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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 on topics underreported and voices under-represented 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 orientation and are free and open to the public.

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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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UPCOMING EVENTS

A GOOD TIME FOR A GOOD CAUSE
Dance Party with the Noisy Gators
(jaunty Zydeco dance band with Tom Turino)
With winter pressing in there’s no better time for a Dance Party with great food and friends. On Saturday, December 13th AWARE will host the Noisy Gators (one of C-U’s best local dance bands). There will be lots of space to dance, food, drinks, and friends. And best of all, the proceeds from the benefit will all be donated to help those who’ve been hurt by war — both here at home and in Iraq. Hope to see you there!
Where: The Offices of On the Job Consulting (OJC), 115 West Main, 2F in downtown Urbana (across from Cinema Gallery)
When: Saturday, December 13th, 8-11pm
Sliding Scale donation: $5 - $20+
All Proceeds benefit Oxfam Iraq (humanitarian aid to Iraqis) and the Red Cross Armed Forces Emergency Services Fund (help for veterans and military families).
Sponsored by AWARE (Anti-War Anti-Racism Effort)

EDUCATION OR INCARCERATION?
SCHOOLS AND PRISONS IN A PUNISHING DEMOCRACY
An Interdisciplinary Conference hosted by the University of Illinois Center on Democracy in a Multiracial Society.
Thursday, Jan. 22-Saturday, Jan. 24, 2004
All activities are at the Lewis Faculty Center and are free and open to the public.
For questions or to volunteer your time, please contact Stephen Hartnett at 217-333-1593 or hartnett@uiuc.edu

ZINE SLAM WITH IMPROV MUSIC
Saturday, December 13 6:30 PM at the IMC, 218 W. Main St. Urbana
The IMC Librarians are hosting a zine reading featuring local and Chicago area do-it-yourself publishers. The reading will be accompanied by improvisational music featuring local musician Jason Finkelman. For more information contact librarians@ucimc.org

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Making a Bloody Statement
Laura Stengrim
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When Civil Disobedience Becomes Bloody

by Laura Stengrim

When direct protest is based on Isaiah's prophecy that to "beat the deadly U.S. military and stubborn state of Illinois which using human and animal blood to protest institutions such as history of political commitment so guttural that it includes career of feminist and gay and lesbian advocacy and has also Lee Sargent only recently left Champaign-Urbana after a long time in prison for...
University Administration Challenges Court Ruling

by Walter Feinberg

Walter Feinberg is Professor of National Policy Studies and Criticism and Interpretive Theory at the University of Illinois, Urbana.

In his article, Walter Feinberg refers to the university's firing of Professor Leo Koch. Koch was fired by the president of the university, David Dodds Henry, during the academic year 1959-60. Koch was fired because he responded to a letter to the editor in the Daily Illini bemoaning the fact that there was so much "getting" (a 1950s word for feeling the body of one's date) going on at fraternity and sorority parties. Koch argued that if mutually consenting students could have sex without being ostracized or penalized, one would not see this kind of activity at parties. Unfortunatelty, there was a daughter attending the university who sent her father a copy of Koch's letter. At the time, the university was seeking authority to launch a major bond issue (always the bottom-line for feeling the body of one's date) going on at fraternities and sororities. Unfortunatelty, there was a daughter attending the university who sent her father a copy of Koch's letter. At the time, the university was seeking authority to launch a major bond issue (always the bottom-line for feeling the body of one's date) going on at fraternities and sororities.

The Koch Affair

Belden Fields

In his article, Walter Feinberg refers to the university's firing of Professor Leo Koch. Koch was fired by the president of the university, David Dodds Henry, during the academic year 1959-60. Koch was fired because he responded to a letter to the editor in the Daily Illini bemoaning the fact that there was so much "getting" (a 1950s word for feeling the body of one's date) going on at fraternity and sorority parties. Koch argued that if mutually consenting students could have sex without being ostracized or penalized, one would not see this kind of activity at parties. Unfortunatelty, there was a daughter attending the university who sent her father a copy of Koch's letter. At the time, the university was seeking authority to launch a major bond issue (always the bottom-line for feeling the body of one's date) going on at fraternities and sororities. Unfortunatelty, there was a daughter attending the university who sent her father a copy of Koch's letter. 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In addition to the organizational support for Koch, students and at least one faculty member (Professor Harry Tiebout of the philosophy department) demonstrated for Koch's reinstatement. I was among them. We carried a coffin on the picket line in matters like this). The zealot contacted the administration to not only regulate political press publications of research findings that might upset potential donors. Perhaps the most alarming feature of the brief is the extent to which it equates the university with any other government agency and then asserts the same level of control over its personnel as any other agency. The administration seems ready to pull out all the stops to win a court case with a brief that is alarmingly insensitive to institutional culture, purpose, and history.

The brief also makes the point that the recruits need to be protected from the conflict over the Chief. This shallow and paternalistic argument devalues the intelligence of recruits. It stretches credibly to assume that a student who meets the academic standards of the University of Illinois would be unable to understand that a letter from a faculty member intended to disrupt them from accepting an offer from the university's coach does not carry with it the seal of approval of the university. While there are certainly circumstances where faculty might need to make a disclaimer about not speaking in any official capacity, it degrades both the athlete and the institution to insinuate that recruited athletes who meet the academic standards of this university would be unable to distinguish between a coach seeking to recruit them and a faculty member seeking to inform them. The most sensible resolution to this issue before it goes any further would be for the administration to encourage a disclaimer on the part of anyone writing to recruits about the Chief (for as well as against) stipulating that they do not speak as the official voice of the university. Once this is done, the administration should quietly and discreetly step away from a court battle that, regardless of who wins, the university can only lose.
Enough Dancing Around the Chief Issue

Jeremy Engels is a graduate student in the department of Speech Communication at the University of Illinois. He focuses on the historical emergence of democracy in America and also the way that Americans today argue and enact democracy.

on Thursday, November 13, a new day for the University of Illinois could be imagined: a day without the Chief as mascot. However, as we know, Chancellor Carruthers will not rescind his resolution, and the Chief lives on, until at least March or July when the Board of Trustees will again discuss the issue. The point of this article is not to recount the history of the Chief, this has been done admirably by Carol Spin del and David Prochaska. The point is, rather, to offer an honest assessment of the arguments made by both proponents and opponents with the hope of offering a basis for further dialogue about the Chief.

The main argument gracing counties editorial in support of the Chief is a nebulous appeal to "tradition," the infallibility of which is generally not contested. In any debate, they believe is not racist but righteous.

My argument is that the Chief has been a symbol of the colonizing and enslaving of Native Americans. As a British traveler in Illinois in the 1790s complained, "they have nearly the same effect: for if they are removed from the usual hunting grounds, they must necessarily encroach on the hunt- ing grounds of another tribe, who will not suffer the encroachment with impunity. Hence, they destroy each other."

We must remember that this is the historical context in which Native Americans have existed in the United States. It would obviously be disrespectful to honor a mascot, or symbol, such as the Con- federate Flag, reminding African Americans of their past as slaves. However, it is less obviously disrespectful to sanc- tion a mascot that mocks Native Ameri- can because many of us do not know enough about Native American history well enough to know that it does. Hopefully this will change. If we let the nativist, brutish moments of American History inform our arguments, we will clearly point to one solution: retire the Chief.


Iillinwek, Again (sigh)

David Prochaska is a professor in the U of I History Department. This article is based on his essay, "At Home in Illinois: Presence of Chief Iliniwek, Absence of Native Americans," in the upcoming book edited by Harvey and Richard King, eds: Team Spirits: The Native American Mascots Controversy (University of Nebraska Press, 2001).

The recent furor over Board of Trustees Frances Carroll submitting then withdrawing her resolution to get rid of Chief Illini- wek (but not the "Fighting Illini") has put the ongoing controversy back on the front burner of political discussion. No new arguments have been heard, but what has changed is the particularly venemous personal attacks on University of Illinois Chancellor Jerry Carruthers. Here I wish to make two points.

In the first place, one of the key features of the pro- versus-anti Chief Illiniwek debate will be that which both sides talk past one another. "Honored symbol," say pro-Chiefs; "racist mascot," say those on the other side. How can Chief Illiniwek be both a "posi- tive" and "negative" representation for some, negative for others? Look at it this way, Chief supporters focus on the specific "text" of the Chief—the dance—while opponents focus on the wider native American context, pointing out that the Chief performs a secular dance routine but in primarily religious regalia, that the Chief wears a Native Indian skull costume in former Woodlands Indian Iliniwek country. If the Chief "text"—the halftime dance—is viewed superficially, in isolation, then it may seem at first that it is a positive not negative representation. But this misses the humorous nor caricatural but solemn, serious. But this is erroneous.

Here precisely is where paying closer attention to the text of the Chief can make a difference. A single, isolated snapshot of the Chief may be seen as "positive," but tracing changes over time, diachronically, in the Chief image reveals a much more "neg- ative" context—just look at Illini, the Univer- sity yearbook, year by year since the 1920s. In recent years pro-Chief forces spearhead- ed by the University have had to engage in more or less continuous "damage control." The orange and blue block "I" has been banned from the Chief's chin. In 1989 Squanto—depicted as a cartoon caricature with a hooks nose and holding a soil augur—was "retired" as the Agronomy Department logo. By 1990 cheerleaders and fans were prohibited from wearing "warpaint" at games. In 1991 the Chief was banned from making appearances in the Homecoming Parade and pep rally. In 1993 Chief Illini- wek was banned from use on Homecoming Parade floats. That the Chief is mutable has also effectively undermined the fewest but still real pro-Chief claims to Native American "authenticity."

Now put the Chief's halftime dance—the text—in the larger context of "playing Indian." Boy Scouts, Eagle Scouts, Order of the Arrow, Order of Red Men, Campfire Girls, Woodcraft, Boston Tea Party: What is "playing Indian," "playing native" all about? It is about play, yes, in the sense of dressing up, masquerade. But it is also about appropriation, in the sense of taking on another's identity. The implication here is speaking for another, silencing the personal expres- sion of another. And make no mistake about it: such appropriation is predicated on power, the power of appropriation is the necessary prerequisite for appro- priation. Cultural appropriation of this sort—white guys presuming to speak for native Americans—is often counteracted with physical or verbal aggression. The "playing Indian" invented in the 1920s, the final defeats of Native Americans and the closing of the frontier were still recent history. With the death of the Chief, it became possible to express imperialist nostal- gia for the "vanishing Indian."

When is playing Chief Illiniwek mimick- ry and culturally derogatory, and when is it, if ever, imitation, the sincerest form of flattery? Consider the Koshare described by (continued on page 7)
Ghettopoly: What Is Your Role in It?

by Xian Barrett

Xian Barrett is an Academic Professional at the University of Illinois in Champaign for over 13 years. He has written on issues of race for a number of publications including AsianAthlete.com and the Kumamoto Japan International Magazine. His research likely to level racial distrust at his Chinese heritage in a "time-honored tradition" way. He can be reached at xianb8@yahoo.com

It's the kind of open-and-shut racial issue that comes along frequently. What kind of racist nut would create a game called "Ghettopoly" and sell it to the brim with conceivable racist stereotypes about ghetto life? In the game, "playals" must choose between playing as a 40 ounce of malt, a marijuana leaf, or a "coochie," a pimp, a basketball, or a coke bottle. They then try to get to the bank, deal their way to riches in a format similar to the classic Monopoly game. The cultural references are obvious and offensive primarily to African Americans, but also target other groups such as Latina/os and Asian Americans. Once the game began to be sold widely at Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boycotts abounded and Urban Outfitters, response was swift. Protests and boyc...
There is no longer any doubt that the fall of 2003 was a watershed moment for the media reform movement. The campaign to reverse the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) telecommunication deregulation of ownership regulations has catalyzed a deeply felt but unarticulated public concern into a fully fledged, citizen-driven, social movement. This is not just about ownership structures in the media system – although that is a primary concern – but also about the large corporate media monopolies that have ravaged the media system at a national level. Now we see a new level of public concern about the effects of corporate media systems. Many have asked themselves: Why are we seeing such a dramatic disengagement from the politics of our democracy? Why has the US media system become so hidebound and······
On Nov. 20, I was among thousands of people gathered in Miami, Florida to protest negotiations for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Estimates range from 5,000 to 20,000, but it is clear that however many people were there, the police presence was shockingly disproportionate (according to the St. Petersburg Times, there were 2,500 police on duty [Nov. 30, 2003]). In the downtown area, police clad in riot gear were visible on nearly every corner all week. Helicopters were audible 24 hours a day. Driving into town on Wednesday night, we were greeted by a helicopter slowing overhead as its spotlight shone on our car. A line of 20 to 30 police dressed in full riot gear stood guarding a McDonalds – the priorities of Miami officials could hardly be clearer. Each morning as I left the hotel, I grew used to feeling hunted. “Be aware of everything around you, don’t get separated from your group, and don’t let our group get separated from a group too large to be thrown into a paddy wagon at once,” I thought. Above all, “Don’t get snatched!” I felt like I had to watch what I said whenever I was outside the hotel room (no cries of “smash the state!” – joking or otherwise – outside the vicinity of the walls of our room), and I felt that I had to be suspicious of everybody I didn’t know personally.

Perhaps you think I sound paranoid. I once thought that a lot of this was activist paranoia or the fears of those who had done something wrong. But planning to attend a protest isn’t illegal, is it? I did not plan to do anything illegal, and there I was faced with lines of police officers standing at attention.

**Who are You Protecting?**

In Miami, the status of our right to protest was thrown into stark relief. There is a lot of coverage about the extreme violence that took place in Miami, but few have focused on the larger picture. It was the decision to build the fence, and then to protect it at all costs, that caused the suffering – of taxpayers who suffered as a result of damage to a fence protecting no one? It was the decision to build the fence, and then to protect it at all costs that caused the suffering – of taxpayers who funded the enterprise, of protestors who merely asked to be heard, and of rank and file police officers who were placed in an artificially tense situation.

One wonders what crime the man could have been convicted of, if any, until his arrest. This type of behavior on the part of the Miami authorities creates a climate of fear. I am left to assume that the man was arrested for something he said in the presence of undercover police officers. No crime has been revealed by the Miami police department.

There have also been several reports of undercover or skinned police officers violently picking people up off the street. One woman reported that she had seen several men dressed in black with bandannas covering their faces jump out of a vehicle and attack two protestors leaving the demonstration on Thursday. She reported that the two were beaten and then thrown into the vehicle. One of these people was a legal observer wearing a bright green hat that said “Legal Observer.” There are other reports of legal observers being especially targeted by such squads of police officers.

The implications of these incidents run deep. The chilling effect on dissent is more profound than the scars of police abuse or the danger of allowing unnamed police officers (who are nearly impossible to hold accountable) to make sweeping arrests. Surveillance criminalizes dissent by making people feel as though they can be whisked off to jail or placed on a “watch” list by taking one false step or expressing their opinions too frankly. Furthermore, it’s a felony to point out a federal agent while they’re on duty even if they are committing a seemingly illegal act like throwing a rock. Those of us who are targeted by such surveillance are left with very few tactics to combat it and even fewer to enforce any kind of legal checks on this system.

**The Devil in Disguise**

There were several reports of undercover police officers and, I suspect, many more undercover officers who did not reveal themselves. I witnessed a group arming a man from the middle of a peaceful crowd. At the lunch time on Thursday, between a semi-spontaneous, “unpermitted” march that morning and the AFL-CIO led rally, many of us who were relaxing along Biscayne Ave witnessed what looked very much like an undercover snatch arrest. I heard a scuffle behind me, and as I looked around, a small group of people struggling with one another came around in front of me. It was a group of about ten people in casual clothing moving jerkily toward the police line. As it became clear that one group was trying to drag a young man with them and one group was trying to stop them, others from the crowd ran up to assist this man. A large intimidating figure dressed in unconvincing protest clothing emerged and boomed “Get back!” at those of us rushing up to the scuffle. People were temporarily stunned, but soon someone yelled, “Help him!” and we began rushing forward again. A woman dressed in black clothing but with her face unrecognizable jumped in front of the group and shot a tazer gun into the air repeatedly while yelling at us all to stay back. I didn’t realize until that moment that we were watching an undercover arrest and an attempted “unarrest.” At this point, the man in black had his hands on the shoulders and head scraping the ground. I assume that he, and perhaps some of those participating in the “unarrest” were taken to jail.

**What Does Any of This Have to Do with the FTAA?**

It’s easy for the scuffle in the streets to overshadow the issues at hand. In fact, I’m not so sure that this isn’t intentional on the part of the powers that be. Either way, it makes sense to examine the relationship between protesting and putting a stop to the Free Trade Area of the Americas. Most protestors have very personal reasons for attending a demonstration like the one in Miami, but I think one common reason would be to draw attention to the larger political issue. As pointed out in The Nation by Sarah Anderson and John Cavanagh (Nov. 1, 2003), nine years ago trade ministers from all over Latin America were able to move freely throughout Miami at one of the first meetings to shape the FTAA. Nine years ago, who ever heard of the WTO? I would not claim that today these institutions can compete with Michael Jackson for television news coverage, nor will I say that a significant proportion of the
American population understands the neoliberal agenda and what it stands for. I will, however, point out that many more people have at least now heard these terms and a significant number of them are interested in why the WTO might be important to them.

Attending protests not only draws media coverage to the event, it forces everyone you know to ask why you are going. I know at least ten people who know a lot more about the FTAA than they did before because of my participation in the protests.

Several folks I talked to in Miami felt that the best thing that came out of the two days was the solidarity between union members and anti-corporatists. One woman told me a story about how she and her friends had been stopped by an intimidating man in a pickup truck, only to be offered food and a ride by the driver, who appreciated the exposure to a lot of different people and worldviews. Being in Miami gave me a sense of what an alternative model might look like.

The legacy of Miami won’t be understood until the last case is being worked through the courts. A lot of tragic things happened that week; there are allegations that people of color were targeted for torture in jail as a way to manipulate a group into cooperating with the system, some evidence that transgenders people suffered sexual abuse at the hands of authorities so they too could be categorized as either male or female, and countless people who were doused in pepper spray as they were being arrested for failure to disperse. But it wasn’t all bad. As Really, Really Free Market we bartered our skills and showed off our talents. At the convergence center, we learned to take care of each other and to listen to each other. As IM Catas, we learned to value our mission more than ever. In some minds, the FTAA protests in Miami were just another series of pointless conflicts between activists and the police. Personally, I came back from Miami stronger, wiser, more confident, and more convinced than ever of what needs to be done. And that’s what we need to become a healthier society.

FTAA Facts

The Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) includes the 34 nations, besides Cuba, that make up the entire western hemisphere.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect in 1994 and serves as the basis for FTAA. Here is what the NAFTA years have seen:

- one million Mexican peasant families have been forced out of farming
- eight million Mexicans have fallen from middle class to poverty status
- income for self-employed Mexicans has fallen by 40%
- real wages in Mexico have gone down from $5 a day, and the purchasing power for the minimum wage has dropped by half
- birth defects and environmental diseases like hepatitis are two or three times higher than the national average in border factory towns due to toxins, unsafe drinking water, and lack of proper sewage treatment
- wages for non-college-educated workers in the U.S. have decreased
- 1,000,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in the U.S.

Negotiators agreed on a limited version of FTAA at the Miami meeting, which slows down the prospect for reaching a hemispheric trade bloc by 2005, as originally scheduled. The U.S. will still make mini-deal bilateral trade agreements and be working on a regional agreement with Central American countries (CAFTA).

The city of Miami raised a total of $12 million to host the meeting of the FTAA, $8.5 million of which came from Congress as part of the $87 billion Iraq package. City Police worked with U.S. Marshals, the Federal Protective Service, and the Coast Guard to prepare for up to 100,000 protesters.

Sources include Global Exchange, Public Citizen, and the AFL-CIO.

-Laura Stengrim

Chief Illiniwek (continued from page 3)

Philip Deloria. The Boy Scout Koshare troop of La Junta, Colorado performed Indian dances, made replicas of Indian material culture, and built a museum for Indian cultural objects. In 1953 they prepared costumes needed to perform the Zuni Shalako dance. The Zunis protested the Koshare's plans. "After visiting the Koshare kiva, however, the Zuni people changed their minds. They decided that the scots' precisely copied Shalako costumes were authentic and real, and they took the masks back to Zuni and built an original kiva for them" (Deloria, Playing Indian, 152). Contrast this with the scene in Jay Rosenstein's film In Whose Honor? (1996) in which the camera zooms in and pans across a woman at a pre-game tailgate party who is wearing a plethora of Chief Illiniwek paraphernalia. She is buttoned up, earrings and the like. She enumerates her various Chiefwegs, ends by pointing to "my Chief earrings here," and not missing a beat continues, "I wear the Chief in respect." In short, she is so bound up in the expression of her identity in the guise of the Chief that it is clearly rich and meaningful for her, but the rights of historically subjugated native Americans to express themselves is not up to the community and the nation, it has taken over its 26 years of existence and service to the community and the nation, it has taken to the community and the nation, it has taken much more effective than working exclusively through the national political structure is much more effective than working exclusively through the national political structure.

The significance of understanding and working within the local political arena was demonstrated (a) in research that was published in the January 2003 issue of the American Jewish Journal of Public Health, and (b) in tobacco control research. As we have learned from the tobacco wars, local politicians are much more accountable to their constituents than national ones. With accountability comes sunshine, and it is sunshine that grassroots organizations like CCHCC are striving for and are bringing to the community and the nation.

There would be no exaggeration to state that CCHCC is the jewel of the community.

I feel privileged to have read Claudia Lennhoff’s statement on the current projects undertaken by CCHCC. Similarly I feel privileged to have read Lennhoff’s written material and whatever else has been written about her. Lennhoff searched (by the way, the CCHCC data collected through the Internet and other sources are part of a more comprehensive research project on the promise and problems of health care, grassroots movements towards the actualization of a single payer health care system in the United States. CCHCC selected for this project because it is the deepest continuously operating organization of its kind in the United States.)

Under Lennhoff’s most able leadership CCHCC is soaring to new heights. It does not, or even pretend, to say this lightly. Most social movement efforts and the organizations that represent them have to endure a substantial number of challenges not only to survive but also to reach the point where their work will be noticed and taken into account by decision makers, the news media, and philanthropic foundations. Indeed, as a public health policy researcher, I cannot think of any other organization that has done so much to benefit the community in which it operates and as of late, to benefit the entire nation (medical debt campaign, for example). I can say with certainty that the models and campaigns of organizing and advocacy developed by Lennhoff and CCHCC will play a seminal role in the ongoing national struggle towards a just, fair, accessible, and affordable health care system.

But what is so impressive about CCHCC is that over its 26 years of existence and service to the community and the nation, it has taken a multi-issue strategy to the betterment of life of its constituencies (via gun control campaigns, via dental access campaigns, Medicare justice campaigns, and so on). It is through such a multi-issue approach that people became empowered to see and experience the benefits of an inclusive decision making process. In addition, CCHCC’s campaigns seem to work in a series of points making the local political structure is much more effective than working exclusively through the national political structure.

CCHCC’s work exemplifies the fact that the only viable arena of American politics is local politics.

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