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.

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Commemorative brick honoring “Grandpa” Bob Wahlfeldt (1925–2008) located in Cherry Alley next to Urbana Free Library

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It’s Time To Get Organized! Stay Tuned...
Government-funded human services are defined in specific terms in relation to state-level administrative structures and the state’s annual budget. These services do not technically include significant portions of the budget devoted to health care and education. Human services—thus narrowly defined—are primarily delivered by the Department of Human Services (DHHS), Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS), Department of Aging (DoA), Department of Public Health (IDPH), and the Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA). When defined in this manner, human services account for over 23% (over $6 billion) of the current fiscal years (2010) State Operating Budget. Moreover, county and municipal funding for human services is relatively minimal. Human service-oriented state departments and the contracted nonprofit agencies that most often deliver these services are particularly financially endangered during the current recession due to either budget cuts or delayed payment for services. It is important to understand why this is the case, as these services are delivered to many of the most vulnerable among us: the physically and developmentally disabled, the elderly, poor children, at-risk youth, the mentally ill, and those in need of addiction treatment.

Two major economic factors determine our current predicament of enormous budget shortfalls: the recession caused by the speculative housing bubble and stock market crash and consequently lowered state revenues (income tax and sales tax); and the long-term structural deficit of our state’s tax system. This structural deficit reflects the decades-long disappearance of at least $200,000,000,000 in state funds as a result of the failure to increase the tax rate to fund the public works and education needs of our state’s citizens. As a result, public service-oriented occupations and services have experienced a decline that is reflected in the decrease in the number of positions in state and local government service. This decrease is a result of the state’s fiscal policies and the state’s economic environment.

According to the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, we have experienced a decade-long real decline in almost all state services other than health care, when adjusted for both inflation and population growth. For human services, this has been on the order of 12% since 2002. In that year, for example, Illinois already ranked 31st nationally in per capita funding for both mental health and development disabilities. The federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), also known as the stimulus bill, has largely neglected funding for human services as defined above. Of the $700+ billion national program, $140 billion over a 2-year period is specifically devoted to addressing budget shortfalls experienced by 48 states (all except Montana and North Dakota). Illinois’ portion of that total is $10.5 billion, equating about 4% of our state’s shortfalls for combined fiscal years 2010 and 2011. At least 80% of that funding is specified by law for health care, education, and employment security. In contrast, funding specified for IDHS, IDCFS, and DoA totals $174 million, or 1.6% of total ARRA grants devoted to closing our state deficit. This 1.6% is in sharp contrast to the 23% of the budget that is devoted to human services. The human consequences of these cold facts are clear when one reads in the newspaper about the struggles of local government agencies and nonprofit organizations to not only deliver services, but to fiscally survive.

According to the Social Impact Research Center at the Heartland Alliance, almost 2,600 nonprofit organizations deliver at least $5 billion of human services ranging from emergency assistance to the homeless, to mental health care interventions, to youth development, to residuum and day care for the disabled. Of these, the majority has annual revenues of under $500,000 and 307 have revenues of less than $50,000. According to the same study, these organizations are lean, efficient, effective, and accountable.

Once nonprofit organizations shut their doors, they are not easily re-constituted at a lean, efficient, effective, and accountable cost. Some of these organizations are particularly impressive. First, and foremost, was Janice Mitchell who came to this project through a lot of both volunteer and paid experience with the Urbana schools. She lives in the neighborhood where the Center is located and she knows the children and their parents. She had a very clear vision of how an educational program should be structured for children of the different age groups. Second was the large amount of space that was available in the two-story former Harley-Davidson sales store and apartment above it, and the amount of volunteer work that it took to make it usable for this purpose. One of the volunteers in the work was the head of the County Housing Authority, which acquired the property from the former owners and turned it over to the Center. Third was the generosity of the two major hospitals, the VFW post one block from the Center, and other people who donated furniture and equipment that they no longer wanted. This is truly a community center in that it brought together the efforts of the city of Urbana that gave it a grant, the County Housing Authority that offered the property, the local hospitals, the VFW, the Local Area Network, and private parties who offered volunteer labor, furniture, and equipment.

For more information on the Center, call (217) 934-1749.

Human Services in Hard Times: State Budget Deficits Threaten the Most Vulnerable Among Us

By David Green

Government-funded human services are defined in specific terms in relation to state-level administrative structures and the state’s annual budget. These services do not technically include significant portions of the budget devoted to health care and education. Human service-oriented state departments and the contracted nonprofit agencies that most often deliver these services are particularly financially endangered during the current recession due to either budget cuts or delayed payment for services. It is important to understand why this is the case, as these services are delivered to many of the most vulnerable among us: the physically and developmentally disabled, the elderly, poor children, at-risk youth, the mentally ill, and those in need of addiction treatment.

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Once nonprofit organizations shut their doors, they are not easily re-constituted at a later date, even if funding is made available.
Valedictorian Speech From The Odyssey Project

By Janice Walker

Janice Walker gave this valedictorian speech at The Odyssey Project’s graduation ceremony in May.

Good Afternoon Friends, Family and Fac-
ulty. Thank you for taking time to celebrate with the 2010 Graduating class of the Odyssey Project.

About 2-years ago I saw the Odyssey Pro-
gram advertised in the News Gazette paper and thought WOW, what an opportunity but at that time my personal plate was full and I couldn’t take advantage of the Project, but I did tell others about it, and one of my fellow co-workers completed the program last year. Little did I know a year later I would need some additional humanities credits in order to complete my Bachelor of Science Degree and so on a personal note that is what this project has done for me.

Answers.com gives a definition of the word ODYSSEY as an extended adventurous voyage or trip. An intellectual or spiri-
tual quest. Both definitions are fitting to what we’ve experienced.

This is my explanation of the letters which spell ODYSSEY:

O Opportunity—to reach new heights in the Humanities
D Dignity—everyone has a story worth telling and listening to
Y Yearning—we were here to increase our educational pursuits
S Solidarity—there was unity of purpose and togetherness
S Success—this is an event that accomplishes an intended purpose
E Effort—it took physical energy to get to class and mental energy to main-
tain in class
Y Yes—an affirmative yes you can, it is so, we are the ones who made it through

A quote from Nelson Mandela says edu-
cation is the great engine of personal devel-
opment. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that a son of a miner will become the head of the mine, and that a child of farm workers can become the president.

Thank you Odyssey Project and all who have traveled this odyssey with me.

Odyssey Project

By Kerry Pimblot

For the past four years, the Odyssey Pro-
ject has offered a free-college accredited course in the humanities to workers and low-income men and women in Cham-
paign County. Thanks to support from both the Illinois Humanities Council (IHC) and the University of Illinois, we are able to offer students an intensive study of philosophy, art his-
tory, literature, U.S. history and critical thinking and writing.

Classes are taught by University of Illinois instructors and take place every Tuesday and Thursday evening from Sep-
tember to May at the Douglass Branch Library in Champaign.

This year has been a signal one for the Odyssey Project. After receiving over sixty applications, we were able to admit a full class of thirty-five students in the fall. By May, a record nineteen students received college credits and a total of sev-
enteen received their Associates in Arts Degree.

The eBlackChampaign-Urbana website (www.eBlack-
CU.net) features digitized newspaper clippings, pho-
tographs, church programs, obituaries, research papers, scrapbooks, maps and more on the local African-American experience. All are welcome to add to this database and use whatever content is in it for whatever purposes they wish. Why a website? By 2012 most homes in the historic “North End” of Champaign and Urbana will have access to low-cost high-speed broadband internet connectivity through the Urbana-Champaign Big Broadband (UCBB) ini-

At the eBlackCU project we want to create the digital infrastructure to enable all past, present and future residents of Champaign-Urbana to become inspired by the rich heritage of the local African-American community and its struggles for equality in housing, education, employ-
ment, financing, as well as for an end to discrimination and racism. Through this project and others we hope to involve and engage everyone in the use of digital technology for life-
long learning. The technology enables us to share this history across Champaign-Urbana, and across the globe, but everyone has to be an active participant in the technology for the project to matter.

The eBlackCU Project is experimenting with the best ways to animate this archive of local history. Projects so far have included creating bibli-
ographies/web biographies of local African-American histo-
ry; creating research guides to primary source documenta-
tion in area archives, libraries, and museums; using social media platforms like Facebook to advertise the collections we have brought together; digitizing and bringing together source material, creating oral histories, and creating curricu-
lar guides for local educators to use in the classroom.

Future projects will focus on addressing campus-commu-
nity issues in Champaign-Urbana. In October look for a pub-
lication tentatively entitled “Opening Up the University,” which will bring together documentation of the University’s impact, through research and engagement, in the African-American communities of Champaign-Urbana. For Novem-
ber 5-6 mark your calendars for the eBlackCU project’s cam-
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nitee for this symposium. Our goal in these activities is to change the way the University reports to, and makes itself accountable for, its actions in the community. In the process of building the eBlackCU database we have found that the University has been an engine for creating documentation on local African-American life through essays, dissertations, papers and more, yet this documentation rarely intersects with community life in constructive ways.

Everyone is encouraged and welcomed to participate in the eBlackCU project. The project is organized by Abdul Alkalmat (Gerald McWorter) and Noah Lenstra from the Department of African-American Studies and the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University

Did You Know….?

• That Champaign County has continuously had an African-American population since the late 1840s.
• That there were over ten African-American news-
papers and newsletters in Champaign-Urbana throughout the Twentieth Century.
• That there have been African-American communi-
ties not only in Champaign-Urbana, but also in places such as Sydney, Homer, Broadlands, Rantoul and other places throughout Champaign County?

eBlackProject: Online and In The Community

By Noah Lenstra

The history of African-Ameri-
cans in Champaign-Urbana has gone virtual! A new pro-
ject, called eBlackChampaign-Urbana, is working to bring together the documentation of this important history online to find new ways to celebrate, remember and use it into the present and future.

The eBlackChampaign-Urbana website (www.eBlack-
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Continued on the next page
In Defense of Mumia Abu Jamal From the Campaign To End The Death Penalty

The Campaign to End the Death Penalty (CDEP) is appalled by the news that several individuals of leading anti-death penalty organizations have signed a confession to and endorsed wordless on an anti-death penalty petition that purports to voice the conscience of death penalty opponents. The CDEP calls for an immediate investigation into the legitimacy of this petition and its signatories.

The CDEP has been in contact with the leaders of the organizations that signed the petition. We have learned that they are being pressured to sign the petition by a group of individuals who are aligned with the death penalty movement. The CDEP is concerned that this petition is being used as a tactic to silence opposition to the death penalty.

The CDEP stands completely and unequivocally against the death penalty. We believe that the death penalty is a violation of human rights and an emblem of systemic racism and inequality. We call for an end to the death penalty worldwide and for the release of all individuals currently on death row.

The CDEP is committed to continuing to fight for a world without the death penalty and to supporting the efforts of those who are working to achieve this goal.
Education vs. Incarceration: The Early Release Program in Illinois

By Brian Dolinar

With a current state budget deficit in Illinois of some $13 billion, among the largest in the country, state legislators are making tough decisions about where to save money. Recently, Governor Pat Quinn announced an “early release” program for prison inmates who have committed non-violent crimes, but it was quickly met by a political backlash. The state has also seen severe cuts in public education. With the current economic crisis, Illinois residents will soon have to decide which they value more education or incarceration.

In July 2009, Governor Quinn announced plans for cutbacks in corrections that would save a projected $125 million. It included an early release program that would eventually free more than 1,700 inmates in Illinois prisons and put them on parole. Similar programs have been implemented in California and Ohio with some success. According to the Taxpayer Action Board, a panel appointed by Quinn to analyze the budget for possible reductions, the state could save as much as $65 million this year and potentially $400 million annually by looking at alternatives to incarceration. This is in addition to increased productivity of those who would remain out of prison, not to mention the emotional benefit to families if their loved ones are not sent away. It costs on average $24,000 to house a prisoner for a year, while it only costs $4,000 to supervise a parolee. For example, it costs on average $24,000 to house a prisoner for a year, while it only costs $4,000 to supervise a parolee. For example, it costs on average $24,000 to house a prisoner for a year, while it only costs $4,000 to supervise a parolee.

In 2009, the overall budget for the Illinois Department of Corrections was $1.44 billion. This was what it cost to house roughly 45,000 inmates in 28 prisons. In comparison, the state expenditures for public universities in Illinois is roughly equivalent, with $1.4 billion being spent in 2007. This was what it cost to educate approximately 200,000 students at nine public universities.

Currently, lawmakers are looking for ways to cut one billion dollars from the public education which has a total budget of $10 billion, one quarter of the state expenditures. Within the University of Illinois system, some 11,000 employees were required to take four furlough days in 2010 to save the state $82 million. This was in addition to a wage freeze already in place. On the Urbana campus, dozens of Facilities and Services workers have been laid off. Positions have not been filled for faculty who have moved or retired.

During the primary election for Governor, Democratic contender Dan Hynes criticized Quinn’s early release program, saying it was done in “secret.” By December 2009, it came out that newspapers that more than a dozen of those released early had already reoffended. Little mention was made of the statistics showing that, with our education, work, or re-entry programs, half of those released early had already reoffended. Quinn blamed Illinois Corrections Director Michael Randle for the mistake. A state law was passed by the legislature that required inmates had to serve at least 61 days of a 12-month sentence. Those who had been released early were hauled back into prison. Quinn narrowly won the primary in March 2010 and was declared the Democratic Party candidate.

In the run-up to the primary election, local State’s Attorney Julita Rietz, who was supporting Dan Hynes’ campaign, attempted to do a political hit job on Quinn. The News-Gazette ran a story in which Rietz said she had obtained a list of the 21 early release inmates from Champaign County. A list given to her by Hynes Rietz called Quinn “irresponsible” for releasing the individuals without notifying their first. Most of those on the list had been locked up for violating the terms of their DUI convictions and had sentences ranging from 12 to 24 months. I made contact with one of the early release inmates from Champaign County. Luke Durso is a self-described “country boy” from the small town of Sidney, Illinois. He was caught driving with a suspended license after getting a DUI in April 2009. He was given a public defender who sentenced him to 12 months in prison, of which he had to spend 22 hours locked up with two hours of recreational time. As part of the early release program, Durso got out after 34 days of time served. He got two jobs laying dry wall and working construction. When he showed up one morning several weeks later and was apologetic, but said he had to take him back to prison. Durso returned to serve the remaining 27 days at Logan Correctional Center in Lincoln, Illinois.

I talked to Durso after he was released and back home in Sidney. Under the terms of intensive house arrest, he had to see a parole officer every two weeks, check in every day by calling a phone number, and submit to drug testing. He was happy to be out of prison, but the two terms he had served in prison had turned his life upside down. He was 25 years old when he was locked up. He owns a house and has a four-year-old son. His inconsistent income has put him in a financial bind.

I asked Durso about the guys he was locked up with. He said most of them were “decent people” with families and jobs, not “dirtball crackheads.” According to Durso, 90% of the guys he met were locked up for “dirty drops” they had smoked marijuana while they were on probation and failed a drug test. Whether people like Durso should be punished for drunk driving is unquestionable. But it is doubtful that prison time is the best option for nonviolent offenders. Those who are being sent to prison for years to sit in a jail cell for hours on end with no benefit to themselves or society. They are simply providing the raw material for a self-serving system which has lobbied for three decades to build more prisons, employ more correctional officers, and hire more prosecutors.

State lawmakers in Springfield are not expected to come up with a solution to the current budget shortfall until after the November election. Spending for prisons, schools, and other services is outpacing the revenue that can be brought in by taxes. If anything will roll back the trend of mass incarceration in the United States, it may be the current financial crisis.

Thanks to IMC interns Adrienne Thomas, Megan Bandy, Joe Cajados, and Sarah Anane for assisting with research for this project.

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 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.
There are not many minorities or women in the building trades. The Summer Construction Education Program tries to do something about that by introducing young minority people and women to the skills of the trades in a hands-on way.

A multi-county office named Education for Employment (EFE) administers the program. Going back several years, two local citizens, Tanya Parker and this author, had been talking with each other and trying to make contacts with others about the need to offer viable skills to young people who might not go on to higher education. One of the people we made contact with was Sean McLaughlin, Director of EFE in this area, to see if he might have the interest and the resources to launch such a program. Shortly after our conversation with Sean, he created a task force made up of trade unionists, public school officials, people from Parkland College and the U of I, and other interested parties to plan a construction training program. It was decided that a four-week summer program aimed at high school students going into their junior or senior years would be the way to go. White males would be eligible, but preference would be given to minority and female students.

The program was launched in the summer of 2008. The participating schools were Champaign Central and Centennial, Urbana, and Rantoul high schools. Lorie McDonald in the EFE office was charged with overseeing the program. Champaign Central's industrial arts teacher Alex Ramirez became the lead instructor in the program, to be assisted in 2009 and 2010 by Rantoul High School teacher Steven Lowe. Brochures were sent to the high school counselors and were circulated in the community in a limited way. In addition to offering credit for the course, the schools paid the students' wages of $7.50 per hour in 2008 and 2009. Because of the budgetary crisis, the schools could not afford the money, up this year so the students are now being paid a flat $500 out of other grant money. The city of Urbana has also made grants to the program.

The process is as follows: the students fill out an application in which they must offer information on their academic standing and their attendance record. They must also write a short essay on their interest in the program and request letters of recommendation from their teachers or counselors. A panel that assesses the appropriateness of the applicant for the program then interviews each applicant. This year there were 16 students accepted, fairly evenly spread between the two Champaign high schools and Urbana's. But there was also a student from the R.E.A.D.Y program and one from Urbana Adult Education. A large majority of the students are African American. There is one Latino student. There was one female student last year. While it was hoped that her experience might attract more female applicants this year, none applied.

The students begin the summer program with brief instruction in the construction lab at Central, but they very soon move out into hands-on experience in building a small structure like a garage for a private party who pays for the materials. The students learn how to pour and smooth the cement floor, frame the walls, install windows and doors, roof, and install electricity. While plumbing is not involved in a garage, they also get instruction in plumbing and pipe-fitting. Trades people in the unions offer help in the instruction in their specialized areas. But the students learn even more, including reliable attendance, promptness, and working cooperatively as a team. In addition, they learn work safety and receive an OSHA safety certificate that they can present to prospective employers or to unions if they should apply for apprenticeship programs.

Even if those students who complete the program choose not to enter the building trades, the skills they learn in this program and the satisfaction that they can actually create things with their hands is bound to be a transformative experience that raises self-esteem. For those who will choose the building trades as their vocation, it will prove to be a good initial preparation for providing materially for self and family. And, it will hopefully contribute to the diversification of the unionized work force.

For more information on the program, contact Lorie McDonald at (217) 355-1382.
If you want to connect to people involved in just about every social justice issue our nation faces, you would find your people at the US Social Forum. The first USSF was held in Atlanta in 2007. This year the gathering of over 12,000 convened in Detroit. The USSF program states “a unifying theme amongst all the forums... is that the solutions to the global crises we are all facing will not come from the governments or institutions, but they will come from the people’s movements and organizations. We have the bottom up, trans-local to the grassroots. The alternatives to the neo-liberal agenda are becoming reality!” This was apparent not only in the many reports from organizations around the nation, but in Detroit itself. So, it is apt that a gathering of movement-builders, organizers and activists would come to a city that has become the icon of capitalistic disasters. Detroit, the city of hope, had a lot to show the nation, and it did.

The Forum opened with a beautiful march down Woodward Ave, through the downtown, to the waterfront where the conference center was located. The march, a more than two hour walk on a very hot June day, was attended by everyone from local Detroit activists to organized domestic workers from New York to formerly incarcerated “Ban the Box” organizers from Massachusetts. Songs were sung, music was played, and the gathering ended with a rally in Cobo Hall. The halls of the Forum followed a somewhat typical conference format, with a dizzying amount of panels, assemblies and plenaries. Workshop tracks included panels discussing pressing issues such as displacement, migration, the rust belt, democracy and governance, media justice, and Indigenous Sovereignty, just to name a few. I followed a track that included ideas of prison abolition and organizing, which I will mention below.

Others in my group found panelsists from New Orleans, working together as the Greater New Orleans Organizers’ Roundtable, who shared methods for building a regional network of trust and support. Much of their methodology was founded on the work of the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond, an organization that “helps individuals, communities, organizations and institutions move beyond addressing the symptoms of racism to undoing the causes of racism so as to create a more just and equitable society.” Some went to the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, which detailed how African-American residents in the city were mobilizing food production and land use to build both political and nutritional infrastructure. The significance of food gardens is hard to overestimate in a city with no full-service grocery stores!

I attended a panel hosted by formerly incarcerated youth in Los Angeles—a group called Youth Justice Coalition—who eloquently articulated how aggressive policing in their neighborhoods resulted in more crime, not less. Furthermore, they described how the LAPD has, and is, exporting this model of policing throughout the country. Another panel I attended focused on why rural American matters for prison abolition, hosted by Lauren Melodia. Melodia, a recent transplant into a rural prison town in upstate NY, is working on a project titled “Milk Not Jails,” a campaign to make urban connections for a fledging dairy market in rural New York. These kinds of projects are crucial to demythologizing the idea that prisons create good jobs or do anything positive for the community in which they are located. This panel realized the need for people to work, but recognized the costs of particular kinds of jobs—prison jobs—on both sides of the prison wall. All of the panels related to prison reform or abolition reflected on the urgency to reject Arizona SB 1070. In another panel, titled “Beyond Walls and Cages”, organizations and activists from all Arizona and New Mexico discussed the case with which we recently have, as a nation, contended immigration and criminalization.

Other activities at the gathering involved learning with and from Detroit. The city has seen decline—any visitor could tell you this—but it is also making radical change. Detroiters have been told again and again that this car plant or that casino will bring the city back, but the results are never realized for the majority of residents. So, like the USSF program statement, residents have initiated block-by-block change. Detroit has more community gardens and urban farms that any other U.S. city. Residents are building a network of social justice centers, leadership training spaces, internet nodes and community radio stations. In response to recent police shootings, they created Peace Zones for Life—in which mediators help resolve conflict between families or neighborhoods, rather than calling the police. So, Social Forum attendees could escape the conference center and participate in building community gardens, building outdoor classroom units, repairing bicycles or painting murals. In addition People’s Movement Assemblies organized actions throughout the week: action to stop shut offs of low income and persons with disabilities by the power company, action for environmental justice at the Detroit Incinerator, and more.

The US Social Forum was a remarkable convening of people, ideas, and actions, making clear what’s at stake in our future. This gathering also made clear that there are many of us, all working in our towns, cities and regions to make real, sustainable, just change a reality. We didn’t need to wait for a new president of a university, or of the nation, the possibilities are in front of us. It is happening now.

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE:
Detroit Black Food Security Network: detroitblackfoodsecurity.org
Youth Justice Coalition: www.youthjusticecoalition.org/aboutyjc
Milk Not Jails: milknotjails.wordpress.com/
Beyond Walls and Cages: beyondcagesandwalls.blogspot.com/
Allied Media Conference: alliedmediaconference.org/
Peace Zones for Life: dprop.org/201006/detroit-summer-2/
Social Centers: www.baggycenter.org/ and www.chehush.org
The People’s Institute: www.pisah.org/
The Hush House: www.thehushhouse.org/
For decades, Champaign-Urbana has inspired a long succession of independently made media created by citizens, academics, and students wishing to enrich and inform their friends and neighbors in ways avoided by commercial outlets. This has encompassed print, radio, theater, music, the Internet, and the film arts. However, the most ill-used form of modern communication to disseminate viewpoints and expression from a local perspective is arguably the one falsely believed to be the province of studio impresarios and celebrity egos—the cinema and its domestic offspring, television.

Consumer-priced technology improved and expanded so rapidly through the Nineties and into the new century that the videographer has found him or herself with plen- ty of effective production tools and work flow options to aid in shooting and editing quality footage without the time and cost concerns associated with traditional film production. Should the videographer be in the right place at the right time with the competence to tape cleanly and confidently to stand their ground while doing so, she or he may come away with material that not only preserves our domestic offspring, television.

People of Oaxaca, Mexico, who reclaimed local radio stations worked like Roswell by Bill Brown and The Bay Swimmers by Jesse Damon.

IMCFF also grew to include special showings and satellite events which engaged the audience beyond the silver screen. For instance, the first night concluded with a broadcast of WRRF’s “The Show” in the stage area featuring monologues by host Ray Morales, slam poetry, and freestyle rhyme with live percussion. The second night’s film highlights included a live multi-instrumental performance of an original score composed by UI graduate student Vin Calamino in sync with the silent German classic, The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, followed by a multimedia performance comprised of found footage projected by Matt Harsh and choice cuts played by DJ Belly.

While programming overlap could be found between IMCFF and the New Art Film Festival, it simply expanded the amount of exposure given to locally-made films. The six-day schedule allowed NAFF to reprise movies that have already been shown publicly, including the features Act Your Age (IMCFF ’99) and Press Start and the shorts Prelude and The Transient (both IMCFF ’09), as well as titles playing for the first time in C-U. These included the documentary Hoopstition, a portrait of the town and its former “Witch School,” the twisty thriller A Certain Point of View, filmed on the University of Illinois campus, and the low-key feature drama The Scientist, self-distributed by Charondale director Zach Lefleur. NAFF also brought back a hit from last year’s IMCFF, the artist documentary Proceed and Be Bold! directed by UI alumna Laura Zingler, for all the positive lessons it embodies in regards to self-expression, self-determination, and DIY ethos.

Between IMCFF and NAFF, hundreds of fellow citizens took in dozens of films not already ubiquitous thankies to the Hollywood marketing machine. The programming decisions were also not influenced overly by C-U’s own populist movie phenomenon, Roger Ebert’s Film Festival. Passion and intelligence guided the two core teams—Nicole Fion, Kary Viezal, Brian Dolinar, Laura Fuhrman, and yours truly for IMCFF, and myself and Sanford Hess for NAFF—to formulate what would make for good cinema viewing and great food for thought.

Of course we now ask, “What locally-produced films will we see at these events next year?” Take your camera in arms and then take advantage of several potential resources—including the IMC, Urbana Public Television, Champaign Government Television, UGL, Parkland College Television, and the monthly Champaign Movie Makers meetings at Class Act Interactive—to enhance your skills and meet fellow citizens with whom you can collaborate. You can also keep tabs on local activity and viewing options at C-U BlackNile (www.micro-film-magazine.com/cublog). Until then, we can’t wait to hear you yell, “Action!”

### Upcoming Events at the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center, 202 South Broadway, Downtown Urbana

**August 6–8th:** “And I Remember” A play starring Karen Vaccaro. Also, 8/6—8PM 8/7—8PM 8/8—7PM 8/7—11am–2pm UCIMC Open House! Including projects from the 2010 Indy-Media & Arts Lab 8/10—7pm Churula Traditional Irish Music: Presented by the Piper’s Hut Concert Series Churula (pronounced cool-Roo-ah), translates from the Irish as “red back,” and was the name and distinguishing feature of the favorite wolfhound belonging to ancient Irish hero Finn MacCumhaill. It is also the name of an internationally acclaimed trio of some of the most respected and unique exponents of Irish traditional music.

Button accordion icon Paddy O’Brien has accumulated a veritable hoard of rare versions of tunes and stories gleaned from more than forty years of patient seeking out and spending time with older musicians throughout Ireland. A native of County Offaly in the Midlands.

**August 14th:** Hottest Steppers Set in Urbana: Workshops and Live Music $10/person at the door Live Music & DJ @ 9pm Stepping contest @10:30

**August 20th:** An Udderbot Recital: Brought to you by OddMusic Urbana-Champaign. 9/1—9/29 Exhibit: BAG, a photographic installation by Ellie Brown www.eliebrown.com 9/11—7:30PM Ash Devine in Concert

### Message & Medium, Both Matter in Local Film Fests

By Jason Panhoke

Jason Panhoke is the editor of C-U Blog-magazine.com and publisher of C-U Confidential in print. Both cover local filmmaking and film culture as it pertains to the Champaign-Urbana area.

### Summer 2010

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