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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), or to contact one of the editors.

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A Paper of the People
February 2008
V8, #2



We are the wrong people of the wrong skin in the wrong continent and what in the hell is everybody being reasonable about?
—June Jordan

Since 1957, black people have experienced double-digit unemployment - in good times and bad times. Look at the population of African Americans in prison. They represent more than half the population of prisoners in the country, 55 percent of those on death row.
—Danny Glover



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Reclaiming Black History

Amira Davis



Amira Davis is a resident of Champaign Urbana and the founder and director/ instructor of the Afrikan-American Cultural Arts Program, an arts based program designed to expose the local community to the artistic traditions of the Afrikan diaspora.

*Se wo were fina wo san kofa ayenki.
(It is not taboo to go back and fetch what has been lost.)*

Akan proverb

A couple of years ago during a combined 80th birthday celebration for my mother and the first ever family reunion of the Davis-Gamble clan from Marshall, Texas (my maternal line), two of my siblings compiled a book of our family history. The fifty or so photocopied pages in a blue, plastic three ringed folder, opened with our family tree from as far back as our collective memory: the end of the Civil War. Several pages attempt to piece together lineages of deceased family members. The remaining pages contain the trees of my mother, Bettye, her only sibling—George, each of her children (9 total), their children and grandchildren. Of course, we have the template to add more pages which is fortunate. Already my mother has 15 great, grandchildren.

On the front page of the book was a sepia colored copy of an old photo. The photo was of a group of people standing on the front porch of a modest house circa 1900. Written in recent ink with lines pointing to them were the names of my great grandmother, Julie Jones, standing in the back and her husband, my great grandfather, Dick Jones on the opposite, front row. Dick Jones was the son of James Bank who had come to Marshall from Kentucky. The story above the picture states that Vinnie Banks was a “formerly enslaved woman of African descent who migrated from Virginia to Kentucky.” The oral history as it’s been passed down intergenerationally says that Vinnie actually walked from Virginia to Kentucky, carrying James Bank in her arms, when she received word she was free.



Banks family portrait, circa 1900

Walked! I instantly thought that perhaps it hadn’t been such an arduous feat. Perhaps she had lived in a border county. My brother cautioned against such limited thinking. Ironically, I had just seen the movie, *The Great Debaters* about the art of debate at Wiley College, a Methodist Episcopal HBCU certified by the Freedman Aid Society and, coincidentally, the school my grandmother attended. In being challenged to identify a little known

fact about his father, James Farmer, Sr., the character playing James Farmer, Jr. stated that his father had walked from Florida to Massachusetts to attend school. My belief in the strength of the human will was restored.

But even greater than the walk was imagining what her life had been. Had she been raped and beaten to produce and reproduce? She was, after all, a Black woman of child-bearing age who had been enslaved in one of the primary slave-breeding states and the child she carried into Kentucky, James, was a mulatto. Had he been her only child? Had she experienced the world-destroying pain of having her children sold away from her/stolen away from her the way DCFS disrupts Black families today? Had her knees been rubbed raw and her soul drained with prayer on the Watch Night? Had she danced and sung for the jubilee, remembering those whose aspirations she fulfilled? Was freedom what she’d imagined it to be?

No one in our family knows what became of Vinnie other than her son James moved to Marshall, the Confederate capitol of Missouri, where eventually my mother came into being. The length of her memory seldom extends beyond James Banks’s son, Dick Jones/“Papa”, an imposing figure on the white horse he rode through town. Such is the story of many Black families: cut off from not only our extended collective history, but our family histories, as well.

This February is not only Black History Month but it begins the yearlong countdown to the commemoration of the 200th birthday of Abraham Lincoln when individuals, organizations and institutions will be celebrating “all things Lincoln.” I wonder what Vinnie Banks thought of Lincoln, shifting her from enslaved to free with little, if any, support. Had he been her longed for savior?

Even if few knew or understood Lincoln or could divine his motives, women like Mittie Freeman were painfully aware of the material effects of his emancipation. She told a WPA writer, “[i]t seem like it took a long time for freedom to come. Everything just kept on like it was. We heard that lots of slaves was getting land and some mules to set up for their selves. I never knowed any what got land or mules nor nothin’.” Surely, Vinnie had prayed for freedom, but at what cost? What was the legacy of her freedom struggles post-Lincoln? How did it impact and/or empower the women in her daughter-line? Are we yet free?

Several weeks ago, I attended a meeting of the Illinois Amistad Commission formed in 2005 to ensure the proper and accurate instruction of the history of the U.S. slave trade, enslavement and its vestiges and the triumphs and contributions of Blacks in the U.S. in all Illinois K-12 schools. While the teaching of Black history was mandated in Illinois several years ago, the implementation and monitoring promises to be a momentous task, especially given a teaching force that is predominantly white, middle-class and female, particularly in small urban, post-Brown v. Board of Education communities that are predominantly white.

Black History is American history and should be studied year round. I trust that all Black parents will hold their local schools accountable so that we can all intelligently critique history and its figures. But as my family book presciently suggests, family histories (and by extension, the histories of neighborhoods and towns) should be the first site of historic investigation for our children. The knowledge gained in schools can be used to augment our understanding of private/family struggles in the public/political domain.

Regardless of the legacy of Lincoln and our collective struggles for freedom, “we are the ones we’ve been waiting for.” For the seed of true emancipation lies within each of us. It is this seed that joins us across the generations. Just as the struggles and sacrifices of Vinnie Banks continue to be felt into the seventh generation.



Davis-Gamble family reunion, circa 2005

African Americans Settle in Champaign

African Americans began to arrive in Illinois as early as 1860. Most sought to escape the racism of the South and looking for work, after the Civil War. Many of these families settled in communities in and around Champaign County. Many of these Black families were related. When one family became established, they would send for others to come north. Many relatives traveled on and settled in Chicago.

Democracy

Democracy will not come
Today, this year
Nor ever
Through compromise and fear.
I have as much right
As the other fellow has
To stand
On my two feet
And own the land.
I tire so of hearing people say,
Let things take their course.
Tomorrow is another day.
I do not need my freedom when I’m dead.
I cannot live on tomorrow’s bread.
Freedom
Is a strong seed
Planted
In a great need.
I live here, too.
I want freedom
Just as you.

—Langston Hughes



Excerpts From The 2008 Martin Luther King, Jr. Essay Contest

This is the sixth year of the essay contest sponsored by the University of Illinois Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Symposium. Since 2003, over 1400 local students have written essays about the living legacy of Dr. King as they experience it. What are the issues for students today that are comparable to those that Dr. King focused on? What do our young people see as problems in our community? How do they want to participate in the work of social justice? What help do they need from the community? In 2008, we received 207 essays from twelve schools. Twelve readers from the campus MLK committee and the College of Education read each of them several times; we selected ten essays as outstanding and seven for honorable mention. We honor each student and teacher for his or her participation.

—Cope Cumpston, Urbana School Board

STUDENTS SPEAK OUT AGAINST PRISON

A dream is something that you should hold fast to and never let slip away because what is a dream if you don't believe you can achieve? Today, the young black society is faced with a challenge—jail. Too many of our young black males are behind bars. Being locked up only hurts you as a person because while you're behind those bars your dream is getting smaller and smaller. You miss out on spending time with family, friends, and most of all you miss out on your future.

—Deanna King, Grade 11, Central High School

What has been bothering me is that I see more African-Americans behind bars than any other race. I think this is not fair because people who don't have money suffer over something that other people can get. I want to see all blacks and whites to be somewhere in their life.

—Jessyca Harris, Franklin Middle School

My second issue is to stop the police from harassing people because they have authority that comes with a gun and a badge. I think they should not abuse their authority.

—Anonymous, 9th grader, READY School

STUDENTS SPEAK OUT AGAINST VIOLENCE

A social issue in our community that I think should be addressed is fighting. One group of people that is affected by this issue is young children. Young children are affected when they see other people fighting and it teaches those children to be violent.

—Aisha Wright-Hamilton, Edison Middle School

My first issue is guns and shooting. People get shot for no reason and little kids get shot.

—Kydel Brown, READY School

I have many concerns about community violence. There is even violence at people's schools. There is violence every week at my school. Like at Central High School they had to go into lockdown because of a fight that was going on. It isn't safe to walk around at night without streetlights.

—Cidnee Sheehan, Franklin Middle School

For a while I have noticed that more and more violence is taking place in school and it's not always being worked with. One way to stop and actually work with this issue is asking people what causes them to do these things. I would like it if adults in general talked to the kids.

—Mary Donahue, Urbana Middle School

Violence is another big issue in our community. The standards for what is okay or "play" fighting have been lowered and something needs to be done about it. Just one slap or one kick could be part of the reason World War III will begin. And if people don't just talk about being peaceful, but actually do something about it, World War III could happen.

—Tabitha Camp, Montessori Habitat School

My last major concern about my community is violence. What really bothers me about it is that it happens right at the school. If we come together as a community and talk about it, we can make a voice that can and will be heard. Anything can be changed for anyone, anywhere.

—Jeron McNeal, READY School

Strong Anti-War and Pro-Rights Votes Cast In February Primary

By Belden Fields

In the February 5th primary, the voters of both the City of Champaign Township and Cunningham Township (Urbana) voted on referenda supporting rights of detainees and opposing the actual war in Iraq and the President's launching of a possible future war against Iraq.

In Champaign Township, an item calling for revision of the Military Commission Act which would grant greater rights to detainees passed (8,902 yes to 3,704 no), while an item to limit funding in the war in Iraq passed (7,772 yes to 5,069 no). Voters in the city of Champaign also voted to raise

general assistance funding, something that the Champaign City Council refused to assist in, by a whopping vote of 8,902 yes to 3,708 no.

In Cunningham Township voters said that funds for the war and occupation in Iraq should be cut (4,756 yes to 2,113 no);

that detainees' rights of habeas corpus should be recognized by the U.S. government (5,350 to 1,394 no); and that the President should not be able to wage war on Iran without the consent of Congress (5,681 yes to 1,364 no).

State's Attorney Implicated In Cover-up Of Police Brutality

By Brian Dolinar

Some may remember an incident on March 30, 2007 when Champaign police sent 17 year-old Brian Chesley to the hospital after an incident in Douglass Park. The claims of police brutality were dismissed by local officials, and quickly dropped by the mainstream media, but the case remains in court. State's Attorney Julia Rietz, currently up for reelection, is taking Chesley to court in a trial that could begin in March for a misdemeanor charge of resisting a police officer.

Charges were filed five weeks after the incident on May 8, 2007, Chesley's 18th birthday, consequently assuring he would be tried as an adult. The current prosecution by Rietz's office appears to be an attempt to stave off a civil suit against Champaign police for excessive use of force. This seems to be an effort to cover up an incident of police brutality.

On March 30, at approximately 8:30 p.m., Brian Chesley was walking out of the Douglass Park gymnasium with two

other black youth, a 15 year-old and a 8 year-old, after playing basketball. The two older boys were walking the younger one home. Park programs continued until midnight and park signs (changed soon after) indicated the park was closed at 9:00 p.m. Champaign police said the park closed at dusk and they had probable cause to stop the youth. What happened afterwards is in dispute. Champaign police say Chesley ran. Chesley says he was grabbed by police, thrown up against a fence, beaten, and heavily pepper sprayed. An ambulance had to be called to take him to the hospital.

This occurred the same night as a Democratic fundraiser at the house of Gina Jackson, Champaign city council representative of District 1. Local kids came to her front door that night saying police had just beat up somebody. The alderwoman, with other members of the local Democratic Party, walked down the street to find a crowd of frightened youth, and young Chesley sitting on the curb obviously in pain.

Community members went to Champaign City Council the following Tuesday night to address what they said was police brutality. Martel Miller, of VEYA (Visionaries Educating Youth and Adults), brought Chesley and his mother to the meeting and pleaded for something to be done. Gina Jackson said that there must be "zero tolerance" for youth who do not obey authority.

Attorneys Bob Kirchner and Ruth Wyman have taken up Chesley's case and are currently representing him. The State's Attorney's office attempted to make an offer of adult diversion, which would have required Chesley to accept responsibility for the incident. Chesley refused the offer. The trial date will be set in the next hearing on March 3, 2008 at 3 p.m. in Courtroom E.

The Circuit Clerk web site clearly shows the offense date of 3/30/07 and charges filed 5/8/07, the 18th birthday of Chesley, 5/8/89: <https://secure.jtsmith.com/clerk/clerk.asp>



The Struggle For Racial Equity In The Champaign County Criminal Justice System

by Kerry L. Pimblott



On the morning of April 29, 1970, Edgar Hoult, a twenty-three year old African American man was shot and killed by a local police officer near his home in Urbana. Edgar, an employee of Follett's Book Store, had been unable to sleep and decided to visit with friends who were working overnight at the store. Earlier in the week, a series of firebombings had taken place leaving Follett's in need of late night repairs. According to the store manager, Anthony Fernandez, Edgar "horsed around" briefly with his co-workers and then left.

Nearby, Champaign police officers Fred Eastman and Robert Soucie were on patrol. According to police accounts, the officers witnessed Hoult's drive north on Wright Street running two stop signs. In response, the officers turned on their siren and engaged Hoult in a high-speed chase. After a few minutes, Hoult lost control of the vehicle and slammed into a fence. Despite the impact, he was able to pull himself out of the car and began to run through an open field with Eastman in pursuit on foot.

The details of what followed are contested. However, what is clear is that Eastman pulled out his .33 caliber revolver and fired. The hollow-point bullet, designed for maximum impact, traveled approximately 50 yards across the field striking Edgar Hoult in the back of the head causing his death. Eastman claimed that he had slipped while firing a warning shot in the air, accidentally causing Hoult's death. However, reports to the contrary quickly emerged. Several African-American eyewitnesses argued that Eastman hadn't stumbled, but rather had carefully taken aim at his victim. Others claimed that Hoult had put his hands in the air as a sign of surrender.

Public officials struggled to locate a reason for Hoult's evasion of local officers during a routine traffic stop. He had no outstanding warrants and had never been convicted of a crime. By all accounts Edgar Hoult was a sober family man with a promising future. Left behind was his pregnant wife, Alice, and two small children. The only motive police could identify was that he had been driving without a valid drivers license.

Many African American residents were less baffled by Hoult's frantic decision to flee from local police officers who were widely considered to be racist and corrupt. Mirroring events in cities across the country, protests against racial inequity and police brutality occurred intermittently throughout the 1960s and 1970s in Champaign-Urbana. Longstanding organizations like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Urban League were joined in the struggle by newer organizations like the Concerned Citizens Committee (CCC) and the Black Action Council for United Progress (BACUP).

The death of Edgar Hoult triggered a community-wide struggle for racial equity in the Champaign County crimi-

nal justice system that continues to resonate. A loose coalition of civil rights organizations, community members, and college students quickly mobilized to protest police brutality against African Americans, demand the reorganization of lily-white law enforcement, and ensure that an independent investigation into the Hoult shooting be performed. Concerned citizens flooded city council meetings expressing their outrage.

University students staged mass protests, the largest of which took place on May 11 when 1,500 people assembled on the quad. Hoult's death resonated particularly amongst black students, many of whom, due to restrictions in university accommodation, had been housed by African American families in the North End forging close experiential and political ties. As testament to these deep feelings of solidarity, black students successfully pushed for the fledgling Afro-American Culture Center to be renamed after Hoult in a ceremony facilitated by both student and community activists.

While the vast majority of students and community members engaged in nonviolent protests, some felt that different strategies were required. In the days following the shooting, fires broke out at Lincoln Square Mall and at Jos. Kuhn & Co. in downtown Champaign. While local press sought to characterize the bombings as the spontaneous acts of angry black youth, letters written to the editorial board of the *Daily Illini* indicated that they were the deliberate and carefully planned work of a revolutionary nationalist cadre called Revolutionary Force 26. In accordance with broader ideological and tactical shifts in the black liberation and student movements, Revolutionary Force 26 represented the increasing militancy of activists frustrated with the slow pace of change and disenchanted with the integrationist agenda of the movement. Elsewhere, struggles ensued between law enforcement and local gangs as police surveillance of black communities was heightened.

Widespread fears about the independence of the investigation into Hoult's death were confirmed on May 13 when Howard Mitchell, the director of the Community Relations Committee, castigated local police and city officials for their negligence. "The only city investigation that can be considered extensive," Mitchell claimed, "has been my own." When faced with demands for information

about the Hoult case, police authorities failed to cooperate forcing the Committee to seek the aid of higher authorities on numerous occasions. For their part, city officials had demonstrated a lack of consideration for the victim's family and the local African American population. "Naturally, the city was on the spot," Mitchell explained, "but a man was dead and no one seemed willing to say 'I'm sorry' without being reminded."

Though the States' Attorney, Lawrence Johnson, initially opted to file charges of voluntary manslaughter against Eastman, tremendous public pressure ensured that when the trial began in October the murder charge was resurrected. Amidst high security, Judge B. E. Morgan presided over a packed courtroom as several eyewitnesses took the stand to testify that Officer Eastman had intentionally

killed Edgar Hoult. After the prosecution presented its case, the defense brought out Eastman and several fellow police officers, none of whom had been present during the shooting, to corroborate Eastman's story of accidental death.

Despite the testimony of several eyewitnesses to the contrary, an all-white jury took less than two and a half hours and one vote to find Eastman not guilty of murder and involuntary manslaughter. At the most fundamental level, the all-white jury had been more convinced by the testimony of a white police officer than that of multiple African-American eyewitnesses. As one juror explained, "We believed he was honest when he said he slipped and fell, and that the killing was accidental." Finding no justice in the criminal proceeding, Alice Hoult filed a civil suit on April 30, 1971. Her struggle continued until 1976 when she finally reached an out of court settlement for \$59,000. After more than five years, Alice Hoult ended her bitter struggle for justice and reparations.

However, the collective struggle for racial equity in the Champaign County criminal justice system continues. The prevalence of all-white juries, the lack of police accountability, and well-established racial disparities at each stage of the process demands that we continue to work in close collaboration for the furthering of freedom and justice in our communities.



Edgar Hoult, 1970.

Rosa Parks



PIONEER OF
CIVIL RIGHTS

"THE only thing that bothered me was that we waited so long to make this protest."

~ Inducted: 1995 ~

MBLGTACC Event

The Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference (MBLGTACC) is an annual conference that works to encourage and promote diversity, activism and network development among LGBTQA students, staff and faculty throughout the regional Midwest. The conference serves as an open forum for education and awareness of issues that affect the LGBTQA community. The 2008 conference features keynotes by Erica Alva, TJ Jourian, and Angela Davis, a screening of the *Vagina Monologues*, a performance by Las Crudas, and a number of other great workshops and activities. It will be held on February 22-24 on the UIUC campus. For details, go to www.mblgtacc2008.org/program/schedule.html



Child Soldiers: The Military Assault On Chicago's Public Schools

By *Therese Quinn, Erica Meiners, and William Ayers*



Theresa Quinn is a professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Erica Meiners is a professor at Northeastern Illinois University, and William Ayers, is a professor at UIC and former guest-in-residence in Unit One at UIUC

In 2001 Chicago's Mayor, Richard M. Daley commented on an article in the online journal, *Education Next*, by then-Mayor of Oakland, California, Jerry Brown. Brown's essay offered a rationale for public military academies in Oakland. In his letter to the editor, Daley congratulated Brown's efforts and explained his own reasons for creating military schools in Chicago:

"We started these academies because of the success of our Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) program, the nation's largest. JROTC provides students with the order and discipline that is too often lacking at home. It teaches them time management, responsibility, goal setting, and teamwork, and it builds leadership and self-confidence."

Today, Chicago has the most militarized public school system in the nation, with Cadet Corps for middle-school kids, over 10,000 students participating in JROTC, over 1,000 students enrolled in the five military high schools, and hundreds more attending one of nine "small" military high schools. Chicago now has a Marine Military Academy, a Naval Academy, and three Army high schools. When an air force high school opens next year, Chicago will be the only city in the nation to have academies representing all branches of the military. And the public school systems of other urban centers with largely Black and immigrant low income students including Philadelphia, Atlanta and Oakland, are being similarly re-formed—and deformed—through partnerships with the Department of the Defense.

As military recruiters fall short of their enlistment goals—a trend spanning a decade—and as the number of African Americans enlistees (once a reliable and now an increasingly reluctant source of personnel) has dropped by 41% over the last several years, the Department of the Defense has partnered with the Department of Education and city governments, to both sell its "brand" to young people and to secure positions of power over the lives of the most vulnerable youth.

The federal No Child Left Behind Act is particularly aggressive, providing unprecedented military access to campuses and requiring schools to provide personal student information to the Army. In many schools JROTC programs replace physical education courses, recruiters assist in coaching athletic teams, and the military is provided space to offer kids a place to hang out and have a snack after school. And in one case in Chicago, a largely working class and immigrant public high school, Senn, was forced to give up a third of its building to a military academy (check out savesenn.org to find out more).

It is urgent that every citizen oppose the presence of the military in our public schools. Here are four reasons why:

PUBLIC EDUCATION IS A CIVILIAN, NOT A MILITARY, SYSTEM

Public education in a democracy aims to broadly prepare youth for full participation in civil society so that they can make informed decisions about their lives and the future

of society as a whole. The Department of the Defense has a dramatically more constrained goal in our schools: influencing students to "choose" a military career. The military requires submissiveness and lock-step acquiescence to authority, while a broad education for democratic living emphasizes curiosity, skepticism, diversity of opinion, investigation, initiative, courage to take an unpopular stand, and more. This distinction—of a civilian, not a militarized, public education system—is one for which earlier generations fought. For example, during WW I, national debates took place over whether or not to include "military training" in secondary schools. James Mackenzie, a school director, argued, in a remarkably resonant piece published in the *New York Times* in 1916: "If American boys lack discipline, by all means, let us supply it, but not through a training whose avowed aim is human slaughter."

MILITARY PROGRAMS AND SCHOOLS ARE SELECTIVELY TARGETED

Pauline Lipman, professor of education at the University of Illinois at Chicago, has documented that Chicago's public military academies, along with other schools offering limited educational choices, are located overwhelmingly in low income communities of color, while schools with rich curricula including magnet schools, regional gifted centers, classical schools, International Baccalaureate programs and college prep schools are placed in whiter, wealthier communities, and in gentrifying areas. In other words, it's no accident that Senn High School was forced to house a military school, while a nearby selective admission high school was not. This is a Defense Department strategy—target schools where students are squeezed out of the most robust opportunities and perceived, then, as more likely to enlist; recruit the most susceptible intensive-

ly, with false promises and tactics that include bribes, home visits, mailings, harassment, video games promoting the glories of war and offering chances to "kill," and more. Indeed, the Defense Department spends as much as \$2.6 billion each year on recruiting.

MILITARY SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS PROMOTE OBEDIENCE AND CONFORMITY.

Mayor Daley's claim that "[military programs] provide... students with the order and discipline that is too often lacking at home" taps into and fuels racialized perceptions and fears of unruly black and brown families and youth. They must be controlled, regulated, and made docile for their own good and for ours. A 16 year old student attending a public naval academy in Chicago understood the school's real goal—unquestioning rule-following—when she said in an interview in the *Chicago Tribune*: "When people see that we went to a military school, they know we're obedient, we follow directions..." An authentic commitment to the futures of these kids would involve, for a start, offering exactly what the most privileged youngsters have: art education, including dance, music instruction, theater and performance, and the

visual arts, sports and physical education, clubs and games, after-school opportunities, science and math labs, lower teacher-student ratios, smaller schools, and more. Instead, to take one important example, a recent study by the Illinois Arts Council reports that in the city of Chicago, arts programs are distributed in the same way as the other rich educational offerings—white, wealthy communities have them, while low income communities of color have few or none.

MILITARY SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS PRACTICE DISCRIMINATION

Although the Chicago Board of Education, City of Chicago, Cook County, and the State of Illinois all prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, the United States Military condones discrimination against lesbians, bisexuals, and gay men. Promoters of these schools and programs willfully ignore the fact that queer students attending these schools can't access military college benefits or employment possibilities, and that queer teachers can't be hired to serve as JROTC instructors in these schools. This double standard should not be tolerated. Following the courageous examples of San Francisco and Portland, Chicago should refuse to do business with organizations that discriminate against its citizens.

Military schools and programs depend on logics of racism, misogyny and homophobia. Military schools need unruly youth of color to turn into soldiers, and they need queers and girls as the shaming contrasts against which those soldiers will be created. In other words, soldiers aren't sissies and they aren't pussies, either, although these terms and others like them are used to regulate behavior in military settings. Military public schools are a problem, not simply because "don't ask don't tell" policies restrict the access of queers to full participation in the military, but because these schools require the systematic disparagement of queerness and queer lives. We reject the idea that queers should organize for access to the military that depends on our revilement for its existence, rather than for the right to privacy, the right to public life, and the right to life free from militarism.

We live in a city awash in the randomly, tragically spilled blood of our children. We live, all of us, in a violent nation that regularly spills the blood of other children, elsewhere. We must all reject a public education system that contributes to these horrors by habituating children to soldiering



Students at a Chicago Military Academy



The African American Studies and Research Program Presents the

2008 Malcolm X Lecture

Jimmie Briggs

Author of *Innocents Lost: When Child Soldiers Go to War*

Thursday, February 21, 7:00 PM

3rd Floor, Levis Faculty Center

The God Strategy In American Politics

by Kevin Coe and David Domke

Kevin Coe is a doctoral candidate in Speech Communication at the University of Illinois. David Domke is Professor of Communication at the University of Washington. They are authors of *The God Strategy: How Religion Became a Political Weapon in America* (Oxford) www.thegodstrategy.com.

Lots of establishment types like to say there's nothing new under the sun with respect to religion and politics. In December 2004, White House speechwriter Michael Gerson told journalists that George W. Bush's religious rhetoric was the same old thing we'd always seen: "I don't believe that any of this is a departure from American history." Three months earlier Rev. Richard John Neuhaus, editor of the ecumenical journal *First Things*, said of Bush's religious politics: "There is nothing that Bush has said about divine purpose, destiny and accountability that Abraham Lincoln did not say. This is as American as apple pie."

IF THIS IS APPLE PIE, THE FRUIT IS ROTTEN.

Both of these men were wrong, and their position is dangerous. How do we know? We ran the numbers. Enough speculation, anecdote, uninformed opinion, and partisan posturing. It's time for the hard facts.

In the late 1970s, conservative Christians began to mobilize politically through organizations such as the Moral Majority. Early on, this newly powerful voting bloc tried to like Jimmy Carter who, after all, was an openly "born again" Christian. But Carter disappointed the political faithful with his insufficiently aggressive foreign policy, support for *Roe v. Wade*, and general unwillingness to make his faith demonstrably public.

Ronald Reagan took a very different approach: he used the God strategy. By making religion a centerpiece of his presidency, he clearly signaled his support for Christian conservatives. Presidents since Reagan have followed suit. The result is that American politics today is defined by a calculated, demonstrably public religiosity unlike anything in modern history.

CONSIDER TWO EXAMPLES.

If one looks at nearly 360 major speeches that presidents from Franklin Roosevelt to George W. Bush have given, the increase in religiosity is astounding. The average president from FDR to Carter mentioned God in a minority of his speeches, doing so about 47% of the time. Reagan, in contrast, mentioned God in 96% of his speeches. George H. W. Bush did so 91% of the time, Clinton 93%, and the current Bush (through year six) was at 94%. Further, the total number of references to God in the average presidential speech since 1981 is 120% higher than the average speech from 1933-1980. References to broader religious

terms, such as faith, pray, sacred, worship, crusade, and dozens of others increased by 60%.

Recent presidents have also made far more "pilgrimages" to speak to audiences of faith. From FDR through Carter, presidents averaged 5.3 public remarks before overtly religious organizations in a four-year term. Beginning with Reagan through six years of Bush, this average more than tripled to 16.6 per term. For example, since 1981 GOP presidents have spoken 13 times to the National Association of Evangelicals or the National Religious Broadcasters Association, four times to the Knights of Columbus, and four times to the Southern Baptist Convention. Clinton never spoke to these conservative organizations; instead, he spoke in churches, again and again. From FDR through Carter, presidents delivered public remarks in churches an average of twice per four-year term. In contrast, Clinton spoke in churches 28 times during two terms in the White House—10 more visits than Reagan, Bush Sr. and Bush Jr. combined.

Wherever we looked, whatever we measured—in thousands of public communications across eight decades—we found the same pattern. Presidents and presidential hopefuls since Reagan have been afraid to be seen as the apostate in the room. They put religion front and center to show they're not.

This convergence of faith and politics is exactly what the nation's Founders sought to avoid. Many of these men were deeply religious, but they were only an ocean removed from the religious strife that had plagued Europe for centuries. With these experiences in mind, they created a Constitution that doesn't contain a single mention of God and prohibits religious tests for those seeking office.

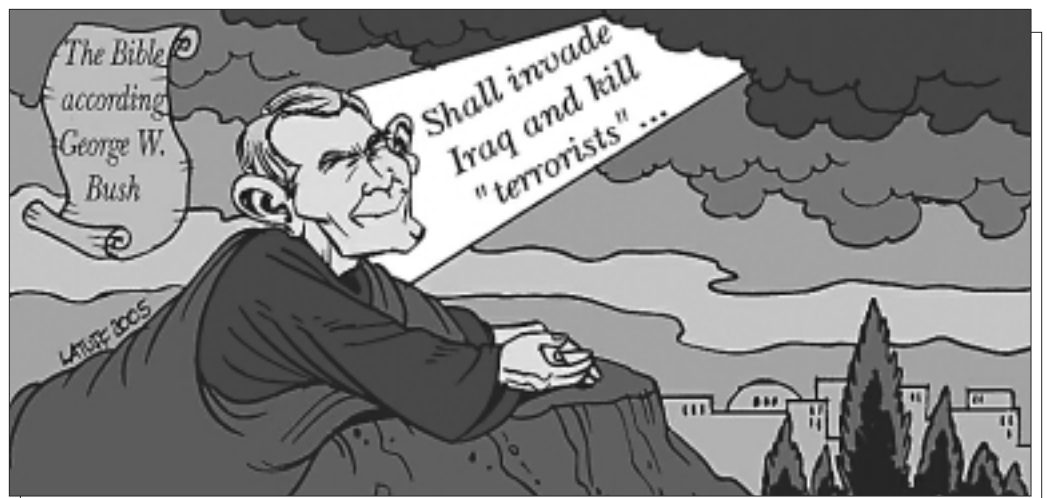
"A THEOLOGICAL VERSION OF MANIFEST DESTINY"

Their vision is at serious risk today. History has shown with tragic consistency that an intimate relationship between religion and politics does irreparable damage to both—from the crusades of medieval times to the terrorism of modern times. Constant use of the God strategy by political leaders encourages just such a relationship. When George W. Bush justifies the Iraq War by saying that liber-

ty is "God's gift to humanity" and that America's "calling" is to deliver that gift to the Iraqi people, he is offering something quite like a divine vision for U.S. foreign policy.

It is precisely this conflation of abstract claims about God with the concrete goals of the state that led esteemed religion scholar R. Scott Appleby to call the administration's rhetoric about spreading freedom and liberty "a theological version of Manifest Destiny." At a minimum, this approach risks repeating the errors of the original manifest destiny: unduly emphasizing the norms and values of white, conservative Protestants at the expense of those who will not or cannot conform.

Just as important, pairing religious doctrine with public policy encourages citizens to conclude that the U.S. government's actions are the will of God—or at least congruent with such wishes—and therefore beyond question. Dogmatic political voices and hints of divinely inspired policy are not the ingredients of a robust republic; they're the recipe for



hubris, jingoism, and the decline of democracy. These are disquieting possibilities, but the words of our political leaders in recent decades have moved America toward them. Both the Gospel of John and the record of evils past teach one thing: in the beginning, always, are words.

To grasp what is at stake, we might recall John Kennedy's address before conservative Protestant clergy in September 1960. Facing substantial prejudice because of his Catholicism, Kennedy declared: "I believe in an America where the separation of church and state is absolute... I believe in a president whose views on religion are his own private affair." Such a presidency was essential, Kennedy added, because "Today, I may be the victim, but tomorrow it may be you—until the whole fabric of our harmonious society is ripped apart."

At this rate we'll soon be there. Tragically, we may already be.

The History of Black History Month

Black History Month is an annual observance in February, celebrating the past and present achievements of African Americans. In February 1926, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, founder of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, proposed the establishment of "Negro History Week" to honor the history and contributions of African Americans to American life. Dr. Woodson, known as the "Father of Black History", chose the second week of February because it commemorates the birthdays of two men who greatly affected the African American community: Abraham Lincoln (February 12) and Frederick Douglass (February 14). Negro History Week became Black History Week in the early 1970's. In 1976, the week-long observance was expanded to a month in honor of the nation's bicentennial.

Black History Month is sponsored by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH). The Association was founded in 1915 by Dr. Carter Woodson—historian, teacher, author and publisher. Each year the Association designates the national theme for Black History Month. In 2006, the association's theme was "Celebrating Community: A Tribute to Black Fraternal, Social and Civic Institutions," in recognition of the impact that these organizations have had on the evolution of African American life and history. It also marked the 100th anniversary of the founding of the first continuous, collegiate Greek letter fraternity Alpha Phi Alpha. Serving more than just their own immediate members, fraternities and sororities joined with the Urban League and other social and civic organizations to address the Black community's social, economic and political challenges.



Carter G. Woodson

BLACK HISTORY MONTH LECTURES

W.E.B. DuBois Lecture

"Global Africa: Whence Its Past? Whither Its Future?"

Michael A. Gomez, Department of History and Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, New York University

Wednesday, February 13, 4:00 pm

Third Floor, Levis Faculty Center

919 West Illinois Street, Urbana

2008 Malcolm X Lecture

Jimmie Briggs

Author of *Innocents Lost: When Child Soldiers Go to War*

Thursday, February 21, 7:00 p.m.

3rd Floor, Levis Faculty Center



Kuumba Lynx: 'Edutainment' for Community Empowerment

By Gabriel Cortez

Gabriel Cortez is a graduate student in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at UIUC. His research, pedagogy, and activism focus on youth of color in Chicago.

In the summer of 1996, Jaquanda Villegas, Jacinda Bullie, and Leida Garcia, came together to found the Chicago-based arts initiative, Kuumba Lynx. Grounded in the belief that Hip-Hop's power to make social change is in edutainment—a form of popular education through entertainment—they seek to use the Hip-Hop movement to increase urban arts, social consciousness, inner peace, creativity, and universal freedom. Their focus has been on developing healthy hearts, minds, and bodies, so that strong community foundations can thrive in a universe comprised of love. As such, the organization seeks to empower urban communities, through exploring individual experiences and neighborhood stories, while preserving Hip-Hop culture.



Carlos Montezuma

In conjunction with community arts programming, Kuumba Lynx has developed a traveling intergenerational performance group, the Kuumba Lynx Performance Ensemble (KLPE), dedicated to creating community edutainment. The performance company is comprised of youth and children as young as eight years old. The philosophy of Kuumba Lynx is to nurture the apprentices and equip them with the artistic skills necessary for performing and educating audiences nationwide, while remaining rooted and connected to their respective communities.

Kuumba Lynx Teaching Artists provide artistic, cultural & historical educational programs specific to Hip-Hop & urban experiences. The programs aim to preserve participants' varied cultural backgrounds, while guiding them through the process of creating their own performance work or specifically studying one component/ technique of an urban art form, such as The Art of Djaying, Graffiti Art, Spoken Word, Urban Dance, and Hip Hop Theater.

Kuumba Lynx defines Hip-Hop as an ever growing urban arts and cultural movement rooted in the ideology of community upliftment and self-determination. It is a vehicle for expressing identity, culture and community experiences as well as a resistive force against oppression. Kuumba Lynx is supported by The Illinois Arts Council,

City Arts I, Department of Cultural Affairs, and The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation.

In the fall of 2007, KLPE ventured South for their first out-of-state performance of the school year. This year's journey was prefaced with a kiss from Mother Earth, as the youth stepped off the concrete city streets to fully experience the plush brown earth and natural surroundings. In the mountains of Tennessee, the youth engaged in rock climbing and cavern navigating in the picturesque Rock City. Taking in the beautiful color changes of fall, the youth were invigorated and awed by Mother Earth's nurturing beautification and blessings. The tone was set for an incredible trip!

KLPE then left Rock City to continue the journey to Atlanta, Georgia. With no definite plans other than to explore the Spellman College campus, KLPE members happened to stumble upon a campus talent show presented by SKIRTS (Sisters Keeping it Real Through Service) which was slated to begin that evening. Unexpectedly, KLPE was recognized by an event staff member and was then invited to perform as guests of honor for the show. Of course the KLPE crew represented Chicago and performed to thunderous applause!

KLPE once again performed in Columbus, Georgia for the School of Americas Watch Vigil and Nonviolent Direct Action to Close the School of the Americas and to Change the Racist System of Violence and Domination!" This annual gathering brings together thousands of high school, college students and elders together to remember the thousands of lives taken at the hands of this institution and to decry the U.S. government sponsored training of South American mercenaries.

Kuumba Lynx has also performed at colleges across the nation including The New School in New York City, San Francisco University, Clark-Atlanta University, Spellman College, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, University of Wisconsin-Madison and more. Nationally, KLPE has toured San Francisco, New York, Atlanta, South Dakota, Grand Canyon, Hawaii, and Cuba. Wherever they travel, Kuumba Lynx performances focus on social justice, as well as global, community, and spiritual issues.

On May 22nd, Kuumba Lynx Performance Ensemble will perform its annual Spring Production at Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre. KLPE will perform at 10:30AM and 7:00PM.

For tickets, folks can call Liz Levy at 312-654-5639. For more information you can visit the Kuumba Lynx website at www.kuumbalynx.org. Their promotional video can be found at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEL46QFBqDs>

YOUTH SPEAK OUT FOR SAFE PLACES TO BE

Boys and girls are left to find their own recreation and companionship in the streets. An increasing number of children are at home with no adult care or supervision. Young people need to know that someone cares about them.

—Kahlil Sassa, Edison Middle School

I think a big reason that kids don't attend after-school programs is because they don't know about them. Kids should also make sure others know that many latchkey kids get into serious trouble. An organization that could help improve this issue is YMCA. I think that kids can improve this problem with effort. Nothing's impossible.

—Sara Sunderland, Edison Middle School

An issue in my community that I feel needs to be addressed is kids having a safe place to go after school. When kids don't have a safe place they are more likely to get into trouble.

—Melana Radanavong, Edison Middle School

Today in our community there are not many places that kids can go to get help with school-work besides school, the library, and home to their parents. Kids may need someone else to talk to other than a teacher or parents; they may need the opportunity to have a tutor.

—Toni Thrasher, Urbana Middle School

Just like you, I have a dream but my dream is to have a place that is nice for studying, hanging out, and a place you can go when you are upset. Kids everywhere have parents who work a million hours just to make ends meet and do not have time for their kids.

—Acaisha Washington, Franklin Middle School

There are few places where people can study or relax. The person on the south side of my town has tons of places to go but not the north side. I really do not think that is right and fair

—David Robinson, Franklin Middle School

Boxing Champs Worked to Help Black Youth in Campaign

In the late 1960, after a "brawl" had taken place at the Douglass Center, Khair Aazaad Ali (aka as Freddie Davis) and Anderson Epps, a former boxing champs, established a boxing club to help young men who had gotten in trouble with the law. Their hope was to show young black men there were other things to do besides getting into trouble. In an old garage behind Washington School, the two men trained many black youth over the years, including the first national champion from Champaign, Anthony.

Campaign to End the Death Penalty Speaking Tour

Wed., Feb. 27, 7:00pm, Room TBA, Campaign to End the Death Penalty (CEDP) is including UIUC in their national speaking tour: "A Broken System... Crying Out For Justice." The UIUC visit will feature Darby Tillis, former death row inmate, and Marlene Marten, director of the CEDP.

Upon co-sponsorship by your group, we will list you on our posters. As well, we will give CU Citizens a special thanks at the event.

For more information about the speaking tour, visit this site: <http://nodeathpenalty.org/content/index.php>

JAMES CONNOLLY IRISH CULTURAL FESTIVAL

Saturday, March 15th, Noon-5PM
Independent Media Center
Downtown Urbana Post Office Building
202 S. Broadway
Irish Food, Dance, Music,
Culture, and Commentary

FEATURING:

Paul Hinson-Baggiper
Emerald Rum with Beth Simpson
with Special Musical Guest, Exorna
Admission \$10, (children 12 and under FREE)



STUDENTS SPEAK OUT ON DISCRIMINATION

I think people should stop judging others by how they look. Many people are being affected by this. I know a group of people that are really being affected by this. It is Muslims that get all the bad comments about their religion. Another important thing is to try to lower down on the media. We Muslims do lots of good things in the world so there is nothing really bad about them!!!

—Mariam Saadah, Edison Middle School

Disabled children are often excluded from a mainstream education. They are then deprived of social development, and the same chances when they become adults. Accepting and being friends with disabled children is one thing we can do as kids.

—Zippy Goldenfeld, Campus Middle School



SOLHOT: "Know That!"

By Ruth Nicole Brown



Ruth Nicole Brown, founder of the Sol-Hot program, is an assistant professor of Women and Gender Studies and Educational Policy Studies at UIUC.

Roshawnna Winfrey passed on Tuesday, January 22, 2008. I did not know Roshawnna Winfrey personally. Yet when I was told she committed suicide, my soul stirred. A young person's death whispers, reminding us that collectively we will not be as great as we could have been.

The following Thursday, a girl I work with in Saving Our Lives Hear Our Truths (SOLHOT) sent me a text: "Hey um will u be busy around 11:30."

"I have to teach. Was up?" I text back.

"Um it's a funeral can u take me."

"Funeral for who?" I text back naively.

Unable to text or speak her name because she's shaken, she calls and I say,

"Was Roshawnna your friend?"

They went to grade school together. As a dutiful friend she was sitting with her school counselor, permission already granted from mom to go celebrate the life of Roshawnna, hug friends similarly hurting, and to give love to "Boo's" family.

"I can take you," I reply, "I'm leaving now."

It was in the faces of family and friends that I learned more about Roshawnna's gifts and talents. The unspoken motivation that kept people standing on their feet in the church communicated that she was a daughter, a friend, a sister, and a mentor—loved. I heard the speakers explain that she was much like the girls I work with—fun to be around, expressively independent, good with kids, and a real talent for making people laugh. She was a very special somebody, as the saying goes, and by all accounts gone too soon.



In SOLHOT we do the "incense circle" to honor our ancestor and to celebrate those who help get us through the day (Photo: Candy Taaffe)

*Which is why I can't let this go.
Why should I feel discouraged,
why should the shadows come?
Why should my heart be lonely,
and long for heaven and home?*

I don't really know what happened. I don't know the details. But I do know the voices of black girls who come

to SOLHOT, who keep calling me, asking me if I heard about Roshawnna. We all want to know, why? And how? And what if that was me or my sister? And can I lean on you? So, I don't have to make that decision, because I understand why someone might have, and did. And most of all, should I be afraid? Did Roshawnna's death have anything to do with being a black girl? Because I'm a black girl too and I don't want to die that way and I could. Could anything have been done so she didn't have to either?



In SOLHOT we write poems, songs, and stories because we have something very important to say (Photo: Candy Taaffe)

What happened to Roshawnna cannot be business as usual in Urbana Champaign for black girls, young people in general.



In SOLHOT we dance and move to feel our selves beautiful! (Photo: Candy Taaffe)

*I sing because I'm happy
I sing because I'm free
His eye is on the sparrow
And I know why he watches me*

It is up to us to remember a black girl's life—short-lived but powerful. To make it impossible for anyone else to see suicide as a viable way out.

We have to create our own celebrations. SOLHOT is a space where black women and girls come together to try and be positive, to try new things, to relate to each other in ways that challenge the status quo, to work together. Our coming together to be loved and to say I love you, and to admit that we not always feeling loved is usually underlying our actions and our words. For this reason, I never

underestimate a word uttered.

When black girls talk casually to each other and they know they are not being judged, many truths emerge. For example, sometimes when we're talking, a girl full and sure of herself will finish her statement with the declaration: "Know that!" In this moment I hear her saying more than two words. I hear her telling it like it is, suggesting we better learn something. I hear her saying, "I'm here, and I can teach you something." She's asking to be held accountable, and she is telling you she is going to hold you accountable. "Know that!"

All the ways they keep telling us: in the ordinary moments of life, some times extraordinary lessons are learned. In the death of a young person, in the genius wrapped up and disguised as "talking back," in being together under intentionally different circumstances, those who don't really "count" demand accountability. At the risk of romanticizing black girls, I think we should listen more. Period. They keep telling us.

Know that!

My love and condolences to the family and friends of Roshawnna Winfrey. To the girls, parents, and homegirl volunteers who attend and support SOLHOT, lets' continue to celebrate those we need to know and remember- thank you for being you! Thank you to the University of Illinois, Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club, and the Urbana Free Library.

YOUTH SPEAK OUT FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR COMMUNITY

I believe that we should help the communities more, by opening more peer mediation centers and getting young black adults involved more. Try to talk sense into kids by letting them know they're not alone. Find out what sparks their minds. Open up more schools, staff and equip the schools, and provide more funding so children can get a good education. Teach them to be magnificent.

—Deanna King, Central High School

Let me tell you what I think about poor children that don't have education. It doesn't only affect young children, but it affects parents, and people who care about social justice.

—Perla Zarco, Edison Middle School

There are too many children out there that have little to no support...I believe there are ways to help them through young people. One thing we could do is be kinder and realize why they may act differently... Also if we support the entire family the parents would be able to support their children better.

—Elias Wilcoski, Edison Middle School

Kids are being hurt by someone physically or emotionally. I think that young people are scared to admit that they are being hurt. When kids are being hurt they need to be able to have someone to talk to.

—Joshua Johnson, Edison Middle School

An idea I have is to raise enough money to create a building for kids who are treated unfairly and unequally. They could use this building as a refuge to get away from all the negativity that is in their lives. I think it would be very cool for these kids just to have somewhere to go and have fun. If you are a teacher, salesman, or even a garbage man, no matter who you are you can help. I know I am going to look inside my heart and try to treat people more fairly and equally.

—Michael Wade, Jefferson Middle School

We have a lot of community problems, but the most important one is struggling teens. The whole community can help, but the most effective groups are the parents, teachers, and the tutors.

—Jacob Wade, Jefferson Middle School

Help for Troubled Teens Hope Academy at Columbia School

Unit 4 Columbia School is taking a step in a positive direction with the start of Hope Academy. Hope Academy is for students 16 and up that have been referred by their home school due to high truancy and are at high-risk of not graduating. This program has a tremendous challenge to face considering attendance is a major component of the program.

Students will do accelerated classroom study part of the day and gain career exploration the other part of the day. With the support of local businesses we will have the opportunity to place students in job shadowing and work opportunities. Most important we will have a chance to offer a real alternative to these students.

This is a very important opportunity to address the problem of high school drop-outs. As we know the higher the

drop out rate the more likely they are to end up in jail. We must cease this opportunity. Habari Connection is a partner and will help by providing paid/un-paid work training opportunities for teens.

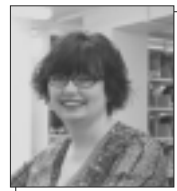
For more information, contact Unit 4 or Columbia School at 217-351-3700.





Will Free Speech Double Speak Stifle Healing?

by Marti Wilkinson



My parents moved to Champaign, IL when I was a small child in the early 1970's and they have lived here since. One of the ways in which they have managed to make this community their "home" is through following and supporting the efforts of the Fighting Illini in their athletic endeavors. I remember my parents taking me to see football and basketball games and watching Chief Illiniwek dancing during half-time. Historically both the football and basketball teams have made a significant contribution to the communities in Champaign County and many residents, like my parents, don't have to be alumni in order to be fans. The rise of Native American mascots coincides with the emergence of the Big Ten during the great depression and, during that time, team spirit became a mobilizing force for people.

When activists started protesting the use of Native American mascots I just didn't understand what all of the ruckus was about. After all, I had seen the team spirit at the games and found the dance of the chief to be uplifting. Years later, a Native American woman I befriended simply asked me how I would feel if the mascot of a university were presented in blackface. That made me really think about the issue from a different perspective. It's not enough to state that no harm is intended in the performance of a mascot—the simple truth is good intentions do not justify hurtful practices.

It's unfortunate that we see the current administration supporting the Honor the Chief Society's efforts to resurrect the mascot under the banner of free speech. As an educational institution the University of Illinois does have the right to discipline any organization that engages in racist activity. The "Taco's and Tequilas" party held at a Fraternity and Sorority in 2006 is an example of this. If stereotypical representations of Mexicans as entertainment are not allowed on the campus, then how can the U of I justify the usage of a Native American caricature as a form of free speech by a registered student organization? This tendency to turn a blind eye for the sake of appeasing a group of people who just don't get it makes it impossible for there to be any kind of resolution to this particular issue.

Freedom of speech is a much admired and often misunderstood right in the United States. As an individual I can write a letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine and, in doing so, I am exercising my right to free speech. In return the newspaper has the right to refuse to publish my letter or to go ahead and publish with modifications. In the event that my letter does not get published I can still engage in my rights to expressing an opinion in other

ways. As such, the gatekeeper function assumed by newspapers and websites are not violating anyone's right to an opinion or the right to express it.

After the U of I retired the chief the *News-Gazette* published a book called *Chief Illiniwek: A Tribute to an Illinois Tradition* and copies can be purchased at local bookstores and it can be purchased online through Amazon.com. Personally, I think it exposes the *News-Gazette* as a racist rag that values profits over the dignity of Native Americans; yet I am also willing to defend their actions as protected speech.

Many court cases dealing with First Amendment issues have had to address topics that have ranged from issues of libel to obscenity statutes. In doing so the judicial system has managed to outline what freedom of speech is, or isn't. I can be critical of a public official and, as a public figure, the official cannot sue me for libel unless I deliberately and knowingly write false information with the malicious intent of causing harm. Even then it's hard to prove libel under those circumstances. Public figures often don't have the same protections as private citizens in that regards.

Courts have also ruled that communities can set guidelines for how obscene materials are distributed and made available to the public. Some of the limitations can include the age of individuals who participate in pornographic productions, the age of the buyer, and statues which adhere to the 'community standards' of a specific location. The judgment used by our court systems have consistently noted that there are reasonable limitations that can be imposed on the First Amendment.

Prior to the retirement of Chief Illiniwek a post appeared on Facebook that suggested throwing a Tomahawk in the face of a student activist. State Attorney Julia Rietz refused to press charges on the grounds that this particular post is protected speech and her decision was the correct one. This is because there aren't any laws on the books, which could have been used by the State Attorneys' office to pur-

sue criminal charges.

The Facebook controversy highlights how the Internet has turned into an uncharted territory in the realm of freedom of speech and press rights. As things stand right now it's up to website administrators to edit out potentially offensive and inflammatory content. The internet is still a recent addition to mediums of communication and only time will be able to address issues such as what happened over the Facebook controversy.

It is no real surprise to me that there is still a lot of seething animosity over the decision made by the U of I to 'retire' the Chief. People who believe that the mascot is a symbol which honors Native Americans and adds prestige to the university feel angry and hurt by the sentiment that Illiniwek is a racist symbol. As someone who grew up amidst Illini fever, I can truly empathize with people who have found the objections of activists to be an open challenge to their feelings and belief systems. It will take time before any real healing can begin and I hope the university will carefully consider their role in this process.



Statement By Republican Candidate Miller-Jones

*Note: last month we published statements by the two Democratic candidates

1.) My qualifications for State's Attorney and why I decided to run for the job:

I have over 8 years of criminal law experience as a licensed attorney and additional experience as an intern for the Attorney General's Office. I have 14 years of Military experience which has taught me military bearing, never to give up in what I believe and how to professionally and successfully manage employees and delegate work. For the last five years I have been a member of the JAG Corps.

I decided to run for State's Attorney because as a Public Defender I see first hand the inequities in the system and have serious concerns about the criminal justice process. I believe I can implement policies and procedures that will improve our system. Instead of being one of those who complain and get upset by what is happening in the criminal justice system and do nothing about it, the opportunity presented itself and I knew it was time to step up to the plate and do something more. So I have stepped up to the plate and I am going to do what needs to be done to make

our criminal justice system in Champaign County better for our whole community

2.) My vision for law enforcement in Champaign County:

I want law enforcement to be more involved in the community. I appreciate the work the police do and I want more. I want more community policing. I want the people in every community, in every neighborhood to know who the police are that patrol their neighborhood. I want the police officers to be invested in that neighborhood and the community. I want them to care about every person in that neighborhood and what troubles they are having. Every neighborhood has different issues and concerns, and I want the police officers that patrol them to understand what the unique issues are that affect the neighborhoods they serve. I want the people who live here to care about their community, to become involved with the police in preventing crime, in reporting crime in caring about each other. If the community

can see the Police as people who are there to help and that they (the Police) really care about members of the community, then the relationship will improve.

3.) What changes I believe need to be made in the local criminal justice system:

First and foremost I believe the State's Attorney should seek justice and not just a conviction. I believe in consistent charging and fair sentencing. I believe the state's Attorney's Office should more proactive to crime and not just reactive. To make the criminal justice system run efficiently and fairly, which should be the goal, requires the State's Attorney to be open with the Public. The Public needs to know that justice will be the main goal, and that they will be treated fairly. The community as a whole needs to know that cases which are prosecuted are done so in good faith.

I want the State's Attorney's Office to be a partner with the community in reducing crime. I will work with the community

organizations, schools, social service agencies and police departments. I will establish a community outreach program to teach all members of our community about the criminal justice system and give everyone the opportunity to share concerns and give suggestions to make our system better. I want a Peer Court program in this county. I want to work with the youth of this community, and with the help of the community keep these kids out of the justice system. The battle against crime begins with the youth. I will establish a Drug School program. A similar program has been used by the Cook County State's Attorney for the past 29 years and has more than an 80% success rate. It is an alternative to traditional prosecution and is a drug intervention and education program for nonviolent drug offenders. I want to utilize the Adult Diversion program more. I will 'think outside the box'. A person who commits a crime can be punished and rehabilitated without having a criminal conviction.

C-U African Film Festival

By Mahir Saul

Mahir Saul is the Associate Curator for the Spurlock Museum, Department of Anthropology at UIUC.

Hankering for a tweak on your senses? The C-U African Film Festival promises a respite from the commercial winter fare of Hollywood. Beverly Cinemas in Champaign will host the festival from February 22-28. Organized by the Center for African Studies at the U of I, the festival will offer multiple screenings of feature films from different African countries, including a full-length animated feature for children.

African filmmaking excited notice this year with Danny Glover's well-publicized involvement in *Bamako*, a mock courtroom drama by the acclaimed filmmaker Abderrahmane Sissako. Glover co-produced and also has a hilarious cameo appearance in the film. Although nominated for his role in *Dreamgirls*, Glover skipped the 2007 Academy Awards ceremony to participate in the Panafrican Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou in West Africa. *Democracy Now's* Amy Goodman conducted a phone interview the next day with Glover, which reverberated through the Internet. The Panafrican film festival of Ouagadougou (known for short as FESPACO) is the biggest film event in Africa. Some of the films to be screened in the C-U African Film Festival were awarded prizes at FESPACO.

Urbana-Champaign moviegoers have had a few scattered occasions to view African films. Both The Roger Ebert Film Festival and the Tournées French Film Festival have included some outstanding examples in past years. Yet, it is still hard for the average viewer to distinguish an "African movie" from a television documentary, or Euro-American drama that casts a white hero against an exotic backdrop of wilderness. The African Film Festival presents a glimpse of the genuine article—films conceived by African directors and wrought by African crews, a diverse menu that will stimulate and entertain, as it unsettles predispositions.

FEATURED FILMS AT THE FESTIVAL

Bamako is set in the domestic courtyard of a home in the capital city of Mali. A trial pitting African civil society against the World Bank is about to be engaged, and lawyers from both sides arrive armed with passionate accusations. In surreal contrast, the everyday life of the families encasing the courtyard presses forward. Chaka thinks of his impending break-up with his sexy wife Melé and his urgent need to find work. A local detective, a bedridden sick young man, newlyweds celebrating their marriage, a crime scene photographer, and a woman lead-

ing a fabric dyers workshop intercut the proceedings and lend poetic tribute to daily existence.

Ezra is the story of a Sierra Leonian teenage boy, formerly a child soldier, facing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission which is trying to piece together the puzzle of a devastating attack on a village during the country's murderous civil war. The film is a punch in the gut that eschews easy emotions. The Nigerian filmmaker, Newton Aduaka, won the Grand Prize in FESPACO in 2007 for his deft direction of this movie, Plan's Special Child Rights Award conferred by a jury consisting mostly of children, and the UNESCO's Peace Promotion Prize.

Tasuma is a laid-back comedy from Burkina Faso filmed against the fetching vistas of a hilltop village. An elderly veteran, still affectionately called "Fire" for his bravery in the battlefields of his colonial army days, bumps along his bicycle in the rock-strewn descent from his village to the main road, wearing his medal-laden uniform, in the hopeless pursuit of his pension. He gets in trouble trying to do good, but everything works itself out when the women decide to take matters into their own hands. Director Kollo Sanou won a Bronze Stallion at FESPACO for this charming movie.

The Hero is a compassionate film from Angola, another civil war torn country, around a decorated veteran who waited months to receive a prosthetic leg. Indifference, joblessness, and theft dash his hopes for a dignified new life. Other characters enter his life, all carrying different sorts of scars. As they learn to lean on each other, the film abjures deluded romanticism but offers a hopeful and humane anticipation of the future. This powerful creation earned director Zeze Gamboa the World Dramatic Grand Prize at Sundance in 2005.

Les Saignantes is a film with an attitude by the most experimental of filmmakers, Cameroon's maverick Jean-Pierre Bekolo. This stylized sci-fi-action hybrid is about two young femmes fatales who set out to rid a futuristic country of its corrupt and sexually obsessed powerful men, against eye-popping color and décor. Adèle Ado's performance won her the Best Actress Award at FESPACO. The film's intentionally cheap-looking DV frames, aesthetics of the cool, and hyperactive editing produced mixed reviews after festival screenings, but *Slant Magazine's* Keith Ulrich called it "an unqualified masterpiece."

Kirikou and the Sorceress is an animated movie with snappy visuals that exquisitely recounts the adventures of tiny Kirikou as he sallies forth to free his village from the curse of wicked Karaba. A great box office success, it features a soundtrack by Senegalese music giant Youssouf N'Dour.

SHOW TIMES

Feb. 22: *Tasuma*, 7 p.m.; *Bamako*, 9 p.m.; *Les Saignantes*, 11:15 p.m.

Feb. 23: *Bamako*, noon; *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, 2:30 p.m.; *Ezra*, 4:45 p.m.; *Les Saignantes*, 7 p.m.; *O'Herai*, 9 p.m.; *Tasuma*, 11:15 p.m.

Feb. 24: *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, noon; *Bamako*, 2:30 p.m.; *Les Saignantes*, 4:45 p.m.; *O'Herai*, 7 p.m.; *Ezra*, 9 p.m.

Feb. 25: *Tasuma*, noon; *Ezra*, 2:30 p.m.; *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, 4:45 p.m.; *Les Saignantes*, 7 p.m.; *Bamako*, 9 p.m.

Feb. 26: *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, noon; *Bamako*, 2:30 p.m.; *Ezra*, 4:45 p.m.; *O'Herai*, 7 p.m.; *Tasuma*, 9 p.m.

Feb. 27: *Bamako*, noon; *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, 2:30 p.m.; *Tasuma*, 4:45 p.m.; *Les Saignantes*, 7 p.m.; *O'Herai*, 9 p.m.

Feb. 28: *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, noon; *Ezra*, 2:30 p.m.; *O'Herai*, 4:45 p.m.; *Tasuma*, 7 p.m.; *Bamako*, 9 p.m.

Spike Lee



I think it is very important that films make people look at what they've forgotten.

—Spike Lee



Asian Film Screening

The 2007 Academy Awards winner for Best Documentary Short, *The Blood of Yingzhou District* (in Chinese with English subtitles), will screen on Tuesday, February 19 at 7:00 p.m. in the Armory, Room 101, 505 E. Armory Ave., Champaign. Free admission.



Poems of War and Peace: A Mother's Response to War

Poems presented at A Mother's Response to War event on November 12, 2007.

A Poem of Sorrow

Katy (Scott) Zatsick, son wounded in Iraq

A mother waits
A messenger comes to her door
The sun stops in its course across the sky
And plunges her world into night
Sorrow so deep
Her wail so strong
It broke my heart
Here in Chicago this day.

Joined together forever are we
One son gave an order
One son died
We are one in our tears
"I am sorry my son says, 'Fire.'"

I hold your son in my arms
And pray for your healing
And may the world be reconciled
To understand we are one.

The Messenger of Death

Paul Appell, a Vietnam War veteran

Flip, flip the numbers on the odometer turn over
One less mile till I have to deliver the message from Dover
Thump, thump goes the mother's fists against my chest
Not enough miles to think of a justification for her son's eternal rest
The odometer of life flips on with each setting sun
I find myself writing another mother about the death of another son
Though separated by miles of ocean and waves that pound the shore
I feel her fists pound my chest because of the inadequate message that I bore
Though months, years, decades on my odometer turn over
Like the phantom pain of a lost appendage, the thump, thump is forever
In Iraq a boy from my small community can no longer take any breaths
The pounding thump, thump tells me this of all these Iraq and Viet Nam War deaths
Waste, waste, waste

It is Wrong to Kill

George Mizo, Vietnam veteran who died of Agent Orange Disease

You, my church told me it was wrong to kill...
except in war.
You, my teachers, told me it was wrong to kill...
except in war.
You, my father and mother, told me it was wrong to kill...
except in war.
You, my friends, told me it was wrong to kill...
except in war.
You, my government, told me it was wrong to kill...
except in war.

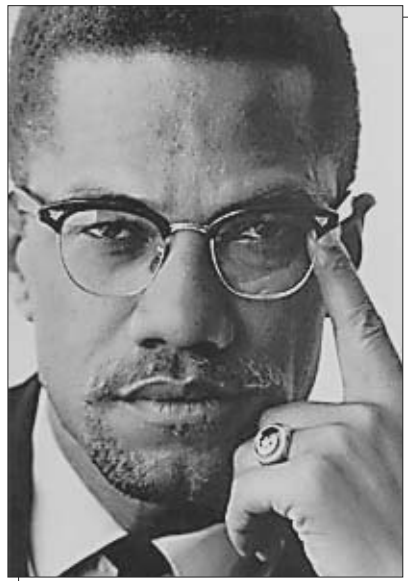
You sent me to war to kill...
And now I will tell you...
My church,
My teachers,
My mother and father,
My government...
It is wrong to kill...except in war...
It is wrong to kill... PERIOD.
And this you have to learn...
Just as I did.



STUDENTS SPEAK OUT AGAINST THE WAR

Dr. King, we have a problem with war and terrorism. Instead of going to war killing thousands of people, we should have turned the other cheek and created peace.

—Denzel Smith, Grade 9, READY School



You can't separate peace from freedom because no one can be at peace unless he has his freedom.

—Malcolm X

Now that we are in war with Iraq we have to pay more tax and stuff gets more expensive like GAS! The war affects our friendship with other countries. I want to find a way to help stop war.

—LaToyah Mason, Franklin Middle School

Think if wars happened for racial discrimination, which I think they do. Then no one would get hurt if everyone put themselves in other people's shoes.

—Hanan Jaber, University High School

STUDENTS SPEAK OUT FOR BETTER EDUCATION

Most students who do not complete school do so because of family problems. Some girls especially drop out of school because they want to get married and start a family. Also, some girls' parents are not interested in education and do not support them. Schools with baby minding facilities should be open especially for married students. The government needs to stress the importance of education and provide financial support to students to continue.

—Justice D. Winfield, Edison Middle School

There is an issue in my city since it is a university town. A lot of people don't go to college or finish high school. I think this is because some people can't afford college since it is so expensive. I also think people don't want to attend college because they think it would be hard and stressful.

—Luke Meikamp, Urbana Middle School

Many students that I know don't go to college. Most of these students don't have the money to go. It's very hard to live these days; so many things are so expensive it's unreal. College is really expensive and there are not that many scholarships to give to everyone who needs one.

—Molly Harmon, Urbana Middle School



Champaign Chapter of War Mothers of World War II. c 1943. (Photo Courtesy of the Champaign County African American History Committee.)



What is the Struggle?

Recapturing the captives
Minds lost because we've adapted
Adopted ideas and definitions that tell us what Black is

A month to discuss
So we rush,
Demanding holidays and a place on the bus, that don't lead "back to Africa"
Putting men on pedestals that your enemies help you boost
STUCK IN A DREAM!
So the chickens rarely come home to roost.
On this *Sojourn*
We hide from *Truth*
Bombarded daily with the brainwash, but,
Renaissance Poets are the stain wash
For 'spots' scattered throughout the hood
On special occasions
We all hold hands and the complacent tell you,
"It's all good, somebody died for you,"
I know,
Malcolm, Martin, Medgar
And a bunch mo' too, but now,
What does that do?

Even sinless,
We still spiral into an abyss that's endless
Are we suppose to pretend this
Stealing of our souls,
Wasn't done by so-called Christians?
This must be mentioned,
Because the most important thing stolen was your attention!

Twelve months minus one still leaves eleven,
Leadership is nothing with followers who are afraid to go to Heaven
Be it in your mind, or a place in the sky,
We run from knowledge and ain't no-body rushin' to die, for what they believe in,
Excuse after excuse
Is what they keep preach-in
Do you know who you are?
That you possess more energy than an atom bomb,
Do you know you're a star?

We scream progress because this month use to be a week,
That's why you're constantly told you're the meek
Because the weak
Are fit to be slaves,
Given dominion of the world
And this is how we behave,
Begging at an altar for forgiveness when we falter
Instead of coming at them in waves of consciousness
We indulge in non-sense, thus,
We perish while we breathe,
Our children seethe with anger
Because they see us as hypocrites and cowards,

So we beat them,
The way the slave masters did us,
We lie to them and destroy their trust,
The way the slave masters did us,
We feed them garbage,
The way the slave masters did us.
We give them no education,
The way the slave masters did us.
Then we fill them with the same fear that has captivated us!

See it's easy for punks
to pop trunks
and talk junk

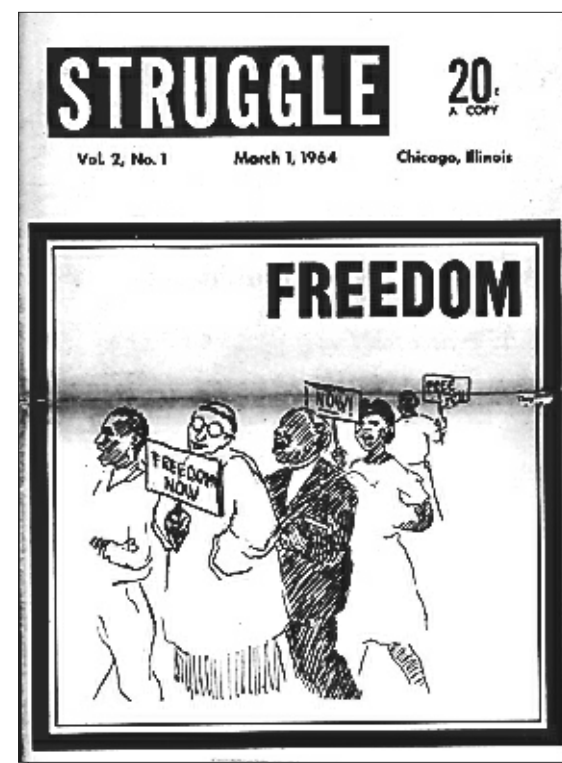
to other chumps
But when I tell you to stop selling drugs and protect the hood
Then I'm a gump?
While the oil tycoons raise the price at the pump and sleep easy at night,
But if I stick you up
Then it's a fight!
With our *hebetudes*, they figure,
It'll take us another fifty years before we approach Black
The way we do nigger,
Wow!
You mean Black is defined as void of power
So where you think you've been given leeway
It's just a new way, to re-enforce, inferiority,
Sad and sullen is *his-story*, of our African memoirs,
Why does this month only seem to remind us of deep scars
Instead of deep roots into Egypt
Because you've been clipped at the cerebral,
Tricked into thinking you're feeble,
Did I say black also means evil?

Listen class,
People are defined by culture, language, and a land mass
Worry of wrath from an illusion
Contributes to your confusion
& Leaves you ignorantly defending
An illogical conclusion,
Whose in charge of your thoughts,
That's the struggle!

—Aaron Ammons

Speak Café Feb. 14, 2008.

Of course it is Black History Month, Frederick Douglass' Birthday and Valentines Day. Speak goes from 7-9p.m at the Krannert Art Museum (500 E. Peabody). Slices of sweet potato pie will be given away to the first 20 people!



The Struggle Newspaper,
March 1, 1964

The Struggle, often called "The Freedom Magazine," not only focused on the issues of the Civil Rights Movement in the Chicagoland area, but also on national political and Civil Rights issues. In addition, Struggle also educated its readers on black history by providing monthly biographical sketches of key leaders in history.

Source: Chicago Public Library, Harsh Research Collection, Donald Mosby Papers