

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

### Reader Feedback

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## 7th ANNUAL UNITY MARCH!

# SOWING THE SEEDS OF EMPOWERMENT



Join us on the 1 year anniversary of Kiwane Carrington's death to:

- RECLAIM your neighborhood
- RESTORE the relationships in the community
- REMEMBER the life of Kiwane Carrington

EDUCATION • ADEQUATE WAGES • HEALTH CARE • POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT • FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY • RESPECT FOR SELF & OTHERS • FOOD SECURITY

**SATURDAY**  
**October 9, 2010**  
**12:00 PM**



- \* Start: 906 W. Vine, Champaign
- \* End: Randolph St. Community Garden, Champaign St & DuSoyoy Ave, Champaign
- \* Garden Party with food & music
- \* Fruit tree planting in memory of Kiwane Carrington
- \* In the event of rain, reception will be held at the Church of the Brethren (1210 N. Neil St.)

## SUSTAINING CONTRIBUTORS

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

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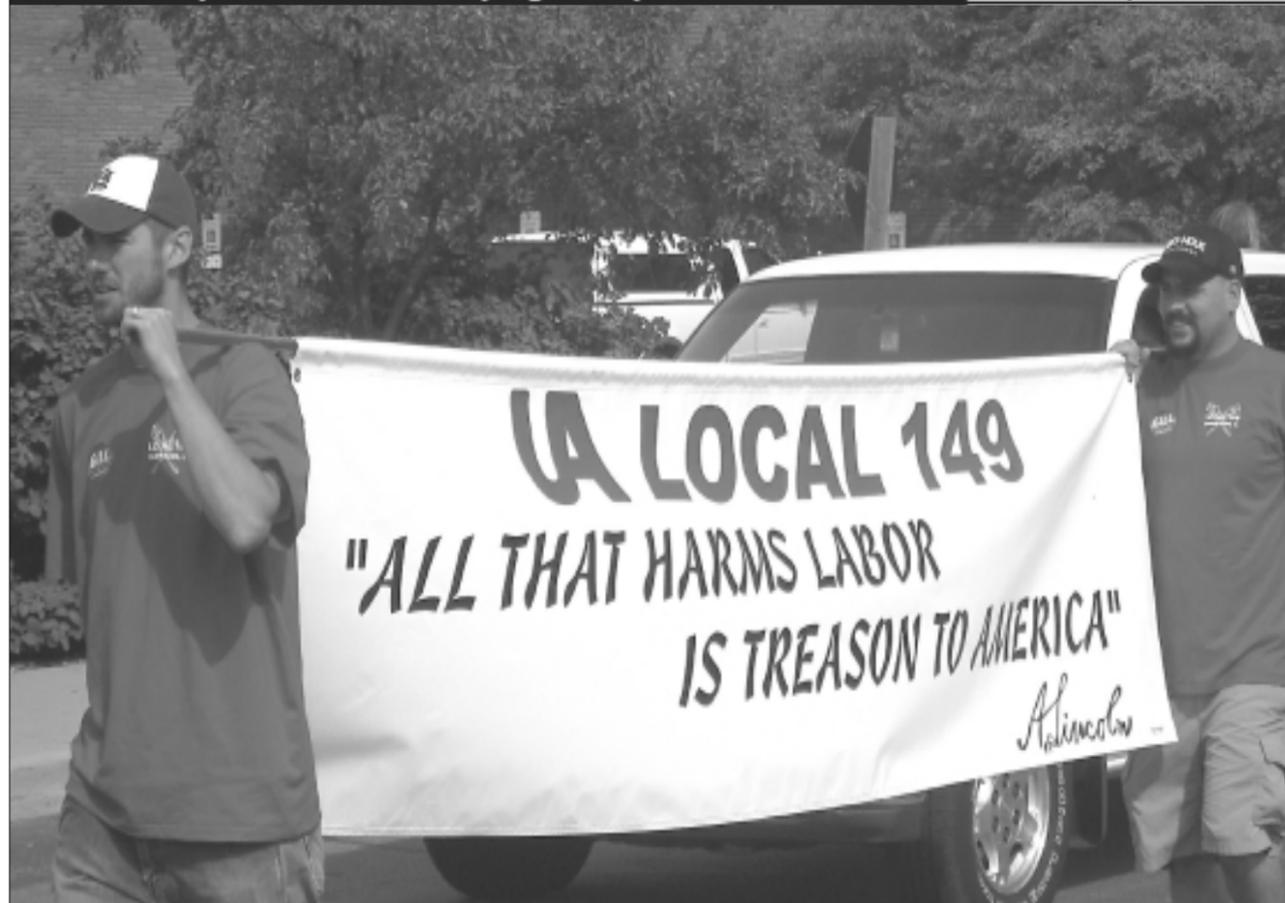
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## "All That Harms Labor Is Treason To America" — A. Lincoln

### Champaign-Urbana Labor Day Parade



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## The Battle of Mahomet

By Neil Parthun



STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS in Mahomet were back in class on Monday, Aug. 23 after the Mahomet Seymour Education Association (MSEA) and the school board were able to settle on a new contract on Aug. 20. The settlement marked an end to a two-day strike, the first strike

ever in their union's history.

MSEA secured a one-year contract with a 2.6% raise (step + .5%) for teachers, 3.5% (step + 1%) for aides and 3.5% for other support staff. Union President Joan Jordan commented on the two-day strike and the negotiations saying, "I've negotiated several contracts and this has been the most contentious process I have ever been through."

### BUILDING UP TO THE BATTLE

The strike was an eruption of continuing disagreement between the union and the district over issues related to employment. Board President Terry Greene had said: "The MSEA president has been quoted as saying '[The district school board's] got the money and the power and we want some of both.' The board of education has quite a different view." Although this quote was uttered in the days before the strike, it aptly encapsulated the heart of the struggle between MSEA and the school board well prior.

In the summer of 2009, the Mahomet school board, led by president Terry Greene, had demanded that educational staff perform medical procedures like giving insulin shots and inserting catheters. The board refused to negotiate the issue with MSEA despite significant pressure. Ultimately, the issue went to a mediator who ruled against the union.

With this victory fresh in mind and upcoming contract negotiations looming, the board announced in February



Striking teachers on the picket line

that the FY 2011 budget would have \$643,211 in cuts, including some staff layoffs. The district blamed the economic downturn and Illinois' fiscal nightmare as they spoke about a projected deficit budget. However, as the union pointed out, the district would not be 'in the red' but rather only less 'in the black.' Further undercutting the district's cries of poverty was the fact that all proposed staff cuts, except for those on one year contracts anyway, were rescinded by the end of March.

Having seen the bogus cuts for what they were, and since the district had \$2.5 million in its general working fund and another \$1.5 million in their education fund, the union became even more adamant in their demands for appropriate and fair compensation. It was also recently announced that the district can expect nearly \$700,000 from the Federal Education Jobs bill which is meant to pay teachers and support professionals. Any of these revenue streams would have allowed the district to settle a fair and equitable contract with the educators.

The board contended that these funds are for 'rainy days' for which the largest economic meltdown since the Great Depression does not apply.

Ultimately, the disagreement between MSEA and the school board was not totally about money. It was, more importantly, about the power dynamic between the workers and the board. Throughout these struggles, it appeared that Greene and the district wanted to bust the union's strength and prove that administration and board run the district.

### THE CONTRACT

During the early negotiations, the district's offer was very limited. Union president Joan Jordan said: "[the board offering was] 0% and no vertical or horizontal movement. So, we weren't going to get any money for experience for being here another year nor were they offering any money if you had gotten more education. And we have to pay for our own education that we need for our credentials and also to get paid more."

After little to no movement by the board throughout the spring and into the summer, despite good faith negotiations and movement by the union, MSEA called for a strike. The vote to authorize the work stoppage was overwhelmingly supported with a 211-25 vote.

Quickly, the union began organizing. IEA UniServ Director Gene Vanderport elaborated: "Our folks organized themselves to make this strike work...so we're well organized and that is key." Many members of the union volunteered for a number of committees to ensure that a strike would likely be successful.

The final offer made by the district prior to the strike was for a 2.1% raise for teachers, 2.5% for aides and 2.5% for other support staff. Based on this proposal, union members making as little as \$16,500 would actually suffer pay cuts due to rising insurance costs. So, this proposal was rejected.

### THE STRIKE BEGINS

Prior to the final bargaining session scheduled to take place before the scheduled start of classes, the district canceled school until further notice because of the potential strike. Board President Greene and the district unilaterally left the negotiations without even looking at a proposal by the union. MSEA members were visibly upset as Greene went to the media demanding that the union accept the lowest offer seen in that district for years and make it binding for two years. Some felt that the pre-emptive canceling of school meant that the district was not interested in negotiating.

MSEA hit the ground running with coordinated committees ensuring that picketers were transported, given water and fed. Others worked on producing press releases and speaking to media about the realities of the strike. The union was quite prepared and had a very effective presence. Outside of a few middle fingers or catcalls, the overwhelming reception to the strike was positive. Many honked horns and waved. Some students even joined the rallying workers with signs like 'Our teachers rock!'

The negotiations at the end of strike day one failed to bring a settlement as Board President Greene and the district walked out of negotiations for the second time that week. Many observers noticed the contradictions in the boards actions, demanding a settlement in the press on the one hand and walking out of negotiations multiple times on the other.

Day two of the strike continued in a similar vein. A rally was held prior to the start of negotiations as cries for a fair contract echoed in the air. By 2:30 pm that day, a contract settlement had been reached.



### "IT'S A MAJOR VICTORY"

After successfully negotiating this highly contentious contract, MSEA president Joan Jordan stated: "It's a major victory for us and the victory came in [the school board] understanding that we are a union and we are going to stand up for ourselves and we will do what it takes to get some action out of the school board."

The union emphasized that the contract was about more than sick days and money. It was about power and leadership. Jordan reflected: "Part of it was personal. The chief negotiator and myself have been active union members our entire careers and [the school board] just wanted to make the rest of the union know that 'you shouldn't be following them.'"

The struggle of Mahomet educators marks another victory for organized labor and educators within the state of Illinois.





# Another School Year, Another War Year

By Sarah Lazare, from Common Dreams, Sept. 4, 2010



CLASSES HAVE STARTED AGAIN and military recruiters are out in full force. Students spill onto the quad, the August sun blazes down on the sea of people rushing off to class or lounging in the grass. And there are my fellow students, standing tall in their uniforms, underneath a military tent where they pass out literature, start conversations, or just smile at passersby.

I was a sophomore in college when the Iraq War started. I remember when my generation was the first to ship off in that war, others sent to Afghanistan before that. I remember the first shock of realizing that war is something that is fought by people I know, working-class kids from my punk scene, youth of color from my high school, my little brother's friends, kids who had no other way to pay for college or get out of our small town. Now, seven years later, I am a graduate student, and this is still sort of my generation's war. But it is being inherited by a younger generation. They look like children to me—what I must have looked like then when the Iraq War began, what my peers must have looked like when they were first marched in lines onto the tarmac and boarded onto fighter jets.

A cluster of college bros walks by, talking loudly. Some people are playing hackysack in the grass. Students walk out of class, speaking animatedly. This is normal life. And so too is war. Most of these students don't remember when the first of their generation were shipped off because, for most of them, the war has been going on since high school. Since junior high. Many of them do not even remember when people still believed in the Iraq War, when the flags were flying and the war drums were pounding. War is the backdrop that simply is, the reality that intrudes into this scene of exuberance, the cause that picks off your classmates, the strangely consistent section of the newspaper.

I think of soldiers my age who returned from wars as shadows of themselves, who wake up screaming at night, who can't stay in one place, who can't function. In my work supporting Iraq Veterans against the War and GI resisters, I've seen that survival is filled with ghosts, and that it is a heavy load to carry when you are 19, 22, 27, or 34 years old. That it is a heavy load for your family and loved ones to carry. And then there are those who didn't survive. Were lost to combat. Or suicide. Last fiscal year, 239 soldiers killed themselves, 160 of them active duty, 146 soldiers died from high-risk activities, including 74 drug overdoses, and 1,713 soldiers survived suicide attempts, according to an Army report.

I think of war survivors in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine. People who are merely dark shadows in US media and public discourse. People who have suffered under shifting alliances and occupations, people who have had their villages and cities cut through with razor wires, tanks, and walls and exploded by bombs. The headlines are trumpeting that the Iraq War is over. But how long until the war is actually over for the Iraqi people? How long until the last "non-combat" soldier, or the last private contractor goes home? How long until the last oil profiteer packs up and leaves? How long until there is a semblance of self-determination for the Iraqi people and reparations for the irreparable harm that has been done?

It didn't make any sense then, when the government was sounding the war drums after 9/11 or when bombs exploded over Baghdad—eerie, flashing lights and burning buildings flashing across our TV screens. And it doesn't make any sense now that the military, government, media insist that the wars are almost over. Or are over. Or are escalating so that they can get the job done and then end. They have been saying that for years. It is an admission that the wars and occupations are no longer justifi-

able in the public eye, that politicians must find ways to make it seem that the wars are constantly on the brink of conclusion, even as they persist.

And it is the same pool of soldiers fueling both wars, some having faced two, three, four, even five deployments. Sent from Afghanistan to Iraq then back to Afghanistan. How long before the war is over for these soldiers? How long before their minds and bodies have begun to heal? The Vietnam War was marked by skyrocketing homelessness, PTSD, and suicide once troops returned. And now our troops are facing record deployments. Who knows what the long-term effects will be? Already, we know that rates of PTSD and traumatic brain injury among troops deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan have been disproportionately high, with a third of returning troops reporting mental problems and 18.5 per cent of all returning service members battling either PTSD or depression, according to a study by the Rand Corporation. And how long until the war is over for Iraqis and Afghans suffering from PTSD? While no statistics are forthcoming, some have estimated PTSD to be near universal in these societies.

Soldiers were plucked off from my generation. And now it continues, in this new school year, filled with expectation and energy. After nearly a decade of wars and occupations, leading nowhere, creating nothing good, we're still looking to our youth to fill the ranks. The recruiters stand and smile, handing out literature, making eye contact, the grays and greens of their uniform mixing with the colorful clothing, people walking, back backs and school books, brick buildings with regal inscriptions on the walls. And hanging in the background, a giant banner reads "Welcome back."

## UCIMC Summer Arts Camp

By Briawsome



WEEDING, PLANTING, and watering may not make it onto your list of favorite things to do, but, despite the heat and hard work, working in the Community Garden was worth it.

We started off with just tomatoes and garlic chives in the IMC's garden plot but now have potatoes, beans, peppers, and more growing. The first day of gardening started with us putting cages around the tomatoes. The cages were to keep the plants off of the ground, which would prevent the plant from getting diseases. Any of those good tomatoes getting wasted by a disease would be a tragedy.

Next came time to clear the weeds. If we tried to do all of it at once, it would be too overwhelming, even for a group of ten or twelve people. The solution: do it in sec-

tions. The part we cleared that day was turned over and planted with peppers.

The next day, we got to eat tomatoes that had grown and plant lettuce and beans. A valuable lesson we learned from those tomatoes is that organic food tastes better than any thing grown with pesticides. If you don't like gardening, don't worry because this camp has much more to offer—fixing up bikes, making art, a Public Service Announcement, and zines.



Change of Mind—By Brianna Coulter

### YMCA Friday Forum on Campus

**September 17 at noon**—"Access and Advocacy: Can Unions Save Higher Education?"

Cary Nelson, Professor Emeritus, English, University of Illinois and President, American Association of University Professors.

Colleges and universities are under siege from an array of economic, political and cultural forces that are dramatically altering higher education institutions and policies. Cary Nelson examines a lengthy list of trends and forces – such as corporatization, globalization, and intrusive research oversight – that he says

are eroding the three foundational principles of higher education: academic freedom, shared governance and tenure.

**September 24 at noon** – "Farewell to Journalism? The Battle to Build News Media and Create American Democracy"

Robert McChesney, Host, "Media Matters," (WILL-AM) American journalism is in free-fall collapse. Robert McChesney analyzes the decline, discusses the political implications, and reviews the best possible solutions.

### Get Involved with the Public i

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



# The Three R's Project: Reading Reduces Recidivism

By Elizabeth Abraham



Elizabeth Abraham lives in Urbana and is a retired school psychologist, interested in improving literacy at all ages.

THE ACT OF READING IS A UNIQUELY human skill and can be transformative as well as entertaining. With this in mind, a relatively new group is seeking to provide reading materials to Illinois prison circulation libraries. The goals are to organize groups of volunteers who will "adopt" a prison library and collect books for the circulation library they have adopted; as well as to advocate for better prison libraries. The new group, identified as the Three R's Project: Reading Reduces Recidivism, is in the process of pulling together volunteers in several areas of the state. Currently Three R's is working on building chapters in Effingham for Robinson Correctional Center (C.C.), in Springfield for Taylorville C.C. and in Oak Park/River Forest /Chicago for Stateville/Sheridan C.C. The groups in these towns are committed to locating donated books for

the specific needs of the libraries of their adopted prison and getting the books there. If you have an interest in participating in this effort to nurture the prison libraries in Illinois, please contact us through the website at Books to Prisoners, [www.books2prisoners.org](http://www.books2prisoners.org). We are especially interested in volunteers to join the three groups currently forming but would be glad to hear from anyone interested, regardless of location. The Carbondale area is the next part of Illinois that Three R's plans to focus on, locating individuals to organize a group to support circulation libraries in the southern part of our state.

The Illinois Department of Corrections gave their welcome to this effort at a meeting on August 27, 2010 when IDOC leaders met with three representatives from Three R's: Sarah Ross, Barbara Kessel and Judith Pond.

The Three R's project grew out of a survey of 27 prison circulation libraries in Illinois, indicating prison libraries have experienced significant cuts in staff and materials over the last seven years. Illinois allocates over \$1.3 billion annually for prisons. Despite this huge budget, seven prison circulation libraries have been closed and many others have reduced staff and hours. Since 2002, circulation libraries in Illinois prisons have not had a budget line

to purchase any new materials: books, magazine subscriptions, newspapers, or even mending tape. It should be noted that while Illinois State Law mandates that prisoners have access to law libraries, no such protection is provided for circulation libraries. As there is such a strong connection between any kind of literacy program and a reduction in the number of people who return to prison after discharge, it is difficult to understand the cuts to circulation libraries. This is especially true as access to books provides such a cost efficient tool to reduce recidivism.

Currently, members from the Urbana-Champaign Books to Prisoners program have taken the lead in the Three R's Project, but other supporting organizations include The Interfaith Alliance of Champaign-Urbana, Central Illinois Jobs with Justice, First Mennonite Church, McKinley Social Action Committee, Urbana-Champaign Friends Meeting, Volunteer Illini Project, *Statesville Speaks* (a prison newspaper), and Youth Advocate Programs, Adult Division, Chicago.

## Kicking Coal's Ash

By Amy Allen



Amy Allen is a student in civil engineering and president of Students for Environmental Concerns (SECS) at the University of Illinois.

COAL. OUR JOURNEY TO MODERNITY started with it, the oldest of our industrial fuels. It feels like something we've left behind a long time ago—most of us have much more personal experience with the other fossil fuels like oil and natural gas. However, coal is still the source of most American electricity. The entire cycle of using coal, from extraction to combustion, is dirty and dangerous. But what is left after combustion has been ignored for too long and poses a serious threat to water quality in communities in this area and around the country.

Controls at coal plants—scrubbers, baghouses, and other installations, have succeeded in reducing airborne emissions of sulfur, mercury, and other heavy metals. But these contaminants must go somewhere, and as a result of "cleaner" methods of burning coal, they arise in coal ash—the sludge and ash that remains after coal is burned—in great concentrations. Coal ash is the second largest stream of industrial waste generated in the US, second only to mining waste. Coal ash can contain levels of mercury, barium, chromium, and selenium that exceed by 100 times the federal thresholds for hazardous waste, yet it is no more carefully regulated than household garbage. Power plants have the latitude to dump it into retention ponds, unlined landfills, or back into the mine of origin, as Abbott Power Plant on campus does. As soon as ash is disposed of through these means, the health and safety of the surrounding area is at stake.

Once the ash comes into contact with water, it reacts to release toxic contaminants, jeopardizing groundwater and wells. At least three sites in the Champaign area—the Greys Siding neighborhood in Vermilion County, the Dynergy Vermilion Station plant near Oakwood, and the Ameren Hutsonville Power Station in Crawford County—have experienced water contamination as a result of coal ash dumps. Residents of the Greys Siding neighborhood have been informed by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency that their well water is unsafe to drink, but no alternative has been provided. The owner of the site has declared bankruptcy, so if remediation ever does occur, it will be at taxpayers' expense.

The impacts are just as devastating as the consequences of air pollution from coal. It turns productive farmland into unusable wetlands, leaches coal toxins into groundwater, poisons wells, fish and wildlife, destroys infrastructure such as roads and houses, and more. In most of these cases, coal companies promise to fix the problem and rarely do. Drainage from Greys Siding and the Vermilion Station site are also contaminating the Middle Fork of the Vermilion River, the only body of water in Illinois protected by the federal government as a Wild and Scenic River. Coal ash poses a serious threat to human health, water ecosystems, and our leisure. In 2007, one of the worst environmental disasters in US history took place when one of these coal ash impoundments failed, covering some 400 acres in Tennessee with several feet of toxic sludge, and adding another entry to the Superfund list. 30 such coal ash impoundments exist in Illinois, several considered high risk by the USEPA.

The US Environmental Protection Agency is in the process of confronting that threat by issuing a proposed rule that would regulate coal ash as hazardous waste. These federal regulations are critical as our own IEPA is far too close to Big Coal. But intense pressure from the coal lobby and the Office of Management and Budget led the US EPA to release two alternatives: one that would create the necessary safeguards, and one that would merely establish watered-down "guidelines" that would be unenforceable by EPA and that states would have the "choice" to adopt. This summer, the Sierra Club and our own Prairie Rivers Network are organizing a response to seek strong regulations. Hearings are being held across the country to solicit public input, including one in Chicago on September 16th. The hearing presents an excellent opportunity for concerned or affected citizens to speak up directly about their experiences. Contact Traci Barkley of Prairie Rivers Network at [tbarkley@prairierivers.org](mailto:tbarkley@prairierivers.org) if you are interested in attending the hearing. Public response will determine whether coal ash is finally regulated like the hazardous waste it is or left

subject to a patchwork of inadequate state regulations. Speak up and hold industry responsible for the tragic consequences of its negligence.

"Poetry for the People" is a project of the *Public i* with the purpose of nourishing the creation of local poetry and celebrating the diversity of voices in the Urbana-Champaign community. A series of workshops/open mics will be hosted throughout the fall. Poets who participate will have their work selected for publication in the *Public i*.

**POETRY for the PEOPLE**

A workshop and open mic will be hosted by artist and poet Dr. Ruth Nicole Brown on Saturday, September 18 at 3:00 pm, at the Urbana Free Library. Ruth Nicole has a stunning ability to connect with others to create stories, songs, performances, discussions, poetry and community. The next workshop will be held in collaboration with S.P.E.A.K. Café hosted by local poet Aaron Ammons. It will take place Thursday October 7 at 7:00 pm at Krannert Art Museum, 500 E. Peabody.

Funded in part by a City of Urbana Arts Grant

**PUBLIC i**

Teen and adult writers of all skill levels are welcome to attend and participate! All events are free and refreshments will be provided!



# Thoughts on the Professor Howell Controversy at UIUC

By Belden Fields



THE ISSUES RAISED BY U of I Professor Kenneth Howell's initial hiring at the University of Illinois, his e-mail to his students who were preparing to take a final examination in his course on Catholicism, and his subsequent termination and rehiring are at once complex and fundamental to the nature of this university and the pedagogy that it offers its students. My remarks and my judgments on the situation are based upon the publicly available information as I write. Thus, there may be some considerations pertinent to the initial decision not to retain him of which I am unaware.

## THE HIRING

Professor Howell was hired nine years ago as a nontenured and nontenurable adjunct professor. However, the difference between most adjunct professors and Professor Howell is that he was not selected by members of his department, but rather by the Newman Foundation. He also was paid not by the university, but by the diocese in Peoria, the St. John's Institute of Catholic Thought, or the Newman Foundation, or a combination of them.

While there is little doubt about Professor Howell's accomplishments, he has two PhDs and four books to his name, there is a problem when the university turns over to a private entity the ability to appoint advocates of their position within the classroom. This is a problem whether it comes to advocacy of a religious point of view or a secular point of view. The university encountered the same problem with the initial proposition that was made by those who proposed an Academy on Capitalism and Limited Government. They wanted the power to design courses and hire professorial advocates of their ideology in the areas of the social sciences, humanities, and journalism. A committee of University Senators found this completely unacceptable.

The same issue arises in the case of the courses on religion. If the highly qualified Professor Howell had applied for a position in the Department of Religion, been accepted by the department, and received a university salary, this would have accorded with the procedures of the university and there would not have been a feeling that he had been imposed upon the department by an agreement between the higher administration and an outside private entity. Thus, if there is blame here, it lies not on the shoulders of Professor Howell, but on those of the higher campus administration.

## THE TERMINATION

The termination was faulty on procedural grounds. A complaint by a student is never a justifiable grounds for not retaining a faculty member unless it is followed up by a further investigation, an interview with the faculty member so that he or she can respond to the charges, and

some sort of due process whereby the situation is systematically assessed to determine if there are really grounds for termination.

This kind of cautious approach is particularly necessary when there is an issue of academic freedom. There is no more fundamental academic freedom than that of speech. That freedom is possessed by both professors, including adjuncts, and students.

The expression of ideas on controversial issues is going to offend some people. But learning to deal with people who have ideas different from yours, even on issues on which one feels strongly, is an important part of both intellectual and civic development. What is important is that the discourse remain civil, even if the parties become angry with each other. "Hate speech" is not civil.

## THE OFFENDING E-MAIL

Whatever the nature of discourse in the professor's classroom, the charge was made by a friend of a student who received the offending e-mail that the e-mail indeed crossed the line and constituted "hate speech." (The e-mail can be read at <http://www.news-gazette.com/news/religion/2010-07-09>).

One must be very careful in what one calls hate speech. Not everything that offends us is hate speech. Professor Howell justifies the Church's and his position on homosexuality by reference to "Moral Natural Law." He claims:

"Morality must be a response to REALITY. In other words, sexual acts are only appropriate for people who are complementary, not the same. How do we know this? By looking at REALITY. Men and women are complementary in their anatomy, physiology, and psychology. Men and women are not interchangeable. So, a moral act has to be between persons that are fitted for that act. Consent is important but there is more than consent needed."

In letters to the editor in the *News-Gazette*, some have responded to him by pointing to so much homosexual activity among priests. He might respond by saying that these priests are fallen angels who have indeed sinned against moral law, but that this does not invalidate the law itself. But his use of anatomy, physiology, and psychology are faith-based interpretations rather than logical proofs that could convince a nonbeliever. Moreover, such argumentation could backfire against Catholic doctrine. For example, it could be argued that the celibacy of the clergy violates Natural Law (and is thus immoral) because it so alienates many clergymen from the REALITY of their anatomy, physiology, and psychology that they misdirect their natural/factual sexual drives toward children. Is this interpretation any more or less a moral "proof" based on Natural Law than his use of the same criteria to morally criticize homosexuality?

But this does get to the central issue of whether his is hate speech. I do not think that it is. In the third paragraph of his e-mail, the professor writes:

"to judge an action wrong is not to condemn a person. A person and his/her acts can be distinguished for the purposes of morality."

Hate speech does not make such a distinction. It is not a criticism of a specific act. Hate speech dehumanizes. It declares the essence of a person, as well as the group to which the person belongs, as being unworthy, hateful, and dangerous to society. A physical attack on someone who is gay because he or she is gay is really a public demonstration intended for emulation. Others should follow the genocidal example of the Nazis and wipe these people off the face of the earth for they are inherently evil and destroy the moral fiber of the society, nation or world. That's why there are often additional criminal penalties attached to hate crimes, which are most easily identified by the speech that precedes and accompanies them.

Where I think that the professor did go very wrong pedagogically is when he writes to his students who are preparing for a final examination:

"Unless you have done extensive research into homosexuality and are cognizant of the history of moral thought, you are not ready to make judgments about moral truth in this matter."

What student facing a final examination, the evaluation of which will affect his or her grade point average, would dare to challenge this professor on his moral evaluation of homosexuality? This statement to students might be acceptable in a theological seminary, but it is out of place in a university where we are presumably encouraging students to be critical thinkers however limited their knowledge and experience might be.

This confusion of the pedagogical mission, and the likely intimidation of dissenting students, needs to be brought to the attention of Professor Howell.

## UCIMC Writer's Block on WRFU 104.5 FM

This month's IMC Writer's Block will be on Sept. 23, from 4:30-5:30. We will be having representatives from the Mahomet Seymour Education Association to discuss their successful strike action.

## The Role of Nonviolence in Palestinian/Israeli Relations: A Conversation with Rajmohan Gandhi

Sponsored by the UC Peace Initiative

Sunday, September 19, at 2:30 pm

Champaign Public Library, Robeson Pavilion A and B  
The program will start with an informal gathering and refreshments.

For more information contact John Setterlund at [john.setterlund\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:john.setterlund(at)gmail.com)

Rajmohan Gandhi is a human rights and peace activist, a Research Professor at the Center for South

Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and the President of Initiatives of Change International, an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Professor Gandhi is the author of several notable books, including a biography of Mahatma Gandhi, *Mohandas: A True Story of a Man, His People and an Empire*. He is also the recipient of honorary doctorates from universities in Canada, Japan, and England and, in 2004, was awarded the International Humanitarian Award by the City of Champaign.

## Fall Book Sale

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# Flatlander Fund Created to Honor the Memory of Dan Schrieber

By Laura Huth



Dan Schrieber

Dan Schrieber had big dreams, and the talent, enthusiasm, and vision to bring so many to fruition. He died in July at age 24.

Known around town as "The Chocolate Man," Dan was the genius behind Flatlander Chocolate, Illinois' only "bean-to-bar" chocolate maker. His operation roasted his own beans, tempered, and molded chocolates, something few others in the country do. The result was considered by some to be among the finest chocolate in the world.

Dan's enthusiasm for great food did not stop at chocolate. He was passionate about creating a community kitchen, a place where small food businesses would be cultivated and local foods would be created and shared.

Friends and colleagues are still struggling with Dan's death. One thing is certain though: Dan would want to see his community kitchen concept developed. With that dream in mind, friends and family came together to create the Flatlander Fund, a project dedicated to bringing the community kitchen to fruition. A community kitchen is a certified kitchen where food artisans can go to make their product, share their skills, and learn new ideas. It is also envisioned to help those making foods, breads, jams, meats, candies, pies, etc..., market and sell them to the local community.

On Sunday, August 29, the Fund held its first fundraising event. Where 38 guests joined 21 volunteers at Buvons!, the Corkscrew Wine Emporium's new wine bar, for a gourmet three-course, wine-paired meal. The event raised more than \$4,000 in just three hours.

The next special event in the works is a chocolate auction this fall where Dan's remaining chocolates will be live-auctioned off along with other artisanal foods and local art. Stay tuned for details!

Dan was a brilliant guy who was brave enough to follow his dreams and make the world better along the way. His passing has left a hole in our community, no doubt. But together, we can help create a kitchen that would cultivate food entrepreneurs, share great food with the community, help teach others about food, and make Dan's dream a reality.

We will never find someone quite like Dan, but we can still breathe life into his dream.

To learn more about and support Dan's dream of a community kitchen, go to [www.flatlanderfund.org](http://www.flatlanderfund.org) and [www.facebook.com/flatlander](http://www.facebook.com/flatlander)

## New Book of Poetry from Aaron Ammons

A second book of poetry is now out from local poet Aaron Ammons, a.k.a. A-Dub, titled *As I Travel My Creation*. It includes dozens of new poems such as "Do I Remember," reprinted below. This self-published book was funded in part by a grant from the Urbana Arts Council and includes drawings by artist Chris Evans. It can be purchased directly from the author. It will also be available at Centennial High School Library, Urbana Public Library, IMC Library, and the Chamapign County jail libraries. Aaron is host of S.P.E.A.K. Café, an open mic poetry event that takes place the second Thursday of the month Oct. 7, and Nov. 11, 7 p.m., at Krannert Art Museum.

**Do I Remember**, by Aaron Ammons

Jumpin' fences and scarrin' up my arms  
 Throwin' thousand dollar packs  
 Under lawn... mowers  
 Outside for hours  
 Duckin' cops  
 In the same clothes and no showers  
 Bathin' in cash and dime bags  
 In the window, for Sandy  
 And the cats in the jag  
 'Cuz crack has, no preference  
 My supplier was my reference  
 Up early in the morning with no hesitance  
 Driven by customer residents, on the 1st  
 From the 2nd - 14th, I was underneath  
 Emerging again on the 15th  
 Totin' pistols and scanners  
 New gear and gold my banners  
 Hated by many  
 So they tore down the Manors,  
 But the whole "Paign" is where I served  
 And momma couldn't believe my nerve,  
 I couldn't either,  
 My woman was outta' line because I wouldn't beat her?  
 Across the street from the preacher  
 I sneak a peak at the truth  
 But I was caught up in the game  
 Selling hell to the youth, through pregnant queens  
 I had to get paid, and this was my means,  
 First a solo,  
 Now I'm building a team  
 That I'll regret before its over though,  
 Now I can't sleep at night because of the shame  
 Wondering how many brothers and sisters did I turn out  
 Just by bringing them to the game!

Do I Remember?

Did I mention myself?  
 And that the same shit I sold like a slave  
 Destroyed my health  
 And had me on the threshold of my grave,  
 With visions of suicide  
 Where addiction  
 And loneliness collide  
 I paid the price for this ride!

Do I Remember?

Losing my nerve and the desire to serve  
 yeah,  
 But there was a huge glitch  
 I wanted to use dope to get high now  
 Instead of rich  
 Ain't that a twist?  
 I started off with diamonds on my wrist,  
 Now the bags I clinch in my fist are for my personal use,  
 Finding out first hand what an addict will do,  
 I'm feeling like, "man this ain't right",  
 My power is turned off  
 So I'm cooking dope in a spoon  
 And smoking it by candlelight!  
 Hiding in my basement  
 But ain't nobody chasin' but me,  
 From the top to the bottom, so suddenly,  
 Or so it seems,  
 But it's been years that I can't replace  
 And I wish they were just dreams,  
 So Hell,  
 Yeah,  
 I Remember.

# Student Fees Make UI Sports Profitable

By Neil Parthun



HIKES IN TUITION, LARGER CLASS sizes, staff furloughs, pay freezes and acrimonious labor negotiations are common knowledge for UI students, graduate employees and staff. While many look at the exorbitant pay raise of President Hogan, the \$150,000 rug and other expenditures for top administrators, people rarely look at how student fees have been utilized to make the UI athletic department turn a profit.

As the data shows, the University of Illinois' athletic programs rely on student fees to maintain their profitability. One exception to this is the short-term revenue boost from the men's basketball team making it to the NCAA championship game in 2005. These funds are reflected in the 2006-2007 budget. The other exception came during the 2007-2008 football season when the Illini earned a 9-4 record and played in the Rose Bowl. These gains do not yield long term revenue increases. This conclusion is also supported by several studies including one from Peter Orzag during his tenure at the Brookings Institute that said for every \$1 a school pays to build its athletic program, it gets \$1 back in new revenue. Spending more on sports programs does not yield

increase alumni giving, winning, net operating revenue or academic quality.

Illinois is a rare college sports program due to their profitability. As the NCAA Knight Commission report noted: "Only 25 Division I sports programs (ed note: approx. 10% of D-I programs) turned a profit in 2008 counting only their generated revenue and only 18 had shown a profit consistently for five years." Illinois has

Year	Student Fee Year	Total Athletic Budget	% of Athletic Revenues from Student Fees	Athletic Revenues Minus Expenses
2004-2005	2,749,207	46,291,696	5.68%	481,223
2005-2006	2,844,794	45,383,567	5.61%	168,575
2006-2007	2,738,845	51,021,840	4.74%	6,123,481
2007-2008	2,930,324	61,167,156	4.32%	4,359,596
2008-2009	2,925,875	70,688,086	3.88%	1,787,840
2009-2010 (projected)	3,000,000	68,172,000	4.40%	N/A

Source: USA Today analysis of College Athletic Department Revenues/Expenses, FOIA request.

been able to achieve this status due to the subsidies from student fees.

Despite most programs running deficits, most universities have continued spending on athletics. The NCAA Knight Commission wrote in their report Restoring the Balance that from 2005 to 2008, athletic spending increased at more than twice the rate of academic spending at near all of the 103 Football Bowl Subdivision schools. On average, FBS schools spend more than six

times as much on athletics per capita than on academics. And most schools are forced to tap general university funds to balance their athletic budgets. In Illinois' case, it is student fees that have balanced the athletic budget.

Likewise, from 2006 to 2009, the average pay for a head football coach for the top 99 big time public schools in the NCAA rose 46% to \$1.4 million. Illinois football coach Ron Zook makes \$1.5 million and is contracted with the University until 2014. During Zook's tenure, the team has had records of 2-9, 2-10, 9-4 (the Rose Bowl season), 5-7 and 3-9.

Other universities have seen similar struggles. The California system has seen class cuts, furloughs and 30+% fee increases as the Golden Bear athletic program had \$31 million in loans forgiven because the department could not sustain itself. The University of Texas will increase tuition 4% for the next two years and is experiencing budget cuts/hiring freezes while raising the head football coach's salary from \$3 million to \$5 million. UConn's men's basketball coach, Jim Calhoun, received a 5 year \$13 million deal in 2009. Meanwhile the school has seen fee increases, raised tuition 6% in 2009 and is raising tuition 5.4% for the 2010 academic year.

What sets the University of Illinois apart is that the athletic department, at first glance, turns a profit. However, when investigated, it is clear that the Athletic Department has chosen to balance its sustainability on the backs of students and their fees. Universities are academic institutions, not sports factories. As a rabid sports fan, I am not proposing an end athletic programs. Instead, I would like these programs to be sustainable and for the schools to maintain their academic focus.

# The U.S. (In)Justice System Doesn't Work. The Alternative Just Might

By Mikhail Lyubansky

Mikhail Lyubansky, Ph.D., is a faculty member in the Department of Psychology at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where he teaches Psychology of Race and Ethnicity and Theories of Psychotherapy. He is hoping to contribute to the building of restorative systems in the Champaign-Urbana community, including schools, churches, and local organizations. Interested parties can contact him at Lyubansky(at)gmail.com

I'VE BEEN THINKING A LOT ABOUT justice lately, pondering the injustice of the way that justice is administered in this country. For years I've pointed out and lamented the racial bias evident in both law enforcement and the criminal courts. For years, I've wished to live in a world in which the determination of guilt and the administration of punishment were both completely uncorrelated to race or any other demographic characteristic.

Today, I'm no longer satisfied with just that.

For those of us living in the United States, "doing justice" is mostly synonymous with administering punishment. We may not literally follow the Biblical edict of "an eye for an eye," but most of us still believe that "the punishment must fit the crime." More than that, many of us are not only willing but insistent that the punishment be cruel—decades of incarceration, sometimes in solitary confinement. Punishment, after all, is supposed to be unpleasant. Besides, even the Talmud tells us that

"If we are kind to those to whom we should be cruel, we will ultimately be cruel to those to whom we should be kind."

Given these options, the choice is easy. But why do we have to choose one over the other? More to the point, why must we limit ourselves to just these two choices? I don't want to choose between being cruel to someone who deserves it and being cruel to someone who doesn't. Sure, that's an easy choice, but it's set up to be an easy

choice in order to justify being cruel to someone. I reject the dichotomous options. I refuse to be intentionally cruel to anyone.

I also refuse to be indiscriminately kind, which is also a false choice. Alternatives to systems that administer retributive justice do not advocate kindness. They advocate compassion — the not-so-radical idea that this person who may have done some terrible things (let's assume that his innocence is not in dispute) is still a person with the same basic needs as any other person.

Compassion is not kindness. It is not forgiveness. And it certainly is not a lack of accountability. It just means that I believe that no one is born wanting to rape and kill (psychopathy may be a special case) and the fact that some person has done so — perhaps multiple times — means that his/her life has been filled with so much pain that rape/murder was preferable to just carrying on. I don't condone his/her choices and I don't want to do anything to compromise the safety of others, but I feel compassion for the person who experienced such pain.

To be compassionate is to recognize everyone's humanity and to value everyone's needs. This works because compassion is not a zero sum gain. My feelings of compassion for one person do not lessen my compassion for another. To the contrary, when I am in a more compassionate and loving space, I have more to give to everyone around me.

Though I talk about giving, compassion is not charity either. To be sure, it can be a tremendous gift to another, but it is a gift to ourselves as well. Just as torture and other acts of cruelty dehumanize not only the person tortured but the torturer as well, so do compassion and empathy reconnect us to our own humanity.

I recognize that there are people who lack the capacity to feel empathy for others, people who enjoy inflicting pain. I recognize that our need for safety may require some people to be incarcerated. But I recognize as well

that involuntary confinement sometimes results in more violence, not less, that incarceration frequently makes people more angry, more resentful, and more violent — especially in a society in which ex-convicts are legally second-class citizens with no voting rights and few employment opportunities.

If there were no better options, we could justify continuing with business as usual. But there is, in fact, an alternative: Restorative Justice.

There are many restorative justice systems. The one I've been studying is Restorative Circles (RC), a system developed by Dominic Barter in urban Brazil and now spreading across the world as a means of promoting and facilitating social justice, group cohesion, resilient relationships and personal healing. RC provides a way for individuals and communities to handle conflicts, including racial conflicts, compassionately rather than punitively, as well as to heal and learn from these conflicts.

To the uninitiated, restorative processes may appear idealistic and naive. After all, they reject the two core aspects of the traditional justice system: the assignment of blame and the administration of punishment. Instead, the goal of the Circle is for the parties involved in the conflict to first gain mutual understanding of the others' experiences and needs and then to restore or build a mutually satisfying relationship.

Talking is involved, so is listening. Lots of listening. But it's a decidedly different type of talk than people usually engage in, and it's not just talk.

Restorative processes can be used for any conflict, large or small, criminal or interpersonal. They are designed to lead to voluntary (and they really are voluntary!) acts offered to repair or restore the relationship. The two words are not synonymous. Reparative acts have to do with compensation—paying for a broken window is a reparative act

Continued on next page



# The System of Snitching

By Barbara Kessel



*"Crime is contagious. If the government becomes a lawbreaker, it breeds contempt for law. To declare that the government may commit crimes in order to secure the conviction of a private criminal would bring terrible retribution."*

—Supreme Court Justice  
Louis Brandeis, 1928

May I remind you of how it is supposed to go when a person is caught in illegal wrongdoing? They are arrested by the police and have the right to legal representation, either a private attorney or a court-appointed public defender. The suspect must decide to plead "guilty" or "not-guilty," and if the latter, they have a right to a trial. This centuries-old process is bounded by rules from the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, monitored by professionals and leaves a paper trail. The purpose of the checks and balances of due process is to find the truth and to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. This model describes much of what happens in our justice system, however, there is another; it's called "snitching."

Instead of serving his sentence for running an identity-theft ring in San Francisco, Marvin Jeffery became an informant. Though Jeffery committed additional offences including violation of probation, police permitted him to remain at-large because of his "cooperation." After his illegal sale of an AK-47 machine gun that was used to kill a police officer, Jeffery disappeared.

Snitching involves a negotiated deal between the government and a suspect. This process corrupts and subverts the very institutions it is said to serve. In exchange for information from a suspect, the government—in the form of prosecutors and police, may ignore or reduce a suspect's potential criminal liability. Informants may reduce or nullify sentences, sometimes even keeping crimes off the record entirely. Trials occur in less than 5% of all cases where criminal charges are filed. Interestingly, 95% of all prisoners nationally report having taken plea deals. In some cases, defendants choose not to go to trial after they are told there is potential hostile testimony against them. They are not told what the testimony consists of, nor given the identity of the source. They never find out if the testimony could have stood up under cross-examination. If defendants do go to trial after having been offered a plea and lose, they can expect much longer sentences.

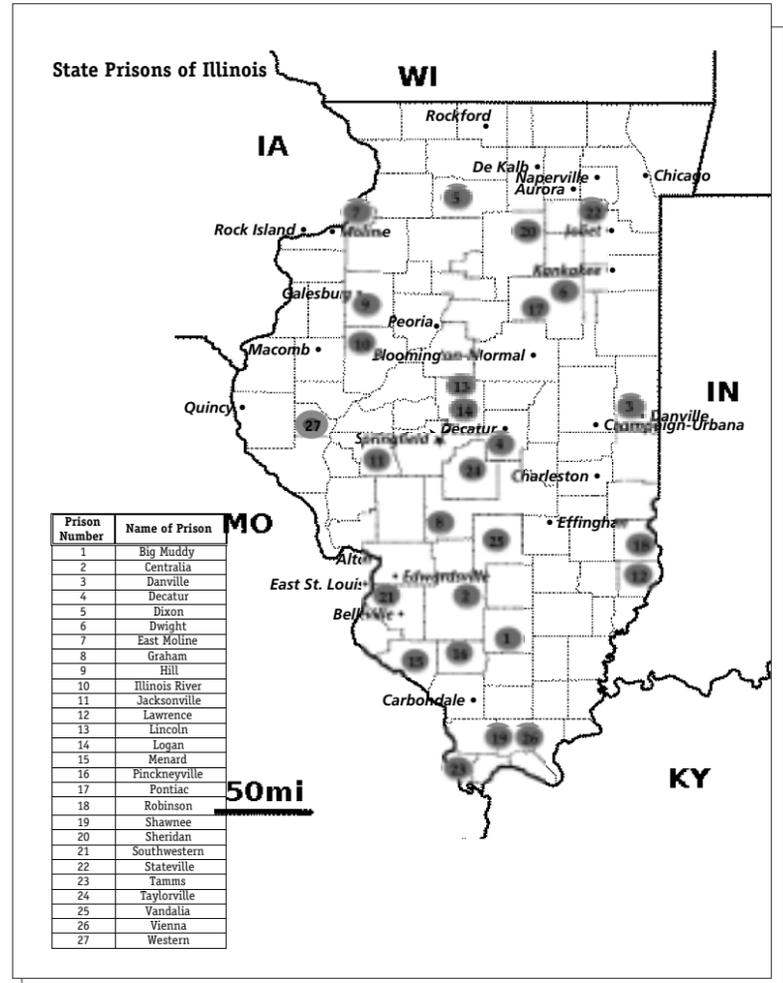
The use of snitches and the plea deal processes are devoid of consistent rules, and are used at the discretion of individual law enforcement officials. The quickest form of a deal is made at the scene of a crime itself when a suspect is implicated and then "flipped" or "turned" based on a conversation with police. Police paint threats of extreme punishment and suggest it can be avoided if the accused cooperate and troll for information on other criminal activities. These actions can encourage individuals with limited involvement in crime to become more deeply involved in order to provide valued information. Meanwhile, the informant's initial crime is left unreported so it

may be held over the snitch's head. Ninety percent of the criminal justice system is handled at the state, county, and local level. In this un-regulated territory, the Snitch system may catch more criminals because it has created them.

The Snitch system puts the police in the business of abetting crime in other ways. Informants often work, not just for leniency, but also for money. The FBI and Drug Enforcement Agency have budgets in the millions of dollars for paying informants. In 1993, federal agencies paid informants approximately 100 million dollars. Local police departments typically pay informants through vouchers or in cash. All of this is completely legal. These factors highlight ways in which the Snitch system compromises our justice system and upends its goals.

The potential for subversion is exacerbated by the lack of oversight and regulation. The snitch and deal process is almost always off the record. The exception is when something unusual happens that "outs" an informant. Take the case of Shance Dalton in Champaign County. Having pled guilty in October 2006 to selling 5.4 grams of crack cocaine, Dalton faced 30 years to life in the federal penitentiary. Dalton was known to be friends with Erick Johnson, a suspect in a nine-year-old murder. Dalton was offered a deal in exchange for fingering this friend. He was to receive the minimum sentence for murder, 20 years, and a reduced sentence from the federal court. During the trial, Dalton surprised everyone by testifying that, in fact, he himself had pulled the trigger and that Johnson was just there to make a drug buy. Dalton said, "you'd probably give up your own mama looking at that much time," and "they (police detectives) let me write a story and recite it to them. They taped it and brought it to you. Facing all that time is like somebody putting a gun to your head." This example highlights potential problem with this system. Furthermore, research shows that juries believe these witnesses at the same rate as non-informants. When deals are made, the resulting information is often severely flawed. The Center on Wrongful Convictions which deals only with DNA evidence cases has highlighted such flaws. In state and county cases, there is rarely evidence presented on whether witnesses have received deals in exchange for their testimony, in fact, the state and the informant can say "deal, what deal?" because they are rarely put into writing and they don't go into effect until after testimony is given at trial.

There are other costs of the Snitch system beyond its weaknesses in obtaining truth and eliminating reasonable doubt. This system has the effect of spreading distrust and fear. Vulnerable, poverty-stricken neighborhoods have



been compared to communist countries laced with neighborhood spies. People feel they cannot speak freely or fully trust anyone, even among families. This becomes a mechanism of social-control through fear and suspicion. Once the greatest resources for vulnerable and poor people, the solidarity and loyalty within a community is destroyed by thoughts of troops of people reporting to the government on the activities of their neighbors. Children see some people dealing drugs with impunity while others are snatched out of school or off the street. The criminal justice system appears to be irrational, unpredictable, and arbitrary. Some speak of "catching a case," in which criminal prosecution is compared to coming down with a random virus.

The Center on Wrongful Convictions (CWC) cite reforms in Illinois as leading examples of what is needed. A state law passed in 2000 requires reliability hearings for "jailhouse snitches" in capital cases. These hearings precede the trial itself and allow judges and defense attorneys to probe witnesses and deals keeping testimony out of trials when it is ruled to be unreliable. The CWC recommends that this process be adopted for all trials, not just capital cases. Adopting these types of reforms can help close loopholes in our system that undercut the values and ethics espoused in the foundations of our judicial system, government, and society.

## The U.S. (In)Justice System Doesn't Work.

Continued from previous page

—while restorative acts are those whose value is largely symbolic, a heart-felt apology may qualify, or a basket of vegetables from one's garden, or an invitation to dinner. It's certainly not surprising that people prefer to have both, but it turns out, Barter explains, that if they can only have one, there is a strong preference for acts that are restorative.

And yet, restorative processes aren't, at the heart of it, about apologies or even about restorative acts more generally. Unlike retributive justice systems, restora-

tive systems work because the people involved want to be there and are invested in the process, which allows the participants to not just understand each other but experience each other's humanity. That's why restorative acts are offered. That's why they're experienced as restorative.

Skeptical? I certainly was, and I wanted hard data, not personal testimonials. What I found was one empirical study after another that demonstrated the effectiveness of restorative systems. Indeed, a recent review by Lawrence Sherman and Heather

Strag of the research on restorative justice across multiple continents showed that restorative systems reduce recidivism in both violent and property crime in comparison to traditional justice systems and provide a variety of benefits to the "victims," including improved mental health and greater satisfaction with the justice process.

Such a profound process should be difficult to facilitate. It isn't. The power of RC rests in the process, and it is the structure of the process that creates change, not the facilitator, whose job is merely to create and

hold the space for the process to unfold.

Barter says the facilitators he enjoys observing most are those under the age of ten. Why not? In Dominic Barter's world, schoolchildren spontaneously break out into a restorative circle during recess. It seems downright inconceivable at first, but after a few days with Barter, the message sinks in: Facilitating a circle is child's play. Anyone can do it.

Isn't it time we start?