

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

Comments on *Public i* articles may be emailed to print (at) ucimc.org. Send the email with the word "comment" in the subject line.

Community Calendar

1/21—*Women of the Southern Wind*, AEMS 2010 AsiaLENS Screenings: 7:00pm, Krannert Center's Studio Theatre, Free

1/23—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration Celebration Community Event, Lobby, Krannert Center, 10:00am—1:00pm

1/24

UFL Reads Memoirs—*Three Cups of Tea*, 2–3pm, The MacFarlane-Hood Reading Room (First Floor)

English Country Dance, Phillips Recreation Center, 2:00—5:00p.m.

1/25—WRFU / Public i FUNdraiser, Clark Bar, 6-9pm, \$2 at door, donations accepted

1/26

CAS Initiative—*Interpreting Technoscience: Explorations in Identity, Culture and Democracy—Designing for Democracy in the American Counterculture*, Spurlock Museum, Knight Auditorium, 4pm

Dealing with Embarrassing Ancestors: Modern Ibadī Muslim Writings on Kharijism, Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Lucy Ellis Lounge (room 1080), Foreign Language Building, 12:00 pm—1:00 pm

1/27

"The Politics of Road Mapping in South Africa," 101 International Studies Bldg, 910 S. Fifth St, Champaign, 12:00pm–1:00pm

Champaign-Urbana Potters Club, First meeting of the winter/spring session, Champaign Library, Room 215, 7:00p.m.

CAS/MillerComm Lecture: *Why is Europe, not China or India, the Second Superpower of the 21st Century?*, University of Illinois, Knight Auditorium, Spurlock Museum, 4pm

1/28

Japan Workshop, *Twisting Terms: An Etymological Approach to Women's Gender and Sexual Expressions in 1970s-1980s Japan*, Freeman Fellows Building, 912 S. Fifth St., 4:00 pm

European Movie Night: *The Last Homecoming*, 1080 Foreign Languages Building (FLB), Lucy Ellis Lounge, 5:15 pm

Lecture Series: *Climate Change and Deforestation in the Amazonia*, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, 101 International Studies Building, 12:00 pm

Outreach to Latina/o Communities, Ricardo Diaz, University Extension, La Casa 12-1pm

SUSTAINING CONTRIBUTORS

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

World Harvest International and Gourmet Foods
519 E. University, Champaign

SocialistForum: An Open Discussion and Action Group, Meets 3rd Saturdays of the month, 3-5 pm, at IMC, Broadway & Elm. (U)

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The shell that killed Kiwane



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Still a Dream

By Celeste Larkin and Ricardo Diaz



Celeste Larkin is a junior at University of Illinois pursuing a degree in Spanish. She is a member of the student group La Colectiva which works for immigration reform and awareness at U of I and nationwide.

This December, Ira McDougall (a real person with a different name) triumphantly graduated from the University of Illinois with a Bachelor of the Arts in Political Science. The seemingly normal feat is even more significant because Ira is an undocumented student and the obstacles to completing a degree are but further tests to the high character that a young person must display. Yet foreign students are still denied a path to citizenship. The laws must change.

Immigration reform is not merely a political issue to Ira. It is a daily battle for social acceptance and the gaining of nine, highly sought after social security digits. Even with a university degree, Ira cannot yet plan on getting a driver's license, registering to vote, or finding employment; these are privileges that he, at present, cannot enjoy. Nationwide, child immigrants of any legal status are required to attend school up to the legal age in the state of their residence; in Illinois, the student may continue through college albeit with systemic handicaps because these near native residents do not have a social security number. Like other undocumented immigrants of any age or origin, they are not eligible for financial aid, permitted to drive, or even to get on a plane. Gaining a college degree is thus fraught with numerous obstacles.



Members of La Colectiva at the Foellinger Hall rally

Constant fear not only changes Ira's long-term goals of employment, voting, or applying to graduate schools, but also deeply affects his everyday reality. Even a simple drive to the grocery store is anxiety-ridden, and Ira is, "extra cautious so that I do not get pulled over, even arrested, for the reason that I do not have a driver's license." But Ira is not alone.

Every year, 65,000 hardworking, law-abiding, yet undocumented students graduate from high school only to confront the trials of life without the rights of citizenship essential to normalcy and opportunity. Having grown up in the USA but without legal status, the desire of these young people to contribute to their own society is nullified. There are many that believe this situation must be changed, legally.

On Wednesday, December 9th, 2009, members of the University of Illinois' I Dream Coalition, (including M.E.Ch.A., UNFAS and La Colectiva), hosted a comprehensive immigration reform rally in the U of I's Foellinger Auditorium. The rally called together hundreds of the Urbana-Champaign community, students, faculty and staff as well as fellow student organizers from other Illinois universities such as ISU. The groups

focused on support for the D.R.E.A.M. Act, a bi-partisan piece of legislation that would provide undocumented students a viable pathway to legal residency through higher education. It would permit undocumented people to get a high school degree in the US, keep a clean record, attend a minimum of two years of college, and then get in line for citizenship. The bill needs two more U.S. senators for passage.

The frigid weather and the fierce winds fanned the enthusiasm of individuals of our Illinois community as they came together to learn about and demand immigra-

DREAM Act (S. 1545, H.R. 1751)

The DREAM Act has four basic requirements which are:

- You entered the country before the age of 16;
- You graduate high school or obtain a GED;
- You have good moral character (no criminal record); and
- You have at least five years of continuous presence in the US.

If you meet the above criteria, once the DREAM Act passes, you will then have six years within which to obtain a two-year college degree or complete two-years of military service. Upon doing all of this you will gain the chance to adjust your conditional permanent residency to U.S. citizenship.

Find contact info for any Representative or Senator at the following site: www.congressmerge.com/onlinedb/index.htm

The New York Times has reported on 4 top students walking from South Florida to Washington D.C. (1,500 miles) in order to raise support for the DREAM Act, the legislation that would include a path to citizenship for eligible illegal immigrants. Learn more at: trailofdreams.net.

tion reform. Indeed, Ira's voice was especially loud and his DREAM ever closer. When asked about his own motivation, Ira said, "my parents came to this country for my future. The reality is that I do not have any other options. Education is the only way that I can even remotely improve my chances of adjusting my status."

Todavía un Sueño

Por Celeste Larkin, y Ricardo Diaz



Ricardo Diaz is an independent research consultant for Latino communities in the U.S. He hosts a show on immigration issues Thursdays from 3 to 4 PM on WRFU 104.5.

El pasado diciembre, Ira McDougall se graduó de la Universidad de Illinois con el triunfo de una licenciatura en la ciencia política. Es un triunfo porque Ira es un estudiante indocumentado.

La reforma inmigratoria no es simplemente un tema político para Ira; es una batalla diaria por una aceptación sistemática y social por medio de nueve, muy exigidos números de seguro social. Ira no ve las posibilidades de tener una licencia de conducir, registrarse para votar, o encontrar trabajo sin darse cuenta de que estos son privilegios que él, en este momento, no puede disfrutar.

La constante ansiedad no solamente cambia las metas de su vida, sino también su realidad cotidiana. Aún una

salida a la tienda está llena de preocupación para Ira, quien dice que tiene "mucho cuidado para no ser parado, aún detenido, por no tener licencia de conducir."

El miércoles, 9 de diciembre, 2009, en el Foellinger Auditorium de la Universidad de Illinois, los miembros de la Coalición IDream, incluyendo los de M.E.Ch.A., UNFAS y La Colectiva, se juntaron con la comunidad para exigir una reforma integral del sistema de inmigración. La congregación incluyó estudiantes, facultad, y empleados de la U of I, miembros de la comunidad de Urbana-Champaign, y estudiantes compañeros de otras universidades de Illinois, como es ISU.

A pesar de que el tiempo afuera hacía mucho frío con viento feroz, nos juntamos para aprender y exigir la reforma necesaria del roto sistema de inmigración. Efectivamente, Ira, un líder en el grupo estudiantil La Colectiva, alzó su voz con el resto de los congregados. Específicamente, el evento se enfocó en apoyar la propuesta D.R.E.A.M. Act, legislación bipartidaria que proveería a los estudiantes indocumentados un camino hacia la ciudadanía al cumplir una educación universitaria.

Cada año, 65,000 estudiantes trabajadores se gradúan del colegio, (high school) topándose con el dilema de intentar vivir normalmente sin los nueve números esenciales, números que les reconocerían como miembros de la sociedad que son. Sin este estatus legal, estos estudiantes pierden su oportunidad de contribuir a sus comunidades y sentirse parte de su propio país.

La noche del miércoles 9 de diciembre, nuestra comunidad alzó su voz, exigiendo merecidos derechos de nuestros compañeros, vecinos y amigos. Estudiantes como Ira inspiraron los gritos de manifestación. Cuando le preguntamos de su propia motivación, Ira dijo, "mis padres vinieron a este país para mi futuro. La realidad es que no tengo otra opción. La educación es la única manera para cambiar mi situación aún remotamente, para ajustar mi estatus."

A pesar del tiempo frígido, nuestras voces juntas, calentaron el debate sobre la necesaria reforma de nuestro sistema roto de inmigración. En este momento histórico y decisivo, nuestra comunidad mostró que no solamente soñamos, sino también actuamos. ¡Sí se puede!



Juvenile Justice in Champaign County— A Racial Disparity

By Durl Kruse

The nature of the daily interaction between local police and minority youth has become a topic of great discussion in our community. The recent police shooting of Kiwane Carrington and the charging of the other 15 year-old involved have highlighted the tensions and distrust that many in the black community have of local policing practices. The handling of the incident by the State's Attorney's office has also raised the related question of whether the criminal justice system itself can be fair and impartial to minority youth. In short, people are asking, "is there a racial disparity in policing practices and the dispensing of juvenile justice in Champaign County?"

To partially address that question, Champaign Citizens for Peace and Justice (CUCPJ) requested through the *Freedom of Information Act* documents from the State's Attorney's Office detailing all juvenile cases filed in Champaign County since January 2008. Before examining this information, a couple of demographic facts must be established. According to 2008 U.S. Census figures, Champaign County's juvenile population (persons under 18) was 38,533. Approximately 30,000 or 78% were white, 4400 or 11.5% were black, and 4000 or 10% were Asian and other. This background serves as a critical lens when reviewing the number of charges and types of juvenile cases filed in Champaign County.

There were a total of 525 juvenile cases filed between January 2008 and October 2009, a 22 month period of time. That's one case for every 73 young people in Champaign County. But when broken down by race, 384 or 73% involved blacks, 106 or 20% involved whites, and 35 or 7% involved "others." When viewed in relationship to each race's proportion of the population, the disparity is glaring. During this period 3.5 of every 1000 white youth faced a criminal charge in Champaign County while 86.7 of every 1000 black youth did. Black youth are 24.8 times more likely to be involved with the police and charged with a criminal act than white youth.

Is the behavior of black youth 24.8 times more criminal than white youth? While everyone recognizes the serious educational, social and economic problems faced by black youth, do these alone explain this huge discrepancy? Or, could black youth be experiencing a different type of interaction with police, a situation where police may be profiling black youth or exercising more aggressive policing practices than toward white youth? Is there an unwritten zero-tolerance directive by the police department in effect in the black community?

An example of this practice might be seen when looking at "resisting arrest and/or obstructing justice" charges filed by the State's Attorney. There were 24 cases in

all, 22 or 92% of them involved black youth and no white youth were identified with any case. Does it seem reasonable that only black youth resist arrest or obstruct justice? How is this discrepancy to be explained, other than by acknowledging that race is an unspoken factor in police interactions?

Once young people enter the juvenile justice system, how are their cases generally disposed? Reviewing conviction rates provides a helpful insight.

Again, during these twenty-two months (1/08–10/09), of 525 juvenile cases filed 344 had been "disposed," i.e., a decision rendered. There were 95 misdemeanor and 60 felony convictions. The remaining 189 cases were either plea bargained or simply dismissed. Broken down further by race, 48.8% or 120 of the disposed black cases ended in a felony or misdemeanor conviction, while 36.6% or 26 of the disposed white cases ended with such a conviction. In other words, the conviction rate was 12.2 percentage points higher for black youth than white youth. One would assume in a fair and impartial justice system these conviction rates would be very similar. But they are not! So, what accounts for black youth receiving a significantly higher percentage of convictions than white youth? If not race, what?

Even this cursory review of recent juvenile statistics highlights serious and huge disparities between black and white youth in Champaign County. Clearly, more comprehensive and detailed information is needed on this subject. However, these limited statistics do provide a glimpse of a major local problem, a situation where black and white youth have qualitatively different interactions and experiences with the police and juvenile criminal justice system. Until the community admits and addresses these differences, these inequities in juvenile justice for minority youth will persist.



Organizing the Unemployed

By Ricky Baldwin



A disheveled man stands in a local post office asking for spare change. Another man hands him a dollar and strikes up a conversation, fishers-of-men style. The second man describes a local effort among unemployed and underemployed workers to get together and work for their own agenda on their own terms: jobs and job creation programs, equitable hiring priorities for economic development and 'stimulus' projects, extended unemployment benefits, dignity and self-determination.

The Unemployed and Anxiously Employed Workers Alliance, (UAEWA), a project of the Central Illinois Jobs with Justice and the AFL-CIO's Working America program, also has a hotline (469-6111) where Sandra, a retired public aid worker, helps callers connect to local services of various sorts, offers help filling out claim forms, refers callers to knowledgeable advocates within a network of contacts, and—perhaps most importantly—helps identify potential activists and organizers to build the local movement of the unemployed and underemployed.

A local union laborer who has seen 90 percent of his usual work evaporate, a former school bus driver, a member of the Safe Haven homeless community, and others are pitching in to build this movement in Champaign County.

This project follows a pattern that is emerging in cities around the country, from Maine to the Carolinas, to Texas and California. In Indiana, Tom Lewandowski, a laid-off union electrician, has been organizing unemployed and 'precariously employed' workers for a year this January. The grassroots group pickets unemployment offices, protests at the state capitol, and holds meetings of unemployed workers to make their own decisions.

The UAEWA describes itself as a kind of broad-based union, negotiating with local development boards for job cre-

ation programs, picketing for extended benefits, and pressuring public officials to change spending priorities. In April the UAEWA won a showdown with Indiana Republicans over an unemployment benefits bill, defeating draconian cuts.

SANTA CLAUS VERSUS U-6

"A record 20 million-plus people collected unemployment benefits at some point in 2009," according to a New Year's Eve story from *AP/ABC News*. Half the states have already run through the trust funds out of which they pay unemployment benefits and are projected to borrow \$90 billion from the feds by 2012. There are now approximately six workers looking for each available job in the US.

Yet so many categories of people have been excluded from these official estimates under successive White House Administrations, each erasing a new chunk of jobless Americans from the official picture, that many economists say the 'real' unemployment rate is at least twice the official rate—and it reached a 68-year high in 2009, according to *Dollars & Sense* magazine.

Higher rates are more in line with the observant citizen's estimations. When Detroit's official unemployment rate hit 27% in October, Mayor David Bing scoffed that the number was as believable as Santa Claus. Rightly so, as it turns out: the *Detroit News* reported Dec. 16 that a University of Michigan economist finds that as many as half of Detroit workforce may now be jobless.

The lower "U-3 rate of unemployment usually cited in the media does not count workers who have given up looking for work, or who have been unable for reasons of health, family, transportation, or other factors, to actively look for a job in the last four weeks; who have been forced to accept reduced hours; who have gone back to school in an effort to replace lost jobs; "independent contractors" or

Continued on page 5

Who Is 'Unemployed?'

For most people, it's not that hard to define 'unemployed.' Most dictionaries do a pretty decent job, for example: *adj.* 1. Not employed; without work. But politicians and economists with an agenda work a bit harder at it. Successive White House Administrations from Kennedy through Bush II have each in turn figured out ways to artificially lower the official unemployment rate by deciding not to count more workers than their predecessors. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics currently maintains fully six measures of 'unemployment'—but the media only report one.

- U-1:** percentage of labor force officially unemployed for 15 weeks or longer;
- U-2:** percentage of labor force who were fired or involuntarily laid off, or completed temporary work;
- U-3:** official unemployment rate, the percentage who are unemployed and actively seeking work;
- U-4:** includes U-3 plus officially "discouraged" workers, who have given up and don't believe they can find work;
- U-5:** includes U-4 plus workers who have given up for various reasons: health, transportation, etc.;
- U-6:** includes U-5 plus workers involuntarily working part-time.

Some economists believe even the U-6 rate seriously undercounts the jobless rate, as it leaves out, for example, "independent contractors" (often employees who are caught in a kind of shell game by employers who are trying to avoid paying the Social Security tax) who are unable to find work.



State's Attorney Files No Charges Against CPD

By Kerry Pimblott



Kerry Pimblott is a graduate student in African-American History at the University of Illinois and a member of the Graduate Employees' Organization, Local 6300 (AFT/IFT-AFL-CIO).

On December 8th, 2009, Champaign County State's Attorney Julia Reitz released her report on the death of Kiwane Carrington, a 15 year-old African-American, at the hands of Champaign police officers. Almost two months after the shooting, Reitz determined that while tragic, Kiwane's death was accidental and that none of the evidence recovered by the Illinois State Police's investigation supported the filing of criminal charges. However, for some the report leaves more questions than it answers.

Central to the State's Attorney's case is her contention that officers acted within the law in approaching reports of a forcible felony in progress with their weapons drawn, and that when Officer Daniel Norbits did shoot it was accidental and without intent. In order to bring the charge of First Degree Murder against Officer Norbits, Illinois criminal law requires that the prosecution prove that Norbits fired his gun with the intent to do great bodily harm or to cause death (720 ILCS 5/9-1). Since all of the available evidence indicates that Officer Norbits fired his weapon accidentally, the State's Attorney concludes that the charge of First Degree Murder is "unsupportable."



Chief R.T. Finney in a Chief Illinewek shirt, Oct. 9

The State's Attorney also assessed whether the lesser charge of Involuntary Manslaughter should be filed. To bring the charge of Involuntary Manslaughter, Illinois criminal law requires that the prosecution prove that Officer Norbits performed the acts that caused Kiwane's death recklessly (720 ILCS 5/9-3), where recklessness is defined as the conscious disregard of a substantial and unjustifiable risk that is a gross deviation from the standard of care which a reasonable person would exercise in the situation (720 ILCS 5/4-6).

After looking at the available evidence, the State's Attorney concluded that the charge of Involuntary Manslaughter could not be supported for two reasons. Firstly, she contends that the officers did not act recklessly in their approach to the scene or by engaging in a physical struggle with their weapons drawn. According to Reitz, several factors justified this type of approach including the fact that officers were approaching reports of a forcible felony in progress, their fears of an unknown third party at the scene, their lack of knowledge about whether the subjects were armed, and the subjects' lack of cooperation. In this context, Reitz finds the officers' actions to be reasonable, not reckless. Secondly, the State's Attorney hones in on the legal definition of recklessness contending that there is no evidence that Officer Norbits made a conscious decision to disregard a substantial and unjustifiable risk in this case. Since there is no evidence to support the claim that Officer Norbits consciously pulled the trigger, Reitz contends there is no support for the charge that he consciously disregarded a substantial and unjustifiable risk and that any reasonable person would have acted in a similar fashion.

After months of vocal protest, the quiet after the report dropped is telling. That quiet has less to do with the persuasiveness of the State's Attorney's findings than with the sense of futility that inevitably overwhelms those that seek justice in police-related homicides, especially those perpetrated in black communities across this country. While the odds seem enormous, it is vital that concerned community members read the report again and lend a critical eye to its findings. Such an examination reveals several problems that require further investigation.

Most critically, the State's Attorney's findings are based entirely on evidence procured by a Multi-Jurisdictional Investigative Team that was incapable of performing an independent investigation into Kiwane's death. The investigative team was composed of Rantoul, Champaign County, University of Illinois, City of Urbana, and State Police officers who work very closely with the Champaign Police Department. These officers often graduated from the same school, worked on the same criminal cases, served on the same SWAT teams, attended the same training seminars, responded to the same dispatch calls for back-up, and have opportunities to socialize after hours. These well-established connections hindered the ability of the Multi-Jurisdictional Investigative Team to perform an independent investigation and raise important questions about the credibility of the evidence upon which the State's Attorney based her findings.

The credibility of the evidence is further challenged by the fact that high-ranking officers from the State Police and Champaign Police Department agreed to permit the lead police witness in the case, Officer Norbits, a four-day extension before giving his statement to investigators on October 13th. According to Deputy Chief Troy Daniels, he granted the extension after hearing of Officer Norbits' "memory issues." Sergeant Mike Atkinson of the State Police agreed with Deputy Chief Daniels' argument that sleep would be beneficial and permitted the extension. Whether or not this delay impacted Officer Norbits' testimony, the fact that police granted the extension brings an air of contamination to the findings of the investigation.

Even if we accept the evidence procured by the investigation, the State's Attorney's logic on the Involuntary Manslaughter charge in particular, remains dubious. While the investigation produced no evidence that Officer Norbits consciously pulled the trigger, this does not mean that his actions fail to satisfy the legal definition of recklessness as the conscious disregard of a substantial and unjustifiable risk that is a gross deviation from the standard of care which a reasonable person would exercise in the same situation (720 ILCS 5/4-6). In fact, several factors support the charge of recklessness or at least muddy the waters enough to warrant the case being put to a jury trial.

Most obviously, guns do not just discharge without human intervention. It is well understood in the law-enforcement community that the Glock 45 which Officer Norbits uses is particularly prone to accidental discharge. The weapon has no external safety and requires only 5.5 pounds of trigger pressure to discharge as opposed to 9-14 pounds for equivalent pistols. In addition, the trigger mechanisms also have a shorter distance to travel than equivalent pistols. These specifications led the FBI to predict that the Glock would "inevitably... lead to an unintentional shot at the worst moment," and by 1999 the pistol had produced over 120 accidental discharges by the Washington D.C. Police Department alone.

For these reasons, officers are given special training on handling firearms. Officer Norbits had received extensive firearms training prior to the shooting of Kiwane and would have been well versed on appropriate methods of holding and holstering the weapon in

LYNCHING THEN, LYNCHING NOW

Champaign-Urbana stop on the Campaign to End the Death Penalty's national speaking tour

Wed. Feb. 24, 7 PM
University of Illinois
Gregory Hall R. 307
810 S. Wright St. (on southwest corner of quad)

Champaign-Urbana has found itself at the center of a fight to tackle racism in the criminal justice system in the wake of the murder of Kiwane Carrington, an unarmed 15-year-old African-American youth, at the hands of Champaign police. Join a panel of exonerated prisoners and activists as we discuss the links between the historical practice of lynching, racism, and the criminal justice today.

Speakers include:

- Mark Clements, sentenced to life without parole at age 16 based on a confession tortured out of him by Chicago police, released last year
- Marvin Reeves, exonerated Illinois prisoner
- Marlene Martin, National Director of the Campaign to End the Death Penalty
- Brian Dolinar, Champaign-Urbana Citizens for Peace and Justice

Presenting the CEDP's National Speaking Tour for 2009—2010. Join this teach-in tour in cities around the country this fall and spring. Learn about the experiences of those who have been freed from death row, activists and scholars on the role of racism in our criminal justice system, and why the death penalty and unjust sentencing need to be abolished.

The local tour stop is sponsored by the International Socialist Organization and Champaign-Urbana Citizens for Peace and Justice

For more information contact
iso.champaign@gmail.com or call 415-713-6260

a variety of circumstances. In his interview with investigators, Officer Norbits admits that "we're trained to keep our fingers indexed," meaning to keep the index finger along the barrel of the gun and not on the trigger itself. Yet, despite this training, Officer Norbits proceeded to take the unjustifiable risk of

engaging in a physical struggle with his gun not only unholstered but with his finger inside the trigger guard dangerously close to the trigger. This kind of behavior not only recklessly endangered the life of Kiwane Carrington, but also that of Kiwane's best friend and Chief Finney who were within just a few feet of Officer Norbits during the struggle.

A lot more could be said about the report and its many failings, particularly the State's Attorney's interest in discrediting Kiwane, his best friend, and several of the civilian witnesses. What matters most isn't the personal histories of the individuals involved but

what really happened on

October 9th and whether the death of an unarmed African-American teenager was a product of deliberate or reckless behavior. On that most important of questions, we don't even have the luxury of saying that the jury is still out.



Officer Daniel Norbits, the officer who shot Carrington



Honduras: The Fight Continues

By Marya Burke

"As a revolutionary I will be today, tomorrow, and forever in the first ranks of my people, all the while knowing that I may lose my life."

—Walter Trochez

Those who are not willing to stay silent in the face of oppression are painfully aware of the dangers they face. Harvey Milk knew this when he was murdered in 1978 and Walter Trochez knew this at the time of his assassination on the evening of December 13, 2009. In both cases, these men were killed for holding their society accountable in a most basic and democratic way—by speaking out.

While individuals have been fighting and dying for equal rights in Honduras for years, the months since the coup on June 28, 2009 have seen a frightening spike in bloodshed. Walter Trochez, a 25 year old LGBTI (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex) activist who had joined forces with other groups to speak out against the coup, became one of its many victims. In his writing, Trochez worked to highlight the sources of support for the coup and the impact of its success on stifling the rights of all Hondurans. In one of his final articles, Trochez blasted a series of powerful individuals and institutions for their support or involvement in the coup:

LGBTI organizations, networks and movements in resistance, "condemn the political-military coup against the Honduran State financed by the Latin American and U.S. ultra-right wing business sector, promoted by the national mainstream media, covered up by the mercantilist Ombudsman of the Honduras Commission of Human Rights (CONADEH) Ramón Custodio, and with the blessing of the Catholic and Evangelical churches through their top representatives... [and] the current President of the National Anti-Corruption Council."

Trochez's work was not limited to critique. He was also engaged directly in helping get people to take to the streets when that served the needs of the resistance. Interestingly,

sometimes they worked to keep people at home too, as was the case when Trochez and other members of the National Resistance Front Against the Coup organized a boycott of the recent elections. They argued that the election was illegitimate at the outset because it was forced by the coup regime. This same regime refused to put in place measures to assure transparency. Furthermore, they chose not to count the votes of the million and a half Hondurans who cast absentee ballots from the United States. Following the elections, Trochez wrote a triumphant article in which he lauded the success of the boycott, reporting an absenteeism rate of 70 percent. He called upon the populace to build on that success and, "kick those frauds out of the electoral masquerade they imposed this past Sunday November 29 in order to whitewash the coup d'état."

Though the rewards for the efforts of Trochez and all those like him are manifest in the continued support for resistance and human rights, he is no longer here to reap them. This is an all too common story. Before being assassinated himself, Trochez reported on at least 16 others. Only a week after his death, another activist was murdered, and the killings continue. Human rights advocates have reported that, "up to 18 gay and transgender men have been killed nationwide—as many as the five prior years—in the nearly six months since a political crisis rocked the nation" (From Joseph Shansky on counterpunch.org). It seems clear that these murders were motivated by the hatred these individuals faced for daring to live their lives with the integrity of being truthful to their sexual identities. However, they were also persecuted because of their resistance to the current regime. This is a reality not lost on the LGBTI communities in Honduras. As activist Gabriel Mass noted, "the overwhelming majority of the Honduran queer community is opposed to the regime installed by the coup... because 'it is understood that we have lost all our protections, including the most basic right—the right to life.'"



Walter Trochez

All of these murders are tragic examples of attempts to stifle freedom and repress resistance, whether that resistance is in response to political regimes or social inequalities. This is a fight, not just for LGBTI, not just for Hondurans, but for all people committed to the ideals and practice of human rights and democracy in the real world. It is unfortunate that the response from the United States, a country that prides itself on these very issues, has done so little to address the ongoing injustices. In fact, as Shansky points out in his article about the murder, Now that the world heard from mainstream news outlets such as the New York Times of a "clean and fair" election," and "with the international community given the green light by the US that democratic order has returned via elections, it's open season for violent forces in Honduras working to tear apart the political unity of the Resistance Front against the coup."

Edgar Heap of Birds Speaks at Closing of "Beyond the Chief" Exhibit

By Brian Dolinar



On December 4, 2009, Cheyenne-Arapaho artist Edgar Heap of Birds gave a talk at the YMCA on the University of Illinois campus for the closing of his "Beyond the Chief" art exhibit. He spoke publicly for the first time about the State's Attorney's failure to fully prosecute a former student who was caught stealing two of his art works.

The "Beyond the Chief" exhibit opened in early 2009 and consisted of twelve panels that were installed along Nevada Street on campus. Several of the metal sign panels were bent in separate incidents. In April, two of them were stolen. Of the dozen panels, a total of seven were vandalized. These incidents were clearly part of a reaction to the University's retirement of its racist mascot in February 2007.

Heap of Birds showed a video about a recent exhibit of his at the Denver Art Museum, an outdoor sculpture of ten 50-foot red tree forms placed in a circle that was inspired by the Big Horn medicine wheel. He also shared photographs and spoke about his visits to the Palenque tombs in Chiapas, Mexico.

Finally, Heap of Birds talked about his "Beyond the Chief" exhibit. He said he had spelled the words "The Fighting Illini" backwards, "to turn the University around, to turn the students around, to turn Illinois around." The panels read "Today Your Host is..." and list the names of the tribes from Illinois such as the Ho Chunk, Odawa, Peoria, and Kickapoo. Heap of Birds' panels are a reminder that this land was never truly 'granted' to this land grant university, but was taken from the native peoples.



Edgar Heap of Birds addressing the audience

Speaking of the controversy surrounding the exhibit, Heap of Birds said this was the first time his art has been vandalized. He mentioned his surprise at seeing his art on Crime Stoppers. A previous student in Fine and Applied Arts, Mark Nepermann, was found to be the thief who stole the art works. Appraisals of \$10,000 per panel were sent to State's Attorney Julia Rietz, but she valued them at less than \$300 and Nepermann was only charged with a misdemeanor. This was a 'ridiculous price,' said Heap of Birds, "as if you could take a Rembrandt and value it by the cost of the brushes." The State's Attorney, he said, "did not honor the appraisal."

As punishment, Nepermann was made to do 100 hours of public service. Additionally, he wrote a letter of

apology that was published in the *News-Gazette*. Asked if he had ever received a personal apology, Heap of Birds said he had never been contacted by Nepermann, "but should have been."

Heap of Birds saw the attacks on his art works as a reaction to the University's retirement of its racist mascot. The panels along Nevada Street had become a "focal point of anger," he said. Yet he also viewed his art as a challenge to the foundations of this country, "Something is 'threatening' in America when Native American people define themselves."

It was also announced that the University of Illinois is currently in negotiations with Heap of Birds to purchase the "Beyond the Chief" exhibit.

www.denverartmuseum.org/collections/objectDetails/objectId--107955

SPEAK CAFE (OPEN MIC/POETRY SET)

Feb. 11, 2009, 7-9 p.m

Krannert Art Museum, 500 E. Peabody, Champaign



Changing the Way U of I Trustees are Selected

By Stephen Kaufman



Stephen Kaufman is an Emeritus Professor and a member of the UIUC Campus Faculty Association

Representative Naomi Jakobsson has introduced a bill (HB4688) in the 96th General Assembly that would fundamentally change the way trustees are selected at the University of Illinois.

This legislation has two main elements:

The first is the establishment of a Trustees Selection Task Force (TRUST Force) to review nominations and make recommendations to the governor. Membership on the TRUST Force would include the chairs of the three campus senates, three acknowledged leaders in education from outside the University of Illinois and four additional persons with impeccable integrity. The credentials of all members of the TRUST Force would be made public.

The second is the inclusion of three faculty members on the U of I Board of Trustees, one from each campus.

The proposal for these changes originated with the Campus Faculty Association at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and was first published as a Commentary in *The News-Gazette*, July 26, 2009. It has since gained the support of the Urbana-Champaign Senate and the Champaign County AFL-CIO. Some considerations underlying the proposal are included below.

Over the past sixteen years, we have seen two models for the appointment of trustees in Illinois: an elected Board and a Board appointed by the governor. Neither of these models is without flaw and neither seems optimal for promoting the best interests of the university.

The majority of public university boards were designed at a time when states provided most of their operating revenues and support from other sources was minor. Over time, state funding has decreased to the point where the designation "public university" is at risk. In Illinois, the state currently provides approximately 18% of the university's operating budget, tuition accounts for 15% and faculty grants provide 26%. Future governance of the univer-

sity, as embodied in its trustees, should reflect this change in the institution's economics and the breadth of oversight needed.

While the governors of 47 states appoint all or a portion of trustees at their respective institutions, many states now include a screening committee to provide vetting and advice to the governors. Illinois lacks such a body. The proposed Trustees Selection Task Force (TRUST Force) would fill that void. In receiving and making independent recommendations, the TRUST Force would identify individuals with proven leadership skills, commitment to the institution, knowledge of the complex problems of higher education, unquestionable integrity, a sincere desire to serve the university and people of Illinois, and the time to do so.

A Special Report in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* ("Chronicle Survey: What Trustees Think," vol. 53, no. 36, May 11, 2007) clearly shows that many public university board members are unprepared for the position and lack knowledge of the complexities of higher education necessary for effective service. Inclusion of faculty representatives from each campus will help to address this problem. Higher education is faced with complex problems and wonderful opportunities, and faculty are arguably the constituency most familiar with both. As the U of I goes forward, it would be a shame, if not foolish, to neglect to include that expertise in the governance of the institution.

Faculty representation on the board could also help to avoid repetition of the types of problems faced in years past. For example:

1. Long term failure of former Boards to request and obtain appropriate resources from the State, even in times of economic prosperity
2. Failure of former Boards to educate legislators and citizens on the merits and activities of the U of I so that they would champion resources for the university
3. Interference with staff appointments and 'questionable' awarding of contracts
4. The 'Clouted Admissions' scandal
5. Politicization of the Board including "Pay to Play". Past trustees contributed more than \$585,000 to former Governor Rod Blagojevich

6. Transfer of university property to the U of I Foundation and subsequent sale to donors at below market value
7. Contracts that violate U of I policies and principles. For example, contracts with Triple Canopy, Blackwater, and the Academy on Capitalism and Limited Government
8. Silencing dissent and promoting an atmosphere of fear and intimidation
9. Golden parachutes to 'team players'
10. Increases in tuition while approving appropriation of tens of millions of dollars to the Research Park
11. Imposition of 'Economic Development' as a fourth mission of the university at the expense of the university fulfilling its traditional three missions—teaching, research and service

The rationale for change embodied in HB4688 is perhaps best stated in University of Illinois President Stanley Ikenberry's thoughtful essay entitled, "Uncertain and Unplanned: The Future of Public Higher Education," *Policy Forum*, vol. 17, 2005. Ikenberry wrote,

Public college and university governing boards need to reflect the diversification in 'publics' to which they must now be accountable and responsible. A fresh vision of public university governing structures, consistent with public interest, consistent with the emergence of new stakeholders, and reflective of a clarified 'state-public university partnership' or 'social contract' needs to be crafted.

The changes embedded in HB4688 represent a major constructive step toward effective governance of the university in the 21st century.

The text of this legislation can be found at:

www.ilga.gov/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=4688&GAID=10&GA=96&DocTypeID=HB&LegID=48928&SessionID=76

Please contact Representative Naomi Jakobsson (Naomi@naomijakobsson.com or 217-373-5000) to let her know you support this legislation and volunteer to help her bring it to a successful vote in Springfield.

Organizing the Unemployed

Continued from page 2

'self-employed' who may have seen former employee status convert to 1099 contracts; and so on.

A much more comprehensive but less publicized government statistic is the 'U-6' rate, which some economists say still undercounts the jobless. In October, the national U-6 rate officially hit 17.5% but it is much higher for some groups, such as teenagers (over 32%), US-born Latinos with a high school diploma but no college (over 35%), and black youth (over 40%). Yet these same groups may also be particularly underserved by federal aid programs, including recent economic 'stimulus' programs.

RESCUING OURSELVES

Public economic assistance ought to focus mostly to those with the most need. This has been a central demand of grassroots efforts around the country, including rallies here in Central Illinois. However the reverse seems to be happening. Government money has disproportionately gone to Wall Street and big banks, and even 'Main Street' bailout funds have not made it to those who need it most.

As a CBS/AP story reported this July 8, a House oversight committee found that many of the neediest areas of the country were not receiving Recovery Act funds. According to a recent Hart Research Group study, less than a third of Latino Americans have seen any benefit.

Chicago Public Radio found recently that less than 10% of stimulus funds spent by the state Department of Transportation went to minority-owned businesses. And locally the *News-Gazette* reported August 16 that the counties in Central Illinois with the highest unemployment were getting less recovery money, and the three counties with the lowest unemployment got the most stimulus money.

"Cash for clunkers" and the various federal tax breaks meant to facilitate car, home, appliance, and other purchases are out of reach for the poorest Americans. The now-famous 'shovel ready' projects created work primarily for those who already had jobs—who were certainly in danger of reduced income—but those with the greatest need benefitted little or none.

Close on the heels of the dramatic failures of the deregulated marketplace, many workers—currently employed or not—are now learning that relying on the goodwill of federal, state and local governments may be every bit the losing proposition that marketplace faith proved. This was the principal theme of a "People's Thanksgiving" gathering of local activists, advocates and aid recipients in November 2008, a potluck meal and discussion format that has become a monthly event here. As union leader Gene Vanderport put it, "We as a community have to come together and rescue ourselves."

In May, local organizers held a "Central Illinois Social

Forum" to develop these ideas: community gardening, anti-eviction activism, urban justice, and a jobs creation program for the twenty-first century—with workers themselves at the center.

Now, with a grant from the Illinois Disciples Foundation to cover expenses, organizers are fanning out to leaflet food pantries, unemployment and aid centers, churches, and union halls. The 'coming together' has been tricky. Job-needy workers actually have very little free time for meetings. Living arrangements may be fluid, and access to phones, computers, and other means of contact may be unreliable. And hope is in short supply these days. Yet "rescuing ourselves" would appear to be the only option.

And there may just be, as Francis Fox Piven the author of *Poor People's Movements* told the *American Prospect* magazine this summer, "something like a nascent movement... developing." The economic crisis may not have reached the depths of the Great Depression yet, when Unemployment Councils organized neighborhood self-help in the nation's cities. But the need has not been greater in most of our lifetimes for the unemployed—and 'anxiously employed'—to organize.

Call Sandra at 469-6111 to pitch in.



Announcing the IMC Computer Help Desk

By Brian Duggan

The Urbana-Champaign community has had a deficit of realistic personal computer support options since Prairienet faded away.

The existing options for computer support in Urbana-Champaign are limited to Best Buy's Geek Squad, two or three local businesses and UIUC's CITES. These organizations discriminate through cost and association between those they will serve and those they won't. CITES only serves students, faculty and staff of the UI. Geek Squad's services start at exorbitant prices or require subscription-to service plans. Local business support services may be less expensive, but they still charge astronomical rates for what can be quite simple procedures.

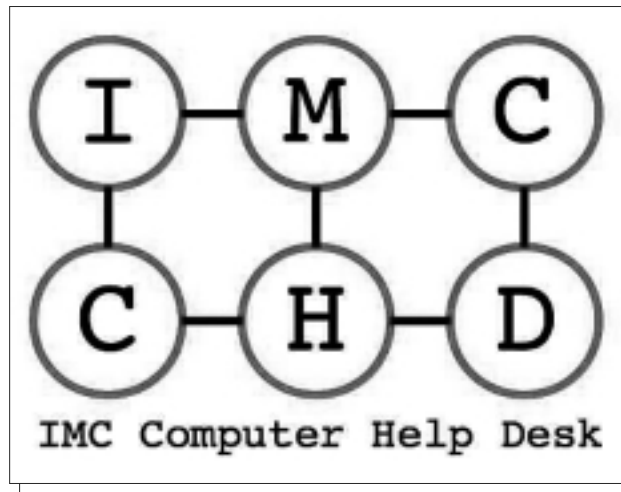
Worse, for-profit support services such as Geek Squad have an interest in misleading users about their computers. Geek Squad offers ill-defined and suspicious services such as "Computer Tune-up." These services are often nothing more than a collection of easy system maintenance procedures such as performing updates or uninstalling unused software. But the real crime of companies like Geek Squad is their lack of interest in teaching users how to maintain the machines they use everyday. To the contrary, Geek Squad's interests are served when users remain uncertain, doubtful and fearful when it comes to issues concerning their computers. Informing and educating their customer base is actually at odds with their business model.

In order for communities to survive and thrive in a world full of technology, they need to rely on a new model of tech support. This model should focus on democratizing technology—on disseminating, copying and distributing tech knowledge among everyday computer users.

This model may start with a central location to help users with their computers, but cannot end with that single source of knowledge. Communities must develop a 'critical mass' of tech-knowledge among community members in order to control their own lives in a technology-dependent world.

In the past few decades, corporate interests have worked diligently to create a culture of helplessness and

complete dependence on product and service vendors among users of technology. If you've bought a late-model



car, there's a high likelihood that many repair shops will not be able to fix many things that can go wrong with it. Car manufacturers began using computers in cars decades ago to improve performance. But in the early 2000s, manufacturers began using secret codes to lock out technicians that had not partnered with car dealers from the car's computer. This increased the cost to repair many problems because owners had to go to more expensive dealer repair shops. But the deeper harm to car owners is that they can no longer understand every piece of the car. When owners are prevented from understanding the components that make technology work, their rights to repair their property are infringed. Car manufacturers have made concerted efforts to make the computer systems that make cars run completely unknowable without an unreasonable cost.

The proprietary nature of car computers is similar to the state of personal computer support today. While car manufacturers have accomplished their goal of locking owners and technicians out with secret codes, cartels like the Geek

Squad accomplish this almost entirely by preying on user fear and by propagating ignorance and misinformation among users.

The most effective method of combating predatory support and repair services is through propagating knowledge and reducing fear of technology among users. The IMC Computer Help Desk is up to this challenge.

When a user calls, emails or walks-in to the IMC Computer Help Desk they will not be talked down to or misled. Further, the IMC Computer Help Desk will not perform any repair or maintenance for anyone. Instead, the support technicians at the Help Desk will help users solve their own problems. The Help Desk can help fix almost any problem, hardware or software, regardless of platform—as long as the user of the system is willing to learn how to maintain their own computer.

Since the mission of the Help Desk is to distribute personal computer knowledge among the community, we don't just fix broken computers. Any user that has any question about how to complete a task with their computer can discuss their problem in the friendly, open environment at the Help Desk. We encourage users of all skill levels to take advantage of the human knowledge base in the staff of the Help Desk.

Expert users are invited to come to Help Desk support hours to help other users, or simply to discuss ideas and projects with people interested in learning about technology.

The ultimate goal of tech knowledge distribution is to resist the harmful culture of fear, uncertainty and doubt that certain technology companies promote among users. To do this, knowledge distribution organizations must replace this with a culture that promotes cooperation, collaboration and knowledge sharing among users. Only when tech knowledge distribution centers like the IMC Computer Help Desk begin driving this transition will people in the Urbana-Champaign community control their tech media.

The IMC Computer Help Desk holds open hours every Thursday from 7:00PM to 9:00PM at the Urbana-Cham-

Makerspace Urbana Brings Tech Knowledge to UC-IMC

By Brian Duggan

An unusual group for Urbana-Champaign has begun meeting at the IMC recently. They plan to forge a new model for creating and democratizing technology within the community.

Urbana-Champaign has been fortunate to have community groups and workshops capable of teaching people how to create and distribute many kinds of media. The local IMC is composed of groups that community members can work with to produce and broadcast their own radio show, record and produce their own movies, publish their own newspaper articles and even build their own bicycles. Outside the IMC, groups like WEFT provide even more public radio access. Together, these groups provide Urbana-Champaign with needed access to traditional forms of media. However, as technology saturates almost every facet of daily life for residents of Urbana-Champaign, no entity has

been able to provide the needed comparable access to create new, electronic media.

Makerspace Urbana intends to fill this gap in Urbana-Champaign's public media creation capabilities. Urbana and Champaign lack any kind of public access to the equipment and instruction necessary for learning how to create and manipulate electronic media. Even community members who are electronics experts do not normally have access to expensive and powerful testing and fabrication tools. Communities the world over have begun addressing this deficit in public access to technology by establishing organizations commonly known as "hackerspaces." These groups provide their members with access to raw electronic materials, tools, testing equipment and sometimes even the machinery necessary for creating small computers. Maker-

space Urbana (or Greek letter Mu, for short) was established to bring these capabilities to the Urbana-Champaign community, and it's off to a great start. Says group member Chuck Geigner, "The Makerspace is the best thing to happen to Urbana since HAL."

So far the group has secured a physical space located in the IMC and has begun procuring equipment, forging relationships with other local groups and, most importantly, attracting new members. Makerspace Urbana is currently made up of 12, bright, friendly individuals who have among them decades of experience in electronic hardware, computer software, building cool stuff and creating beautiful works of electronic art.

The group is still working towards holding their first public workshop to direct people in learning the basics of electronics. In the meantime they plan to spread the

word and establish working relationships with the community. Soon they'll help set up community technology centers, and they already help staff the IMC Computer Help Desk every Thursday night at 7:00pm. The Makerspace also hopes to serve as an incubator for radical product design and a springboard for entrepreneurs who wish to take their projects outside the group.

Everyone is welcome to attend Makerspace Urbana meetings, especially as the group formulates its structure. Drop by the IMC on Wednesdays at 6:00PM. Find the group in the Family Room in the basement of the IMC and introduce yourself. You're invited to take an active role in distributing tech knowledge, the capacity to create and the maker's spirit throughout Urbana-Champaign.

PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY POTLUCK

Sunday, February 7, 6–8 PM, Independent Media Center, 202 South Broadway, Urbana

The Peoples's Community Potluck is a food-sharing communal gathering to discuss the economic and social problems in our community. The intention is to harness the talents and resources of local organizations and individuals to improve the conditions of working people, unemployed people, poverty-stricken people, and those who are physically or mentally unable to care for themselves. Given the sorry state of the economy over the past 8 years, and government economic policy that has been most concerned with the well-being of the very wealthy, organizations and individuals at the grass-roots level are going to have to use social conscience and talents to find ways of supporting the most vulnerable people in our communities. We cannot just rely on the new administration to turn things around. We envision a new stimulus for coordinated action and communication for a democratic, egalitarian political-economy.



Upcoming Cultural Events At UC-IMC

JAN. 22ND—IMC SHOWS PRESENTS: BEAT KITCHEN

@ UC-IMC, Saturday, Jan. 22nd, Start Time: 9:00PM
Adm. \$5



Beat Kitchen is Champaign-Urbana's premiere funk/soul/reggae band, known for its intriguing repertoire of classics that, in the words of front man Brandon T. Washington, "you may have heard before, but you've never heard it quite like this." Formed in 2001 by Michael McLoughlin and Brad Decker, the BK has evolved into a nine-piece professionally-minded band, dedicated to preserving and promoting the true sound of funk, soul, reggae, rock, and hip-hop of yesterday and today. Their energizing shows include music from the Meters, Toots and the Maytals, Grant Green, The Dap-Kings, Radiohead, The Roots, the arrangements of Mark Ronson, and more.

Check out Beat Kitchen's Music at: www.myspace.com/beatkitchenfunk

JAN. 29TH—INSURGENT THEATRE: ULYSSES' CREWMEN

@ UC-IMC, January 29th, Start Time: 7:30PM
Admission: \$5 Donation



A militant dissenter abuses her hostage from the US delegation while faintly aware of the audience surrounding her. This claustrophobic scene creates a space for radical introspection, defiant theatre and tactical conversations. With only a few props, two actors, one of who is bound and gagged, and a serious commitment to DIY politics, Insurgent Theatre refutes ancient dogmas found in Homer's *Odyssey* and examines the psychosexual underpinnings of empire and rebellion.

Written by Ben Turk

Starring Kate Pleuss and Ben Turk

Music by Mark Enslin will combine a shredded avant flamenco guitar piece, Church Committee testimony with toys & percussion, and a wall of idiosyncratic keyboard...

ON TOUR SINCE SEPT 09 Insurgent Theatre has staged over 30 performances of *Ulysses' Crewmen* in various theatres, bars, infoshops, and other non-traditional spaces across the US, including a performance in Pittsburgh during the G20 summit protests on Oct 24th.

For more information please check out: <http://insurgenttheatre.org/>

JAN. 30TH—IMC SHOWS PRESENTS: BRUISER AND THE VIRTUES DANCE EVENT

@ UC-IMC, Saturday, January 30, 2010
7pm—Swing Dance Lesson,
8pm—Bruiser and the Virtues
Adm: \$5

A chance to cut a rug, and learn some swing dance moves. There will be an hour long swing dance lesson, and then Bruiser and the Virtues will get you movin to the beat.



Tunes range from the rockin' jump-blues of T-Bone Walker, to Booker T and the MGs, to Bruiser originals. One of the true gems of the regional music scene.

"Bruiser and The Virtues: The jazzier side of Bruce "Bruiser" Rummenie... wonderfully concocted songs in the way of classic dance band tunes; a hot saxophone, piano, upright bass, drums, and Bruiser on a big fat electric archtop guitar. This band is precious and awesome."—OpeningBands.com 2005

Bruiser and the Virtues dare you to join their rhythm train before it pulls out of the station for the trip uptown. The musicality of the band is unquestionable and impressive. Bruiser's vocals pour over the tracks like smooth whisky over ice. Kudos to the rhythm section for bop extraordinaire, while the horns burn, keyboardist Neal Robinson comps, swings, and makes the ol' 88s beg for mercy. "A gas."—Cody Sokolowski, *The Octopus*, 2001

In 2004, The Virtues won the Illinois Central Blues Society Challenge and went on to compete in the International Blues Challenge in Memphis, TN, performing at B. B King's Nightclub on Beale St. in February, 2005.

Check out Bruiser and the Virtues here:
<http://www.myspace.com/bruiserrummenie>

CU FOLK AND ROOTS FESTIVAL COMES IN FEBRUARY

The UC-IMC along with Heartland Galleries of Urbana announce a spring concert series. The series will feature two former *Prairie Home Companion* performers and an up and coming band. All concerts will be at the IMC 202 South Broadway in Urbana.

On Saturday February 27th Claudia Schmidt will be performing and doing a vocal workshop. The vocal workshop taking place from 2-4 pm will teach people how to harmonize and enjoy singing, the performance will begin at 8 pm. One critic has described a Claudia Schmidt concert as "...a lot like falling in love. You never know what's going to happen next, but chances are it's going to be wonderful, every moment is burned into your memory, and you know you'll never be the same again." She is well-known to public radio listeners during her regular stints on "A Prairie Home Companion" in its early incarnation. Tickets are \$10 in advance, \$15 at the door. The workshop will be \$20 and a combination workshop and concert ticket is \$25. Advance tickets will be available at Heartland Galleries, the IMC, and by calling 493-4654. www.claudiaschmidt.com

On Saturday March 13th Bill Staines will be performing. The show starts at 8 pm. Singing mostly his own songs, Bill has become one of the most popular singers on the folk music circuit today and averages around 200 concert dates a year. Mr. Staines weaves a magical blend of wit and gentle humor into his performances, and as one reviewer wrote, "he has a sense of timing to match the best stand-up comic." His music is a slice of Americana, reflecting with the same ease, his feelings about the prairie people of the Midwest or the adventurers of the Yukon. Bill has performed on *Prairie Home Companion* and *Mountain Stage*, both on NPR. Tickets are \$10 advance and \$15 at the door. Advance tickets available at Heartland Galleries, the IMC, and by calling 493-4654. www.acousticmusic.com/staines/index.htm

On Wednesday May 19th one of the real up and coming Bluegrass/Americana Bands in the country will visit the IMC. Red Molly recently featured in *Dirty Linen Magazine* and scheduled to perform at Merle Fest this year, will grace the stage at the IMC. Red Molly consistently brings concert-goers to their feet with stunning three-part harmonies, crisp musicianship and a warm, engaging stage presence. They have earned a devoted and ever-widening fan base, and have begun to tour nationally. Laurie MacAllister, Abbie Gardner and Carolann Solebello have a lot of fun on stage, and it's contagious. The *Boston Globe* says: "Everything Red Molly sings is delivered with tick-tight arrangements, crystalline vocals, and caramel harmonies. But what is most striking is the ardor they bring to everything they do, whether snuggling into the sweet parochialism of an old spiritual, or the gritty pathos of a Gillian Welch tune. They come on less like stars strutting for their minions than pals sharing their favorite songs. In the friendly world of the coffeehouse, that remains a star-making quality." Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door. Advance tickets will be available at Heartland Galleries, the IMC, and by calling 493-4654. www.redmolly.com/

Celebrate 2010 With the people who bring YOU Independent Media

The *Public i* and WRFU-LP 104.5FM—potluck and fundraiser

January 25th, 6PM-9PM, @ The Clark Bar
207 W. Clark St. in Champaign

\$2 Suggested donation at the door
bring a dish to share
www.ucimc.org or www.publici.ucimc.org

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.