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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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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.

## Community Calendar

**2/19** "Business as a Solution to Poverty in Africa," The University YMCA Friday Forum, 12pm, \$6 (\$3 students)

**2/19-21** Legacy: Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center

**2/20** Middle East Story Time Urbana Free Library, Megan's Room, 2pm-3pm

Quest for Freedom: 1850s, 1960s. Camille Born, Teller: A Rocking Chair and A Trunk: Stories from the Underground Railroad.

Kim Sheahan, Teller: A Place to Live: The Life of Anne Braden, Civil Rights Activist, Faith United Methodist Church, Champaign, 7:30 pm \$5

Champaign Urbana Dumpster Divers Association Urbana Free Library, The Satterthwaite Conference Room, 1-3pm

**2/21** UFLive! presents West African Drummer Bolokade Conde Urbana Free Library, The Lewis Auditorium (Ground Floor), 2-3pm

**2/22** Melting Ice: Climate Change and the Humanities 7:30pm, Levis Faculty Center, Third Floor

Grand Prairie Friends Seed Planting NRB Greenhouse (Corner of 6th and Pennsylvania St Champaign, IL), 7pm-8pm

Knit & Craft Nite, St. Jude Catholic Worker's House, 6pm

**2/24** Social Justice Forum Channing Murray Chapel, 7-8pm

**2/26** Korea Workshop, South Korea's Queer Internet and the Making of Democracy, 1 NOYES 16, 11am-3pm

**2/27** Celebrating African Women Writers Teacher's Workshop Urbana Free Library The Satterthwaite Conference Room, 9am-12pm

Lesson in Leadership from African Women Urbana Free Library The Lewis Auditorium, 1-3pm

**2/28** UFL Reads Memoirs--This Life Ain't Gravy Urbana Free Library, The MacFarlane-Hood Reading Room (First Floor), 2-3pm

## 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**  
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Published by the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center

February 2010  
V10, #2

## Black History Month



The Tuskegee Airmen mural at the Chanute Air Force Base in Rantoul



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Kerry Pimblott  
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## A History of the Douglass Center

By Michael Burns



Michael Sterling Burns is a husband, father, IMC/Bike Project volunteer, and Ph.D. candidate in English/Writing Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

IN THE HEART OF THE NORTH END, the historically black community of Champaign-Urbana, is the Douglass Center. It was named in honor of the great African American abolitionist Frederick Douglass who reportedly made a stop in Champaign while on a speaking tour. When the Center was first conceived, it served as a recreational center for black enlisted men who were stationed at the Chanute Air Force base in Rantoul but denied access to white facilities. Among the ranks of these soldiers were the Tuskegee Airmen, the famous black pilots who served in World War II. Today, the Douglass Center is a landmark of local black history and life in the Champaign-Urbana area.

The origins of what is now the Douglass Center date back to the 1930s, when two centers were opened for the purpose of serving the African American population. The first, which opened in May 1931, was "an adult education center sponsored by the office of the county superintendent of schools." The program was run from a refurbished eight-room house just south of Douglass Park. While financial sponsorship of the space was attributed to the local government, organization of the center's programs was credited to the efforts of an advisory board consisting of local community members, all of whom were women. The classes offered included "cooking, sewing, dressmaking, French, reading, writing, arithmetic, English, Negro History and Hygiene."

In December 1931, another center opened. Pre-school and athletic programs that were previously run out of local area elementary schools were moved to a new site close to Douglass Park. Sponsored by the Champaign-Urbana Junior Woman's Club and the Recreation Commission, programs included crafts, social activities, music, dramatics, and other activities for all ages.

As the United States prepared to enter World War II, 250 black soldiers trained at Tuskegee Institute were sent to the Chanute Air Force Base in nearby Rantoul for training as mechanics before going on to become pilots. All the spaces for military training were provided, albeit separately and unequally, for black troops on the base. However, black soldiers were not allowed into the all-white USO recreational facilities. As a result, the North End of Champaign became a destination for African American enlisted men during "rec time."

A group of community members, along with the Champaign Playground and Recreational Board, sponsored a center to provide organized activities for these black soldiers. The Servicemen's Center opened on March 26, 1943, and consisted of two rooms in the basement of the old Lawhead School at 5th and Grove Streets. The Center showed movies, held dances, and hosted holiday events. The snack bar was especially popular, as there were few

places for African Americans to eat out. Seeing 2,500 servicemen pass through its doors each month, the space was soon outgrown.

The Servicemen's Organization was founded and funds were raised within the black community for a new center. Local black residents contributed a total of \$3,000 towards a proposed building. They also acquired two plots of land adjacent to the Douglass Park. Financial contributions from the War Chest and the Twin City Community Committee allowed them to complete the fundraising.

On February 18, 1945, the first spade of dirt was turned in a dedication ceremony and seven months later the Douglass Center was officially opened. Its first directors were Pauline Johnson and Erma Bridgewater.

### BLACK LIBRARY FOR THE BLACK COMMUNITY

In April 1970, a group of students from the Graduate School of Library Sciences at UIUC, with input from the local black community, submitted a proposal to Champaign and Urbana Public Libraries and the Lincoln Trails Library System to install a library at the Douglass Center. While it had long been a hub of activity in the black community, library services at the Douglass Center consisted largely of donated books. The North End never had a library of its own. A year later, the Douglass Center housed a full-fledged library and Miriam Butler was appointed as its first director.

At the top of the library's letterhead was the image of an open book with a raised black fist, a symbol of the Black Power era. On the pages of the book read the library's slogan, "A Black Library for the Black Community." The Douglass Library soon became a favorite hang-out for local youth. Library staff hosted a story hour, special programs, and offered day-care for children. Among the most popular events was a program called "A Soul Experience" which attracted some 350 people. In April 1971, the first month that materials were lent from the library, only 37 books were checked out. However, by August there was a circulation of more than books. In 1972, the Douglass Library officially became a branch of the Champaign Public Library.

So on after, local black activists, including John Lee Johnson, began to pressure the Champaign Park District to take greater responsibility in solving the community's problems. He was critical of the city's overemphasis on sports. "We cannot turn our backs upon drug addiction," he wrote, "by handing a kid a basketball." Discussions began about the construction of a new Douglass Center that would include space for a larger library and a senior center.

to protest the decision. Former director Erma Bridgewater and her mother Sarah Scott, along with others, attended a large rally in the park. John Lee Johnson organized a committee to protest the demolition. Over the following weeks and months, the North End staged several forms of protest and advocacy for a "complete center." A picket line was set up at the offices of the construction company the city had hired. A steering committee was formed to represent the demands of the local community, and citizens attended meetings at the Park District to make their demands clear to local government officials. After several months of struggle, the community and local agencies arrived at a compromise. In December 1975, the old center was razed and construction began on the new Douglass Center. The project was completed a year later. While the finished structure was the building as it now stands, Douglass Park is now also home for both the senior citizens' annex and the Douglass Branch of the Champaign Public Library. Taken together, these spaces serve to connect the history of struggle in the North End to a future where there is always room for progress.

to a future where there is always room for progress.

to a future where there is always room for progress.



The original logo of the Douglass Library



The Fredrick Douglass statue

### THE DOUGLASS CENTER AS IT NOW STANDS

In 1975, despite the community's need for a more diverse facility, the park board claimed it could only provide a building for a gymnasium, "because of lack of funds," and announced that the old Douglass Center would be demolished. Some 200 local residents showed up at city council

## Marxism and the Black Experience in the Era of Global Capitalism

*Ubuntu, The Black Radical Work Group in the Department of African American Studies*

**February 22, 12:00-1:30PM**

Dept. of African American Studies  
1201 West Nevada Street, Urbana

**Chair:** Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua, Departments of African American Studies & History

#### Panelists:

- Abdul Alkalimat, Department of African American Studies & the Graduate School in Library Science
- Bruce Levine, Department of History
- Bob McChesney, Department of Communication
- Lou Turner, Department of African American Studies



*Adinkra*, the Symbol of Democracy and Unity. *Ubuntu* is a classical African ethical philosophy. The term originates in the Kwa Zulu language and culture of South Africa and as a concept has parallels throughout southern and eastern Africa. *Ubuntu* means "belonging

and interconnectedness," conveying a communal rather than an individual life philosophy. As a political philosophy, *Ubuntu* is synonymous with participatory democracy, and like *Kafu* in West Africa expresses the democratic spirit of the people. It incorporates the communal ethos of sharing, mutuality, and collective decision-making that have been at the heart of African American civil society and social movements.



# Juvenile Justice in Champaign County— A Racial Disparity

By Jan Kruse



This commentary first appeared on WILL 580's Public Square.

MY NAME IS JAN KRUSE and as a resident of Champaign County I wanted to share with listeners the experiences I recently had while serving as a Champaign County Juror.

I was notified of jury duty the first week of January 2010. After going through security at the Champaign County Court House, we walked up the steps to approach the jury assembly room. In the hallway a man was directing us toward the large room for jury service. Jurors had walked up the steps side by side with those arriving for trials. The person directing us seemed to instinctively know the white folks were prospective jurors and the black men and women were either going to court to face a jury or were the supportive family members accompanying them. It appeared I was one of over 100 potential jurists. We filled the large jury assembly room and the overflow west wing area as well. I was shocked to note that between both rooms only one black male was present to be considered for jury service. This was very troubling in light of the number of court cases that involve members of the minority community.

Eventually I was chosen for a jury and became one of twelve white people hearing a case brought against a young black man. I was troubled that his case was not going to be before a jury of his peers since not a single minority was serving on the jury. This fact has to affect the outcomes of many trials in Champaign County.

It was most troubling to hear fellow jurors use unacceptable racial terms in reference to the defendant. When I observed that we were an all white jury, some jurors were

offended that I had noticed. The addition of persons of color as full partners in the deliberation process could have had a significant impact in this case. The lack of a minority person's voice is a failure of the judicial system to bring a missing, necessary, and much needed perspective.

The "presumption of innocence until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt" did not appear to be taken seriously by some during deliberation. Instead, I noted verbal pressure being asserted by some toward the undecided to join the majority and vote guilty. Reasonable doubt was not enough, in the face of "majority rule."

The presence in that jury room of persons with a more diverse ethnic background may have considered the testimony and the evidence, or lack, of in this case and seen the defendant from a different perspective, a perspective seldom heard if the jury is of only one ethnic group.

The inability of the county judicial system to assure that each person has a fair trial (beginning with a jury of ones peers) is very disappointing. In addition, as the trial continued, it became obvious that the young man on trial was not being adequately represented. The lawyer did not appear to fully advocate for his client. It was made painfully clear that finances are required to obtain a fully engaged attorney. The combination of a jury not-of-his peers and the poor representation that is apparently all too common for poor people makes it doubly difficult for the minority members of our community. An individual's race or financial status should not stand in the way of a fair trial in this county.

Until these concerns are fully addressed I contend justice will not be served for all citizens of Champaign County.

## Interview With Deborah Thomas Who Lives In The House Where Kiwane Carrington Was Killed

On December 8, State's Attorney Julia Reitz released a 13-page report concluding that Kiwane Carrington had been shot "accidentally" by Champaign police officer Daniel Norbits. While dedicating only one paragraph to Norbits' history, and failing to mention his involvement in the 2000 death of Gregory Brown, Rietz spends several pages discrediting the black witnesses. After reviewing the interviews with Deborah Thomas, who lived at 906 W. Vine where Kiwane was killed, Rietz said her statements "were not considered to be credible." In particular, Rietz said Thomas initially stated that Kiwane was not allowed to be in the house. In this interview on Dec. 11, 2009, conducted by Melodye Rosales and Chris Evans, Thomas responds to the claim that she changed her story, explains how police lied to her, and says Kiwane was always permitted in her home.

### WHAT HAPPENED THAT MORNING?

**CE:** So, what was your schedule that day? You got up at about 6 a.m. and then...

**DT:** Got those two ready for school, my step sister usually comes to get those two and I usually take off for school. Which is what I did.

**CE:** What time was your class?

**DT:** 7 am.

**CE:** What time did you get over there?

**DT:** 7:50.

**CE:** How did you come back?

**DT:** I came back home. I drove my car.

**CE:** That's right. And you got here at about 7:50.

**DT:** No. I got here—class is out at 7:50. I got here maybe about say 10, 20 after 8.

**CE:** OK. When you came in the-

**DT:** It had to at least be about 8:25, 8:30 to tell you, to be exact, because Ebonee and Issiah, at that time were both were going to Central. My brother comes to pick them up at exactly 10 after 8 and they were all gone. When I came home, Kiwane was sitting, was standing right here, where my microwave is. Right down there. And he was cooking him something to eat. And I said: "Boy, how come you are not at school like the rest of the kids?" He said: "Mrs. Debra, you know, I go to READY, I don't got to be at school until 10." I said: "OK" [...].

**CE:** And Kiwane had spent the night?

**DT:** Yeah.

**CE:** And he had full permission all summer to be in the house, part of the household.

**DT:** Yes he was. If I went to McDonald's, bought the kids something to eat, he got something too. He didn't even have to ask [...]. After that I went back to Parkland.

**CE:** OK.

**DT:** Because I had to be in class at 12.

**CE:** OK. You got out at what time?

**DT:** 12:50. But I didn't leave from there [...] I went to the library and printed out some papers and things.

**CE:** OK.

### POLICE LIE ABOUT SUPPOSED BURGLARY

**DT:** Yeah. Then from there I had all the calls on my phone, but you know I couldn't answer, you can't answer the phone you know when you are in class. So I didn't think none of it until I got to the Y. I went to the YMCA 'cause I was trying to get my two younger kids from the Y. And I started getting all these phone calls. And my sister called. My step sister, Mary. She's like: "You have got to get at your house real fast 'cause a whole bunch of police is out there. They've got their guns out and everything. Something is going on." And I'm like "What? Let me hang up." Then my phone blows up again. And then I said: "Let me check all these messages." So I checked one. And one was from the dispatch or something from the Champaign police. She gave me her name. I can't remember right now. It's on my phone. And she said: "You need to get to your house real fast. Someone's been shot" [...].

**CE:** So where, did you meet the first police officer?

**DT:** Actually at the neighbor's part of the driveway 'cause I couldn't get nowhere near my home. And that's when I was fussing about. I'm like: "What's going on? What happened? Who got shot at my house?" "Ma'am, we don't know right now. We don't know anything right now. We don't know nothing." That's all I was getting. "We don't know nothing." You know. And I'm like: "What's going on?" "Someone was trying to break into your house." And I'm like: "Who got shot?" And then I see my dad. He was walking down the street. And I'm like, "It was one of those kids. Was it one of those kids?" They're like: "Ma'am, we can't tell you anything." That was [Champaign police officer John] Schweighart [...]. My dad

said the same thing, he said: "Was it one of those kids?" Schweighart, out of his mouth, said, "We can assure you guys it wasn't a kid" [...].

**CE:** Did you sign anything?

**DT:** Yeah.

**CE:** What did you sign?

**DT:** I signed a consent to come into my home [...].

**CE:** What did you think you were signing?

**DT:** They asked me to sign a piece of paper to make sure, to check that no one else was inside my house. That's what they told me [...]. So of course they still lead me to believe that the house had been broken into. So this is why I'm thinking it was already a burglary. And I'm thinking in my head it's grown people, 'cause that's what they told me. They told me it was no kids. They said it was two grown men [...].

### REFUTES CLAIM SHE CHANGED HER STORY

**MR:** We read in the newspaper and other places about you changing your story. What was that about?

**DT:** I don't know, I'm trying to think: What part of the story did I change? You talking about the question, oh, the Champaign question: "Was anyone supposed to be at your house? That's the question, the only one I can think of. And that's one that came up. Actually, to me what kind of sparked my memory, when I went to court with Jashaun. The very first time. And they said they were still trying to say he got in trouble for burglary because they said: "You changed your story." And I'm like: "Well, how?" That's when Jashaun first went to court. And they said: "You saying wasn't nobody supposed to be at your house." And I said: "But that's what I meant. During that time of the day all the kids are supposed to be at school." So that's what I was meaning by, wasn't nobody was supposed to be at my house, not during that time of the day. And then more or less my kids really don't be here unless there is an adult here. That's what I meant, 'cause my brother is usually here from 1:30 in the afternoon to 2:00. He picks my two younger kids up at Dr. Howard at 2:00, from 2:00 on until what, 4-4:30, my brother is here.

For the full 40-page transcription of this interview go to the all-new website dedicated to Kiwane Carrington created through a collaboration between Smile Politely and UC-IMC: <http://timeline.chambana.net>

# WILL Changes FM Format, Cuts Jobs, and Eliminates Weather Department

By Kimberly Kranich



ON FEBRUARY 11, 2010 Illinois Public Media General Manager Mark Leonard announced steps the organization's leadership will take to address ongoing budget concerns and ensure that Illinois Public Media is sustainable in a new financial and technological environment. Changes include:

- Elimination of nine staff positions
- Phasing out the weather department, resulting in the elimination of in-house forecasts for WILL Radio and WILL-TV. Weather reports and severe weather coverage will continue, provided by regular radio staff using National Weather Service information.
- A change in format for WILL-FM, which will become a dual-format radio station April 1, adding news programs from National Public Radio to its classical music line-up, while expanding classical music on the weekends and retaining its locally produced music programs
- Shifting WILL-AM staff responsibilities to provide more in-depth coverage of local issues, informed by outreach projects in the community
- Addition of three staff positions, including a web developer, in critical areas or areas with potential for revenue growth

The changes are a continuation of a reorganization, begun last summer, designed to make Illinois Public Media competitive as the web and other new technologies are playing increasingly larger roles in media, Leonard said. "We cannot continue to do things the way we've done them in the past," he said. "If we do, we're spreading ourselves too thin across too

many projects. And we'll miss the opportunities that technology offers to provide public media in new ways."

In addition, Illinois Public Media is making changes to ensure that its services can continue in a time of shrinking state support, he said.

Illinois Public Media has been operating with a deficit during the current fiscal year as a result of \$110,000 in budget cuts from the Illinois Arts Council that were announced in October, he said. Since 2006, Illinois Public Media's annual arts council funding has decreased by more than \$280,000 and the overall state funding picture continues to be bleak. "We're cutting deeply enough with these changes that we hope no more cuts will be needed next year," Leonard said. "In the past, as our state funding decreased, we've relied mostly on attrition to downsize and automation to cut costs. Most of these changes have been invisible to the public. But now we have to make changes that viewers and listeners will notice."

Without the steadfast financial support of members who have been contributing at about the same rate as last year despite the bad economy, WILL-TV's and WILL radio's budget situation would be worse, he said.

The Illinois Public Media web site at [will.illinois.edu](http://will.illinois.edu) has a list of frequently asked questions with more information.

WILL Radio and WILL-TV will eliminate their independent weather service, which has employed a full-time meteorologist and other full- and part-time staff. "We are proud of our long tradition of weather coverage... Ed Kieser, Mike Sola, and their staff have for years dedicated themselves to making sure our listeners knew when severe weather threatened as well as bringing them day-to-day forecasts. But now that in-depth weather information is avail-

able on the web and elsewhere, we believe that our limited resources must be applied to other areas," said Leonard.

Providing full-service weather costs Illinois Public Media \$140,000 a year, and only \$40,000 of that cost is underwritten by businesses, Leonard said. WILL Radio on-air staff will continue to update listeners on the weather using forecasts and warnings from the National Weather Service. The radio severe weather coverage plan is still in place, with on-air staff providing updates and warnings when needed.

With the new dual format, WILL-FM will still air classical music, but also simulcast the NPR news magazine programs being broadcast on WILL-AM 580, *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered*, both of which contain local WILL-AM newscasts.

In part, the FM format is changing to provide national and local news to areas west of Champaign-Urbana where the signal for WILL's news and information station, WILL-AM, doesn't reach, Leonard said. Because of AM's limited coverage area to the west and the fact that WILL-AM must reduce power after dark, many potential listeners cannot receive NPR's signature news magazines, he said. "We're taking our strongest NPR programs, along with our local news, and offering them on our FM station where they can be heard by more people."

"WILL-AM's signal is strong north and south, but it's so limited to the west that people in southwestern Champaign and beyond have trouble receiving it," Leonard said. WILL wants to serve Mahomet, Monticello and other communities with news and information.

Trusted local and national news reporting is more important than ever, and some news sources are struggling to remain viable, he said.

So it is essential that sources such as public media continue to be available. The reorganization plan will allow WILL-AM staff to spend more time on issue-oriented reporting based on what producers learn from projects in the community.

"Our commitment to classical music on WILL-FM remains strong, and classical music will continue to make up a large portion of our FM schedule," Leonard said. "In fact, we'll be adding 27 more hours of classical music on the weekends." Jazz, folk and other music formats on Friday and Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons will be replaced by classical music from the C-24 classical music service. FM is already airing music from C-24 in the mid-morning and afternoon on weekdays, Sunday mornings and Sunday evenings. The station will realize a cost savings by replacing individual programs with the C-24 service at additional times.

WILL's locally hosted weekday morning music program with Vic Di Geronimo will move from early morning to 9 a.m.-noon when more people are listening to classical music, he said. Other locally produced and hosted FM music programs, *Live and Local with Kevin Kelly*, *Prairie Performances*, *Afternoon at the Opera*, *Classics by Request* and *Classics of the Phonograph* will continue at their current times.

"We know classical music is important to our FM listeners," he said. "We don't believe we can sustain our classical music service without changes in our format to increase our audience and our fundraising."

On WILL-AM, David Inge and Celeste Quinn will continue to host weekday local talk and news magazines. Beginning April 1,

*Continued on page 6*

# How Some U of I Faculty Members Will Deal With Furloughs

By Megan McLaughlin

Megan McLaughlin is President of the Campus Faculty Association (CFA)

SUSAN DAVIS IS TAKING HER FIRST unpaid furlough day on February 15, along with other faculty and members of the Campus Faculty Association at the University of Illinois. "Since the University demands that we not do our jobs," she says, "we will be on campus devoting our furlough time to discussions of the future of the University of Illinois, and taking action to break the logjam in Springfield." For many faculty members at the U of I, furloughs (pay cuts) are a painful but short-term issue. They are much more worried about the growing threat to university jobs (staff as well as faculty), to the institution's reputation, and to accessible, high-quality public education in the state of Illinois. What is the current uproar over furloughs/pay cuts really about?:

- A state legislature that has consistently underfunded the university over the past thirty years. While the state provided almost half of this "state" university's budget in 1980; it provides only about 16% of it now.
- A state legislature that now can't even get itself together to balance its own budget, and as a result is delaying payment to all kinds of providers, including the university.



"A spoonful of sugar, [etc...]"

- A university administration that has swollen like a cancer, soaking up funds that should have been spent on teaching and research.
- A university administration that routinely ignores the established principle of "shared governance" by offering professors propaganda, denying them

accurate information, and making major decisions without consulting with the faculty.

- A public that all too often thinks of the university as a glorified job-training center, rather than as what it was meant to be—a place for educating the state's citizens to be productive members of society and informed, engaged participants in democracy.

So, on Monday, February 15, faculty members came together with students to talk about what the University of Illinois will be like in the next century. What will it be like as a place to learn and work if tuition triples? If programs close and class sizes triple? If most classes have no TAs? If poor and middle-class families have no chance to send their students here? All these things are happening right now in the much admired University of California system. In the midst of the worst unemployment in decades, professors like Davis and myself feel lucky to have jobs—for now. But the federal stimulus money runs out soon, and the University administration has large cuts planned. As teachers and scholars concerned with education's future, we don't feel it is "time to sit down and shut up." It's time for a democratic discussion of the university's future, which is a big part of so many people's futures.



## 2010 Martin Luther King Essay Contest Winners

\* The organizers of the 2010 MLK Essay Contest asked that the names of these young authors be withheld.

Dear Barack Obama,

My name is K\_\_\_ and I am 18 years old. I go to the READY Program and I am a senior. I am writing this letter for my English class. I love to play sports and watch them; especially basketball. I have eight brothers and sisters, and I live with my mom and step dad. I will go on and talk about what I have experienced or heard of about social injustice.

I didn't see it, but everybody heard about a boy named Kiwane Carrington. He was climbing through someone's window that he knew because the door was locked. The police came on the site and saw him. They told him to put his hands up and he didn't. They shot him. I don't think that was fair because they could have done something else besides shoot him. The police are always so quick to shoot people and he was just a kid.

What I hope to change is the law enforcement. They have so much power and they abuse their authority. The police are always harassing me every time I walk the streets or drive around. I think somebody needs to change the way law enforcement is. I think police officers take advantage of their power.

Police officers worry about the wrong things. You could be walking down the street, minding your own business and they automatically think you are doing something wrong just because you are BLACK. They should worry about more important things, like people getting killed.

From this experience, I learned that you have to be careful when you are around the police because they will find any little reason to mess with you or in Kiwane's case shoot you. So do what the police tell you to do, even if you don't want to and you will be all right.

Thank you Barack Obama for taking the time in your busy schedule to read my letter. And thank you for wanting to make a difference and wanting to hear what I have to say about how law enforcement is unfair to my community.

Sincerely,

K\_\_\_

Dear President Obama and Dr. King,

Hello my name is R\_\_\_. I am a junior at the Ready Program. In my first hour English class we are learning about social justice in our world. So we have been asked to write a letter, a poem, or an essay. I have chosen to write both a letter and a poem. In my letter I will be talking to you about how there is a lot of "unfair" treatment in the community. Also how there are people who have high authority but are very unfair on how they use it. Those are the things that I will be talking about.

There are two things I would like to talk about in my letter and the first one is going to be about how policemen abuse their authority. About a month ago I had a student from my school get shot by a police man...now understand I was not there when it happened

but what I have gathered is that the boy died for nothing. But like I said I don't know the whole story. All I know is that I knew him...I had chilled with him and he was an ok kid just to be blown away by a gun...for nothing. Now you tell me how you think they should have gone about this. I think that there was no reason to pull a gun out on a kid anyway. But that is my opinion on this situation.

In my poem I will be talking about how unfair things are and how they affect us as people who can't do things because of unfair treatment. People can not get jobs because of a mistake that they made. There are so many things people can not do because of unfair treatment. Being unfair is unfair, its like if I would say that you can't get a job because you stole a car five years ago, that's a double whammy...because have I not already paid the price once before?

### Poem by R\_\_\_

Why unfair?  
 Why do people have to be unfair?  
 Can't get a job because you made a bad decision.  
 Giving dirty looks to everyone like racism.  
 Why do people have to be unfair?  
 It's wrong... But we deal with it.  
 Unfair we can't work with it.  
 Why do people have to be unfair?  
 Abusing authority to get the job done fast.  
 Taking someone's life with the sound of a blast.  
 Why do people have to be unfair?  
 Unfair... we hear that every were.  
 The government, school, home, it's all unfair.  
 Why do people have to be unfair?  
 Being put in a place you don't want to be.  
 For something you didn't do and now all you can do is plead.  
 It's just that one word that we all are used to saying.  
 Ever since we were little that's the one word that is staying.  
 But what will happen if it gets out of hand?  
 It's been said so much...the word could be banned.  
 If we as the people...as a town...as a community...as a world and as a society work together to fight for our fairness.  
 We will be able to beat out this crazy child ness.  
 It's been around for too long.  
 We are grown now and that should be dead and gone.  
 But it's not...it's still here...lingering like gas in the air.  
 We have to stop this unfair pollution  
 But until then we still ask ourselves. Why do people have to be unfair?

## UPCOMING BLACK HISTORY EVENTS

| Date | Event   | Location             | Time      |
|------|---|----------------------|-----------|
| 2/19 | "Mad World: Sex, Politics, Style and the 1960s"         | Levis Faculty Center | 9AM-6PM   |
| 2/19 | *BNAACC 40th Anniversary Opening Reception              | BNAACC               | 4-6PM     |
| 2/19 | Beautiful And Together Sisters Fashion Show             | Foellinger           | 7PM       |
| 2/20 | *BNAACC 40th Anniversary Banquet                        | I-Hotel              | 4-6PM     |
| 2/20 | Cotton Club   | Foellinger           | 8PM       |
| 2/23 | African American Read In                                | BNAACC               | 12-1:30PM |
| 2/23 | W.E.B DuBois Lecture and Reception                      | Levis Faculty Center | 4PM       |
| 2/24 | *Food for the Soul: Putting Scholarship into Action     | BNAACC               | 12-1PM    |
| 2/24 | *Alpha Phi Alpha Ritual w/Kevin Powell                  | Smith Memorial Hall  | 7PM       |
| 2/25 | Megiste Arete Christian Fraternity Inc.—3 Tier Workshop | BNAACC               | 6PM       |
| 2/28 | *Closing Ceremonies: <i>CROSSED The Play</i>            | Greg Hall            | 3PM       |

For more information: [www.bnaacc.illinois.edu](http://www.bnaacc.illinois.edu)

### Speak Cafe (Open mic/poetry set)

"The Women Gather," Women's History Month Open Mic

March 11, 7-9PM, Krannert Art Museum, 500 E. Peabody, Champaign

### Part-Time Union Staff Position

The CFA is hiring a staff person to replace the departing coordinator. Please share the job announcement below with any qualified candidates.

Seeking CFA Coordinator: The Campus Faculty Association (CFA) has an opening beginning March 1 for a 10-hour per week staff person.

**Duties include:** editing/formatting newsletter, correspondence, liaison with union/community groups, research, attending CFA meetings, maintaining email lists and the CFA website, and such clerical tasks as updating a membership database, event planning, and mail distribution. Compensation of \$12 per hour plus contribution to health plan. Please call Mark Leff at 493-1706 or email application letter to [mleff@illinois.edu](mailto:mleff@illinois.edu). Applications received by 2/19/10 will receive full consideration.





## Howard Zinn (1922–2010)

By Neil Parthun

HISTORIAN, AUTHOR AND ACTIVIST Howard Zinn died on January 27, 2010. He was 87. He was involved in social justice movements and the author of over twenty books including *A People's History of the United States*.

Reading *A People's History* was, for me, one of those moments that I'll always remember. During my junior year of high school, my Catholic Social Justice teacher suggested the book, knowing that I was interested in teaching history. When I began reading, the book was almost impossible to put down. The stories were not only incredibly riveting but my attention also was grabbed by the fact that so much of this history had gone unreported in my previous history courses. I immediately wanted to find out more about Zinn and the divergent history he so eloquently described.

Zinn would be the first person to admit that his work is not neutral, but it serves as a counterbalance to the god-like tone and revisionism of modern textbooks by giving voice to unrepresented and underrepresented groups. As Howard wrote, "My history... describes the inspiring struggle of those who have fought slavery and racism, of the labor organizers who have led strikes for the rights of working people, of the socialists and others who have protested war and militarism. My hero is not Theodore Roosevelt, who loved war and congratulated a general after a massacre of Filipino villagers at the turn of the century, but Mark Twain who denounced the massacre and satirized imperialism. I want young people to understand that ours is a beautiful country, but it has been taken over by men who have no respect for human rights or constitutional liberties. Our people are basically decent and caring, and our highest ideals are expressed in the Declaration of Independence, which says that all of us have an equal right to 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.' The history of our country, I point out in my book, is a striving against corporate robber barons and war makers, to make those ideals a reality."

Striving for the ideals of the country did get him in professional trouble. Zinn was a history professor at Spelman College in Georgia and an adviser to the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. He was ultimately fired for insubordination due to his support of and participation in

civil disobedience actions with his students. One of his students, author/activist Alice Walker discussed Zinn's firing, saying: "He was thrown out because he loved us, and he showed that love by just being with us. He loved his students. He didn't see why we should be second-class citizens. He didn't see why we shouldn't be able to eat where we wanted to and sleep where we wanted to and be with the people we wanted to be with. And so, he was with us. He didn't stay back, you know, in his tower there at the school."

Ultimately, Zinn's efforts showed the disparate interests between corporations/elite politicians and the nation's people. This theme was made clear in his seminal work, *A People's History of the United States*. From the instance I first read his book, I became thankful for Zinn's scholarship as it is very much needed. As sociologist James Loewen noticed about most history classrooms: "Students consider history the most irrelevant of... subjects commonly taught... African American, Native American and Latino students view history with a special dislike. They also learn history especially poorly... If you'll pardon my grammar, nonwhite students do more worse in English and most worse in history. Something intriguing is going on here: surely history is no more difficult for minorities than trigonometry or Faulkner. Students don't even know they are alienated, only that they don't like Social Studies or aren't any good at history."

As a 7th grade Social Studies teacher, I have found Zinn's work indispensable to combat the problems Loewen's analysis has uncovered. The first lesson my class does is a poll. I ask my students how many like history as their favorite sub-

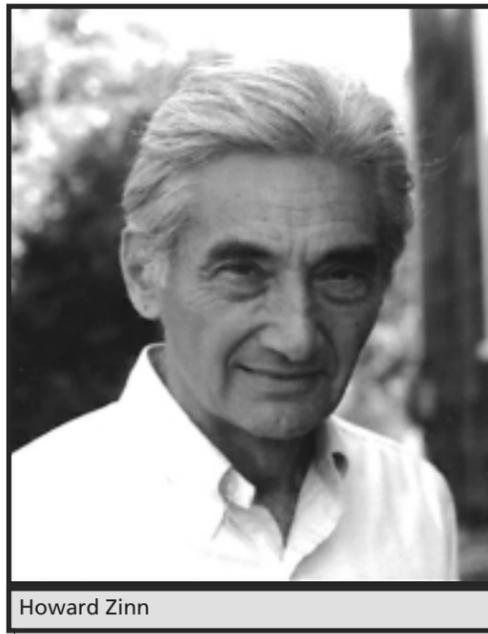
ject. At most, two or three people raise their hand. For the rest of the period, the class develops a list of reasons why they don't like history. Invariably, the lists become "the book's too big, it is boring, people never seem to make mistakes, the stories are melodramatic and that it doesn't apply to real life."

To understand why they do not like the traditional texts, we look at how and why textbooks are written. To deconstruct melodrama, we take the case of Helen Keller as an example to discuss how human beings become heroes who never err. We even discuss cultural alienation by dissecting the idea of eurocentrism.

I am able to bring in supplemental materials like Zinn's *A People's History* to set up discussions that give voice to unrepresented or underrepresented people and ideas. One of our early historical discussions is about Christopher Columbus. We go through all the positive contributions that Columbus' exploration had and follow that with a reading from Zinn's *A Young People's History of the United States* that details Spain's crimes as they were docu-

mented by Bartolome de las Casas. To make a connection with current events, we frame the discussion about whether or not Columbus should be honored with a national holiday based on what we know. Since I've instituted these different perspectives and voices, many students have told me about their increased interest in history and that it is now one of their favorite subjects. Zinn's efforts are a direct influence in this success.

While Howard Zinn may no longer be with us, his impact will continue to be felt for generations to come because it has helped uncover a more representative version of American history.



Howard Zinn

## WILL Cuts Jobs

Continued from page 3

the 10 a.m.–noon morning show will be renamed Focus, and *The Afternoon Magazine* will begin airing from noon–1 p.m. The syndicated radio show, Fresh Air, will begin airing at 1 p.m. in addition to 7 p.m. At 2 p.m.

WILL-AM will air a new one-hour program of enhanced agriculture and business coverage, hosted by Illinois Public Media agriculture director Dave Dickey and *Closing Market Report* host Todd Gleason.

## NYC/Champaign: Policing

Continued from page 5

When we turn our lens onto other police practices, a highly disturbing picture emerges in the schools. School Resource Officers made 84 "custodial arrests," the most severe intervention of the SROs. Of these arrestees, 62 were black, 39 white, 2 Hispanic, 2 Middle Eastern, and 1 Asian.

Another area of concern is in the use of force and violence. As in the case of New York, police violence tends to fall most heavily upon the black community. In a presentation to the Champaign City Council study session on the police's Use of Force Policy, I detailed a number of such instances. Among them were: a 1998 incident in which a frail 81 year-old grandmother was grabbed by the throat and forced to the floor as a SWAT team broke in and searched her apartment in vain for her nephew; a 2007 incident in which the Champaign police, chasing an armed man who ran into a house, shot multiple times into the house despite being warned by neighbors that a woman and two young children were inside; and the 2009 killing of unarmed 15 year-old Kiwane Carrington

who, like Amadou Diallo, was shot and killed in front of the door of the dwelling in which he was staying.

In 2000, Daniel Norbits, the officer who shot young Carrington, had also been one of the officers involved in the death of another unarmed black man, the developmentally disabled Gregory Brown. Brown's family received a \$185,000 settlement from the city. Yet, Norbits remained on the force. After Carrington's killing, Officer Norbits was permitted to continue to perform administrative duties in the department while he was placed on administrative leave while a report on the killing was prepared for the State's Attorney. After receiving the report, the States Attorney accepted his claim that he did not know how his gun went off when it was in his hand and pointed at Carrington. She went even further and declared the killing to have been an accident. Thus the officer remains on the force, free from the prospect of prosecution by the state.

Heck, why should Champaign let itself be outdone

### 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.

### March Artist-in-Residence

Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr., letterpress printer, book artist, social commentator, will be artist-in-residence on campus March 1-3.

**Monday, March 1:** 7 p.m. Allen Hall, Loreda Taft Lectureship on Art: "Speaking Unconventionally: the Printed Works of Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr."

**Tuesday March 2:** noon-4 p.m. Artist book production with Soybean Press and community volunteers, University Printing Services

**Wednesday, March 3:** noon-4 p.m. Artist book production with Soybean Press and community volunteers, University Printing Services

7-9 p.m. Closing Reception/Poster Sale, IndiGo Gallery, 9 East Main Street, Champaign

**February 1–March 3:** A display of books, posters, and assorted formats by APKJ from the collection of the Rare Book and Manuscript Library, along with a large selection of current posters, Main library exhibit cases, ground floor. A large selection of posters will be for sale at the IndiGo closing reception on March 3.



# Taking Back Our University

By Kerry Pimblott



Kerry Pimblott is a graduate student in African-American History at the University of Illinois and a member of the Graduate Employees' Organization, Local 6300 (AFT/IFT-AFL-CIO).

OVER THE PAST YEAR, it has become almost impossible to ignore the movement growing on college campuses both within and outside the United States. While diverse in their demands, seemingly independent local struggles converge around a common critique of the corporatization and privatization of public universities. Resulting in a demand that students and workers take back these institutions and re-imagine their composition and function. I remember organizing a Graduate Employees' Organization (G.E.O) rally that focused on this theme and receiving complaints that the anti-corporatization message was "too abstract". Today, in the throes of a financial meltdown, the vast majority of the campus community recognizes the devastating effects of University corporatization and seeks meaningful solutions. Here at the University of Illinois we—students and workers—are faced with an exciting and momentous opportunity to help build an international movement to take back our public universities, democratize them, re-imagine their composition and function, and extend access to all.

What do corporatization and privatization mean in the context of public universities? Put simply, they refer to an



Occupy everything!! UC first... Could UIUC be next?

increasing dependence on private funding and corporate models of administration with devastating implications for all members of the campus community. The effects of this encroachment are tri-fold: (1) the delimitation of access to higher education along class and racial lines, (2) the promotion of an unstable and inequitable labor system, and (3) the erosion of democratic structures of accountability and decision-making.

Different groups on campus experience the effects of corporatization and privatization in different ways, largely as a result of their position within the university's hierarchical structure. Unsurprisingly, those at the bottom of the pyramid have tended to be the first to recognize the problem. Undergraduate students—particularly working-class students and people of color—were the first hit as hikes in tuition were utilized as a mechanism to subsidize the growth of the University while state funds stagnated.

Despite all the talk of an "Inclusive Illinois" and the integrity of the University's land-grant mission, the reality is that the administration of this University—like others across the country—has already delimited access to an elite few.

The promotion of an unstable and inequitable labor system has been one of the hallmarks of the corporatization of the University. As management sought to expand enrollment, they did so on the backs of a new, largely contingent labor force. Graduate employees, adjuncts, lecturers, and undergraduate TAs are being utilized as a form of cheap labor. Many work for low pay and no benefits. Of course, the tenure system has also been eroded, ensuring that the majority of contingent workers now have little or no hope of ever attaining job stability in the field for which they trained. Those that do "make-it" are confined to a field in which corporate logics powerfully shape the distribution of funds and, concomitantly, the range of acceptable intellectual projects.

All of these changes have been enacted by a corporate management structure in which decision-making is centralized in the hands of a few non-representative, highly paid administrators who have little understanding of the day-to-day realities of learning and labor on this campus. Systems of shared-governance that have traditionally functioned as important mechanisms of accountability and oversight have been eroded and compromised. Decisions are made behind closed doors with little input from those that will be affected by them. In this context, it is no surprise that academic institutions are the hottest spots for unionization in the United States today. The academic labor system is in flux, workers are alienated from decision-making processes, and the only way we can get our voice heard is through collective bargaining. For the most part, management resents the presence of unions and their incessant demands for better pay and benefits. Whenever possible, management seeks to limit the power of campus unions by excluding union representatives from important decision-making processes, engaging in aggressive bargaining practices, and outsourcing jobs to non-union workers.

While the problems faced by faculty, graduate employees, adjuncts, staff, service-workers, and students appear disparate, the reality is that they stem from the same root cause: corporate encroachment. Many of the aforementioned changes have been taking place for several decades, but when state and national financial structures imploded in 2009, campus workers and students were forced to navigate hostile labor negotiations, tuition increases, and furloughs rendering the implications of corporate approaches visible to all. Administrative scandals and cover-ups, incompetency in financial management, skewed priorities manifest in poor investments, and a long-term failure to secure adequate state revenues have led most of us to believe that a new approach is necessary.

Now it is time for us—students and workers—to struggle collectively to take back the University. We must come together and develop a new vision for a public university that is equitable, accessible, and democratic.

If we really believe that students from all backgrounds should be given the opportunity to attain a college degree,



Student General Assembly during UC Occupations

we must take a principled stand on halting tuition increases now. We must inform the Board of Trustees that as a campus community we will no longer allow them to balance the budget by restricting access to the privileged few. Rather, we should take a unified stand on public funding increases for higher education and back that up by lobbying in Springfield and staging major rallies and protests in solidarity with our peers on campuses across the globe.

While we push for these larger fiscal changes, we also need to educate each other on the administrative operations of our campus by studying the budget and taking collective stands on how funds should be allocated. The administration has shown that its priorities are inconsistent with the rest of the campus community. We must articulate our own priorities and organize to ensure that they are represented. While we could utilize the language of "excellence in teaching and research" that has often characterized demands in higher education—we might also add new priorities reflective of our broad-based coalition. These could include the expansion of access, the promotion of a stable and equitable labor system, and the fortification of meaningful relations between campus and community.

Ensuring that our priorities resonate in the long-term will require that we commit ourselves to the democratization of the university. The interests of faculty, students, and organized labor must be democratically represented at all levels of decision-making from the smallest academic unit to the Board of Trustees. While administrators are focused

on the bottom line, workers and students are best situated to understand the effects on the ground. Our collective knowledge of what works and what doesn't is invaluable to the effective operation of this campus. Therefore, we must fight to decentralize administrative decision-making, restore and enhance mechanisms of accountability, and promote the practice of participatory democracy.

If you would like to help build this movement to promote an equitable, accessible and democratic university, please join us by

participating in the "March Forth on March 4th National Day of Action to Defend Public Higher Education!"



Masked student take over UC campuses

## PEOPLES' COMMUNITY POTLUCK

Sunday, March 7, 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.