated by joint resolution of a state legislature; and

WHEREAS, President Bush has publicly admitted to ordering the National Security Agency to violate provisions of the 1978 Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, a felony, specifically authorizing the Agency to spy on American citizens without warrant; and

WHEREAS, Evidence suggests that President Bush authorized violation of the Torture Convention of the Geneva Conventions, a treaty regarded a supreme law by the United States Constitution; and

WHEREAS, The Bush Administration has held American citizens and citizens of other nations as prisoners of war without charge or trial; and

WHEREAS, Evidence suggests that the Bush Administration has manipulated intelligence for the purpose of initiating a war against the sovereign nation of Iraq, resulting in the deaths of large numbers of Iraqi civilians and causing the United States to incur loss of life, diminished security and billions of dollars in unnecessary expenses; and

WHEREAS, The Bush Administration leaked classified national secrets to further a political agenda, exposing an unknown number of covert U. S. intelligence agents to potential harm and retribution while simultaneously refusing to investigate the matter; and

WHEREAS, the Republican-controlled Congress has declined to fully investigate these charges to date; therefore be it

RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that the General Assembly of the State of Illinois has good cause to submit charges to the U. S. House of Representatives under Section 603 that the President of the United States has willfully violated his Oath of Office to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States; and be it further

RESOLVED, That George W. Bush, if found guilty of the charges contained herein, should be removed from office and disqualified to hold any other office in the United States.

A little over a week ahead of Representative Yarbrough, residents of Cunningham Township (Urbana) and City of Champaign Township (Champaign), attending their respective town meetings on April 11, 2006, amended the meeting agendas to consider advisory referenda for the November 7 ballots and then voted to place those referenda on the ballots. By these actions, Urbana and Champaign became the first communities in the nation to offer their residents the opportunity to express their opinion on impeachment in the voting booth. Voters will also be able to express their opinions regarding the withdrawal of U.S troops from Iraq.

Yarbrough is scheduled to speak on her efforts to initiate impeachment proceedings against President George W. Bush at 7pm on October 17 at the Urbana City Council Chambers, 400 S. Vine St, Urbana. This presentation, free and open to the public, will also be recorded by Urbana Public Television, Channel 6; please check the UPTV schedule for times this will be shown. At noon on Wednesday, October 18, she again will address impeachment at a rally on the Quad on the University of Illinois campus. The rally will be followed from 1-2pm by a discussion and meet-and-greet in Room 314B at the Illini Union, 1401 W. Green St., Urbana. The above events are sponsored by AWARE, local anti-war anti-racism effort. Please consult www.AWAREPresents.com for more information and a complete schedule of presentations.

Years prior to Representative Yarbrough and the groups of citizens from Urbana and Champaign taking the above actions, Francis A Boyle, Professor of Law, University of Illinois School of Law, began his own campaign to impeach the president. Professor Boyle published his first draft Impeachment Resolution against President George W. Bush in January 2003. Prof Boyle will host a brown bag discussion with Yarbrough of her state bill at noon on October 17 at UIUC Law Bldg, 504 E Pennsylvania Ave, C. He will be joining her at the campus rally and speaking about his efforts at the national level for impeachment.



State Rep. Karen Yarbrough,
7th District

Representative Yarbrough's Appearances in Champaign-Urbana

Please note: State Representative Karen Yarbrough unfortunately had to be unexpectedly canceled and has not been rescheduled at this time.

No Room for Neutrality on Net Neutrality

Continued from page 5

Fourth, when all else fails, they trot out the tired bogeyman of regulation. A prevailing myth characterizes the Internet as some Wild West frontier bereft of regulation, when, in fact, the Internet has always been highly regulated by both the government and other forces. In other words, there are many kinds of regulation. To lose net neutrality would remove a governmentally enforced safeguard and allow corporations to regulate the content we receive online as they see fit.

Looking ahead, the stakes are even higher. In the coming years, with increased convergence and decreased numbers of market players, Americans will be forced to rely on single providers to deliver so-called "triple play"—Internet, television, and phone—via one pipe to each household. This creates

the potential for one telecom giant to take control over all of these media—not just in terms of pricing, but, without net neutrality, gate-keeping power over all content as well.

THE POLITICS OF NET NEUTRALITY

The situation in Congress right now, at least on the surface, looks promising for net neutrality advocates. Though anti-net neutrality legislation passed the House, it's been tied up in the Senate. However, many observers believe that industry-backed legislators may try to sneak anti-neutrality legislation through during the coming "lame-duck" session after the November elections when Congress is less accountable. Now more than ever, the public needs to pay attention to net neutrality and

other key media issues (for example, the media ownership debate that will be raging at the FCC this fall and winter).

The net neutrality debate is fundamentally about nothing less than the future of the Internet. Ultimately it has less to do with ownership and control of wires and everything to do with the health of American and global democracy. Without net neutrality, what was once heralded as a great global resource for promoting diversity, civic participation, and freedom will be reduced to little more than a profit-making instrument with special benefits for a privileged few. Considering the public subsidies lavished on telecom companies over the decades, it's high time we begin a national conversation that renegotiates the social

contract between telecom providers and the public, and demand that social benefits, not private profits, be first and foremost in our national telecommunications objectives.

The degree to which the public has mobilized around this issue is unprecedented in modern telecommunications history. But there is much more to be done. Everything that we cherish about the Internet—especially its openness and democratic potential—is under attack. Every one of us needs to contact our members in Congress and urge them to ignore the telecom lobbyists and do what's best for their constituents. At this critical juncture in the development of the Internet, our actions will reverberate for generations to come.



Driving While Muslim

The following letter was sent to the ACLU, CAIR (Council of American Islamic Relations) and to family friends in Urbana-Champaign regarding a recent incident. CAIR called the FBI, which simply recommended that the victim get a lawyer to make further enquiries and in case he was stopped again or arrested. It appears that 'Driving While Muslim' has joined 'Flying While Muslim' as a reason for senseless profiling and harassment. Names, places and other details have been removed to protect the identity of this family and to help prevent additional harassment.

I was returning a U-haul truck as my wife and daughter followed behind. I pulled into a gas station and began to fill the truck. My wife pulled in behind me, stopped, and waited for me to finish. My wife wears the full Islamic covering including the face veil and I have an Islamic beard. My 2-year-old daughter crawled out of her car seat and sat in my wife's lap, waiting for me to finish. My wife then noticed a police vehicle circling around her. He then pulled up beside her, so she rolled down her window and told him that our daughter has a car seat but was just sitting up front until I finished. She assumed he was just going to tell her to make sure to put our daughter in the car seat before she pulled away. Instead he asked her if I

was her husband. She said yes. At that point I saw him speaking with her so I went over and asked the officer if I could help him. He asked my name. He then told me he needed to speak with me. He pulled me to the side and began asking me if I was ever questioned by the FBI or was on a terrorist watch list. I said no, I had never spoken with the FBI. I told him that I had issues in the airports with having to get cleared with DHS (Department of Homeland Security) before boarding. He then told me that when he ran the plates on my vehicle, his computer screen returned a message that he should detain me as I may be a member of a terrorist organization and that he had to call me in. I laughed when he told me this. He asked me why I thought this message came up and I told him I have no idea.

He then said, "You are Muslim, right?" I told him yes. My wife then got out of the car and asked the officer why I was being questioned. He repeated the message on his computer screen and offered to let us see it if we wished. Then she said that she is tired of being harassed all because we are Muslim and because of the clothing she chooses to wear.

The police officer got defensive and said it had nothing to do with her, that it was only me. So I asked him why he ran our plates to begin with and he said because he just

randomly runs plates. He said he called the situation in and he had to hold me until he received a response on his radio. He walked away and spoke into his radio and then 2 more police cars came and 2 other officers got out. They pulled the first officer to the side and spoke with him privately. Then all three officers came over and the first officer told me I could go. I asked for all of their cards and they did not have any but rather the first officer gave me his information. One of the other officers said that if I had a complaint he was the Sergeant and I could complain to him. I explained that I did not have a complaint with this, only needed information to try to understand why this was happening and that I found it unacceptable to be harassed in such a manner without cause.

The first officer then asked me if I was moving and I said yes. He then asked me where. At this point I told him I would not answer any more questions and he confirmed that I did not have to answer his questions. I then asked them if this would happen again and they said probably. I then asked what I could do to stop this and he said I might want to start with calling a federal agency. I asked him which one and he said he did not know.

My wife and I then got back into our vehicles and drove off.

Today I Voted

Continued from page 1

They can't take two books?

No, only uno.

Do they take turns?

They could take one book this time and the other book the next time.

Is that the way it works?

No, it's just one.

How do they decide which books to vote on?

The teacher takes two books and the kids have to vote on whichever teams wants this book, takes it. And then the other team doesn't get to take their book.

Do the kids get to suggest another book?

They would have to raise their hand and say, "I don't like those two books."

And what would happen if they said that?

Well, what they get is what they get.

Remember last year when you voted on what songs to sing for wings?

I voted on Love Can Build a Bridge. That was my favorite.

The teacher asked you to raise your hands?

Yeah and then we got it. Because a lot of the kids wanted it so we got it.

I wonder about the other kids.

I don't remember. I was happy and I wanted Fireman because I wanna be a fireman. You can only choose one song and another person choosed it so I got it.

Did the kids tell each other what to vote for before hand or what?

No, you have to think about it by yourself.

The teachers make that a rule?

You have to make your own decision.

If somebody doesn't get their vote do you have a chance to talk about it?

We just have to go on.

Do you ever work on projects at school?

You can't work on each other's projects at school.

So you don't do group projects?

Only when a teacher does it.

How did you decide what to do for your pro-

ject?

The teacher.

Have you ever been on a project where the kids decide what to do?

No, we can't do that in our class.

What if you have five kids working on one puppet and one kid wants to put on a big long grey snake and the other kids don't want it?

They could make one big puppet first and then they could make another puppet that they could put that on.

What if the person feels left out and wants their snake on the big puppet?

They could make it the next day.

What if they say it's not fair to wait?

[No response.]

What questions could you ask that kid to find out why the kid wants to do that?

I'd ask, "do you want to do that in the afternoon today?"

What if the kid says no?

I could say, "Why do you want to put it on?"

What if the reason is that it is the only thing that is long and grey?

Well, just have to not let that kid put it on.

What if that kid asked you why you don't want the grey snake on the puppet?

Because it would look uglier.

What if the kid said, "What is it about the grey snake that looks ugly to you?"

It's the color.

I wonder if you could ask the kid to change it in some way to make it look better?

The color. I could ask him if he could draw a different color of snake on the puppet.

Let's imagine you ask him but he says he likes the color grey.

I sorta kinda like grey.

I wonder why he likes the grey color.

Maybe if the other kids put grey on it then they'd like it. Maybe the other people could put on grey to make it a little bit

ugly then he could. Or he could put one different color and on the other end he could put grey.

What if said he liked grey because it was the color of his mom's hair?

Then he could do it.

What if to him grey is a color that is a bad mean color?

Then he could put a different one.

So if he says mean things?

I would say, "I don't want to be around him"

At my work when we make a rule we have to have everybody agree. But there was one person who didn't like it.

I don't like it.

Why?

Because one person didn't like it and everybody had to like it and he has to move.

Yeah?

To a different town where he likes the rules.

What if he couldn't find a town that he liked or didn't have money to move?

Then he'd have to work really hard to get his money before he moves.

Did you know that people vote in the US for presidents and presidents make rules about what people should do? What do you think about that?

I would choose a president who listens to people.

If you have 5 people and 3 people vote for 1 president and 2 people vote another, the two people

still have to follow the president's rules even if they didn't vote for that president.

Not fair.

Why?

They could hurt their feelings. They would want their president that they voted for.

What do you think they should do instead?

They could move to the place where that president lives that they voted for.

join the illinois disciples foundation for the...

idf annual fall dinner

saturday, november 4th

doors open at 5pm

1st floor of the idf

Feat. keynote speaker James Thindwa



James Thindwa will deliver the keynote address, entitled, "Intersecting Workers Rights, Living Wages and Undocumented Workers." His address will locate immigration in the context of global economic policies that favor corporate profits at the expense of worker and community interests. Thindwa is calling on Congress to ease the path to legalization, strengthen the rights of all workers to organize, and to enact a national living wage. Finally, Thindwa will discuss how the construction of border walls violates the spirit of triumph, openness and freedom Americans celebrate, especially in this post-Cold War, post-Berlin Wall period and is not the answer to solving immigration concerns. Thindwa has been the Executive Director of Chicago Jobs with Justice since 2002. In his more than twenty-two years of organizing, he has worked on health care reform to stop the privatization of Medicare and Medicaid, participated in anti-apartheid movements, organized for utility rate reform, fought in opposition to nuclear energy, worked for environmental advocacy, and much more.

"Intersecting Workers Rights, Living Wages and Undocumented Immigration"

dinner tickets are \$20 each

raffle tickets are \$1 each or 6 for \$5 · need not be present to win proceeds go to the idf to further our peace with justice mission please rsvp on our website · tickets on sale at idf office and at door the idf is located at the northwest corner of springfield and wright limited free parking available · the event is wheelchair accessible



illinois disciples foundation
a peace with justice campus ministry
610 e. springfield ave., champaign
(217) 352-8721 · idf@prairienet.org
www.prairienet.org/idf





Bob's Response to John Foreman's Editorial in the News-Gazette

by Robert Wahlfeldt

October 7, 2006
Letter to the News Gazette

I would like to request a correction to the Editorial N-G Publisher John Foreman wrote Sunday September 17, 2006. In his lengthy editorial Mr. Foreman was critical of the "usual suspects."

Mr. Foreman states he got a "kick" out of the writer (me: Robert Wahlfeldt) who identified himself as a WWII military veteran. Foreman states that I said that I only respected members of the military who served in the "good wars." He has made a number of errors in his writing, which I hope the N-G will have the respect and also take the responsibility to correct.

My September 13 letter to the editor stated I felt uniformed military in elementary schools to be discouraging and that Col. Rudzinski's response to those who question his appearance was disrespectful. Calling us ignorant fools is his right as well as Mr. Foreman's, but it is hardly respectful. I never stated in my letter, that I only respect those who fought in the "good wars." I am a veteran and I am also currently working in opposition to war and am especially concerned regarding those who say they support the troops yet do nothing to bring them safely home or work for their ongoing needs upon return. The

Can you imagine a WWII veteran who has realized the racket of war and now wants to work to support our troops by making sure they learn that what is going on in Iraq is a misuse of their sacrifice?

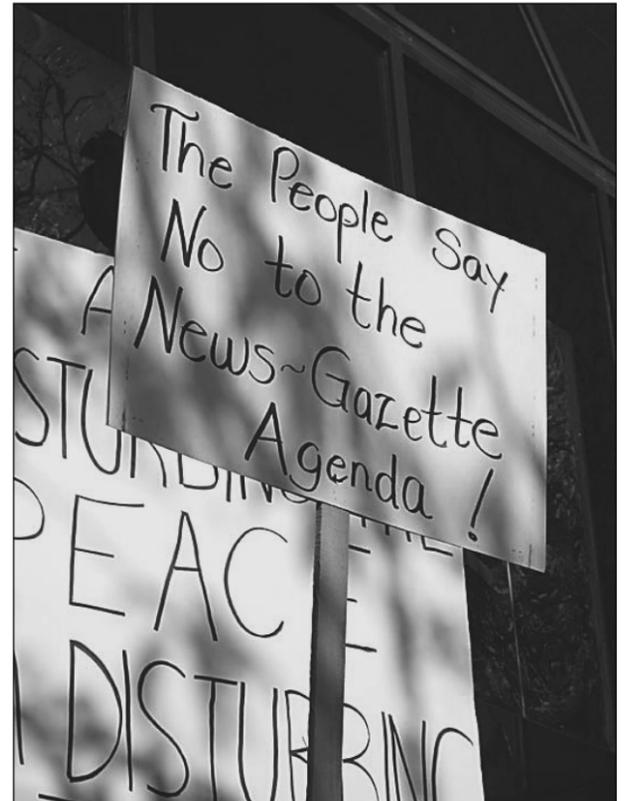
US is in Iraq due to lies and no amount of so-called "patriotic" spin will make this easier to defend.

For Mr. Foreman's information I was not a draftee. I left high school at a young and impressionable age and joined the navy. I was in the US navy from 1943-1946 and was aboard the USS Waldron in the Pacific Theater of Operation. I was a rescue swimmer who pulled my fellow soldiers from the Pacific Ocean among other tasks. I have grown in age and wisdom over the years since then and now devote my time and life to working to end war since it has not ever really resolved much; there are no good wars.

The current war is perhaps no worse than others but due to the misleading reasons for the invasion, the lack of planning, misuse of soldiers and loss of innocent civilian life we need to oppose it whenever we can. I currently work for "full-disclosure recruitment" so that our young folks know what they are getting into when they join the military. Those wearing a military uniform are obligated not to dissent from

US Policy and therefore unquestionably will present a certain bias when speaking. I find it disappointing that the N-G's publisher says he is often paraphrased incorrectly and yet he proceeds to do the same thing himself in regards to me. I joined the navy at 17, I was not a "draftee," and I was not "peeling potatoes in Virginia to help lick Hitler," though an interesting assumption on Mr. Foreman's part.

Can you imagine a WWII veteran who has realized the racket of war and now wants to work to support our troops by making sure they learn that what is going on in Iraq is a misuse of their sacrifice? Col. Rudzinski's disrespectful response to those who questioned his presentation given in military uniform and Mr. Foreman's lack of a truthful portrayal of my service completes the picture of why the military should not be talking to youngsters about war. The war in Iraq is devastating to those who serve and to the civilians who are suffering. I see no humorous side to this misadventure and it



is wrong to suggest otherwise. Col. Rudzinski's presentation was incomplete at best. In addition, the N-G misquoting of me to support Rudzinski's and oppose those who question his appearance in uniform is further evidence of an incompetent and dishonest editorial by Mr. Foreman.

I hope Foreman will be both respectful and responsible and retract the incorrect assumptions he made about my military service and me. Do I feel an exception coming on to his typical editorials? How about one that informs the readers of those who actually do support the troops but want the current debacle shown for what it is: a tragic mistake?

Mr. Foreman's suggestion that those who questioned the school presentation are "bashing America" is a real affront to those like myself who love our country always and our government, fellow military and the News-Gazette publisher only when it is deserved.

Robert Wahlfeldt
Champaign, Illinois 61820



City of Champaign Township Presents: A "Town Hall" Meeting

Please join the City of Champaign Township as we embark on a series of "Town Hall" meetings intended to ignite the collective efficacy and expertise of community members, social service professionals, township officials, health care advocates, mental health professionals and other critical actors on our landscape of services to inspire our community to IMPACT of POVERTY.

This is the first township Town Hall meeting in the history of the City of Champaign Township, designed to address poverty in our community. Our guest speaker will be James Anderson, PhD, professor of Education, in Educational Policies and Studies. This Town Hall meeting is a call to action to develop solutions to address the impact poverty and its on the most vulnerable citizens in our community.

Date: October 19, 2006

Place: City of Champaign Council Chambers
102 North Neil Street
Champaign, Illinois 61820

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Reception 6:15 - 7:00 p.m. (immediately before the Town Hall meeting)



Third Annual Unity March: This Is What Unity Looks Like!

By Brian Dolinar

On a beautiful Saturday afternoon, October 7, 2006, a crowd of nearly 200 participants joined in the Third Annual Unity March. This year, we took the Unity March to the community. We went into the Garden Hills neighborhood, ground zero for the effects of racism and poverty in our community.

The march started at Bradley and Prospect. From there we walked west to McKinley and north passing through the Dorsey apartments, where there are many individuals who receive Section 8 vouchers. These are the people that certain members the Champaign City Council would like to keep segregated. Champaign City Council member Ken Pirok recently

attempted to repeal a city ordinance passed in March to prohibit landlords from discriminating against Section 8 recipients. This pro-discrimination policy was also supported by Vic McIntosh, the City Council representative from this neighborhood.

The march also went past the sites of several tragedies that have struck this embattled community in the last year. The first was the block of Honeysuckle where police called out the S.W.A.T. team and an armored truck to deal with Carl "Dennis" Stewart, a suicidal black man with a gun. Pushed into a corner by police, Stewart allegedly put the gun to his head and killed himself.

Next we walked down Hedge Road past the home of Quentin Larry who died over

Memorial Day weekend in the Champaign County jail. Larry was one of five deaths that have occurred in the jail in the last two years. His mother came out to greet the crowd and there was a moment of silence for her son.

Moving down Hedge Road, marchers chanted "This is what community looks like." We walked past a burned and boarded up house at 1313 Hedge Road. On September 25, a 3 year-old boy named Demetrius Lenard, Jr. died in the fire. In a News-Gazette article, writer Mary Schenk was more concerned about the property damage and blamed the mother for her son's loss, emphasizing there should have been an escape plan. Unity marchers again

bowed their heads in a moment of silence and Carol Ammons placed a wreath of flowers in front of the home.

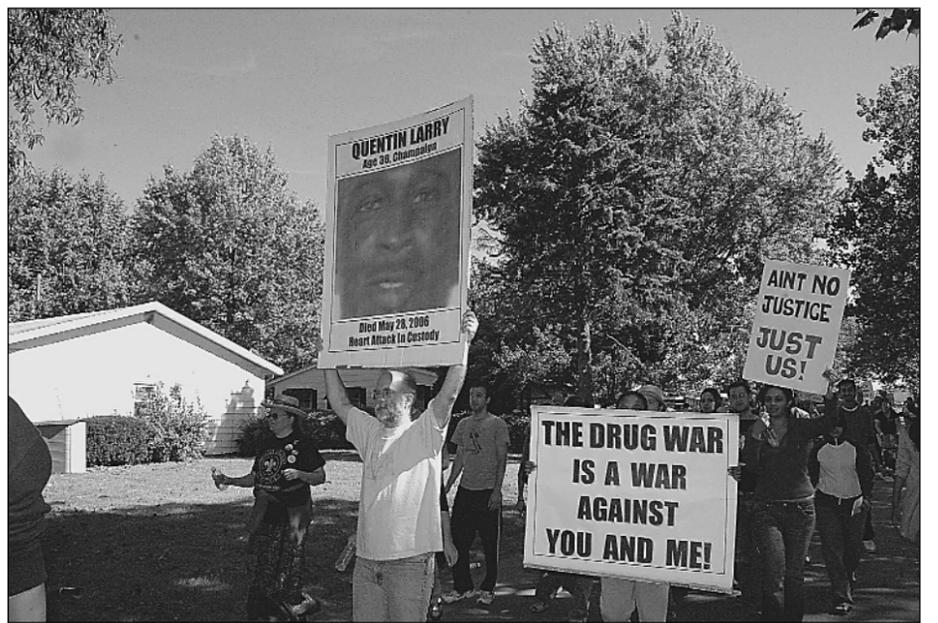
The march ended in Thompson Park with a rally. Several politicians were in attendance and a voter registration table was set up. Members of the community who had joined in the march sat on the grass with their children or stood under trees for shade.

Once again, the Unity March was a sign that people prefer community and togetherness over war and destruction.

(Photographs by Wendy Edwards)



Some of this year's Unity March participants



The theme of this year's Unity March "End the Drug War!"



At 1313 Hedge Road, site of recent fire.



Carol Ammons (right) and Quentin Larry's mother (left)