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**THE PUBLIC I**

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# Thanksgiving Health Care Access Protest

Please join CCHCC's Health Care Access Task Force in a Thanksgiving protest at Carle Clinic on University Avenue in Urbana, on Tuesday, Nov. 20, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The Health Care Access Task Force is protesting Carle Clinic to demand an end to Carle Clinic's harmful and discriminatory policies and practices that have resulted in limiting or denying care to thousands of Champaign County residents (please read the bottom of this message for more facts).

The Health Care Access Task Force will provide the protest signs for anyone who wishes to carry a sign! Please contact CCHCC at 352-6533 or email [cchcc@healthcareconsumers.org](mailto:cchcc@healthcareconsumers.org) for more information or to RSVP to the protest.

**Facts About the Health Care In Champaign County:**

- 40% of Champaign County residents (more than 75,000 people) are locked out of the local health care system.
- Carle and Christie Clinics' policies deny, limit, or price out of reach health care appointments and services to over 40% of our County's people.
- Those who can't get health care appointments and services because of Carle Clinic and Christie Clinic's policies include:
  - people with Medicaid insurance (approx. 20,449)
  - people without insurance (approx. 54,990)
  - people who may be insured but have medical debt and can't meet unreasonable payment demands of Carle Clinic and Christie Clinic (unknown number of individuals).

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# ....FIGHTING TERRORISM SINCE 1492



**Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination...**

**—Article 2 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**



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# UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples Rings Hollow at UIUC

Antonia Darder



Antonia Darder is a professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She is longtime Puerto Rican activist-scholar involved in issues related to education, language, immigrant, workers, and women's rights.

IN SEPTEMBER OF 2007, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a landmark declaration in support of the rights of an estimated 370 million indigenous peoples in some 70 countries worldwide, prohibiting State discrimination against them in both practice and policy concerns. The decision was the culmination of a long history of intense debates, first initiated in 1923 when Haudenosaunee Chief Deskaheh traveled

to Geneva to speak with the League of Nations about the injustices suffered by his people on this continent.

In response to a long history of oppression and marginalization, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was approved by a landslide vote of 143 member states, with 11 abstaining and 4 opposed. The only four member nation-states opposing the declaration—Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States—all emerged, historically, as independent nations as direct consequence of the brutality of colonial conquest and the violent genocide of Indigenous Peoples.



Chief Deskaheh

For those unfamiliar with the term, the term 'Indigenous Peoples' is defined by the UN "as those with a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop, and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems."

The UN Declaration sets out the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples, as well as their rights to culture, identity, language, employment, health, education, and other issues of well being. The text emphasizes the rights of indigenous peoples to maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures and traditions and to pursue their development in keeping with the integrity of their own needs and self-determination. Moreover, discrimination against indigenous peoples is explicitly prohibited, promoting and reinforcing their right to full and effective partici-

pation in all matters that concern them, their right to remain distinct, and to pursue their own visions of economic and social development.

General Assembly President, Sheikha Haya noted that "the importance of this document for indigenous peoples and, more broadly, for the human rights agenda, cannot be underestimated. By adopting the Declaration, we are also taking another major step forward towards the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all." Nevertheless, she warned, "even with this progress, indigenous peoples still face marginalization, extreme poverty and other human rights violations."

## ETHNIC CLEANSING IN THE U.S.

The violation of human rights and the disregard of the well being of indigenous peoples appear to be a long held tradition in this region. As much for UIUC with its tenacious obsession on the "chief" mascot, as it was for the fledging state in the 1800s with the ethnic cleansing campaign to fully eliminate Illinois tribes from the area. Hence, it is not unusual to read or hear that "there are no Indian tribes surviving in Illinois today"—a claim often used to dismiss the rights of indigenous people of this state.

However, many Indian tribes of Illinois, including the Ho-Chunk, Dakota, Miami, Illini, Shawnee, and Chickasaw, should not be considered extinct. For like so many other native tribes, these populations were forced off their lands and moved against their will to Indian reservations in Oklahoma, by the American government—a practice legally sanctioned by the federal government, through congressional approval of the Indian Removal Act in 1830.

Those who resisted were often murdered, while an estimated 100,000 American Indians were eventually relocated in the West as a result of this colonizing policy. Consequently, five southeastern nations were relocated west, opening 25 million acres of land to white settlement. Nearly 9,000 Cherokees alone passed through Southern Illinois, during the winter of 1838 on that bitter journey now remembered as the Trail of Tears.

It is precisely the shared memories of such brutal histories worldwide and a sincere desire to make peace with the past that fueled a 20-year commitment by indigenous advocates to finally bring to the table the most comprehensive global statement to date of indigenous rights. The adoption of the Declaration is viewed as a historic moment of reconciliation, hopefully tied to clear and committed efforts by government institutions and civil society to infuse policies, programs, and practices related to indigenous people everywhere, with a vision of human rights and social justice.

However, in a historically consistent and familiar pattern, the four (wealthiest, white-majority, English-speaking) dissenting colonial powers, cited legalistic concerns for their refusal to approve the Declaration. Ambassador John McNee of Canada feigned disappointment in having to vote against the Declaration; while expressing "significant concerns" about the language of the document. He stated that it was "too overly broad, unclear, and capable of wide interpretation," particularly in defining what might be meant by the human rights of indigenous peoples. Moreover, claims were by the four dissenting world powers that the twenty-year process lacked "open, inclusive, or transparent negotiations," despite the landslide victory and large-scale dissemination of working drafts throughout the crafting of the declaration.

## U OF I IN VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

It is both striking and disheartening to juxtapose the politics of the UN Declaration with the politics of indigenous peoples' rights within the Champaign-Urbana community. This is so, particularly, given the recent decision by Chancellor Richard Herman, who single-handedly caved to the money-elite, choosing to ignore the March 13, 2007 Board of Trustees policy: a directive that unambiguously calls for "The immediate conclusion to the use of Native American imagery as the symbol of the University of Illinois and its intercollegiate athletics along with the related regalia, logo, and the names 'Chief Illiniwek' and 'Chief,'—a directive specifically tied to compliance with the NCCA policy.

As administrators planned for this year's Homecoming Parade—a university activity directly tied to its athletic program—they created a policy with language that they considered to be in keeping with the retirement directive. In reviewing the policy, the Chancellor paternalistically determined that "the policy was the result of well-meaning people interpreting—[you guessed it!] over broadly—the ban on commercial use of the Chief logo."

Continued on page 7



When Adolph Hitler died, rows of books by Karl May were found at his bedside. In the later 1800s, Karl May wrote extensively about the U.S. One of these books, *De Ku-Klux-Klan*, was about the white-hooded knights, who like the leader of the Third Reich also seem to enjoy a disturbing fascination for American Indians. When American soldiers arrived in Germany in 1945, they were shocked to discover that German children, after 12 years of Nazi rule, could be found decked-out in buckskins and feathers playing "Indians."



# Champaign Landlords Now Permitted To Discriminate Against Section 8 Voucher Holders

By Mark Aber



ON OCTOBER 9, 2007, Champaign officials turned back the clock on efforts to protect the city's most vulnerable citizens from discrimination in housing. By a 6-3 vote, the City Council amended Champaign's Human Rights Ordinance, thereby allowing landlords to refuse to

rent to people who would pay part of their rent with a federal Section 8 housing assistance voucher (Bruno, Feinen, Foster, McIntosh, Pirok, and Sweighart in favor; Dodds, Jackson, and LaDue opposed). The decision promotes landlords' interests at the expense of Section 8 voucher holders' rights to be protected from discrimination.

The Section 8 program provides low income persons with a voucher that can be used to pay for rent in the private market. The program pays the difference between 30% of the qualified applicant's income and the fair market rental of the unit. Currently, the need for vouchers is much greater than the supply. Only about 1300 of the estimated 2500-3000 eligible families in the county are voucher holders. The waiting list of qualified applicants has grown so long that it is no longer possible to even get on it.

During the past 30 years, Champaign's policy on whether to prohibit discrimination against Section 8 voucher holders has shifted back and forth. For over 25 of those years, Section 8 renters enjoyed the same legal protections from discrimination as renters using any other form of payment. These protections were initially implemented in 1977, the first year that the Champaign County Housing Authority applied to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for Section 8 funds. In fact, Champaign was the first city in Illinois to prohibit housing discrimination on the basis of source of income. From 1977 through 2001, refusal to rent to someone solely on the basis that they would use a Section 8 voucher to pay part of their rent was enforced as a violation of the city ordinance.

That practice changed in 2001 when a complaint was filed by a prospective tenant against a large local apartment owner, Royce & Brinkmeyer Apartments, alleging discrimination on the basis of Section 8. In a hearing before the Human Relations Commission (HRC), Royce & Brinkmeyer argued that federal law established Section 8 as a voluntary program and that the federal law should pre-empt the city's ordinance. To the surprise of many, the hearing officer ruled in favor of the apartment owner, finding the "source of income" clause in the city ordinance did not cover Section 8. The HRC accepted the hearing officer's ruling. The complainant appealed the decision to the Circuit Court, which ruled that the HRC had acted within its authority by interpreting the "source of income" as not including Section 8.

In 2006, Esther Patt, Director of the Champaign-Urbana Tenant Union, brought the issue back before the HRC, encouraged by a 2004 ruling by the Illinois Appellate Court (1st District, *Godinez v. Sullivan Lackey*) which upheld the City of Chicago's practice of interpreting the "source of income" clause in their human rights ordinance to include Section 8. Following public hearings by the Champaign HRC and a study session by the City Council, in March 2006 the council followed the recommendation of the HRC and specifically prohibited discrimination against Section 8 voucher holders. Following the spring 2007 municipal elections, however, two council members who supported Section 8 protections were replaced by two who opposed them, leading the council in October 2007 to reverse the 2006 decision. Once again landlords are free to turn away prospective Section 8 tenants.

Much of the debate leading up to and surrounding this most recent decision focused not on the costs of discrimination to Section 8 voucher holders and the community but on burdens to landlords. One potential burden that the HRC investigated turns out, on closer inspection, to be more of a burden in theory than in reality. It happens that HUD can prematurely terminate a contract with a landlord when certain special circumstances arise for Section 8 tenants (e.g., if the tenant has a child and needs an extra bedroom, if the tenant marries) and landlords do not have the capacity to sue to recover lost rental income as they would with other lessees. While it is very difficult to obtain precise data on how often these circumstances arise, they are certainly rare. The rate of premature terminations for any reason is less than 5%, so the rate for these special circumstances is certainly less. Indeed, Section 8 vouchers are so valuable that those lucky enough to have them will do nothing to risk losing them. Most participating landlords find that Section 8 voucher holders are among the most reliable tenants.

Landlords are also protected from financial burden by the human rights ordinance, which since 1977, has allowed discrimination if it can be demonstrated to be based on a business necessity. Landlords who demonstrate that participation in the program causes a financial burden are exempted from complying. Moreover, the HRC discovered that there were many misconceptions in the community about what burdens the program actually posed and what anti-discrimination protections would demand of them. In response, the HRC recommended that the City Council clear up these misconceptions by codifying how the city staff historically has interpreted Section 8 protections—specifically indicating that a property owner was not required to do any of the following: "(1) keep a rental unit vacant, or refrain from renting an available unit to a qualified applicant, while waiting

for a Section 8 inspection; (2) perform repairs; (3) change the amount of rent or damage deposit; or (4) change standards for application approval for a Section 8 voucher holder so long as the same standards apply to all tenants." But those landlords who were vocal about the issue opposed adoption of this clarifying language and instead urged the Council to drop Section 8 protections altogether.

The goal of Champaign's Human Rights Ordinance, like other anti-discrimination law, is to prevent individuals from being denied "equal opportunity in housing, employment, education, public accommodations, health care and delivery of social services" ... "based upon categorizing or classifying a person which is not based on factual data about the person or group and is not related to the purpose for which it is used." Several council members suggested that there is no need to protect Section 8 renters from discrimination because there are more rental units on the market that accept Section 8 than there are voucher holders to fill them. Such arguments simply miss the point of anti-discrimination law. From the point of view of the law, the fact that a community might have an adequate number of employers who are willing to hire women does not make it alright for a given employer or group of employers to refuse to hire women simply because they are women.

The recent city council decision has the impact of denying equal opportunity in housing for Section 8 voucher holders.

According to the 2006 Census, 26.1% of Champaign City residents, and 13.5% of the families with children in the city live below the federal poverty level. The decision to allow Section 8 discrimination will hurt many of these already highly stressed families by making it more difficult for them to live close to work, school, services, or to other family members. Given the demographics of Section 8 voucher holders, such discrimination will have a disparate negative impact on the disabled, families with children and people of color. While many property owners are willing to accept Section 8 tenants, they are not evenly distributed across the community. Thus, the decision to allow Section 8 discrimination will reinforce residential segregation by race and income. The decision to protect landlords' interests over the rights of poor citizens to be free from discrimination will reverberate in our neighborhoods and schools, notwithstanding efforts to distinguish and rationalize discrimination against the Section 8 program from discrimination against poor people.

Mark Aber is Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and is the chair of the Champaign Human Relations Commission.

## Giant Slayers? SEIU Takes on the University

James Barrett



Jim Barrett is a labor historian and professor in the Department of History at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign

WITH STRIKES REACHING THE VANISHING POINT in the United States, a fascinating David and Goliath drama is unfolding on the University of Illinois campus, with little fanfare or media attention.

### THE CONTENDERS

In the far corner, wearing the orange and blue trunks, we have the University of Illinois, a powerful bruiser, the largest employer in Champaign County, with a battery of lawyers and personnel experts, considerable political influence (though never enough, it seems, to get a decent budget from the state), its own police force, and a loyal faculty always ready to take orders from the administra-

tion. In the near corner, wearing the purple trunks with the clasped black and white fists, we have Local 73 of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), representing some of the lowest paid employees on campus.

At a moment when most unions seem too petrified to call a strike, the SEIU membership, consisting of maids, janitors, and food service workers, has voted overwhelmingly (90%) to authorize a strike, if necessary, to save their union and prevent further erosion of their living standards. Some people have guts.

The fight is over wages, understaffing, and equal contracts. In the last contract cycle, service workers agreed to forego cost of living increases. This means the pay has remained stagnant, as prices have risen. The 2.5% increase that the university has proposed is less than inflation and will prevent workers from making up the real income lost over the past several years.

The University has also proposed different benefits for food and building service workers. This would result in greater benefit disparities between the two groups of workers. To their credit, SEIU members have refused to be divided. The better-paid workers with more benefits are

supporting those with less. If the University tries to enforce such disparities, they will strike.

### POSSIBLE STRIKE

Aware of the disruption and financial hardship it will bring its members, the union is trying desperately to avoid a strike. They have worked for almost two years without a contract and have been trying to negotiate a new one for the last fourteen months.

For a long time, the university administration seemed uninterested. After refusing to schedule another meeting with the federal mediator, the overwhelming authorization vote and the preparations for a strike seem to have encouraged them to reconsider. A meeting has been set with SEIU and the mediator on November 26, but unless the university becomes a little more motivated, the strike is still a very real possibility.

The University, of course, is banking on a state law that restricts the campus workers to a maximum of three days for the strike. There is a lot of sympathy for SEIU on campus, but the Graduate Employees Union (GEO) can't strike

*Continued on next page*



## Voices Against the War

By Amy Ismail

### CAN'S STUDENT UPRISING PANEL: OCTOBER 17, 2007

THE CAMPUS ANTIWAR NETWORK (CAN) hosted an evening panel with Martin Smith of Iraqi Veterans Against the War (IVAW) and International Socialist Organization (ISO), Paul McGuire of IVAW, Chris Dols of CAN, and ISO, and Raad Ismail, a peace activist. Forty concerned community members crowded the room to hear and discuss ways to build an effective antiwar movement in Champaign-Urbana.



The Future of the Anti-War Movement panel

Paul McGuire was the first to speak. He pointed out the absurdity of the rhetoric being used to perpetuate this war. Slogans such as, "Support the troops; Support the war," were compared to, "Support the police. Support crime." McGuire also pointed out that Alan Greenspan and Brigadier General Abizaid have publicly confessed that this war is not for peace and democracy, but rather for control of energy resources.

Raad Ismail spoke next, giving a brief timeline of Iraq's history with imperial intervention over the last 135 years. Ismail stated that Iraq has consistently been a target for United States imperialism since 1967. Iraq has not only been a target of the current Bush Administration, but also the Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush Sr., and Clinton Administrations. "This is not just a Republican war, but also a Democrats' war" he stated.

Martin Smith spoke of the GI resistance during the Vietnam War and how parallels can be made to the current war. He passed around Vietnam GI resistance newspapers, and stated that building an effective antiwar movement means to support troops who decline to go to the current war.

Finally, Chris Dols from Madison, WI spoke of building strong antiwar bases on campus to protest against wars. Well-organized networks need to be formed for students and community members to learn how to effectively dissent. These groups would serve as venues for learning history and developing protest tactics to challenge current and future government war actions.

After the panelist spoke, the audience engaged in a lively dialogue on how our community can take action to stop the current war and any developing wars. The audience and panelists consensus was characterized by a lack of expectation that any of our elected officials to carry out the will of the people. Ideas of how to combat the pro-war rhetoric of politicians and media outlets were discussed. Many of the audience members agreed that more collaboration and activism must be pursued to combat the "Global War on Terror".

### CHAMPAIGN ANTI-WAR RALLY: OCTOBER 27, 2007

AN ANTI-WAR RALLY WAS HELD at the intersection of Prospect in Champaign on October 27, as part of a nationwide Day of Action against the war. Approximately 70 Protestors braved the cold, cloudy, and windy



Iraq Veterans Against the War on N. Prospect

day to stand on all four corners of the intersection. They held signs asking the public to support a campaign to get the U.S. out of Iraq and prevent any new fronts on the "Global War on Terror". The protest served as a send-off rally for the thirty-five protestors going to Chicago that day. The crowd was a mixture of local concerned citizens and groups opposing the war.

A variety of groups are active in our community dedicated to raising consciousness against the war. Some of the groups represented included: the Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW), the International Socialist Organization (ISO), Campus Antiwar Network (CAN), and Antiwar Antiracism Effort (AWARE). Protestors spanned a wide sector of our community, composed of many demographic groups, from young people to elderly citizens.

Placards held by protesters challenged domestic policies and raised concerns about the lack of funding for education and health care, pointing to the failures of our democracy to fulfill the will of the people. When 70% of United States Citizens oppose the war and our elected officials continue to wage it, our government looks less and less like a "government of the people, by the people, for the people."

### "BEYOND THE GREEN ZONE": OCTOBER 28, 2007

DAHR JAMAIL, AN UNEMBEDDED American journalist in Iraq, spoke at the University of Illinois on October 28th. Jamail, an Alaskan mountain ranger, decided to travel to Iraq because of his frustration with the biased portrayals. With \$2,000, he traveled to Iraq where he remained for nine weeks. During those weeks, he traveled around the country, as he investigated and wrote on the atrocities of the war. His work gave a voice to many Iraqis not represented in the mainstream media.

Dahr Jamail critiqued media outlets and their incentives to hide the truth of war crimes and other atrocities occurring in Iraq. Due to



Dahr Jamail

media consolidation and the financial incentives of corporations, very few media outlets have an incentive to report the truth, but rather rely on official statements produced by the government. He urged the support of GI resisters, as they will ultimately be the tipping-point for ending future wars. He also cautioned about the potential war with Iran and spoke of the advertising blitzkrieg currently taking place in the media on this issue. Jamail paralleled the current advertising frenzy of the threat of Iran with on going media portrayals of Iraq as an imminent threat.

Jamail also spoke of the courage of Iraqis in the face of daily bomb attacks causing residential displacement and lack of civil rights, medical supplies, electricity, and clean water. He was present in Fallujah during the first and second assault. Many war crimes were carried out on the orders of top military officials. One of the many atrocities that took place in Fallujah was to mark all military aged men with an "X" on their forehead with a Sharpie. Soldiers were told that if any man with a mark on their forehead was to try to leave the city, he should automatically be shot. Many women and children were assaulted and killed under pretenses that they were attempting to leave. Jamail's book *Beyond the Green Zone: Dispatches from an Unembedded Journalist in Occupied Iraq* documents a very different portrayal of the Iraq war.

## Giant Slayers? SEIU Takes on the University

Continued from previous page

to help the service workers, because the GEO's contract forbids this, as do those of many of the other campus unions.

Yet, it would be a mistake for the University to assume that other unions will not find all sort of ways to support SEIU. Most Americans still love an underdog and one can only hope that Local 73 will get a lot of help. Invisible bonds of solidarity, between unionized truck drivers, maintenance workers, teaching assistants, and even the order-loving faculty, are likely to translate into significant support.

If SEIU strikes, they hope to shut down the campus. Urbana liberals hoping to sneak into their office and classroom buildings are likely to be confronted by picketing janitors and food workers--perhaps even some of their own more unruly faculty colleagues. Walking most places on campus may entail crossing SEIU picket lines—a moral dilemma for faculty and staff who still have consciences. The fact is we would all be wise to support SEIU workers. An effective strike could settle things quickly; a weaker one is likely to simply prolong the conflict or produce more strikes later.

There will be no shortage of \$200,000-a-year Finance

professors (and \$300,000-a-year administrators) happy to push aside a \$20,000-a-year cafeteria worker who is trying to put some food on the table for her kids, but many of those hopelessly liberal humanists and social scientists (not to mention their underpaid teaching assistants) are more likely to side with the cafeteria worker. The 800 student workers who toil alongside SEIU members in residence halls and elsewhere represent something of a wild card. But many of these students likely come from blue-collar backgrounds and if the strike occurs, the administration may be surprised how many of them also sympathize with union colleagues.

### SUPPORT FOR THE WORKERS

One of the most remarkable things about this pending conflict is how little attention it has generated in progressive circles. The other issues crowding this one out—yet another round of black face minstrelsy, the desperate efforts to hold onto the University's offensive mascot, and the striking threats to academic freedom inherent in the

University's new Academy on Capitalism and Limited Government – are all vital, but so is this strike.

So, if you support the legal right to strike as one cornerstone of democracy, if you still tend to root for the spunky little guy in any fight, or if you still believe that every working family deserves a decent standard of living, then you'll want to support Local 73 in this scrap. You can do so in many ways. Write University of Illinois administrators, expressing your support for the workers and urging them to avoid the strike by compromising with the union. Write to the Daily Illini and the News-Gazette to publicize the issues in the strike and to indicate your support. You can help picket or make a donation. Discuss the pending strike with students, colleagues, and others who want to understand the issues. Above all, follow your conscience. And, if the strike occurs, don't cross the picket line.

The "smart money" might be on the big guy in the orange and blue trunks, but I'm putting mine on the little guy in purple.



# University of Illinois' First Indian

Jamie Magleby Singson



Jamie Singson is a graduate student in Educational Policy Studies at the University of Illinois. With a research emphasis in the History of American Indian Education, he has found Carlos Montezuma to be a larger than life individual whose life's works and contributions to Indian education are still being discerned.

MEDICAL PHYSICIAN, CHEMIST, CLASS PRESIDENT, writer, independent media publisher, activist, caricaturist, and Indian are but a few of the roles and identities held by the University of Illinois' first Native American graduate of the Class of 1884. Carlos Montezuma, Yavapai Indian born 1865 in the territory today known as Arizona, holds a place in the history of Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, in Arizona, and in the histories of over 550 American Indian Nations in the United States.

Born "Wassaja," which in Yavapai means "beckoning" or "yearning," Carlos Montezuma's story is one of abrupt removal from an indigenous life with the Yavapai of the Southwest, to a life of traveler and city dweller in an economically and industrial burgeoning Midwest and east coast. Montezuma, endearingly referred to as "Monte" by classmates, was taken from his mother and Yavapai tribe around the age of six when Pima Indian raids took him and other youth into captivity. An Italian adventurer, Carlo Gentile, purchased the youth for 30 silver dollars from the Pima, feeling a sense of connection with him.

It was in Arizona that Gentile and Montezuma's paths crossed and they began a unique relationship, as Gentile finds in the newly adopted youth a traveling companion. Little could Gentile have known, at the time, of the impact this unlikely merger would have on a young boy of Indian heritage, who would grow up to be one of the



Carlos Montezuma

most significant and outspoken Indian activists of the early 20th Century.

After time in the west, Gentile would see a need to settle down. He set up a photography studio first in Chicago and then New York. It is in both these bustling metropolises that Montezuma was introduced to public education. In 1878, he was sent to live in Urbana with Baptist minister Charles Steadman, by George Ingalls, a New York Baptist missionary representative, whose goal for Montezuma was a practical degree so he could return to help his people. Montezuma was accepted into the University of Illinois in 1879 and graduated in 1884 with a degree in Chemistry.

During his undergraduate years, Montezuma was an active member of one of the University's early literary societies. Since Greek organizations were banned during the early years of the University, literary societies provided alternate means for association through a club membership, such as the Adelpic Society. Montezuma was a part of these weekly activities, which included speeches, poetry readings, debate, and musical performance.

Carlos Montezuma embraced a sense of "rugged individualism," even though he was not completely seen as an equal amongst his peers. It is hard to assess the degree to which Montezuma was affected by racism, but it is clear that a perception of inferiority towards other minority populations was present on the campus of that era. The reference to local African American youth as "nigs" on campus and "the need for a coon hunt" can be found in the student publication of the Illini.

The thoughtful Montezuma was surely not immune to such sentiments.

However, during this period, the young man grew to be an articulate, dedicated, and extremely bright student leader amongst his peers. Even the University of Illinois' Board of Trustees were impressed enough to waive Mon-

tezuma's matriculation fees. Clearly the time spent at the University of Illinois was an exciting and formative period of his life.

Following graduation from the Chicago Medical College in 1889, Montezuma spent seven years working as a physician for the United States Indian Agency. It was during this tenure that Monte worked at the famed Carlisle Indian School, which was the first governmental project for the mass re-education and assimilation of the Indian child. Montezuma seemed to have found positive his experience at Carlisle, but longed to return to Chicago. Returning prior to the World's Columbian Exposition, he established a practice, where he was not only a physician, but also an advocate for Indian rights,

During this period, he independently published a monthly newsletter called Wassaja that spoke to the Indian condition and was a vehicle to critique issues of governmental agency oppression, as well as anti-war (WWI) sentiments, voting rights for Indians, and issues of self-determination. Montezuma's life took him to many places to speak to many people, but it was always the plight of voiceless Native Americans that he championed.

Thirty years after leaving Arizona, Montezuma finally returned to his Yavapai home, where he again worked tirelessly for the rights of his tribal nation. In 1923, he passed away in a simple thatched hut on the Fort McDowell Yavapai Reservation.

Montezuma always expressed a fondness for the University of Illinois. Active in his participation as an alumnus, he would stay connected to classmates and the institution. In 1968, Montezuma was featured in commemorative book *The First 100 Years*, as one of the University's most notable alumni. But 40 years later, Carlos Montezuma seems to have withered from the pages of Illinois history. Nevertheless, he remains the University of Illinois' first Native American student, deserving of honor as a leader and an indigenous man who fought for equality, democratic values, and respect for all human beings.

## The Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The human rights of indigenous peoples are explicitly set out in the International Labor Organization Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (No. 169), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and most recently in the UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples. These rights include the following indivisible, interdependent and interrelated human rights:

- The human right to freedom from any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on their indigenous status, which has the purpose or effect of impairing the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- The human right to freedom from discrimination in access to housing, education, social services, health care or employment.
- The human right to equal recognition as a person before the law, to equality before the courts, and to equal protection of the law.
- The human right of indigenous peoples to exist.
- The human right to freedom from genocide and 'ethnic cleansing'.
- The human right to livelihood and work which is freely chosen, and to subsistence and access to land to which they have traditionally had access and relied upon for subsistence.

- The human right to maintain their distinctive spiritual and material relationship with the lands, to own land individually and in community with others, and to transfer land rights according to their own customs.
- The human right to use, manage, and safeguard the natural resources pertaining to their lands.
- The human right to freedom of association.
- The human right to enjoy and develop their own culture and language.
- The human right to establish and maintain their own schools and other training and educational institutions, and to teach and receive training in their own languages.
- The human right to full and effective participation in shaping decisions and policies concerning their group and community, at the local, national and international levels, including policies relating to economic and social development.
- The human right to self-determination and autonomy over all matters internal to the group, including in the fields of culture, religion, and local government.

Source: <http://www.pdhre.org/rights/indigenous.html>



# Land Of The Chief & Home Of Modern Blackface Minstrelsy

David Roediger



U OF I GRADUATE SAMSON RAPHAELSON is enjoying a nice little comeback, a quarter of a century after his death. Members of the marching band might recognize the name. A song that he co-authored in the 1920s has recently turned up and undergone a revival with, as the University's website reports, the band featuring it this season, after points after touchdowns.

You surely have heard "Fight Illini: The Stadium Song" if you go to games. Playing it is appropriate enough. After graduating during World War One, Raphaelson stayed on to play a leading role in the fund-raising for Memorial Stadium, wrote the first account of the stadium's story, and orbited around the marching band, as the figure of "Chief Illiniwek" took shape in the 1920s to the strains of songs like "Fight Illini."

Beyond the cornfields, none of those accomplishments account for the extent to which Raphaelson's name has recently resurfaced. He is discussed, instead, for his role in bringing into being the foundational talking film, *The Jazz Singer*. The film, which also is the critical link between blackface minstrelsy and modern U.S. culture, turned eighty this year.

The story of Raphaelson as the U of I football fan, and that of Raphaelson as the sophisticated writer responsible for the play on which *The Jazz Singer* was based, is in fact the same story. This reality greatly complicates the ways in which the University ought to think about its own racialized past, about its students' present flirtations with blackface and other racial impersonations, and about its inability to let go of "Chief Illiniwek."

At about the same time that Raphaelson wrote *Day of Atonement*, which would become *The Jazz Singer*, a lynching occurred on the edge of the University of Missouri campus. The great African American writer, W.E.B. Du Bois, wrote that Missouri could claim the dubious honor of being the first university to offer a course in racist atrocity. University of Illinois could similarly cast itself as the academic home of modern blackface minstrelsy.

The story is sadly fascinating. In 1917, Raphaelson saw a performance of the imperialist classic *Robinson Crusoe* in Champaign-Urbana. Al Jolson, the eventual star of *The Jazz Singer*, headlined in multiple roles, one of them—think about this!—in blackface as the "native" character



"...Mammy!"

Friday in the *Crusoe* story. Dazzled by Jolson, Raphaelson remembered hearing not so much jazz as the sounds of Jewish religious music in the blackface performance. This was clearly evident in his response to Jolson's performance: "My God, this isn't a jazz singer, this is a cantor!"

The horrors and history of white performance in blackface here fully gave way, before an opportunity to use racial disguise, as if it had nothing to do with anti-black racism. On this view, blackface could even be said to pay respects to jazz and to combat racism, in the form of anti-Jewish sentiments.

Coincidentally, *Days of Atonement* appeared in *Everybody's Magazine* in 1922, at about the same moment that Raphaelson



'Chief Illiniwek,' and the a blacfaced Al Jolson

son wrote "Fight Illini." Dramatizing something of Jolson's own life, the play followed the Americanization-through-music of a young entertainer and the ways in which his Jewish roots both were transcended and survived. Jolson and George Jessel, then the bigger star of the two, pitched hard the production of the play on stage and film.

Approached early on, D.W. Griffith rejected making a movie of the play as too "racial." Presumably this meant too Jewish, as Griffith's vicious use of blackface performance in the service of antiblack racism in *Birth of a Nation*, had already linked the minstrel tradition and U.S. silent film, just as *The Jazz Singer* was to do for "talkies." When the film finally appeared in 1927, the victimization of African Americans by blackface was so off the studio's radar that it was considered to be "for the sake of racial tolerance," since it allegedly critiqued anti-Semitism.

With Samson Raphaelson in mind, the persistent confusion and racism of young white partygoers on campus and the reappearance of Chief Illiniwek at this year's University homecoming parade become two sides of a weighty coin. Those blackfaced partygoers are routinely criticized as representing a departure from the traditions of a liberal and inclusive university. They ought to be criticized. But so should the traditions, which are, in truth, anything but inclusive or antiracist.

Samson Raphaelson was far from conforming to the academic and Hollywood stereotype that has conservatives, blue collar workers and hicks doing all the heavy lifting required for building and rebuilding white racism. Jewish and urbane, he lived as an undergraduate with the great founder of the Catholic Worker movement, Dorothy Day. After Illinois, he joined forces with the director Ernest Lubitsch in Hollywood, writing such witty and marvelous films as *Heaven Can Wait* and *Trouble in Paradise*.

During the post-World War 2 Red Scare in Hollywood, his politics earned him the enmity of Red Channels, the anti-Communist scandal sheet that insisted he should be blacklisted as a radical. When he returned briefly as a celebrity to teach writing at Illinois his star pupils included that embodiment of U.S.-style cosmopolitanism, *Playboy* founder Hugh Hefner. Just before Raphaelson died, the left-liberal journalist Bill Moyers filmed a warm tribute to him.

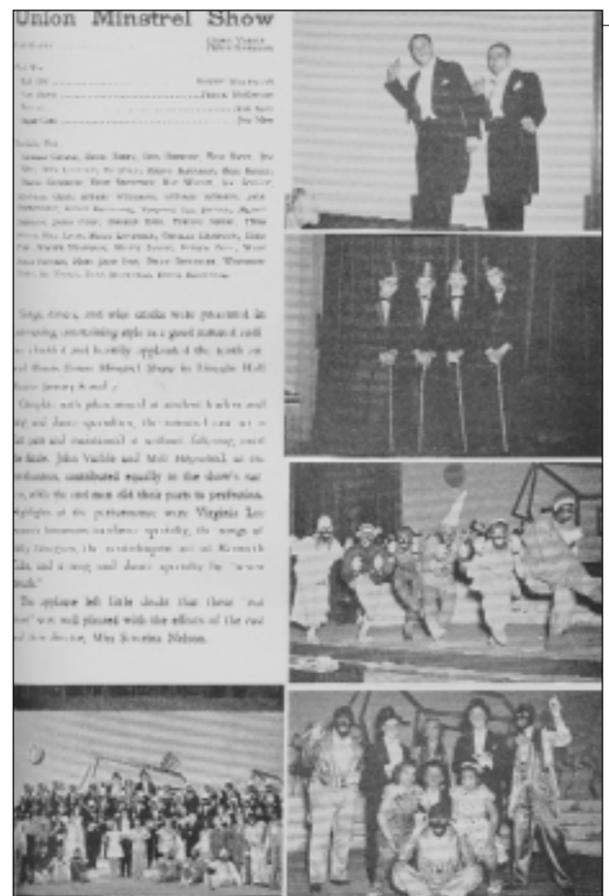
Alexander Saxton, an important historian of 19th century blackface, insisted that the very form of the act undermined any potential for it to carry progressive messages, within a white supremacist social order. Indeed, the very claim to control race and to decide if blackface or Indianface are well-meaning, admiring, honoring, or somehow not about race is itself an act of white privilege. When the contemporary students, who party in blackface or mimic anti-Mexican stereotypes, offer the same justifications for their behavior, they act up within a tradition.

It pains me, coming from really southern Illinois, to hear people in the university imagine that the 'small-town peo-

ple' are a reason that the University cannot do the right thing and acknowledge "Chief Illiniwek" as a lengthy and racist mistake. Mostly, none of us down there cared about the Chief as I grew up and do not care now. The real truth is that the Chief was made, endlessly marketed, and scandalously held on to for fifteen years by the most powerful trustees and administrative forces, despite years of intense anti-chief protests.

These are the same powerful forces that are now unable to acknowledge that the "Chief" was both their individual and institutional mistake. Instead, they resort to all sorts of fancy footwork discussing whether the eighty years of selling it—not "him," as a symbol of whiteness the "Chief" requires an impersonal pronoun—was a mistake at all, or just a phase we all needed to go through.

Given all this, perhaps our reflections on the uncomfortably close histories of modern blackface minstrelsy and of "Chief Illiniwek" in Illinois will lead students, if not administrators and trustees, to a little more clarity on these issues.



A program from a pre-war Union Minstrel Show held at Lincoln Hall at the U of I



# A Native Blogger in Pursuit of Social Justice

By Debbie Reese



Debbie Reese is an enrolled member of the Nambé Pueblo Tribe. She is assistant professor of American Indian Studies at UIUC, a native blogger, and a resident of Urbana.

AS A PROFESSOR, IT IS IMPORTANT that I publish my research in academic and professional journals that will lead to tenure, but as a Native parent and former school-teacher, I know that those journals are not readily available to people who work with children on a daily basis. An Internet blog was the answer. In May of 2006, I launched American Indians in Children's Literature.

## ARTRAIN

With my blog, I reach parents, teachers, librarians and others who do not have access to professional and academic journals. I provide immediate information about American Indians—whether that information is a review of a children's book, or a new source for teachers, or, an announcement about something like *Artrain*.

Artrain is precisely what its name suggests—a train filled with art. The works exhibited in the Artrain that stopped in Monticello last month were contemporary art by American Indians. *NativeViews: Influences of*

*Modern Culture*, has been touring the country—on railroad tracks—since 2004.

The exhibit especially intrigued me because it includes the work of Judith Lowry, who illustrated the outstanding children's picture book, *Home to Medicine Mountain*, about her father and uncle. They are of the Mountain Maidu and Hamawi Pit-River tribes in northern California. As boys, they were among the thousands of Native children taken to boarding schools developed in the late 1880s to “kill the Indian, save the man.”

Missing home, the boys ran away from the school, getting home by riding atop a boxcar.

These schools had a devastating effect on Native communities across the United States, but it is among the too-many topics not taught in our classrooms.

## BLOG AS RESOURCE AND CRITIQUE

On my blog, I write about books like *Home to Medicine Mountain* and others by Native authors who make an effort to tell stories that provide children with accurate information about American Indians. I link to websites maintained by Native writers and illustrators like Sherman Alexie, Cynthia Leitich Smith, and George Littlechild.

Research shows, however, that it is not enough to provide children with better information. Teachers must also actively work towards helping children develop an

ability to identify racist, biased, and outdated information, in this case, about American Indians. These depictions—whether they appear in children's books, television programs, movies, as school mascots, or in products at the grocery store—far outnumber the factual and realistic portrayals of American Indians. For

decades, Native scholars have addressed these problematic images. Many have written about the racist, biased, and erroneous presentation of American Indians in Forrest Carter's *The Education of Little Tree* and Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House on the Prairie*. By reading my blog, teachers find these critiques.

The content of the website is designed to help people develop a critical stance when evaluating American Indians in children's books. This means recognizing negative and positive stereotypes, both of which stand in the way of seeing and accepting American Indians as people of the present day. I am confident that more and more people are learning how to look critically, let go of problematic books, and instead, select books that present Native Americans as we are—not savages, and not heroes—but people with good and bad qualities.

My blog is listed on websites of the leading teacher and librarian organizations and associations, social justice organizations, and, sites maintained by American Indian tribes and organizations. I invite you to visit my blog, *American Indians in Children's Literature* (<http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com>). Take time to read and think about the content. With good faith and hard work, we can all effect change in the way that today's society views American Indians.



Rose & Coyote Dressed up for the Heard Show, by Harry Fonseca

## Open Letter To Chancellor Richard Herman

Dear Chancellor Herman:

I just finish reading the media advisory notice that states: “As administrators planned this year's Homecoming parade, they created a policy that they interpreted was in keeping with the retirement directive. In reviewing that policy, Chancellor Richard Herman has determined that the interpretation was overly broad. The University values free speech and free expression and considers Homecoming floats, decorations, costumes and related signage all representations of such personal expression.”

My understanding, confirmed by staff, is that the revised policy will now permit Homecoming float makers to utilize the “Chief Illiniwek” logo or images, in the name of “free expression.” This is an unfortunate decision on the part of the administration. The implications of this decision are significant, in ways that the administration fails to understand.

For example, taking this line of thinking further, if a float maker wants to use KKK imagery or a noose hanging from a tree on a homecoming float, is this now also acceptable under the auspices of “free expression?” Or if a float maker wants to use images of people copulating or nude participants on a float, would this also be accepted as the freedom of personal expression? And if not, why not? Certainly if public nudity is considered immoral or at least inappropriate, why not public racism?

Moreover, there is a blatant disregard here for the fact that “The Chief” is the direct product of racism, with its long history of appropriation and commodification of Native Americans—the same populations that were almost completely exterminated by white conquerors. Hence, the “Chief” image is no more an innocent cartoon figure, than would be a Klansman (or noose) image.

As such, the administration's lack of courage to hold firm on the policy of the “no Chief logo or imagery” represents another assault to

Native Americans and all people of color who have suffered and continue to suffer humiliation, disregard, and exploitation, at the hands of those with decision-making power in this institution.

The lack of backbone shown by the administration on this issue and the lack of consistent administrative commitment to counter the further racialization of Native Americans on this university campus is truly disappointing and disheartening.

Please understand that it is not that we fail to recognize that this is a tough issue for administration; but it will never compare with the humiliation, frustration, and exploitation that so many students, faculty, staff, and administrators of color must contend with on a daily basis, as a consequence of racism, power, and privilege on this campus and in the surrounding community.

Hence, this administrative decision is a betrayal to all those who have struggled tirelessly for decades to change this policy. So Chancellor, for how long will we need to be subjected to such immorality and disgrace? How long more will we be treated like step-children of the powerful overseers of this institution?

How can we believe that we have a place in this so-called Inclusive Illinois, when we can't even depend on the administration to act with dignity and respect, on such an important issue?

Historically, public institutional expressions of racism in this society have only changed when people had the courage, dignity, and love to stand against such immorality. With so many colleges and universities across this country showing real commitment and where-withal in stopping the use of “Indian” mascots, why not UIUC? How can such a prestigious university allow itself to behave so backward, in the face of so much suffering?

Respectfully,  
Prof. Antonia Darder



# Vernon Bellecourt: A Life of Struggle for Indian Rights

By Antonia Darder

"Our detractors always say, 'We are honoring you.' It's not an honor. In whose honor? We have to ask. Beginning with the pilgrims at Plymouth Rock, about 16 million of us were wiped out, including whole villages in Washington, where native girls were sold on the auction block as sex slaves in mining towns, and young boys were made slaves on ranches."

"The name of your football team has got to change! We don't like your chicken feathers, your paint, your cheap Hollywood chants."

—Vernon Bellecourt

Vernon Bellecourt (WaBun-Inini), an Ojibwa and spokesperson for the American Indian Movement (AIM) died on October 13 from complications of pneumonia. He was born on the White Earth Indian Reservation in Minnesota in 1931. His father was disabled from exposure to mustard gas in World War I, leaving his mother to raise their 12 children on government benefits in a home with no running water or electricity. As a consequence, the young boy grew up on the reservation amidst abject poverty and, like so many indigenous children of his time, he suffered the abuses of boarding school education.

In response to the injustice of his early years, Bellecourt channeled his rage and fury into a life shaped by longstanding campaigns for the human rights of indigenous peoples. Often considered a controversial figure during his lifetime, he struggled for the restoration of Indian lands and the preservation of indigenous cultures and languages, as well as the respect and human dignity of native people.

Bellecourt first gained public notice attention in 1972 when AIM members occupied the offices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington D.C., in protest of the years of political and social injustices managed by the BIA. Later, he worked to attain international recognition for Indian nations and their treaties, often meeting with controversial world figures including Yasir Arafat, who fought for rights to Palestinian lands and political self-determination. Most recently, he had met with President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela. He was a special representative of the International Indian Treaty Council and in 1974 helped organize the first international conference of Indigenous Peoples under United Nations auspices to proclaim their rights.

Most notably in our community, Bellecourt was known as an ardent opponent of the use of Indian mascots and his unceasing supported for the efforts of Charleen Teters and others on the campus and community, who have worked tirelessly to end the "Chief Illiniwek" compulsion at UIUC. As president of the National Coalition on Racism in Sports



Vernon Bellecourt

and Media, he also protested fiercely against teams with names like the Indians, the Redskins, or the Chiefs. Bellecourt was during the 1997 World Series and again in 1998 for burning an effigy of the Cleveland Indians' mascot, "Chief Wahoo" and his Super Bowl protest of the Washington Redskins.

Bellecourt argued passionately that Indian mascots objectified American Indians by perpetuating stereotypes, which allowed institutions to gloss over the true histories, social problems, and political demands of Indigenous Peoples in this country. In 2001, Bellecourt's efforts gained momentum when the United States Commission on Civil Rights issued a statement that criticized the use of Indian mascots and nicknames by non-Indian schools, calling them "insensitive in light of the long history of forced assimilation that American Indian people have endured in this country."

Over the years, Bellecourt's unrelenting efforts were rewarded by the steady decline of the use of Indian mascots and Indian team names by colleges and universities across the nation. In 2005, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) barred the use of Indian mascots by college and university teams. It was the NCAA groundbreaking decision that has provided the most positive leverage to advocates of indigenous rights in higher education, including the efforts that led to the University of Illinois Board of Trustees decision to retire the "Chief Illiniwek" this year.

Among the many other causes he championed, Bellecourt was also a tireless leader in the campaign to release AIM activist Leonard Peltier, who was wrongly convicted of killing two FBI agents during a 1975 shootout on the Pine Ridge reservation. Peltier, has spent more than 30 years in jail. In his book, *Prison Writings: My Life is my Sun Dance*, Leonard Peltier wrote of Bellecourt "an imperfect man, yet with vision and bravery and fiery words, he gave voice to a whole generation of Indian activists."

## UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Continued from page 1

Thus, Chancellor Herman vetoed a policy, in complete compliance with the BOT and the NCAA, prohibiting the official use of "related regalia, logo, and the names 'Chief Illiniwek' and 'Chief'" in the Homecoming event. Bear in mind, that nothing in the policy spoke to any prohibition of non-university-related use of T-shirts or other related paraphernalia—which, incidentally, anyone with common sense would consider a violation of free speech. Moreover, it cannot be ignored that the nature of this humiliating wholesale cultural appropriation of Native American imagery translates into a human rights violation.

Unfortunately, Chancellor Richard Herman's magnanimous concern for personal expression, comes at the direct expense of the very moral courage and fortitude that will be required to move the University of Illinois and its avid fans beyond its disgraceful fixation with "playing Indian."

For the full text of the U.N. Declaration visit: [www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/en/declaration](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/en/declaration)

"We are the first country to turn this declaration into a law and that is important, brothers and sisters. We recognize and salute the work of our representatives. But if we were to remember the indigenous fight clearly, many of us who are sensitive would end up crying in remembering the discrimination, the scorn."

—Evo Morales, President of Bolivia

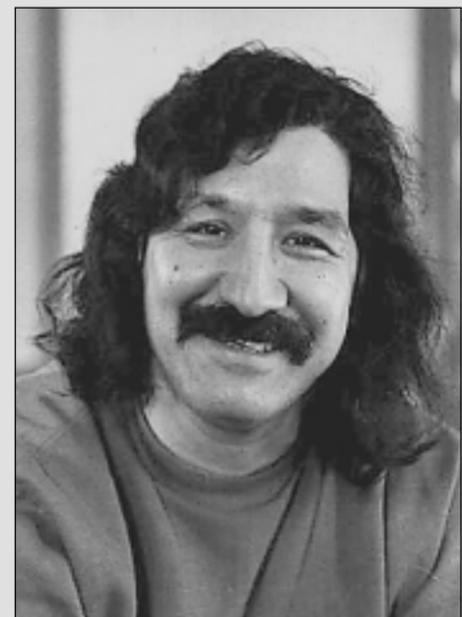
### Paintings by Leonard Peltier



"Black Elk"



"The Ultimate Sacrifice"



Leonard Peltier

Leonard Peltier is serving two life sentences for crimes the U.S. government has admitted they can't prove were even committed by Peltier. He is considered by Amnesty International and many other humanitarian organizations to be a political prisoner.





# A First-Hand Account of the Jena 6 Case by Terry Davis, Investigator for Mychal Bell



The following is a talk given by Terry Davis, investigator with the legal defense team for Mychal Bell, one of the members of the Jena 6 on trial in Louisiana. Davis was in Jena for three weeks and was present for the historic march there on Sept. 20. She gave a talk in Champaign-Urbana on October 12, 2007 at the Urban League.

WHAT I WANT TO DO in talking with you tonight is to share with you the particularly unique and gripping story of Jena. I don't think this story became world famous by accident. There's something about it that just grabs at the heart and I think that made it big, even though there are things like what have been happening to the Jena six, unfortunately, way too much and in way too many places.

I do work with the public defender's office in Chicago. I had some training and experience that I thought may be helpful for one or any of the Jena 6 kids with their legal case.

## IT'S JUST A PRANK

I read in the paper about this amazing series of incidents that took place in Jena starting when a black student in the high school asked the principal if the black kids were allowed to sit under the white tree, that is the tree in the school yard where some of the white kids gathered. Historically no black kids had sat there. He said they could. And this young man, Ken Purvis, and a few of his friends, without any fanfare, just went one lunch period and sat there. The next day when the students came to school there were three nooses hanging in the very same tree.

Everything you've heard, it may be true. But there is so much more that makes it so much worse than you even know. For example, the white kids that usually sat under the tree in the morning, I guess a lot of them instinctively pulled back and didn't sit down, but somehow they knew they didn't want to sit under those nooses. There were teachers standing around laughing in the morning. One of the kids went and told the principal there's nooses in the tree, and he said, "Oh, ha, ha, ha. It's just a prank." When the kids went to their first period class, those nooses were still there. They did take them down then. But it was a sign, I think, to the kids that it really didn't matter.

People in the South, black and white, I think have much stronger sense of history in a way than people in Illinois—for better and for worse. I don't think there was anyone in that school yard that didn't know what the nooses meant. To the black kids, a lot of whom I interviewed in the course of my work, it was a horrible shock that their school mates wanted to say something that violent and ugly to them.

You've probably heard how the principal initially wanted to expel the kids who put up the nooses, and then the school board overrode his decision and made it into a minor offense rather than a major offense. Then began a very tense Fall. I don't think you can understand this case without picturing the tension that existed among the kids from that point on. The day of the nooses just about every black student in the high school, spontaneously, they went at lunchtime and sat under the tree. I don't know if they thought they were having a sit-in, but that was what they were doing anyway.

The response by the powers-that-be was immediate and they had a lock-down at the school. They had a heavy police presence at

the school, including dogs, following this. The District Attorney, who wears at least two hats in Jena, one of which is attorney for the school board, came to a school assembly of the kids and looking right at the black kids he said, "I can take away your life with the stroke of my pen." There is not one student who was in that room who doesn't remember that like it's emblazoned on their mind.

The kids I talked to largely felt that their needs and concerns were being overlooked completely. There were fights, there was tension, there was race-baiting, name-calling going on during the Fall. After Thanksgiving there was a series of incidents that culminated in the incident for which the Jena 6 were arrested.

## THE TRIAL OF MYCHAL BELL

Before I came to Jena I read the transcript of the first of the Jena 6 to go to trial, and he was my client Mychal Bell. It was a stunning experience just to read the transcript. I doubt that all of you are lawyers, but I bet even the youngest people here know that you're supposed to be impartial in order to serve on a jury. We had potential jurors being questioned, "Do you know anything about this case?" They would respond, "Only what I've read in the papers." The papers in Jena had vitriolic attacks on the Jena 6 every day—day in, day out—just wild attacks on these kids. This one woman juror was asked, "Do you think you can be fair?" She said, "No, not really." She was seated.

The jury was all white. The Defense Attorney was a court-appointed lawyer who seemed to feel the weight of the case enough that he didn't want to stick his neck out too far. He didn't call a single witness.

I found out after reading the transcript that there was one teacher, and only one teacher, who actually saw the beginning of

the fight. The others arrived seconds later, but they didn't see it start. Mychal Bell was accused of throwing that first punch that knocked Justin out temporarily and caused him to fall. And then he was kicked. But the punch, that was Mychal's contribution to the situation, according to the prosecution. There was a teacher who happened to be coming in front of where Justin was heading, so he was able to see it uniquely well. He made a written statement which he turned into the principal that very same day saying that he saw who threw the punch. Guess what, it wasn't Mychal Bell, it was another kid. He was not called as a witness. He had moved to another town. Nobody knew where he had gone. I found that coach. He said it was somebody else and he said a lot of other things that were very important. But he was never called as a witness, even though his statement was in there before the trial.

Jena is very, very small. There's no movie theater. There's four stop lights. Nowhere to eat. One motel. Within it the black community is very small, maybe fifteen percent. This is a very isolated black community with no economic power, no political power. The black people have been gerrymandered out of Jena so they can't even vote for Mayor because they are just on the other side of the city line. There's very few jobs. There's no black people in the library, in the city clerk's office. There's one black person who works in the bank, but he works in a room where he cannot be seen. In some ways it is a throw back to years ago—but is it? Is this a throw back to years ago, or is it that you don't see it unless it's pushed right up against your face?

For a full transcript of this speech go to [ucimc.org](http://ucimc.org).

## In Memory of Lucky Dube: South African King of Reggae (August 3, 1964–October 23, 2007)



Lucky Philip Dube, the singer, songwriter and musician known as South Africa's King of Reggae, died on October 23, 2007. It is ironic that a man who dedicated his life and music to the struggle against

oppression should die from the wounds of a hijacker, attempting to steal his vehicle. This senseless and random crime has left a void in the many who garnered strength in his message, as 25 years of music ended suddenly in tragedy. War and Crime is one of Lucky Dube's most beloved songs.

### War and Crime

Every where in the world  
People are fighting for freedom  
Nobody knows what is right  
Nobody knows what is wrong  
The black man, say it's the white man  
The white man, say it's the black man

Indians say, it's the coloureds  
Coloureds say, it's everyone  
Your mother didn't tell you the truth  
Cause my father didn't tell me the truth  
Nobody knows what is wrong  
And what is right  
How long is this gonna last  
Cause we've come so far so fast

When it started, you and I were not there so  
Why don't we  
Bury down apartheid  
Fight down war and crime  
Racial discrimination  
Tribal discrimination

You and I were not there when it started  
We don't know where it's coming from  
And where it's going  
So why don't we

I'm not saying this  
Because I'm a coward  
But I'm thinking of the lives  
That we lose every time we fight

Killing innocent people  
Women and children yeah  
Who doesn't know about the good?  
Who doesn't know about the wars?  
Your mother didn't tell you the truth  
Cause my father did not tell me the truth  
Yeah

Black man, say it's the white man  
White man, say it's the black man  
Indians say, it's the coloureds  
Coloureds say, it's everyone

When it started we were not there  
We know where we come from  
But we don't know where we're going  
So why don't we

Bury down apartheid  
Fight down war and crime  
Racial discrimination  
Tribal discrimination



# Sen. Frerichs and Rep. Jakobsson Vote to Send Medical Cannabis Users to Jail

By Shaleen Aghi



MY FRIEND JULIE FALCO lives in Chicago and is an alum of Illinois State University, where she graduated in Communications and played in a band called New Position. She was singing live on stage in Bloomington-Normal when she suddenly found herself unable to move her arm. The whole left side of her body stiffened. Her legs felt tight, and she became shaky and weak. She wondered what was happening to her as her bandmates carried her, bewildered, off the stage.

After a series of hospitalizations and inconclusive tests, Julie was finally told that she had multiple sclerosis (MS), a disease with no known cause or cure. That was all she was told. Her doctor simply gave her a book about MS and told her to go home and rest.

This happened in 1986, when she was 20 years old. Let me tell you about what her life is like currently, 21 years later. It is as you might imagine for an MS patient. She suffers from severe pain, but she is able to live alone and generally take care of herself. She sometimes uses a wheelchair and sometimes hunches over a walker, dragging each leg with each step. In her words, each step is like dragging through deep snow while hiking up the side of a mountain. The mornings are the worst for her because she wakes up with her tightened legs in pain every day. But she manages and, as anyone who knows her will tell you, she is a fun, spunky, and generally happy person to be around. She takes exactly two medications and experiences very few side effects, none of them especially intrusive.

Now let me tell you what her life was like before she began eating cannabis brownies regularly. She tried several pharmaceuticals, and none of them provided the degree of relief she currently experiences. For the harsh side effects, doctors prescribed other pharmaceuticals that produced further side effects. For example, for drugs that caused depression as a side effect, she was prescribed antidepressants, which carried their own side effects, for which she was prescribed more drugs. At one point, she was trying more than thirty different pharmaceuticals, each with their own side effects. She would wake up with massive headaches and flu-like symptoms every day plus constipation, and these were side effects on top of the MS symptoms. She became

severely depressed to the point of being unable to wake up. The costs of the drugs were not cheap. She could barely keep up with the cycle of drugs treating side effects of drugs treating other side effects of drugs that were not helping with MS symptoms. Then she read about cannabis as a treatment for MS, and tried inhaling cannabis, which did not lead to a great improvement. Then she tried cannabis brownies, and experienced such a rapid improvement that she has been able to wean herself off all the pharmaceuticals except an occasional Tylenol-3.

At this point, there is very little serious debate about whether cannabis has medical value (if you would like to learn more, do a review of "cannabinoid" in medical literature), but the legal status of medical cannabis is a source of much confusion. In the rest of this article, I'd like to summarize the federal and state-specific legal status of cannabis.

## EXISTING LAW

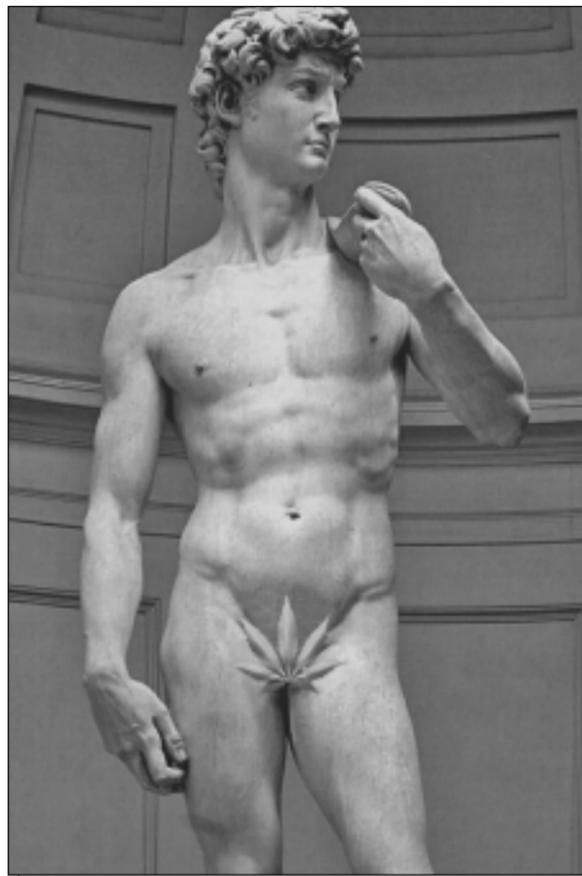
At the federal level, medical cannabis remains illegal. Period. At the state level, however, twelve states including Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington, have passed laws permitting the medical use of cannabis. Even in those states, patients are subject to federal prosecution, according to the Supreme Court's decision in *Gonzalez v. Raich* (2005). But patients in those states enjoy varying degrees of day-to-day legal protection while they use their medicine.

## CURRENT STATE LAW

Putting aside the states that explicitly allow the medical use of cannabis with a doctor's recommendation, thirty-five states plus the District of Columbia have passed legislation that recognize cannabis's medicinal value. One of these states is—surprise—Illinois! Section 11 of our own state's Cannabis Control Act, states that "the Illinois Department of Health and Human Services, with written approval by the Illinois State Police, may authorize the use of cannabis for the treatment of glaucoma, the side effects of chemotherapy or radiation therapy in can-

cer patients or such other procedure certified to be medically necessary". [Source: 720 ILCS 550/11]

If you're rubbing your eyes, re-reading that, and wondering how we still have a problem, you're not alone. Why can't this law protect Julie and the 200,000 other patients who could benefit from medical cannabis? Why are they instead being harassed, intimidated, and arrested when the law says they may use cannabis? Why hasn't anyone been



authorized by the IDHHS, per this section? Maybe a public outcry would provide an answer to these questions. We're asking all organizations, media, and citizens to contact their legislators and ask them to enforce Section 11. As a prominent but anonymous Champaign citizen said to me recently, if the state can choose which parts of the Illinois Cannabis Control Act it wants to enforce, why can't we choose which parts of the Act we want to comply with?

## RECENT ILLINOIS MEDICAL CANNABIS BILLS

Meanwhile, there have been several recent attempts to make Illinois the thirteenth

state to allow medical use of cannabis. In fact, there have been three bills in the past three years. A quick recap:

2005: Sen. John Cullerton (D-Chicago) introduces H.B. 407, the Illinois Medical Cannabis Act. After a no vote from the Republicans on the committee and two Democrats including Naomi Jakobsson, the bill fails in the House Human Services Committee with a vote of 6-5. (Sidenote: I met with Ms. Jakobsson before the vote and presented a Zogby poll showing that approximately 70 percent of Champaign County residents support medicinal use of marijuana under the guidance of a physician. She was very dismissive.)

2006: Sen. Cullerton again introduces a medical cannabis bill, S.B. 2568. It passes the Illinois Senate Health and Human Services committee and is endorsed by the *Chicago Sun-Times* and the Illinois Nurses Association. However, the Senate fails to vote on the bill by the session deadline. 2007: Sen. Cullerton introduces S.B. 650. After passing committee, the bill fails narrowly by a vote of 22-29. Our area's state senator, Sen. Frerichs (D), voted against the bill.

While it is disappointing that the bill has failed despite the wide range of credible endorsements and the heartfelt testimony from patients like Julie Falco, there is reason to be optimistic. Through the hard work of groups and individuals all over the state, support for a medical cannabis bill has steadily increased and there is reason to expect the pattern to continue. Stay tuned in 2008 for another attempt. If you think patients like Julie and the roughly 200,000 patients in Illinois with ailments like cancer, AIDS, MS, and glaucoma deserve to use their medicine in peace, call Rep. Jakobsson and Sen. Frerichs and ask them why they voted to send these patients to jail.

For more information on medical cannabis in Illinois, please visit the local health care advocacy group IDEAL (Illinois Drug Education and Legislative) Reform at [www.idealreform.org](http://www.idealreform.org).

## The Politics of Sports

Sportswriter, David Zirin, will speak about his new book *Welcome to the Terrordome: The Pain, Politics, and Promise of Sports* at Gregory Hall, room 319 on Wednesday, November 28, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. Zirin's talk is sponsored by Haymarket Books, African American Studies, and the International Socialist Organization.





# The October 27 Anti-War Protests In Chicago

## AT THE HEART OF THE PROTEST

by Sindha Agha



Sindha Agha is a sophomore at Uni High. She is fourteen years old and interested in film.

THE AERIAL VIEW had to have been breath-taking: an estimated 10,000 people forming a disorganized rainbow, our muscles pulsing with the weight of PVC pipes and sticks, holding up signs and banners that spoke in a volume as loud as our voices, all saying different words for one—peace.

At around 9:30 a.m. on Saturday morning, a group of C-U residents, about half of them high school students, piled into three rented vans with several signs, one large banner, and several white wooden doves held up by sticks.

Then we began the two-and-a-half-hour drive to Chicago, where we took part in an anti-war protest that drew demonstrators from eight Midwestern states. Estimates of the number of participants ranged from 5,000 (according to police) to 30,000 (according to organizers).

Chicago was one of 11 cities around the country where regional peace protests took place, organized by United for Peace and Justice and Act Now to Stop War and End Racism. Organizers estimated that at least 100,000 people took part nationwide.

In Chicago, a day of rallies, speeches, and a march began at Union Park, wound through the Loop, and ended at Federal Plaza.

People of all ages called upon the government and fellow citizens to put an end to the war in Iraq (this being its fifth year) and to resist going to war with Iran.



C-U makes its voice heard in Chicago

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

by Erik Harper

Erik Harper is a junior at Armstrong-Potomac High School and is looking to further his knowledge to become a Pediatrician.

AMAZEMENT, WONDER, APPRECIATION, a sense of kindness, and uncorrupted welcome were all things which passed through my mind, as I gazed down upon the gathering of some of the most caring people I have ever met.

Thousands attended the anti-war march, for it was a great and worthy cause. Through the rumble of emotion being emitted from the massive crowd you could hear the knowledgeable speakers, sharing their ideas with others. Sharing is a large basis of these events. Unlike the government, the speakers did not keep their knowledge to themselves. They shared it with as many people as possible and with an open heart.

I glanced around in amazement and noticed that there was no discrimination or hatred for the soldiers, our soldiers, occupying Iraq and soon to be in Iran, if something is not changed. The sentiments were not what many who have never attended a gathering such

as this believe, which is that the anti-war factions are against their loved ones serving in the military. This is simply and utterly not the case.

As I looked around I saw no hatred or discrimination, but compassion, understanding, caring, and love. They know not to judge a whole, on the actions of a few (i.e. the actions of the Bush Administration). In the same way, America should not judge Iraq or Afghanistan on the actions of a few (i.e. the actions of Al-Qaeda or Taliban). Would you like to be called a horrible person for the actions of a few?

The massive group marched down the streets of Chicago and was met by cheers and peace signs from windows and sidewalks alike. It was so clear that there are many people out there who care and want to bring home our beloved soldiers, but don't really know how to become involved or simply do not have the time. That is what most of these marches and events are about. To make people aware of America's situation and the wrong path it is taking, as well as to inform them of ways that they, that you, can help.

I personally was changed for the better by attending this protest and plan to attend future ones. I highly encourage and hope you will do the same. If we as American citizens act together as a whole, anything can be accomplished. Once again, I owe thanks to all those involved in making it possible for me to attend this truly inspiring event. So now I leave you with one thought--Power to the people, for the people are the power.

## Patch Adams

by Rachel Hurley, photos Maria Silva

PATCH ADAMS HAS BLUE HAIR and 45 million people in the United States are without healthcare. While few would disagree that the latter is the more appalling of the two facts most might find the former more shocking. We are currently living in a country where healthcare is a privilege and not a right and very few people are speaking up. Some of the few proud protesters could be found at the Redesigning the Healthcare Intensive hosted by Patch Adams, yes—the Robin Williams clown doctor, and the School for Designing a Society at the Independent Media Center here in Urbana.

One might imagine that this healthcare intensive would attract similar people, with similar backgrounds and similar val-

ues, but this wasn't the case. As expected there were doctors, nurses, and medical students, but there were also School for Designing a Society students, art majors, Canadians, holopaths, Oklahomans, high school students, naturopaths and a really old lady with a crazy hat from Maryland that took extensive notes, but had no connection to healthcare beyond being a patient. Each brought their own experiences and views to the intensive making for many great discussions, really amazing speeches and a few heated arguments.

The Intensive was a three-day conference that met in three different formats throughout the day. The first part of the day and the first part of the afternoon were spent listening to speakers. The speakers ranged from Patch Adams himself to Paula Murphy, an everyday chiropractor with an innovative practice. After the "time clock," sounded we would break into our design groups. Each design group was given the task to use false statements, (statements you would like to be true but are not), to find solutions to the problems of the healthcare system. The last part of the day was spent in small groups listening to speakers where you could learn about everything from health co-ops to the history of the private insurance industry. At the very end of the day there was always

some amazingly fun activity like Indian dancing on the roof.

From listening to the speakers and learning about the current healthcare systems in Cuba and Canada no one had trouble making false statements. They ranged everywhere from broad, seemingly disconnected issues like "the environment does not pollute our bodies" to the seemingly logical "everyone has the right to free healthcare." To maintain the morale

of the group as well as make legitimate progress we focused mainly on plausible, realistic and fairly small scale changes that we could personally make to help improve the system. Because I had very little experience with design groups other than my own I feel I should share some solutions proposed by my design group. The paramedics in our group were concerned with the community's knowledge of basic health. So to educate the people of their community, as well as avoid unnecessary calls, they proposed using the side of their ambulance as

health billboard. They would change the message according to the season, but each vehicle would list symptoms, and treatments of minor illnesses and injuries.

Another solution proposed by a medical student was based on a currently working model. He said that the comfort that the library in the children's cancer wing of a hospital that he had recently visited made him want to open a library in the children's wing of his hospital. Because he knew asking for textbooks, employees, and enough space to hold a library was probably out of the question he decided to begin with a small book cart and eventually work his way up to a closet.

Each idea developed at this intensive is a step towards creating a healthcare system that the United States can be proud of. Whether you propose free medical school, to increase the amount of doctors, preventative medicine instead of reactive medicine, natural cures or clowning, all of us have the potential to make healthcare available to all.



A design group discussion



And... clowns!



# National Conference for Prison Book Projects Held in Urbana-Champaign

ON NOVEMBER 3, 2007, a conference in Urbana-Champaign, Illinois brought together 88 participants from 29 different prison book projects across the country. A similar event of this kind has not taken place since a 2002 conference in Philadelphia.

Participants shared information about issues of fundraising, censorship, and how to work with prison administrations. They compared their experiences of what has worked and what has not. All agreed that, despite their titles, prisons have failed to 'correct' their inmates. These prison activists have taken it upon themselves to reach out to those individuals who are 'gone but not forgotten.'

The history of the Urbana-Champaign Books To Prisoners project, host of the event, is an inspiring story. Yet it's just one example of similar projects that have sprouted up throughout the nation in places like New Orleans, Seattle, Boston, and Claremont, California. In 2004, the UC-BTP began as a small handful of volunteers carrying boxes of books around in the backs of their cars. When the local Independent Media Center purchased an old post office built in 1915, UC-BTP found the perfect home in an old mail sorting room in the basement with built-in shelves ready-made for a library.

Books flooded in from students, professors, and community members, as well as the larger community. The project has been led by those who have served time, or had loved ones who have been locked up. The UC-BTP now serves 27 Illinois state prisons and four federal penitentiaries.

UC-BTP volunteers also staff and maintain libraries in the two local jails. After a rash of jail suicides—three occurred within six months in 2004—the Sheriff was open to improving conditions. In September 2005, they moved 1500 books into the downtown jail, and two years later they opened a second library in the satellite jail.

In just four short years, UC-BTP has become a thriving project with dozens of volunteers. To date, they have sent out 18,596 books to 2,855 inmates. This year alone they have sent out over 10,000 books. During a pack-a-thon the weekend of the conference, they sent out 500 of those books. As one volunteer commented, "It was an incredible act of solidarity that participants wanted to spend hours in our room getting packages out."

Speakers for the national conference included Buzz Armstrong who promotes art in prisons across Michigan through his Prison Creative Arts Project. He organizes the Annual Exhibition of Art by Michigan Prisoners, an event that showcases art works from over 200 artists in prison. The opening reception for the next exhibit is March 25, 2008 at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

The keynote speaker was Paul Wright, founder and editor of Prison Legal News, the longest running publication of its kind and a favorite among 'jailhouse lawyers.' He gave a history of the modern movement to get books to prisoners which he says began in 1962 when black Muslims struggled to get the newspaper Muhammad Speaks into prisons. Wright commented on the fight to get prisoners access to literature:

"I think the hostility that we're seeing toward written materials of all stripes is a conscious hostility towards having a literate, politically conscious population. They don't want to take any chances with it. 80% of the prison population is functionally illiterate and they are spending a lot of time, money and resources to keep it that way."

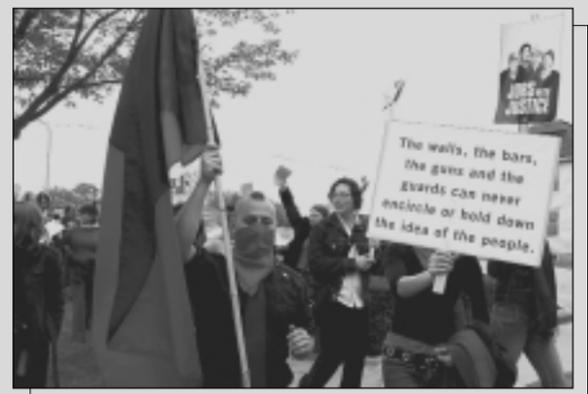
For more on the local Books to Prisoners project see [www.books2prisoners.org](http://www.books2prisoners.org).

If you would like to volunteer there are work days on Tuesday (7-9 pm), Thursday (2-4 pm), Saturday (2-4 pm), and Sunday (1-3 pm).



"Layla" by Willie Terrell  
Prison Creative Arts Project

## Photos From The 4th Annual Urbana-Champaign Unity March, Saturday, October 16



Left: "What have the police to hide;" Top center and right: Unity marchers on the move. Bottom: Marchers gather on the hill in Douglas Park for a rally. —Photo by Bill Gorrell