

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

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

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**THE PUBLIC I**

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The UC-IMC is part of the Community Shares Program.

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

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

## Public Health to Offer Emergency Contraceptive to Area Women

CHAMPAIGN—The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) will offer emergency contraceptive (EC) to women during clinics. Teen Parent Services Case Managers were certified to distribute Plan B (an emergency contraception method of contraceptive) over the counter to women in Champaign County through Planned Parenthood of East Central Illinois.

Emergency contraception is a concentrated dose of hormones used to keep a woman from getting pregnant when she has had unprotected vaginal intercourse and must be taken within 120 hours. However, the sooner it is taken the better. CUPHD will now have it available to pick up for clients to have on hand in case of an emergency situation, allowing women to back up their birth control plan.

**Emergency contraceptive does not prevent sexually transmitted infections.**

The contraceptive will be available free to eligible females at the 710 N. Neil Street site during all clinic hours. It will also be available on the Wellness On Wheels Teen Mobile Van.

*Please visit [www.cuphd.org](http://www.cuphd.org) for more information.*

## WILL Youth Media Workshop

WILL's Youth Media Workshop is bringing the filmmaker, Byron Hurt, here for a town hall meeting about the issues discussed in the film on Tuesday, March 13th at 7pm in the Knight Auditorium of the Spurlock Museum, 600 S. Gregory Street, in Urbana. The event is free and open to the public. There will be a small panel of speakers, including Mr. Hurt, and audience questions.

## SUSTAINING CONTRIBUTORS

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

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A scene from a student performance of *The Vagina Monologues* in Guangzhou, China.



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# Lesbian Activism and Women's History in the Cold War Era

by Stephanie Foote

Stephanie Foote is working on a book about lesbian cultures in the twentieth century U. S.

## ORGANIZING WOMEN'S HISTORIES

Which women do we remember when we think about women's history and which do we forget? What kind of woman has remained invisible when the idea of Women's History itself becomes institutionalized? Questions like these are not challenges to the idea of Women's History—in fact they are the part of the powerful legacy of decades of feminist challenges to conventional ways of organizing knowledge. The political stakes of such questions are all the more important in a world where only some women have been able to reap material benefits from those challenges. Women's history—its formation as a discipline, its innovative scholarship, its political energy and even its internal conflicts—has been instrumental in introducing women histories into the archive, but its most important cultural work lies in its disruption of how the very idea of the past is constructed and reproduced.

Women's History is a way of understanding the cultural work of gender itself, of interrogating how commonsensical knowledge about gender identities is constructed, and of critiquing how gender structures the political and social experiences of historical subjects. Women's History can help us to see familiar events, eras, and social actors in a new way because it reminds us that our own practices of remembering and forgetting are deeply structured by gender inequality.

That central insight can also help us see how gender influences the way we tell the stories of progressive political movements as well as how we critique entrenched institutional power. One easy example can be seen in the near consensus about the origins of gay and lesbian political organizing in the U.S.. Conventional (if progressive) histories inaugurate the queer politics with which we are most familiar with the Stonewall Inn Uprising of 1969. The Stonewall Inn, a gay bar with a substantial clientele drawn from the Latino/a and trans community, was well-known to the police, who, as they did with most gay bars in the mid-twentieth century, raided it with some regularity. In the early morning hours of June 28th, the clientele of Stonewall responded to a police raid by attacking the police with rocks and bottles. The news of the riot spread throughout Greenwich Village and the lesbian, gay, and trans community gathered and intensified the protest against the police. Eventually, riot police were dispatched to quell the uprising, but news of it was already working its way through the gay and lesbian community.

Stonewall, which gathered together protesters across the spectrum of queer life in New York, became a beacon for the gay rights movement. Stonewall is now as much myth as history, and like most myths, it provides a powerful foundation for queer politics and activism. It is central to how progressive historians in the later twentieth century have understood the queer movement, the critique of the state launched by gender and sexual dissidents, and the political potential of broad based alliances between gender and sexual dissidents, people of color and transpeople.

But where did the Stonewall riot come from? What other histories and experiences enabled it? What previously invisible people become visible if we do not imagine that Stonewall is the origin of the modern queer political movement? What happens if we look at the smaller stories, the more localized dissent, the less world-shaking but no



Stonewall pioneers

less history-making day to day activities that made something like Stonewall possible? What happens if we use the challenges of Women's History to open up the historical archive even further?

## THE RADICAL FIFTIES

It seems counterintuitive to argue that women in the 1950s helped to make Stonewall possible. The 1950s have bad rap all the way around as an age of intense political, social, and individual repression. The 50s summon up the specters of McCarthyism, black lists and witch hunting. That decade's drive toward normalization seems embodied by the iconic straight, white, heteronormative family, and especially by June Cleaver, the perfect and perfectly anti-septic housewife of the Cold War Era. For both queer politics and feminism, the 50s seem best passed over in silence. The fifties might be fetishized by popular culture as the ideal of the middle-class white family, and scorned by activists as the dead zone in political organizing, but Women's History Month gives us an opportunity to see some of the work of the lesbian activists and writers whose contributions have been largely forgotten. For the lesbian community, the fifties are a vital moment when lesbians began to create a rich but too often forgotten history of struggle against normative definitions of gender and sexual identity. They did this work as women and as lesbians, and they did it by taking advantage of the very stereotypes and assumptions that had most demonized and pathologized their understanding of gender and sexuality.

First, they took advantage of the decade's fascination with sex and especially with the dangers of sexual and gender dissidence. Despite its reputation for being buttoned-down and straight-laced, the 50s saw a remarkable proliferation of books about sexuality and sex, as well as a series of quasi-medicalized texts devoted to a popular Freudian self-analysis and mental and sexual health. Publishers like Cadillac printed best selling sex manuals and marriage

manuals like *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Sex*. Kinsey published *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* in 1948 and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* in 1953. Among the most controversial of Kinsey's arguments was that an extraordinary number of men and women had had homosexual relations at some point in their lives. Both of his books also introduced social analysis to the study of sexuality. Kinsey correlated such factors as age, class, and educational level with sexual experiences, without arguing that such factors caused particular kinds of sexuality.

The effect of Kinsey's book was immediate. *Publishers Weekly's* anonymous "Note on About the Kinsey Report" reported in 1948 that interest in Kinsey's work was so high that a book that merely interpreted Kinsey's findings had actually outsold the Kinsey report. Five years later, *Publishers Weekly* announced the release of a medical book that aimed to counter aggressively the Kinsey's view of female sexuality ("Note on Response to the Kinsey Report" (1953).

The mainstream popular media followed suit, becoming intensely interested in the "problem" of sexuality, especially homosexuality. *Time* magazine, *The Nation*, and *The New York Times*, for example, all carried stories about "the" homosexual presence, as they tended to call it, in society, concentrating especially on legal reports, such as Great Britain's 1957 Wolfenden Report and on the psychiatric community's assessments of homosexuality's causes and potential cures. In part, though, this incredible production of talk about sexuality and the intense interest in how sexual identity was formed shows us that the ideal of the straight, white, heteronormative family was under immense pressure even at the moment of its greatest apparent strength.

There is no question that public interest in sexuality and gayness did not translate into greater tolerance, despite what some "experts" argued in their articles, sex manuals, and popular medical books. Police raids of cruising areas in public parks and gay bars were standard, as was the enforcement of postal regulations to prohibit the circulation of "pornographic" sexual material. But even within these restrictions, women took advantage of the circumscribed public sphere for discussion of sexuality to reach out to one another.

One way was by writing what we now call pulp fiction. Publishers of mass market paperbacks and even more staid and respectable publishers did a brisk business in nonfiction work dealing with sexuality, including popular accounts of psychoanalysis and book-length analyses of

Continued on page 9



Stonewall demonstration



# A Response to Champaign Authorities Who Dispute Need for a Citizen Police Review Board

By Laurie Solomon

Laurie Soloman is a long-time resident of Champaign

In a recent News Gazette article by Mike Monson, dated January 21, 2007 and entitled, *Cities Taking Different Tacks on Police Review Issue*, City Councilman, Michael La Due is quoted as saying that he would “want to see compelling evidence for the need for one before I’d sour relations with the police department unnecessarily.” In the same article, Champaign Mayor Jerry Schweighart, a retired city police officer, made it clear he’s unalterably opposed to a review board and is quoted as saying, “With a civilian review board, you’ll have amateurs who think they know the law making judgments on people’s careers. You’re going to take something that’s workable now and make it into something that’s adversarial.” I, for one, have to take exception to the quoted remarks and think that these comments deserve some attention, analysis, and response.

## A RESPONSE TO MR. LADUE’S COMMENTS

With respect to Mr. LaDue remarks, I think that they show a bias in favor of the status quo without furnishing any rationale for assuming such a bias. One has to wonder why Mr. LaDue does not ask to see compelling evidence that there is not *a need for a citizen police review board, rather than asking for compelling evidence that one is needed*. Since there has never been a local citizen review board, there is no empirical evidence available to provide compelling evidence to show the need for one other than the following: (1) the fact that a significant portion of the population feels that there is a need to at least try some form of citizen review given their mistrust of the existing processes, and (2) the fact that any statistical evidence that might exist is dependent on what the police department has collected and will make available to the public. Those statistics are limited in that they were never collected, they were not collected in any systematic fashion with respect to the issues in question, or those statistics which do exist are not readily available to the public in raw data form—if at all.

I would think that, since the existing processes have been in existence for some time and there is a history of experience with its operation and impact, it would be easier (and incumbent on) those who support the present system and oppose a review board to collect, assemble, and present compelling evidence to show that the current system works and that there is no need for a review board.

However, if Mr. LaDue were really interested in viewing and evaluating the evidence pro and con for various forms of the citizen police review process, he could always do a Google search where he would find that a number of cities and towns across the country—big and small—have some form of civilian citizen review process. There are at least 1,200,000 web sites with information on this subject when looking under the subjects “cities with civilian police review,” “cities with citizen police review,” “cities with citizen review boards,” etc.

Furthermore, I have to wonder how many pieces of legislation and what legislation brought before the City Council have elicited from a member of Council the requirement that there be compelling evidence presented on behalf of the legislation before they would consider voting in favor of it. It is only on the rarest of occasions where “compelling evidence” has been used as a standard; the common standard uses have tended to be “sufficient evidence” which

need not be compelling. I ask Mr. LaDue if he would care to specify and define exactly what he would consider as being “compelling evidence” and would accept as such. To the best of my knowledge, this has not been specified anywhere; and the standard of “compelling evidence” only serves as a means to cover up the capricious and arbitrary exercise of some undisclosed, discretionary judgments and decision-making by council members when evaluating the proposals and acting on them.

Lastly, whose relations with the Police Department is Mr. LaDue concerned about souring unnecessarily? His relations? The City Council’s relations? The complaining community’s relations? The public in general’s relations?

## A RESPONSE TO THE MAYOR’S REMARKS

With respect to the Mayor’s remarks, his argument is both arrogant and absurd, even though - on the face of it—the argument sounds both rational and applicable. If the concern is with amateurs being on the board who think they know (but really do not know) the law, then that can be resolved easily by appointing a few lawyers and retired judges to the review board who can inform the other members of the applicable law.

Moreover, there is no reason why civilians cannot, over a brief period of time, be taught and learn the relevant laws just as police officers are taught and learn the law over a brief period of training and experience. If teaching civilian amateurs about the relevant laws were not possible, then why would it be possible to do so with respect to new police officers? Maybe we should require our police officers to be attorneys with law degrees in addition to attending the Police Training Institute for training in policing methods so as to assure that they actually are both specialists and experts in the law rather than uncertified amateur lawyers who have had a few hours at PTI dealing with the law. If the police officers were so knowledgeable of, and expert, in the law, then one has to ask why some of the charges they file are often not prosecuted by the states attorney’s office, which is made up of legal experts, and, when the charges that they file are prosecuted and brought before the courts, a number of the defendants have been found not guilty. It is obvious that the officers are not infallible and actually do not always know for sure the law and its application to the situational circumstances they encountered. Why insist that members of a review board be any less fallible?

Moreover, if the Mayor’s arguments were valid, then the same can be said about grand juries and trial juries which are made up of common everyday civilian citizens who are not experts in the law but are charged with making legal and other decisions which impact on the lives of the defendants. Would he say that the legal system be changed so as to prevent amateur civilian citizens from serving on juries because they do not know the law and might think that they do? Who would he propose that we replace them with? Police officers? Lawyers? Former judges? Academics specializing in constitutional law and/or other forms of law? As with grand juries or trial juries, those brought before a civilian review board should be expected to make arguments to the board members which convince them and make them understand why the board should take no actions or make no recommendations in their case. It is incumbent upon the defendant to educate the members of the board on what the appropriate law is and how to inter-

pret the relevant law in the case before them just as one would expect from the advocates in a grand jury hearing or a court hearing with a jury.

Just because a process is adversarial does not mean that it is unworkable which is what the Mayor seems to be implying. In one stroke, the mayor appears to be condemning the entire U.S. legal system for its adversarial structure as being unworkable. I assume he would prefer closed non-jury court proceedings where the defendant is not allowed to challenge the prosecution or question the witnesses.

Furthermore, if the Mayor’s standards of not allowing amateurs who are not experts review, evaluate, pass judgment on or make recommendations concerning decision in fields where they are not certified as being experts are valid, then I am left with the question of how can members of the City Council assess and evaluate, decide to enact or reject proposals and proposed legislation of a technical nature brought before them by the city staff consisting of engineering projects and designs, municipal planning, finance, and so on which they have no expert knowledge or certification to suggest that they are anything more than competent amateurs in most cases at best? How many members of city council have engineering degrees and licenses, credentials in city planning, municipal finance or risk management, information systems, or any one of a multitude of issues and subjects that come before them for review and decision?

## CONCLUSIONS

There is not just one type of citizen review process; there are many different forms of review that are possible—each having different focuses and levels or types of decision making authority attached to them. While there may be good arguments in support of and/or against each of the various forms of civilian review, those offered by La Due and the Mayor are not among them.

Both sides of this issue need to bracket their pre-established points of view and be much more open-minded in approaching a serious examination and discussion of all the questions and issues involved. The fact that municipalities such as San Diego, Fort Collins, Iowa City, Corvallis, New York City, Pittsburg, Oakland, Baltimore, and Dallas have found that some form of citizen police review process was useful enough to institute one should suggest that the subject merits a serious open-minded discussion, analysis, and assessment of the possibilities.

There certainly is no harm in trying out an acceptable method of citizen review which will accomplish or help bring about the goals of the community for some fair and alternative mechanisms to investigate, review, evaluate, and adjudicate instances of alleged police misconduct and abuse so as to allow the community to have some formal input into the decision-making - even if that is merely to furnish recommendations to the decision-makers in authority. There must be methods available which will protect the rights of both the police officers and the members of the community, which are more transparent and more available to the public than currently is the case. Such a review process should provide an alternative set of avenues for handling citizen complaints that the members of the public can avail themselves of when and if they do not trust or have faith in the police department handling such things in-house without any public scrutiny.

## Program Coordinator at Urbana School-Based Health Center Accepts Opportunity to Help School-Based Health Care at the State Level

“It’s a great opportunity for Urbana and for Illinois. Bringing this level of assistance to the state level will help to tailor the solutions with the needs of each health center.”

URBANA—Heidi Britton Dion, Program Coordinator at the Urbana School-Based Health Center was one of four trainers selected state-wide by the Illinois Coalition of School Health Centers to participate in the National Assembly of School-Based Health Care’s (NASBHC) State National Technical Assistance and Training Partnership. Historically, NASBHC conducted all training and technical assistance on a national level. This two year pilot program will allow for states to bring technical assistance to their state. The Illinois Coalition for School Health Centers (ICSHC) with The Illinois Department of Human Services applied and was selected to be one of three states to participate in the pilot program. Heidi Britton Dion was selected to be on the Illinois Training Team and will begin training in February and end December 2008.



# Sgt. Myers Given Probation: Torture of Inmates Goes Unpunished by State's Attorney

By Brian Dolinar



Former Sergeant William Alan Myers pleaded guilty to charges of felony disorderly conduct and misdemeanor aggravated battery on Monday, October 26. Charges of felony obstruction of justice and felony aggravated battery were dropped. He received two years probation, a \$500 fine, and 100 hours community service.

On November 14, 2005, Sgt. Myers illegally used a taser on inmate Ray Hsieh and falsified a report about the incident. Myers tased Hsieh four times while he was fully restrained in a chair with his wrists and ankles tied (See case file 05-CF-2105).

This is the third cop in less than two years whose abuse of power has gone unpunished since State's Attorney Julia Rietz took office. Rietz was elected in 2004 to stop the corruption that had become routine under the previous administration of John Piland.

In July 2005, Urbana officer Kurt Hjort was accused of rape by a 25-year-old woman. Hjort was fired from the force, but he was never charged and did not spend a single night in jail. Rietz had claimed a conflict of interest in the case (her husband Al Johnston is on the Urbana police force) and passed it to Judge Tom Difanis (whose daughter is also on the Urbana police force). Difanis gave the case to special prosecutor Jim Dedman, an Urbana attorney. Even former Urbana Police Chief Eddie Adair said he wondered why the case was not sent out of the county.

Dedman looked at the evidence and said he could not prove Hjort guilty "beyond a reasonable doubt." Dedman told the *News-Gazette*, "of great significance to me is the fact that Kurt Hjort has resigned his position with the Urbana Police Department" (10/18/2005). This sent the message that Hjort had suffered enough because he lost his job.

Although frequently appearing on conservative talk radio, Rietz took no public stance against Dedman's decision or on behalf of the rape victim.

In November 2005, Champaign County sheriff's deputy Ryan Garrett lost his job after threatening his estranged wife and her boyfriend. Garrett had told Ty Kellums, "I'm a cop. Watch your back" (06-CF-136). Garrett's wife alleged a history of physical and mental abuse. Garrett pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor offense and received a two years conditional discharge. He did one night in jail. Garrett was represented by Tony Novak, the attorney who also defended Sgt. Myers.

## A HEAVY PRICE?

In all three of these incidents, the rogue police officer did little or no jail time. The loss of their job was considered enough punishment for their serious breach of public safety. The press release by Myers's attorney Tony Novak is revealing:

"Alan Myers was a Champaign County Correctional Officer for over 13 years. In November 2005, he was a sergeant and shift commander. It is a thankless job.

"Pursuant to his duty, he was attempting to control an extremely disruptive inmate through use of a taser. He failed to follow protocol and then attempted to cover up his violation, ultimately admitting the false report as contained in the charge of Disorderly Conduct.

"The guilty plea to the misdemeanor battery charge was a compromise of a very close question of whether Alan Myers's use of the taser went beyond what was necessary to control an extremely disruptive, mentally unbalanced inmate.

"Alan and I decided it was in his best interest to accept the plea agreement although he has paid a heavy price in that he is unlikely to ever work in law enforcement again."

Drawing attention to the length of Myers's employment, and his service to the public for what is a difficult job, Novak says that Myers has paid heavily for his abuses. The suggestion is that Myers suffered enough because he lost his job.

Of course, if you or I, the average citizen, were caught stealing money at our job, or if we committed aggravated battery against an individual, we would not only lose our job, we would do some jail time. Because of the police officer's unique position of power, the expectations of them to uphold the law are not higher, but actually lower than the ordinary citizen.

## CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT

The 8th Amendment protects the public from "cruel and unusual punishment." This is one of the cornerstones of the American Constitution and what makes it such a radical document. It says that even the worst criminals in our society still have basic human rights. Myers's attorney Tony Novak makes it clear that inmate Ray Hsieh, even though he may have been mentally imbalanced, was being disruptive and deserved what he got.

The Constitution apparently has no jurisdiction in the remote cornfields of downstate Illinois.

Investigations conducted by the Sheriff's Department revealed that Myers had wrongly tased three other inmates. African American inmate Michael Alexander was tased on November 12, 2005 just two days before the incident with Ray Hsieh. On September 19, 2005, Sgt. Myers also used a taser on Trina Fairley, a pregnant African American woman.

But the most glaring incident occurred on November 6, 2004 when Myers used a taser on 21 year-old white student from Chicago, Michael Rich. Rich alleges that Myers slammed his head against a cell wall, put him in a restraint chair, beat him, then after letting him out of restraints, Tased him four times. Myers then falsified the report on Rich (S-2004-5123).

After looking at these documents, the State's Attorney could not find any evidence that Myers conducted any "great bodily harm" and he was given a misdemeanor charge of aggravated battery, rather than a felony. No additional charges were brought against Myers for the three other incidents.

## NO TORTURE HERE

Myers's lawyer Tony Novak said, "There was no torture here."

The definition of torture defined in the International Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984), to which the U.S. is a signatory, is as follows:

"The term 'torture' means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity."

The international standards of torture also apparently do not apply in Champaign County.

The prosecutor, Assistant State's Attorney Steve Ziegler, said that Myers "pleaded guilty to what he did." Ziegler would not answer my questions: Why did he not pursue felony aggravated battery against Myers? Why he did not file additional charges against Myers for falsifying a police report on Michael Rich? Why did he not call Trina Fairley? I was able to get in contact with Fairley and she told me she was never even contacted by the State's Attorney.

Michael Alexander, Trina Fairley, and Michael Rich all filed formal complaints against Myers. In August 2005, Sheriff Dan Walsh met with Rich and told him he would look into Myers. He did nothing and three other people were abused. The day of Myers's plea bargain, Sheriff Dan Walsh was tight-lipped and had no comment.

Sheriff Dan Walsh, Julia Rietz, and others will be at a public forum on March 13, 2007 titled, "Introduction to the Champaign County Criminal Justice System." This will be a rare opportunity to demand some answers from public officials about the handling of the Sgt. Myers case.

For more on Sgt. Myers see the Oct. 2006 and Dec. 2006/Jan. 2007 issues of the Public i.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE CHAMPAIGN COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

March 13, 2007, 7:00 PM

Urbana Civic Center

108 E. Water, Urbana

Citizens should understand how the criminal justice system works. Please join us for a free educational evening on how the criminal justice system works in our community. Office holders will make presentations about how their offices are structured, their job duties, how cases are processed, challenges to their offices and what citizens can do to improve the system. There will be a question and answer period following the presentations.

### Speakers include:

Richard Klaus, Associate Judge

Dan Walsh, Sheriff

Julia Rietz, State's Attorney

Randy Rosenbaum, Public Defender

Joe Gordon, Director of Court Services

Sponsored by the Champaign County Bar Association and the Illinois State Bar Association

**HIP-HOP: Beyond Beats and Rhymes** takes an in-depth look at representations of manhood, sexism and homophobia in hip-hop culture. This groundbreaking documentary is a "loving critique" of certain disturbing developments in rap music culture from the point of view of a fan who challenges the art form's representations of masculinity. Leading rap and hip-hop artists including Mos Def, Busta Rhymes, Russell Simmons are interviewed—and pressed—to answer some difficult questions about the violent and sexually explicit content of many hip-hop songs and videos. **HIP-HOP: Beyond Beats and Rhymes** premieres on the Emmy Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens*.



# THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES IN CHINA

By Belden Fields

*Belden Fields offers his appreciation to Professor Sufeng Song for supplying him with a video of the Chinese documentary on the staging of the play in China, for allowing herself to be interviewed and generally educating the author on the meaning of this play within the Chinese context, and for reading and commenting on the drafts.*

## THE POLITICAL AND THE CULTURAL

I have, for many years, been interested in how a single political ideology or a set of political institutions will vary when they are implemented in different cultural contexts. For example, in 1988 I published a book that examined how movements claiming to represent the ideologies of Trotskyism and Maoism took on very different forms when political activists tried to apply them in France and in the United States.

It appears that the same is true of cultural productions. The production that I want to discuss here is Eve Ensler's award winning play, *The Vagina Monologues*. This play is interesting because it is simultaneously, and intentionally, a cultural production and a political intervention. It is a cultural production because its form is the play. It is not a treatise or a political tract. It is meant to be enjoyed, to be fun for both the performers and the audience. But it is also political because it is designed to raise consciousness about power, violence, and self-affirmation in the face of patriarchal power and violence against women.

On February 23 and 24, *The Vagina Monologues* was performed in the Lincoln Hall Auditorium. This has apparently become a yearly event. The performance was to benefit the local Woman's Fund and V-Day International. V-Day is an international effort to combat violence against women world-wide. At about the same time that *The Vagina Monologues* was being performed in Lincoln Hall, a class in Chinese history at the University of Illinois was being shown a documentary about its performance in China.

## THE CHINESE CONTEXT

In the United States, Ensler's play became an artistic component of a larger feminist movement that was struggling for women's rights in all domains of life-- political, sexual, economic, and expressive. Such a movement, that engages in open political organizing, demonstrations, and direct confrontations with those holding political power, does not exist in China. It does not exist in China for both political and cultural reasons. The political reason is that the state, controlled by a single party, does not permit such public activity. The pro-democracy movement and Falun-Gong have both paid very dearly, often with their lives, when they have held public demonstrations. In the latter case, the demonstration was not even political, simply featuring the bodily exercises of this spiritual group.

The second reason is the moral context in China. There is a reluctance in China to publicly discuss issues that are explicitly sexual. "Good taste" dictates that these remain in the private domain. This conflicts with the Western feminist contention that the boundary between the public and the private is a false one that is useful in perpetuating patriarchy. As in most single-party states, the Chinese regime assumes as its responsibility control over public expressions of sexuality morality. When it judges that presentations are too far from the dominant norms, or are too public, it will intervene to prevent them. Indeed, scheduled performances of *The Vagina Monologues* in public galleries and museums by non-student actresses were prevented from taking place by the regime.

But, in an interview with Professor Sufeng Song of the Program in Women's and Gender Studies at Sun Yat-Sen University and a Freeman Fellow at the U of I this year, we learned that there has been an open space for such expression in China. That space is the universities with students as the actresses. The Chinese-language version play was first performed in China in December 2003. It was performed by students in the Women and Gender Studies Program at Sun Yat-Sen University in Guangzhou. The actual performance was at the Guangdong Museum of Art. Perhaps because it was the first performance that was under the government's radar, students in the Women and Gender Studies program at Sun Yat-Sen did manage to perform the play in the Guangzhou museum while non-student performances in the larger cities of Beijing and Shanghai were not permitted to take place. The play has been presented in a number of other Chinese universities since the initial 2003 performance.

## MODIFICATIONS IN CHINA

I observed some interesting differences between the play that was presented in Lincoln Hall Theater and what I saw in the documentary on the presentation in Guangzhou. According to Professor Song, these differences are due to concerns over the prevailing sexual mores among actresses and audiences alike. It is not that there is no reference at all to sex in Chinese culture. Professor Song points out that many of the folksongs sung by the rural population are very explicit. But there is a modesty and a discreteness in China that perhaps once existed in the United States but no longer does. So, if one wants the audience to accept the message, which means, among other things that the actresses have to be comfortable in delivering it, then a certain sensitivity is required. Professor Song stresses that the play needs to be fun for both actresses

and audience. There can be a certain fanciful audacity, such as if one were to think about how one would go about dressing a vagina up, which would be fun and provoke laughter.

But other things are thought to be off-limits, or requiring the greatest sensitivity. The portrayal of sex workers is one of those things. Prostitution is illegal in China, though it exists. But the overt portrayal of a prostitute on the stage would not work for either the actress or the audience. In addition to conservative sexual mores, there is a kind of self-censorship in China when it comes to portrayal of illegality, probably based upon both deference to authority and fear of the possible penal repercussions, that does not exist in the United States. Neither performer nor audience would be at ease with it; they would not learn from it; and they would not find any fun in it.

Another issue is lesbianism. The documentary about the play produced in Guangzhou contained interviews with actual lesbians but did not show their faces. In a "not-in-your-face" delicacy, it showed only their clasped hands. In the play itself, there was only one brief reference to a lesbian experience by an actress who was recalling many memories in her life. An American might say that this "delicacy" contributed to the closeting of lesbians. Professor Song says that it is rather out of respect for the women who are not out of the closet as well as an attempt to balance education about the lesbian experience and the need for greater respect for it with a concern for sensitivities in a society that is to a very great extent desexualized even when it comes to heterosexual forms.

In the Chinese documentary, there is much less bare skin presented to the audience than in the Lincoln Hall version where one young woman appeared in a bikini and another in a tee-shirt and what appeared to be panties. All of the actresses shown in the Chinese documentary were fully clothed. It is not that there was no self-affirmation of sexuality in the Chinese version, it's just that nudity is not required for such affirmation and would be counterproductive in the Chinese context.

In addition, the portrayal of sexual pleasure was different in the two productions. Again, the Lincoln Hall version was more blunt about the sensations when parts of the vagina were touched. In the Chinese version, the issue was presented by what Chinese women felt was a taboo against groaning during the sexual act, i.e., the woman expressing too much pleasure. The Chinese production reverted to forms of traditional opera to discuss the pleasure that women feel during the sexual act. Professor Song says that "in a culture that is comparatively more modest in sexual expression, it is a little difficult to get these amateur and perhaps first-time actresses to act it out on the set."



Professor Sufeng Song

*Continued on the next page*

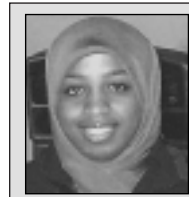


Scenes from a student performance of *The Vagina Monologues* in Guangzhou, China



# Guard Your Girls From Gardasil: What every woman and parent should know before considering the HPV vaccine.

By Ayanna Qadeem



Ayanna Qadeem is a University of Illinois alumna and member of CU Citizens for Peace and Justice.

Recently, the media has been saturated with ads promoting Gardasil, the Human Papillomavirus vaccine created by Merck. The overwhelming tone of this campaign is that cervical cancer is a growing epidemic and that the best preventative measure is to inoculate young girls and women. However, there are still many unanswered questions surrounding Gardasil and growing evidence showing that there is more behind this media blitz than a general public policy to improve women's health.

## WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT HPV AND THE VACCINE

The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the United States. HPV includes over 120 different strains, and approximately 30-40 of those are transmitted sexually. Out of these 30-40, only a few types can cause mild cellular changes in cervical cells or genital warts. In rare cases, if left unchecked for many years, these abnormal cellular changes (dysplasia) could lead to cervical cancer. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, about 6.2 million Americans become infected yearly with HPV and over half of all sexually active men and women (20 million) will become infected in their lifetime. In the United States, there are approximately 9,710 new cases each year of cervical cancer, and about 3,700 deaths. On a worldwide scale, 400,000 women get cervical cancer and of that 233,000 die each year due to cervical cancer that could have been caught early through regular Pap smear screening.

It is also important to note that 70% of people infected with HPV will clear the virus on their own down to an undetectable viral load level in 8-24 months following infection. Most won't show any symptoms of ever having the virus. Regular Pap smear testing continues to be the one of most effective methods in cervical cancer prevention. Other factors for preventing cervical cancer include maintaining a healthy immune system, not smoking, and practicing safe sexual habits.

If most HPV is cleared, and cervical cancer is so rare, then what good is Gardasil?

Gardasil was introduced last year and was the fastest FDA-approved vaccine ever. It is a non-infectious genetically engineered vaccine created from virus-like particles of major HPV proteins 6,11,16, and 18. HPV 6 and 11 are low risk strains linked to 90% of genital warts, while 16 and 18 are high risk strains responsible for 50-70% of the cervical cancers in the world. Although Gardasil has been highly effective in Merck's clinical trials, it is not a replacement for regular Pap screening, nor is it a cure for cancer. Women already infected with these strains will not benefit from taking the drug. Gardasil does not prevent infection from the other HPV types not contained in the vaccine. The vaccine is administered in three shots and costs \$120 per shot.

Some of these figures were reiterated on Monday, Feb. 25, during a HPV presentation on the University of Illinois

campus. Dr. Suzanne Trupin of Champaign's Women's Health Practice provided statistics and stated that cervical cancer is rare in the United States and not a problem worldwide. Only 10% of those with HPV will develop a serious infection. She also stated that cervical cancer is primarily diagnosed in women during their late 30s and 40s and that half of the women who develop cancer have never had a regular Pap smear. Regular Pap smears are still the primary cancer screening method, however she foresaw that in the next 5-10 years the HPV test will become an increasingly more prevalent screening method. Despite the low incidents of cancer in women, the doctor still highly praised Gardasil, citing a singular case of a young woman who developed cervical cancer in her twenties. She also confirmed that the vaccine Gardasil does contain aluminum, a chemical that in some reports has been linked to aluminum plaque buildup in people with Alzheimers.

## WHAT WE STILL DON'T KNOW

There are still many things that we don't know about this vaccine. First, there has not been enough research done demonstrating the long term effects this drug will have on women and girls. Lobbyists are pushing for this drug to be used on pre-adolescent girls as young as 9 years old, and yet, at this time no testing has been done outside the age range 16 to 26 years. Based upon the trial results, the effectiveness of the drug's reaction was inferred to the younger age group. Secondly, the length of the vaccine's immunity in the long term is still unknown. At best, immunity has been slated for 5 years. Also, women with compromised immune systems may have complications and develop adverse auto-immune responses. Gardasil should not be used by pregnant women. Merck has not tested to see if the vaccine's antigens are passed on through breast milk. The long term effect on women's fertility has not been studied. Merck has not established Gardasil's potential toxicity and carcinogenicity. In addition, with the exception of the hepatitis B vaccine, Gardasil's administration with other vaccines has yet to be studied. While side effects normally associated with vaccination are mentioned in their product information, Merck does not clearly state what the adverse side effects are. However, the national vaccine surveillance program, Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), contains numerous patient reports of loss of consciousness, severe headaches, temporary vision loss, hives, erythema, vasculitis, abdominal pain, arthritis, dizziness and seizures. In some of these instances, adverse reactions occurred in women taking birth control.

## FOLLOW THE MONEY

Despite the questions surrounding this drug, many states are being pushed to introduce legislation and resolutions making vaccination a school requirement for young girls. A closer look reveals that Merck has been lobbying and funding efforts to pass state laws across the country. Merck is channeling money through Women in Government, a non-profit advocacy group comprised of women state legislators from around the country. Women in Government has been in the forefront for pushing new legislative changes to states laws and also has several ties to Texas Governor Rick Perry. In February, Governor Perry issued an executive order mandating that all Texas girls get the vaccine. In the

past, Perry received several thousands of dollars in campaign contributions from Merck. His former chief of staff, Mike Toomey, is now one of Merck's three lobbyists.

Women in Government plans to partner with women's clubs, sororities, advocacy groups, faith based organizations and membership associations to influence women to take the vaccine. They are going to disseminate pro-vaccination information in places where women, particularly target poor women and women of color, gather, e.g. hair and nail salons, schools, on public transportation and particularly target women of color and the poor. A press release on the group's website states, "minority and underserved women are being left behind in states" prevention efforts" and that "we can no longer accept substandard prevention and treatment for the underserved women of our country."

Digene, the makers of the HPV Test and another Women in Government sponsor, hopes to piggyback off of Merck's success. Like Merck, it has also launched media campaigns promoting its HPV Test in places such as Texas, Chicago, Los Angeles and other cities with high concentrations of women of color, immigrants, and poor. Digene wants to replace regular Pap smear screening with its more expensive DNA HPV test. The company projects to make millions of dollars this year and calls cervical cancer its largest untapped "overall cancer-screening market."

## THE BACKLASH, THE LAW AND YOUR RIGHT TO CHOOSE

The attempt by these groups to usurp parental control has backfired. After numerous complaints and an overwhelming backlash against this mandate, Merck has temporarily backed off pushing the vaccine. Governor Perry, however, still stands by his executive order, even though it is not an actual law and not legally binding. All parents still have the legal right to conscientiously object to vaccinations on the basis of religious and philosophical grounds. If politicians in league with Women in Government, Merck and others have their way, such provisions around exemptions will be tightened and monitored.

In Illinois, 103rd District Representative Naomi Jakobsen recently introduced legislation calling for the vaccination of all sixth grade girls. House Bill 115 would amend the current School Code and call for a statewide comprehensive Cervical Cancer Prevention Plan for the general public. Under this law, parents would have to register their child's HPV vaccination status with the state.

There needs to be more conclusive studies done before it can be determined whether Gardasil is more beneficial than it is harmful. One thing is for sure, this highly experimental investigational vaccine was prematurely rushed out into the market at the behest of those who stand to make the most profit from forced inoculations. The perceived danger of the cervical cancer "epidemic" has been inflated by advocacy groups, lobbyists, and politicians in a coordinated front launched, initiated and funded by Merck. Merck has intentionally manufactured a false need through direct-to-consumer advertising and is influencing the public discourse on this issue. Whatever legislation passes, it is important that all women and parents become informed on this issue, get adequate balanced information on HPV and cervical cancer, and exercise their right to choose what chemicals they put into their own and their children's bodies.

# THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES IN CHINA

Continued from the previous page

Actually, the most endearing part of the Chinese documentary to me was when students asked older women about groaning to express sexual pleasure. The older women, some of them mothers of the actresses, were shy and they laughed good naturedly with an obvious dose of embarrassment, but they

were amazingly good sports to permit the filming of the discussion.

## CONCLUSION

*The Vagina Monologues* is part of an international movement to raise the consciousness of women about their sexuality, about

the patriarchal nature of the societies in which they live, and about one of the most damaging aspects of those societies, violence by men against women. What this comparison of two performances in two different countries shows is that the universal messages must be presented in ways

that take into account both the way that political power is manifested and the moral sensibilities that are deeply rooted in the culture. The less blunt approach is not always the less powerful one.



# An Honored Tradition

By Tom Garza



*Thomas Garza has been a community member for many years. He's spent much of his life as a songwriter and performer, and currently works as an Illustrator.*

Recently, University of Illinois Board of Trustees chairman Lawrence Eppley announced that as of February 21st 2007, the U of I team mascot called 'chief illiniwek' would cease to perform at half-time events.

To anyone who is unaware of the controversy surrounding this figure, this sounds like a relatively unimportant bit of trivia, just another boardroom maneuver in the giant corporate game that college athletics has become.

But this is, in fact, a fairly big deal. Who or what was 'the chief'?

At a halftime performance, a student donned a costume that was designed to give the audience the impression that he portrayed an 'Indian Chief.' He then did a stylized dance. This 'chief' was said to represent the 'spirit' of the University; to memorialize the Native people who used to live here, and to portray "strength, bravery, truthfulness, courage, and dignity."

Now if you have lived in the United States for awhile, you won't think to ask the next logical question. It probably won't even occur to you. But for those not steeped in classic American traditions, myths, and legends, your next question will likely be: 'so what is it about this character that represents those qualities anyway?'

How does the performance described above—or any of its various permutations and iterations over the succeeding 81 years -- manage to captivate an audience of disparate ages, genders, and socioeconomic situations, and leave them all with at least some degree of the same impression about who 'the chief' is, and what he represents?

## THE ANSWER IS: 'THE CHIEF' IS SUPPOSED TO BE AN AMERICAN INDIAN

If you've read any books, watched any movies, television shows, or cartoons; if you were ever a Boy Scout; if you attended any schools in this country in the last 100 years or so, you will know as soon as you look at him, that a person who is dressed in this way is supposed to be an Indian Chief. You will also 'know' that Indians were wise, spiritual, dignified, courageous and so on.

Just by donning his outfit, the performer doesn't automatically assume the full measure of his role however. For the transaction to be complete, there must be a number of unspoken agreements already in place, so that this would-be Indian will be seen as the embodiment of all the qualities I just mentioned.

The most important agreement of course concerns the outfit itself. It's changed a bit over the years, but the consistent requirements for it have always been and must always be such, that the greatest number of people possible will recognize it as something an 'Indian Chief' would wear. Anything else, however accurate in its own way, wouldn't do.

That his 'war paint' demonstrates a lack of understanding about the way native people used face paints, and why and when they did so; that his outfit—indisputably authentic though it may be in and of itself -- is representative of a people that never lived in this area; that his dance only vaguely resembles the Fancy Dance it's supposed to be based on, and that his movements and regalia incorporate elements of religious significance without any attempt to contextualize the way they are interspersed with other things utilized strictly for their entertainment value alone is all, actually, beside the point.

The only thing that matters is that the greatest possible number of people understand and know without being told, that by putting this costume on, and jumping around the way he does, the person portraying 'the chief' assumes all of the relevant characteristics of an American Indian. Even if that person is just a blond, blue-eyed white kid from somewhere near Chicago, and up close couldn't look any less at home in his costume than your dog does when you put a coat and sunglasses on him.

The next agreement is that we, the observers, must all know, or think we know some basic things about Indians.

In order to achieve this, they have to trade in stereotypes.

"The chief" stereotype is that of a figure from the "golden age" of Indians, a purer, more innocent time before Native culture was destroyed and altered by the coming of Europeans. This kind of imperialist nostalgia informs every aspect of "the chief" and his so-called "tradition" (a word that was chosen specifically to invoke a sense of unbroken connection to the past, and the proven worth of things both tried and true).

You couldn't utilize a living Native person for this purpose—despite the fact that he may be culturally, phenotypically and perhaps even genetically indistinguishable from your preferred historical version, because a real, living person is ... well ... a real person. Just like everyone else. And real people have a way of inconveniently straying from the approved script and not living up to the ideal.

So over the years this "chief" has been sent to grade schools and public events, and he's delivered lectures on Native American history and culture primarily because he can be depended upon to stick to the script. He probably doesn't actually know any more about the subject than what that script tells him. But at the very least he doesn't have any of those inconveniently contemporary qualities that an actual Native person would have, which would keep him from being ... well ... "Indian" enough for the part.

Before we go any further, there is a point I've been making that I wonder if you've picked up on. To wit: Native themed mascots like "the chief," are fundamentally mimetic. Their entire existence is derived from, and is dependent upon the cultures they purport to represent. Any amount of legitimacy they claim to have is in direct proportion to how accurately they are able to copy actual Native Americans and their culture, or as in the case of the chief, how true they are to the most commonly held stereotype thereof.

Just look at how they justify this thing. It is described in terms of its accuracy, it is said to be a tribute to; an actual authentic version of; is derived from; is respectful to, and of course, let's not forget its intent to honor—Native Americans. But usually, in nature, when you have one creature that depends entirely upon another for its existence, the relationship is symbiotic. You keep my fur free of fleas, I protect you from predators.

But there is no reciprocation going on here. Aside from the dubious "honor" of having the richness and variety of hundreds of different indigenous cultures boiled down to one simplistic and inaccurate stereotype, native people don't get much out of the bargain. And all the millions the

**"The relationship 'the chief' has with real Native people isn't symbiotic, it's parasitic."**

University makes off of merchandising goes right into its own pockets, and nary a cent goes to the people whose cultures are being sold. The relationship "the chief" has with real Native people isn't symbiotic, it's parasitic.

All of those things I mentioned about the "war paint"; the costume; the dance, and the pseudo religious trappings—the things that I said were all beside the point in re-making the chief seem authentic to his fans—are actually the *point* to the people whose cultures those things are derived from. "The chief" may seem to be something dignified and reverential to the people who love him, but to an actual Native person, or to someone from any of the many groups whose rich experiences and complex lives have also been reduced to simplistic caricatures of this sort, it's obvious what "the chief" is—and what he is not.

Take for example the mercifully short-lived Facebook group that was called "If they get rid of the Chief, I'm going to become a racist." (That the people who created and joined this group seemed to be utterly oblivious to the irony of that name is simply astounding). Facebook, for those who don't know, is a sort of online bulletin board, where students post about things that interest them, and are then able to append comments to each others posts, carry on conversations, and just generally socialize with one another. One of the most telling comments posted in this group was: "... what they don't realize is that there was never a racist problem before..but now i hate redskins

and hope all those drunk(sic), casino-owning bums die."

Now I couldn't express what's wrong with stereotyping, or the ignorant arrogance of privilege that these few words manage to convey any clearer or more eloquently if I'd written a hundred, or even a thousand pages of exhaustive (and exhausting) disquisition on the subject. The person who posted this apparently has only two types of Native people he is able to conceptualize: the 'Noble Savage' of the George Catlin or James Fenimore Cooper variety—as portrayed by the chief—or the drunken, casino-owning bums who exist primarily as an invention of racists who wanted another category to define the objects of their hatred. The problem isn't so much that someone would think about you that way—you can't go through life without making a few enemies—but that so many of the people who control your opportunities, who own the media; run the government, and write the history books, think that way about you. Their voices, multiplied and amplified many times over on account of that power, are so much louder than yours, that they simply drown you out. If you even bother to try to tell your own personal and unique story, no one is listening and they can't; they won't hear you. They won't even try.

Even if you have no great desire to "fit" in their world, the problem still exists that you—for all intents and purposes—do not exist as an individual in the minds of far too many people who control access to the things you need. They design the education that you have to acquire if you want to get good jobs, and they are the ones who make the laws that define what you can, and cannot, do. And what can, and cannot be done to you.

So yes, "the chief" was important—is important. He has served as a potent rallying point for adherents of the ideologies of exclusion, dominance, and privilege, and to the many, many people who unknowingly supported them because they didn't realize what was actually going on. His presence has reminded the rest of us daily of our "place" at this University, and in society in general.

So it's great that he's gone. It's long overdue and I'm very happy about it, but pardon me if I'm not as impressed by the retirement of this dancing cheerleader as I might be. The University has in no way admitted that there was ever anything wrong with "the chief" at all. They didn't address the misrepresentation of native culture his image has perpetuated for 81 years, and they didn't even acknowledge the fact that for nearly twenty years this has been an extremely divisive figure on this campus, and that his removal was absolutely necessary if they even hoped to bring the student body together and earn the national and international respect that this University otherwise deserves. Quite the contrary in fact, Chairman Eppley made it a point to praise this "proud tradition" of misrepresentation.

So nothing substantive has changed, and the long, hard fight of hitherto ignored and marginalized people to be respected, recognized, and accepted for who they really are, continues on. Would that it were not so.

## Bellies For Life

Join us for an evening of fun on March 10th at the High Dive, where all proceedings are going towards breast cancer research.

**Date:** Saturday March 10, 2007

**Time:** 5:30 pm–10:30 pm

**Location:** HighDive @ down town Champaign

Doors open at 5:30 pm for a Happy Hour.

Belly Dance show starts at 7pm.

For more details visit [http://www.cubellydance.com/Directory\\_n\\_Calendar/Pangaea\\_BFL\\_2007.htm](http://www.cubellydance.com/Directory_n_Calendar/Pangaea_BFL_2007.htm)



# Native Women's Resurgence at UIUC

by Brenda Farnell and Jodi Byrd



Brenda Farnell is Associate Professor of Anthropology and affiliate faculty in American Indian Studies at UIUC and active in the struggle against the Illiniwek mascot. UCIMC supported the making of her video, *Not a Mascot* (produced with John Matirano and Brent McDonald) currently in the American Anthropological Association's museum exhibit on Race: Are We So different? Check out this important teaching resource at <http://www.understandingrace.org/home.html>.

Jodi Byrd, an enrolled member of the Chickasaw nation, is an Assistant Professor of American Indian Studies and English at UIUC (see below).

Ask your friends and family to name any American Indian women. It is likely that Sacagawea and Pocahontas will be the only ones they know. Why is it that these two Native women have acquired mythical status in American history and popular culture, to the exclusion of all others? We suggest it is because they are seen as the benefactors of men—"good Indians" who mediated friendly relations between Indian and whites. Stereotypical representations of American Indian men dominate the popular imagination (e.g. Chief Illiniwek), and as a result, a masculine discourse influences how most people imagine who "Indians" were and are. Those imaginings, as well as the subordinate positioning of Native women as sidebars to, and helpers for, both white and Native men, mask the contributions of American Indian women, both historically and in the present.

We want to address these misconceptions and misrecognitions by first acknowledging some of the overlooked historical contributions from American Indian women in this region. By recognizing the long history of American Indian women and the contributions and resistances they made, we celebrate and honor the return of Native women to this particular landscape, a landscape emptied of Native peoples through forced removal and genocide in the early nineteenth century. Facilitated by the creation of a vibrant American Indian Studies Program at the University, American Indian women have returned as artists, activists, scholars, and community leaders to help us begin to heal from the traumas and legacies of violence that have for so long erased Native women's presences. In so doing we recognize a continuing line of resistance, recovery and reclamation by American Indian women that rewrites the dominant popular narrative.

## NINETEENTH CENTURY NATIVE WOMEN

Betsy Love (Chickasaw): *Married Women's Property Rights, 1839*. Research by LeAnne Howe, professor of

American Indian Studies and Creative Writing at UIUC, has uncovered the legal contributions of Betsy Love, a 19th century Chickasaw woman who, despite the turmoil of forced removal and genocide in the early 1800's, played the formative role in establishing the *Married Women's Property Act of 1839*. This act affirmed the legal rights of *all* married women, Native and white, to own their own property and prevent it being seized by their husbands or their husbands' creditors. Significantly, the Mississippi courts upheld matrilineal Chickasaw culture and traditions in which women owned and controlled property, and retained that property even through marriage. Betsy Love, married to a white man through a Chickasaw marriage ceremony, resisted her husband's creditors who wanted to sell her property—which included African American slaves—to pay off her husband's debts after his death. In 1837, the court ruled that Chickasaw customs of property rights in which the wife's properties did not transfer over to the husband's control were affirmed, and through this decision, along with Betsy Love's challenge to the creditors, precedent was established to protect the property rights of women in general.

**Jane Johnston Schoolcraft (Ojibwa): First American Indian literary writer.** Recent work by Robert Dale Parker, professor of English and American Indian Studies faculty affiliate at UIUC, reveals that the first known American Indian literary writer was an Ojibwe woman, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft (1800-1842). Collecting Jane Schoolcraft's writings into one volume for the first time, Dr. Parker's book, *The Sound the Stars Make Rushing through the Sky*, demonstrates that American Indian written literature and poetry has a longer and richer history than previously assumed by scholars focused on mid to late nineteenth century contributions by Native writers. The author of many poems and traditional stories in both English and Ojibwe languages, Jane also translated songs and other Ojibwe texts for her husband, the well-known folklorist Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, who adapted and published her work without attributing the source. It is her work and poetry that became a primary source for Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha*.

**Meskwaki, Ho-chunk and Potawatami Women in 19th Century Economics.** Until recently, historians have ignored the key roles that tribal women played in the economic systems that developed in the Great Lakes and Upper Mississippi Valley regions during the first half of the 19th century. A new textbook co-authored by Frederick Hoxie, Swanlund Professor of History and American Indian studies faculty affiliate at UIUC, corrects this bias. Indigenous women frequently intermarried with French or Creole traders, producing a population of mixed lineage with extensive and prosperous trading networks. For example, Meskwaki, Ho-chunk and Potawatami women

controlled much of the production and marketing of lead from the rich mines near modern Dubuque and Galena. They used their mixed lineage husbands to "front" for them in trading, and employed their extensive tribal kinship networks to promote their business ventures among tribal communities.

Likewise, in northern Indiana and southwest Michigan, two Potawatomi women Kakima and Mouto (a.k.a Madeline Bertrand) are known to have played pivotal roles in their husbands' far flung trading activities. Kakima's kinship ties to prominent Potawatomi village chiefs enabled her husband William Burnett to pass freely among the Potawatomi communities in the region. Mouto, who was also active in trading, also spent considerable time promoting Roman Catholicism within the Potawatomi villages. Massaw, a Miami business woman, was an entrepreneur who owned and operated an "inn and gambling house" in modern Fulton County, Indiana, and held considerable political influence. Despite the trauma of forced removal from their homes and lands in the 1830s, historical records show that Potawatomi women rebuilt their lives and continued their business activities in Kansas, reestablishing inns and restaurants to market food and lodging to settler populations traveling West.

## AMERICAN INDIAN WOMEN RETURN TO URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

The emergence of the American Indian Studies Program at UIUC enables us to mark the return of a vibrant, effective Native women's presence to our local landscape. In the rich contributions of faculty members LeAnne Howe, Debbie Reese and Jodi Byrd we recognize the ongoing project of resistance, recovery, reclamation and healing.

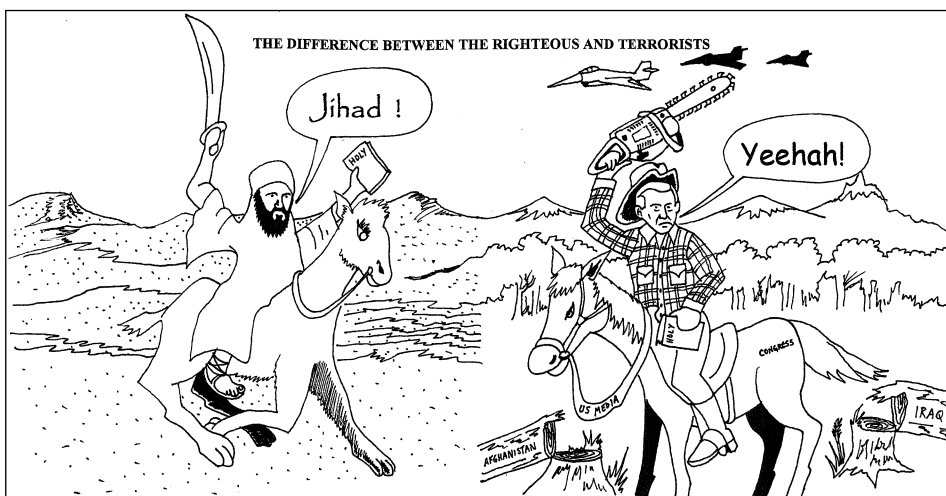
**LeAnne Howe** is an enrolled citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and an Associate Professor of American Indian Studies and Creative Writing. Born and educated in Oklahoma, she writes fiction, creative non-fiction, plays, poetry, and screenplays that primarily deal with American Indian experiences. Her first novel, *Shell Shaker* won the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation in 2002, and as a finalist for the 2003 Oklahoma Book Award. In 2004, *Equinoxes Rouges*, the French translation of her novel, was the finalist for one of France's top literary awards, the *Prix Medici Etranger*. Her collection of poetry, *Evidence of Red* won the 2006 Oklahoma Book Award. Her next novel, *Miko Kings* (forthcoming from Aunt Lute Press) is an Indian baseball novel set in Ada, Oklahoma in 1903 and 1969.



Continued on page 11



**Photo of the month**—A tank convoy being transported through suburban Chicago in preparation for the new Iraq troop build-up. Photo by Dave Crawford



- One is a crazed Religious-Nut trying to force his beliefs on sovereign nations.
- One attacked the other's country.
- One thinks he is Right and God directs his every move.
- One uses dirty tricks with the support of a corrupt government to back him.
- One has blind followers who put him in power.
- One was put into power by another government.
- One has close ties with the Saudi Royal Family.
- One likes chopping things in his spare time.
- One can't speak English very well.

Contributed by Anonymous





# Globalizing Solidarity: Report Back from the World Social Forum in Nairobi

by Danielle Chynoweth



Danielle Chynoweth is a co-founder of the local independent Media Center. She is serving her second term on Urbana's City Council.

## INDYMEDIA IN AFRICA

This January, Urbana IMC members Jason Turner and I traveled to Nairobi, Kenya to join dozens of independent journalists from Uganda, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya, and Germany and the Prometheus Radio Project from Philadelphia. We built two radio stations from scratch - soldering the transmitters and cables by hand. The group built a dozen mini-transmitters that were taken home to broadcast in neighborhoods throughout Africa. We also built a printing press, made Indymedia Africa t-shirts, and left the press for future projects.

Since 1999, over two hundred Independent Media Centers have formed a network throughout the world, producing stories by people directly connected with grassroots social justice struggles. But in Africa, government repression and lack of access to technology have formed a barrier between vibrant social movements, grassroots media makers, and the largely online network of Independent Media Centers. African independent journalists called for an Indymedia gathering to coincide with the World Social Forum, to grow Indymedia in Africa.

## THE WORLD SOCIAL FORUM

The World Social Forum is an annual gathering of participants in social movements for global justice, timed to coincide with the World Economic Forum. The World Economic Forum is a meeting of business and political leaders in Davos, Switzerland. The city is converted into a military security zone during the meeting, making demonstrations and coverage by independent journalists nearly impossible.

Rallying around the call of "Another World Is Possible," the World Social Forum has placed social justice, gender equality, peace, and defense of the environment on the agenda of the world's peoples. World Social Forums have collectively expanded the democratic spaces of those seeking concrete, progressive alternatives to corporate exploitation and military land grabs. Regional social forums have begun to spring up - the first US Social Forum is June 27 through July 1st in Atlanta, Georgia. (See [www.ussf2007.org](http://www.ussf2007.org))

Our Indymedia delegation was given a small room at the World Social Forum where we broadcast live as Radio-Huru 107.9 FM, interviewing a steady stream of people from grassroots struggles, and providing hands on media production training. With photos and stories from the World Social Forum, we produced and distributed a newsletter.

The World Social Forum was a festival of over 100,000 participants conducting forums on every major social issue, with music and dancing throughout. Colorful demonstrations circled the forums, calling for an end to the Indian caste system and supporting grassroots women fighting HIV/AIDS. Our newly trained radio producers interviewed Nigerians about the ongoing Ogoni struggle against Shell oil, a Somali women's group about their

efforts to promote sustainable energy sources and minimize the destructive use of charcoal, and gay and lesbian Kenyans in their struggle against discrimination. The Forum buzzed with the excitement of people meeting across continents and connecting their local experiences with global movements.

The World Social Forum was also a gated community inside a sports stadium. Mainstream NGOs acted as gatekeepers, hand-picking grassroots activists. Many Kenyans we met were not able to attend the World Social Forum, hosted in their back yard, because of cost. The only restaurant located within site of the events was owned by a government official. When attendees found this out, they stormed the restaurant "liberating" the food to give to Kenyan children. South Africans and Kenyans led protests which succeeded in allowing Kenyans into the forum for free, after pulling one entrance gate off its hinges.

## THE SLUMS

Right outside the gates of the World Social Forum were some of the worst slums in the world. Within days of arriving in Nairobi, we decided against staying within the confines of those gates. Through our Kenya Indymedia friends, we worked with community organizers in the slums, sharing stories and planning future collaborations.

"We are still being considered squatters ... how can you be a squatter in your own country?" asked Geoff from Korogocho, a slum with a population of a half million. In Nairobi, sixty-five percent of the population lives on five percent of the land in slums where houses are cobbled out of tin and garbage. There is no electricity, water, or sewers. One third of residents in the slums are HIV positive. About four million people live under these conditions, a result of the de-industrialization of rural areas, causing people to move to Nairobi in search of work.

The ironic thing is that the government holds in its hands a fairly straightforward remedy - one that was voiced clearly by residents: "Give us deeds to the land we live on and access to loans. Build city infrastructure like you do in middle class Nairobi. We can do the rest." Currently, residents pay between \$100-300 per month for one room shacks built on public land. The government stands by as politically connected people force residents to pay them rent. "And what if you don't pay?" I asked one school teacher as she showed us her home. She pointed to a new piece of tin on her roof "They start taking parts off your house until you pay."

## RADIO FOR LIBERATION

I struggled with how to tell the story of my trip to Africa. It starts with a predictable gesture similar to the mainstream media. Africa is poor, corrupt, and full of AIDS. But there is another side to this story - one that the mainstream media neglects.

Inside the "most dangerous" slum of Nairobi one finds Koch FM, the first community radio station in the slums. On a dirt clearing used for gatherings and sports, sits a recycled shipping container. Inside is a deluxe community space lovingly lined with sound proofing and red fabric, separated into two swank broadcast studios and an office. A generator provides the power. Air conditioning units keep the temperature controlled inside, eighty miles from the equator.

When we arrived in Nairobi, Koch FM was poised to go back on the air. They began broadcasting as an unlicensed station last Spring, but media attention brought govern-

ment attention and within a month they were shut down. They went through the application process but were repeatedly stalled - until they sat down in the Communications Commissions office and refused to leave. They got their license.

When we arrived, they were struggling with a broken transmitter. We worked together to fix it. On February 8th, they went on the air. "Koch FM is a tool to address the issues of the community," said Geoff, one of the organizers. "The listeners of Koch FM do not want to know about traffic jams in Nairobi ... they want to hear things related to HIV/AIDS, the environment, and land reform - that's what affects them. We are trying to bring the community together so we can have somewhere to share our community's problems and be a center point for change ... We will bring the government ministers down here to the station, and they will have to answer our questions."

The organizers of Koch FM are largely Hip Hop musicians in an environment that has, so far, escaped corporate co-optation of this political art form. In fact, the night before we met with Koch FM, their meeting was raided by the police. One of the members explained: "I spent last night in jail ... the police were fishing for suspects in our neighborhood as usual ... They interrupted our radio station meeting and said 'you're one of those hip hop artists' and grabbed me." To hear the music that sent Koch FM members to jail, go to: [www.ukooflanimaumau.com](http://www.ukooflanimaumau.com).

## GLOBALIZING SOLIDARITY

Most important was the building of solidarity across borders in the long term effort to grow a global independent media network. We have built strong relationships with plans for future collaborations. We worked closely with a group called Pro-Active Youth in the slum of Kangemi. Their projects span from removing the piles of street garbage to educating youth about their constitutional rights in a neighborhood familiar with police sweeps. They have built a network of thirty-two groups and meet in a tiny shack, set in the yard of an abandoned police station. They plan to develop a Community Media Center with a radio station, resource center, and meeting space.

Grassroots, independent communication is at the foundation of every social movement. It is the beginning of change by and for Nairobi residents. The Kangemi Community Media Center is fundamentally an empowerment project, not a charity project. The Urbana-Champaign IMC has decided to support the creation this Center—assisting with the acquisition of a recycled shipping container and radio equipment at the sum total of \$10,000. We have raised \$1,000 to date.

To find out more, contact [finance@ucimc.org](mailto:finance@ucimc.org). To offer a tax deductible donation visit [www.ucimc.org/info/donate](http://www.ucimc.org/info/donate) and stipulate payment for "Kangemi CMC."

## Report Back from the World Social Forum—by Danielle Chynoweth

Photos, interviews, and talk about building radio stations in Kenya

Thursday, March 8th from 7-9 PM at the Independent Media Center

## CONCERTS/MUSIC

**Fula Flute, Saturday, March 3, 10pm, Global Transfer Series, KCPA, NYC based West African music ensemble FREE**

**Nu Orbit Ensemble, Tuesday evenings 10pm-12am in March, Canopy Club**

**Ravish Momin's Trio Tarana, Monday, March 19, Iron Post, NYC based world jazz trio returning to town, presented previously in the Sudden Sound Concert Series.**

**Straylight, Thursday, March 29, 7:30pm Sudden Sound Concert Series, KAM, Free.**



# James Connolly

by David Johnson



Born Seamas O'Conghaile on June 5th 1868, Connolly is one of the single most important persons in the history of Ireland in the last 100 years. Born and raised in Edinburgh Scotland to Irish immigrant parents, he joined the British army at age 14 to escape extreme poverty and deserted from the military at age 21 in 1889. He moved to Dublin in 1896 to take a full-time job as secretary of the Dublin Socialist Society, which later evolved into the Irish Socialist Republican Party (ISRP).

Connolly emigrated to the U.S. in 1903 and in 1905 he became a Union organizer for the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) until he returned to Ireland in 1910. At that point he became an organizer for the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU) and within a year became the General Secretary of the ITGWU. In 1913, along with Jim Larkin (Dublin president of the ITGWU), he organized a general strike in Dublin that paralyzed commerce and transport for many weeks. During the general strike, Connolly organized the Irish Citizen Army amongst striking workers, in a self-defense response to wide spread beatings of striking workers by the police and British military. The Irish Citizen Army became the nucleus of the Dublin Division of the Army of the Republic during the 1916 Easter Rebellion against British rule of Ireland.



James Connolly

Connolly was badly wounded and imprisoned during the Easter Rebellion, and despite his severe wounds was tied to a chair and executed by the British military on May 12th 1916, several weeks after his capture. James Connolly died for his belief in social justice, but this belief was not merely a theoretical ideal. It was a belief based on a lifetime of experience, of seeing thousands of men and women exploited to the edge of despair and starvation by the greed of a few.

Though considered by many historians as an Irish "Nationalist", Connolly's nationalism was the view that a revolution in Ireland, or anywhere in the world, was worthless unless the revolution substantially improved the well being of the vast majority of the people, in particular those most impoverished. Connolly's nationalism encompassed an international perspective in that he believed in a brotherhood of equal nations in the world as well as a brotherhood of equal citizens within every nation. Thus Connolly believed that colonialism and feudalistic capitalism were the cause of Ireland's problems and most of the world's problems. Connolly instead advocated for a social/economic-political system called a Co-operative Commonwealth. Connolly's Co-operative Commonwealth was influenced to some degree by the social structure of ancient Celtic Ireland as well as modern realities of the industrial age.

According to Connolly, the Co-operative Commonwealth would be a societal structure where major industries and resources would be owned by the people in common, administered by a democratically elected government, and the government held in check by the industrial Unions of the respective industries. Connolly was extremely cautious of too powerful of a centralized government. One of his more famous quotes that reveals this was "Without the power of the Industrial Union behind it, democracy can only enter the state as the victim enters the gullet of a serpent."

## Alternative Saint Patrick's Day/James Connolly Festival

Saturday March 17<sup>th</sup>, Noon-5PM, at the Independent Media Center, 202 S. Broadway, Downtown Urbana (on the north side of Lincoln Square)

Come join us for an indoor festival of IRISH; Music, Food, Dance, Film, Stage Drama Presentations, and Speakers. As well as; Book, CD, DVD, Posters, Art, Clothing and Misc. items of interest for sale.

\$5 admission/children under 12 are free

For ticket info contact; 356-8247

Tickets also available from 8am-2:30 pm, (Mon-Fri) in Suite 21-A, IMC Building (in the basement adjacent to the Family Room).

A prolific writer of historical, cultural, political, economic, and social analysis, many people of opposing political beliefs valued and praised Connolly's insightful articles and books. Two of his more famous books are *Labour in Irish History* and *The re-conquest of Ireland*. An article this length cannot begin to do justice to the legacy of James Connolly. You can learn more by googling [www.wageslave.org](http://www.wageslave.org) (James Connolly Society). A film about the life of James Connolly is planned for 2007, with Peter Mullan in the lead role and Adrian Dunbar as Director.

## Pages for Pennies

"Pages for Pennies, a booksale to benefit Books To Prisoners, will be held April 12-16 in the Independent Media Center, 202 E. Broadway, Urbana. Hours are from

4-9pm on 4/12, 12pm-9pm on 4/13, 10am-5pm on 4/14, 10am-5pm on 4/15, and 10am-12pm on 4/16. On April 16th, all books are half-price."



# Lesbian Activism and Women's History in the Cold War Era

Continued from page 1

homosexuality, most of which were written by "experts" and pitched to a general audience. Popular paperback publishers like Gold Medal saw dollar signs. Enabled by new technologies that allowed them to print a great number of books and market them in places like train stations and drug stores, paperback houses produced best selling books about devious lesbians that were designed to titillate male readers but which also convinced lesbian readers that they were not alone. Within the lesbian pulp subgenre, lesbian writers used pseudonyms to write novels about lesbians that relied on the lurid pulp conventions while also creating out a subterranean but self-conscious lesbian literary genre. Among the most famous of these 50s pulp writers was Ann Bannon, who went on to write five books in a pulp series. Her first novel in the series, *Odd Girl Out* (1957), was based partly on her undergraduate experience at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

### VERNACULAR SEXOLOGY

The pulps were only one response to the restless questioning of sexual and gender

normativity in the 50s. In 1955 the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB)—the first national association of lesbians—was formed, and in 1956, the first issue of its magazine, *The Ladder*, appeared. The magazine *ONE*, founded by ONE, Inc (which had developed out of the larger Mattachine Society) had begun to circulate (in 1953), and in 1955 the Mattachine Society began the monthly *Mattachine Review*. In 1956 Jeanette Foster published her important reference work *The Sex Variant Woman in Literature*.

The magazines produced by formally constituted gay and lesbian groups are a particularly important source of a radical queer politics that found more general expression in the decades that followed. The magazines' editors engaged often and directly with members of the medical and psychiatric community, inviting debate from its members on various theories as well as searching out members of that community who did not pathologize gayness indeed, conversing with that community was part of the mission statement of *The Ladder*. Perhaps more importantly, the editors of these early homophile journals rec-

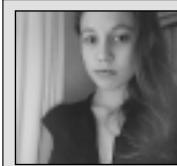
ognized that it was by organizing—even if only in print—that gay people could combat being labeled as deviant individuals. Their argument: A single person is a patient but a group of people form a political community. At least as crucially, all of the groups were intensely concerned with the day to day life of gay people in the United States and interested in negotiating the relationship between visibility and invisibility.

Later characterizations of these early homophile groups were not kind. The DOB for example was critiqued for seeking to assimilate into mainstream culture. Early pulp novels and pulp writers were dismissed, too, for blindly following publishing conventions that posited gay and lesbian character as abnormal. There has been a very welcome resurgence of interest in the pulps, as well as in the homophile organizations of the 1950s, and new readings see how ingeniously and sharply the pulp writers and the first gay organizers critiqued straight culture at the very points they appeared to be palliating it. The men and women who helped to shape those organizations were not the first, nor will they be

the last social actors to be denigrated by their heirs for not being radical enough. They are not the first nor the last to fall apart from infighting, to struggle over political issues and even over how to define themselves as groups. They did not form the first gay organizations, and they did not produce the first self-consciously gay publications aimed at a gay market. They represent one very small story in a history that is still unfolding and incomplete. But the very act of remembering forgotten histories is important, even if we inevitably forget something else by doing it, and even if we inevitably narrate those histories from our own preconceptions about what and who counts. Women's History reminds us to interrogate how we seek and claim knowledge, just as Women's History Month reminds us that the official versions of history—and even the official critiques of those official histories—are always in process, and that it is often in the most unexpected decades and places that we will find not just a different past, but a different future.

# Women Just Die Every Day

By Shara Esbenshade



Shara Esbenshade is a junior at University Laboratory High School. She is a member of AWARE and several politically active student groups at her school.

"Women have no leaders who have been assassinated. Women just die every day." I spent four hours discussing the feminist movement of the 60s and 70s with local activist Barbara Kessel, who was part of the first women's studies departments in the world created at San Diego State University in the late 1960s. Her words shocked me - the tragic, matter-of-fact tone of them. No, it is not an exaggeration. In the United States, an average of three women are murdered a day by husbands or boyfriends. At the same time, we women encounter a more subtle sexism. The sexism so hard to put into words, so hard to recognize, even. As a woman, I notice with sharp emotion the frustration it brings, but find it difficult to identify the exact actions that cause it. Eventually I realized, however, that it is not a single action - it is a society. It is the acceptability, for instance, of questioning a woman where one would not question a man, of ignoring the contributions of a woman to a discussion while listening intently to the men. And even more frustrating is the silencing of those who attempt, courageously, to point it out. It is this aspect of our culture that denies women respect. How does one counter something so ingrained? And until people do counter the subtleties, how will the overt results (the widespread rape, harassment, violence) of the same ingrained sexism be stopped?

Men who would never commit rape and who are not themselves sexist can still perpetuate a sexist society through this "subtle sexism." In fact, women do it too. In this society a man is automatically born into a certain privilege. This he can not help, but he does then have a responsibility to counter that unearned advantage by trying to notice and refrain from participating in the often sub-conscious silencing of women. Until then, I fail to understand how the violence will ever stop.

This is how I have interpreted what I hear about and see the women in my life go through. I hope that it will spur my fellow young women to reflect on how they behave and on what kinds of behaviors they tolerate from others.

She remembers a living room  
"consciousness-raising"  
tentative, growing words  
she remembers, as her white locks curl in her fingers, the days  
women overcame silence.  
and even though  
the glass ceiling was only raised and not broken  
even though  
husbands, boyfriends still abuse  
she smiles; hope and  
power leak from her teeth,  
fresh from the days when together,  
all the women bit into control.

In sixth grade, Grace learns a new kind of silence.  
The teacher's eyes pass over her words  
forced back inside her  
the boy who called her a prude  
is allowed to speak instead.  
Her teeth clamp  
Denied the chatter  
Denied a bite  
She starves later



Next to her, Lila screams  
the boy who called her a slut speaks and she is not allowed her turn  
for the hundredth time  
At lunch he called her a whore  
And no word to respond with  
but *man*-whore  
"she's crazy" they whisper  
she spoke out  
dared to call him sexist  
crazy- men and women are equal now, they laugh,  
we all know that  
see- a woman professor  
proof- a woman C.E.O.  
(never mind that women make less money  
never mind that 180 women are raped a day  
never mind that 85% of the congress meant  
to represent the people is male)  
Lila bit  
But her bite was poisoned  
Her anger erased by their adjectives: exaggerated, un-called-for, trivial  
Silence is re-learned for women

Women: man-haters  
Women: bra-burners

Or women: obedient like ancient times  
Women: inconsequential  
Women

It's not that they aren't smart  
But men do not *have* to listen

A women's movement,  
living rooms,  
united,  
mass refusal  
A cloud of memory  
clouds the new split—

Divide and conquer:  
Suburbia, children, housekeeping, dinner  
women competed until living rooms opened

Divide and conquer:  
Today a new disunity  
women silenced in the classroom.  
She who points it out-  
A radical  
A man-hater  
The worst word we know to use

Trivial? Academic, subtle.  
Every picture on this wall  
Every statue in "historic America"  
(save lady Liberty, paralyzed in an iron mold, confined to an island)  
every person in this office  
every president we've had  
every rapper who makes it big

If I were not a woman,  
Would you question my authority?  
Would you smirk at my anger?  
If I were not a woman,  
Would you be surprised at my loud voice?  
Would you turn green if my body weren't hairless?

If I were not a woman,  
Would it be wrong for me to masturbate?  
Would you still judge my sex life?  
Why does Cosmo tell me how to please *him* in bed?  
"I am not here to please!" she screams in silenced need.  
I am not here  
to kiss away your guilt.

says Lila,  
alienated instantly  
She is not silent,  
but as un-heard as  
Grace.

denied the bite.



# Access to Abortion and EC for Teens in Illinois

By Jessica Kuzemsky

Obtaining proper reproductive healthcare and education about sexuality and sexual health is essential to keeping teens in our area healthy. In Illinois, teens are lucky to have some access to contraceptives, abortion services and other reproductive care. However, activist groups continue placing roadblocks preventing teens and others from accessing the care they need.

For more than 12 years, Illinois lawmakers have been unable to enforce a dangerous mandatory parental notification law. The Parental Notification of Abortion Act was first enjoined in 1995 and required a parent to be notified 48 hours prior to a minor child's abortion procedure. Rules were never written to enforce this law and minors can currently access abortion services without parental consent.

In January, State Attorney General Lisa Madigan asked a federal judge to lift an injunction on this law after pressure this fall from the Thomas More Society, Concerned Women for America and other anti-choice groups. The judge denied the request, saying the court system was unable to handle the judicial bypass provision included in the law and the injunction would remain in place until courts were prepared to handle this process. The bypass would allow the parental notification requirement to be waived if a young woman appeared before a judge who deemed her competent to make the decision or if she testified in writing that she was a victim of incest.

In the interest of protecting the safety of teens, Rep. John Fritchey (D) proposed a bill this January to expand those able to be notified under the act. Fritchey's Adolescent Healthcare Safety Act (HB 317) currently has 19 co-signers and would allow members of the clergy or another adult family member to be notified instead of a parent. The bill also requires counseling on all options for unplanned pregnancies- parenting, adoption and abortion. Fritchey proposed the bill to protect young women whose health and safety would be jeopardized if a parent

were notified prior to an abortion procedure, such as victims of incest or abuse.

Karla Peterson, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of East Central Illinois, shares Fritchey's concerns. "We encourage all of our patients to communicate with their families about important healthcare decisions. However, this may not be a reality for all teens, particularly those from abusive homes or those who may face homelessness and other difficult or dangerous situations as the result of an unplanned pregnancy. If teens can't or won't turn to a parent, we still need to ensure that they get safe medical attention and high-quality counseling," she said.

This concern for teen safety is echoed by numerous medical organizations that also oppose mandatory parental notification laws including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, the Society for Adolescent Medicine, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Public Health Association.

Access to abortion services in Illinois for all women, including teens, is already limited without notification laws or other restrictions. A recent report from NARAL Pro-Choice America, a national advocacy organization that works to protect reproductive rights, ranked Illinois 20th in the nation and gave the state a C+ grade for access to abortion services. Ninety percent of Illinois counties have no abortion provider.

Wider access to birth control options and comprehensive sexuality education would reduce the need for abortion services for women of any age. Recent data has shown a decline in teen birth rates but not pregnancy rates. The United States teen birth rate is still 4-9 times higher than any other developed country.

Teens can currently receive and have prescriptions filled for birth control without parental consent. However, those who are 17 and younger do not have over-the-

counter access to Plan B emergency contraception, or the "Morning After" pill. Instead, these teens must obtain a prescription for Plan B from a clinician. The product is available over-the-counter to those over 18 with a government issued photo ID. Plan B, manufactured by Barr Pharmaceuticals, works to prevent pregnancy if taken within 120 hours of unprotected sex or contraceptive failure. The earlier it is taken the more effective it is, up to 95%.

Plan B is not an abortifacient and is a different drug than the "abortion pill," Mifeprex. Plan B is simply a higher dose of the same hormones contained in ordinary birth control pills and has no effect if a woman is already pregnant. Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich was a strong supporter of over-the-counter access to Plan B. The drug was approved for over-the-counter sale in late 2006 and became available at pharmacies and Planned Parenthood health centers for over-the-counter sales earlier this year.

Pharmacists nationwide have placed further roadblocks to contraceptive access for teens and women of all ages. Some pharmacists with moral objections to contraceptives have refused to fill prescriptions for contraceptives or dispense emergency contraception to their clients.

Gov. Blagojevich passed a ruling in 2005 requiring all pharmacies to fill prescriptions for contraceptives, if they carry them, without delay. After further complaints, the Governor enacted a new rule last March requiring pharmacies to post signs listing information about a customer's right to have their prescription for birth control or emergency contraception filled and what they can do if their prescription is wrongfully refused. During a visit in November 2006, the first lady, Patricia Blagojevich commended pharmacies in Champaign after an independent study found that 100 percent of pharmacies in the Champaign-Urbana area complied with these rules.

## Native Women's Resurgence at UIUC

Continued from page 7

Howe is also the screenwriter and on-camera narrator for the 90-minute PBS documentary *Indian Country Diaries: Spiral of Fire*, which first aired nationally on PBS in November 2006. It takes Howe to the North Carolina homelands of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians to discover how their fusion of tourism, community, and cultural preservation is the key to the tribe's health in the 21st century. She is currently writing and co-producing a film entitled *Playing Pastime: American Indian Fast-pitch Softball*, and *Survival with James Fortier*, an Emmy award winning Ojibwe filmmaker. The film examines the rise of fast-pitch softball in Oklahoma, explores the evolution of ball games from Southeastern sports traditions, and dares to ask the question: "Did Indians invent baseball?"

Professor Howe, who is currently the 2006-2007 John and Renee Grisham Writer in Residence at the University of Mississippi in Oxford, draws upon Choctaw cultural traditions, knowledges, and historical memories to narrate and explore the centrality of Choctaw women as agents of resistance, innovation, and survival.



**Debbie Reese**, an enrolled member of Nambé Pueblo in New Mexico, has been a resident of Urbana for 13 years, and was the first faculty member to be hired into the American Indian Studies Program at UIUC in 2003. Her untiring commitment was instrumental in making the Native American House and American Indian Studies Program a reality on the UIUC campus.

Her research focuses on the widespread (*mis*) representations of Native Americans in children's and young adult literature, textbooks, curricular materials, and other forms of media used in the classroom. Her Internet resource <http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com> disseminates valuable information on these topics for teachers, parents and librarians. She is currently writing a book, *Indians as Artifacts: How Images of Indians are used to Nationalize America's Youth*. An award-winning teacher,

Dr. Reese offers courses on the Politics of Children's Literature, and the History of American Indian Education, as well as courses in American Indian Studies.

**Jodi Byrd** is an enrolled citizen of the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma and Assistant Professor of American Indian Studies and English. Prior to joining the UIUC faculty, Dr. Byrd was an Assistant Professor of Indigenous Politics within the Political Science Department at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. Her work seeks to understand the legacies of colonialism and genocide on the North American continent by foregrounding Chickasaw and Southeastern Indian interpretations of history and oppression. She teaches courses on Federal Indian policy, Indigenous literatures, and Indigenous governance.

**2006-7 Post Doctoral Fellows Kim Furumoto (Yakima) and Katrina Ackley (Oneida/Chippewa)** have also enriched our community. Dr. Furumoto received her PhD in the School of Justice and Social Inquiry in the College of Law, Arizona State University and is currently working on a book manuscript, *Racial Juris-Fiction: Federal Indian Law from the Discovery Doctrine to Allotment*. Reading law as literary text, this interdisciplinary project traces the racial-colonial conceptions of Indians in U.S. legal discourses, drawing upon critical race theory and studies of colonialism in various global contexts.

Dr. Ackley, a faculty member at Evergreen State College, Washington State, holds a Ph.D. in American Studies from SUNY Buffalo, and an MA in American Indian Studies from the University of Arizona. Her research centers on discourses of unity surrounding the Oneida land claim in her home community of Oneida, Wisconsin.

We also acknowledge the multiple contributions to our community made by Assistant Director of Native American House, Molly Springer. Molly's energy and dedication in building support services and cultural programming has provided a welcoming space and important resources for American Indian students on campus during these difficult and hostile times.

The Native American House and American Indian Studies Program (NAH/AIS) has also brought distinguished Indigenous women to campus from fields such as politics, music, poetry, and theater, as well as scholars of Indigenous feminisms, histories and anthropologies. For example, in Spring 2004, we were honored to welcome Wilma Mankiller, the first woman to be serve Principle Chief of the Cherokee Nation from (1987-1995.) Ms. Mankiller was part of the political resistance that led the American Indian Movement during the 1960's, with firsthand knowledge of events such as the occupation of Alcatraz Island and the "Trail of Broken Treaties," at a time when women's voices were being silenced, even by Indian men. The community has also benefitted from the presence of poet and musician Joy Harjo, and the inspiring Native Women's theater group, Turtle Gals. Cultural anthropologist Bea Medicine honored us as our Elder/Scholar-in Residence in 2005, and Post-Doctoral Research Fellow Andrea Smith convened a groundbreaking Native Feminisms Conference in Spring 2006. This spring we look forward to our 2007 Artist-in-Residence, Teri Greeves. Known for her award-winning beadwork, Ms. Greeves' refined use of traditional materials and techniques combined with the influence of contemporary culture make her work exceptional, as she combines the past and present to express Native experiences in modern American society.

These strong, talented Native women of NAH/AIS are committed to the recovery of Indigenous community and presence, constituting a spiral that moves out from the center to where we hope things will go toward indigenizing the academy and decolonizing Native peoples and nations. We invite *Public i* readers to stop by NAH and learn more. For more information on programs and activities, please see <http://www.nah.uiuc.edu> or send e-mail to [nah@uiuc.edu](mailto:nah@uiuc.edu)