

The Public

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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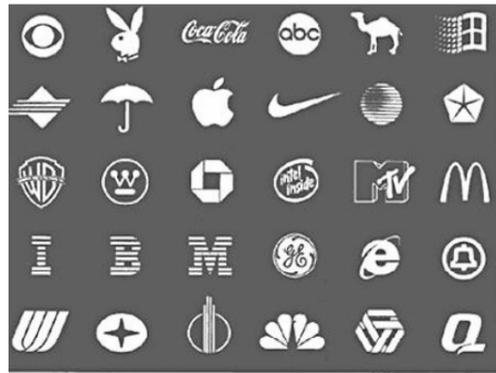
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You don't need a degree in journalism to be a citizen journalist. We are all experts in something, and we have the ability to share our information and knowledge with others. The *Public i* is always looking for writers and story ideas. We invite you 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.

- Become a citizen journalist; write a news story or opinion piece.
- Make a tax-deductible contribution.
- Help distribute the public i around the Champaign-Urbana area.
- Help with fund-raisers.
- Join the editorial board.

	NUMBER OF CORPORATE LOGOS THE AVERAGE AMERICAN CAN RECOGNIZE TODAY: MORE THAN 1000
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NUMBER OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS NATIVE TO HIS OR HER LOCALITY THAT THE AVERAGE AMERICAN CAN RECOGNIZE TODAY:
FEWER THAN 10

Number of times a Hummer H2 could be driven around the world on the excess calories Americans consume each year :



244

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Atlanta)/ Food and Drug Administration (Rockville, Md.)/ Harper's research]

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The Public

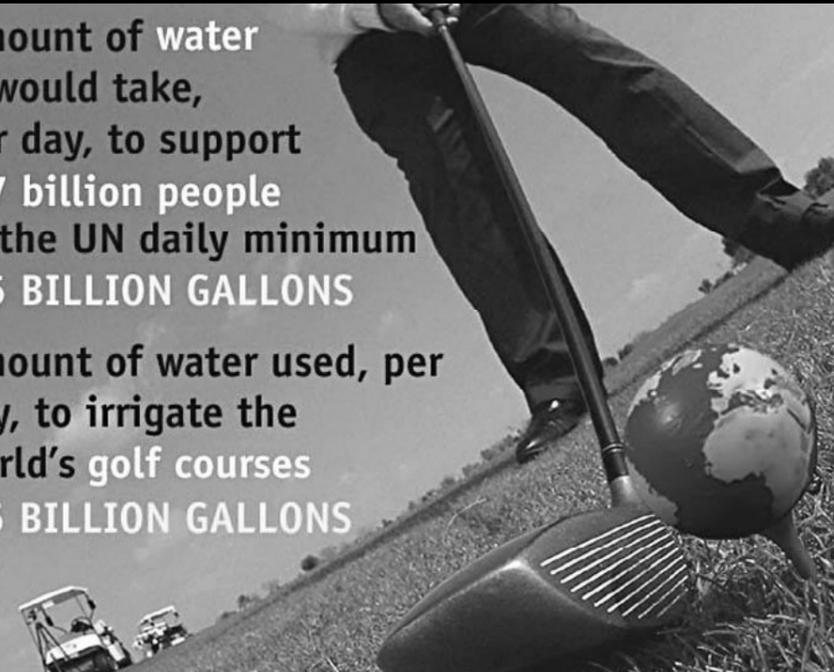
A Paper of the People

Published by the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center

October 2004 • V4 #8

Amount of water it would take, per day, to support 4.7 billion people at the UN daily minimum
2.5 BILLION GALLONS

Amount of water used, per day, to irrigate the world's golf courses
2.5 BILLION GALLONS



TERRORISM (as defined by the FBI):
the unlawful use of force or violence...in furtherance of political or social objectives.

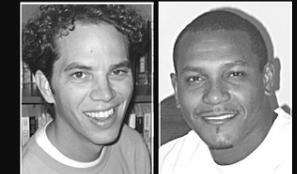
WAR = TERRORISM

A terrorist is someone who has a BOMB and doesn't have an AIR FORCE.

The images above and on the back page are part of an alternative media slideshow produced by IMC member Darrin Drda for the Canopy Club in Urbana. The entire slideshow can be viewed online at www.jaytv.com/can2/slide.html, and is shown before performances at the Canopy. To find out more about this project or to get involved, email d_drda@hotmail.com.



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The PUBLIC



Really Untold News The Recent Global Assault on Independent Media

October 2004 • V4 #8

by Scott Edwards



"Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets."
(Napoleon)

"We are not afraid to entrust the American people with unpleasant facts, foreign ideas, alien philosophies, and competitive values. For a nation that is afraid to let its people judge the truth and falsehood in an open market is a nation that is afraid of its people." (JFK)

BETWEEN PROTESTS AND HURRICANES, it's been a very busy news month. The most pressing untold story, however, has been a seemingly relentless series of attacks on press and independent expression across the international system. If it were a slow news cycle, though, I doubt we'd hear much about these developments anyhow. So in keeping with the *Public*'s goal of reporting the often unacknowledged, here it goes:

Countries in the media activist "news" over the past few months, in no particular order:

Iraq: U.S. military sets precedent of shutting down newspapers and banning broadcast media in a time of crisis; less than principled example to set for the leaders of the newest "democracy" in the region.

Nigeria: The Nigerian government has been heavily criticized by NGO's and democracy advocates recently for its pattern of repression and intolerance to political dissent. On September 6th, the Nigerian Intelligence Agency raided the independent magazine, *Insider Weekly*, in Lagos with sledgehammers, arrested staff, and banned further production. The reason? "...disparaging and humiliating the person and office of President and Commander-in-Chief."

Thailand: The current Prime Minister founded the country's largest telecommunication conglomerate. Late August of this year, this media giant filed libel charges against a Thai media reform activist from the Campaign for Popular Media Reform, as well as editors of the Thai Post who researched and documented that the conglomerate was a major beneficiary of the government's policies. Media activists in the country have documented over 20 recent cases of journalists and editors being dismissed, or having their stories altered in order to appease the government. The Thai court agreed to hear the case, which could result in imprisonment.

Angola: Outside of Luanda, there is no independent media in this country, which is struggling to rebuild civic life after decades of war. In the capital, independent media is constrained by strong libel laws, and



Police confront an Indymedia reporter during the August RNC protests. Photo by Arun Bhalla

severely restrictive dissemination rules.

Brazil: As of September, the Brazilian government had not backed away from a proposal to require licensing of journalists in the country—a measure being pushed by the state-journalists union. President Luiz da Silva's chief policy strategist, in response to questions about the proposal, quipped "nothing is absolute, not even freedom of the press."

Palestine: Early July, the Israeli military attacked and destroyed a Palestinian media office in Gaza city with missiles, with IDF justification being that it was "a communications center which maintained constant contact with terrorists." The owner and manager admit contact with various Palestinian elements as a function of journalistic work. This was the third attack on Palestinian media in less than two months.

Vietnam: Journalists critical of the government have been subject to harassment and imprisonment. Notably, Nguyen Vu Binh was sentenced to 7 years imprisonment for releasing an article over the internet; an apparent violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Vietnam is a state party. The government has been unresponsive to recent calls for his release and increased tolerance of journalism.

Kyrgyzstan: Physical attacks on independent journalists in the country are commonplace. In a number of cases editors and journalists critical of the government face threat to their families, the most recent documented case in May when the son of a journalist critical of the Interior Ministry was beaten nearly to death.

Eritrea: Eritreans have been forced to rely on state press for information, and the government has refused recent pleas by Paris-based Reporters Without Borders to release 14 journalists held without charge

for at least 3 years. As of August, nearly all foreign journalists have been expelled from Eritrea.

Cyprus: The Cypriot government demonstrates its commitment to free speech by following "encouragements" from the CIA to investigate Petros Evdokas as a potential "threat to US interests". Evdokas is a founding member of Cyprus Indymedia.

Russia: The KGB successor, the FSB, has been accused of intimidating journalists attempting to cover sensitive stories. Most recently, during coverage of the Beslan school tragedy, less government-friendly journalists have found themselves being detained for unknown reasons, or groggy and confused after prolonged unconsciousness following coffee or tea.

Zimbabwe: The hopelessly morally corrupt Zimbabwean government under Mugabe has for years repressed independent media in the country. As the country is becoming further isolated from the international community, even greater restrictions on speech critical of the government's policies are being implemented. The government has ejected foreign media (most notably the BBC) for coverage of the use of food by the government as an instrument of coercion. In June of this year, the government required that ISPs enter into a contract that requires them to prevent or report to the authorities any "anti-national" activities and correspondence through their telephone lines (or face punishment).

Other countries that fit the press-repression/incident time-frame criteria above: **Guatemala, Ethiopia, Venezuela, Cuba, Malaysia, Uzbekistan, Indonesia**

(If you are interested in these cases, contact the author. Space considerations are at work.)

This is the short, very non-exhaustive list, limited to stories I've come across the

last 3 months or so. A more temporally expansive search of disturbing restrictions on press and other expression would read as a who's who list of troubled societies and dangerous political environments. Coincidence?

It is in times of crisis that an independent press is most important to a functional social and political community. It is also at these times that the press faces the gravest threats. We in the U.S. are accustomed to corporate self-censorship at home (e.g., Iraq war, and all things "un-patriotic"), but we must not forget the active role some state leaders take in using the coercive apparatuses of government against independent media. And we certainly must not limit media activism to those cases of need arising from corporate strangleholds.

What will these societies look like in 10 years? The global community is currently and appropriately concerned with countless political and humanitarian crises. What is the root of these crises? There are, of course, a thousand answers, and no single answer. Here's a proposition, though: free press, unfettered from political control, profiteering interests, and factional intimidation, will foster a healthier civic life for those societies with such press than those without.

Healthy civil society is what allows human beings to air grievances without resort to violence. In looking at the list of countries above, it is obvious that these states are already in danger of continued chronic unrest, deprivation, and violence. By actively supporting independent media rights in these places, as well as here at home, speech and media activists will be playing a bigger role than they may realize in making the world a better place, for this and future generations.

Nearly all of the countries listed above are being targeted by campaigns that address, either directly or circumstantially, limits on press and political expression. For information on how to get involved in a particular country, email the author at seward1@uiuc.edu.

Are You Registered To Vote?

The last day to register to vote before the November 2, 2004 election is October 5, 2004. Voters can register at any number of places, including libraries, the DMV, and the county clerk's office.

More details can be found at <http://www.champaigncountyclerk.com>. Even if you think you are already registered, make sure by checking your status online on the county clerk's website. You can also find your polling place, see if you need to present ID at the polling place, and see a sample of your ballot.

COMMUNITY FORUM



Response to Opus Dei Article

The following is excerpted from John Gueguen's full letter due to space constraints. The full letter may be viewed at <http://www.ucimc.org/newswire/display/20660/index.php>.

Hi, Wendy.

In reading [your article], several things occurred to me, which I hope you don't mind my sharing with you. One is the tendency by most writers to treat Opus Dei as an external "thing," a movement or organization (some strange new hybrid hard to classify) rather than as an internal reality in the lives of people God has called. One reason it is so difficult to "pin down" what Opus Dei is in trying to write an objective article (as you did) is that in reality what Opus Dei "is" continues to evolve and develop in the lives of each member from day to day, in the struggle to put into practice the impulses of grace (which comes from the Holy Spirit, as it does to all Christians to enable them to fulfill their calling).

This leads into my second observation: The people you cite throughout the article give the kind of skewed understanding of Opus Dei that would occur in reporting on any topic by confining the research to such an

infinitesimal number of "experts" on the subject. You can imagine what a variety of answers you would get to a question like "how do you live Opus Dei day by day?" In my case, for example, I've started more than 15,000 new days since I asked for admission to Opus Dei in April, 1959, and as I look back on them I find that no two of them were ever the same. I can tell you that the renewal each morning of my dedication to practice the spirit of Opus Dei has led to marvelous insights into myself, into others, into the nature of my teaching and writing responsibilities.

I suppose most people aren't that much aware of what "spirit" they are dedicated to. In the best instances, it is a spirit of professional service, or of serving one's family, one's children and spouse, or for students, a spirit of achievement. For so many Americans, it is a spirit of maximizing one's own pleasure, or profit, or influence – the infamous materialistic, hedonistic, individualistic, consumeristic "spirit." When I used to teach, one of my aims was to help my students realize and then come to terms with the "spirit" that was driving or inspiring their lives. The "great books" we read were meant to help them do that. Many realized that their "spirit" was not very admirable, and they set about reforming their lives, lifting their

sights, etc. That's why I love to teach those great books; they are such powerful stimulations to get young people in their 20s to examine themselves and their society.

[In email to me, you noted]: "As I've gotten older, many things have seemed less black and white, and I have a certain distrust of any organization that offers to make things too simple. At this point, I'm just too old to jump on anyone's bandwagon. So I guess my goal is to muddle through and do the best I can. Not too inspiring, but I'm sort of a realist."

That's not "realism" in my book, but I lived on a different planet from the one you and your contemporaries live on. I call it the "post-revolutionary" planet (referring back to the disaster of 1968-70, which cut loose from all the moorings of reality as it truly is, and is wandering all over the universe, outside any orbit). Nevertheless, it is a fitting epitaph for the age that is currently unraveling and sending our civilization to its graveyard. It is precisely that worldview which you have PERFECTLY expressed which motivates virtually your entire generation and is responsible for that generation's inability to make a permanent commitment of any kind, and why virtually all "marriages" that take place today are invalid and break up after a short time

(since by definition, marriage is the union of a man and a woman until death do us part for the purpose of bearing progeny and educating them to be mature men and women). It is why monasteries and convents have emptied. It is why vocations to the priesthood keep declining, and why so many have left and keep leaving. It is why you can go around campus and find almost NO genuine friendships, because friendship too requires a permanent commitment, a letting-go of oneself. The dorms are jammed with people struggling desperately not to compromise their individuality, their precious ego. A terrible loneliness and isolation results, and with it the unhappiness which if not successfully drowned in weekly binges can lead to suicide (note the increasing rate among young people in the prime of life).

This isn't meant to be a criticism and it has not the least touch of irony about it. You are interested in reporting "facts" and there you have one of the most appalling facts of recent American cultural history. It is best enshrined in the kind of music young people like to listen to and imitate today – very like the brainwashing cults engage in.

Best wishes in your studies and writing! You're in our prayers.

John Gueguen

Local



Food Not Bombs Serves Up Social Justice

by Scott Edwards

Peace is not a relationship of nations. It is a condition of mind brought about by a serenity of soul. Peace is not merely the absence of war. It is also a state of mind. Lasting peace can come only to peaceful people.

Jawaharlal Nehru

If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world.

J. R. R. Tolkien

AS I WRITE THIS CONTRIBUTION to the *Public i*, the audio of the first Presidential debate is playing in the background. To absorb it critically is an exercise in cynicism. I listen as the incumbent speaks of his profound respect for human life and desire to help those in need. I juxtapose his words with his actions, and both with the weekly actions of a group of community members I have come to work with.

Champaign-Urbana Food Not Bombs began operating earlier this year. Every Sunday, volunteers meet at a local park (after a few hours of preparation) to share a meal with community members with varying means. Each week, volunteers collect food that would otherwise go to waste from various sources in the area. The Food Not Bombs (FNB) activities rely on a network of volunteers, food and financial donors, and a seemingly endless number of hungry people.

There are hundreds of independent FNB organizations across the world, all of which, with varying mixtures of the two activities, serve vegetarian meals in their communities and campaign for causes of peace and justice. Different local groups operate differently based on the needs of the community, and the activist interests of their members. A common understanding of the uniting FNB principle is summarized nicely by the San Francisco organization, however:

"We believe that society and government should value human life over material wealth. Many of the problems in the world stem from this simple crisis in values. By giving away free food to people in need in public spaces we directly dramatize the level of hunger in this country and the surplus of food being wasted. We also call attention to the failures of the society to support those within it while funding the forces of war and violence."

There are a number of regular volunteers that make

Champaign-Urbana FNB happen every week, with varying backgrounds: some older community members, some university students, and even a contingent of dedicated high schoolers.

I look forward to it every week. Apart from the wholly rewarding work of feeding hungry people, the fellowship of being surrounded by people who share the simple conjecture that energies are better spent helping fellow community members rather than seeking the accumulation of wealth or waging of war is a perfect anecdote for the cynicism that events like Presidential debates tend to breed. To be in the presence of people for whom the simple act of preparing and sharing food is a powerful political statement is not simply elevating, but inspiring. I believe quite strongly that if the world's political leaders shared the same dedication to fellow human beings as some of the high school students I've met through Food Not Bombs, the world would be a far better place.

But FNB isn't a simple symbolic exercise. I first became aware of the group at a local community action, of which the organization was a participant. The volunteers that make FNB run each week represent a cross-section of the wide array of community organizations mobilized for purposes of peace, justice, and equality. As such, the organization itself represents the very best the community has to offer in the way of dedication to these principles, and activism to achieve these ends.

Additionally, the meals themselves allow for dialogue between segments of the community that would otherwise not have them. Not only are "we using what would go to waste in this town, but we are bridging (societal) boundaries between the homeless, the poor, and the people with money. Where else can you go to see a homeless person off of the street striking up a conversation with a college student or businessman?" Says Maggie, a CUFNB volunteer.

Food Not Bombs as a new organization is not without problems. Most pressingly, many of the people who eat with the group on Sundays are indeed homeless.



Food Not Bombs at Scott Park in August

Communication between the group and the people who value its activity the most is, understandably, difficult. With no phones, internet access, or even fixed avenues for announcements, it is often difficult for FNB organizers to judge the needs of this particular segment of the community. "There's no way for us to know reliably what's happening on the street," remarks one volunteer. "Something could happen that effects this whole portion of the community, and it's nearly impossible to keep track, because, after all, who is paying attention?"

Regardless of the difficulties, FNB continues with its work, and looks forward to expanding its activities and community interaction. This expansion will be greatly impacted by the participation of new community members, whether they simply wish to eat, or additionally wish to serve or volunteer in some capacity.

Food Not Bombs serves every Sunday at 4:30pm at Scott Park (corner of 3rd and Springfield). I strongly encourage you to visit to eat and socialize with the group, all of whom are remarkably warm and open people. Also, if you are interested in volunteering, donating food or money, or have questions, email foodnotbombs@ucimc.org, or visit the CUFNB website at www.readysubjects.org/fnb.



The Facts Against At-Large Electoral Systems

by Ben Grosser



ON NOVEMBER 2ND, Urbana voters will face this question on the ballot: "Shall the City of Urbana restrict the number of aldermen to a total of nine, with one alderman representing each of seven wards, plus an additional two aldermen to be elected at-large?" Currently, the Urbana City Council consists of 7 alderpersons, each one representing a discrete area of the city, called a "ward." The proposal on the ballot is asking whether two more representatives should be added to the council. The "at-large" part means that those two representatives would be elected by a majority vote of all voters within the city boundaries (like the mayor or city-clerk).

More is better, right? Wouldn't two more representatives give everybody more voice in local government? Perhaps Urbana is behind the times, and needs to sign on with this hip new form of choosing their elected officials?

Or perhaps not. If you look across the country, you'll find that over 250 cities across the United States have recently removed at-large seats from their city councils. Removing them has been so popular that "the second most commonly considered change [in municipal government structures nationwide] was to eliminate at-large seats on the council and replace them with ward or district elections." In fact, the change being proposed in Urbana is so uncommon that the standard sources used to track trends in local government don't even bother to report it. As a result, political and social scientists who study the effects of at-large elections now tend to focus their attention on school boards, as there just aren't enough city council examples left to support research.

But even school boards with at-large elections are getting harder to find. Right here in the city of Urbana, the voters overwhelmingly chose to eliminate at-large from the school board in favor of district elections in 1998.

Those pushing to resurrect at-large as an improvement for the council point to the fact that more voters turnout in some areas of the city than others. Although this is a common occurrence all over the United States, they feel that voters who live in wards with higher turnout deserve a greater voice in government. But imagine if we applied their reversal of constitutional philosophy to the state legislature. The 100th Representative District, which surrounds Springfield, had 48,000 voters turnout in the last election—almost twice the number of people who voted in our 103rd District! Does this mean Champaign-Urbana voters deserve less representation than Springfield does in the Illinois House of Representatives?

Not according to the U.S. Constitution (see Article I, Section II, and the 14th amendment). The constitutional principle of "one person, one vote" is that representation in government must be based on population, not on voter turnout. In other words, everyone has the same rights to equal representation, whether they choose to vote or not.

At-large systems have long been supported by those who think they deserve more representation than others. Used in local governments for at least the last 100 years, it gained renewed popularity around 1965, when congress passed one of the most important pieces of civil rights legislation, the Voting Rights Act. The Voting Rights Act enacted a number of changes that were meant to empower minorities to vote and gain equal representation. A common method used to negate the minority vote in the wake of the Voting Rights Act (as well as before it), was to use at-large seats for local government.

At-large seats are effective in diluting the minority vote because they require candidates to run city-wide as opposed to district-wide. Minority neighborhood districts are more likely to elect minority candidates. But at-large seats, with voters taken from anywhere in the city, typically elect majority candidates. This has been proven time in study after study, making it one of the most verified findings in the field of political science.

As convincing as it is, one need not solely rely on empirical evidence in the scientific literature for examples of how at-large affects minority representation. Right here in central Illinois we have plenty of examples:

In 1987, a group of African-Americans filed a minority vote dilution lawsuit against the city of Springfield, seeking the city's compliance with the Voting Rights Act. As a result, the city eliminated its at-large system in favor of a ward system—like we have here in Urbana. The first African-American was then elected to that body since 1911.

Also in 1987, a similar lawsuit was brought against the city of Danville. At that time in the city's history, every elected council member since the city was founded in 1867 were all white men. The city settled the lawsuit by eliminating at-large and adopting a ward system—again, like we have in Urbana. And since they removed at-large? The city has elected 5 African-Americans, 8 women, a Latino, and a person of Native-American descent. Danville, with an over 20% African-American population, has since had two African-Americans on the council at all times.

In 1998, the citizens of Urbana voted to eliminate at-large seats from the school board in favor of district elections. Subsequently, the first African-American was elected to that body in 20 years.

While Springfield and Danville's electoral systems were fully at-large, the system being proposed in Urbana is referred to as a "mixed" system—one made up of both districts and at-large. Proponents of the proposed change suggest this is an important distinction, one which makes all of the scientific evidence "irrelevant." But the leading scholars in political science have studied mixed systems as well. Susan Welch, a leading researcher on the effects of at-large elections on minority representation, and Dean and Professor of Political Science at Penn State University states it clearly: "While

blacks are equitably represented in the district portions of mixed systems, they are abysmally underrepresented in the at-large portions."

Given the overwhelming national and local evidence, we can easily predict some of the effects of adding at-large to Urbana's city council. Currently, the council is 1/7th African-American, just as 1/7th of Urbana's population is African-American. Since at-large seats almost never elect minority candidates, we can be assured that at-large would dilute minority representation in Urbana's city government, with African-American representation immediately shifting to 1/9th of the council. This disparity would grow over time, as African-Americans are on track to make up 1/5th of Urbana's population within the next 10 years.

One of the fundamental reasons at-large dilutes minority representation is the high cost of running a city-wide campaign. Minority candidates are less likely to receive the big-money backing typically supplied by majority supporters. But minorities aren't the only ones discouraged by the at-large system; the average majority citizen doesn't have the funds to compete with special interest funded candidates either.

While a candidate for a ward seat can knock on every door in their ward, it would be impossible for an at-large candidate to knock on every door in the city. This forces at-large candidates to replace personal contact with media saturation. As such, they engage in one-way communication, broadcasting their ideas out to the people, hoping voters find their sound bites more appealing than the other candidates' sound bites. In contrast, a ward candidate continuously engages in two-way communication with the voters. Every time they knock on a door they hear the concerns of their neighbors, and it is in their best interests as a candidate to remember and respond to those concerns. The concept of local government is that local decisions are made by normal people that understand the concerns of people like them. In comparison, at-large elections produce council representatives that are out of touch with those they represent, and obligated to special interests.

There has been extensive research into alternative electoral systems. Various versions of a system called proportional representation (such as that used in Peoria, IL) are often cited in research on election reform. Unfortunately, those pushing for at-large elections never researched the problems inherent in this system that cities across the country have been abandoning for years. Urbana needs effective city government—it has serious problems and it needs serious answers. But at-large is not the answer.

Ben Grosser is an Urbana resident, and is one of the leaders of "Vote No At-Large," a local grassroots organization opposed to the addition of at-large seats in Urbana. Further information, including a detailed review of the scientific literature on this topic, is available on the organization's website, at <http://www.noatlarge.org>.

The Story Behind the Story: The Lord Mayor of Urbana

by Belden Fields

BEN GROSSER'S ARTICLE discusses the larger implications of introducing at-large seats in Urbana's city council elections. It raises serious issues. However, there is also a subtext to this story, the intriguing circumstances leading to this proposal so ardently supported by Tod Satterthwaite, the mayor of Urbana. Until 2001, Satterthwaite virtually controlled the council. He could usually muster a majority vote for his own proposals and veto the others that he didn't like. Carolyn Kearns was his strongest ally on the council. He did not care much for the other women on the council, namely Esther Patt, Ruth Wyman, and Laura Huth. He has referred to them as "ultra-liberals" in radio interviews. However, there was a silver lining for the mayor: Patt, Wyman, and Huth could be outvoted on the seven-person council, even when joined by the only African-American alderman, Jim Hayes.

The status quo was upset in 2001. Danielle Chynoweth successfully challenged Kearns in the February Democratic primary.

What was the mayor to do? Satterthwaite waxed strategic. If he had to endure Chynoweth on the council, maybe he could eliminate one of the other troublesome women. Wyman and Patt were both strongly entrenched in their wards, which were liberal and had lots of students. He targeted Huth, possibly hoping that she would be more vulnerable because she represented a ward in East Urbana where most of the constituents are not affiliated with the university. However, there was one thing needed to get rid of Huth, an opponent. Since the Republicans weren't running a candidate, the Democratic mayor chose to recruit an independent, Chuck McCaffrey, to run against Democrat Huth. As Satterthwaite's good buddy, how could McCaffrey refuse? And how could he lose with the mayor on his side?

There was one thing that McCaffrey and Satterthwaite didn't anticipate. Huth's constituents were actually impressed by her record. She'd stood up for them on many occasions, including the fight against Illinois

Power's abuse of our trees. Also, union members appreciated her strong support for the Urbana firefighters when the mayor was giving them a rough time. Huth won, and Satterthwaite then had to contend with Chynoweth, Huth, Patt, and Wyman. Moreover, he can never take Hayes for granted. Satterthwaite still gets along very well with Milton Otto, and doesn't get much trouble from the sole Republican on the council, Joe Whelan. However, they are only two white councilmen who are left to contend with the four out-of-favor females and Jim Hayes who is too close to them on too many votes.

Michael Moore notwithstanding, not all white men, even white men in politics, are stupid. Some are imaginative and when pushed too far, can even display strokes of genius. Satterthwaite's last straw was the redistricting map drawn up by the women on the council. The mayor proposed his own map, but the women would not accept his in place of theirs. To veto their map, Satterthwaite needed Jim Hayes's vote. He thought

he had it, but when it was time to vote, Hayes voted with the women. This made their map veto proof.

Satterthwaite and Otto continued to exercise their imaginations. If you cannot win elections and policy changes according to the rules, then simply change the rules. Change the form of governance! Introduce at-large seats so that the mayor can try to recruit like-minded people to run in citywide elections along with him. If the "ultra-liberals" think that they can play with radical ideas, the mayor will show them a thing or two about revolutionary ideas and practices. Like Charles de Gaulle introducing the Fifth French Republic, he will "appeal to the people." With their support he will transform the form of representative government in Urbana. Voters of Urbana Arise! You have nothing to lose but the door-to-door relationship with all council candidates and affordable elections for all council seats. What you have to gain is a more powerful mayor, perhaps who will once again be able to control the council. In subsequent elections, maybe we could propose a referendum to change the name of the mayor to Lord Mayor.

Local



From Profile to Prison: Criminalization of a Community

by Brian Dolinar



Brian Dolinar is a recent addition to the Urbana-Champaign community. He is completing a Ph.D. in Cultural Studies from Claremont Graduate University in California, and originally hails from Kansas.

WHILE NEWS OF POLICE MISTREATMENT in African American communities is nothing new in the post-Rodney King era, what is new is the nation-wide organizing against it. From Los Angeles to New York, Chicago to Champaign—grassroots organizations have come together to fight the widespread criminalization of black youth. Caught in a dragnet cast by the criminal justice system, today 2 million prisoners sit in jail and another 5 million are currently on parole, probation, or house arrest, by far the highest incarceration rate of any nation in the world. The problem is deep-rooted and racism is rampant. Whether endemic racial profiling (according to Amnesty International there were 32 million victims last year) or America's continued practice of the death penalty, the intent is to both discipline and punish. The trumped-up charges of eavesdropping against Martell Miller and Patrick Thompson, Founders of VEYA, Visionaries Educating Youth and Adults—filed and quickly dropped by Champaign police after strong public support—expose the need for police reform at home. While the issue of criminal justice remains off the political radar in the upcoming national election, Urbana-Champaign residents have a unique opportunity to send a message to public officials on November 2 and come together to do the work needed for the day after election day.

I recently moved to Champaign from Los Angeles, where the LAPD is known as an occupying army by black and Chicano communities. In the Rodney King beating or the more recent 2002 incident in Inglewood where 16-year old Donovan Jackson-Chavis was thrown against a police car and punched in the face by an officer, videotaping has given credibility to black urban legends of pervasive police brutality. Yet the many "stolen lives" that have come at the hands of police are less known because they have been off camera. One of these was Irvin Landrum Jr., a 19 year-old black youth, who in January 1999 was shot and killed by white police in the seemingly "enlightened" college community of Claremont, where my wife and I were living.

According to the police report, Landrum was pulled shortly after midnight on a routine traffic stop. After he was asked to step out of his car, police claim that Landrum drew a gun on them and fired. The two policemen pulled their guns and returned fire, fatally shooting Landrum. Family members, members of the community, students, and a few radical professors organized to question the account. The local police chief promptly released the criminal record of an organizer to the local press and the city council later gave thousand-dollar city employee awards to the two police officers involved, due to the harsh public scrutiny they endured. As details of the incident unfurled, it was discovered that Landrum's alleged weapon had no fingerprints, had not been fired, and was formerly owned by the police chief of a nearby city.

This was where I, a young white college student, got my first taste of grassroots protest—attending weekly public events, marching in solidarity, and standing in front of offices at the local newspaper chanting "no yellow journalism." I and other members of the community picked up skills to later mobilize for migrant workers, fight for the right of campus employees to unionize, and stand up against the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. In standing side-by-side with other students, blacks, Chicanos, women, gays, lesbians, and people of many

ages, I have gained my best role models. In raising my own voice, I have found precise language for criticizing America's hypocritical "war on terror," a war of mass distraction from a more real threat of police terror that patrols our city streets.

Across the nation, similar incidents have provoked public outrage. In a hail of 41 bullets, Amadou Diallo, a 22 year-old West African immigrant, was gunned down outside his Bronx apartment by four police officers under Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's indiscriminate crime sweeps. In Brooklyn, a white off-duty police officer went on a day-long drinking binge and drove his car through an intersection, mowing down a Latino family, and then was promptly released by a judge without bail. Reports from death row by America's most famous political prisoner, Mumia Abu-Jamal, an independent journalist from Philadelphia, have received attention the world over. A growing national movement has emerged to call for a moratorium on prison construction and a repair to the broken relationship between police and communities of color. October 22, coming up this month, has been set aside as a day to wear black in protest of "police brutality, repression, and the criminalization of a generation."

Yet it is the Midwest that provides a weathervane for the future of America, this region of the country that rarely makes national news, but where the sense of frustration among black youth has become most acute. One way points to Cincinnati and Benton Harbor, where riots in 2001 and 2003 erupted after repeated police abuses. Another way points to Chicago, where Fred Hampton Jr., the son of Fred Hampton, leader of the Black Panther Party who was killed in the infamous 1969 FBI raid on his house, is again organizing on the South Side and has vowed, "You can kill a revolutionary, but you can't kill a revolution!" As Chairman of the Prisoners of Conscience Committee, Hampton Jr. has been working with gang members, parolees, prisoners, and individuals on death row. Presented with these two options, founders of VEYA are working to address problems in education and community relations with police before they reach a boiling point.

Although Irvin Landrum Jr.'s death remains a closed case, public disgust led to the voting out of two city council members. In Los Angeles, police districts are now installing videocameras in squad cars to monitor traffic stops, a positive step in answering the demands of citizens. The absurdity of Champaign police, who have targeted two men for doing what police departments across the country are now doing of their own accord, could only be a product of America's racist logic. More than just a public relations blunder, these charges were an attempt to suppress the irrefutable images contained in the VEYA video, Citizen's Watch, such as those of Sgt. David Griffet who is captured holding a can of mace to control a black crowd outside a club in downtown Champaign. We can be sure that if police are carrying these chemical weapons, they are using them on black youth. This is why there was public outcry over the proposal to arm Champaign police with tasers. This is why voters must send another signal to city officials this November.

Also shown in Citizen's Watch are images of young white males terrorizing the streets of campus town and vandalizing public property, with no police in sight. Police say that they simply do not receive the same number of calls from this side of town. This video sharply contrasts assumptions of black criminality with images of white male students whose binge drinking and lewd behavior is tolerated, as if it were a part of their college experience. Members of this "enlightened" community must find more sufficient answers and demand equal enforcement of the law on both sides of the tracks.

It is the Midwest that provides a weathervane for the future of America, where the sense of frustration among black youth has become most acute.

Abuse of Power

by Aaron Ammons



Aaron Ammons, A.K.A. "Brotha A-Dub," is an author, poet, inspirational speaker/spoken word artist, Peace and Justice activist, and the best husband and father in the world.

ACTING UPON THEIR SINCERE CONCERN for our community, Martell Miller and Patrick Thompson, founders of Visionaries Educating Youth and Adults (VEYA), have courageously taken the necessary steps toward change. Using a very popular piece of technology, a video camcorder, these two dedicated gentlemen began videotaping our law enforcement officials as they engaged African-American youth on the streets of Champaign-Urbana during routine traffic stops.

After accumulating hours of footage, the two men decided to bring the public face-to-face with the reality that exists on our streets. They made a 40-minute documentary, Citizen's Watch, with the intent of creating a dialogue between struggling youth and frustrated police officers. Instead, it was misunderstood and resulted in the two men being charged with a class one felony for eavesdropping. The eavesdropping charges were brought against the two men after they turned the videotape over to UPTV (Urbana Public Television) for public access. At this time, it is unclear exactly how the tape found its way into the hands of the Urbana Police Department for use as evidence. The only logical conclusion is that someone from UPTV allowed the tape to be confiscated by law enforcement. According to an ex-president of UPTV, the number one "no-no" in public television is to give someone's property away. It is the understanding of the members of VEYA that if the tape was deemed inappropriate by the staff of UPTV, then it was their responsibility to either destroy the tape or return it to its rightful owner. Furthermore, UPTV may have violated Martell's and Patrick's Fifth-Amendment rights. The Bill of Rights clearly states that no one's belongings shall be searched, or seized, without due process.

Martell Miller and Patrick Thompson are African-American men from Champaign who spoke up against taser electroshock stun guns when the police department wanted to purchase them earlier this spring. Part of their argument in opposition to tasers was the disparate treatment of African Americans by local police departments. They did not want police to have another weapon to use against black residents. Thanks to the collective efforts of people like Martell and Patrick, the request for purchase of tasers was defeated.

Soon thereafter, based upon the fact that police seemed determined to purchase tasers at a later date, Martell and Patrick informed the Champaign mayor and city manager that they were going to start monitoring Champaign police stops of "black folks." They explained that this cop watch was a way to document any further abuse of power. There was no response from either city official.

On August 7, 2004, around midnight, Martell was on north Bradley Street with his video camera. He filmed a police officer pulling over a black man on a bicycle—simply for not having a light on the front of his bike! From across the street, Martell filmed this "traffic stop." The police officer left the scene. The biker then crossed the street and Martell asked him for an interview. The man agreed and the interview began. The cop who pulled the suspect over then returned while the interview was in progress. As Martell was interviewing the biker, the officer asked Martell if he was taping him (the officer). Martell's pri-

(continued next page)

Unity March

Oct. 23 10am-12noon. March will begin at two points, Scott Park and Douglass Park, converge at the Champaign police station, and end at Westside Park. This march is organized by Visionaries Education Youth and Adults (VEYA) and C-U Citizens for Peace and Justice.

Oct. 22 Wear black!

in protest of "police brutality, repression, and the criminalization of a generation." See www.october22.org



mary objective was to record video and audio of the alleged suspect, however, based upon the proximity of the officer as he approached Martell, the officer's voice was also picked up by the built-in microphone. Consequently, Martell's response was, "No, you're putting yourself on my tape." There was a brief exchange about citizen rights and Martell asked to talk to a superior officer. The supervisor was called and upon his arrival informed Martell that he had recorded the cop without his permission. The officers "seized" the camera and the tape, yet they did not arrest Martell.

Martell was later summoned to court and charged with eavesdropping. Judge Heidi Ladd refused to allow the State Attorney to arrest Martell over the charge and released him on his own recognizance. Meanwhile, the News-Gazette reported on the story, and also editorialized against State Attorney John Piland bringing charges against Martell for a "crime" that thousands of people commit daily.

The Illinois State law on eavesdropping has been interpreted by many attorneys, supporters and critics, but no one has been able to shed light on the subject. Champaign Police Chief R.T. Finney explained the charges quite clearly and agreed that the two men technically broke the law, however, he added that such legal actions could have been prevented by simply having a meeting with Mr. Thompson and Mr. Miller. The confusion that ensued undermined the progress that police and members of the community have made thus far. Supporters said the law is the law, no matter how trivial it is and the men should be prosecuted. Critics said if the law is to be strictly interpreted, it would make felons of thou-

sands of American citizens. Considering the vagueness of the law and the sensitive relationship between black citizens of Champaign County and its police departments, other concerned citizens asked the State Attorney to exercise some discretion and oversee a meeting between the two parties in attempt to resolve this matter in a manner beneficial to the community.

Amidst intense pressure from organizations, such as C-U Citizens for Peace and Justice, AWARE, NAACP, and hundreds of concerned citizens, on September 23, the Champaign Police Department publicly requested that the State Attorney drop the eavesdropping charges. Under the microscope of public scrutiny and a mounting political campaign to remove him from office, State Attorney John Piland called a press conference to explain that he had done as he had been instructed. Mr. Piland revealed that he was asked by officers on the Champaign police force to press charges against the two men. Just days later, Mr. Piland dropped all the charges against Mr. Miller. However, as of publication date, the charges against Mr. Thompson still stand. Mr. Piland certainly has the jurisdiction to dismiss the eavesdropping charges against Mr. Thompson, especially since the two men were charged for the exact same crime. Furthermore, even with the dismissal of Mr. Miller's charges, neither the camcorder nor the tape seized by the officers has been returned. These tactics are typical examples of the abuse of power that the concerned citizens of Champaign County are no longer going to tolerate.

Champaign County citizens of all political affiliations

are opposed to actions that disenfranchise viable segments of our population. Everyone realizes that we are at our best when the community functions as one united body. Henceforth, it is imperative that the good people of our growing cities sacrifice personal desires and humbly submit to the greater good of all people. With the help of VEYA, the entire community can be properly informed and bursting with self-esteem. This "dream" can be realized by practicing forgiveness, empathy and compassion for those in our human family who show symptoms of pain and suffering, while simultaneously holding each other accountable for our words and actions. The integrity and respect that prevails from such an understanding will allow us to serve the health, rights, interests, and needs of all people.

This aforementioned information has led to mass community education in the form of classes, seminars, and workshops to begin this mandatory process of dismantling ignorance. Meanwhile, each of us must search our souls and discipline ourselves to do what is right—forgive our fellow man, yet resist the perpetuation of exploitation and ignorance that is represented by some of our citizens and public officials. To get involved in the many upcoming events that have been sparked by Mr. Thompson and Mr. Miller, such as the tremendous voter registration drive being held throughout the community, or the Unity March that will take place on October 23 from 9:00-10:30 a.m. beginning at Scott and Douglass Parks and converging at the Champaign police station, please contact C-U Citizens for Peace and Justice at lifestratinst@sbcglobal.net. BE Peace, BE Just!

Voice of the People

What do YOU think about the relationship between U-C police and the community at-large?

Compiled by Meghan Krausch

ZACH MILLER, CANDIDATE FOR CHAMPAIGN COUNTY BOARD DISTRICT 9, URBANA

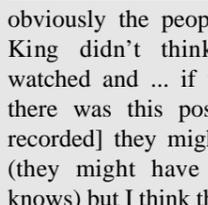
You know, in my neighborhood we don't really see the police that much. I think that there may be some class issues at work there.... [I]n an area that's predom-



inantly populated by professors and grad students..., even if we have a party or something the police don't really come by and hassle us or anything like that. But I hear stories all the time from folks that live in areas where folks are maybe a little more poor, the property values may be a little lower, and there's just police harrassment. There's police pulling people over for stuff [unnecessarily] and there's just a lot of distrust of the police.

DAVID C. SUTTON

I think if they would welcome people videotaping them - in fact if they were videotaping themselves so that all of their stops were [recorded] - especially if something unexpected happens to them, to record that the suspect drew a gun which was completely unexpected - [that would help]. I think they should welcome that... They should be open about what they do with people and I think that



obviously the people who beat Rodney King didn't think they were being watched and ... if they had known that there was this possibility [that it was recorded] they might not have beat him (they might have still beat him who knows) but I think that people will behave

more genuinely toward the citizens of this country - all of them - if they expect that how they are treating people is always being watched. And if they're doing things right, ... then they shouldn't worry. They should welcome it because it protects them from lawsuits and so forth when somebody winds up with a broken nose or limb and blames it on the police and it really wasn't their fault.

ALVETA HENDERSON, CHAMPAIGN

They racially profile everyone and I am a white, 40-year-old woman that is married to a black man and so therefore I get pulled over just as much as a black man or woman would.... Before I was arrested in this town, I was pulled over for the simple fact of having a black man in the car. And once they realized that they



knew my husband, then everytime that they see me, they think they have to speak to me - 'Hi Mrs. Henderson. How are you? How's your husband?' and always 'What're you doing? Where're you going?' and it's none of their business. I'm not doing anything illegal....Treat everybody fairly. Whether you're black, white, red, purple, whatever. I mean have consistency.... Don't just earmark anybody.... So as far as the community I don't have a clue right now. All I know is that I'm angry, I'm angry at the system and Champaign County is very bad. ... I've never lived in Chicago but everybody that has that lives down here now says Champaign police department - Champaign County period - is worse than Cook County.

NANCY ELEANOR LASTER, CHAMPAIGN

Well, maybe get out in the community



that's the bad neighborhood and talk to them more. See what they could do to help some people may not be as bad as [the police] think they are. Just because they're hanging out on the street or whatever doesn't mean that they're bad people. Take some time.

MIRANDA O'DELL, CHAMPAIGN

The neighborhood [I lived in] before I would say no, because it was mostly students and everybody was always complain-



ing about parties and the police coming and giving them a hard time. Every person that we've ever seen pulled over it usually happens to be someone of a minority status... . Not necessarily that I see maybe a lot of blacks or anything, but I do see a lot of people of Asian descent pulled over.

KRUTI VYAS, CHAMPAIGN

I don't think there is a good relationship at all with the people in our community. Just because I mean, one, you barely even see cops around unless it's 2 AM in the morning and they're trying to raid bars, but I personally think that the Champaign police department kind of forgets about the safety of campus and the people on campus and are a little more

worried about just ticketing them for alcohol and other problems.

ADAM YIN

Actually, I just got pulled over a few days ago and they seemed really nice. Cause we made a wrong turn into a one way street and we were a little tipsy but



they were like, 'Oh yeah, this is okay. It's okay, don't worry about it, it's a warning,' you know. And we were all Asian, so... So far I didn't have any encounters, but I wouldn't generalize that.... If the police drive by don't just be like 'fuck the police' or whatever. Cause they are here to help you. ... [T]hey don't really like wanna just catch anyone I guess. I don't know, be more cooperative, not you know, cause if you're nice to them I'm pretty sure they're gonna be nice to you.

CHRISTOPHER EVANS

Depends on the neighborhood. In rural areas, the sheriff's department probably have a good relationship. The business community probably have a good relationship. The police are often from rural areas and the business community appreciates protection from burglaries. In white neighborhoods, they are accepted, with the white youth probably liking them less because of their type of carousing. The black community can obviously speak for themselves. A better measurement of how the relationship is going with the police is to ask ourselves a question: When a police squad car appears in your area, do you feel like the good guys are here, or do you feel scared they will try to find out if they can arrest you or write you some kind of ticket?

National



Little 'Gitmo':

Activists Held in Captivity During the Republican National Convention

AT 4 PM ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 31, five members of the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center were arrested in a mass round-up of peaceful demonstrators just one block from the site of the former World Trade Center in New York City. The arrest led to a two and a half day ordeal for the demonstrators and their loved ones as the New York Police Department and the Department of Corrections attempted to clear the streets of demonstrators during the Republican National Convention (RNC).

The march, organized by the War Resisters League and the School of the America's Watch, had assembled at the World Trade Center to march to Madison Square Garden in an effort to bring the sober legacy of September 11 home to the RNC, which was widely reviled in New York City for capitalizing on the attacks for political gain. An estimated 400 people were arrested shortly after police had announced that the march, which did not have a permit

to close the street, must remain on the sidewalk and obey New York State traffic laws. The demonstrators were moving along the sidewalk, leaving about 2 1/2 feet of space for other pedestrian traffic and attempting to organize themselves to walk two abreast, when the police suddenly blew a whistle and announced that everyone was under arrest. The police gave no order to disperse prior to surrounding the march with net and beginning the process of handcuffing everyone on the block, including a German tourist, a New Yorker who wanted to watch the demonstration, and a 17 year old woman from Delaware visiting New York for the first time.

These are the first-hand accounts of our UC-IMC members who were held in detention during the RNC protests in New York City.

Sarah Kanouse, Zoe Ginsburg, Colleen Cook, and Arun Bhalla

Zoe Ginsburg, a 16 year old Urbana resident and student at University High School, was held for 37 hours before being released at 5:30 AM on Thursday morning. When she asked an officer what she was being charged with, the officer replied that she did not know. Zoe and other UC-IMC members Zach Miller of Urbana, Colleen Cook of Champaign, Arun Bhalla of Champaign, and Sarah Kanouse of Chicago were never formally informed of their arrest charges but were assured by their arresting officers that they would be released before the next morning. None of the group was set free before Wednesday afternoon, and Sarah Kanouse, the last of the group to be released, left the New York Criminal Court at 6:45 pm on Thursday, after being in custody for over 50 hours.

On August 31, over 1000 people were swept up in massive arrests, handcuffed, fingerprinted, photographed, and held in custody—overwhelming a system that usually handles 200-300 arrests per day and triggering a massive backlog that caused delays in the arraignment process. The demonstrators were initially taken by the busload to Pier 57, a makeshift holding pen in a warehouse quickly dubbed “Guantanamo on the Hudson” by prisoners and the media alike. As many as 90 prisoners at a time were held in 20 by 40 foot pens made with 15 foot chain-link fencing capped with razor wire. The three benches in the pens were far too small to seat all the prisoners, who were forced to sit or sleep on the bare floor. Two port-a-potties serviced each cell, which filled quickly during the lengthy holding period, which for many prisoners exceeded 18 hours. Most of the pens were not supplied with trash disposal, and the cells filled quickly with stale, half-eaten sandwiches, crushed paper cups and empty milk cartons.

When the media received word of the conditions at Pier 57 and arranged a photo opportunity after the prisoners were transferred, the police department attempted to conceal the conditions by thoroughly mopping the floor and laying new carpet. While a few demonstrators received plastic sheeting to lie down, the vast majority were offered nothing and emerged from Pier 57 covered in fine, black grit. A large number of arrestees received rashes and blisters, and still more reported severe headaches, sore throats and hacking coughs in the hours and days following their transfer. Medics who treated demonstrators upon their release recommended that they first take cold showers to avoid absorbing the substances from the Pier 57 floor and were taking clothing samples to analyze the composition of the greasy grit.

Excruciating delays in arraignment not only wore down the prisoners' health and energy but also kept many demonstrators off the street for more than two days. Lawyers and protesters believe that the delays were designed to prevent people from exercising their free speech rights during the convention and voicing their opposition during Bush's acceptance speech on Thursday. Norman Siegel of the National Lawyer's Guild, which represented thousands of arrestees, alleged, “The city of New York attempted to ‘lose’ the people currently held in central booking until after Bush gave his speech tonight, after which they would miraculously be ‘found.’” Donna Lieberman of the New York Civil Liberties Union issued a statement regarding police tactics. “The pre-emptive arrests; preventive detentions and dangerous conditions at Pier 57 and massive surveillance of lawful protest activity undermined the right to dissent. The department's practices were inconsistent and its standards were unclear from day-to-day. As a result, perfectly lawful actions could result in an arrest on any given day and time. That stifles dissent and political debate.”

A common refrain of both the police and the New York media was that if someone attends a demonstration, she or he should expect to get arrested. One of the corrections officers who expressed sympathy with the protesters' cause added, “Of course if you're going to protest, you've got to expect that this will happen.” But to the demonstrators, this seems like a backwards way to look at the detention. If free speech and free assembly are among our most important constitutionally guaranteed rights, people should not be expected to spend two days behind bars as a price exacted for voicing their conscience.

Notes from 100 Centre Street

by Sarah Kanouse, 10 Sep 2004

Sometime into my 43rd hour in the custody of the New York Police Department, I started to cry. “I just don't see how we can stop this,” I pleaded with my cellmates through my tears. “I feel this country and myself just sinking and sinking. At what point does this kind of repression stop being proto-fascist and become just plain old fascism?” My cellmates gave me toilet paper to wipe my tears and hugged me until I stopped crying. They had no words of comfort to offer. We all felt the same way.

An hour later, we were banging on the bars and shaking the floor with our chant, “This is illegal! Let us go!” Within minutes, several floors of demonstrators joined in the chanting, and those on vigil below sent their voices up to meet ours. After twenty minutes, the guards promised we'd be next to get our photos taken, another step on the excruciating process of being arraigned and released. After another hour, we were waiting still, seven women in an eight by nine foot cell, taking turns sitting on the bench and stepping over our comrades sleeping fitfully on the cold, concrete floor.

After almost no one was processed or released on Tuesday night, somewhere I knew the delay was part of a deliberate strategy to keep the streets clear of demonstrators until Bush could give an expertly directed, perfectly choreographed acceptance speech on Thursday. And, while that knowledge didn't prevent me from hanging onto every false estimate of my release time given to me by my wardens (which ranged from “I don't know” to “six more hours” to “we can keep you up to three days”), I placed more stock in the combination of rumor and information circulating among the cells about habeas corpus and threats of contempt charges and fines levied against the NYPD. I left the courtroom at 6:45 pm on Thursday, a bit disoriented that I wore no chain on my right wrist and that no one was yelling at me to keep my shoulder to the wall. But I knew Bush's speech would start soon and I would miss it because I needed a medical exam, legal advice, and the first nutritious food I'd eaten since breakfast two days before. The Republican plan, if I might call it that without hard evidence, had worked on me and hundreds of others. We were too busy taking care of ourselves and each other to protest what had hurt us. For some of us, it felt like a slap in the face. We weren't used to being immobilized like this. We were going to miss the big event, and it was going to go on with or without us.

There is an unacknowledged myth about radicalism among white people that allows us to feel like we're supposed to be at the forefront of social change movements. It goes something like this: white, middle-class people are well-positioned to become vanguard activists because our privilege gives us the economic and social capital to use in our work and shields us from the worst oppressions of the state. At times there is an element of truth to this myth, as there are to many. But if it sounds like a variant on white guilt, or an apology for why white people can't stay in the background, it proba-

bly is. But it might help explain why even in New York City and against the Republican Party, the counter-convention events were still overwhelmingly white. Our radical Valhalla is too full of white people: my friends are more likely to argue about the spirit of Paris in 1968 than Kinshasa in 1960. I'm no exception—I needed to Google to find the date for Kinshasa but not Paris.

As self-centeredly myopic as our unspoken vanguardism has been, it has also never been so wrong. The comfortable padding of privilege is being worn a little thinner by the Bush administration, and the pre-emptive arrests at the RNC are only the most recent and visible examples. (The prosecution of artist and professor Steve Kurz on counter-terrorism charges is another). We could, of course, try to shore up our racial and economic position (as Log Cabin Republicans seem masochistically desperate to do), or, worse yet, claim our time in jail as an ‘authentic’ experience of oppression that is on par with the experiences of others. But I don't think that we will do that. In New York, the bystanders swept up in the mass arrests were as supportive of the protesters and outraged at the guards as the demonstrators, and no one (least of all the police) was keeping track of who ‘should’ have been arrested and who ‘shouldn't’ have been. I'd like to see that happen on the outside, and I believe it can. We, who find our white skin and middle-class backgrounds not buying us as much as they used to, must develop more complex forms of solidarity and collaboration with those who have been too busy taking care of themselves and each other to come to ‘our’ protests.

I've returned again and again to that 43rd hour crying spell and gotten angry at myself for having no better inking about how to stop the spread of fascism than I did then. I've cried about it all over again, and then laughed at myself for the arrogance of wanting to have all the answers. I'm still sorting through the contradictory emotions, observations, and conversations that came out of being in jail for two and a half days. I'm vigilant not to allow the peculiar combination of weariness and bravado that accompanies being a political prisoner (for however short a term and minor an offense) to obscure the fact that I still know nothing about living in prison for years on end. “Why does my story matter?” I ask myself as I tell it to anyone who will listen. There is no way to impose artificial coherence on my experience because what this story will matter has more to do with what we all do now than with what has already happened. We have a collective responsibility to gather the threads of these experiences, observations, emotions, and conversations and weave them into a new narrative. We need to take charge of what stories are told about us and what stories we tell ourselves. Being a reflective activist, I can't help but make this sound like a consciousness-raising session where everyone sits around in a room and talks. But it isn't. It's a collective working out of error, experience, and coexistence through action, and the action had better start right now.

National



Zachary Miller

Author's Note: I wrote this on the day after my release from NYC jail, while sitting on a bench in an airport in Denmark and waiting for the rest of the CU Wireless crew to fly in from Chicago. We are attending a weeklong conference about international applications of community wireless technology and implementing community wireless networks in the developing world.

On Tuesday, August 31st and Wednesday, September 1st, I spent an unexpected 23 hours in jail without access to lawyers and limited access to a telephone; I rode on 2 prison buses, was transferred between 9 different cells, put in handcuffs 4 times, and fed nothing but 3 stale white bread sandwiches (2 with cheese and 1 with some foul green and purple splotchy bologna-like meat product).

The charges against us, parading without a permit and disorderly conduct (impeding the flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic), were ordinance violations, not crimes. The sorts of things that on any regular day a cop would write you a ticket for and send you on your way. But in this case the NYC police department decided to use these laws as a pretext for rounding up hundreds of protesters and getting us off the street before some theoretical subset of us did some actual crimes. The anticipated crimes were things like the 20 or so folks who planned to lay down in the street near Madison Square Garden, staging a "die-in" to draw attention to the global deaths caused by the Bush administration. The police marked possessions like bandannas to use as evidence that some protesters were "anarchists", which of course means they are more dangerous and probably should get higher bail.

A NIGHT AT PIER 57

Everyone at the Pier that night would start cheering and singing and chanting as each group of 20, 50, or 100 protesters was brought in, growing louder as the population rose. It was pretty beautiful. When we weren't cheering we were having spirited political discussions about the pros and cons of direct action and civil disobedience, how to adapt to the changing police tactics, and about the differences and motivations for our different political orientations. This protest drew Deaniacs, Naderites, Greens, Anarchists, and regular every day rank and file Kerry/Democratic Party supporters. Most of those arrested were "non-radicals". Most were in jail for their first time. Many had no intention of engaging in civil disobedience.

I found this to be a great environment for education. These folks were all poised on the edge of radicalism. They were all intrigued to learn that I was an anarchist. I don't fit the profile. I hadn't been advocating for violence. How could I be a Green Politician, the picture of non-violent hippiness, arrested for my first time, and call myself an anarchist? And where in these cells full of priests and businesspeople and workers and hippies and bicyclists and journalists were all the pink haired freaks? Where in the peaceful march along the sidewalk were the Molotov throwing, paint-wielding, havoc wreaking anarchists? Oh, do you mean that they've been lying to us? That the police don't always play by the rules? That anarchists do have legitimate political ideas? That hordes of pink haired bandanna masked youths weren't coming to burn down the town? Oh, and getting arrested isn't an end in and of itself for these civilly disobedient rebels, that the civil lawsuits afterwards are part of the strategy to deepen and enhance first amendment freedoms through precedent? That the press exposure during and after our arrest is part of the strategy? Oh huh...and I'd never really thought of the whole system as working in the interests of profit and the powerful people who control it, or that Democrats have also done an awful lot of bad things on the world stage. If hundreds of new radical activists were not born that night, at least I hope that I had a part in spurring their thinking.

NEGOTIATING THE BUREAUCRACY

After 12 hours at the Pier, some of us were transferred to Central Booking, known to locals as The Tombs. We saw nearly every one of the 25 or so floors of this building during our stay. We were searched, put in cells, transferred to other cells, searched again, fingerprinted, digitally photographed, handcuffed, interviewed by EMS workers about our medical state. We didn't actually see the doctors until we'd been in the tombs for about 8 hours, about 16 hours too late for the 60 year old man who suffered from chronic pain and didn't have enough meds, the heroin addict who was going through withdrawal and needed methadone, or countless others who were suffering without any help from their captors). We had access to phones in some cells but not others—where the phones were simply broken and we were not given the option of using working phones in other cells. We had to pay to use the phones in all but one of the cells that we passed through. All calls were monitored by nearby guards and on the free call the name and number of the person called was recorded.

We were interviewed by social workers from some unidentified government organization who asked about where we lived, where we worked, how much money we made, and who could confirm all of this. Supposedly, this information would be used to determine whether we could be released with or without bail but in the end bail was irrelevant because most of us didn't end up with court dates. Supposedly, the fingerprints that were taken were an inquiry against the fingerprint system and would not create a "record" for us. However upon further questioning of the officers in charge, we learned that the fingerprinting would create an ID entry in the FBI's fingerprint database system. No criminal record would be attached to it but for now and forever our fingerprints would be associated with our names, birthdays, and current addresses.

After a day or so of sleep deprivation it is pretty hard to remember what you want to ask your lawyer and get it all said and figured out before you go before a judge a few minutes later. Luckily, the National Lawyers Guild rocked the courthouse and most of us were released ACD (Adjourned Contemplating Dismissal) which means that the case was set aside, and if we didn't get arrested in the next 6 months it would be as if the case never even existed. If we did get arrested again in the next 6 months the case would simply come to trial and because we did nothing wrong we would almost certainly be found not guilty anyway. So there is no need to return to NYC for a trial—they certainly weren't going to be able to try 1500 people that same day so if we hadn't gotten ACD we'd have gotten a notice to appear just so we could come back and win our innocence.

My stuff is still all in New York City. My digital video camera, my digital camera, my cell phone, my MP3 recorder, my backpack, and numerous other small stuff. All told there's probably around \$1000 worth of stuff in a plastic bag in a police trailer in Manhattan that belongs to me. I'll have to send a notarized letter to a friend in New York City in the next 120 days authorizing them to pick up my stuff. If I wanted to get my stuff directly I'd have had to sit in line for three to four hours and then I would have missed my plane to Denmark.



Photos by Arun Bhalla





Recording a Revolution: IMCstas Document Workers' Movement in Argentina

by Darrin Drda



Darrin is a long-time Champaign resident who's been intimately involved with the *Public i* since its inception. He's inspired by the struggle for freedom, in both its political and spiritual aspects. Darrin is the author of the political cartoon **Channel X** and fronts the band **Theory of Everything**.

IN NOVEMBER OF 2003, thousands of activists converged in Miami, Florida to protest the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), a trade agreement which would enlarge the scope (and, some would say, the disastrous effects) of NAFTA to the entire Western hemisphere. Among the crowd in the streets were several members of the Urbana-Champaign IMC, including Dave Powers, who filmed the demonstrations, which were marked by an intra-state police presence more massive and well-financed than had yet been seen in similar protests (the so-called "Miami model"). Apart from the tear gas and rubber bullets fired by the trigger-happy men in blue, however, the protests were largely peaceful, colorful and creative. It was at a puppet show that Dave met up with Graciela Monteagudo, a human rights activist and artist who encouraged him to visit her country of origin, Argentina, in order to document the growing resistance movement of the workers, who themselves are responding to globalization with incredible creativity and resourcefulness.

The ensuing winter months passed without definitive travel plans, until Dave was contacted by the Autonomista Project, a Vermont-based social justice organization coordinated by Graciela. Arrangements were made, and by the end of June Dave was on his way to Buenos Aires, accompanied by fellow IMC member and videographer Colleen Cook. Their mission was to gather footage for a documentary about the day-to-day, grassroots activities of Argentina's MTDs (*Movimiento Trabajadores Desocupados*, or Movement of Unemployed Workers). While much media attention has been focused on violent clashes with police and on the *piqueteros*, whose direct action protests include the blockading of streets and highways to obstruct commerce, fewer people are familiar with other aspects of the movement, which, though perhaps less visible, are no less revolutionary.

"YOU ARE ENRON, WE ARE ARGENTINA!"

At the end of 2001, under President Fernando de la Rúa, the once-robust Argentinean economy suffered a collapse. Roughly a week before Christmas, tens of thousands of disgruntled and jobless workers took to the streets, banging pots and pans and chanting "*Que se vayan todos!*" ("Everyone must go!"). Much of the collective rage was directed towards former neoliberal President Carlos Menem and the disastrous "structural adjustment" policies he implemented, which left Argentina beholden to foreign capital and led to the virtual disappearance of its middle class.

The popular uprising of December '01 marked the beginning of a major mobilization of the Argentinean poor and working class. In 2002, it was estimated that nearly half of Argentina's population was involved in the MTDs, which have splintered into two main factions. On one hand are the more moderate, hierarchically-organized "corporatist" groups that engage in ongoing lobbying efforts with the government for better unemployment benefits (the current monthly stipend is 150 pesos – roughly \$50 US – regardless of the number of dependents one might have). On the other hand are the more radical, horizontally-organized "autonomist" groups that reject capitalism and refuse government assistance, which in fact is dependent upon one's affiliation with a corporatist group. A worker who believes in *autonomia* is likely to avoid involvement with a hierarchical organization, with its president and board of directors and their implicit demands to refrain from radical political activity.

THE DIGNITY OF WORK

It was amongst the latter, autonomous MTDs that Dave and Colleen spent their time in Argentina. "We wanted to get the actual people to tell us what they do. We didn't want to meet with some leader [who] would have just sat down and fired off [pre-conceived answers]," Dave explains.

From their base in downtown Buenos

Aires, with digital AV equipment at the ready, the two set out on daily treks to gather footage and conduct interviews with members of various worker collectives and neighborhood assemblies. Many such MTDs are located on the sprawling outskirts of Argentina's capital, home to some 13 million people, an incredible 40% of the country's population. As the city expands into the countryside, many are forced to take up residence on private land, living as squatters in shantytowns of corrugated metal, scrap wood, and homemade bricks. The commute from the urban hostel to the outlying barrios often took hours, and it was easy to get lost. "Many of these streets don't even have names. On the map, the whole neighborhood would just be a green area. None of the streets were on the map," says Dave with a laugh.

Often accompanied by other delegates

"We don't want their jobs; we want our freedom. They want us to disappear, and we refuse to disappear. And the only way we can prevent that is by taking care of ourselves."

from the Autonomista Project, the reporters managed to visit some of the better-known MTDs in and around Buenos Aires, including Solano, Lamatanza, and Chipoletti-Allen. Within these communities of resistance, residents meet their own needs through the cultivation of community gardens and

the production of a certain commodity, often clothing, which is traded with other, nearby communities or brought to open-air markets. Having little or no money, residents rely heavily on the barter system or the use of social credits called *truques* (truckays). Some of the more organized MTDs have established community kitchens, schools, and town halls to accommodate regular neighborhood meetings and occasional musical or theatrical performances. The goal of the unemployed workers is to co-create and maintain sustainable living conditions outside of the capitalist system, which considers them useless.

"OCCUPY, RESIST, PRODUCE!"

Another highlight of Dave and Colleen's stay in Argentina was a visit to Zanon, a ceramic tile factory in the Neuquén province that is being run cooperatively as an egalitarian, self-sustaining

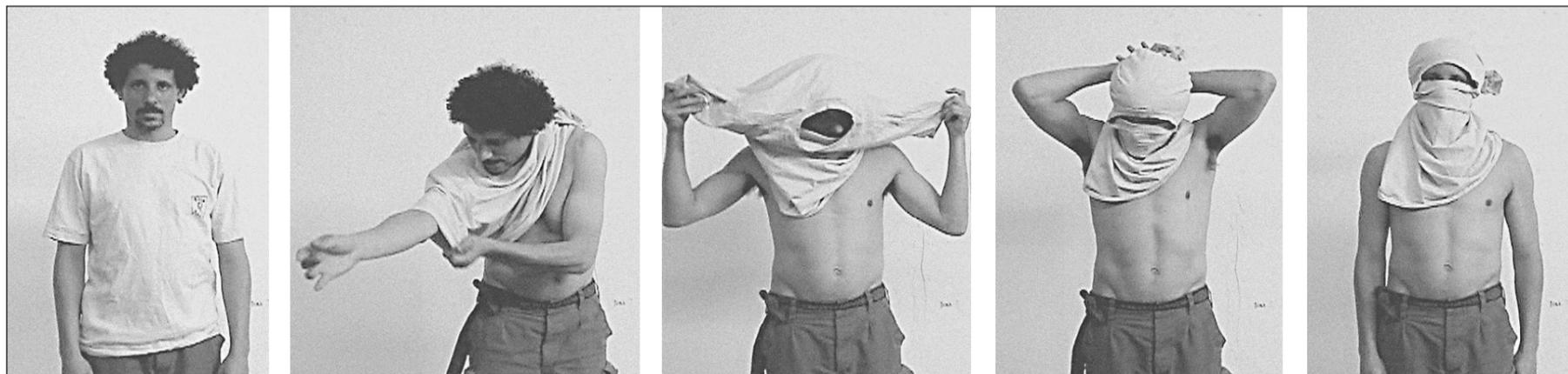
enterprise in which all of the roughly 300 workers receive the same wage and share equally in the directly-democratic decision-making process. The factory was taken over (workers use the terms "recuperated" or "expropriated") in March, 2002, after the management threatened to close down in the face of workers' demands for back pay. Under worker control, productivity has increased and the previously high rate of on-the-job accidents and deaths has dropped to zero. On several occasions, workers armed with slingshots have successfully defended their territory from the police.

While Zanon is perhaps the most widely-known example, there are over 200 worker-run factories in Argentina. Dave and Colleen also visited Boca Negra, where they conducted a long interview with a Chilean-born indigenous man from MTD Solano who, though lacking formal education, expounded a well-developed philosophy of equality and sustainability based on communalism and self-determination. Dave summarizes the worker's sentiments: "This movement needs to be different than any other previous movement, because what we're facing is different than what was faced in the 60s and 70s. We don't want to be a part of capitalism. We don't want their jobs; we want our freedom. They want us to disappear, and we refuse to disappear. And the only way we can prevent that is by taking care of ourselves."

The philosophy and practice of *autonomia* has led to an improvement in the living conditions of millions of Argentineans. Indeed, the movement is gaining popularity in the neighboring countries of Chile, Paraguay, and Bolivia, and is reflected further north in Brazil's Landless Peoples Movement as well as Mexico's Zapatista uprising. These grassroots movements serve as an inspirational and viable alternative to the failing model of trickle-down economics prescribed by free-marketters.

STREET PROTESTS

While not the main focus, there were also plenty of demonstrations for Dave and Colleen to document. One was organized by the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo*, mothers of the estimated 30,000 people who were "disappeared" during Argentina's military dictatorship, which lasted from 1976-83. An even larger demonstration occurred on the anniversary of the assassination of two well-known *piquetero* organizers, Dario Santillan and



IMC member Dave Powers demonstrates how to quickly turn an ordinary T-shirt into a revolutionary mask worn by Argentinean *piqueteros*.

Media



Maximiliano Kosteki. Tensions were understandably high between the police and the protestors, who numbered around 50,000, but the gathering was peaceful as the police cautiously and wisely laid low.

The most dramatic event happened on July 23, when hundreds of angry *piqueteros* surrounded the offices of the national legislature, which was scheduled to vote on a bill that would make it illegal to engage in disruptive political activity, effectively criminalizing dissent. In order to prevent the legislators from walking to the nearby Assembly building for the vote, the protestors surrounded their offices, smashing windows and even driving a car through the front doors. The bureaucrats retreated to the upper floors until the end of the six-hour siege, and the bill was never voted on. The people had spoken.

LET THE PRODUCTION BEGIN

After six weeks in Argentina, Dave and Colleen returned to C-U with nearly 15 hours of footage, out which they plan to create one or more documentaries. It may take a good deal of time and effort, but it's a process

with which both are familiar. Colleen has created an as-yet-untitled documentary about the effects of sex trafficking on women and children in northern Thailand, while Dave has produced "Crashing the VIP Room: Conversations with Vrije Keyser TV, Amsterdam, NL", which tells the story of a pirate TV station that eventually grew into a pair of community stations. He has also put together a shorter documentary of his experience at the aforementioned FTAA protests, entitled "The Miami Model." Both Dave and Colleen see their role as filmmakers to be to educate and inspire rather than to make money; therefore their work is open-access and anti-copyright.

Keep your eye out within the next few months for the local debut of the Argentina video, or screenings of other Independent Media productions. If you'd like to help with the scripting and editing process, please consider joining the IMC video group, which meets every Tuesday at 7pm.

To learn more about the *Autonomista Project*, visit www.autonomista.org. For more information about Argentina, visit ZNet (www.zmag.org), which features an entire section dedicated specifically to Argentina.

Postcards for Peace

Postcards for Peace will be held this year on Sunday, November 14 from 2-5 pm at the Cowboy Monkey. This benefit auction will raise money for the Independent Media Center and AWARE.

We depend on submissions from local artists to make this event a success. If you, or someone you know, would like to contribute, the details are as follows:

We are looking for 4x6 in (postcard sized) original artworks, prints and photographs. They do not need to be framed or mounted—we will take care of that.

The submission deadline is October 28th, but the sooner the better. You can send your submissions by mail to Rebecca Plummer Rohloff at 605 Fairlawn, Urbana, IL 61801. Or call us and we will pick it up. Questions or comments? 328-3059 or rohloff@uiuc.edu or rohloff@uiuc.edu.

Muzzling Al-Jazeera in Iraq

By Wendy Edwards



"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

The United States Constitution

AL-JAZEERA, SOMETIMES CALLED the "BBC of the Middle East," was launched in November 1996 and offered the Arab world an alternative to government-controlled news stations. The network's attempt to cover multiple viewpoints has drawn criticism from a variety of sources. The former Iraqi information minister Muhammad al-Sahaf threatened al-Jazeera with dire consequences for its "pro-US reporting," but US leaders have accused the channel of broadcasting anti-American propaganda. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said, "We're dealing with people who are perfectly willing to lie to the world to further their case." On August 7, the interim Iraqi government announced the closure of al-Jazeera's Baghdad bureau, citing the broadcasts of captives in Iraq. In a press release, Prime Minister Iyad Allawi said, "This is a decision taken by the national security committee to protect the people of Iraq, in the interests of the Iraqi people." Ironically, Iraqis claiming to represent the resistance had accused al-Jazeera of portraying the U.S. too positively and had threatened the network days before its closure. Media around the world, including the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Guardian*, spoke out against the closing. The *Los Angeles Times* said, "Freedom of expression, including press freedom, was declared an international human right by the United Nations in 1948. If US authorities believe in the principle of self-determination, they should practice it — starting now — insisting that the interim Iraqi leaders acting under US auspices do so as well." In September, the Iraqi government extended the al-Jazeera ban indefinitely.

Jehane Noujaim shot the documentary "Control Room" inside al-Jazeera's headquarters and the US military's Central Command (CENTCOM), both located in Doha, Qatar. Unlike mainstream American media, al-

Jazeera does not sanitize its coverage of the war, and this has infuriated some U.S. leaders. Rumsfeld said, "We know that al-Jazeera has a pattern of playing propaganda over and over and over again." Josh Rushing, a US Marine serving as a press officer, expressed disappointment at some of al-Jazeera's coverage, but conceded that Fox News wasn't impartial either. Rushing complains about al-Jazeera's practice of repeatedly showing images of American soldiers followed by footage of wounded Iraqi children and civilians. Samir Khader, an al-Jazeera senior producer, defends the network's approach: "We show that any war has a human cost. We focused on that there is a human cost because we care for the Iraqi people. We are not like Rumsfeld who says, 'We care for the Iraqi people.' He doesn't care at all. We care for them. We are Arabs like them. We are Muslims like them."

Al-Jazeera's staff struggles to balance empathy for fellow Arabs with balanced reporting. However, its perspective is markedly different from that of mainstream Western media. For example, an al-Jazeera journalist in the documentary pointed out that although Americans perceive Iraq and Palestine as separate issues, Arabs see them as closely related. Unsurprisingly, its coverage of the war has focused heavily on the suffering of the Iraqi people. Some people construe this as propaganda and even incitement. Others believe that al-Jazeera is presenting uncomfortable but important information.

One of the most wrenching scenes in "Control Room" is the death of Tariq Ayoub, a correspondent who was killed when the U.S. bombed Al-Jazeera's office in Baghdad on April 8, 2003. In an interview with the *Independent's* Robert Fisk, one of Ayoub's colleagues described the attack. "It was a direct hit — the missile actually exploded against our electrical generator. Tariq died almost at once." Two months earlier, al-Jazeera had provided the Pentagon with the coordinates for its Baghdad office, and had been promised that the bureau would not be attacked.

This wasn't the first time that U.S. forces had bombed al-Jazeera. A missile hit the network's Kabul office during an air raid in November 2001. U.S. officials said that the military was targeting Al-Qaeda and didn't realize that al-Jazeera was located there. According to al-Jazeera, the network had submitted its coordinates to the Pentagon via CNN in Washington.

A few hours after the al-Jazeera bombing on April 8, a U.S. tank fired at the Palestine Hotel, where a hundred independent reporters were staying. This bomb exploded in the Reuters bureau on the 15th floor, killing two journalists and seriously wounding three others. Spokesmen at U.S. Central Command in Qatar stated that the tank had been responding to "significant enemy fire from the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad." Fisk disputes this: "I was driving on a road between the tanks and the hotel at the moment the shell was fired — and heard no shooting. The French videotape of the attack runs for more than four minutes and records absolute silence before the tank's armament is fired." *Democracy Now!* host Amy Goodman interviewed Tariq Ayoub's widow, Dima Ayoub, a month after her husband's death. "Hate breeds hate," said Ayoub.

"The United States said they were doing this to rout out terrorism. Who is engaged in terrorism now?"

Suhaib Badr al Baz, an al-Jazeera cameraman, was detained for 74 days without being charged. He was initially held at the Baghdad airport and then moved to Abu Ghraib prison. In an interview with Salon's Phillip Robertson, he described his experiences. "In there I heard some horrible noises, many people screaming. They told me to sit on the floor and I went numb from the cold. If I moved my head even a little bit, a soldier would grab my hood and slam my head into the wall. Sometimes they pretended to kill me by pulling the trigger of their rifles. I found out later that they were punishing other people there." Al Baz was also interrogated. "When the tall man was not satisfied with my

answers, he hit me in the face. They asked questions in a way that showed they were not interested in the truth."

In spite of everything, the al-Jazeera journalists in "Control Room" expressed surprisingly positive views of the American people. Khader hoped to send his children to the U.S. and admitted that if Fox News offered him a job, he'd take it. Ibrahim said, "I have absolute confidence in the United States Constitution. I have absolute confidence in the US people. The US people are going to stop the United States."

Hazem Jaber, a local businessman from Palestine who watches al-Jazeera, talked with me about his impressions of "Control Room." He confirmed one of the documentary's points — although Americans see Iraq and Palestine as separate issues, Middle Easterners consider them closely related. Iraq is perceived as a potential power against Israel, and the pictures from Iraq and Gaza could be almost indistinguishable. Jaber summarized it briefly: "Same people, same suffering, same destruction." He explained that the Iraqis had been disgusted with Saddam Hussein and had hoped for something better. However, some Iraqis believe that the U.S. occupation is even worse than Hussein's regime. For example, the abuses of Iraqi political prisoners in Abu Ghraib horrified the world, and the U.S. ultimately gained nothing from them. Jaber pointed out that injustice led to insecurity. This seems to be supported by the increased suffering and violence. Like the al-Jazeera journalists in "Control Room," Jaber also had hope for our country. "The American people have the power to lead the world toward destruction or prosperity."

Sources:

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"Does the U.S. Military Want to Kill Journalists?" Robert Fisk. *The Independent* 4/9/2003

"Sometimes They Pretended to Kill Me" Phillip Robertson. Salon 5/8/2004

Los Angeles Times Editorial 8/15/2004

"Iraq Silences Messenger Aljazeera" Ahmed Janabi. Al-Jazeera 8/18/2004

The Exception to the Rulers. Amy Goodman with David Goodman. Hyperion 2004

Its coverage of the war has focused heavily on the suffering of the Iraqi people. Some people construe this as propaganda and even incitement. Others believe that al-Jazeera is presenting uncomfortable but important information.



Come Over to My House!

Performing and Politick-ing of House Theater

by Susan Parenti



On Friday, Oct. 15 through Sunday Oct. 17, you are invited to come over to our house – 122 N. Franklin, Urbana for House Theater! There will be 5 performances; Friday at 8pm, Saturday at 5 and 9pm, and Sunday at 2 and 6pm. (To attend, please make reservations as space is limited: 384-0299, or elizacorps@yahoo.com)

WHAT IS HOUSE THEATER?

House Theater is a non-university, non-commercial context for mixing experimental composition and political satire in a lived in setting. A House Theater makes use of the doors, windows, stairs, porch, kitchen, bathroom of a rented house in Urbana to create a quasi cabaret atmosphere with small cafe tables, flowers, candles, coffee-can-clip-on lights hooked to the frames of windows and doors, and with food and drinks served at the intermissions. The atmosphere, program, and performance are so designed that a person might find herself addressed by experimental attempts in art or discussing politics with a stranger at intermission.

If you find a home with space enough for 30 people to sit; build 8 small tables for people to place their drinks on; if already a few friends live in that home and pay rent; if you design a program that “mixes neighborhoods” by putting political satire next to experimental composition and a rowdy poem next to a highbrow dance; if, inside this semi-nightclub atmosphere you serve wine and cider and good food during the intermission; and if a weekend of five performances is followed up a month later by another program – then, you have a House Theater!

The upcoming house theater in October is the result of an invitation sent out a few months ago, asking local and not-so-local people to write political satire for these performances. A satire is a form of writing that “exercises” the logic of one’s opponents, we thought satire might enable us to see that though Bush was stupid, it doesn’t follow that stupidity is powerless or ineffective. In addition to satires by Joe Futrelle, Mark Enslin, Beth Simpson, this house theater will also feature singers/composers Rick Burkhardt and Andy Gricevich of the Prince Myshkins, who will be presenting a range of music and theater compositions.

HISTORY OF HOUSE THEATER

The idea of House Theater grew out of discussions in composer/activist Herbert Brun’s class, the Seminar in Experimental Composition, offered at the UIUC Music School (taught by Brun from 1967-2000).

There, in 1985-6, classmate Candace Walworth and I analyzed Theaters and Concert Halls: as much as we loved those places, they seemed to prejudice and limit our imaginations. When people enter a typical perfor-

mance space, their expectations become obedient, conditioned. And this, not only for the audience – but also for the creators of that event. If you accept the stage and the imperative to fill up the seats, then you can accept a lot of other things, too: that the audience needs to “like it”?, that a liked piece is good for society, that a huge audience is better than a small one. All of these things come from commercial criteria, not artistic! – but swallowed hook, line, and stinker by most artists.

However, we mused, if we were to invite people to our house? And then present our theater and music there, along with good food and home-made wine, to the people we had invited? Sounded good.

We decided to make House Theaters.

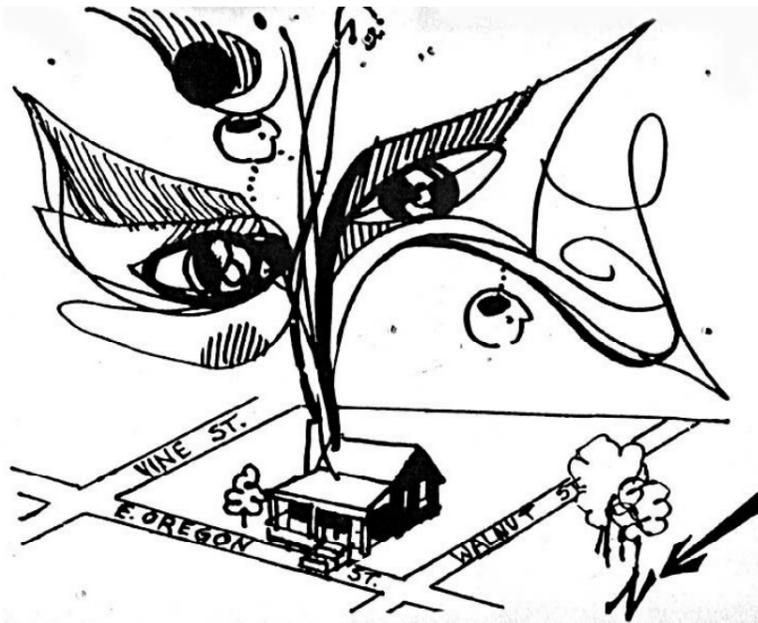
Since 1986, we’ve made 27 house theaters hosted at homes of various friends in Urbana (in addition to house theaters in Chicago, Sarasota Fla, Virginia Beach Va, Germany). Past house theaters have presented the poetry and comedies of poet Michael Holloway; theater and mime works of Jeff Glassman and Lisa Fay; skits and music linking pornography with commercial performance standards written by students of the University of Michigan; theater and music composed by students of Uni High; a 1993 house theater portraying the “rise of the free market in Eastern Europe” as Capitulate-ism; experimental music by many composers.

House Theater is a context which allows for a large range of risk-taking, where we can try things considered inappropriate by commercial standards but which we feel are needed by our society – with the knowledge we can “fail” and nobody gets hurt!

“HOME-MADE” VERSUS “STORE BOUGHT”

But really, why do things in a house? Doesn’t that just mean everyone sits cramped in a little space, trying to look over someone’s head just to see an amateur goofing off on stage? Good question. Here are a few answers: A while ago, if something was home-made, it was considered inferior to store-bought. Though home has lost its reputation as a creative center (after all, who sews, or cans, or makes wood-work anymore), store-bought has met a worse fate, meaning CHAIN-store-bought. Nowadays, there’s a kind of hope in, and respect for, something made and presented at home. Home-made can mean more variety, or a different kind of variety, than what we find in commercial venues. Who can resist home-made cookies?

Another answer: every home has all the makings of a performance space so anyone can put on a house theater! Your home (yes, I’m talking about your house or apart-



ment) already has chairs, tap water for dry throats, lights, friendly relationships between you and your guests, and a door for your guests to arrive in and to be told to leave out of. That’s all you need – and, oh yes, something to say or perform or discuss. But, take a look at our current political scene; don’t you, indeed, have something to say or perform or discuss?

The Internet activist organization, MOVE-ON, has been encouraging people to hold salons or potluck dinners in their houses, inviting the neighbors over to discuss our society. The film, OUT-FOXED has been presented in non-commercial venues, with the request to follow the showing of the film with discussion.

Maybe “home space” could be added to the public places where we invite strangers in, not keep them out. Invite us to your house theater!

You’re invited. You walk up the stairs of an unfamiliar home. A child with a top hat greets you: Welcome to the House Theater! You see amidst the knick knacks of a home, a small stage, some 30 chairs arranged around small wooden tables. You take a seat. You face neighbors. From the staircase, someone seems to be arguing with someone upstairs. At first confused, you realize the performance has begun. Then follows thirty minutes of more performance. Political satire makes you laugh, experimental music leaves you puzzled. Your neighbor has the opposite reaction: laughs during the music, is silent and blank during the satires. You make a mental note to talk about it later. Intermission. You hesitate, but when the “waiter” who brings you your glass of wine turns out to be the musician who brought you your piece of “experimental music”, you can’t resist: a discussion with neighbor and musician keeps you busy until the lights dim for “Set Two”?



aNNouNCeMeNts

Practical Strategies 2004 - Reclaiming Our Children with a Beloved Community

OCTOBER 13, 14 AND 15

Chancellor Hotel and Conference Center

Sponsored by: Champaign-Ford ROE EBD Network and the Urban League of Champaign County

This year's conference, as in the past, will bring together some of this nation's leading experts, professors, authors and more importantly, practitioners, known for their quality work with African American and Latino youth and families. We will create a safe space for you to observe, learn and reflect upon your work with children and families of African American and Latino descent. Special guests will also include family members and youth for lively discussions and observations. We will talk directly about the impact of "race and culture" in the lives of children and their families. You will learn strategies and be given tools and techniques during each day long workshop to use as you return to work with children and families. Most importantly we will give you an opportunity to develop a network of colleagues and friends to provide you with ongoing support and technical assistance after the conference.

For more information, contact Vernessa Gipson or Barbara Cornejo at 355-5990.

Community Drum Circle

meets every Monday 7-9pm at Ten Thousand Villages, 105 North Walnut St., Champaign, IL. We are seeking a convener/leader to succeed Robert Herendeen, who is stepping down. 217/352-8938.

U/C Progressive Meet October 10

U/C Progressives will meet on Sunday, October 10, 3-5 pm, at the Crystal Lake Boathouse in Urbana. This meeting is intended to bring together independents, Greens, Socialists, Democrats and members of progressive social movements and civic organizations in the C/U area for purposes of sharing information, avoiding scheduling conflicts, and all around mutual aid. There is so much going on in our community now. The more we work together, the more we will accomplish in making this a more progressive community. At this meeting there will be a short dance performance by African American youth at 3 pm followed by presentations by Sister Carol and Brother Aaron of CU Citizens for Peace and Justice and by Mike Lehman concerning an about-to-be -launched progressive low frequency FM radio station in the twin cities. Members of progressive organizations are encouraged to attend and to participate, as well as to share in the home-made cookies and nonalcoholic drinks.

Socialist Forum presents a pre-election warm-up with political folksinger

David Lippman

at a fundraiser to help build Radio Free Urbana, a new low-power FM community radio station on **October 12** at 8pm. The event will be held at the **Channing-Murray Foundation**, 1209 West Oregon, Urbana and is sponsored by Socialist Forum, Channing-Murray, and WRFU. Suggested donation at the door is \$5 to \$20.

Creative Expressions Art Show

Featuring artwork done by people with mental illness. We highlight our strengths and our recovery through our art.

Saturday, October 9 4-6 p.m.

201 W. Park

Champaign, IL 61820

in conjunction with a movie festival at the Virginia Theatre

Friday Night - *Benny and Joon* with Johnny Depp

Saturday Matinee - *Finding Nemo*

Saturday 6 pm - *A Beautiful Mind* followed by a panel discussion.

For further information on submitting pieces for the art show or coming to the events, please call Sue Keller at 373-2436 x 103.

Columbus Day Rally

The Progressive Resource/Action Cooperative (PRC) will be hosting a rally on Columbus Day to protest the continuing legacy of racism on the U of I campus, in our community and around the world. The rally will be held Monday, October 11th at noon on the South Patio of the Student Union. Come speak out against America's military imperialism in Iraq and the U of I's racial discrimination embodied by the "Chief." For more information please contact the PRC at (217) 352-8721 or prc@prairienet.org.

Telescope Buyer's Seminar

OCTOBER 27

Those thinking of purchasing a telescope for the upcoming holidays might want to participate in a free telescope buyer's clinic on Wednesday, October 27 from 7 to 8 p.m. at the William M. Staerkel Planetarium. No prior knowledge is assumed. The workshop will cover telescope basics as well as what to look for in a purchase and what to avoid. Following the seminar, participants may go outside and view a Total Lunar Eclipse, beginning just after 8:15 p.m., weather permitting. For more information, contact Dave Leake at 217/351-2567 or dleake@parkland.edu.

Lunar Eclipse Viewing

OCTOBER 27

The nation will witness a total lunar eclipse beginning just after 8:15 p.m. on October 27, as the moon passes through Earth's shadow. Members of the Champaign-Urbana Astronomical Society, an affiliate group of the Champaign Park District, will be at the William M. Staerkel Planetarium with telescopes to view the event, weather permitting. Interested observers should park in Parkland's M1 or C4 lots and walk to just west of the planetarium. For more information, contact David Leake at the planetarium at 217/351-2567 or email dleake@parkland.edu.

New Astronomy Club for Kids opens at Planetarium

The Champaign-Urbana Astronomical Society and the William M. Staerkel Planetarium announce a new program for all school-aged children called "Junior Stargazers." This astronomy club for kids will have their initial meeting on Thursday, October 14 from 6 to 7 p.m. at the Staerkel Planetarium at Parkland. Subsequent meetings will occur on the second Thursday of the month at 6 p.m., just ahead of the 7 p.m. CUAS meetings. The first three meetings can be attended free of charge, and then there will be a \$5 annual fee to cover the cost of materials. All are welcome.

The one-hour meeting will involve the children in astronomy activities such as locating constellations, learning about stars and planets, and space exploration. "It is our hope that we can entice kids into becoming skywatchers," says Claudia Paris, CUAS member and JS coordinator. "These kids are our future scientists, so there ought to be a place where they can meet, have a little fun, and learn something about the sky." Paris is planning several activities for JS over the next few months, such as creating a logbook for recording sky observations. For more information, contact David Leake at 217/351-2567 or dleake@parkland.edu.

CHANNEL

The Tweedle Dee-bates

MEXED MISAGES? VEXED VISAGES

vs.

The President rushed to war. He had no real plan. He misled the whole world. The war is a disaster. The dude screwed up.

Dammit! Can't I just ARM WRASSLE this chump?



BY 10 DR03 DA04

CHANNEL

Hurricane-spiracy

Wow - right after Charley and Frances, we get George and Jeb!

Yeah, that disaster relief came sooner than you can say "strong leadership in a time of crisis!"

Sorry about your house! Here - have an Orange Alert! Hehe.

And be sure to make the RIGHT choice in November! - or ELSE!



BY 09 DR10 DA04