

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

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

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The Public i

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Get Involved with the Public i

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

Reader Feedback

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

Crisis, Resistance, and Radical Reform In Public Education

MAY DAY, SATURDAY, MAY 1, 9am-3pm

Lower Level of the Institute for Labor and Employment Relations, 504 E. Armory (plenty of parking in the lot on the corner of 6th and Chalmers)

A One-Day Forum Sponsored by Socialist Forum on class, race, and the crisis in public education, and the political and economic institutions and forces that now determine its character and quality.

There will be a series of panels on different aspects of the crisis, such as the negative impulses in the US capitalist system (e.g., the push toward privatization), the growing race and class divide, the issue of educational governance, and the role of unions.

9 -10 am continental breakfast and meeting folks

10-12:30 panel sessions and open discussions

12:30-1 free public lunch

1-3 break-out groups, a possible conference statement of future actions for defense of a differently conceived public education system.

PEOPLES' COMMUNITY POTLUCK

Sunday, May 2, 6-8 PM, Independent Media Center, 202 South Broadway, Urbana

The Peoples' Community Potluck is a food-sharing communal gathering to discuss the economic and social problems in our community. The intention is to harness the talents and resources of local organizations and individuals to improve the conditions of working people, unemployed people, poverty-stricken people, and those who are physically or mentally unable to care for themselves. Given the sorry state of the economy over the past 8 years, and government economic policy that has been most concerned with the well-being of the very wealthy, organizations and individuals at the grass-roots level are going to have to use social conscience and talents to find ways of supporting the most vulnerable people in our communities. We cannot just rely on the new administration to turn things around. We envision a new stimulus for coordinated action and communication for a democratic, egalitarian political-economy.

SUSTAINING CONTRIBUTORS

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

World Harvest International and Gourmet Foods

519 E. University, Champaign

SocialistForum: An Open Discussion and Action Group, Meets 3rd Saturdays of the month, 3-5 pm, at IMC, Broadway & Elm. (U)

Campus Faculty Association (CFA)

The Natural Gourmet
2225 S. Neil, Champaign; 355-6365

Progressive Asset Management, Financial West Group
Socially Responsible Investing

Jerusalem Cafe

601 S. Wright St, Champaign; 398-9022

The AFL-CIO of Champaign County

That's Rentertainment
516 E. John, Champaign; 384-0977

AWARE, the Anti-War, Anti-Racism Effort
Meetings every Sunday at 5pm at the IMC

Milo's Resaurant

2870 S. Philo Road, Urbana; 344-8946

Graduate Employees' Organization (GEO) IFT/AFT 6300

1001 S. Wright St., Champaign, 344-8283
www.uigeo.org

If you or your organization would like to become a sustaining contributor to the *Public i*, or would like more information, please call 344-7265, or email imc-print (at) ucimc.org. Send the email with the word "contribute" in the subject line.

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Moving Champaign-Urbana Beyond Coal

By Parker Laubach



Parker Laubach is a junior in Environmental Geology at UIUC, a member of Students for Environmental Concerns, Sierra Club and currently the director of the Beyond Coal campaign on campus.

We have become a nation hopelessly addicted to dirty energy. Here in Urbana-Champaign at the University of Illinois we are no different. Despite recent talk of a possible wind turbine, our campus still has its own glaring link to dirty energy and coal. The story of coal at the University of Illinois starts with the belching smoke stacks just East of Neil Street known as Abbott Power Plant. Abbott, built in 1941, largely contributes to the heating and electricity needs of the University, with any additional electricity purchased from utility companies. Abbott has the capability to burn all coal, up to 80% natural gas, or a combination of both. However, coal remains the principal fuel source for Abbott due to its less expensive price compared to natural gas.

In a recent report commissioned by the University, indications are that Abbott will need around \$200 million in renovations in order to maintain burning the status quo, with a large chunk of these renovations connected to coal. Coal burning at Abbott currently accounts for around 30%

of the campus's carbon footprint, amounting to the largest source of carbon emissions for the University. In light of these fiscal and environmental worries, Students for Environmental Concerns and representatives from Sierra Club launched the Beyond Coal campaign in mid-March to show the University there is an alternative to dirty energy.

With energy conservation and increased combustion of natural gas, the University has the opportunity to become a coal free campus. It will not be easy finding ways to cut energy use on campus considering the University has already admirably cut 9% in just a few years. Despite this success, the campus still has the problem of using too much energy. Problems of this scope call for innovative solutions; the U of I has a storied history of innovative solutions and now is the time for a breakthrough on sustainability.

The transition to natural gas at first may seem like a cheap sacrifice by still allowing the combustion of fossil fuels on campus. Why not ask to fully decommission Abbott and move to a carbon free energy source? The answer to that lies in the vast problems of fully transitioning to a carbon free economy. There are still immense infrastructural barriers that need to be taken into account in order to be able to meet the heating, cooling and electricity needs of the University. Although a carbon free economy is the end goal, it is not a realistic goal for the next two years at this University.

This is why we are proposing that the University not contribute any additional money towards the combustion of coal on campus and allow the existing coal systems to be retired. It is time that the U of I begin to take the lead on clean energy and not lag behind the likes of University of Wisconsin-Madison or Ball State, which have already committed to retiring their coal systems in favor of cleaner energy. It is embarrassing to the University that as one of the nation's top research institutions, it continues to rely on coal as a prominent source of energy. In order for the University to be considered in the same arena as the Stanfords and the Cornells, it is time to take the steps that other schools have already taken and retire dirty energy.

On March 3-4, 2010, the students at the U of I voted to increase the campus green fees by five dollars, adding to the student funded money that goes towards sustainability projects. This issue was put forth by the students and made the University one of the leaders in student sustainability fees. The students have voted and now it is time for action towards clean energy on the part of university administrators.

Switching off of coal would send a strong message to the state and to other universities that climate change is a serious problem and we need to start taking action. Natural gas is not a permanent solution, but it is a transition fuel while we build the infrastructure for a zero-carbon economy and national energy system.



The Abbott coal plant

Now is the time to tell the University that we do not want any more coal on campus or our community. In such a variable political and economic climate it is time for institutions such as the U of I to step up and lead, and not lag behind others. This is the type of action that Students for Environmental Concerns is asking the university to take. Stand up and lead a movement towards clean energy and leave dirty energy behind as a relic of past times.

Prairie Roots Connect Us

By Miriam Larson & Meadow Jones

Once upon a time, this land we live on was covered in prairie. The people here called themselves the Peoria, Piankeshaw and Wea. Creeks wound freely across the land. One little creek was especially fond of dancing and it glided and skipped across the prairie, sometimes sweeping up the sandbars and rocky banks with it, constantly changing its winding course across the flatlands. One day, people from Europe began to arrive. They liked to build square houses and straight roads. They wanted things their way and locked the creek into a straight concrete gutter through their town. Sometimes it submitted but sometimes the creek overflowed into their basements and backyards and they pulled at their hair and tried new ways to control the creek.

Many years later, an Aussie named Dave arrived to the town. Dave liked the way plants danced in the prairies, he recorded frogs singing, and he sympathized with the creek because he danced the wiggle-woggle sometimes too. He took it upon himself to go talk to people about the way nature dances. He talked to mayors and construction work-

ers, little kids and medical students. Often they looked at him funny but sometimes his wiggle-woggle stories planted seeds. When that happened, he would go confide to the little creek who would dance in spite of the concrete confines and work a little harder to convince the concrete to dance too. And so it went until this day when I am telling you this story in order to plant wiggle-woggle seeds in your heads with the hopes that you might go about dancing your lives differently, caring less about coloring inside the lines and caring more about the dances and music inherent in the land that make our journey unpredictable but harmonious.

Most of us know this land used to be prairie and that there are only little bits and pieces left. Many of us have learned snippets of the history of this place from the man mentioned above, Dave Monk. As steward of some of these little pieces of remaining ecosystem, he has cast a wide net in our twin towns; educating, making art, restoring, and talking with people. As water shapes its landscape, digging through the earth, slowly wearing the steadfast stern

stones down, this is the way that Dave has shaped the landscape of our lives in Champaign-Urbana. And as water may run underground unseen by us, like the Mahomet aquifer dug deep into the ground beneath us, so too, the work of Dave has not always been visible. We want to make his work visible including the networks and connections that he has made through his ubiquitous activism and tireless organizing.

We are students in the Graduate School for Library and Information Science and are taking the opportunity given us by our Community Archiving class to work with Dave. We invite you to tell your own stories about Dave, to find the connection you have had to his work, or his projects, or even just to point out what you have noted from the consequences of his labor. We are looking for the traces of Dave, and to trace ourselves together through our connections with Dave. This project will naturally escape the boundaries of allotted time and structure, but that is part of the beauty of it; that sometimes, through our efforts at organization and collection, stories like the one above

emerge. Miriam was inspired to write this story by Monkisms. Share yours stories, inspirations, collaborations, and anything else by emailing monkisms@gmail.com or posting comments on the Prairie Monks facebook page. We are watching to see how this river runs between us and invite you to partake. Look for future postings about Dave, his projects, and ours as well here, and on Dave's blog: www.prairiemonk.org/blog

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The DUI Case of Former Police Officer Lisa Staples

By Brian Dolinar



Although it was 2008 when off-duty Champaign police detective Lisa Staples was caught driving drunk in an unmarked squad car, only recently were police reports describing the incident obtained. Many were outraged when Staples was given a lighter punishment than other DUI cases in Champaign County, but the public was kept from knowing the extent of her intoxication or the embarrassing details of her arrest. This case and others have led to a campaign for stricter drug and alcohol testing for Champaign police officers.

In March 2009, I sent a FOIA request for police reports on the Staples case to the Illinois State Police. Notorious for their denials of public information, the state police summarily denied my request. After new FOIA legislation took effect in Illinois on January 1, 2010, I re-submitted my request. Now forced to obey the law, the state police handed over their records.

According to a report written by Illinois State Police Sergeant B.K. Ingram, he responded to a call at approximately 2:30 a.m. on Sunday, November 30, 2008. Several drivers had spotted a car going the wrong way, travelling westbound in eastbound traffic, on Interstate 72. It was a cold night, it was snowing, and there was ice on the road.

A Piatt County deputy stopped the gray 2007 Nissan Altima, found out that it was owned by the Champaign Police Department, and the driver was Lisa Staples, an off-duty police officer. The Illinois State Police were called for assistance. When Sergeant Ingram arrived, he approached the car and asked Staples to open the locked door. When Staples opened the door, Ingram says he, "immediately smelled an overwhelming odor of alcoholic liquor coming from inside the Nissan."

Asked to exit the car, Staples got out and stood up, "fumbling forward." She did not know where she was. She was dressed in a long sleeve shirt, blue jeans, and fuzzy pink house slippers. According to Ingram, "It appeared Staples had urinated in her pants as the crotch of her jeans was soaking wet." When Ingram said that it looked like she had wet her pants, Staples replied, "I probably did. I'm sorry." Ingram writes in his report, "I observed the front of her jeans was completely unfastened and slightly pulled down, exposing her panties. I brought Staples' attention to this and asked her to fasten her pants."

Staples was also rambling incoherently. When Ingram asked where her driver's license was, she said, "Um, I'm sorry. It's probably on my person which is not on my person, which is correct." She was eventually given a ticket for not carrying a driver's license.

Staples refused to take a field sobriety test or a breath test and was immediately placed under arrest. Ingram states that he put her in handcuffs and before putting her into the squad car, "placed several layers of paper towel on the passenger seat." At the Champaign County jail, Ingram read Staples her Miranda rights. She began laughing and joked that she was waiving her rights, "as she waved her raised arms side to side."



Former Champaign police officer Lisa Staples

Other reports filled out by Ingram noted that Staples was "swaying," "staggering," and "stumbling." Although she told other police she only had "three drinks," she admitted to Ingram that she was "fucked up."

Although being issued a DUI while driving a department vehicle was grounds for termination, Staples was placed on administrative leave with pay while an internal investigation was conducted. Because of her working relationship with the Champaign County State's Attorney's Office, the case was assigned to special prosecutor Tony Lee, a former State's Attorney in Ford County. Unlike Champaign County, where first-time DUI offenders lose their license, in Ford County offenders are often only sentenced to court supervision. Staples' attorney Ed Piraino and Tony Lee worked out a deal where Staples only got supervision.

At a hearing on December 18 before Judge Richard Klaus, Piraino and Lee both agreed that this arrangement would allow Staples to keep her job as a police officer. As Piraino said, "If she can't drive, she can't be a police officer." Judge Klaus accepted the deal and Staples pleaded guilty to misdemeanor driving under the influence. She was allowed to keep her driver's license and therefore remain on the force. Her punishment was 18 months of court supervision, 250 hours of public service, a \$750 fine, and she was required to wear an alcohol-monitoring bracelet. As part of her public service, she was allowed to give lectures to high school students about the dangers of drunk driving. If these terms were completed, the case could be expunged, and she would have a clean record.

On December 19, the day after the plea was accepted, Elizabeth Drewes was driving drunk going the wrong direction on Interstate 74, struck a minivan, and killed bride-to-be Brittany Babb. The parallels between this tragic story and the Staples case could not be ignored by the public. Dozens of letters poured in to the *News-Gazette* complaining about the "sweatheart deal" given to Staples. Local defence attorneys who deal with DUI cases protested the unequal treatment.

After six months, Staples tampered with her alcohol-monitoring bracelet disabling it for 24 hours. In most cases, such a violation would result in immediate arrest or further punitive consequences, however, this former

police officer was not penalized in any way.

On January 7, 2009, Lisa Staples handed in her resignation letter to the Champaign Police Department, surely the result of public pressure. Police Chief R.T. Finney told the *News-Gazette* it was her decision, "Lisa was a very good detective and employee. That's what makes it so tough."

Many studies have shown that the rate of alcoholism among police officers is higher than the general public. The irony here is that police are required to arrest drunk drivers, conduct sweeps at local bars for underage drinking, and hand out tickets for public drunkenness. Indeed, many of the offenders police deal with on a daily basis are under the influence of alcohol. Moreover, police are called on to prosecute a "War on Drugs" which has sent hundreds of thousands of citizens to prison for drug charges.

The Staples case is one of many involving alcohol and local police. On New Year's night 2001, University of Illinois police officer Collin Jay Harmon killed himself while drinking beers with fellow officers and playing a game of Russian Roulette. In 2008, another UIPD officer, Curtis Bolding, resigned after choking his wife and threatening to kill her while he was in a drunken fit.

Recently, there have been a number of high-profile cases in Chicago of off-duty police officers who were caught on video beating up citizens while drunk. Chicago police officer Anthony Abbate was fired after beating up a female bartender, video of which can be seen on YouTube. As a result of these cases, Chicago City Council ratified changes to the police union contract requiring that lieutenants and captains undergo more stringent drug and alcohol testing.

Locally, Champaign-Urbana Citizens for Peace and Justice is circulating a similar proposal. Among the changes is a requirement for mandatory drug and alcohol testing when a police officer is directly involved in an incident which results in death or great bodily harm or if the officer has fired his or her weapon. A campaign for this and other revisions to the police union contract comes in the wake of the death of Kiwane Carrington at the hands of a Champaign police officer.

Charges Dropped Against Jashaun

On April 13, 2010, State's Attorney Julia Rietz dismissed all charges against Jashaun Manning-Carter. Jashaun was with Kiwane Carrington who was shot and killed by a Champaign police officer. While no charges were brought against police, Jashaun was charged with felony aggravated resisting a peace officer. A 1,700-signature petition to drop the charges was handed to the State's Attorney and dozens of community members showed up at the courthouse to protest the case, but Rietz said she did not bow to the pressure. Outside the courtroom, Jashaun's mother said, "I'm glad it's over with."

UCIMC Receives 3 Arts Grants



The UC-IMC thanks the City of Urbana Public Arts Commission for the recent award of three grants that will support the following projects:

Poetry for the People is a project of the Public i in collaboration with the Urbana Free Library and S.P.E.A.K. Café that celebrates the diversity of voices in the Urbana community. A series of five poetry workshops supporting and connecting local poets will culminate in an issue of the Public i with a pull-out section of poetry and an open-mic at the UC-IMC.

The UC-IMC's Children's Arts Festival on May 8, 2010 is a day of opportunities for children to experience new outlets for self-expression through art, music, and media

workshops and to share their talents with each other. There will be performances by local youth ensembles, dance workshops, piñatas, a kid's contra dance, a parade on the sidewalks of downtown Urbana, and art on display in featured Urbana Businesses.

Say it Loud - Teen DIY Publishing is a series of the UC-IMC Librarians group that promotes youth literacy, self expression, and community involvement through workshops on DIY publishing. Programs will include workshops on cut & paste zine making, screen printing, graphic arts, paper-making, and print & electronic publishing. Events also include open mic events, music performances and art openings. The yearlong series will culminate in a

zine festival, bringing individuals from the broader zine community to Urbana for two days of skill-shares, discussions, and events.

These three grants will allow the UC-IMC to expand public arts programming in downtown Urbana, to expand public participation in the arts, and to further our mission to serve as vibrant community media and arts center. All events are open to public and volunteer participation. Please visit www.ucimc.org for more information.

The UCIMC would like to thank the Urbana Public Arts Commission for their past support of the IMC Film Fest in 2010, which was the IMC's best-attended festival to-date, with outstanding artistic contributions coming from our community.





Olympian Drive, Sustainability and Local Foods

By *Brandon Bowersox*



Brandon Bowersox is a member of the Urbana City Council.

Many of my fellow advocates for smart growth and sustainability have questioned Urbana's plan to build the Olympian Drive extension. After studying the issue and its history, I believe that there is a need for the road, and that we should build it in a way that fits our sustainable vision for Urbana and preserves and supports our local foods movement.

The proposed Olympian Drive extension would be an East-West connection between North Lincoln and North Cunningham. It would also include a bridge over the Canadian National railroad tracks to meet up with Olympian Drive in North Champaign. Given all the pressing issues facing our region and the world, why would Urbana even consider building a road?

There is no direct east-west route and none of the existing rural roads can carry truck traffic. North Lincoln Avenue is home to a large and growing base of industrial businesses and blue-collar jobs. Currently there are over 900 jobs in industries including asphalt, asphalt recycling, concrete, grocery distribution, shipping, electronics recycling, waste transfer, packaging, engine and truck repair, and more. It is Urbana's only area zoned for heavy industry and the only location adjacent to a major rail line, important for moving more goods with less fuel. Yet this industrial zone is hamstrung by a lack of road connectivity. Because the existing rural roads cannot carry trucks, many of these businesses must route trucks far out of the way on a daily basis. One grocery facility alone generates 40-50 truck trips per day through residential neighborhoods in Urbana-Champaign. These trucks drive down Lincoln Avenue, across Bradley, and up Market Street to get to a produce distribution facility in Champaign. The Olympian Drive project would cut the distance of every trip by more than half and keep these trucks out of our urban neighborhoods.

The lack of connectivity is also hampering emergency response. Two buildings were lost in a fire in 1990 while fire trucks drove the long way around. Because there is no bridge over the railroad, it is common for the County Sheriff and emergency responders to be stuck waiting for a slow moving

or parked train. The crossing is at the end of the rail yard where trains routinely block the road for 10, 20 or 30 minutes at a time. Expanding Olympian Drive would improve public safety and emergency response.

The expansion would also bring Urbana additional blue-collar, living wage jobs. This is the only growth of industrial activity in Urbana. The area does have many available lots on Philo Road, Five Points, or near Downtown Urbana—but none of these locations is compatible with heavy industry.

Concerns have been raised about the impact the Olympian Drive project might have on another important part of our community, the amazing local foods economy and the family farmers who have worked the land for generations. Prairie Fruits Farm is a cherished local cheese producer. It is true that the proposed Olympian Drive Extension would pass roughly 300 feet south of the farm and would bisect a field currently growing alfalfa to feed their goats. However, the benefits of the project outweigh this drawback. Rather than rejecting the project, I argue that what we must do is design the road in a way that minimizes any impact on the local food producers, the family farmers, and on the environment. This type of planning has already started. In fact, a location study was completed in 1997 that considered ten different road locations, including the option to upgrade existing rural roads to carry trucks rather than building a new road. After many public meetings and lots of community dialogue, building a new road was chosen in order to avoid disturbing any of the existing homes and farmhouses. The Olympian Drive location was also ideal because it crosses the Saline waterway at a right angle, crosses the railroad at its narrowest location, and intersects Cunningham Avenue at a right angle for safety. Locations further North, such as Ford Harris or Leverett Road, were rejected because building a road 1 to 2 miles farther from Urbana would contribute to leapfrog, scattered development and unconstrained growth.

In the continuing planning process for the Olympian Drive Extension, we will have the opportunity to design the roadway with continued emphasis on minimizing the impact on local farms while meeting our economic and transportation needs. The width of the roadway can be reconsidered to build a narrower, lower-impact road. We can plan for tree plantings to buffer the road and its neighbors. We can use sustainable techniques for water retention and roadway design. Furthermore, we can use this planning process to update Urbana's comprehensive land use plans in order to effectively address preservation and expansion of the local foods movement and family

farming. We could create a "green belt" of local foods activity and foster agri-tourism. For many years, agricultural and industrial activities have co-existed in North Urbana, and they should continue to co-exist prosperously for decades to come. Urbana deserves both a healthy blue-collar economy and a healthy local agriculture economy.

Many people have questioned whether this road will create sprawl and become another North Prospect. On the contrary, the Olympian Drive area is not zoned for expansion of residential subdivisions or shopping centers. It is zoned for industrial use and the city's policy is to promote slow and compact growth. The city has denied requests from developers asking to use this land for other projects, because this is Urbana's only industrial area with major railroad access.

Many have also questioned whether Urbana should simply build a railroad bridge but not connect Olympian Drive through to Cunningham. However, Cunningham connectivity is important in order to serve and expand the businesses there including Frasca International and the new Mervis Industries Recycling Center. Much of North Lincoln lies within the Champaign School District boundaries even though it is in the City of Urbana. For business growth to benefit the tax base of the Urbana Schools, we must support business activity and connectivity along Cunningham Avenue.

Given the great stresses our region and nation are enduring, it is also prudent to ask whether now is the proper time to spend money building a road. Currently the City of Urbana is accepting a state grant that is not eligible to be spent on other activities and does not require any local taxpayer matching funds. The grant will allow us to begin a public engagement and planning process. All interested residents are encouraged to attend the public meetings and advocate for a sustainable roadway design and a land use plan that preserves and grows our local foods "green belt". There is a need for an east-west road in North Urbana, and we can all have a say in how the road is built and how the area evolves in the coming decades.

1st Annual Talent Fest

May 15th, 8:00pm-10:00pm, Parkland College Theater, 2400 W. Bradley Ave, Champaign.

Purchase Tickets at Mirror Image 202 W. University Ave Urbana, or by calling Shon at 344/1317 or 722/3502, Juan 344/4827. Tickets are \$10.00 advanced \$15.00 at the door.

The Intertwining Cycle

By *Ashley Redding*



Ashley Redding is a graduating senior at the UIUC, who will be attending the UICo to pursue a master's degree in Social Work.

In the late Spring of 2009, a group of homeless Champaign-Urbana residents formed "Safe Haven" as means to provide a sense of community and safety to homeless residents; who were oftentimes, targets of abuse. This group has been shunned by local government officials because of their homeless status and left on the brink of existence.

North End Champaign residents suffer a similar plight. Though not homeless, North end residents have been mistreated by local officials and their needs have yet to be adequately addressed. For decades, North end residents have endured sub-standard living conditions and inadequate community resources. Local officials have underinvested in infrastructure and services in the north end, and have failed to sufficiently redress environmental contamination. Poli-

tics and neglect have translated into a silent war against the poor. Developers and business owners have been reluctant to revitalize the community because of the possibility of little to no return on their investment and city officials have done little to entice them. Residents have attempted to work with officials to no avail.

For years, the Champaign City Council has failed to protect its vulnerable citizens. by failing to adequately fund the Township office, which provides services for the poor, and by strict enforcement of zoning codes. Disdain for the homeless among local officials came through loud and clear, when Champaign Mayor Jerry Schweighart was asked at a city council meeting on May 12, 2009, where the evicted residents of Gateway Studios were to sleep that winter, he responded, "I don't care." This attitude is also reflected in budget decisions. Instead of funding the township office and a host of social services agencies, the City of Champaign has chosen to focus on business relations. 3.7 million dollars of tax incentives have been offered to developers and contractors while social services face debilitat-

ing cuts. I speculate that local community members and businesses are reluctant to speak out on issues of homelessness and poverty out of a fear of backlash.

In American society, we have bought into the notion that the poor and homeless are a product of their own faults and therefore, are a burden to society. However, many of these individuals have encountered financial, physical, emotional or psychological difficulties, which adversely influence their life circumstances and chances.

The residents of the North End as well as Safe Haven community members have been neglected for far too long. The local government has been unresponsive to the needs of these residents and have attempted to keep them out of public view. In so doing, local officials are participating in perpetuating the cycle of homelessness and poverty. For how many more years, are the down-trodden expected to survive in these conditions or the mayor allowed to publicly say that he doesn't care about homelessness? The time has come for these issues to be brought to the forefront and to stop the intertwining cycle of poverty and homelessness.

Let Safe Haven Help You While We Help Ourselves!

What's Sweat Equity?

Sweat equity describes a partnership where individuals contribute labor in exchange for housing. Safe Haven is seeking sweat equity partnerships with property owners and/or property management companies where individuals are given housing while working on properties that need repair and maintenance.

A group of 10 Safe Haven members wish to enter into a sweat equity partnership. This group represents significant combined years of experience in rehabilitating residential and commercial properties.

Interested parties should contact us at: 217-530-6468 or safehaven-cu@gmail.com, or 217-979-1272 or painterdonnie@live.com



Arguments Against Olympian Drive

By Carly Nix



Carly Nix is News Media Coordinator at UCIMC.

Resistance to Olympian Drive has been growing more vocal in recent months—here's a compendium of positions against the extension expressed by the CU community.

At a marathon Urbana City Council meeting on March 22nd, Eric Thorsland of Tomahouns Organic Farm gave the following assessment of the situation: "54 tons of composted manure—that's what I've done since Friday, what I've spread on my boutique fields... That's 108,000 pounds of poo, which I thought was a pretty big pile, until I read the facts on Olympian Drive."

Olympian Drive is a proposed East-West arterial road north of I-74 that would link I-57 in Champaign to US-45 in Urbana. Urbana officials say the road will result in 6,000 to 8,000 new jobs after the Olympian Drive corridor is developed in the next 20 years, and that expansion to the North could bring in an annual \$2 million from property, sales and utility tax.

On April 12th, the audience at the Urbana City Council was standing room only, with over three hours of public input largely against the Olympian Drive project. Carol Osgood waxed poetic before the council painting Olympian Drive as a train sitting at the station. She urged the council to hear how Urbana citizens do not want to

be on this train, that it's not too late to get off—but once the train starts moving, it will be a lot harder to jump off.

Those against construction of the road say projected benefits—decreased unemployment, increased tax base for school district, fire department, and police—won't materialize, and that hopes for these outcomes are based on studies and figures that are outdated or inaccurate. Folks are skeptical given the amount of unused industrial land already in CU—to the tune of 2,000 acres—including empty land south of the interstate and at Five-Points.

Farmland in the path of Olympian Drive will be destroyed to make way for the road. Estimates on the lost acreage range from 85 to 200 acres just for the construction of the road. Another 1,600 acres could be lost due to businesses expansion to meet the new road. Squire Farms, Prairie Fruits Farm, and the Ziegler Family Centennial Farm are all located where the road is projected to be built, and have been central to the "Say NO to Olympian Drive" campaign. They believe this road and projected growth would turn productive farmland—that adds millions to the local economy—into concrete.

Paving over farmland and encouraging sprawl is deleterious to Urbana's environmental sustainability goals. Suhail Barot, a graduate student at the University and chair of the Student Sustainability Committee, remarked, "One great thing about the city of Urbana is that I've never had to go to a city council meeting... I've had to go to the city of Champaign to ask them to bring in multi-family recycling. I have to fight with University administration virtually every day. But I

don't have to deal with Urbana. So I'm saddened that I have to come before the city council for something like Olympian Drive. This is really the first environmental issue that I've seen in the past 6 years that the city government is on the wrong side of."

Is Olympian Drive sprawl? A quick look at a satellite map of the area shows the road will connect a whole lot of nothing but fields and streams. Some call it a classic road to nowhere—one that's being built before the need for a new road arises. Olympian Drive is likened to a "ring road"—a high-speed arterial road around Champaign-Urbana that if implemented would weaken the urban center and encourage growth and development at the edges. Over at Smile Politely, Stuart Tarr notes that the concept of the ring road is perfectly reflected in the map of the Champaign-Urbana Urbanized Transportation Study Long Range Transportation Plan; Olympian Drive is just the portion of the ring to the North.

The plans for Olympian Drive were outdated years ago. Smart development and urban design have changed dramatically since then, when Olympian Drive was first conceived in the document Major Street and Highway Plan for the Champaign-Urbana Area. The current iterations continue on the same premise that the road is needed—a premise more in line with the design ideas that created twentieth century suburban sprawl. Sprawl means increased dependency on cars, more land taken out of other use to accommodate cars, and higher infrastructure costs.

Others believe the lack of jobs isn't a reflection of lack of space, but about the

city's people-friendly policies. One CU resident said, "Urbana isn't in need of new land in order to attract business, it's in need of a different attitude, and that attitude is one that the residents would prefer it not take."

After studying Champaign's Cost of Land Uses Fiscal Impact Analysis, Urbana resident Bill Cope calculated that even if the 6,000 to 8,000 new jobs and the increase to tax revenue are achieved, the city will experience a net loss because of the high cost of providing services to the proposed build-out area.

Creating more industry isn't the only way to support the economy—supporting local farms is supporting the local economy. Buying food that's locally produced puts money back in the community that would otherwise be spent toward food and goods produced elsewhere. Local farmers contribute substantially to the local economy each year.

Prairie Fruits Farm is a vision for Urbana's future. It's a working model for returning to smaller-scale organic farming in Illinois. According to the USDA, one-tenth of 1 percent of Illinois farmland is currently devoted to organic production. Urbana stands to gain from protecting small farms and encouraging more small farms to take root here: to feed the community and feed the sustainability movement close to Urbana's heart.

Despite continued opposition and concerns over the dialogue, the Council voted unanimously to send resolutions forward authorizing an intergovernmental agreement with the City of Champaign and Champaign County to accept \$5 million for design and land acquisition for Olympian Drive. The roll call vote will take place on April 19.

Judi Bari, the IWW and Environmentalism

By Neil Parthun and David Johnson

As we celebrate Earth Day and enjoy the flush of spring, it is important to reflect on those who have made invaluable contributions to the continuing efforts at protecting our environment and our rights. Judi Bari is one such individual and tracing some of her history can inspire all of our continued efforts. Bari's work with the IWW helped to forge a relationship between mill workers and environmentalists to fight their common enemy, corporate domination of workers and natural resources.

After dropping out of college in the early 1970s, Judi Bari obtained a job as a clerk in a large grocery store chain. She soon got involved in a union organizing campaign, eventually becoming a union shop steward. A few years later, she got a job as a U.S. postal worker where she continued her union activism by publishing and distributing a rank-and-file worker newsletter. Bari also organized a successful wildcat strike for better working conditions.

In 1979, Bari moved to Northern California. In 1988, Bari joined the Earth First! Environmental Organization in Mendocino County, where she helped organize a successful campaign to blockade logging on public land. In 1989, she organized an effort to support sawmill workers doused with toxic chemicals in a Georgia-Pacific Corporation sawmill accident. Her sense of solidarity with the mill workers led her to organize sawmill and timber workers into Timber Workers Local #1 of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Bari's efforts contributed significantly to a working relationship between IWW Local #1 and the Earth First! environmentalists in fighting against the misdeeds of large timber corporations. The common cause that Judi Bari used to unite previously adversarial timber workers and environmentalists was the demand that timber corporations stop

overcutting forests at an unsustainable rate. Environmentalists opposed overcutting for ecological reasons. Timber workers opposed this practice because it led to the closing of sawmills and the layoff of workers once the forests were depleted of trees. Local communities also supported ending the practice because they were adversely affected by both the resultant soil erosion and the loss of income due to layoffs of timber workers. Because of the joint efforts, timber corporations could no longer simply blame environmentalists for job losses.

After Louisiana Pacific Corporation closed the sawmill in April 1990 resulting in the loss of 200 jobs, Bari and a contingent of laid off workers showed up at a Mendocino County Board Meeting. The allied labor and environmentalist group demanded that the County use its imminent domain powers to seize Louisiana Pacific's 300,000 acres of forest land and operate them in the public interest under the control of a worker owned cooperative. This community demand to seize corporate property made Bari the target of the timber corporations with public efforts to smear her reputation, discredit the Earth First organization and worse. In August 1989, Bari's car was rammed from behind by a logging truck, totalling her car and sending her and her passengers to the hospital. Death threats received in the mail and by telephone followed. When Bari reported the death threats to the police and showed them the written ones, they refused to investigate. On May 24, 1990, a bomb exploded under Bari's driver's seat as she was driving in Oakland, California.



Fellow worker Judi Bari

Within a few hours of arriving at a local hospital's intensive care unit, Oakland Police placed Bari under arrest with bail set at \$100,000. The police told the press that Bari was an "Eco-Terrorist" and that she was knowingly transporting the bomb to commit a crime. The FBI continuously delayed court arraignment and asked the judge repeatedly for more time to gather evidence. After 2 months, the District Attorney decided not to press charges against Bari because there was no evidence. In May 1991, Bari filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against the FBI and the Oakland Police Department. As a result of Bari's lawsuit, the FBI agent in charge of the San Francisco office, Richard Held, resigned. The bomb which nearly killed Bari in Oakland was shown to closely resemble those made at an FBI bomb school that trains police to investigate bomb scenes. In 2002, 5 years after Judi Bari's death from breast cancer, a jury in Bari's federal law suit case exonerated her and ordered 4 FBI agents and 3 Oakland police officers to pay a total of \$4.4 Million to Bari's surviving husband and 2 children. On May 20, 2003, the Oakland City Council unanimously passed a resolution designating May 24 as Judi Bari Day for her courageous environmental, civil liberties, and labor organizing work.

If you'd like more information about the IWW or are interested in organizing your workplace, contact the IWW Central Illinois General Membership Branch at 217-356-8247.



The Abortion Debate: Now Showing At a Football Game, Billboard, Twitter, Or a Clinic Near You!

By Heather Ault

On Super Bowl Sunday, CBS ran a television commercial by conservative Christian group, Focus on the Family causing an incredible backlash throughout the pro-choice and progressive communities across the country. By viewing this particular advertisement, CBS broke its own policy of not permitting “advocacy ads” about controversial issues during the most watched program in our country, the Super Bowl. Instead, CBS worked with Focus on the Family to craft a TV appropriate anti-abortion story about Tim Tebow, the all-American football player, and his mother Pam, who chose to carry a life-threatening pregnancy to full-term rather than terminate it for the sake of her own health and the health of her baby. The presence of a message aimed at stigmatizing abortion and promoting a “pro-life” agenda during this national televised event blurred the lines between sports, entertainment, and abortion within the media landscape.

If it was not for the fact that CBS had rejected other advertisements due to their “controversial” content, this ad may have run less noticed. CBS has rejected ads from the United Church for Christ and ManCrunch.org, providing spiritual and dating services to the gay community, as well as MoveOn.org, and PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.) The unwillingness to air the ads of progressive organizations, along with Focus on the Family, a conservative, anti-choice Christian organization, resulted in a backlash against CBS by feminist and social justice organizations who nicknamed CBS the “Christian Broadcasting System” and “Commercially Broadcasting Sexism” network in the weeks leading up to the game.

Several counter-campaigns emerged that sought to reframe and clarify the issue of “choice” in our country. Planned Par-

enthood launched an internet-based advertisement featuring former college and professional football player Sean James and Olympic gold medalist Al Joyner. Gloria Steinem, a prominent feminist leader, joined guests at the Women’s Media Center for a live video-stream called “Jockocracy Sexism Watch” during the Super Bowl to critique on the overall nature of event. World Can’t Wait, a social justice organization based in New York City, promoted their one-hour YouTube film, “Abortion, Morality, and the Liberation of Women”, as an alternative viewing event “from the front-lines of the struggle for abortion rights.” These groups, among many, put pressure on CBS to not air this ad from an “anti-choice, anti-woman, anti-equality, and homophobic” organization.

When the Tebow advertisement finally ran, the feared message was surprisingly subtle. Rather than a blatant attack on abortion, the ad’s fuzzy, feel-good message about family left many wondering, what was all the fuss about? After the ad aired, the Burma Group, Christian research organization, polled 1000 viewers and found that only a minority (38%) understood the anti-abortion message. 20% were unable to guess the main message and 19% thought the message was about the importance of family. Yet, 62% were aware of the pre-game controversy over the commercial. Ironically, the pro-choice movement’s objection to the ad likely provided a clearer articulation of the anti-abortion message than the ad itself. As well, the critique of the Tebow ad by feminist organizations turned out to be the somewhat humorous gesture of Tim Tebow “talking” his mother. Terry O’Neill, from the National Organization for Women (NOW), told the LA Times, “I am blown away at the celebration of the violence against women in it. That’s what comes across to me even

more strongly than the anti-abortion message. I myself am a survivor of domestic violence, and I don’t find it charming. I think CBS should be ashamed of itself.”

Less than a month after the Super Bowl, another anti-choice controversy materialized in Georgia with connections to CBS. This state-wide billboard campaign features a close-up photograph of an African American baby peering back at the viewer alongside the text “Black children are an endangered species” and the website “TooManyAborted.com.” Georgia Right to Life, along with a coalition of national black leaders including Dr. Martin Luther King’s niece, is accusing Planned Parenthood of “racial genocide” on the basis that African American women in Georgia have higher rates of abortion and most clinics are located in urban centers. As well, the early history of Planned Parenthood had close ties to the eugenics movement. Professor Beverly Guy-Sheftall, who teaches women’s history and feminist thought at Spelman College, told the New York Daily News, “To use racist arguments to try to bait black people to get them to be anti-abortion is just disgusting.” Loretta Ross, of Sister Song, a reproductive justice coalition of women of color, blames higher abortion rates on the lack of reproductive health education and access to contraception within the African-American community. Yet, despite efforts from African American activists in Georgia, as well as throughout the country, CBS hasn’t wavered in its position to display the billboards.

Despite the mainstreaming pro-life messages via CBS, pro-life campaigns against women’s right to abortion will inevitably continue. Rather than ask, how does the pro-choice community respond to CBS and other corporate media outlets, I wonder, how will organizations such as Planned Parent-

Money is Not a Natural Resource

By Michael Brün



Can money be wasted in a global sense? No, not like fuel is wasted. Money is neither a natural resource nor a manufactured product. There are no resource limits, though there are social limits to its quantity, and there are essentially no costs to its creation and destruction. It takes the same amount of resources and effort to issue a million dollars as just one dollar. Money is all about power and promises, about relations between human beings.

Of course, in an individual sense, you can “waste money” by spending it to no good purpose, or by failing to achieve your purpose when you spend it; but this is careless speech—actually you are wasting only your opportunity, your access to money, not the money itself. Say, for example, you spend money on tuition to take the class I teach, and all you learn is nonsense. You don’t feel good about your expenditure, you feel you “wasted your money”—but lo! There the money is, safe now in my pocket, ready to be spent again. Therefore, as an environmentalist in a global sense (as money is part of the environment), you should not think of the money you paid for my teaching as wasted, even though you learned nothing. Suppose I take that money you paid me and pay someone else to teach me—and also learn nothing. The waters continue to flow as clean as before, the songbirds seem most unconcerned, and the money sits safely now in yet another’s pocket. Only when instead I buy the fuel I need to get to class, to teach perhaps another load of nonsense—only then should you be concerned. For in your view at least, that fuel is indeed wasted! Burned, it is no longer available to anyone, and the fumes pollute the air and water, and in your view, to no good purpose. Once again, however, only the fuel is wasted, not the money, which now safely sits in the fuel dealer’s pocket.

Let’s examine this more closely. You think the burned fuel is wasted because you get nothing from my teaching, and you are quite right! But I don’t agree, because I do get something from my teaching—your money. More money indeed than I need to pay for fuel to get to class, so for me

the whole enterprise is a valid business plan; in fact, who knows, I might even get a bank loan against my car on the strength of it, in case I have to buy fuel before you pay me; so apparently the bank doesn’t agree with you either.

WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT THIS DISAGREEMENT?

There is a market solution: you stop paying me, and then my business plan collapses: no income, no bank loan, no teaching, no fuel burned. This actually works if it gets me to improve my teaching or do something else useful. Say that I improve my teaching, can now teach you and thirty others how to save fuel, and in the end, my teaching reduces students’ fuel consumption a greater amount than I burn to get to class. This is what markets are supposed to accomplish: you are happy about how you spent your money, I am happy to earn it, and globally we end up with more resources than we used in the enterprise. How marvelous!

What happens if the market solution doesn’t lead to such a happy outcome? Perhaps I cannot improve my teaching; perhaps I’m also a bit short on technical and social skills and fail to retrain or find another line of work. In this case, the graceful, environmental and social thing for me to do seems to be to get out of the way—to commit suicide. This is the ultimate, inescapable logic of those to whom private markets are sacred and other institutions profane. For all but these, however, there are also non-market solutions available.

Non-market solutions are less efficient, at least in theory, but they can be more efficient than an existing status quo (and certainly more palatable to me)! For example, suppose you pay me to teach where I live instead of driving to my old class: no more burning fuel. You don’t miss me in class; for all you care I don’t have to teach at all, it was nonsense anyhow; and while you are still wasting your opportunity, and your access to money, (remember you are not wasting the money itself—I’ll have it), at least now no fuel is burned. OK, things are already better than before; the water remains clean and the songbirds unconcerned. A problem, though: why should you be the one

stuck with paying me? What about others? Here is one reason we have taxes and “big government,” to spread the responsibility of paying people to do nothing.

That is right: nothing, or at any rate, less, that is how we save resources and reduce pollution without culling the ranks of unproductive humanity. In our example, we prevent needless fuel consumption. And remember, since I’ve stopped teaching in another town, you’ll not only somehow have to take care of me, but also the fuel vendor who, however competent, has lost my business.

If you’ve read this far, you surely are wondering—are these really the only choices? To pay me to teach badly or pay me not to teach at all; to pay the fuel vendor either to sell or not to sell fuel? Of course you are right to wonder. To be sure, the amount paid need not be the same in either case, so both the fuel vendor and I could have some financial incentive to do our work well instead of not at all in order to keep our jobs. Still we are left with the basic issue.

What about the happy possibility we discussed before, the celebrated “market solution”, whereby we either do our jobs better or switch to other jobs and end up making ourselves both useful to other people and protective of nature? Once again, that is always a possibility, but there is certainly no guarantee. The main difference between the view presented in this article and the economic analyses you are likely to read elsewhere is simply this: less optimism about the power of market allocation, however rational, and of incentives, however strong, to make all—or even most—of us worth a decent living; less optimism about the ability of market forces to guide us all into useful activities consistent with responsible stewardship of our resources and environment. We need non-market interventions to keep masses of people, unproductive for one reason or another, from wrecking the environment and using up resources in a futile struggle to survive. Let’s help ourselves and each other survive in a manner less wasteful of resources, and remember, as long as we share the cost burden in an acceptable manner, there is no reason whatever to worry, on a global level, that money itself is ever “wasted.”



Home Defense: A New Blackwater Course

By Dan Kenney



Dan Kenney is a teacher, activist, and co-coordinator of No Private Armies: www.noprivatearmies.org

In addition to training law enforcement, Blackwater, now operating under the name Xe Services, is offering a course designed for any gun toting citizen. This is the world's most powerful and best known mercenary company with a reputation of operating outside of the law in the war zones of Iraq and Afghanistan. This same company is now offering a new class in "Home Defense" at their 6,000 acre North Carolina, and 80 acre northwest Illinois, training locations.

Blackwater's training division is now known as the U.S. Training Center. According to the US Training Center website, the new course has this aim: "The course is designed to make the armed citizen more aware of personal security whether at home or away; considerations in protecting self and family members."

Closer examination of what the class entails raises questions about who may be included in the target demographic group for this new training. The training involves the following: "Introduction: This course will inform the concerned citizen on methods of protecting the home front. The students will receive classroom instruction and will engage in shoot/no-shoot, force on force realistic scenarios.

The "students" will pay \$595.00 for two days of training. The training involves the following: "Topics:

- Use of Force
- Security of weapons at home and away.
- Away from home considerations
- Gear & weapons
- Mindset/ Indications of Mental State
- Basic room clearing techniques for the homeowner
- Force-on-force scenarios
- Ballistic protection at home and away
- Dealing with the Police "

One must ask in what "scenarios" would a homeowner need to conduct a "room clearing?" Also, who would be better to train a citizen on how to "deal with the police" than a company that is involved with training hundreds of police officers every year? It would appear that Blackwater is willing to not only train the police but to train the citizen cops as well.

The only prerequisite for the class is that the "student" knows how to fire a gun. "Prerequisite: Basic pistol marksmanship/familiarization course. This is not a marksmanship course. Handling skills are required prior to attending class."

The equipment supplied includes: Simunition® Pistol (customer preference of Glock, Sig Sauer, Beretta), Simunition® safety gear, 100 rounds of Simunition®, holster & magazine carrier."

Simunition is a General Dynamics-Ordnance and Tactical Systems-Canada Inc. company that developed in the 1980s. Their mission, according to their website is, "to provide the most realistic training systems possible so that officers and military forces around the world can engage in experience building and ultimately lifesaving exercises."

They also have a philosophy that includes, "helping law enforcement officers, emergency response teams and military personnel to improve their tactical skill and condition their fear response, our family of training products ultimately saves lives." Interesting that simulator weapons can be referred to as a "family of training products." This brings a whole new light on the term "family."

The "Home Defense" course however does come with a disclaimer, "Disclaimer: This is NOT a pistol/shotgun course. Students should come prepared to operate their weapon system and be familiar with weapon handling, safety and marksmanship. Local authorities should be consulted on use of Lethal Force and the use of Lethal Force to defend lives and property." (My underlining for emphasis.)

Required gear, according to the course description on their website: "Gear: belt, flashlight, ear protection, clothing appropriate for climate and conditions, rain gear, and a water bottle or other hydration system. Cover garment for concealed draw is highly recommended."

Now this kind of training for any gun carrying citizen taught by any company would be unsettling, but to have it provided by a company that is owned by Erik Prince who has been accused of murder by two former employees under sworn statements filed in a Federal court in Virginia last August is especially disturbing. According to sworn testimony by two former Blackwater employees, who were referred to as John Doe #1 and John Doe #2 for fear they may be murdered by Prince or one of his current gunmen, Erik Prince may have murdered or facilitated the murder of individuals who were cooperating with Federal authorities who were investigating the company. The former employees also alleged that Prince "views himself as a Christian crusader tasked with eliminating Muslims and the Islamic faith from the globe."

Here is an excerpt from the two five page sworn statements by the former employees:

"To that end, Mr. Prince intentionally deployed to Iraq certain men who shared his vision of Christian supremacy, knowing and wanting these men to take every available opportunity to murder Iraqis. Many of these men used call signs based on the Knights of the Templar, the warriors who fought the Crusades."

Mr. Prince operated his companies in a manner that encouraged and rewarded the destruction of Iraqi life. For example, Mr. Prince's executives would openly speak about going over to Iraq to "lay Hajiis out on cardboard." Going to Iraq to shoot and kill Iraqis was viewed as a sport or game. Mr. Prince's employees openly and consistently used racist and derogatory terms for Iraqis, and other Arabs, such as "ragheads" or "hajiis."

One does not have to stretch too far to see a troubling possible connection between a company headed by someone who according to Jeremy Scahill in his book, Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army, was "dedicated to a Christian-supremacist agenda" and the creation of the class to train any armed citizen on how to basically be their own law enforcers, just as Prince's mercenaries operated in Iraq. One can also make the parallel between the rise of armed citizen militias, some of whom have a similar "Christian-Supremacist agenda," and the need for a class that teaches citizens the same skills that are being taught to the military and to law enforcement.

Last month the Government Accounting Office stopped Blackwater from winning a multi-billion dollar contract from the US Army to train Afghan police. Now the contract has to be re-bid and DynCorp is in the running as well. Prince is also selling off his own private air force, Aviation World Services with its subsidiary Presidential Airways for \$200 million to AAR Corp. This will mean a cut of another 240 employees after last year layoffs that resulted with the cancellation of the contract to build the Grizzly, an armored vehicle.

The former employees also testified that Erik Prince lives in fear of being prosecuted by the Federal government for the many illegal activities he is suspected of being involved with, such as smuggling illegal arms into Iraq, some of which were sold on the Black Market, tax evasion, wrongful death lawsuits which number in the double digits at last count, etc.

One thing all of this points to is that if you poke a desperate polecat with a stick, he is bound to fight back. I wish this meant the downfall of Prince's Dark Kingdom were near, but I fear that it only means that a reshaping is taking place.

The Abortion Debate

By Heather Ault

hood, NARAL, and NOW respond with their own national campaigns that affirm a women's right to choose? Instead of battling CBS at the national level, where might the pro-choice movement focus their efforts in reframing the debate? What does pro-active, effective pro-woman, pro-choice media look like? In short, two spaces exist that are perhaps underutilized by the pro-choice movement where women considering abortion turn to—the Internet and the clinic itself.

A simple search for "abortion" images through Google reveals a gallery of grotesque, sensationalized images of aborted fetuses. To cut through the visual rhetoric of anti-abortion messages is difficult, but on February 25, 2010, Angie Jackson, a Florida woman facing an unwanted pregnancy, did just that. After surviving serious health concerns with her first pregnancy, Jackson decided that as a mother with a young son, she was unwilling and unable to endure a second pregnancy. As a regular blogger with a following, she released a video disclosure

about her upcoming medical abortion. She Twittered her abortion as a personal account to the experience for other women. "I'm not trying to ignite a culture war," she told ABC-News.com "I'm just offering one person's personal experience and true story." However, her story is notable due to the level of backlash she has experienced. She told website *The Frisky*, "I've just been astonished by the level of hatred and death threats and threats of violence against my son. It's been a very ugly side of people to see." Perhaps, this speaks to the effectiveness of her message, as personal testimony is a powerful tool. The Internet provides an almost limitless audience, and unlike corporate controlled spaces such as television and billboards, remains available for telling personal and powerful stories about abortion.

Clinics themselves present another public space for pro-choice messaging campaigns. Currently, organizations such as 40 Days for Life and Operation Rescue occupy clinics to protest abortion providers and provide "side-

walk counseling" to women to deter them from seeking abortion services. Other than loosely organized "clinic defenders", a national pro-choice presence at clinics does not exist. The 4000 Years for Choice campaign, begun on the 37th anniversary of Roe v Wade in January, 2010, attempts to refocus the attention to clinics by celebrating the history of abortion and contraception through a visual postcard campaign to the most heavily protested clinics across the country. As clinics are often physically marginalized within communities, this project calls to attention these spaces and celebrates them within the context of a new historical narrative.

Anti-abortion rhetoric will only continue, and the reproductive rights community needs to respond with campaigns that address personal stories, spaces, and histories in the daily spaces where women exist when facing choices about their reproduction; the privacy of their own homes at their computers and at the clinic where they will exercise their legal and human

rights in reproductive freedom. It is in these grassroots spaces, rather than at the national level, where our stories and choices are needed.

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Susan Gage's New View of a Woman's Body

By Bonnie Fortune



Bonnie Fortune is an artist, writer, and educator. Her project-based work explores issues surrounding the environment, health, technology, and aging. She has exhibited in such diverse locals as Chicago, Mexico City, Aberdeen and Nashville.

Bloomington-Normal is the location of Illinois State University, a college in a remote location with a thriving arts program. It is where Suzann Gage went to study art in the 1970s. It is also where she had an epiphany. Gage was born in Rock Island, Illinois and had a typical Midwestern childhood, participating in school and community activities like the Rainbow Girls, the girls auxiliary of the Masons. Interested in visual arts from a young age, her parents encouraged her by providing creative materials for drawing and collage. She studied studio art in college. Balancing ceramics classes with waitressing at the Town and Country Restaurant and activism with the campus chapter of the National Organization of Women.

It was the NOW chapter that brought in Lorraine Rothman and Carol Downer, two reproductive rights activists from Los Angeles, to speak to the young Illinois feminists one rainy day in 1972. Rothman and Downer were on a national tour to raise awareness about the Women's Health Movement, showing films and leading discussions about the need for safe and legal abortions, and respectful doctor patient discourse. During their presentation that 19-year-old Gage attended in her black and white waitress uniform, Rothman and Downer taught how to perform a cervical self-examination. In a movement about developing respect for one's own body while agitating for respect for the needs of female bodies from the medical establishment, the cervical self-exam was a direct action technique that put activist women in direct contact with the subject of the movement. When Suzann Gage saw her cervix, her life changed. For the always visually oriented Gage, the act of seeing her cervix with a mirror, a flashlight, and a room full of other curious and concerned women, was enough to radicalize her. Shortly after the experience, Gage came out as a lesbian, dropped out of art school, and took a

flight west to join Rothman and Downer at the Women's Choice Clinic in Los Angeles.

The Women's Choice Clinic was a feminist health center, run by women like Gage who were trained as lay-health workers. They had activist doctors on staff who would take on more serious diagnoses, but for the most part the lay-health workers would check blood pressure, lead women through cervical examinations, and talk to women about health care concerns like sexually transmitted disease and menstruation needs. Most importantly they were creating an environment of mutual respect that made patients feel comfortable in participating in their own health care. Gage says of her experience, "I just couldn't stand to see people suffering and to not have human rights and I felt absolutely compelled to take some kind of action. To get involved... to remedy these wrongs." She and the other women at the clinic wanted to spread the idea of the feminist health center nationally, and knowing



Images by Suzann Gage from *New View of a Women's Body* (Federation of Feminist Health Centers, 1981)

that they could not be everywhere at once, they decided to write a book. The project started in the 1970s was finally published in 1981 as *A New View of A Woman's Body*.

A New View of A Woman's Body was written by the team of women, who would take time out of clinic work to research medical illustrations, medical texts, and interview doctors to write chapters like "The Clitoris, a Feminist Perspective." The

book's main goal was to bend, shape, and change what the definitions of normal were in relationship to women's bodies and women's medical concerns. In the research process the women discovered that images of the female body in the existing medical literature were for the most part non-existent, and what was there focused on pathology. Gage thought she left art behind in Illinois, but when the Book Team, as the working group was called, figured out that there were no good images available, Gage was asked to pick up a pencil once again. She made drawings from life at the clinic and worked through a combination of medical textbooks and direct observation to create the medical illustrations of the female reproductive system. Her drawings shape the character of this handbook that is still used in feminist health centers today. In addition to Gage's drawings, the Book Team collected photographs of their cervixes over several months to show the changes in color and shape that were part of a normal cycle of menstruation and ovulation.

When I first saw *A New View of A Woman's Body*, Gage's earnest illustration style showing women of all shapes, sizes, color, and age performing breast exams, and cervical exams it was attractive to me. The urgency expressed in her drawings is reflected in her direct conversational manner. Her drawings to me reflect the character of a movement that focused on encouraging women to be comfortable with their bodies and to take responsibility through self-education and discussion for their health and well-being. Gage, a perpetual activist spreading the word about health care justice, is just as direct as her drawing style. She would go on to become a certified OB/GYN nurse practitioner, a nationally certified licensed acupuncturist and a nutritionist. She now owns and runs Progressive Health Services in San Diego, California where she lives with her partner and their dog. I interviewed her in May of 2009 via telephone while she was working at the clinic. She often put me on hold to answer telephone calls from patients. Though she is no longer a practicing artist, her visual sensibilities and contribution to the visual culture of feminist health movements remains influential.

To read more about Suzann Gage email me at lefortune@gmail.com and I will send you a copy of the full interview.

Guerrillas in Our Midst: Guerrilla Gardening In CU

By Emperor Infiltrator

This article originally appeared at Smile-Politely.com

The strategic advantage to Guerrilla Warfare is that through individual anonymity and highly-visible acts of defiance, a small number of motivated people can multiply their reach, amplify their message, and counter a far more powerful force. This is Guerrilla Gardening, and its rebellion has already arrived in Champaign-Urbana.

I have made personal contact with a small group of high motivated horticultural hooligans whose idea of a good time is sneaking around, doing dirty deeds in the dead of night. They slink in the inky blackness surreptitiously depositing seeds and young plants on abandoned, empty, and otherwise unproductive land. They don't ask permission. They don't apologize. They wear masks and go by pseudonyms.

The symbolism of guerrilla gardening is powerful: A man-made wasteland, selfishly emptied of life by economic forces, poor judgment, misplaced values, or simple neglect is returned to nature for the benefit of all. However, while symbolic acts (including Internet posts) in and of themselves are mere sound and fury, when this group's plans come to literal fruition, it will signify far more than nothing; we shall

have our symbolism and eat it too.

While there are many empty lots in CU, the location they've scouted is the perfect (first) ground zero for Guerrilla Gardening in CU. Remember way way back in the early 00's when the gangly, insolent, puss-faced, mallcore-listening housing bust we know all too well these days was then just a cute bouncing baby housing boom? In those gay monocle-wearing fat times, a developer had a vision: to plow under hundreds of acres of corn and build a shitload of cookie-cutter houses. The land got sold, the corn bulldozed, the roads went in, and houses went up. Around 2007, despite the declarations of an elder statesman, the fundamentals of the economy were not strong, and people stopped buying houses. The sacrifice of the land to the maw of sprawl was in vain. The houses never went up; the lot is bare, save a little scrub and a lot of potential.

In addition to turning an eyesore into a productive, verdant oasis in South Central Sprawlsburg, the group hopes to transform the way that folks in CU see the land around them. Every square inch of dirt in our micro metro was at one time a diverse and vibrant prairie ecosystem. Our predecessors overtook every square inch of that for the production of food. Eating is important and agriculture is a pretty darn good thing to do with land, so long as we

are produce and consume it in a responsible manner. But that isn't really where we are today, is it? We live in a town where the old new Wal-Mart was abandoned and another couple dozen acres of farm land were bulldozed to build a new Wal-Mart, while at the same time, and not even 10 miles away, two other brand-new Wal-Marts and shat themselves down upon acres more of our "prime farmland."

The group hopes that seeing zinnias blooming in an alley or a tomato vine growing up a stop sign pole will jar the rest of us from our collective slumber. They want us to reevaluate our insatiable demand for more, bigger, and newer developments reaching far into the countryside. The group wants to remind us of the ease, simplicity, beauty, and thrift of growing your own food, of making something from nothing.

Sow what are their plans? First, they want to plant a bounty of crops, flowers, and native flora at the location above. You can expect to see (if you can find it) corn and cucumbers, zucchini, beans and peas, sunflowers, herbs, squash, peppers, tons 'o tomatoes, potatoes, pumpkins, watermelons, berries, and my personal favorite: big, bad Emperor Carrots. They will of course harvest these crops when the time comes, eating some, donating the rest of the food to one or several of the local food banks/shelters and the friendly Food



Not Bombs folks for their delicious free Saturday vegan cookouts. The group is adamant, however, that the crops belong to everybody, so if you see a pie pumpkin growing at the plot and you want a pie pumpkin for your pot, a pumpkin you've now got.

The crew is getting ready for their big dig. Want in? The crew is always looking for the hook-up with free seeds, tools, bags, compost and the like, so if you've got an in, spill it. The author can put you in contact with these folks if you ask nicely. You take it from there.

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