Public Health to Offer Emergency Contraceptive to Area Women

CHAMPAIGN—The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) will offer emergency contraceptive (EC) to women during clinics. Teen Parent Services Case Managers were certified to distribute Plan B (an emergency contraception method of contraceptive) over the counter to women in Champaign County through Planned Parenthood of East Central Illinois.

Emergency contraception is a concentrated dose of hormones used to keep a woman from getting pregnant when she has had unprotected vaginal intercourse and must be taken within 120 hours. However, the sooner it is taken the better. CUPHD will now have it available to pick up for clients to have on hand in case of an emergency situation, allowing women to back up their birth control plan.

Emergency contraceptive does not prevent sexually transmitted infections.

The contraceptive will be available free to eligible females at the 710 N. Neil Street site during all clinic hours. It will also be available on the Wellness On Wheels Teen Mobile Van.

Please visit www.cuphd.org for more information.

WILL Youth Media Workshop

WILL’s Youth Media Workshop is bringing the filmmaker, Byron Hurt, here for a town hall meeting about the issues discussed in the film on Tuesday, March 13th at 7pm in the Knight Auditorium of the Spurlock Museum, 600 S. Gregory Street, in Urbana. The event is free and open to the public. There will be a small panel of speakers, including Mr. Hurt, and audience questions.

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If you or your organization would like to become a sustaining contributor to the Public i, or would like more information, please call 344-7265, or email imc-print@ucimc.org.
Lesbian Activism and Women’s History in the Cold War Era

by Stephanie Foote

ORGANIZING WOMEN’S HISTORIES

How much do we remember when we think about women’s history and which do we forget? What kind of woman has remained invisible when the idea of Women’s History itself becomes institutionalized? Questions like these are not challenges to the idea of Women’s History—in fact they are the part of the powerful legacy of decades of feminist challenges to conventional ways of organizing knowledge. The political stakes of such questions are all the more important in a world where only some women have been able to reap material benefits from those challenges. Women’s history—is its formation as a discipline, its innovative scholarship, its political energy and even its internal conflicts—has been instrumental in introducing women histories into the archive, but its most important cultural work lies in its disruption of how the very idea of the past is constructed and reproduced.

Women’s History is a way of understanding the cultural work of gender itself, of interrogating how common-sensical knowledge about gender identities is constructed, and of critiquing how gender structures the political and social experiences of historical subjects. Women’s History can help us to see familiar events, eras, and social actors in a new way because it reminds us that our own practices of remembering and forgetting are deeply structured by gender inequality.

That central insight can also help us see how gender influences the way we tell the stories of progressive political movements as well as how we critique entrenched institutional power. One easy example can be seen in the near consensus about the origins of gay and lesbian political organizing in the U.S. Conventional (if progressive) histories inaugurate the queer politics with which we are most familiar with the Stonewall Inn Uprising of 1969. The Stonewall Inn, a gay bar with a substantial clientele known to the police, who, as they did with most gay bars, responded to a police raid by attacking the police with rocks and bottles. The news of the riot spread throughout Greenwich Village and the lesbian, gay, and trans community gathered and intensified the protest against the police. Eventually, riot police were dispatched to quell the uprising, but news of it was already working its way through the gay and lesbian community.

Stonewall, which gathered together protesters across the spectrum of queer life in New York, became a beacon for the gay rights movement. Stonewall is now as much myth as history, and like most myths, it provides a powerful foundation for queer politics and activism. It is central, too, to how progressive histories in the later twentieth century have understood the queer movement, the critique of the state launched by gender and sexual dissidents, and the political potential of broad based alliances between gender and sexual dissidents, people of color and transpeople.

But where did the Stonewall riot come from? What other histories and experiences enabled it? What previously invisible people become visible if we do not imagine that Stonewall is the origin of the modern queer political movement? What happens if we look at the smaller stories, the more localized dissent, the less world-shaking but no less history-making day to day activities that made something like Stonewall possible? What happens if we use the challenges of Women’s History to open up the historical archive even further?

THE RADICAL FIFTIES

It seems counterintuitive to argue that women in the 1950s helped to make Stonewall possible. The 1950s had banished sex. The very idea of sex, let alone discussing it, was considered too scandalous. The decade’s drive toward moralization seems embodied by the iconic straight, white, heterosexual family, and especially by June Cleaver, the perfect and perfectly anheletic housewife of the Cold War Era. For both queer politics and feminism, the 50s seem best passed over in silence. The fifties might be fetishized by popular culture as the ideal of the middle-class white family, and scorned by activists as the dead zone in political organizing, but Women’s History Month gives us an opportunity to see some of the work of the lesbian activists and writers whose contributions have been largely forgotten. For the lesbian community, the fifties are a vital moment when lesbians began to create a rich but too often forgotten history of struggle against normative definitions of gender and sexual identity. They did this work as women and as lesbians, and they did it by taking advantage of the very stereotypes and assumptions that had most demonized and pathologized their understanding of gender and sexuality.

First, they took advantage of the decade’s fascination with sex and especially with the dangers of sexual and gender dissidence. Despite its reputation for being buttoned-down and straight-laced, the 50s saw a remarkable proliferation of books about sexuality and sex, as well as a series of quasi-medicalized texts devoted to a popular Freudian self-analysis and mental and sexual health. Publishers like Cadillac printed best selling sex manuals and marriage manuals like The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Sex. Kinsey published Sexual Behavior in the Human Male in 1948 and Sexual Behavior in the Human Female in 1953. Among the most controversial of Kinsey’s arguments was that an extraordinary number of men and women had had homosexual relations at some point in their lives. Both of his books also introduced social analysis to the study of sexuality. Kinsey correlated such factors as age, class, and educational level with sexual experiences, without arguing that such factors caused particular kinds of sexuality.

The effect of Kinsey’s book was immediate. Publishers Weekly’s anonymous “Note on About the Kinsey Report” reported in 1948 that interest in Kinsey’s work was so high that a book that merely interpreted Kinsey’s findings had actually outsold the Kinsey report. Five years later, Publishers Weekly announced the release of a medical book that aimed to counter aggressively the Kinsey’s view of female sexuality (“Note on Response to the Kinsey Report’ 1953”). The mainstream popular media followed suit, becoming intensely interested in the “problem” of sexuality, especially homosexuality. Time magazine, The Nation, and The New York Times, for example, all carried stories about “the” homosexual presence, as they tended to call it, in society concentrating especially on legal reports, such as Great Britain’s 1957 Wolfenden Report and on the psychiatric community’s assessments of homosexuality’s causes and potential cures. In part, though, this incredible production of talk about sexuality and the intense interest in how sexual identity was formed shows us that the ideal of the straight, white, heteronormative family was under immense pressure even at the moment of its greatest apparent strength.

There is no question that public interest in sexuality and gender did not translate into greater tolerance, despite what some “experts” argued in their articles, sex manuals, and popular medical books. Police raids of cruising areas in public parks and gay bars were standard, as was the enforcement of postal regulations to prohibit the circulation of “pornographic” sexual material. But even within these restrictions, women took advantage of the circumscribed public sphere for discussion of sexuality to reach out to one another. One way was by writing what we now call pulp fiction. Publishers of mass market paperbacks and even more staid and respectable publishers did a brisk business in nonfiction work dealing with sexuality, including popular accounts of psychoanalysis and book-length analyses of...
A Response to Champaign Authorities Who Dispute Need for a Citizen Police Review Board

By Laurie Solomon

Laurie Solomon is a long-time resident of Champaign.

In a recent News Gazette article by Mike Monson, dated January 21, 2007 and entitled, Cities Taking Different Tacks on Police Review Issue, City Councilman, Michael LaDue is quoted as saying that he would “want to see compelling evidence for the need for one before I’d want relations with the police department unnecessarily.” In the same article, Champaign Mayor Jerry Schweighart, a retired city police officer, made it clear he’s unalterably opposed to a review board and is quoted as saying, “With a civilian review board, you’ll have advocates who think they know the law making judgments on people’s careers. You’re going to take something that’s workable now and make it into something that’s adversarial.” I, for one, have to take exception to the quoted remarks and think that these comments deserve some attention, analysis, and response.

A RESPONSE TO MR. LADUE’S COMMENTS

With respect to Mr. LaDue’s remarks, I think that they show a bias in favor of the status quo without furnishing any rationale for assuming such a bias. One has to wonder why Mr. LaDue does not ask to see compelling evidence that there is not a need for a citizen police review board, rather than asking for compelling evidence that one is needed. Since there has never been a local citizen review board, there is no empirical evidence available to provide compelling evidence to show the need for one other than the following: (1) the fact that a significant portion of the population feels that there is a need to at least try some form of citizen review given their mistrust of the existing processes, and (2) the fact that any empirical evidence that might exist is dependent on what the police department has collected and will make available to the public. Those statistics are limited in that they were never collected, they were not collected in any systematic fashion with respect to the issues in question, or those statistics which do exist are not readily available to the public in raw data form—if at all. I would think that, since the existing processes have been in existence for some time and there is a history of experience with its operation and impact, it would be easier (and incumbent on) those who support the present system and oppose a review board to collect, assemble, and present compelling evidence to show that the current system works and that there is need for a review board. However, if Mr. LaDue were really interested in viewing and evaluating the evidence pro and con for various forms of the citizen police review process, he could always do a Google search where he would find that a number of cities and towns across the country—big and small—have some form of civilian citizen review process. There are at least 1,200,000 web sites with information on this subject under looking under the subjects “cities with civilian police review,” “cities with citizen police review,” “cities with citizen review boards,” etc.

Furthermore, I have to wonder how many pieces of legislation and what legislation brought before the City Council have elected from a member of Council the requirement that there be compelling evidence presented on behalf of the legislation before they would consider voting in favor of it. It is only on the rarest of occasions where “compelling evidence” has been used as a standard, the common standard uses have tended to be “sufficient evidence” which need not be compelling. I ask Mr. LaDue if he would care to specify and define exactly what he would consider as being “compelling evidence” and would accept as such. To the best of my knowledge, this has not been specified anywhere in the law and serves as a means to cover up the incompetent and arbitrary exercise of some undisclosed, discretionary judgments and decision-making by council members when evaluating the proposals and acting on them.

Lastly, whose relations with the Police Department is Mr. LaDue concerned about souring unnecessarily? His relations? The city Council’s relations? The complaining community’s relations? The public in general’s relations?

A RESPONSE TO THE MAYOR’S REMARKS

With respect to the Mayor’s remarks, his argument is both arrogant and absurd, even though - on the face of it—the argument may appear to be supported by the law. If the concern is with amateurs being on the board who think they know (but really do not know) the law, then that can be resolved easily by appointing a few lawyers and retired judges to the review board who can inform the other members of the applicable law.

Moreover, there is no reason why civilians cannot, over a brief period of time, be taught and learn the relevant laws just as police officers are taught and learn the law over a period of training and experience. If teaching civilians about the relevant laws were not possible, then why would it be possible to do so with respect to new police officers? Maybe we should require our police officers to be attorneys with law degrees in addition to attending the Police Training Institute for training in policing methods so as to assure that they actually are both specialists and experts in the law rather than uncertified amateur lawyers who have had a few hours at PTI dealing with the law. If the police officers were so knowledgeable of, and expert, in the law, then they could ask who some of the charges they file are open to challenge by the state’s attorneys office, which is made up of legal experts, and, when the charges are reviewed by legal experts, we would have a system where the process is not open to review by the state’s attorneys office, which is made up of legal experts, and, when the charges are reviewed by legal experts, we would have a system where the process is not open to other review by the state’s attorneys office, which is made up of legal experts.

Furthermore, if the Mayor’s arguments were valid, then the same can be said about grand juries and trial juries which are made up of common everyday civilian citizens who are not experts in the law but are charged with making legal and other decisions which impact the lives of the defendants. Would he say that the legal system be changed so as to prevent amateur civilian citizens from serving on juries because they do not know the law and might think that they do? Who would be prepared to say that we replace them with police officers? Lawyers? Former judges? Academics specializing in constitutional law and/or other forms of law? As with grand juries or trial juries, those brought before a civilian review board should be expected to make arguments to the board members which convince them and make them understand why the board should take no actions or make no recommendations in their case. It is incumbent on the defendant to educate the members of the board on what the appropriate law is and how to interpret the relevant law in the case before them just as one would expect from the advocates in a grand jury hearing or a court hearing with a jury.

Just because a process is adversarial does not mean that it is unworkable which is what the Mayor seems to be implying. In one stroke, the mayor appears to be condemning the entire U.S. legal system for its adversarial structure as being unworkable. I assume he would prefer closed non-jury court proceedings where the defendant is not allowed to challenge the prosecution or question the witnesses.

Furthermore, if the Mayor’s standards of not allowing amateurs who are not experts review, evaluate, pass judgment on or make recommendations concerning decision in fields where they are not certified as being experts are valid, then I am left with the question of how can members of the city Council assess and evaluate, decide to reject or accept proposals and proposed legislation of a technical nature when they do not have the level of expertise in the fields of engineering projects and designs, municipal planning, finance, and so on which they have no expert knowledge or certification to suggest that they are anything more than competent amateurs in most cases at best? How many members of city council have engineering degrees and licenses, credentials in city planning, municipal finance or risk management, information systems, or any one of a multitude of issues and subjects that come before them for review and decision?

CONCLUSIONS

There is not just one type of citizen review process; there are many different forms of review that are possible—and having different focuses and levels or types of decision making authorities attached to them. While there may be good arguments in support of and/or against each of the various forms of civilian review, those offered by La Due and the Mayor are not among them.

Both sides of this issue need to bracket their pre-established points of view and be much more open-minded in approaching a serious examination and discussion of all the questions and issues involved. The fact that municipal authorities such as San Diego, Fort Collins, Iowa City, Corvallis, New York City, Pittsburgh, Oakland, Baltimore, and Dallas have found that some form of citizen police review process was useful enough to institute one should suggest that the subject merits a serious open-minded discussion, analysis, and assessment of the possibilities.

There certainly is no harm in trying out an acceptable method of citizen review which will accomplish or help bring about the goals of the community for some fair and alternative mechanisms to investigate, review, evaluate, and adjudicate instances of alleged police misconduct and abuse so as to allow the community to have some formal input into the decision-making, even if that is merely to furnish recommendations to the decision-makers in authority. There must be methods available which will protect the rights of both the police officers and the members of the community, which are more transparent and more available to the public than currently is the case. Such a review process should provide an alternative set of avenues for handling citizen complaints that the members of the public can avail themselves of when and if they do not trust or have faith in the police department handling such things in-house without any public scrutiny.
Sgt. Myers Given Probation: Torture of Inmates Goes Unpunished by State’s Attorney

By Brian Dolinar

Former Sergeant William Alan Myers pleaded guilty to charges of felony disorderly conduct and misdemeanor aggravated battery on Monday, October 26. Charges of felony obstruction of justice and felony aggravated battery were dropped. He received two years probation, a $500 fine, and 100 hours community service.

On November 14, 2005, Sgt. Myers illegally used a taser on remote control African American inmate Michael Alexander was tased on November 6, 2004 when Myers used a taser on 21 year-old white student from Chicago. Michael Rich argues that Myers' plea bargain, Sheriff Dan Walsh, Julia Rietz, and others will be at a public forum on March 13, 2007 titled, “Introduction to the Champaign County Criminal Justice System.” This will be a rare opportunity to demand some answers from public officials about the handling of the Sgt. Myers case. For more on Sgt. Myers see the Oct. 2006 and Dec. 2006/Jan. 2007 issues of the Public i.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CHAMPAIGN COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

March 13, 2007, 7:00 PM
Urbana Civic Center
108 E. Water, Urbana

Citizens should understand how the criminal justice system works. Please join us for a free educational evening on how the criminal justice system works in our community. Office holders will make presentations about how their offices are structured, their job duties, how cases are processed, challenges to their office and what citizens can do to improve the system. There will be a question and answer period following the presentations.

Speakers include:
Richard Klaus, Associate Judge
Dan Walsh, Sheriff
Julia Rietz, State’s Attorney
Randy Rosenbaum, Public Defender
Joe Gordon, Director of Court Services

Sponsored by the Champaign County Bar Association and the Illinois State Bar Association

No Torture Here
Myers lawyer Tony Novak said, “There was no torture here.” The definition of torture defined in the International Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984), to which the U.S. is a signatory, is as follows:

“Torture means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or inflicting severe pain or suffering on him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.”

The international standards of torture also apparently do not apply in Champaign County.

The prosecutor, Assistant State’s Attorney Steve Ziegler, said that Myers “pleaded guilty to what he did.” Ziegler would not answer my questions: Why did he not pursue felony aggravated battery against Myers? Why did he not file additional charges against Myers for falsifying a police report on Michael Rich? Why did he not call Trina Fairley? I was able to get in contact with Fairley and she told me she was never even contacted by the State’s Attorney. Michael Alexander, Trina Fairley, and Michael Rich all filed formal complaints against Myers. In August 2005, Sheriff Dan Walsh met with Rich and told him he would look into Myers. He did nothing and three other people were abused. The day of Myers plea bargain, Sheriff Dan Walsh was tight-lipped and had no comment.

Sheriff Dan Walsh, Julia Rietz, and others will be at a public forum on March 13, 2007 titled, “Introduction to the Champaign County Criminal Justice System.” This will be a rare opportunity to demand some answers from public officials about the handling of the Sgt. Myers case. For more on Sgt. Myers see the Oct. 2006 and Dec. 2006/Jan. 2007 issues of the Public i.

Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes takes an in-depth look at representations of manhood, sexism and homophobia in hip-hop culture. This groundbreaking documentary is a “loving critique” of certain disturbing developments in rap music culture from the point of view of a fan who challenges the art form’s representations of masculinity. Leading rap and hip-hop artists including Mos Def, Busta Rhymes, Russell Simmons are interviewed—and pressed—to answer some difficult questions about the violent and sexually explicit content of many hip-hop songs and videos. Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes premiers on the Emmy Award-winning PBS series Independent Lens.
THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES IN CHINA

By Belden Fields

Belden Fields offers his appreciation to Professor Safeng Song for supplying him with a video of the Chinese documentary on the staging of the play in China, for allowing herself to be interviewed and generally educating the author on the meaning of this play within the Chinese context, and for reading and commenting on the drafts.

THE POLITICAL AND THE CULTURAL

I have, for many years, been interested in how a single political ideology or a set of political institutions will vary when they are implemented in different cultural contexts. For example, in 1988 I published a book that examined how movements claiming to represent the ideologies of Trotskyism and Maoism took on very different forms when political activists tried to apply them in France and in the United States.

It appears that the same is true of cultural productions. The production that I want to discuss here is Eve Ensler's award-winning play, The Vagina Monologues. This play is interesting because it is simultaneously and intentionally a cultural production and a political intervention. It is a cultural production because its form is the play. It is not a treatise or a political tract. It is meant to be enjoyed, to be fun for both the performers and the audience.

But it is also political because it is designed to raise consciousness about power, violence, and self-affirmation in the face of patriarchal power and violence against women.

On February 23 and 24, The Vagina Monologues was performed in the Lincoln Hall Auditorium. This has apparently become a yearly event. The performance was to benefit the local Woman's Fund and V-Day International. V-Day is an international effort to combat violence against women worldwide. At about the same time that The Vagina Monologues was being performed in Lincoln Hall, a class in Chinese history at the University of Illinois was being shown a documentary about its performance in China.

THE CHINESE CONTEXT

In the United States, Ensler's play became an artistic component of a larger feminist movement that was struggling for women's rights in all domains of life—political, sexual, economic, and expressive. Such a movement, that engages in open political organizing, demonstrations, and direct confrontations with those holding political power, does not exist in China. It does not exist in China for both political and cultural reasons.

The political reason is that the state, controlled by a single party, does not permit such public activity. The pro-democracy movement and Falun-Gong have both paid very dearly, often with their lives, when they have held public demonstrations. In the latter case, the demonstration was not even political, simply featuring the bodily exercises of this spiritual group.

The second reason is the moral context in China. There is a reluctance in China to publicly discuss issues that are explicitly sexual. "Good taste" dictates that these remain in the private domain. This conflicts with the Western feminist contention that the boundary between the public and the private is a false one that is useful in perpetuating patriarchy. As in most single-party states, the Chinese regime assumes as its responsibility control over public expressions of sexuality morality. When it judges that presentations are too far from the dominant norms, or are too public, it will intervene to prevent them.

Indeed, scheduled performances of The Vagina Monologues were prevented from taking place by the regime.

The Chinese production of The Vagina Monologues was presented in Guangzhou. According to Professor Song, these differences are due to concerns over the prevailing sexual mores among actresses and audiences alike. It is not that there is no reference at all to sex in Chinese culture. Professor Song points out that many of the folksongs sung by the rural population are very explicit. But there is a modesty and a discreetness in China that perhaps once existed in the United States but no longer does. So, if one wants the audience to accept the message, which means, among other things that the actresses have to be comfortable in delivering it, there is a certain sensitivity required. Professor Song stresses that the play needs to be fun for both actresses and audience. There can be a certain lighthearted naughtiness, as if one were to think about how one would go about dressing a vagina up, which would be fun and provoke laughter.

But other things are thought to be off-limits, or requiring the greatest sensitivity. The portrayal of sex workers is one of those things. Prostitution is illegal in China, though it exists. But the overt portrayal of a prostitute on the stage would not work for either the actress or the audience. In addition to conservative sexual mores, there is a kind of self-censorship in China when it comes to portrayal of illegality, probably based upon both deference to authority and fear of the possible penal repercussions, that does not exist in the United States.

Neither performer nor audience would be at ease with it; they would not learn from it; and they would not find any fun in it.

Another issue is lesbianism. The documentary about the play produced in Guangzhou contained interviews with actual lesbians but did not show their faces. In a "not-in-your-face" delicacy, it showed only their clasped hands. In the play itself, there was only one brief reference to a lesbian experience by an actress who was recalling many memories in her life. An American might say that this "delicacy" contributed to the closing of les-bians. Professor Song says that it is rather out of respect for the women who are not out of the closet as well as an attempt to balance education about the lesbian experience and the need for greater respect for it with a concern for sensitivities in a society that is so very great extent desexualized even when it comes to heterosexual forms.

In the Chinese documentary, there is much less bare skin presented to the audience than in the Lincoln Hall version where one young woman appeared in a bikini and another in a tee-shirt and what appeared to be panties. All of the actresses shown in the Chinese documentary were fully clothed. It is not that there was no self-affirmation of sexuality in the Chinese version, it's just that nudity is not required for such affirmation and would be counterproductive in the Chinese context.

In addition, the portrayal of sexual pleasure was different in the two productions. Again, the Lincoln Hall version was more blunt about the sensations when parts of the vagina were touched. In the Chinese version, the issue was presented by what Chinese women felt was a taboo against groaning during the sexual act, i.e., the woman expressing too much pleasure. The Chinese production reverted to forms of traditional opera to discuss the pleasure that women feel during the sexual act. Professor Song says that in a culture that is comparatively more modest in sexual expression, it is a little difficult to get these amateur and perhaps first-time actresses to act it out on the set.

Continued on the next page

MODIFICATIONS IN CHINA

I observed some interesting differences between the play that was presented in Lincoln Hall Theater and what I saw in the documentary on the presentation in Guangzhou. According to Professor Song, these differences are due to concerns over the prevailing sexual mores among actresses and audiences alike. It is not that there is no reference at all to sex in Chinese culture. Professor Song points out that many of the folksongs sung by the rural population are very explicit. But there is a modesty and a discreetness in China that perhaps once existed in the United States but no longer does. So, if one wants the audience to accept the message, which means, among other things that the actresses have to be comfortable in delivering it, then a certain sensi-tivity is required. Professor Song stresses that the play needs to be fun for both actresses and audience. There can be a certain lighthearted naughtiness, as if one were to think about how one would go about dressing a vagina up, which would be fun and provoke laughter.

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Continued on the next page
Guard Your Girls From Gardasil: What every woman and parent should know before considering the HPV vaccine.

By Ayanna Qadeem

The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the United States. HPV includes over 120 different strains, and approximately 30-40 of those are transmitted sexually. Out of these 30-40, only a few types can cause mild cellular changes in cervical cells or genital warts. In rare cases, it is untested for many years, these abnormal cellular changes (dysplasia) could lead to cervical cancer. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, about 6.2 million Americans become infected yearly with HPV and over half of all sexually active men and women (20 million) will become infected in their lifetime. In the United States, there are approximately 9,710 new cases each year of cervical cancer, and about 3,700 deaths. On a worldwide scale, 400,000 women get cervical cancer and of that 233,000 die each year due to cervical cancer that could have been caught early through regular Pap smear screening.

It is also important to note that 70% of people infected with HPV will clear the virus on their own down to an undetectable viral load level in 8-24 months following infection. Most won’t show any symptoms of ever having the virus. Regular Pap smear testing continues to be the one of most effective ways to prevent cervical cancer prevention. Other factors for preventing cervical cancer include maintaining a healthy immune system, not smoking, and practicing safe sexual habits.

If HPV is cleared, cervical cancer is so rare, then what good is Gardasil?

Gardasil was introduced last year and was the fastest FDA-approved vaccine ever. It is a non-infectious genetically engineered vaccine created from virus-like particles of major HPV proteins 6,11,16, and 18. AHP 6 and 11 are low risk strains linked to 90% of genital warts, while 16 and 18 are high risk strains responsible for 50-70% of the cervical cancers in the world. Although Gardasil has been highly effective in Merck’s clinical trials, it is not a replacement for regular Pap screening, nor is it a cure for cancer. Women already infected with these strains will not benefit from taking the drug. Gardasil does not prevent infection from the other HPV types not contained in the vaccine. The vaccine is administered in three shots and costs $120 per shot.

Some of these figures were reiterated on Monday, Feb 25, during a HPV presentation on the University of Illinois campus. Dr. Suzanne Trupin of Champaign’s Women’s Health Practice provided statistics and stated that cervical cancer is rare in the United States and not a problem worldwide. Only 10% of those with HPV will develop a serious infection. She also stated that cervical cancer is primarily diagnosed in women during their late 30s and 40s and that half of the women who develop cervical cancer have never had a regular Pap smear. Regular Pap smears are still the primary cancer screening method, however she foresaw that in the next 5-10 years the HPV test will become an increasingly more prevalent screening method. Despite the low incidents of cancer in women, the doctor still highly praised Gardasil, citing a singular case of a young woman who developed cervical cancer in her twenties. She also confirmed that the vaccine Gardasil does contain aluminum, a chemical that in some reports has been linked to aluminum plaque buildup in people with Alzheimers.

WHAT WE STILL DON’T KNOW

There are still many things that we don’t know about this vaccine. First, there has not been enough research done demonstrating the long term effects this drug will have on women and girls. Lobbyists are pushing for this drug to be used on pre-adolescent girls as young as 9 years old, and yet, at this time no testing has been done outside the age range 16 to 26 years. Based upon the trial results, the effectiveness of the drug’s reaction was inferred to the younger age group. Secondly, the length of the vaccine’s immunity in the long term is still unknown. At best, immunity has been slated for 5 years. Also, women with compromised immune systems may have complications and develop adverse auto-immune responses. Gardasil should not be used by pregnant women. Merck has not tested to see if the vaccine’s antigens are passed on through breast milk. The long term effect on women’s fertility has not been studied. Merck has not established Gardasil’s potential toxicity and carcinogenicity. In addition, with the exception of the hepatitis B vaccine, Gardasil’s administration with other vaccines has yet to be studied. While side effects normally associated with vaccination are mentioned in their product information, Merck does not clearly state what the adverse side effects are. However, the national vaccine surveillance program, Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), contains numerous patient reports of loss of consciousness, severe headaches, temporary vision loss, hives, erythema, vasculitis, abdominal pain, arthritis, dizziness and seizures. In some of these instances, adverse reactions occurred in women taking birth control.

FOLLOW THE MONEY

Despite the questions surrounding this drug, many states are being pushed to introduce legislation and resolutions making vaccination a school requirement for young girls. A closer look reveals that Merck has been lobbying and funding efforts to pass state laws across the country. Merck is channeling money through Women in Government, a non-profit advocacy group comprised of women state legislators from around the country. Women in Government has been in the forefront for pushing new legislative changes to state laws and also has several ties to Texas Governor Rick Perry. In February, Governor Perry issued an executive order mandating that all Texas girls get the vaccine. In the past, Perry received several thousands of dollars in campaign contributions from Merck. His former chief of staff, Mike Toomey, is now one of Merck’s three lobbyists.

Women in Government plans to partner with women’s clubs, sororities, advocacy groups, faith based organizations and membership associations to influence women to take this vaccine. They are going to disseminate pro-vaccination information in places where women, particularly target poor women and women of color, gather, e.g. hair and nail salons, schools, on public transportation and particularly target women of color and the poor. A press release on the group’s website states, “minority and underserved women are being left behind in states’ prevention efforts” and that “we can no longer accept substandard prevention and treatment for the underserved women of our country.”

The attempt by these groups to usurp parental control has backfired. After numerous complaints and an overwhelming backlash against this mandate, Merck has temporarily backed off pushing the vaccine. Governor Perry, however, still stands by his executive order, even though it is not an actual law and not legally binding. All parents still have the legal right to conscientiously object to vaccinations on the basis of religious and philosophical grounds. If politicians in league with Women in Government, Merck and others have their way, such provisions around exemptions will be tightened and monitored.

In Illinois, 103rd District Representative Naomi Jakobsen recently introduced legislation calling for the vaccination of all sixth grade girls. House Bill 115 would amend the current School Code and call for a statewide comprehensive Cervical Cancer Prevention Plan for the general public. Under this law, parents would have to register their child’s HPV vaccination status with the state. There needs to be more conclusive studies done before it can be determined whether Gardasil is more beneficial than it is harmful. One thing is for sure, this highly experimental investigational vaccine was prematurely pushed out into the market at the behest of those who want to make the most profit from forced inoculations. The perceived danger of the cervical cancer “epidemic” has been inflated by advocacy groups, lobbyists, and politicians in a coordinated front launched, initiated and funded by Merck. Merck has intentionally manufactured a false need through direct-to-consumer advertising and is influencing the public discourse on this issue. Whatever legislation passes, it is important that all women and parents become informed on this issue, get adequate balanced information on HPV and cervical cancer, and exercise their right to choose what chemicals they put into their own and their children’s bodies.

THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES IN CHINA

Continued from the previous page

Actually, the most enduring part of the Chinese documentary to me was when students asked older women about groaning to express sexual pleasure. The older women, some of them mothers of the actresses, were shy and they laughed good naturedly with obvious dose of embarrassment, but they were amazingly good sports to permit the filming of the discussion.

CONCLUSION

The Vagina Monologues is part of an international movement to raise the consciousness of women about their sexuality, about the patriarchal nature of societal attitudes towards women’s sexuality and the damaging aspects of societal violence against women. What this comparison of two performances in two different countries shows is that the universal messages must be presented in ways that take into account both the way that political power is manifested and the moral sensibilities that are deeply rooted in the culture. The less blunt approach is not always the less powerful one.
In order to achieve this, they have to trade in stereotypes. “The chief” stereotype is that of a figure from the “gold- en age” of Indians, a purer, more innocent time before Native culture was destroyed and altered by the coming of Europeans. This type of figure is given to any person in a way that makes every aspect of “the chief” and his so-called “tradition” (a word that was chosen specifically to invoke a sense of unbroken connection to the past, and the proven worth of things both tried and true).

You could build this prototype Native person for this pur- pose—despite the fact that he may be culturally, pheno-typically and perhaps even genetically indistinguishable from your preferred historical version, because a real, liv- ing person is well ... a real person. Just like everyone else. And real people have a way of inconveniencing themselves from the approved script and not living up to the ideal. So over the years this “chief” has been sent to grade schools and public events, and he’s delivered lectures on Native American history and culture primarily because he can be depended upon to stick to the script. He probably doesn’t actually know any more about the subject than what that script tells him. But at the very least he doesn’t have any of those inconsiderate contemporary qualities that an actu- al Native person would have, which would keep him from being ... well ... “Indian” enough for the part.

Before we go any further, there is a point I’ve been mak- ing that I wonder if you’ve picked up on. To wit: Native themed mascots like “the chief,” are fundamentally mimetic. Their entire existence is derived from, and dependent upon the cultures they portray to represent. Any amount of legitimacy they claim to have is in direct proportion to how accurately they are able to copy actual Native Americans and their culture, or as in the case of the chief, how true they are to the most commonly held stereotype thereon. Just look at how they justify this thing. It is described in terms of its historical origins, and an authentic version of, is derived from, is respectful to, and of course, let’s forget its intent to honor—Native Amer- icans. But usually, in nature, when you have one creature that depends entirely upon another for its existence, the relationship is symbiotic. You keep your fur free of fleas, I protect you from predators.

But there is no reciprocation going on here. Aside from the dubious “honor” of having the richness and variety of hundreds of different indigenous cultures boiled down to one simplistic and inaccurate stereotype, native people don’t get much out of the bargain. And all the millions the University makes off of merchandising goes right into its own pockets, and nary a cent goes to the people whose cultures are being sold. The relationship “the chief” has with real Native people isn’t symbiotic, it’s parasitic. All of those things I mentioned about the “war paint”, the costume, the dance, and the pseudo religious trap- pings—the things that I said were all beside the point in re- making the chief seem authentic to his fans—are actually the point to the people whose cultures those things are derived from. “The chief” may seem to be something digni- fied and reverential to the people who love him, but to an actual Native person, or to someone from any of the many groups whose rich experiences and complex lives have also been reduced to simplistic caricatures of this sort, it’s obvi- ously what the “chief” is—and what he is not.

Take for example the mercifully short-lived Facebook group that was called “If they get rid of the Chief, I’m going to become one too.” (This the people who created the group and joined this group seemed to be utterly oblivious to the irony of that name is simply astounding) Facebook, for those who don’t know, is a sort of online bulletin board, a place where people post messages, and if they feel that it is then to append comments to each others posts, carry on conversations, and just generally socialize with one another. One of the most telling comments posted in this group was: “... what they don’t realize is that there was never a racous problem before, but now I hate redskin and hope all those drunk(sic), casino-owning bums die.” Now I couldn’t express what’s wrong with stereotyping, or the ignorant arrogance of privilege that these few words manage to convey any clearer or more eloquently if I’d tried. It’s a thousand pages of exhaustive (and exhausting) disquisition on the subject. The person who posted this apparently has only two types of Native people he is able to conceptualize: the “Noble Savage” of the George Catlin or James Fenimore Cooper variety—as portrayed by the chief—or the drunken, casino-owning bums who exist primarily as an invention of racists who wanted another category to define the objects of their hatred. The problem isn’t so much that someone would think about you that way—you can’t go through life with- out making a few enemies—but that so many of the peo- ple who control your opportunities, who own the media; run the government, and write the history books, think that way about you. Their voices, multiplied and amplified many times over on account of that power, are so much louder than yours, that they simply drown you out. If you even bother to try to tell your own personal and unique story, no one is listening and they can’t, they won’t hear you. They won’t even try.

Even if you have no great desire to “fit” in their world, the problem still exists that you—for all intents and pur- poses—do not exist as an individual in the minds of far too many people who unknowingly support them because they didn’t realize what was actually going on. His presence has reminded the rest of us daily of our “place” at this University, and in society in general.

So it’s great that he’s gone. It long overdue and I’m very happy about it, but pardon me if I’m not as impressed by the retirement of this dancing cheerful as I might be. The University has in no way admitted that there was ever any- thing wrong with “the chief” at all. They didn’t address the misrepresentation of native culture his image has perpetuat- ed for 81 years, and they didn’t even acknowledge the fact that for nearly twenty years this has been an extremely divi- sive figure on this campus, and that his removal was absolutely necessary if they even hoped to bring the student body together and enjoy the national and international respect that this University otherwise deserves. Quite the contrary in fact, Chairman Eppley made it a point to praise this “proud tradition” of misrepresentation.

So nothing substantive has changed, and the long, hard fight of histrionintroverted and marginalized people to be respected, recognized, and accepted for who they really are, continues on. Would that it were not so.

The relationship “the chief” has with real Native people isn’t symbiotic, it’s parasitic.

An Honored Tradition

By Tom Garza

Recently, University of Illinois Board of Trustees chairman Lawrence Eppley announced that as of February 21st 2007, the so-called “Chief Illiniwek” would cease to perform at half-time events.

To anyone who is unaware of the controversy sur- rounding this figure, this sounds like a relatively unimpor- tant bit of trivia, just another boardroom maneuver in the giant corporate game that college athletics has become. But this is, in fact, a fairly big deal. Who or what was the ‘chief’?

At halftime performance, a student donned a costume that he must have been given the audience the impression that he portrayed an “Indian Chief.” He then did a stylized dance. This ‘chief’ was said to represent the ‘spirit’ of the University; to memorialize the Native people who used to live there and to portray “strength, bravery, truthfulness, courage, and dignity.”

Now if you have lived in the United States for awhile, you won’t think to ask the next logical question. It proba- bly isn’t something that you need to know because you’ve already been taught that the greatest number of people possible will rec- ognize it as something an- cient American traditions, myths, and legends, your next question will likely be: ‘so what is it about this character that represents those qualities anyway?’

How does the performance described above—or any of its various permutations and iterations over the succeeding 81 years — manage to capture an audience of disparate ages, genders, and socioeconomic situations, and leave them all with at least some degree of the same impression about who ‘the chief’ is, and what he represents?

THE ANSWER IS: ‘THE CHIEF’ IS SUPPOSED TO BE AN AMERICAN INDIAN

If you’ve read any books, watched any movies, television shows, or cartoons, if you were ever a Boy Scout; if you attended any schools in this country in the last 100 years or so, you will know as soon as you look at him, that a per- son who is dressed in this way is supposed to be an Indian Chief! You will also know that Indians were wise, spirit- ual, dignified, courageous and so on.

Just by donning his outfit, the performer doesn’t auto- matically assume the full measure of his role however. For the transaction to be complete, there must be a number of unspoken agreements already in place, so that this would- be Indian will be seen as the embodiment of all the quali- ties I just mentioned. The most important agreement of course concerns the outfit itself. It’s changed a bit over the years, but the consist- ent requirements for it have always been and must always be such, that the greatest number of people possible will rec- ognize it as something an Indian Chief would wear. Any- thing else, however accurate in its own way, wouldn’t do.

That his ‘war paint’ demonstrates a lack of understand- ing about the way native people used face paints, and why any else, however accurate in its own way, wouldn’t do.

That his “war paint” demonstrates a lack of understand- ing about the way native people used face paints, and why and when they did so; that his outfit—indispensably attached to his person—is representative of a person who never lived in this area, that his dance only vaguely resembles the Fancy Dance it’s supposed to be based on, and that his movements and regalia incorpo- rate elements of religious significance without any attempt to contextualize the way they are interspersed with other things utilized strictly for their entertainment value alone is all, actually, beside the point.

The only thing that matters is that the greatest possible number of people understand and know without being told, that by putting this costume on, and jumping around the way he does, the person portraying the ‘chief’ assumes all of the relevant characteristics of an American Indian. Even those who disagree, and believe, blue-eyed white kids from somewhere near Chicago, and up close couldn’t look any less at home in his costume than your dog does when you put a coat and sunglasses on him.

The next agreement is that we, the observers, must all know, or think we know some basic things about Indians.
Native Women’s Resurgence at UIUC

by Brenda Farnell and Jodi Byrd

Brenda Farnell is Associate Professor of American Indian Studies and Creative Writing at UIUC, has uncovered the legal contributions of Betsy Love, a 19th century Chickasaw woman who, despite the turmoil of forced removal and genocide in the early 1800s, played a formative role in establishing the Married Women’s Property Act of 1839. This act affirmed the legal rights of all married women, Native and white, to own their own property and prevent it being seized by their husbands or their husbands’ creditors. Significantly, the Mississippi courts upheld marital lineal Chickasaw culture and traditions among which women owned and controlled property, and retained that property even through marriage. Betsy Love, married to a white man through a Chickasaw marriage ceremony, resisted her husband creditors who wanted to sell her property—which included African American slaves—to pay off her husband’s debts after his death. In 1837, the court ruled that Chicka saw customs of property rights in which the wife’s property did not transfer over to the husband’s control were affirmed, and through this decision, along with Betsy Love’s challenge to the creditors, precedent was established to protect the property rights of women in general.

Jane Johnston Schoolcraft (Ojibwa): First American Indian literary writer. Recent work by Robert Dale Parker, professor of English and American Indian Studies faculty affiliate at UIUC, reveals that the first known American Indian literary writer was an Ojibwe woman, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft (1800-1842). Collecting Jane Schoolcraft’s writings into one volume for the first time, Dr. Parker’s book, “The Sound the Stars Make Rushing through the Sky,” demonstrates that American Indian written literature and poetry has a longer and richer history than previously assumed by scholars focused on mid to late nineteenth century contributions by Native writers. The author of many poems and traditional stories in both English and Ojibwe languages, Jane also translated songs and other Ojibwe texts for her husband, the well-known folklorist Henry Rowe School craft, who adapted and published her work without attributing the source. It is her work and poetry that became a primary source for Longfellow’s “The Song of Hiawatha.”

Mescalaki, Ho-chunk and Potawatomi Women in 19th Century Economics. Until recently, historians have ignored the key roles that tribal women played in the economic systems that developed in the Great Lakes and Upper Mississippi Valley regions during the first half of the 19th century. A new textbook co-authored by Frederick Hosie, Swanlund Professor of History and American Indian studies faculty affiliate at UIUC, corrects this bias. Indigenous women frequently intermarried with French or Creole traders, producing a population of mixed lineage with extensive and prosperous trading networks. For example, Mescalaki, Ho-chunk and Potawatomi women controlled much of the production and marketing of lead from the rich mines near modern Dubuque and Galena. They used their mixed lineage linkages to “front” for them in trading, and employed their extensive tribal kinship networks to promote their business ventures among tribal communities.

Likewise, in northern Indiana and southwest Michigan, two Potawatomi women Kakima and Mouto (a.k.a Made line Bertrand) are known to have played pivotal roles in their husbands fur trading activities. Kakima’s kinship ties to prominent Potawatomi village chiefs enabled her husband William Burnett to pass freely among the Potawatomi communities in the region. Mouto, who was also active in trading, also spent considerable time promoting Roman Catholicism within the Potawatomi villages. Massaw, a Miami business woman, was an entrepreneur who owned and operated an “inn and gambling house” in modern Fulton County, Indiana, and held considerable political influence. Despite the trauma of forced removal from their homes and lands in the 1830s, historical records show that Potawatomi women rebuilt their lives and continued their business activities in Kansan, reestablishing inns and restaurants to market food and lodging to settler populations traveling West.

AMERICAN INDIAN WOMEN RETURN TO URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

The emergence of the American Indian Studies Program at UIUC enables us to mark the return of a vibrant, effective Native women’s presence to our local landscape. In the rich contributions of faculty members LeAnne Howe, Deb-hie Reese and Jodi Byrd we recognize the ongoing project of resistance, recovery, reclamion and healing.

LeAnne Howe is an enrolled citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and an Associate Professor of American Indian Studies and Creative Writing. Born and educated in Oklahoma, she writes fiction, creative non-fiction, plays, poetry, and screenplays that primarily deal with American Indian experiences. Her first novel, Shell Shaker won the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation in 2002, and as a finalist for the 2003 Oklahoma Book Award. In 2004, Equiano, Rouges, the French translation of her novel, was the finalist for one of France’s top literary awards, the Prix Médicis Etranger. Her collection of poetry, Evidence of Red won the 2006 Oklahoma Book Award. Her next novel, Moho Kings (forthcoming from Aunt Lute Press) is an Indian baseball novel set in Ada, Oklahoma in 1903 and 1969.
Globalizing Solidarity: Report Back from the World Social Forum in Nairobi

by Danielle Chynoweth

INDYMEDIA IN AFRICA

This January, Urbana IMC members Jason Tanner and I traveled to Nairobi, Kenya to join dozens of independent journalists from Uganda, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya, and Germany and the Prometheus Radio Project from Philadelphia. We built two radio stations from scratch—soldering the transmitters and cables by hand. The group built a dozen mini-transmitters that were taken home to broadcast in neighborhoods throughout Africa. We also built a printing press, made Indymedia Africa t-shirts, and left the press for future projects.

Since 1999, over two hundred Independent Media Centers have formed a network throughout the world, producing stories by people directly connected with grassroots social justice struggles. But in Africa, government repression and lack of access to technology have formed a barrier between vibrant social movements, grassroots media makers, and the largely online network of Independent Media Centers. African independent journalists called for an Indymedia gathering to coincide with the World Social Forum, to grow Indymedia in Africa.

THE WORLD SOCIAL FORUM

The World Social Forum is an annual gathering of participants in social movements for global justice, timed to coincide with the World Economic Forum. The World Economic Forum is a meeting of business and political leaders in Davos, Switzerland. The city is converted into a military security zone during the meeting, making demonstrations and coverage by independent journalists nearly impossible.

Rallying around the call of “Another World Is Possible,” the World Social Forum has placed social justice, gender equality, peace, and defense of the environment on the agenda of the world’s peoples. World Social Forums have collectively expanded the democratic spaces of those seeking concrete, progressive alternatives to corporate exploitation and military land grab. Regional social forums have begun to spring up - the first US Social Forum is June 27 through July 1st in Atlanta, Georgia. (See www.usssf2007.org)

Our Indymedia delegation was given a small room at the World Social Forum where we broadcast live as Radio-Huru 107.9 FM, interviewing a steady stream of people from grassroots struggles, and providing hands on media production training. With photos and stories from the World Social Forum, we produced and distributed a newsletter.

The Nairobi World Social Forum was a festival of over 100,000, with multiple forums on every major social issue, with music and dancing throughout. Colorful demonstrations circled the forums, calling for an end to the Indian caste system and supporting grassroots women fighting HIV/AIDS. Our newly trained radio producers interviewed Nigerians about the ongoing Ogoni struggle against Shell oil, a Somalian women’s group about their efforts to promote sustainable energy sources and minimize the destructive use of coal, and gay and lesbian Kenyans in their struggle against discrimination. The Forum buzzed with the excitement of people meeting across continents and connecting their local experiences with global movements.

The World Social Forum was also a gated community inside a sports stadium. Mainstream NGOs acted as gatekeepers, hand-picking grassroots activists. Many Kenyans we met were not able to attend the World Social Forum, hosted in their back yard, because of cost. The only restauran located within site of the events was owned by a government official. When attendees found this out, they stormed the restaurant “liberating” the food to give to Kenyan children. South Africans and Kenyans led protests which succeeded in allowing Kenyans into the forum for free, after pulling one entrance gate off its hinges.

THE SLUMS

Right outside the gates of the World Social Forum were some of the worst slums in the world. Within days of arriving in Nairobi, we decided against staying within the confines of those gates. Through our Kenya Indymedia friends, we worked with community organizers in the slums, sharing stories and planning future collaborations.

“We are still being considered squatters – how can you be a squatter in your own country?” asked Geoff from Korogocho, a slum with a population of a half million. In Nairobi, sixty-five percent of the population lives on five percent of the land in slums where houses are cobbled out of tin and garbage. There is no electricity, water, or sewers. One third of residents in the slums are HIV positive. About five million people live under these conditions, a result of the de-industrialization of rural areas, causing people to move to Nairobi in search of work.

The ironic thing is that the government holds in its hands a fairly straightforward remedy – one that was voiced clearly by residents: “Give us deeds to the land we live on and access to loans. Build city infrastructure like you do in middle class Nairobi. We can do the rest.” Currently, residents pay between $100-300 per month for one room shacks built on public land. The government stands by as politically connected people force residents to pay them rent. “And what if you don’t pay?” I asked one school teacher as she showed us her home. She pointed to a new piece of tin on her roof “They start taking parts off your house until you pay.”

RADIO FOR LIBERATION

I struggled with how to tell the story of my trip to Africa. It starts with a predictable gesture similar to the mainstream media. Africa is poor, corrupt, and full of AIDS. But there is another side to this story - one that the mainstream media neglects.

Inside the “most dangerous” slum of Nairobi one finds Koch FM, the first community radio station in the slums. On a dirt clearing used for gatherings and sports, sits a recycled shipping container. Inside is a deluxe community space lovingly lined with recycled shipping containers, separated into two swank broadcast studios and an office. A generator provides the power. Air conditioning units keep the temperature controlled inside, eighty miles from the equator.

When we arrived in Nairobi, Koch FM was posed to go back on the air. They began broadcasting as an unlicensed station last Spring, but media attention brought government attention and within a month they were shut down. They went through the application process but were repeatedly stalled - until they sat down in the Communications Commissions office and refused to leave. They got their license.

When we arrived, they were struggling with a broken transmitter. We worked together to fix it. On February 8th, they went on the air. “Koch FM is a tool to address the issues of the community,” said Geoff, one of the organizers. “The listeners of Koch FM do not want to know about traffic jams in Nairobi ... they want to hear things related to HIV/AIDS, the environment, and land reform – that’s what affects them. We are trying to bring the community together so we can have somewhere to share our community’s problems and be a center point for change ... We will bring the government ministers down here to the station, and they will have to answer our questions.”

The organizers of Koch FM are largely Hip Hop musicians in an environment that has, so far, escaped corporate co-option of this political art form. In fact, the night before we met with Koch FM, their meeting was raided by the police. One of the members explained: “I spent last night in jail ... the police were fishing for suspects in our neighborhood as usual ... They interrupted our radio station meeting and said ‘you’re one of those hip hop artists and grabbed me.’” To hear the music that sent Koch FM members to jail, go to: www.ukoollianauma.com.

GLOBALIZING SOLIDARITY

Most important was the building of solidarity across borders in the long term effort to grow a global independent media network. We have built strong relationships with places for future collaboration. We worked closely with a group called Pro-Active Youth in the slum of Kangemi. Their projects span from removing the piles of street garbage to educating youth about their constitutional rights in a neighborhood familiar with police sweeps. They have built a network of thirty-two groups and meet in a tiny shack, set in the yard of an abandoned police station. They plan to develop a Community Media Center with a radio station, resource center, and meeting space. Grassroots independent communication is at the foundation of every social movement. It is the beginning of change by and for Nairobi residents. The Kangemi Community Media Center is fundamentally an empowerment project, not a charity project. The Urbana-Champaign IMC has decided to support the creation of this Center—assisting with the acquisition of a recycled shipping container and radio equipment at the sum total of $10,000. We have raised $1,000 to date.

To find out more, contact finance@ucimc.org. To offer a tax deductible donation visit www.ucimc.org/inoffolocate and stipulate payment for “Kangemi CMC.”
Lesbian Activism and Women's History in the Cold War Era

Continued from page 1

homosexuality, most of which were written by "experts" and pitched to a general audience. Popular paperback publishers like Gold Medal saw dollar signs. Enabled by new technologies that allowed them to print in places like train stations and drug stores, a great number of books and market them for pennies, as well as in the homophile organs.

A prolific writer of historical, cultural, political, economic, and social analysis, many of his most famous articles and books. Two of his most famous books are Labour in Irish History and The Re-conquest of Ireland. An article this length cannot begin to do justice to the legacy of James Connolly. You can learn more by googling www.wagslave.org (James Connolly Society). A film about the life of James Connolly is planned for 2007, with Peter Mullan in the lead role and Adrian Dunbar as Director.

Homosexuality became a Union organizer for the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) until he returned to Ireland in 1910. At that point he became an organizer for the Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU) and within a year became the General Secretary of the ITGWU. In 1913, along with Jim Larkin (Dublin president of the ITGWU), he organized a general strike in Dublin that parodied commerce and transport. During the general strike, Connolly organized the Irish Citizen Army amongst striking workers, in a self-defense response to widespread beatings of striking workers by the police and British military. The Irish Citizen Army became the nucleus of the Dublin Division of the Army of the Republic during the 1916 Easter Rebellion, and despite his severe wounds was one of the first gay organizers critiqued by some historians for not being radical enough.

Connolly was badly wounded and imprisoned during the Easter Rebellion, and despite his severe wounds was one of the first gay organizers critiqued by some historians for not being radical enough. Connolly's nationalism was the view that a revolution in Ireland, or anywhere in the world, was worthless unless the revolution substantially improved the well-being of the vast majority of the people, in particular those most impoverished. Connolly's nationalism encompassed an international perspective in that he believed in a brotherhood of equal nations in the world as well as a brotherhood of equal citizens within every nation. Thus Connolly believed that colonialism and feudalistic capitalism were the cause of Ireland's problems and most of the world's problems. Connolly coined the term "co-operative" or "collectivist" political system called a Co-operative Commonwealth. Connolly's Co-operative Commonwealth was influenced to some degree by the social structure of ancient Celtic Ireland as well as modern realities of the industrial age.

According to Connolly, the Co-operative Commonwealth would be a societal structure where major industries and resources would be owned by the people in common, administered by a democratically elected government, and the government held in check by the industrial Unions of the respective industries. Connolly was extremely cautious of too powerful of a centralized government. One of his more famous quotes that reveals this was "Without the power of the Industrial Union behind it, democracy can only enter the state as the victim enters the gullet of a serpent."
Women Just Die Every Day

By Shara Esbenshade

“Women have no leaders who have been assassinated. Women just die every day,” I spent four hours discussing the feminist movement of the 60s and 70s with local activist Barbara Kessel, who was part of the first women’s studies departments in the world created at San Diego State University in the late 1960s. Her words shocked me - the tragic, matter-of-fact tone of them. No, it is not an exaggeration. In the United States, an average of three women are murdered a day by husbands or boyfriends. At the same time, we women encounter a more subtle sexism. The sexism so hard to put into words, so hard to recognize, even. As a woman, I notice with sharp emotion the frustration it brings, but find it difficult to identify the exact actions that cause it. Eventually I realized, however, that it is not a single action - it is a society. It is the acceptability, for instance, of questioning a woman where one would not question a man, of ignoring the contributions of a woman to a discussion while listening intently to the men. And even more frustrating is the silencing of those who attempt, courageously, to point it out. It is this aspect of our culture that denies women respect. How does one counter something so ingrained? And until people do counter the subtleties, how will the overt results (the widespread rape, harassment, violence) of the same ingrained sexism be stopped?

Men who would never commit rape and who are not themselves sexist can still perpetuate a sexist society through this “subtle sexism.” In fact, women do it too. In this society a man is automatically born into a certain privilege. This he can not help, but he does then have a responsibility to counter that unearned advantage by trying to notice and refrain from participating in the often sub-conscious silencing of women. Until then, I fail to understand how the violence will ever stop. This is how I have interpreted what I hear about and see the women in my life go through. I hope that it will spur my fellow young women to reflect on how they behave and on what kinds of behaviors they tolerate from others.

She remembers a living room
“consciousness-raising”,
tentative, growing words
she remembers, as her white locks curl in her fingers, the days
women overcame silence.
and even though
the glass ceiling was only raised and not broken
even though
husbands, boyfriends still abuse
she smiles; hope and
power leak from her teeth,
fresh from the days when together,
all the women bit into control.

In sixth grade, Grace learns a new kind of silence.
The teacher’s eyes pass over her words
forced back inside her
the boy who called her a prude
is allowed to speak instead.

Her teeth clamp
Denied the chatter
Denied a bite
She starves later

Next to her, Lila screams
the boy who called her a slut speaks and she is not allowed her turn for the hundredth time.
At lunch he called her a whore
And no word to respond with
but man-where
“She’s crazy” they whisper
she spoke out
dared to call him sexist
crazy- men and women are equal now, they laugh, we all know that
see- a woman professor
proof- a woman C.E.O.
(never mind that women make less money
never mind that 180 women are raped a day
never mind that 85% of the congress meant to represent the people is male)

Lila bit
But her bite was poisoned
Her anger erased by their adjectives: exaggerated, un-called-for, trivial

Silence is re-learned for women

Women: man-haters
Women: bra-burners
Or women: obedient like ancient times
Women: inconsequential

Women:
It’s not that they aren’t smart
But men do not have to listen
A women’s movement, living rooms, united, mass refusal
A cloud of memory
clouds the new split—

Divide and conquer:
Suburbia, children, housekeeping, dinner
women competed until living rooms opened

Divide and conquer:
Today a new disunity
women silenced in the classroom.
She who points it out- A radical
A man-hater
The worst word we know to use
Trivial? Academic, subtle.
Every picture on this wall
Every statue in historic America
(save lady Liberty, paralyzed in an iron mold, confined to an island)
every person in this office
every president we’ve had
every rapper who makes it big

If I were not a woman,
Would you question my authority?
Would you smirk at my anger?
If I were not a woman,
Would you be surprised at my loud voice?
Would you turn green if my body weren’t hairless?
If I were not a woman,
Would it be wrong for me to masturbate?
Would you still judge my sex life?
Why does Cosmo tell me how to please
him- I am not here to please!
I am not here
to kiss away your guilt.
says Lila,
alienated instantly
She is not silent,
but as un-heard as
Grace.
denied the bite.
Native Women’s Resurgence at UIUC

Continued from page 7

By Jessica Kuzemsky

Obtaining proper reproductive healthcare and education about sexual health is critical to keeping teens in our area healthy. In Illinois, teens are lucky to have some access to contraceptives, abortion services and other reproductive care. However, activist groups continue placing roadblocks preventing teens and others from accessing the care they need.

For more than 12 years, Illinois lawmakers have been unable to enforce a dangerous mandatory parental notification law. The Parental Notification of Abortion Act was first enjoined by the courts in 1995 to remain in place until courts were prepared to handle this process. The bypass would allow the parental notification requirement to be waived if a young woman appeared before a judge who deemed her competent to make the decision or if she testified in writing that she was a victim of incest.

In the interest of protecting the safety of teens, Rep. John Fritchey (D) proposed a bill this January to expand the ability to be notified under the act. Fritchey’s Adolescent Healthcare Act (HB 317) currently has 19 signers and would allow members of the clergy or another adult family member to be notified instead of a parent. The bill also removes restrictions on all unplanned pregnancies—parenting, adoption and abortion. Fritchey proposed the bill to protect young women whose health and safety would be jeopardized if a parent were notified prior to an abortion procedure, such as Vice President Dick Cheney’s daughter.

Karla Peterson, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of East Central Illinois, shares Fritchey’s concerns. “We encourage all of our patients to communicate with their families about important healthcare decisions. However, this may not be a reality for all teens, particularly those from abusive homes or those who may face homelessness and other difficult or dangerous situations as the result of an unplanned pregnancy. If teens can’t or won’t go home, it is critical that we ensure they get safe, confidential medical attention and high-quality counseling,” she said.

This concern for teen safety is echoed by numerous medical organizations that also oppose mandatory parental notification laws including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, the Society for Adolescent Medicine, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Public Health Association.

Access to abortion services in Illinois for all women, including teens, is already limited without notification laws or other restrictions. A recent report from NARAL Pro-Choice America, a national advocacy organization that works to protect reproductive rights, ranked Illinois 20th in the nation and gave the state a C+ grade for access to abortion services. Ninety percent of Illinois counties have no abortion provider.

Wider access to birth control options and comprehensive sexuality education would reduce the need for abortion services for women of any age. Recent data has shown a decline in teen birth rates but not pregnancy rates. The United States teen birth rate is still 4.9 times higher than any other developed country.

Teens can currently receive and have prescriptions filled for birth control without parental consent. However, those who are 17 and younger do not have over-the-counter access to Plan B emergency contraception, or the abortion pill, Mifeprex. Plan B is not an abortifacient and is a different drug from the “abortion pill,” Mifepristone. Plan B is simply a higher dose of the same hormones contained in ordinary birth control pills and has no effect if a woman is already pregnant. Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich was a strong supporter of over-the-counter access to Plan B. The drug was approved for over-the-counter sale in late 2006 and became available at pharmacies and Planned Parenthood health centers for over-the-counter sales earlier this year.

Pharmacists nationwide have placed further roadblocks to contraceptive access for teens and women of all ages. Some pharmacists with moral objections to contraceptives have refused to fill prescriptions for contraceptives or dispense emergency contraception to their clients.

Gov. Blagojevich passed a ruling in 2005 that allows pharmacies to fill prescriptions for contraception, regardless of whether they carry them, without delay. After further complaints, the Governor enacted a new rule last March requiring pharmacists to post signs listing information about a customers’ right to have their prescription for birth control or emergency contraception filled and what they can do if their prescription is wrongfully refused. During a visit in November 2006, the first lady, Patricia Blagojevich, commended pharmacies in Champaign after an independent survey found that 100 percent of pharmacies in the Champaign-Urbana area complied with these rules.

The Native American House and American Indian Studies Program (NAH/AIS) has also brought distinguished Indigenous women to campus from fields such as politics, music, poetry, and theater, as well as scholars of Indigenous feminisms, histories and anthropologies. For example, in Spring 2004, we were honored to welcome Wilma Mankiller, the first woman to be serve Principle Chief of the Cherokee Nation from (1987–1995.) Ms. Mankiller was part of the political resistance that led the American Indian Movement during the 1960s, with firsthand knowledge of events such the occupation of Alcatraz Island and the “Trail of Broken Treaties,” at a time when women’s voices were being silenced, even by Indian men.

The community has also benefitted from the presence of poet and musician Joy Harjo, and the inspiring Native American House and American Indian Studies Program (NAH/AIS) has also brought distinguished Indigenous women and men to our campus from fields such as politics, music, poetry, and theater, as well as scholars of Indigenous feminisms, histories and anthropologies. For example, in Spring 2004, we were honored to welcome Wilma Mankiller, the first woman to serve as Principle Chief of the Cherokee Nation from (1987–1995.) Ms. Mankiller was part of the political resistance that led the American Indian Movement during the 1960s, with firsthand knowledge of events such as the occupation of Alcatraz Island and the “Trail of Broken Treaties,” at a time when women’s voices were being silenced, even by Indian men.

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