



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.

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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.
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THE INDEPENDENT MEDIA CENTER AND *THE PAPER* PRESENT ...

IMCFest!
Saturday, August 30th

Main St. in Urbana, between Race and Strawberry Fields (in front of the IMC).
1 PM- 10 PM

A FREE all-day festival showcasing local music and all the projects of the IMC. Come hear great live music and participate in indymedia production!

WHOSE STREETS? OUR STREETS!



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

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A Paper of the People

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The PUBLIC



IMC Poised for Big Things in Fall

August 2003 • V3 #5

by Zachary C. Miller

SUMMER IN CHAMPAIGN-URBANA BRINGS A SLOWER PACE TO volunteer organizations but this summer volunteers at the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center (IMC) have been laying the groundwork for what could end up being the most active chapter in its nearly three-year history.

On August 30th, the IMC will host IMCfest in downtown Urbana. IMCfest celebrates the IMC's Grand Reopening and kicks off a season of major outreach and training efforts. By December, the IMC hopes to finish raising \$100,000 for its Capital Campaign to purchase a building of its own. These projects are expected to bring over a thousand new people into the IMC and bring independent media and the tools to produce it out to a broader community.

IMCFEST 2003: THE GRAND REOPENING – ART ON THE WALLS AND PARTY IN THE STREETS

The IMC was shaken by the surprise closure of its performance space in May by City of Urbana inspectors. At that time it was unclear whether or not the gallery and production areas were also in danger of closure. More than a dozen volunteers had to put in many hours of work and donate over two thousands dollars to satisfy the inspectors and receive an occupancy permit. The back room performance space remains closed but the production facilities and the Middle Room Gallery, having passed inspection, are now ready for the Grand Reopening at IMCfest on August 30th.

"Just because we don't have a performance space doesn't mean we can't have shows at the IMC. There's always the street." That thought by IMC Shows Group members was the genesis of IMCfest 2003, the IMC's first outdoor festival.

The purpose of IMCfest will be to showcase the unique services that the IMC provides to residents of the Urbana area. The IMC is dedicated to providing the tools to produce and distribute independent media to the residents of Urbana-Champaign. Independent media may take the form of music, video, spoken audio, news reporting, visual arts, Internet media, and print. IMCfest will therefore be a multimedia event featuring presentation of these kinds of media as well as hands-on production workshops.

The primary feature of IMCfest will be its main music stage. The stage will feature about ten local music groups from a variety of genres (e.g. punk, indie-rock, world, goth/industrial, jazz, blues). This main music stage will give area residents the chance to hear music in a free, all ages, non-smoking, outdoor environment that could normally only be heard in bars. In addition to the main stage, a second more intimate folk/acoustic stage will be set up with another dozen local acoustic performers.

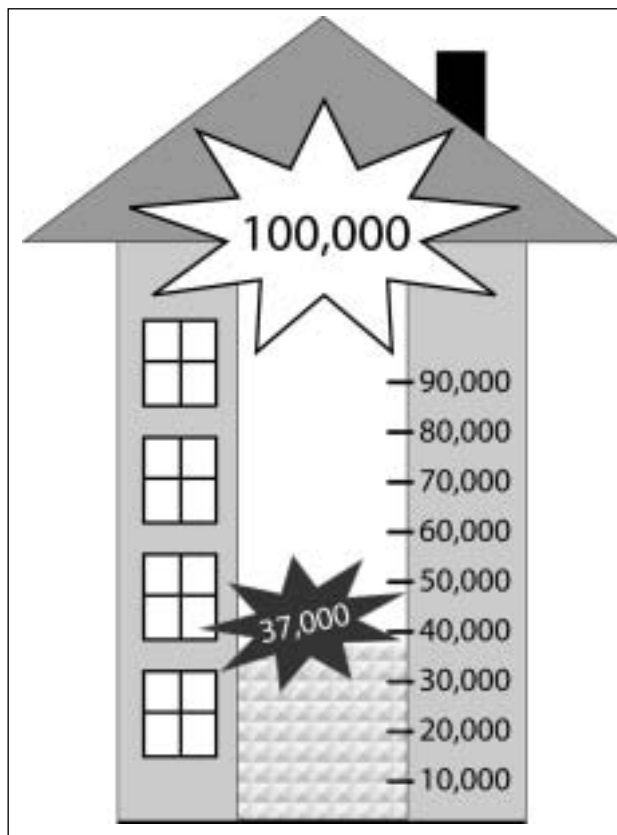
In addition to music IMCfest will feature independent media of many other types. Authors of independently produced 'zines will read poetry and prose from their published works, independent guerrilla films will be screened after the music is over, poetry will be read, visual art will be displayed.

In the Indymedia spirit of participatory open publishing, there will be several ways in which the festival participants can get in on the action directly. Musicians from the crowd can perform a few songs on the main stage during the cabaret period in the middle of the festival. Anyone will be able to speak on any topic for 5 minutes at The Festival Soapbox. Throughout the day, IMC working groups will offer workshops on media skills at the IMC.

By the end of the festival, dozens of new volunteers will have gathered audio, video, photos, and interviews with festival participants. With this raw material, seasoned IMCstas will teach the new volunteers how to produce radio, video, and print news stories.

As this story goes to press the IMC Shows Group is still

working on acquiring the appropriate permits and funding for the festival. If you would like to be involved in the planning of IMCfest please attend festival planning meetings every Thursday night at 7pm at the IMC, 218 W. Main Suite 110, Urbana. Additional details about the festival will appear at <http://www.ucimc.org/> by August 15th. If you would like to get involved with the IMC Gallery effort as an artist, curator, or volunteer, please contact gallery@ucimc.org.



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN - INVESTMENT IN THE COMMUNITY

The IMC's Capital Campaign to buy a building of its own, establishing a permanent presence in our community, is in full swing. The capital campaign seeks to raise \$100,000 by this December. In just a few months of active fundraising the Capital Campaign already has \$37,000 in the bank (that's up \$10,000 from the last issue of this paper). An additional \$20,000 has been pledged but not yet collected. IMC grant writers are working on several grants to raise additional funds.

The IMC has been able to do many things in its current rented space at 218 W. Main. The current IMC location houses an audio/video/print production facility with 5 workstations and professional audio equipment, an active art gallery with a different show each month, a radical library with over a thousand items, a consignment shop for independent media, snack sales from the common ground food coop, and a public meeting space. With these facilities the IMC has been able to produce a weekly radio show for WEFT 90.1 FM, a monthly newspaper distributed regionally, a weekly video compilation for Urbana Public Access TV, a monthly art gallery, and an ongoing open publishing website. IMC volunteers have reported on thousands of stories. Until recently the IMC's performance space hosted an average of four all-ages non-smoking independent music concerts per week. Several local organizations use the IMC as their community meeting space. The Capital Campaign seeks to give these successes a permanent home in the community.

All of the buildings under consideration by the campaign are significantly larger in size than the current IMC

space. Purchasing such a building would allow the opening of a very large all ages music venue, the expansion of the library, better production facilities, and larger meeting spaces. A larger building would also allow the IMC to become the home of a pan-progressive resource center in our community. Capital Campaign members imagine many of the local progressive organizations and services now scattered around town, or meeting in people's homes, all able to be headquartered in the same building. Such a building could house an artist's coop, a food coop, a concert venue, an art gallery, a community web hosting service, the hub of the community wireless project, an expanded consignment shop for independent media and arts, coop housing for artists and activists, some local progressive businesses, environmental organizations, labor unions, political parties, a cafe, a GLBT resource center, a theater space, and general office space for other organizations. IMC members have learned over the last 3 years that given space and excited volunteers, anything is possible. Some IMC planners imagine something like a year round indoor weekly Farmer's Market could be possible in one of the potential buildings.

Although the IMC had some, now resolved, trouble with the City of Urbana in May involving permits and code issues, many individuals from the city government and some local business owners are very supportive of the IMC's efforts to purchase a new building and Capital Campaigners expect significant cooperation from the city in terms of getting the appropriate inspections and permits for public assembly in the new building. Local residents who are concerned about the closure of the IMC's venue space can directly help reopen a safe all ages IMC venue space by contributing to the capital campaign.

The IMC is a 501c3 not-for-profit organization. All donations to the capital campaign are tax deductible as allowed by law. If you'd like to make an anonymous or one-time contribution to the IMC capital campaign, you can send donations by mail to:

**Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center
ATTN: Treasurer/Capital Campaign
218 W Main St, Suite 110
Urbana, IL 61801-2725**

You can also make donations online by clicking on "Donate!" at <http://capital.ucimc.org/>

The majority of the funding for the new building will come from individual members of the Urbana-Champaign community. If all of the thousands of readers of this newspaper were to donate \$50 each, the IMC would well surpass its fundraising goals and be able to purchase a new building immediately.

IMC Mission Statement

Indymedia is a global network of collectively run media outlets for the creation of radical, accurate, and passionate tellings of truth. We are motivated by a love and inspiration for people who work for a better world despite corporate media's distortions and unwillingness to cover efforts to develop an egalitarian and sustainable society.

The Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center (IMC) is a grassroots organization committed to using media production and distribution as tools for promoting social and economic justice in the Urbana-Champaign area. We are dedicated to addressing issues that the mainstream media neglects and we do not conceal our politics behind a false objectivity. We will empower people to "become the media" by providing democratic access to available technologies and information.



IMC Statement

The IMC Emergency Response Team released the following statement on May 19th, 2003:

On Thursday, May 8, the City of Urbana shut down the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center (IMC) performance space for code violations. The IMC deeply regrets this situation and wishes to comply fully with the Urbana Fire Code.

We are pleased to say that after meeting with officials from the City of Urbana, many misunderstandings have been resolved, and city officials are supportive of our efforts to serve the community. We have been assured by the city that the office space; library; radio, video, and print production room; and art gallery areas of the IMC will remain open. Meetings with less than 50 people will continue at the IMC. Our community space is still open during scheduled hours. However our music venue space is now closed.

WHAT HAPPENED

Throughout the community center's existence, the IMC has acted in good faith in regard to fire code compliance and will continue to act in good faith in the future. Problems arose not only from fire code issues, but also from lack of communication from the City of Urbana before, during, and immediately after the most recent inspections. The IMC has consistently been transparent with the City of Urbana about the use of the room as a performance space, and has publicly advertised events for the past year and a half. The performance space, the focus of the recent citations, was inspected eight months ago and the minor issues raised at that time were promptly resolved. All of the major violations that have been cited by the city preexisted the IMC's use of the space and the majority of the issues preexisted the annual inspection that occurred eight months ago.

After an inspection on May 5, the City gave the IMC twenty-four days to complete six repairs in order to comply with the Urbana Fire Code. The violations were not deemed serious enough by inspectors to warrant closing the performance space to public use. Within 48 hours, IMC members formed a plan of action and began fixing the problems. On Thursday, May 8, officials returned unexpectedly to the IMC and issued an official notice of closure. The IMC was not informed of why this sudden change in requirements had occurred. The closure forced the IMC to cancel several performances that were to occur over Mother's Day weekend.

While the IMC will complete the minor repairs in the meeting space necessary to ensure the safety of the building's occupants, the IMC is a tenant at 218 W. Main. Several major repairs require action from the owner of the building.

The IMC has been a vital part of the downtown Urbana economic ecology. The IMC brings many people each week into downtown Urbana to produce media, view art, meet with other community members, and hear a wide range of music. The hundreds of people who visit the IMC each week patronize many other downtown Urbana businesses.

FINDING A PERMANENT HOME FOR THE IMC

In the short term we will be forced to cancel some performances. The IMC is seeking temporary relocation alternatives for our shows. The IMC's goal is to provide a safe and educational space for youth and adults alike. The only long-term solution to the current situation that will serve best the community is to acquire a new space.

To this end, we are kicking our Capital Campaign into high gear. This campaign will raise funds to purchase a permanent home for the IMC. The IMC will not be able to reopen our previous performance space, but we hope within the next 12 months to buy a building of our own that complies with all city requirements for a public assembly space. Our goal is to raise \$100,000 by December; we have already raised over \$30,000 towards that goal in just a few short months.

If you would like to help with the Capital Campaign or become a member of the IMC please contact the Independent Media Center at 344-8820 or info@ucimc.org.

The St. Louis Biodevastation Conference

by *Sehvilla Mann*

Sehvilla Mann is a home schooled high school student, activist, and Urbana native. She became interested in biotech food issues after attending a protest at Monsanto's headquarters in August 2000. Since then, through her involvement in WEFT 90.1 FM and the UC-IMC, she has written numerous pieces about the social and environmental implications of the use of agricultural biotechnology and increased corporate control of the food supply. On May 16th, she was in St. Louis to attend Biodevastation 7.

ST. LOUIS IS HOME TO THE GIANT AGRIBUSINESS COMPANY Monsanto, perhaps the most recognized name in the biotech industry. Far from being hostile to the biotech industry, the city and state governments of Missouri seem eager to support it in every way possible through official government-industry collaborations. By supporting biotech, they believe it can help bring money into the state and into St. Louis. The city's mayor, the governor, and Missouri Senator Kit Bond all support plans to make Missouri a hub of biotech money and activity as the "BioBelt" state.

The World Agricultural Forum is a part of that campaign. It was founded in 1997 as an annual St. Louis conference as "the only neutral, inclusive, forum that allows for the comprehensive discussion of...global agricultural policy." World officials and members of corporations and nonprofit groups are invited to the lavish event, held this year at Union Station in downtown St. Louis. In reality, while members of groups with opposing viewpoints may be included, the WAF receives its primary funding from Cargill and other agribusiness giants. Its Board of Directors includes executives from Monsanto, Edward Jones, Anheuser-Busch, and the Emerson Electric Company.

Instead of bringing together a diverse group of people to formulate solutions to world hunger, the WAF, according to many farmers, scientists, and biotech critics, is merely a public relations vehicle for the interests of big agribusiness companies.

In response to such pro-business meetings, activists have organized an alternative conference, known as "Biodevastation," in order to discuss the implications of the use of agricultural biotechnology on a global scale. During the seven years of its existence, the conference, has been held in the same city as the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO), during its annual meetings held within the US and Canada. Biodevastation features panels and workshops led by some of the leading critics of the biotech industry. It has generally drawn between 100 and 150 participants, usually culminating in a protest outside BIO's meeting, with the number of demonstrators ranging from a few hundred to upwards of 2,500.

Despite a history of small, peaceful protests, St. Louis police told the press in the weeks before this year's WAF that they were preparing for "violent" protests, possibly "another Seattle," a reaction that could only be described as alarmist. Needless to say, there were many differences between the 1999 protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle and the demonstration planned for the WAF. In the United States, no biotech issue has ever drawn anywhere near the numbers that the anti-corporate-globalization movement has. Furthermore, the WAF protest was much less publicized; the organizers never intended that demonstration to be a national, much less international protest. It's not clear why neither a professional security firm, nor a metropolitan police department, were able to understand these differences.

As part of their preparation, the police were shown videos of an officer on fire in Seattle and of protestors attacking police dogs and horses. Seattle officers who were on duty during the WTO protest also briefed St. Louis police in person. On St. Louis Coptalk, an online discussion forum for St. Louis-area officers, several users expressed wishes to do bodily harm to demonstrators. The department commissioned aerial photographs of Union Station and the surrounding area to map out possible protest scenes. They coordinated their plans with Allied Intelligence, the firm hired by the WAF to handle security during their conference. They also began planning preemptive raids on the Bolozone, a cooperatively owned house, and the Community Arts and Media Project (CAMP) building, both connected with the organizers of Biodevastation.

The first target was Bolozone. Since it was bought out of condemnation in 1998, members of the collective had been working to bring it up to code. That weekend, the Bolozone was housing about thirteen out-of-towners, members of the Flying Rutabaga Cycle Circus, who were touring the country performing a play about genetically engineered foods. At about 10:30am on the morning of Friday, May 16th, two days before the opening of the WAF, police appeared in front of Bolozone with several paddy wagons and a

board-up crew. They based their raid on the pretext that Bolozone's building permits had expired and the building was condemned. The members of the collective, however, had not been notified by the city. Police arrested fifteen people and shut down the house.

Several days later, when those arrested were allowed to return briefly to Bolozone to gather their belongings, they discovered that many items within the house had been very obviously damaged or destroyed, while others were missing. Allegedly, certain items had been deposited in the toilet, a camera and video camera had been smashed, a photo defaced with a drawn-on mustache, sleeping bags and bike tires were slashed, and clothes had been drenched in urine.

Not long after the police had raided Bolozone, they arrived at the Community Arts and Media Project (CAMP), whose building was in the midst of being renovated as a multi-use community center, with offices for several nonprofit organizations and a couple of apartments. The Gateway Green Alliance, the local organizer of Biodevastation and the WAF protest, is located at CAMP. According to resident Art Friedrich, members of CAMP were told they had to consent to a search or the building would be condemned. They confiscated "two cell phone bills, multiple journals, assorted paperwork that I was not allowed to inspect, and a CD-ROM drive."

Nearby, police stopped a van of activists en route to the conference and told occupants they were violating the seat belt law. They were all arrested, while the driver, organizer Sarah Bantz, was charged with drug possession for what later turned out to be vitamins. The vehicle was impounded for the weekend.

In perhaps the oddest situation, police stopped nine cyclists outside Tower Grove Park and arrested them for "bicycling without a license," in violation of a law that had been taken off the books two years ago. They were later charged instead with "impeding the flow of traffic."

The level of fear that the St. Louis street police displayed towards the protestors was illustrated by an interview in a St. Louis Post-Dispatch article with a policeman who participated in the Bolozone raid. He explained that the police force had been conditioned to think of the activists coming to protest the WAF as "terrorists." He feared for his life as he neared the Bolozone. To his surprise, he was greeted by women painting flowers on signs in the backyard. "I know bad people when I see them. These weren't them...I think the street cops got used," he said.

Nevertheless, on the afternoon of May 16th, the Police Department repeated its allegation that the anti-WAF activists had violent intentions. At a press conference, Chief of Police Joe Mokwa displayed whips, torches, butane, roofing nails, batons, a bag of rocks and a slingshot found at Bolozone and said ominously that "we can certainly draw conclusions and expectations after we found these items."

However, the May 18th protest of the WAF was peaceful and small, without incident, exactly the opposite of what the police had anticipated. The organizers of the protest contend that their plan had always been for a peaceful and legal weekend. They maintain that the police cannot justify their actions, which they say violated the rights of the activists. According to the organizers, the police did little to protect the populace, but rather trampled on peoples' rights and certainly portrayed a negative image of St. Louis to those who had gathered there for a completely legal event.

The activists are now awaiting the results of a probe by the Police Department's Division of Interior Affairs, which is seeking to determine whether their officers participated in property damage. Police Chief Mokwa has stressed that any officers who participated in such destruction will be "disciplined." However, according to Mokwa, their findings are not likely to be made public. A report on the probe was due June 20, but, as of August 1st, has not yet been completed.

The Eastern Missouri American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) intends to file a civil rights lawsuit against the City of St. Louis pertaining to the police department's targeting of activists in the days before May 18th. The events have also renewed calls for an independent citizen review board of the Police Department.

The ACLU will file its case after hearings for those accused have been completed. The activists, meanwhile, are hoping that they are given the redress they feel they deserve. To them, it was a little shocking to find out that the Police Department had labeled them as "terrorists" and treated them so unjustly.

WWW.BIOTECHIMC.ORG

There is now an Indymedia site devoted specifically to the issue of biotechnology/genetic engineering, mainly with postings that are published on other Indymedia websites, as well as direct coverage of special events.



Letters from Guatemala

by Meridith Kruse



Meridith Kruse, a local activist from the Urbana community, just returned from Spanish Language School in Guatemala. She was the former Executive Director of the Illinois Disciples Foundation in Champaign and just completed a three month stay at Proyecto Linguistico Quezalteco de Espanol in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala Central America. Meridith is back in the Urbana area for a few weeks before returning to Guatemala with a human rights organization where she plans to assist with the documentation of human rights violations and the current political situation in Central America.

SUBJECT: HELLO SWEET FAMILY

Hi parents and sis,

Let me back up and let you know where I have been.

We left Saturday morning around 7am for Santa Anita. This is a community of former refugees. Many fled to Mexico during the war and many of their sons and daughters were involved in the guerilla movement. Renaldo, the guide for the school, lives here along with his father. We were to hear the testimony of his father and participate in the community celebrations around the construction of their new school.

Santa Anita is nestled deep in the mountainous jungle. After a long, packed bus ride, we squeezed into a pick-up and rode on bumpy, rock-laid erosion roads through garbage dumps and pristine wilderness and then walked into the village. When we arrived, the festivities were in full swing. There was a soccer game going on. It was a really hot, muggy day and only men were playing soccer. We mosied to the main plaza where an outdoor Catholic mass was underway. Under a blazing sun elderly people sat in school desks with umbrellas shielding their faces. Mothers nursed their children. A priest said mass. People came forward for communion. This was all in the plaza – really a basketball court – in the middle of their new school buildings. The school buildings were built of cinder blocks painted bright yellow and open air windows. After the service we went to Renaldo's father's house for lunch. It was a cinder block house with a latrine and a natural well in the backyard. As tradition would have it, on this hot day we had a hot, hot lunch of beans, papas fritas, eggs, and hot, sweet coffee.

After lunch a couple of the female students walked back to the plaza. We watched as some of the young girls in the community began playing basketball. I asked if we could join them and soon we were all playing full court. It was fun to play and get exercise and connect with these young women. Some played full court barefoot.

After about an hour, I remembered that we needed to return to Renaldo's house for our meeting with his father. From Renaldo's house we walked to an abandoned house. We would sleep there at night. We spread backpacks and blankets out on the concrete floor. Then Renaldo's dad, Pedro, came to give his testimony. I then realized I was the

student with the strongest Spanish so, with another student, I began translating his testimony.

This was the first testimony of a torture survivor that I had translated. It was intense and I worked hard to get all his words correct. It was such a challenge. I found that when you are translating, it is often not until afterwards that the profoundness of things hits you. The overview of his story is that he was part of a farming cooperative during the 1970s during the Lucas Garcia regime. This was enough to be accused of being with guerillas. He was tortured for 14 days and afterwards he was unable to work or support his family for many years. This caused immense hardship. He and his family fled to Mexico as refugees. Renaldo joined the URNG (Guatemala National Revolutionary Unity) guerilla movement after talking and learning about justice issues from his father while they were refugees in Mexico. Now they still suffer as coffee prices have plummeted. Renaldo and Pedro are working now with the URNG political movement.

Santa Anita was a special community. There was a dance that night – again on the plaza in the middle of the new school. They played marimba, and then disco music. I much preferred the marimba! I danced with lots of young children. It was really, really fun but sad too. All this life and hope in the midst of such desperate circumstances.

The next morning I headed to the mountain school – another very special place. This school began in 1996 as a counterpart to the school in Xela to give students a connection with rural communities in Guatemala. I was happy to have a change of pace. But people here are definitely suffering directly from the fall in coffee prices as well.

Each day I would eat my meals with Irma, who is 22, and her two young children, Glendi and Rodriguez. Her husband was working construction in Xela. He earned slightly more than his brother-in-law, who got 18Q a day for work on the finca. That is \$2 a day. Most men were trying to support their families on \$2 a day...impossible.

Food. There is not enough food here for people to eat. I was given very small portions of boiled bananas, fried potatoes, and boiled egg. Some mornings I had pancakes or mosh, a runny but tasty oatmeal drink. I was often hungry after meals. I was never served fresh fruit and I had a vegetable one time all week. Fruits and vegetables are just too expensive here.

Nothing goes to waste. Here the dogs are so skinny. I threw my used newspaper into the trash in my room at school and immediately the woman cleaning asked me if she could have the paper. This will be used for many things I am sure. Toilet paper, to wrap food, other things...

On Thursday night I translated a conference about the history of San Jose. This was an incredible story that helped me understand and put into place the abandoned finca buildings that I had seen on my walk the night before.

In the 1980s a group of 50 families worked on a coffee finca for a finca owner. The owner was a woman from Germany who, according to Aboleno, the man telling us the story, was a generous and fair boss. Then the woman died

and her son inherited the finca. He was fair at first and continued to pay them every 15 days and maintained good communication. Then he began to have financial problems and they went a month without pay. When they asked him what was going on, he told them to be patient. And, as promised, after about two months, he did pay their salary. So things went on and they all thought they would work and die on that land. But soon the son had financial problems again but this time more severe. The community went two, three, four, five months without pay. But when the son promised to repay them, they thought of the time before. He had come through so they were patient. Soon, it had been one year without pay. People were desperate. Children began to die. Adults were very sick. They asked for their money but were denied. They decided to organize.

Twenty-five families joined together. Twenty-five others were too scared. This was mid-1990s in Guatemala when people were being disappeared and called guerillas for doing social justice work. So the 25 families began to meet, organize, and hold protests in Guatemala City. Finally the finca owner came to talk to them. He promised to repay them. But he never showed up as planned. At this point the community was very, very desperate. They did not know if they could continue in a peaceful way. Then they realized that there was a lot of valuable coffee that was going to be picked up soon. By stopping the pickup they could economically pressure for their wages.

Aboleno told us that the day the trucks arrived to pick up the coffee, they were ready with machetes and sticks. They threatened but did not hurt anyone. The coffee was not delivered and the finca owner caved in. He gave them back pay for the whole year.

It was a hard struggle. They had organized and finally gotten food and money. Plus the finca owner gave each family ten sheets of corrugated metal to construct houses. They decided to leave the finca, purchase their own land, and build their own houses. This is how the community of San Jose began. They are an amazing, very well-organized community. They are supporting Aboleno in his local campaign for mayor with the URNG party.

On the bus this morning I was explaining the Fourth of July to a funny old man. He asked me if I was from Germany since my eyes were so blue. I told him I was from the U.S. with grandparents from Germany. I also had to add that I wasn't a very good citizen since I forgot Independence Day. We laughed. He asked me what year we got our independence and from whom. I explained 1776 from Britain. And then I had a funny thought about how messed up this world is. We did have an armed revolution to throw off a colonial power. But never mind that it was imperfect and only benefited rich, white men. And never mind all the indigenous people that we killed. It is an odd challenge every day to find my place here. I am the tall, white gringa on a bus with almost all indigenous Maya who wonder curiously who I am and why am I here. It is good. I need to be able to answer this. And I think I am coming into this better each day.



Photo by Matt Yeoman



Photo Robert Phares



Favorite Alternative Media Outlets

by various authors

AlterNet.org

AlterNet

A self-described “infomediary,” **AlterNet.org** is a like Dante’s Virgil, guiding us to the Web and helping us drudge through hellish corporate-driven, merger-loving, war-supporting mainstream media. It is John Edwards for the information-obsessed, like myself, or for progressives who go online hoping to find signs of critical resistance and candid discussion. Allow me to make just one more gross overstatement: Awash in a hyper-torrent of information, we need infomediaries like AlterNet. It organizes its frequently-updated collection of articles into a searchable database that includes other alternative sources. It also archives by date, collects in “content files” articles related to pressing issues, and keeps tidy and timely its main newswire. Part of the Independent Media Institute, AlterNet syndicates investigative journalism too – the stories available online come from these and other published and respectable sources in partnership. Heavily hyperlinked, it is easy to follow citations and reach other sites, sources, and viewpoints as well as peruse such vivacious and vigorous opinionistas as Molly Ivins and Arianna Huffington. Despite several points of criticism about the site that I will not launch here, I find AlterNet.org a solid starting point for Web sessions that undoubtedly lead far beyond it in a scavenge for information, analysis, and discussion. Via AlterNet’s database, those aiming to research a specific topic would surely find left-leaning gems. Finally, hard-core netizens can participate in a number of forums hosted by AlterNet in its admirable effort to mitigate against mega-media’s information onslaught.

Laura Stengrim

Common Dreams NEWS CENTER

Common Dreams

<http://www.commondreams.org/>

Founded in 1997 by a former Congressional staffer who learned the value of distilling the mountains of available information into manageable “Daily Clips,” Common Dreams presents progressive perspectives on the news of the day in their NewsCenter. The site also publishes in their Progressive NewsWire the press releases and position statements from the progressive community that mainstream publications often ignore. Common Dreams accepts no advertising or corporate support but with a small staff and a lot of volunteers they have created a site that promotes progressive visions for America’s future and could, in the words of *The Utne Reader*, “shake the world”.

Ken Fortenberry

counterpunch

Counterpunch

Counterpunch.org is the website of Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St Clair: they have a magazine of the same name that contains material that is not always on the web. Cockburn is the more notorious of the two, though St. Clair is known for his eco (and other) activism and writing in the Pacific Northwest. They have recently edited an anthology called *The Politics of Anti-Semitism*, to be published in October by AK Press.

Cockburn maintains a page long essay in *The Nation*, cut back from two pages sometime ago (Those editors would have done well to have given him the page his frequent antagonist Chris Hitchens surrendered when he went off in another direction). Beat the Devil, his column is named for his leftist father’s pseudonymous novel,

made into a movie, Bogart’s last, that was centered around control of a uranium mine in Africa...Hard to not comment on that presently.

The website features a wide variety of provocative essays from authors around the globe, most of whom aren’t in any media’s rolodex. Others are published like Edward Said or Robert Fisk, who are well known but don’t get calls from Brit Hume or Andrea Mitchell for comments.

Whilst their effort doesn’t take advantage of multimedia, no audio of Cockburn’s entertaining bookchats, for instance, they do the traditional literate approach well, even including a pair of hundred Best Book List, one of English language and another of works in translation.

Well worth your attention. Chomsky calls it “must reading.”

Paul Mueth



Democracy Now

When Are Our Sons, Daughters, and Spouses Coming Home From Iraq?

In an effort to learn more about the situation in Iraq, I sometimes listen to WEFT radio and Democracy Now! carried at 4:00-5:00pm Monday through Friday. On July 8th I heard just the end of a story about a military base somewhere in Georgia where a large number of spouses/parents of those deployed in Iraq are based. I missed the city and the number attending this meeting and a number of the details. However, I knew I could find out what I had just missed by going on line to www.democracynow.org. I found the details of July 8th story. The fort is Fort Stewart and the 800 spouses and/or

parents were crying, cussing, and yelling at the Pentagon official (a colonel) who had to be escorted out of the gathering. I appreciate knowing details like this, which you never hear on the usual mainstream media. These family members want their loved ones home and not left in harms way. Morale is low and the danger is high. The mood is changing and the fact that this took place on a military base and the number of 800 family members voicing this kind of attitude seemed significant to me. To read this very story go to www.democracynow.org and look into the archives for the July 8, 2003 story and read the details for yourself. The questions seem to be growing....

When is our military coming home from Iraq?

Jan Kruse

Portside

<http://www.portside.org>

e-mail: portside@yahoo.com

I am especially fond of Portside because, more than any other website I know, it offers important information on racial issues and developments in Africa. To be sure, it covers the globe as well as most other websites but it offers more concerning race and Africa the others that I have seen. This is probably due to the fact that Portside is the news, discussion, and debate site of the Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism (CoC). This organization was created over a decade ago by independent socialists and former members of the Communist Party/USA. The latter were largely African American party members who felt that the Communist Party was not giving them proper representation at the national leadership level. Aside from the CP itself, not all of whose African American members quit, the CoC is one of the few truly integrated organizations on the American Left. It contains a number of prominent intellectual activists, including Angela Davis. In case you are wondering, the name Portside derives from the nautical term of the left side of the boat.

Belden Fields

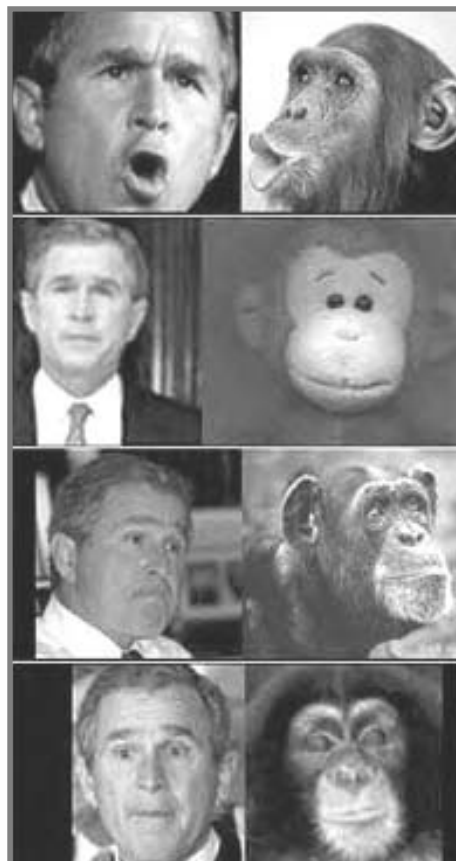
Bitch

Combine the phrase “feminist response to pop culture” with a cuss word, and you have an irresistible combination. “Bitch: Feminist response to pop culture” is exactly what it sounds like – an intelligent yet irreverent (read: snarky) analysis of movies, music, television, advertising, and the world at large. Bitch offers its take on everything from the latest scholarly works to “Joe Millionaire,” and no matter what these women write, it’s always fascinating. I don’t always agree with the authors’ viewpoints (although more often than not I do), but I have never seen a magazine so willing to discuss its editorial policies. So willing, in fact, that the letters section has been expanded to



include room for “letters about letters.” The first issue of Bitch I bought included an ad space where the editors, rather than running the ad, described it, explained why they had decided not to run it, and invited readers to comment on this decision. The dilemma was that the ad featured a pair of buxom blond women frolicking on a bed. It was for the band Nashville Pussy, and the two women are musicians, not just models selling records. There was no way to know this from the ad, however, so Bitch chose not to run it. But, and this is key to that indie media spirit, Bitch thought it owed its readers an explanation. I’ve been hooked ever since. You can check Bitch out at www.bitchmagazine.com, at bookstores around town, and soon at the IMC.

Meghan Krausch



Smirking Chimp

<http://www.smirkingchimp.com/>

SmirkingChimp.com, so named because of the remarkable resemblance of our commander in chief to a, well...smirking chimp, is as you might suspect, more anti-Bush than pro-anything else. But it’s a lot of fun and the articles they choose to reprint from a variety of credible sources while not balanced, are informative, and taken in such a large dose they are scary enough to move you to act or at least click over to the ACLU site and buy a card. “Ask not at whom the chimp smirks – he smirks at you.”

Ken Fortenberry

Media



IMC Websites

The IMC (Independent Media Center) network started in 1999. There are now over 120 sites on six continents. Any IMC website – www.ucimc.org in Urbana-Champaign – is an entry point to a vibrant, radical, people-to-people web of progressive, independent activists around the world.

Each site's opening page has a list down the left-hand margin of all the other sites. Austin, Portland, Philadelphia, for example. Istanbul, Vancouver, Nigeria. Both Palestine and Israel are there. So is Baghdad. Click on any in the list and you arrive at that IMC, where local citizen-reporters are posting breaking stories, links are available for background information, and there are photos and graphics you'll never see in mainstream media. The sites are interactive – anyone can add a comment to a story, and following the conversational thread is like entering a local debate. I know a mother who tracks her activist children's activity by going to the IMC sites of the cities they are in.

Back in May a couple of C-U folks headed for St Louis where the World Agricultural Forum and parallel Biodevastation 7

Conference were taking place (see the article elsewhere in this issue by Sehvilla Mann). When I heard on NPR that protestors in St Louis were being arrested, I went to the St Louis IMC website and could follow what was happening there, by the people it was happening to.

- Did you know that last month 10,000 people gathered in Los Angeles to protest against the Bush administration at a fundraising dinner? Not if you only tune in to mainstream media. You can read about it at the LA-IMC.

- Did you know that on June 21 twenty-nine people were arrested protesting against the EU Summit in Thessaloniki, Greece and that solidarity activities have been taking place in many cities across Europe? Check the Athens-IMC for more info.

- Interested in what will happen at the WTO meetings in Cancun, Mexico in September? Many IMC sites show local organizing efforts to go there.

IMCs are above all dedicated to disseminating media skills, so that people can produce radio, video, film, and newspapers, and become the media. The sites are as good as what is posted – so become a citizen-reporter yourself and get the word out.

LISA CHASON

UnansweredQuestions.org

SKEPTICAL!!!

Are you suspicious of the official Washington story line regarding the events of 9-11? So too are thousands of self-thinking Americans. "UnansweredQuestions.Org" is dedicated to pressing for a continued investigation of the unanswered questions surrounding 9-11. The current official explanation is not the total story they assert. To demonstrate the incongruity of the events of that day and the government's explanations regarding them, they have identified eleven "talking points". Each point raises significant ques-



tions about why and what happened on that fateful day. Each cries for a truthful and factual response. Yet to date these questions have been largely left unanswered or ignored by our government and press. The

goal of www.unansweredquestions.org is not to let these questions go unanswered but to aid the Government's Commission in finding the truth about the events leading up to and following 9-11.

If you too are skeptical of the government's explanation of 9-11, you will want to visit this web site. Being interactive, the site also invites you to submit your own unanswered questions regarding 9-11. Be a self-thinking American.

DURL KRUSE

Book Review

By Sandra Ahten

I-69 Does Not Stop Here

BY SEAN CONNELLY

This four hundred page novel is fiction, which should go without saying, but needs to be clarified because it is based on a real-life struggle over a battle that has taken place in Bloomington Indiana for the past ten years. The real-life battle is between the community and the mixture of corporate interest, the Indiana Department of Transportation, and Federal Agencies who want to see the I-69 interstate extension accommodate increased NAFTA trade by having a corridor from Canada to Mexico. Seven of nine Bloomington City council members oppose the I-69 extension through their community. They point out alternative routes (running parallel with old US 41) which would make more sense and do less harm to the environment and to the communities involved.

Sean Connelly, the author, and his partner Kay lived in Urbana and I met them through activist work on the Lincoln Trailer Park project back in 1996. He sent the book to me and asked me to review it. I was hesitant. Four hundred pages from a first time, self-published author on a political cause that he was personally involved in? Sounded like good getting-to-sleep material. Wrong. This novel captured me with its intrigue and unfolding story line cleverly threaded with historical and current facts. It was a lesson in the ruthless means taken to squash political dissent and to undermine the will of the people when that will does not fall in line with corporate interest.

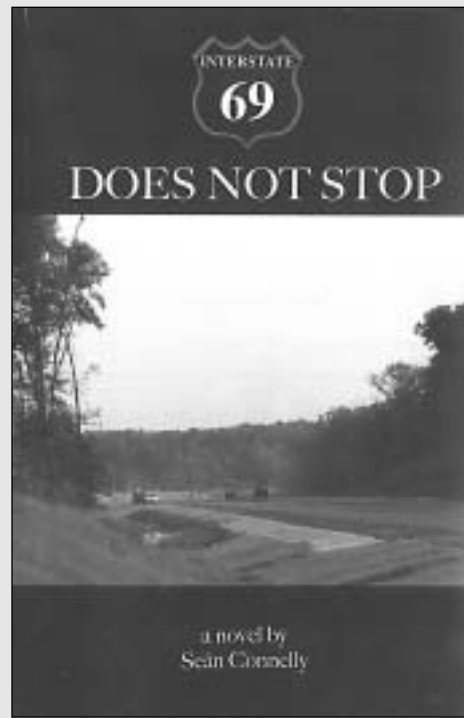
As it became more and more clear

that the intent of the novel was to educate the reader who might not know this history I worried that at some point the storyline was going to be subjugated to the education. I thought that at any moment I might be beaten over the head. Instead I found myself wanting to get back to the book to find out what happened next to Fionn (the tree-sitting main character), and the band of activist, anarchist, farmers, sorority sisters, sheriff and others who through alternative media, web activism, personal contact, education, music, and more come together as a community. I found the information regarding how PR firms work, the methods of the FBI, the history of why we have highways instead of mass transit all played to the plot and not the other way around.

I found myself hopeful. The author says, "This novel is about protest in the face of corporate government and corporate media, and largely about what it takes – unity – to combat these forces that create reality through repeated illusion." I know it's fiction. There are some places in the plot that stretched a little

thin, but I wanted to believe. I wanted to believe that unity could stop a highway. For after all, what else will? I'm allowing for the possibility that this work of fiction, of unity prevailing, of the building of community being worth the effort, is a foreshadowing of things to come. I find myself hopeful that life will imitate art (having taken its inspiration from life) will imitate art will imitate life, and that some battles will be continued to be won.

One copy of the book is available for borrowing from the IMC library and more are available for purchase. You can order directly from www.unknownarts.org or www.amazon.com.



WILL AM 580 THE INFORMATION ADVANTAGE

WILL AM 580

WILL AM 580 is a superb resource. The weekday morning talk program Focus 580 (10am-12pm) produces programs on a wide range of topics from general (home and garden care, medicine, finance, computers, electronics) to political (global/national/local events, journalists, candidate interviews) to author interviews. Plus, anyone can call in and ask questions and participate. If the 10am show doesn't trip your trigger, check out the show at 11am. In addition, WILL archives all the shows on www.will.uiuc.edu so you can catch interviews you miss or recommend interviews to your friends.

In addition to Focus 580, WILL also carries BBC news (9am, 8pm, and 11pm-5am). The BBC provides a more global news source and foreign perspectives generally missing in the mainstream media. The BBC can be quite enlightening. Simply adding a little BBC to your news diet can increase your awareness of global events tenfold.

Of course, I have to include Media Matters with Bob McChesney as an important piece of WILL's lineup (Sundays at 1pm). This program provides critical examinations of different media and, like Focus 580, is usually a call-in program.

Besides these benefits, WILL has real meteorologists (as opposed to disc jockeys reading teleprompters) and runs CBC news weeknights at 7pm. Be prepared to listen to ag reports at the tail end of every hour. For those of us who aren't farmers, it can be tedious, but I try to see it as an opportunity to expand my knowledge base and confirm my dream of a more diversified ag sector in the future.

SARAH BOYER



ZNet

Visiting ZNet (www.zmag.org) is like entering an enormous downtown department store – the alternative media equivalent of Bloomingdale's or Sak's. If you're looking for something in particular – whether Chomsky's latest comments on the Middle East or a debate about health-care reform – you're certain to find it. If you're just browsing, you could spend a virtual eternity meandering through an ever-growing number of sub-sites with topics ranging from Terror/War to Global Economics to Latin America to Gender issues, each a link-laden universe unto itself. And in addition to the cornucopia of compelling material, the reader may choose among 11 different languages. The options are truly inspiring, if not overwhelming.

My personal favorite is the "ZNet Interactive" section, which allows (registered) users to post their own provocative/progressive song lyrics, poems, quotes, reviews and cartoons. Indeed, here is where I enjoy the weekly privilege of publishing my own comic, Channel X, alongside more popular political cartoonists like Stephanie McMillan (Minimum Security), Jim Siergey (Cultural Jet Lag), B. Deutsch (Ampersand), and Kirk Anderson.

Founded in 1995, ZNet is the online offshoot of ZMagazine, a popular monthly which has been thumbing its nose at the status quo since 1988. The brains behind the operation belong to one Michael Albert, an activist, speaker and writer of over a dozen books focusing politics and empowerment, the most recent of which is entitled *Parecon: Life After Capitalism*.

DARRIN DRDA



Do You Know Where Your Government Information Is?

by Mary Mallory



Mary Mallory has been a librarian for 32 years. For 23 of those years, she has been a government information specialist, serving as the Head of the Government Documents Library of the UIUC Library since November 1999. Mary has worked as a librarian in Ann Arbor, Cambridge, MA, Manhattan, and CU.

A TRUE FACT, BUT UNFORTUNATELY NOT widely-known, is that over 1300 US Government depository libraries exist for the public's free use. The US Government is the world's most prolific publisher, and depository libraries receive 1000s of government titles annually at no cost for the publications. Two important corollaries, these libraries are required to provide direct access to electronic government information and databases on the Web, and to have specialists available to help anyone and everyone locate and utilize government documents in all formats. Locally, the Government Documents Library at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, is a designated Federal Depository. It is a community, as well as a campus, resource. Its librarians are specialists and advocates, who help users access government information. UIUC's Law Library, although more selective in terms of its collection policies, is also a Federal Depository.

WHAT A DEPOSITORY LIBRARY HAS

Depository libraries include the obvious, such as a 1980 congressional hearing, "Effect of Iraqi-Iranian Conflict on U.S. Energy Policy," or a 1998 congressional hearing, "Iraq: Can Saddam Be Overthrown?" Even Frank Zappa's congressional testimony on song lyrics may sound like standard fare. However, the range of subject matter which government information encompasses may surprise the uninitiated, and its educational and instructional value in a land-grant university environment such as ours extends far beyond the campus.

Libraries continue to receive depository shipments of government documents in paper, and audio-visual materials, CD/DVDs, maps, microfiche, posters, videos, etc.; yet, the passage of the Government Printing Office Electronic Information Access Enhancement Act of 1993 marked the beginning of the official trend towards a predominately digital Federal Depository program. This initiative evolved into the present GPO Access site, a marvelous resource for tyros and technocrats alike, which has official information from all three branches of the US Government. The possibility of relatively easy, unparalleled access to government information led to visions of "downloading democracy," and increased awareness of US Government practices and programs. Then and now, Federal Depository librarians develop web sites for their local congressional districts and communities, and promote e-government resources through a myriad of access tools. Examine the *Affirmative Action* web site, created by Grace York, Documents Center, University Library, U of M, Ann Arbor, or *The War with Iraq*, a webliography, done by James Jacobs, Data, Government and GIS Services, UCSD Libraries. Or in your own virtual backyard, view *Government Information for a Changing World*, the work of many, Government Documents Library, UIUC Library.

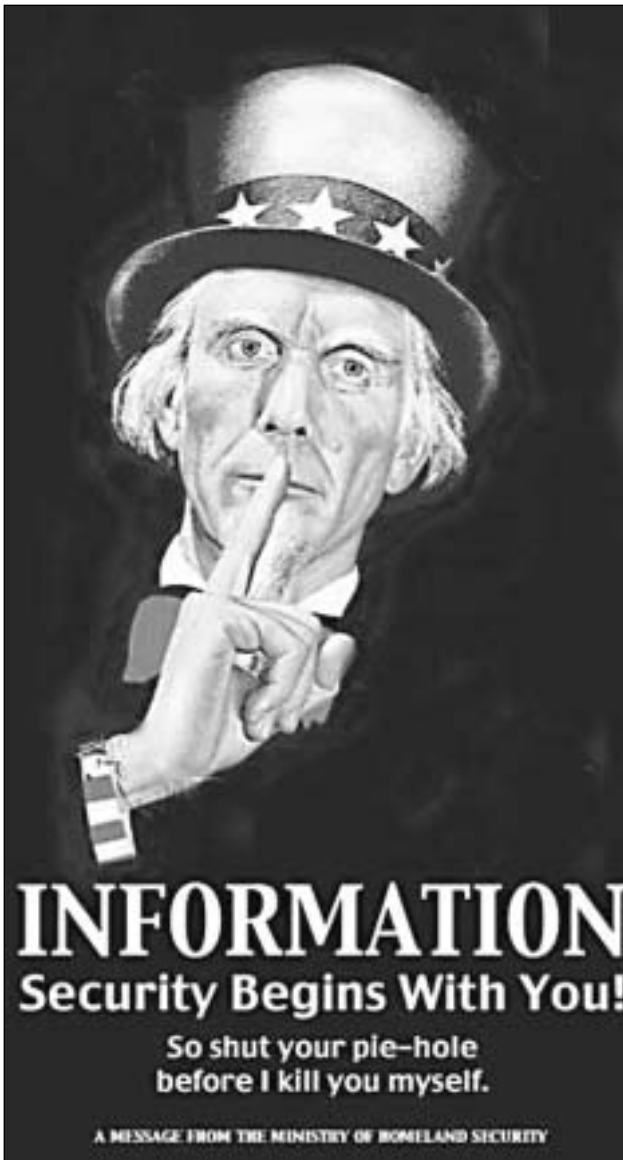
The depository library system originated in the country's oldest right-to-know laws. To many, an informed citizenry is fundamental to our vision of American democracy. Federal Depositories, encompassing tangible and virtual government documents, also function as the "nation's collective memory." These collections and services, combined with basic government information literacy skills, represent at least one major means of finding out what's what, and holding our public servants, elected or otherwise, accountable.

THE 'FUGITIVE' DOCUMENT

Throughout the country's history, "fugitive" documents have existed. Although the web environment has given new meaning to the concept, fugitives are basically government documents not cataloged in, nor distributed through, the Federal Depository Library Program. This would include, for example, a government agency fee-based electronic journal or database that was unavailable for free at a Federal Depository.

Another example, Congressional Research Service reports, prepared specifically for Congress, are not distributed for free to Depository libraries. Three recent titles, Low Power FM Radio Service: Regulatory and Congressional Issues, Substantive Due Process and a Right to Clone, or Patient Protection and Managed Care could conceivably be of interest to area residents.

The meaning of "fugitive" took on another dimension in the aftermath of the devastation on September 11, 2001. On September 14, 2001, President George W. Bush issued Proclamation 7463, declaring a national emergency by reason of the terrorist attacks. The vulnerability of electronic government publications, databases, and records did not originate with the 9/11 tragedy. However, the US Government's procedural response to it in terms of openness precipitated the removal of thousands of important government documents and infor-



Images taken from The Propaganda Remix Project (<http://homepage.mac.com/leperous/PhotoAlbum1.html>)

mation resources from the Web. In many instances, these web-based editions were the only official depository copies disseminated. Between September 11, 2001, through mid-October, 2001, US Government agencies and the Executive Office of the President either immediately shut down or restricted access to electronic government information. The Federal Aviation Administration took away its enforcement files, which included information about security violations, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission removed publications that had detailed specifications for energy facilities. The Centers for Disease Control and its Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry removed individual reports from agency sites. A number of Department of Transportation agencies, including the Bureau of Transportation Statistics' Geographic Information Services, the National Imagery and Mapping Agency, and the International Nuclear Safety Center, all removed maps or atlases from their web sites.

The list of agencies is long, and ranges from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry to the US Geological Survey. Selected actions by some of the agencies may seem justified. In many cases, it has been excessive. The Department of Energy eliminated over 15,500 reports from its DOE Information Bridge. These resources were part of the Federal

Depository Library Program electronic collection. The Environmental Protection Agency, excepting its own employees and contractors, and military, federal, and state employees, is now allowing the public only limited and less flexible access to Envirofacts, which the agency describes as "your one-stop source for environmental information." Although it is to be expected that the Department of Defense would do a sweep of what it considers sensitive, accessible e-information, journalists, lawyers, librarians, and many Americans really, wondered why the Department of Education, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Internal Revenue Service felt compelled to do so.

THE GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE GETS INTO THE ACT

The Government Printing Office rarely asks Federal Depositories to remove paper or other tangible format publications from the shelves. Since 1995, twenty tangible items, out of a total of 230,000 titles disseminated, have been recalled or withdrawn. In October, 2001, the Government Printing Office instructed libraries to "withdraw and destroy" US Geological Survey Open-File Report 99-248, Source-Area Characteristics of Large Public Surface-Water Supplies in the Conterminous United States: An Information Resource for Source-Water Assessment (1999). This official request was sent to 335 Federal Depositories holding a copy. Breaking this CD was not a natural act for us. This product, done in conjunction with the Environmental Protection Agency, was to assist the agency and states in meeting the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996 by identifying selected characteristics of source-water areas for drinking-water for fifty million people. In some areas, the FBI followed up to make sure the CD had been destroyed. A few individual depositories have been approached about removing other government titles.

AN ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY OF DENYING ACCESS

This trend was accompanied by a series of policy issuances that redefine open government and access to government information. Most of these have been fairly widely discussed. Attorney General John Ashcroft's October 12, 2002 memorandum to federal department and agency heads on the Freedom of Information Act, essentially a reinterpretation of the act, began the trend. If agencies are able to identify any "sound legal basis" for withholding information, the Ashcroft Memorandum clearly states that they will be protected. The USA Patriot Act, signed into law on October 26, 2001 by President Bush, and also his December 10, 2001, Administrative Order, empowering the Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson, to classify the department's information as "secret," confirmed the direction the Administration was taking. Heretofore the department had no classified documents. The result was many unclassified documents were removed from public view. The Department of Agriculture and the Environmental Protection Agency now have "original classification authority" as well. In total, over 4,000 individuals at agencies have this type of authority.

On March 25, 2003, one year after White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card issued a memorandum that contained guidelines for reviewing classified, reclassified and declassified, and also, "sensitive but unclassified" information, President Bush issued Executive Order 13292 – Further Amendment to Executive Order 12958, as Amended, Classified National Security Information. It "prescribes" a uniform system of classifying, safeguarding, and declassifying national security information. Foreign relations or foreign activities of the United States, including confidential sources and weapons of mass destruction are just two of the specific categories that could be restricted. It also provides new authority to reclassify previously declassified documents. Congressional Research Service has prepared a comprehensive report on Executive Order 13292, entitled, "Sensitive But Unclassified" and Other Federal Security Control on Scientific and Technical Information: History and Current Controversy. It points to problems, including the lack of a statutory definition, individual agency interpretation, and the potential expansion of the applicability of the "sensitive but unclassified" label. The Office of Management and Budget is apparently developing guidelines.

In light of increased secrecy and further limitations on e-government information, many activist groups, think tanks, organizations and professional associations, and individuals



are speaking out, lobbying and campaigning, and challenging such restrictions in the courts and elsewhere. For example, the American Library Association adopted a resolution on Security and Access to Government Information at its June 2003 annual conference. Another group, The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, has released *Homefront Confidential: How the War on Terrorism Affects Access to Information and the Public's Right to Know*, 3rd ed., RCFP White Paper, March 2003 (see RCFP's web site).

On a related note, the Information Secu-

ity Oversight Office's fiscal year 2002 Report to the President indicates that 23,745,329 classification actions – original and derivative – occurred. This is 2,909,520 more than the previous fiscal year, a 12.2% increase. The Department of Justice reported an increase of 39%. A dramatic jump occurred in fiscal year 2000, when the number of actions went from 8,038,592 in fiscal year 1999 to 22,965,363. This represents an increase of 64.9%, and each successive year, the number has grown. Stephen Aftergood describes the Bush Administration's secrecy as an "empirical fact," and predicts, given the state of military affairs, that this pattern will continue and expand ("The Bush Administration's Suffocating Secrecy," Forward, March 28, 2003).

Certain provisions of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, passed on November 22, 2002, create a broad exemption from the Freedom of Information Act. In response, on March 12, 2003, Senator Patrick Leahy, Vermont, introduced the Restoration of Freedom of Information Act of 2003, which would amend the Homeland Security Act. It was referred to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, and no further action has occurred on the bill. On June 19, 2003, Representative Barney Frank, Massachusetts, and Mark Udall, Colorado, introduced a similar bill, H.R. 2526, with the same title.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 harks back to another age, as it would allow the Director of the National Security Agency, in coordination with the Director of Central Intelligence, to exempt the agency's operational files from public disclosure requirements. As of July 22, 2003, it is in the process of being reported out of committee.

A CALL TO ACTION AND TO VISIT THE LIBRARY

If this bothers you, find out where, when, and how US Government information is disseminated, how it is organized, and read and use it. Whether you are attempting to understand the labyrinth of 1980s export controls vs. military items and technology sales to Iraq, tracking the latest activities of the Department of Homeland Security, or planning a visit to a national park, drop into your local depository library – virtual or otherwise. Talk with your depository librarians. Advocate for no-fee, broad public access to government information with as few restrictions as possible. It belongs to all of us.

Agencies Who Have Had Information Removed From Their Websites

- Agency of Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
- Bureau of Transportation Statistics: Geographic Information Services
- Center for Disease Control (CDC)
- Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC)
- Department of Defense
- Department of Education
- Department of Energy (DOE)
- DOE Information Bridge
- Department of Transportation
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Federal Aviation Administration
- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- Internal Revenue Service
- Los Alamos Laboratory
- National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
- National Imagery and Mapping Agency (NIMA)
- National Institute of the Humanities
- Nuclear Regulatory Commission
- U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)

From *The Working Report of the Task Force on Restriction on Access to Government Information*



Erskine Carter

THIS MONTH'S POET IN PRINT

Where are you from & what brings you here?

I was born in England, raised in Canada, and have lived in the US since 1974.

How long have you lived here?

I have lived in the Quad Cities for 16 years.

Any political work in your family of origin?

No.

Do you think of yourself as an activist?

Yes.

How do you find the courage to be an activist?

I don't see it as courageous, but merely as what I do as an educator and a human being who opposes violence and oppression.

List five words you would use to describe yourself.

Enthusiastic, open, tolerant, teachable, imperfect.

How would your parents describe you?

Unpredictable, lucky to be alive.

List five words your friends would use to describe you.

Dependable, funny, difficult, easygoing, compromising.

How would you describe your "family"?

Idiosyncratic.

How would you describe your "community"?

Diversified and unaware of its potential for goodness.

What are you most proud of?

My three daughters.

What gives you hope for the future?

My three daughters.

Where do you see yourself in 5 or 10 years?

Teaching English, writing poetry, and trying to make some sense of the world.

What organizations are you involved in?

Social Action Connection. I help organize and participate in peace activities.

How do you choose where to focus your involvement?

I choose to do what I can do best, and that is organizing, participating, and writing.

What is your profession?

I am a very satisfied English professor.

Who Am I?

I am not rose petals, waterfall, childhood's dream
I am not lullabies, tenderness, sweet summer rain
I am not the breath of babies, the taste of last year's honey
I am not philosophy, magic, christmas morning
I am not art or poetry
No, not I

I am not Buddha, Krishna, God, or Allah
I am not Mary, Gandhi, Teresa, Lennon
I am not friend
I am not brother
I am not sister, father, mother, neighbor
I am not heart
I am not semen
I am not egg
I am not sun or moon or stars
I am not the wind upon your face
I am not warmth, compassion, courage
No, not I

I am not serenity
I am not laughter
I am not sunrise or the silver slipped moon
I am not you or she or he
I am not love or hope
I am not peace

I am bitter leaves, stagnant water, mother's nightmare, father's folly
I am screams and sirens, toxic rain of retribution
I am the stench of swollen corpses, the flyblown taste of this year's slaughter
I am lying, deception, spikes of crucifixion
I am the song of suffering
I am Satan, Beelzebub, Wendigo, Legion
I am Attila, Charlemagne, Saddam, Bush
I am enemy
I am killer

I am destruction, disease, defiler, denouncer
I am the blackened soul
I am the evil seed
I am the poisoned womb
I am your darkest night, your darkest hour in your darkest day
I am the napalm flames dancing upon your face
I am hatred, cruelty, vengeance, fear

I am insanity
I am hopelessness
I am terror

I am guns and bombs and incinerated children
I am gas and tanks and fallen cities
I am ruin, pestilence, famine, and despair
Cold am I, dull, metal-barreled butcher heart
Feel my sweat ooze from your frozen flesh
Kiss my ashgray lips
I am plucked eyes, broken eardrums, splintered nostrils
I am numbness, the savor of dried blood and cracked bone marrow
I spit on warmth, compassion, courage
I kick the face of your bliss
I strangle your sons, rape your daughters
I corrupt your spirit and break your heart, violate your home
I am the one who murders peace

Yes, yes, I

I am the one who hates what's kind
I am the one who lies behind
I am the one who lies ahead
I am the one who craves what's dead
Try to stop me if you can
Try to stop me who I am
I am the one who came before
I am the one who keeps death's door
I am the one who makes tears pour
I am the pimp to Fortune's whore
Ask, who am I?
My name is War