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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- Campus Faculty Association (CFA)
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The Legacy Of The 1999 WTO “Battle Of Seattle” On Champaign-Urbana

By David Johnson

During the late summer and early fall of 1999, I saw a multitude of e-mails and postings on the relatively new internet, from numerous citizens’ organizations and individuals, indicating their plans to go to Seattle in November to protest the WTO (World Trade Organization) meeting. I had a feeling that the upcoming protest in Seattle was going to be monumental.

As Vice-President and Political Director of the AFL-CIO of Champaign County at the time, I had been irritating and encouraging discussion within the labor movement for several years about the adverse effects of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) and the ‘new world order’ of anti-worker corporate globalization. At our October 1999 monthly meeting, I invited three local anti-globalization activists from the School For Designing a Society to talk about the need to assemble as many globalization activists from the School for Designing a Society built on my position as vice-president and my expulsion as a delegate to the convention of the national AFL-CIO. Charges of “misconduct,” were filed against me for making a public statement to News-Gazette reporter Phil Blommer at the open house of the local Prairie Greens in which I stated a personal opinion with a disclaimer that Al Gore and the Democratic Party had betrayed the labor movement by supporting NAFTA and other corporate trade agreements that had caused the loss of tens of thousands of American jobs, and for that reason I was supporting Green Party candidate Ralph Nader for President of the United States.

Because of the IMC’s coverage of my story and its posting internationally on the Indy Media network, the national AFL-CIO in Washington D.C. received thousands of e-mails from individuals across the country and even from other countries, expressing their support in my defense. As a result, the national AFL-CIO sent a staff person from Chicago to Champaign for my trial. When he arrived, he was greeted by close to a hundred of my supporters and a camera crew. This was also made possible by the IMC.

Thanks to this public pressure, the national AFL-CIO prevented the local AFL-CIO from impeaching me from my position as vice president and my expulsion as a delegate to the convention of the national AFL-CIO. Thanks to this public pressure, the national AFL-CIO prevented the local AFL-CIO from impeaching me for my position as vice president and my expulsion as a delegate to the convention of the national AFL-CIO.
Courthouse Rally in Kiwane Carrington Case:
“Felonies Ain’t Favorites! Plea Bargains Ain’t Either!”

By Brian Delmar

About 25 people, including several youth and their parents, showed up at the Champaign County courthouse on November 12, 2009 for a juvenile hearing of the other 15-year-old involved in the police shooting of Kiwane Carrington. Police had originally responded to a burglary on October 9, but after it was discovered that one of the two youth lived at the house, charges of felony resisting arrest were leveled against the surviving boy. Following the hearing, supporters and family members assembled in front of the courthouse for a rally.

Attorney Julia Rietz was seen outside her office talking with Ed Piraino, known as a local “plea doctor” who had been appointed by the court to handle the case. When inside the courtroom, Rietz appeared personally and Piraino was present among the lawyers. Local attorney Alfred Ivy, who ran against Rietz in the 2008 democratic primary for State’s Attorney office, entered a sub- stance of counsel and will be taking over the case.

After the hearing, Piraino made a statement to the record. After talking, he and the State’s Attorney had come up with what he called an “agreement in principle.” If the boy would attend Lincoln Challenge, a military school in Rantoul, the charges would be dropped.

The option of attending a military school in which her son would be taken away from her was unacceptable to Laura Manning, the boy’s mother. She apparently did not believe that the courts have the best interest of her son at heart. Of course, there is a long history of the court system taking children away from poor families and families of color.

As Lincoln Challenge, a program supported by the Illinois National Guard, children are enrolled for a period of five and one-half months during which parents are only allowed to visit once every two weeks. Approximately half of the students are African American. Focused almost entirely on discipline, it is questionable whether students learn anything at the school and their chances of re-offending are high.

Aron Ammons, co-founder of CU Citizens for Peace and Justice, had a different explanation of the proposed plea bargain. He said, “Citizens organizing to put pressure on public officials has an impact, specifically in the case of this teen, organizing to demonstrate, march, and speak out is impacting this case.”

Discovery materials were turned over to attorney Ivy who asked for a continuance to review the documents. A status hearing was set for January 19, 2010 at 2pm in Courtroom C.

After the hearing, supporters gathered outside the courthouse. They held posters that were made by the youth the previous day at the Independent Media Center. They pinned buttons to their clothes reading “S.W.A.G.,” which stands for Students With A Goal. An idea the youth came up with themselves. Gathering outside the second-story window of the State’s Attorney’s office, they chanted, “Felonies Ain’t Favorites! Plea Bargains Ain’t Either!”

Those who would like to contact State’s Attorney Julia Rietz and ask that the charges be dropped can call 394-3733 or email her at jrietz@co.champaign.il.us

The National Police Misconduct Statistics and Reporting Project utilizes news media reports of police misconduct to generate statistical information in an effort to approximate how prevalent police misconduct may be in the United States.

PROJECTED COMBINATIONS

By projecting this month’s NPMPSRP totals out to one year, the following combinations can be made between the reported police misconduct allegation rate and the reported 2008 general crime rate* as published by the FBI and DOJ for 2008 (*please note that both the NPMPSRP police misconduct rates and the FBI/DOJ UCR general crime rate statistics are reported incidents, not convictions):

VIOLENT CRIME:
(all assault, excessive force, forcible rape, murder, and domestic assault allegations)

1 out of every 208 (372.5 per 100k) police officers will be accused of a violent crime.
1 out of every 220 (454.5 per 100k) citizens will be accused of a violent crime.

HOMICIDE
(all non-negligent manslaughter, murder, and homicide allegations)

1 out of every 2,374 (42.1 per 100k) police officers will be accused of homicide
1 out of every 18,518 (5.4 per 100k) citizens will be accused of homicide

SEXUAL ASSAULT
(all sexual assault, coercive sexual battery, and rape allegations but not including consensual sexual misconduct, exposure, solicitation, or child pornography)

1 out of every 896 (118.2 per 100k) police officers will be accused of sexual assault
1 out of every 3,413 (29.3 per 100k) citizens will be accused of sexual assault.

“Nae Tae” G20 in St. Andrews Scotland

From Indymedia Scotland

The poor progress made by the G20 in St. Andrews, echoes a week of negotiations in UN climate talks in Barcelona where Industrialised World Intransigence on CO2 emission targets has probably doomed any legally binding treaty at the crucial UN climate conference - COP15—in Copenhagen in December.

Dr Richard Dixon, Director of WWF Scotland said: “The G20 Finance Ministers meeting turned out to be a mostly irrelevant sideshow on the way to the talks in Copenhagen in a month’s time. Failure to come to agreement here is a major disappointment. Given that these are the people who run the biggest economies in the world it seems unlikely that they will manage to devote any serious time to the issue of climate finance before the start of the Copenhagen meeting.”

On the streets of St Andrews 3rd year International Relations student Oliver Kearsn said: “The G20’s plan to put the IMF at the centre of an economic recovery plan is beyond a joke. It is precisely the structural adjustment programmes of raised interest rates and cuts to public spending imposed by the IMF that have made so many countries suffer during downturns, that’s why we are strongly opposed by U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, and Canada.”

The Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center will host “Kiwane’s Future,” an art exhibit by local community members, youth, and artists honoring Kiwane Carrington (1995-2009). The exhibit will open Saturday, December 12th, from 7-9pm with open mic, improv theater and Speak Out. Your participation and contributions are welcome: contact the IMC in the historic downtown Urbana post office building located at 202 S. Broadway Ave at Elm Street, Urbana, by the north exit from Lincoln Square Mall, inc@ucimc.org or 344-8820.

2008 general crime rate* as published by the FBI and DOJ for 2008 (*please note that both the NPMPSRP police misconduct rates and the FBI/DOJ UCR general crime rate statistics are reported incidents, not convictions):

VIOLENT CRIME:
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The G20 acknowledged the need to increase significantly and urgently the scale of funding but failed to make any reference to the sums required, estimated to be around $160bn a year of public financing.

The G20 failed to agree on new sources of funding for a climate deal,
There is a new sound on the radio. Listen past the endless droning of manufactured music and centralized news feeds, and you might already hear it. It started with the murmur of a few hundred community radio stations, broadcasting with the wattage of a light bulb via rooftop antennas. Now this sound is about to grow.

After nine years of nationwide grassroots organizing, Congress is finally ready to move on the Local Community Radio Act (www.expandlpm.org), which will greatly expand the number of low power FM stations in the United States. This popular, bipartisan legislation is on the fast track to becoming law, with votes before the House and Senate just around the corner.

In response to massive media consolidation, radio advocates pressured the Federal Communications Commission to create the low power FM (LPFM) service in 2000. LPFMs are smaller stations that fit between larger ones on the dial. They are local, non-commercial, and inexpensive to build and operate, making them accessible to just about anyone.

Predictably, Clear Channel and other big broadcasters cried wolf about “signal interference.” So Congress put the smackdown on low power radio, restricting LPFMs to rural areas and denying licenses to hundreds of applicants. It was then proven by a $2.2 million taxpayer-funded study (prometheusradio.org/images/documents/misf acts.are.in.2009.pdf) that low power stations create no significant interference to the signals of full power stations.

But it isn’t signal interference the media moguls are really worried about. LPFMs are competition. They sit on valuable spectrum real estate that incumbent broadcasters have already shown to be worth at least $5 billion. With hundreds more local, independent radio stations, imagine how much better prepared our country would be to navigate things like health care and immigration.

We could broaden the dialogue past the corporate talk show echo chamber. Local musicians (futureofmusic.org/playlist/power-fm-lpfm/) could sideline industry gatekeepers to share emerging music. And local democracies would be revitalized by public awareness and debate over local issues.

A look at existing LPFM stations gives us a glimpse of what is possible. Run by community groups, schools, churches, and local governments, many LPFMs operate as community pillars. They broadcast local news and events and provide essential information during emergencies.

When Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf, low power radio was the only source of emergency information in a number of counties. Residents in East Texas tuned battery-operated radios to KEZK while they wanted a week for power to be restored. At 100 watts, KEZK easily ran on a small generator. Low power radio brought information to Katrina evacuees in the Houston Astrodome (www.ren.org/temp/plate/story/story.php?storyId=48495/907) in Florida, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers built Radio Conscencia (www.naplesnews.com/news/2006/nov/17/radio_consciencia) to broadcast in Spanish and Mayan languages spoken by farm workers.

With so many success stories, more low power radio is nearly a no-brainer. While we have been growing our station, we have been growing our station, we have been growing our station. We have had to fight for the right to broadcast — knocking out the ability to have LPFM in larger cities. And local radio activists. We were one of the lucky ones. After LPFM was created, Congress moved to restrict it to rural areas — and places that pass for rural like Champaign-Urbana — knocking out the ability to have LPFM in larger cities. And local radio activists.

But people fought back. Radio pirates took to the airwaves with thick glasses showed up in Champaign-Urbana in a broken down car and sat around a table with a bunch of us to talk about starting a radio station. He called himself Pete Tridish, his pirate name, and showed us how to fill out complicated FCC forms to apply for a license. We did, and after many years, and some battles in Washington, we got a license to broadcast Radio Free Urbana (WRFU). While waiting on the snails pace of the FCC, we started the Independent Media Center in a living room, moved to Main Street, and were contemplating buying the post office building as a place to expand our media production and performance venue, and to locate WRFU. We did, and teamed up with Pete Tridish and his band of mercy ex-pirates at Prometheus Radio Project to hold "radio kermitizing" — building our station rapid fire in a weekend while training the next generation of radio activists.

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Livening Up the Airwaves
By Joel Gillespie, originally published in Smile Politely. smilepolitely.com

Carly Nix is passionate about community radio, and her enthusiasm shines through to anyone interacting with her. Nix, a Decatur native who graduated this past spring from Boston University with a B.A. in religion, is the AmeriCorps News Media Coordinator at the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center. She’s tasked with helping the volunteers that run both WRFU-FM and the Public i accomplish their goals.

ALREADY A RADIO VETERAN

Nix decided early on that she wanted to work in radio, and she did anything she could to get experience. “I was really involved with my student radio station, and I volunteered at three or four radio stations in Boston throughout my college career, and worked at a radio station, she noted. “So by the time I made it to the IMC, I think I’d worked at six different radio stations — maybe seven.” She did internships at WILL in Champaign-Urbana and WBEZ in Chicago, working on the Third Coast International Audio Festival there.

All of these unpaid jobs are part of paying your dues to break into a competitive field. “[In] public and community radio, you have to volunteer a lot and do internships before you can actually get anywhere,” Nix continued. “After I graduated from college, I was doing all this reading about how to break into the field, and everyone was basically saying don’t go to grad school, just volunteer and intern at radio stations, and eventually you’ll get paid. That’s what I did, and it worked out.” Now she’s making the not-so-big bucks as an AmeriCorps staffer.

RADIO AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE

Nix is excited to work for WRFU. She said, “This is the first station that I’ve worked at that’s really progressively-minded and really community-minded.” Soon after she started her position, she saw the Indymedia movement in action at the IMC’s coverage of the death of Kwame Carrington. The IMC quickly organized a press conference featuring Carrington’s family and friends, as well as local community leaders, and Nix assisted with the proceedings, posting audios of the press conference on the IMC’s website. Fellow AmeriCorps Brian Duggan recorded the event on video.

She recalled, “That’s when I really started to understand why the Indymedia movement is so powerful, and what it has to offer to the community. We made the mainstream media come to us and listen to this story and report on it. We also covered it and had the whole thing online and on the radio for people to listen to or to watch. These are all things that were said, so that if you weren’t there, you can digest it yourself and see what you think about it.”

The Public IV Brian Dolmar agreed, referring to the “crash course” in independent media that the Carrington press conference contained. Dolmar said, “While the mainstream media ran their sound-bites, at the IMC we had the press conference in its entirety. This was one of the best examples of Indymedia at work, and made possible by the assistance Carly provided.”

Nix cited that coverage as an example of the void that the IMC fills in the community. “NPR used to cover a lot of things more in-depth like that,” she contended. “They haven’t been able to do that as much, for some reason. I don’t know if it has to do with funding, or it has to do with the burden of having an increased audience or what. They used to cover whole congressional hearings and stuff, and they just don’t do that anymore. They have it on some sort of alternate web stream, but it’s not going to be on the radio and it’s not going to be in the #1 program.”

She has high hopes for the coming year at WRFU. “I’m really liking it, and I’m really looking forward to making the station stronger, and getting more people on the radio this year,” Nix said. “We have a ton of free time on our schedule right now, so I’m looking forward to reaching out to different community groups and trying to get some more community-minded programming on the air. One of our taglines is ‘Community radio, by and for the people,’ but we need to re-connect with the people, so that’s what I’m trying to do this year.”

Nix continued, “I think it’s really important for the community to listen and pay attention to what’s going on right now in our community. To just sit back and not think about it, I don’t think that’s the answer.”

Cranking up the Airwaves
By Joel Gillespie

Cranksgiving Tops Last Year

Celebrating 10 Years of Indymedia at UCIMC
This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Indymedia movement and the founding of the UCIMC. On December 5th, we will be celebrating 10 years of the Indymedia movement and kicking off the 10th year of the UCIMC’s existence. Come help us celebrate the victories and remember the struggles of the past 10 years.

2–5pm: FREE COMMUNITY AND YOUTH MEDIA WORKSHOPS:

Improv with Zoo Improv (2–3pm): Learn the techniques of improvisational acting with the Zoo Improv troupe.

Radio Broadcast: Radio’s not just for mainstream music and corporate news — come learn to broadcast your favorite music, share your point of view and make awesome audio!

“Zine Making: Making your own magazine is easier than you think. The Radical Librarians will show you how.

Learn Live Video: Home video isn’t just for your birthday party! Learn how to capture live footage to report on your community and advocate for change!

Running Sound for Concerts: Behind every good musician there’s a better sound technician. Learn this valuable skill and be the most talented fan at the concert.

Intro to Books To Prisoners: Books to Prisoners volunteers have shipped over 40,000 books to inmates in Illinois. Find out what their work is important to 2.3 million Americans.

Painting Paint: Paper, and a plastic utensil… learn to make a masterpiece with just the basics. Camerounian painter and anthropologest Betsam Benjamin will show you how.

Open Source Software: Linux Install Fest — why spend hundreds on software when you can build your own? Linux is a free, open source operating system preferred by Indymedia activists everywhere.

5pm PANEL ON THE INDY MEDIA MOVEMENT:
At 5pm, you’re invited to a panel discussion with founding members and supporters of the Independent Media Movement, from 1999-present. Get a historical perspective on the Indymedia Movement and brainstorm for the future of Indymedia activities, including: Marty Gendel from Labor Beat Productions in Chicago, Danielle Chynoweth and Petrie Dish from Prometheus Radio Project, as well as local activists and regional IMC members and supporters.

At 8pm, celebrate 10 years of solidarity — we’ll have live music, a DJ, food, drink, and good company. For more information, please email Nicole@UCIMC.org

Chicago’s premier cycling initiative, the Chambana Cranksgiving, returned to the UCIMC Saturday November 21st for yet another successful event.

Cranksgiving, which is concerned with providing food insecurity in rural parts of Illinois, has its origins in those communities.

This year the event – which is organized by UCIMC volunteers,ADED – raised $3,500 and collected 2545 pounds of food for the UIUC Foodbank.

“Last year in cities like Des Moines, New York City, Chicago, we collected 10 times more food than we did last year in Champaign-Urbana, or across the state,” said UCIMC Director John Poganik.

The weather and amount of food collected were far superior to last year — we collected 28% more food and $2,900 more than last year, Poganik noted.

The food collected for last year’s Chambana Cranksgiving was divided among UIUC’s food pantry and local community organizations.

This year, the event benefitted the UIUC Foodbank, and provided food to UIUC students, and many other community organizations.

Last Saturday, the second annual Chambana Cranksgiving collected 888 pounds of food for Eastern Illinois Food Bank. 34 riders (and several others who didn’t participate in the event, but donated food) cycled across Champaign and Urbana, visiting local grocery stores and purchasing non-perishable food items.

The weather and amount of food collected were far superior to last year’s event, even if competing with a home Illinois football game meant a small decline in attendance. Sunshine and highs in the 60s meant that those that came out had about as pleasant riding conditions as you could ask for on a mid-November day.

“When we first started to plan this year’s Cranksgiving, we were a bit disheartened to hear the calculation from The Eastern Illinois Foodbank that estimates that local hungry families’ need for food has increased 30 percent from last year,” said event organizers Luke Thompson and Petra Horvath Thompson. “However, our cyclists, spon- sors, and donors certainly stepped up to the challenge, and hauled 888 pounds of nonperishable food across the finish line — more than 30 percent above last year’s total of 613 pounds.”

Riders traveled to supermarkets in three zones of Champaign-Urbana, traveling an average of 15 miles total, and picking up different courses of a Thanksgiving meal, from corn to boxed potatoes, canned turkey to cranberry sauce. Participants were awarded prizes provided by the event’s sponsors based on their point total, which was calculated through a combination of how many food items they collected, plus bonuses for things like time and accumulating an entire Thanksgiving spread.

Local sponsors this year included Common Ground Food Co-op, Strawberry Fields, Schnucks, Pekara, Sandel- las Flatbread Cafe, Noodles, The Pita Pit, El Duke Degraser, and That’s Rentertainment; more national spon- sors included Waldo Bargo, Urban Velo, and Vanco Pads.

Cranksgiving food drives happen around this time of year in cities like Des Moines, New York City, Chicago, Ann Arbor, and Omaha, benefiting social service organiza- tions in those communities.

Thanks to Charlie Smyth for providing the photos.
On Monday, November 16th my union - the Graduate Employees’ Organization (GEO), IFT/CFT local 6300, ATL-CIO, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign - began an open-ended strike over the University administration’s refusal to sufficiently protect graduate tuition waivers. Over 1,000 union members and allies walked the picket lines beneath a cold, bone-chilling rain on the first day of the work stoppage. On Tuesday morning, with hundreds back out on the picket lines, both sides returned to the bargaining room, where the administration quickly capitulated. After signing a tentative agreement that included protection for all tuition waivers, the GEO declared victory and called down the picket lines.

At a general membership meeting later that night, over 450 members unanimously recommended that the GEO strike committee officially suspend the strike. During the final pre-strike negotiation session, on Saturday the 14th, the administration was only willing to guarantee in-state tuition waivers. For the vast majority of graduate employees, who are out-of-state students, the loss of a tuition waiver would effectively force them to drop out of their program of study. Graduate education would become even more inaccessible to working and middle class persons than it already is. Additionally, any department barred from granting out-of-state waivers would be unable to attract the most talented and committed students. The reputation of those departments, along with the quality of their undergraduate education, would plummet. Some would disappear entirely.

Why would the administration even consider taking such a risk? For decades, state funding for public higher education has been diminishing. Instead of advocating on behalf of students, administrators have responded by raising tuition, cutting costs according to corporate models of management, and seeking outside, often private, revenue. Research programs have been reoriented toward the generation of revenues, as opposed to knowledge and wisdom. Now, instead of responding to budget restrictions by cutting administrative costs, administrators are seeking new ways to cut down on costs related to the University’s core mission of academic instruction. Last year they proposed stripping tuition waivers for all teaching assistants (TAs) with 25% FTE appointments. This year the Department of Chemistry took back the waivers it had promised to undergraduate TAs. Given this history, the GEO was fearful that the administration would come after our out-of-state tuition waivers next.

We knew the first day of the strike had to be big. Maximum disruption. We’d been planning for months, but nobody knew how it was really going to look. The kickoff rally was at 7:45am on the Main Quad, and despite the cold rain, the crowd was big, at least 500 people. Some thought it was more like 700. Our drum corps was out in full force. They’d just gotten a couple of big bass drums, and you could feel the beat in your gut. Gerry Pimblott, our lead negotiator, addressed the crowd with his English accent. I’d often reflected on the irony of a Brit leading a campaign in support of an accessible US public higher education system, but then again, the Brits know a spot more about universal access to education than we do. Gerry is as committed as they come, and she was in form on Monday morning, inciting the membership to “shut this University down.”

By 8am we were on the picket lines. Draped in ponchos, we encircled four of the big buildings on the Main Quad. This is the heart of the University, and it’s where we have the most organizing strength. Later in the morning, the administration was saying that the disruption was minimal. But we knew the truth. Hundreds of class sessions were suspended. The entire English Building was deserted, except for one class in the morning. But that was a supportive professor who wanted his students to experience a real live labor strike. So he had them cross the picket line and then discuss their emotions and the issues. Our own emotions were running high, but we all knew that if things dragged on beyond a few days, we were going to have to work hard to keep up the momentum. Many of our picketers stayed out the entire first day, and they were exhausted. In an effort to lift their spirits and end the first day with a bang, the strike committee decided to unite the various picket lines and march on the Swanlund administration building. As a member of the communications committee, I was asked to lead the march and address the crowd. I told them what they already knew, that despite the administration’s claims, it could never be business as usual on our public, land-grant campus so long as tuition waivers are under threat. They roared their agreement, and then the drum corp took over. We chanted, and we danced. As one member aptly put it, this is not your grandfather’s union.

Later that night the bargaining team called me in to discuss our press strategy. They told me what they already knew, that the administration had realized their predicament. They spent over an hour looking at our proposal, but they could never get the Administration to say yes for any reason, other than the proverbial “numbers on the page”.

Guarantee the PRACTICE

Our gambit had worked. Once again we gathered the various picket lines for a march, but this time it was more of a victory lap. From the center of the main Quad we marched across the grass, directly toward the steps of Foellinger Hall. We were a phalanx of pulsing, drum beating solidarity. Who are you? A few of us called. The response was a united roar, “G–E–O”!

Once assembled on the steps, with the press out in force, I had the great pleasure of announcing our victory to the members and allies who had done so much work to earn it. The response was jubilant, euphoric, crazed, clapping.

Though we were looking forward to having such a clear advantage, we were even happier the next day to find out that the administration had realized their predicament. They spent over a hour looking at our proposal, but they must have seen no way out. Our gambit had worked.

On Monday, the interim provost/chancellor, Robert Easter, had sent an email to the entire campus community stating, in essence, that the GEO was striking over a non-issue. According to the email, tuition waiver practice was not going to be changed. This was not, of course, what we had heard in the negotiation room just two days before, but it gave us all the leverage we needed. The bargaining team had taken Easter’s email language, some of it verbatim, and written it into the proposal they would present during Tuesday’s bargaining session. It was a brilliant plan. If the administration wouldn’t accept their own language, then we would expose their hypocrisy in the press. That would be the job of the communications committee.

Continued on page 7

GEO rally in front of Swanlund Administration building

The GEO Noise Brigade leads the march

Guarantee the PRACTICE

LaBoR ZeCoNoMiCs

PEOPLE’S COMMUNITY POTLUCK

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

The People’s Community Potluck is a food-sharing communal gathering to discuss the economic and social problems in our community. The intention is to harness the talents and resources of local organizations and individuals to improve the conditions of working people, unemployed people, poverty-stricken people, and those who are physically or mentally unable to care for themselves. Given the sorry state of the economy and government economic policy over the past 8 years, that has been most concerned with the well-being of the very wealthy, organizations and individuals at the grass-roots level are going to have to use social conscience and talents to find ways of supporting the most vulnerable people in our communities. We cannot just rely on the new administration to turn things around. We envision a new stimulus for coordinated action and communication for a democratic, egalitarian political-economy.
So what exactly is social change and how can one go about creating social change? Over the span of the course, our class conjured up multiple responses to these questions in connection with the issue of homelessness in Urbana-Champaign. We felt that social change consisted of actions taken by individuals in an effort to combat the status quo of a social issue. Our class also explored a variety of methods through which any individual could partake in social change. These strategies, among others, included participatory action research, direct action organizing, independent media publications, and artwork aimed specifically at promoting the awareness of societal injustices.

Nearing the end of the course now, we have been given an opportunity to utilize the knowledge gained and implement our own form of social change through a community project of our choice. The scope of my project is quite basic but is geared at providing the homeless population with a resource that can be utilized indefinitely. My community project consists of compiling a list of locations, both public and private, that may be utilized by anyone seeking immediate shelter. This will include places like hospital waiting rooms and train stations. My goal is to include locations that are less known about among the homeless population in Urbana-Champaign. I plan on compiling this information in the form of a brochure with a series of maps designating where these different emergency shelter areas are located, so that anyone experiencing homelessness can reference them. Within this pamphlet I also hope to include different tactics/strategies that are useful when seeking refuge in such locations, pertaining more specifically to the public locales. To include as many locations as possible on the map, I will be working in conjunction with those most affected, including individuals at homeless shelters such as the Times Center and residents of Safe Haven.

The overarching goal of my project simple, is that I want to provide something to the homeless population that can be effectively utilized. Everyone time someone looks at the brochure and finds somewhere to go where they will be safe from freezing or scorching weather conditions, I know that I have helped in some way. I feel that using my technical skills to formulate a resource guide is the best manner in which I can help to create social change. In the future, I hope to implement greater changes through urban and spatial design to help prevent social inequities.

A great majority of students in Champaign-Urbanas tend to stereotype homeless individuals with those they see on Green Street. However, the pan handlers that they associate with the homeless issue are only a mere fraction of the entire population and are certainly not a clear depiction of the entire community. My hopes are that more students are made aware of classes such as this one and are given an opportunity create a form of social change of their own.

I have lived in Urbana since I was six years old. However, I never understood the homeless situation in Urbana-Champaign. My journey began with my decision to spend this past summer volunteering locally in my hometown.

Although I had done service trips across the US, I had never taken the time to volunteer in my own community. One day while volunteering at the Catholic Worker House, I spoke with a woman who told me that the Catholic Worker House, Center for Women in Transition, and a Women’s Place were all full, so she was sleeping on the streets, while waiting for one of these three shelters to open up. This surprised me. I had always assumed the wealth and influence of the University of Illinois would enable there to be enough shelters in Urbana-Champaign.

This semester, I took a course taught by Abby Harmon, FAA 391, in which we learned about the homeless situation in Urbana-Champaign, as well as how to go about talking social action. During one of our classes, we had a group of Safe Haven community members come in and speak with us. Some of the issues we discussed included what it is like to be homeless on the UIUC campus, barriers to finding shelter, jobs, housing, how they lost their homes or jobs, and their interactions with community members. The Safe Haven members talked about how if they walk on to campus property, they immediately get kicked off. Due to the increasing number of No Trespassing signs, police make homeless people move from place to place. It was brought up that over the past winter, two people died of hypothermia exposure. The idea of homeless members needing for being able to socialize with other community members, as opposed to just being viewed as ‘homeless.’

This conversation showed me the importance of having an open dialogue. While volunteering at Catholic Worker House, I had interacted with Safe Haven community members. However, in that situation, I was perceived as a volunteer with a certain agenda. I learned so much more through having an open, frank conversation with members of Safe Haven.

After this conversation, I realized not only how little do UIUC students know of the poverty and homelessness in Urbana-Champaign, but also often how apathetic they are. Due to policies such as the police lacking homeless people off of the campus, many students are unaware of there even being poverty or homelessness in Urbana-Champaign.

As a result, for my final project for FAA 391, I will be working with one of my classmates, Vicky Brown, to hold an open forum between Safe Haven community members and University of Illinois students. This would be a way for University of Illinois students to become more aware of our community and hear firsthand accounts of what it is like to be homeless on the campus. I hope that Safe Haven members a chance to share their experiences and perspectives with the campus community as well as to ask University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign students questions. The social change we hope to bring about through this forum is to increase awareness and interaction between different groups of community members. The long-term goal of this project is increased awareness on the part of University of Illinois students of the Urbana-Champaign community. Hopefully this increased awareness not only will show them in what areas social change needs to be done, but will also encourages them to go out and make social change.
LOS ANGELES 11/21—Just after midnight in the early hours of Thursday November 19th a group of about 30 students seized Campbell Hall on the UCLA campus and began their occupation of the building. The building was renamed Carter Higgins Hall in honor of the two black liberation activists who were assassinated by the FBI on the UCLA campus during the sixties. The takeover was in response to the current budget crisis and to quote from the students’ statement, “aches beyond the Regents, beyond the criminal budget cuts in Sacramento, beyond the economic crisis, to the very foundations of our society.”

The takeover was peaceful and without any police intervention. All entrances were quickly secured and the students were able to hold the building for the next eighteen hours. During the occupation one entrance at the top of the stairs on the third floor was opened at times to admit supporters and reporters deemed friendly.

This Indymedia reporter was granted access on the condition of no photographs or video inside the building. Audio interviews with students were allowed. Inside the hall a diverse group of students were to be found, some sleeping, some gathered in discussions, others simply sharing food and enjoying each other’s company.

The students had declared the occupation to be a leaderless action and no spokesperson or media relations person had been designated. Those guarding the door told me that I was free to talk anyone who chose to speak with me.

(Edited mp3 files from these interviews to follow in a separate article.)

The occupation ended Thursday evening when students by their own decision peacefully left the building in response to fire and life safety issues raised by the fire marshall. There were no arrests or conflicts with police during the de-occupation.

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**GEO Wins!!**

Continued from page 6

and shouting. Dancing and hugging, ensued, smiles all around.

Then I passed the mic to Kerry, who—despite the many leadership roles in our organization and her own humble protests—is clearly our leader of leaders. She’d shown the greatest foresight, putting together a strike working group back in September. The hard work had paid off now, and Kerry deserved to stand in the center for a moment. There was a long list of thanks, and a few tears. You could almost see her shoulders loosening up as the weight was lifted off of them.

“We scored a victory, for ourselves, for the University, for organized labor, and for public higher education across the nation and around the world. We hope our stand will motivate our sisters and brothers in the GEO at the University of Chicago who remain in negotiations with their administration. We also stand in solidarity with students and workers in California, who continue to organize in opposition to catastrophic funding cuts and tuition hikes. The fight is far from over. I’m on vacation now, but Kerry just sent me a text message: ‘When you come back I want to talk with you about the next sites of struggle.’ It’s a conversation I’ll be happy to have.”

For more information on the GEO strike, visit ugeo.org. To see video of the pickets and rallies mentioned above, go to iresist.org

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**“Nae Tae” G20 in St. Andrews Scotland**

Continued from page 2

In a World News Australia report Oxfam’s senior policy adviser Max Lawson said: “The G20 has once again failed to live up to its rhetoric on climate change. As the clock ticks towards Copenhagen, the hundreds of millions of people around the world who are already suffering as a result of climate change cannot afford to wait any longer for a deal.”

Dr Richard Dixon said “This is a group that can throw money at collapsing banks but cannot find adequate figures for the far worse challenge to the global economy of a collapsing climate system. Talk of a financial transaction tax has the potential to raise hundreds of billions in new funding every year, but turned out to be a red herring—without social political support.”

“If we are to keep the planet below the danger threshold of a 2°C temperature rise, the rich nations of the world are going to have to help developing countries follow a low-carbon development path and help them cope with the impacts of current and future climate change. We wanted to see solid proposals on how the money would be raised, managed and distributed and an indication of how soon the countries most vulnerable to climate change will receive assistance. The G20 has failed to deliver and the real work will now have to be done at Copenhagen.” he said.
Unforgivable Blackness: The Lingering Legacy of Jack Johnson

By Neil Parkham

The reason Jack Johnson was so beset by his own country, a country ironically which had only recently reaffirmed that all men were created equal, was because of his Unforgivable Blackness. —W.E.B. DuBois

Jack Johnson was an African American boxer during the early 1900s. Johnson was overtly proud of his abilities and his heritage, refusing to acquiesce to the deep-seated racism in American society. His illustrious career was consistently hampered by overt racial discrimination including a criminal charge that is still on his record—being guilty of bringing a white woman, across state lines for immoral purposes.

Professor Gerald Early wrote about the era in which Johnson boxed. “By the turn of the century, institutionalized racism had shut blacks out of baseball. They were forced out of the sport for a variety of reasons, including the color of their skin.” Johnson was a black fighter, promoters did their best to ensure that he was never given a chance to compete.

In February 1903, Jack Johnson won the World Colored Heavyweight Championship. Johnson was the first African American boxer to hold a world title. After Johnson won the title, more black boxers began to appear. The most famous was boxer Jack Johnson, who held the world White Heavyweight Championship. James Floyds—refused multiple opportunities to fight Johnson. Floyds continued to box and retired in 1903. New champion, Tommy Burns, agreed to a match against Jack Johnson in Australia in December, 1908. Burns only agreed to the fight after months of Jack Johnson publicly taunting Burns to step into the ring. Johnson dominated the entire match while openly mocking Burns’ crew, and holding Burns up to continue throwing punches when he was about to fall to the mat. After Johnson’s decisive victory, a vicious animosity from whites ran so deep that the public immediately wrote him off as a has-been. Yet for most of the audience, it was a tedious event with nothing remotely resembling an academic or scholarly point. I can’t imagine a presentation less worthy of this country’s alleged reputation.

In a press conference after the match, Johnson said, “I am going into this fight for the sole purpose of proving that a white man is better than a Negro.” In response, Johnson was quoted in the newspapers saying, “I honestly believe that in pugilism I am Jack Johnson.”

Johnson was unapologetic in his response to the conflict surrounding him. In a classic example, when being harassed by the police for a $50 speeding ticket, Johnson handed the officer a $100 bill and told him to keep the change. He was later stopped by the police, who asked him to step out of the car. Johnson got out of the car and told the officer, “I’m sorry, but I have no more money.”

In 2003, Johnson was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame. Johnson was inducted posthumously, as he was not living at the time. Johnson’s boxing career was marked by his ability to take on any opponent and win. He was known for his speed, agility, and power. Johnson was a true pioneer in the sport of boxing, and his legacy lives on in the history of the sport.

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The saying that the Chinese government and the Hans destroy and suppress Uighur culture is totally nonsense.

In a number of policy areas, the Chinese government has given preferential treatment of minorities for 60 years. Chinese minorities get preferential treatment in entrance examinations and enrollments in higher educational institutions, employment, and family planning. Uighur people in Xinjiang occupy powerful positions at all levels of government. Hans envy the Uyghurs. Han Chinese even are willing to pretend to minorities to get the preferential treatment, but have not seen Uyghurs wanting to pass as Hans.

In reality, the mainstream relationship between the Uyghur and Han-Chinese can be characterized as one of solidarity and friendly cooperation, something like relationship between brothers and sisters in one family. I had a Uyghur girl undergraduate. She was studying in the history department in the Southwest University. I invited her to eat Islamic meals with me, and she gave my daughter a flute as a birthday gift. I guided her to the completion of her dissertation for a bachelor’s degree in history. After graduation she began working as a history teacher in a secondary school in Beibei District, Chongqing. She has married a local businessman. They bought a new house and live a happy life. I have a graduate student who is 32-years old, a teacher in Hotan Normal College. Xinjiang. Two years ago, the Chinese nation paid for his studies in Switzerland. Last year he enrolled as a graduate student in Southwest University in China. Even though his scores were lower than those of the Han Chinese, we allowed him to enter and to study the economic history of Xinjiang Uygur, with particular emphasis on the current agricultural economy of the Uygurs. I respect his religious beliefs and customs. We often go to Islamic restaurants, walk together, discuss academic issues, and exchange ideas without any obstacles. I also saw on Central China Television that an elderly Uyghur couple in Xinjiang has adopted a non-Uyghur baby girl who was abandoned by birth parents. The baby girl was suffering from various diseases. The elderly Uyghur couple was very poor, but they overcome difficulties, sought medicine and doctors everywhere, and finally cured her diseases. Now they are supporting her as she grows up. Through the media reports, this story made many people teary-eyed, including me. We can see that people of all nationalities in Xinjiang take care mutual care of each other. The ethnic relations are basically harmonious. A few terrorists and separatists create trouble and attempt to destroy the harmony and unity of ethnic relations, and to endanger the peaceful lives of people. They are not only the enemies of the Han people, but also the enemies of the Uyghur people. They are the enemies of the Chinese nation and of peace-loving people in the world. No country will allow criminals to kill innocent citizens and burn houses as they like. China is determined to safeguard national unity and solidarity between ethnic groups, which is in line with humanism. The international community should understand and support China’s good intentions.
UC-IMC Celebrates 10 Years of Independent Media
By Brian Dolinar

As we celebrate the ten-year anniversary of the UC-IMC, it is a good time to reflect on the accomplishments of our network and the role of independent media in shaping the political landscape. Founded on September 24, 2000, the UC-IMC has been a driving force in the independent media movement, providing a platform for diverse voices and perspectives to be heard. In this article, we will highlight some of the key events and milestones that have shaped the UC-IMC over the past decade.

**November 30, 1999 (N30): WTO Protests in Seattle**
The Battle in Seattle took place when the World Trade Organization was targeted for protests by a wide range of organizations that included labor unions, anarchists, environmentalists, peace activists, and representatives from around the world. The goal was to shut down the meetings of the organization and indeed the first day's events were delayed after several direct actions were staged. Police cracked down heavily, firing rubber bullets, setting off stun grenades, and using excessive amounts of tear gas and pepper spray on protesters. More than 600 people were arrested. When a wave of negative reports in local and national media blamed the unrest on anarchists, the activists on the ground used a relatively new tool, the World Wide Web, to present a different picture. This was before the widespread use of blogs, although many were inspired by the use of the web by the Zapatistas in Mexico. A collective of media makers joined together in Seattle to form the first Independent Media Center that presented live video footage, audio, photographs, and firsthand accounts of police violence directed against the crowd.

**August 2001: First Issue of the Public i Newspaper Published**
The first issue of the Public i, a free monthly newspaper of the UC-IMC, came out. It was released just weeks before September 11 and included a two-page supplement about the GA protests.

**September 11, 2001**
On this historic date, 19 commercial airplanes and two of them into the World Trade Center in New York. In the widespread panic that followed 9-11, there was a mass roundup of 1,000 people within the United States who had ties to the Middle East. The Bush administration used this event to justify a “War on Terror” and launch invasions into Afghanistan and Iraq.

**February 15, 2003 (F15): Millions Rally Around the World Against Imminent War on Iraq**
In the largest anti-war protest in history, deemed “F-15,” millions rallied around the world to hail Bush’s plans for a war against Iraq. Despite the protests, Bush invaded Iraq on March 20, 2003.

**November 20, 2003: Miami Protest Against FTAa**
At another round of talks to discuss the Free Trade Area of the Americas, protests were organized. Local UC-IMC activists were to Miami to set up an Independent Media Center there. After negotiations broke down between officials, a second day of talks was called off.

**September 2004: RNC in NYC**
With September 11 still fresh in the minds of Americans, the 2004 Republican National Convention in which George W. Bush was running for re-election was held in New York City. At a Critical Mass bike ride, an NYPD cop was caught on video tape attacking a bicyclist. Throughout the week of the events, 1,800 people were arrested and placed in Pier 57, a contaminated old building purchased by the NYPD which became known as “Guantanamo on the Hudson.” Among them were five activists from Champaign-Urbana.

**May 2005: Old Post Office in Downtown Urbana Becomes New Home of UC-IMC**
A year after the “Katrina” response by Prometheus Radio, WFUI 104.5, Radio Free Urbana, a low-power radio station, broadcasted for the first time.

**October 27, 2006: Brad Will of NY-IMC Shot Dead in Oaxaca, Mexico**
An annual May Day rally was held by the teachers union in Oaxaca, Mexico. In 2000, for the first time, “Radio Planet” went on the air. On July 14, the protesters were met with police violence. Thousands poured into the streets in support of the teachers and occupied the downtown plaza. The police escalated their repression and armed gunmen roamed the streets at night killing and brutalizing protesters. The people responded by setting up barricades closing off the city. At one of the barricades, New York IMC videographer Brad Will was shot and killed. His murderers remain at large to this day.

**September 2008: RNC in St. Paul-Minneapolis**
Republican National Convention held and Twin Cities IMC founded to cover events. A total of 600 protesters were arrested. Among them was a group that became known as the “RNC 8.” In addition to the RNC committee that was charged under Minnesao terrorim laws. Those of the L-Witness video crew had their house raided. In total, some 80 journalists were arrested, including Amy Goodman of Democracy Now.

**May 2009: Old Post Office in Downtown Urbana Becomes New Home of UC-IMC**
For a more extensive coverage see: www.eff.org/wp/anatomy-bogus-subpoena

Get Involved with the Public i

Indymedia.us and EFF Successfully Fight Back Against Bogus FBI Subpoena

Indymedia.us and EFF Successfully Fight Back Against Bogus FBI Subpoena. A police fishing expedition has been fought successfully over the course of the past year by one of the Indymedia.us system administrators and the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), largely in secret due to dodgy gag orders -- which actually didn’t have any real legal standing to begin with. Earlier this year, U.S. attorneys issued a federal grand jury subpoena to Indymedia.us sysadmin Kristina Claire demanding “all IP traffic to and from www.indymedia.us” for a particular date, potentially identifying every person who visited any news story on the Indymedia site. EFF argued that the overly broad demand for Internet records not only violated federal privacy law but also violated Claire’s First Amendment rights, by ordering her not to disclose the existence of the subpoena without a U.S. attorney’s permission. For a more extensive coverage see: www.eff.org/wp/anatomy-bogus-subpoena/indymedia
By Jamie and Gary Storm

November 2009

www.ucimc.org / www.publici.ucimc.org

Injustices Observed First-hand

Jamie and Gary Storm are residents of Urbana.

On November 6, 2009, we returned from a ten-day visit to Palestine and Israel. Our trip was organized by John Settlerndorf, a retired campus minister from Urbana who had recently spent two years working at a Lutheran complex in Beit Jala, a small Palestinian city adjacent to Bethlehem in the West Bank.

Our purpose for making the trip was to visit the sites and experience the culture of this region which is of major significance to millions of Jews, Christians and Muslims. We went to see with our own eyes how the practices of the State of Israel affect the lives of the people of Palestine.

We encountered the Israeli Separation Wall and armed checkpoints throughout our travels. Many in the United States do not realize that the Wall does not follow the internationally recognized boundary between Israel and the West Bank but that it exists largely within Palestinian territory. It prevents the free movement of Palestinian residents to and from their jobs, health care centers, and schools. It separates members of families from one another and farmers from their land or businesses on which they depend for income. It denies Palestinians access to water for drinking and irrigation.

U.S. passports are the credentials that allowed us to cross the checkpoints. Palestinian residents told us that it is common practice for Israel to answer a family’s request for crossing papers by denying the request to at least one of the family members. Our group attended the special Reformation Day service at the packed large Lutheran church in Jerusalem. The Bishop delivered the sermon; many international guest clergy were present. Although the program stated there would be special music by the Bethlehem Lutheran Church Choir, they weren’t there. It was announced that not all the children were issued travel permission.

Many of our excursions from Beit Jala began with our boarding an Arab tour bus, greeting our Palestinian driver and experience the culture of this region which is of major significance to millions of Jews, Christians and Muslims. We went to see with our own eyes how the practices of the State of Israel affect the lives of the people of Palestine.

Our encounters with the Israeli checkpoint were often harrowing, involving extensive searches of our passports, the play of our passports. We saw people ordered out of their homes, families detained to and from their jobs, health care centers, and schools. It separates members of families from one another and farmers from their land or businesses on which they depend for income. It denies Palestinians access to water for drinking and irrigation.

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Many of our excursions from Beit Jala began with our boarding an Arab tour bus, greeting our Palestinian driver and riding through Bethlehem to a check point in the forty-foot high Separation Wall. The check points are guarded by young Israeli soldiers armed with automatic weapons. Vehicles queue up at the check points and wait for unpredictable amounts of time, which are affected by both the volume of traffic and the actions of the soldiers. It is impossible to know what time to leave Beit Jala for the scheduled appointment in Jerusalem because the six-mile drive can take minutes or hours. The soldiers’ inspections of vehicles and passengers appear to be capricious rather than standard. At times our tour bus was held at the checkpoint for hours, behind a yellow line marking the window between our driver and a soldier. Other times, after a longer exchange between the driver and a guard, an armed soldier or two opened our bus and demanded a display of our passports. We saw people ordered out of their vehicles, their persons and automobiles searched by armed guards. Checkpoints can be closed without notice.

One evening, approaching the Bethlehem checkpoint, which we routinely used to return home, we found our way blocked. We later learned that access to Bethlehem through that gate had been blocked to accommodate attendees at an Israeli festival. On our way to Jerusalem the next day, our driver, having been told the festival was a two-day affair, drove us to the checkpoint to which we had been diverted the previous night. Our bus wasn’t allowed through and we waited while they were questioned and inspected. All were eventually allowed to reboard but it was a humiliating and time-wasting experience.

We heard stories of university students routinely harassed while going to class and of arrests and the long-term detention of some without charges. After the last three elected presidents of the student body at Birzeit University, near Ramallah, were arrested and detained, the students decided to no longer elect anyone to this position. At both Birzeit and Bethlehem Universities, enrollment has declined because students have been unable to get permission to cross checkpoints. Fewer males are seeking college admission to cross checkpoints. Fewer males are seeking college admission and enrollment has declined because students have been unable to get permission to cross checkpoints.

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