When a Parent Is in Prison

The young people who are featured here are among the 2,400,000 children who have a mother or father in prison.

“When a Parent Is in Prison” explores the situation of children who have a parent in prison through their portraits and words.

A documentary project of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. and Eastern Mennonite University’s Center for Justice and Peacemaking

UC Independent Media Center
202 South Broadway, Urbana, IL 61801
Exhibit runs from November 1 - 21, 2009
Opening: Sunday, November 1, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Free and Open to the Public
Champaign Police Fatalley Shoot Unarmed 15-Year-Old African American Youth

By Brian Dolinar

CHAMPAIGN POLICE WIFE will take a month for an investigation into the "officer-involved shooting" of Kwame Carrington, an unarmed 15-year-old African American youth. There has been an outpouring of support for young Kwame from friends and family. The community anxiously awaits an answer to what happened that rainy afternoon.

On Friday, Oct. 9, 2009, Champaign police responded to a reported burglary on 90th W. Vine St. The first to arrive on the scene was Champaign Police Chief R.T. Finney who confronted two 15-year-olds in the backyard. Classes in the READY program that Kwame attended were cancelled that day for teacher instruction. Kwame, whose mother passed away last year from pancreatic cancer, was staying at Debra Thomas’ home. He had eaten breakfast there that morning. When he arrived at the house in the afternoon, the door was locked and he had forgotten his key. It was raining outside and the two were looking for shelter.

The press conference at UCIMC

When Chief Finney arrived at approximately 1:20 p.m., he knew only that a neighbor had reported a burglary. Soon after, a witness reportedly heard police yelling out, “Get on the ground. Get on the ground.” It had been raining for two days and the ground was wet and muddy. When one of the youth tried to walk away, Finney grabbed him and a struggle ensued.

Another officer appeared on the scene, Daniel Norbits, a 14 year veteran of the force. Although neither of the 15-year-old boys had a weapon, Norbits apparently drew his gun and, according to a press statement released Friday, he was being beaten in an alley by Champaign police back in 2000. Witnesses said they heard Brown calling out for help that night.

The News-Gazette has reported that Norbits had previously been involved in the case of Greg Brown, a developmentally disabled man who died of a heart attack after being transported to the scene of a burglary and left on the ground by police. The second 15 year old involved has been released from juvenile detention. The charge of burglary was dropped, but State's Attorney Julia Rietz has decided to prosecute him for aggravated resisting a police officer, a felony which carries a possible three-year sentence. His next court date is November 12.

A memorial fund has been set up at Busey Bank for anyone who would like to contribute. Donations can be dropped off at any Busey Bank location or you can call 367-4500.

For video and audio of the press conference at the IMC, as well as up-to-date information, go to ucimc.org

For the coming year, the Independent Media Center will have nine AmeriCorps volunteers working for us. They include (from left to right) Jacob Barton, School for Designing a Society, Nicole Pion, Outreach Coordinator, Kasy Vizdal, shows, Meoissha Polk, Property Manager, Carly Nin, News Media Coordinator, Emma Barnes, Bike Project, Brian Duggan, Tech, and Judith Pond, Books to Prisoners (not pictured Kat Lieder, Gesundheit Int, and Carol Ammons, program coordinator).

The Show with Ray Morales, WRUF 104.5, Friday nights at 10 p.m.

"Hip Hop: The Untold Contributions of Latin@s". On Nov 6, we will be filming an episode of "The Show" for National Public TV featuring Prof. John Jennings, NYC MC Magnetic & NYC Actor/Producer Victor Cruz. The topic will be "Hip Hop: The Untold Contributions of Latin@s." This event is co-sponsored by the Puerto Rican Student Association & funded by SORF. It will be filmed live at La Casa Cultural Latina.

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Power Without Accountability?

By Marti Wilkinson

In following the news coverage and comments made regarding the murder of Kiwane Carrington-Williams, I am disturbed to see how many people are quick to jump to the defense of an officer who took the life of a 15 year old boy. Perhaps I’ve overlooked something, but I have yet to see any reports that Carrington-Williams was holding a weapon. Neither has it been reported that the life of an officer was in danger. This is the second time that this officer has killed someone during a 1/4 year career. They are painting this kid out to be a thug who was on the way to being a career criminal just because he attended the READY school. He was just a kid and it’s my understanding that their brains are still developing even at the age of 15 so it’s unreasonable to hold these children to an adult standard. If this situation involved a couple of white kids in Cherry Hills would this have happened? As a mother of a teenager I know that there are times when kids will simply react to a situation instead of thinking first.

Personally, I think Flynn is going to defend the actions of Officer Norbies if for no other reason than to save his own skin. After all, if Officer Norbies committed a senseless murder then our Chief of Police is an accessory to a criminal act. History in this community has shown many times that a badge gives one a free pass to engage in unlawful acts towards the very citizens that police officers have sworn to serve and protect. How many women did Kurt Hjort stalk, harass, and assault before someone finally had the courage to report him? How many people were in grave danger the night that Lisa Staples were out and drove the wrong way on I-72? How many inmates at the County Jail were subject to the unlawful use of tasers by Sgt. Myers at the Champaign County jail before he was charged with a crime? Yet, Hjort, Staples, and Myers are free and able to live their lives without having to bear responsibility for the abuse of public trust and safety they committed. Perhaps I’m naive, but when officers are not held to the standards they are expected to uphold then how can we teach our children and grandchildren to ‘respect’ the police.

To make a comparison let us look at examples of churches who have leaders that abused their positions. Perhaps the most well known examples involve priests who spent years abusing children and being moved from parish to parish before finally facing criminal charges. How much money has this cost the church in lawsuits alone? Then you have the Rabbis in New Jersey who have killed someone during a turn of events, the perceived favorite host city, Chicago, was eliminated in the first round. In the May 2009 issue of the Public i, the IOC covered the myriad reasons why Chicago hosting the games would be a disaster. While activists are cheering their success, it is vitally important for people to remember that the battle is not over. Those concerned about the problems—the police impunity, economic devastation, and gentrification—that the Olympic bring need to organize support and solidarity for the people of Rio De Janeiro. As sports writer Dave Zirin reflected: “If history is any kind of a guide, the pain for Brazil’s working people is now on the immediate horizon. It’s our duty to do whatever we can to express solidarity with the favelas, the landless peasants, and the workers about to stare down the barrel of Olympism. Our work has just begun.”

By Brian Dolinar

Unity March Highlights “Don’t Care” Attitude Toward the Poor

As we passed by a Subway restaurant, workers came out to see what was happening. When asked, one worker (who must have been a pastor until he can to another parish or when a local church chooses to retain his pastorate) recited his poem from the Independent Media Center. Some purchased books from the Books To Prisoners book sale taking place the same weekend.

Youth lead the march past the Police Station

A banner hanging during the march reads: “CU: Where will our homeless sleep this winter? Champaign Mayor Schweigart at city council mtg., 5.12.09, "I don’t care."

Victory: Chicago Loses Olympic Bid

Social justice activists celebrated a victory on Oct. 2 when the International Olympic Committee (IOC) did not award the 2016 Olympics to Chicago. In a shocking turn of events, the preferred favorite host city, Chicago, was eliminated in the first round. In the May 2009 issue of the Public i, the IOC covered the myriad reasons why Chicago hosting the games would be a disaster. While activists are cheering their success, it is vitally important for people to remember that the battle is not over. Those concerned about the problems—the police impunity, economic devastation, and gentrification—that the Olympic bring need to organize support and solidarity for the people of Rio De Janeiro. As sports writer Dave Zirin reflected: “If history is any kind of a guide, the pain for Brazil’s working people is now on the immediate horizon. It’s our duty to do whatever we can to express solidarity with the favelas, the landless peasants, and the workers about to stare down the barrel of Olympism. Our work has just begun.”

Toward the Poor

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October 2009

by Aaron Ammons

Gateway through people on the street even though they paid their rent
They won't even let us live in a tent
You can't just look the other way
Your silence gives consent!
These brothers are sleeping in the park
That closes after dusk, or is it dark?
Sometimes it rains and it gets cold at night
This is not the time for a debate about wrong and right
It's time to fight!

Time for everyone to become their own leader
And that's how you become your brother and sister's keeper
It's a slippery slope that gets steeper and increases the tension
I don't know if I'm a socialist, but,
How can we have homeless citizens while crooked trustees
and politicians retire with a pension, show no remorse or repentance?
Hard working grad students get pennies for their assistance because
The cycle of greed is vicious,
The cycle of greed is vicious
The cycle of greed is vicious!
From freecycle, the Bicycle and Common Ground Co-op
From IMC, CU Citizens, iResist to S.T.O.P.
These are some of our outstanding residents
By the way
S.T.O.P. stands for; Students Telling Off the President
They say to rear a child, it takes a village
So we have to address housing, poverty, health care
Race, Class, and Privilege
If not, we sentence our Nation to a variety of things
Amongst them are American dreams that never come true
Festering hatred
Battles between the right and left
And a population that sees death
As sacred.

Do you see now how you can become what you fear
Why we have to prepare everyday of every year, for the inevitable,
Can you live together, build a house, sew some clothes and grow a vegetable or two?
That's called intelligent and it shows respect
Those of us who live check to check
Know we are a bad day away from poverty, too!
At what cost are people working their asses off,
Not for a select few to play tennis and golf,
While other citizens can't get help for a nasty cough!
Where's the trough for the community?
I know I'm responsible to contribute to a public hospital,
What about rich white collar criminals who get immunity?
They consistently avoid prosecution
Juxtapose,
Homeless citizens are jailed if they can't pay fines, court cost and restitution!
ARE YOU KIDDING ME!!
Did they rape, rob, or attempt to kill,
Did they sit on their hands and get rich from expensive medicines that don't heal?
I mean let's keep it real man,
You're arresting me, a homeless citizen
For using somebody's garbage can?
Are you serious, or delirious?
I mean, what are you thinking?
Have you been drinking?
I don't know if you knew,
Cops drink and drive too!
They just have a different view of justice,
They think they're on the inside of a circle of vultures
We must recognize the two different cultures and face it,
It is what is and that's how it stands,
It's the very reason we have to stay united
Because power concedes nothing, without a demand!

Statement From CU Citizens for Peace and Justice

On Friday October 9, 2009, two unarmed 15 year-olds, Kiwane Carrington and another youth,
were accosted by Champaign officers—including the Chief of Police—at the place where Kiwane
stayed. Kiwane was shot and killed. The other was arrested, at first for burglary (charges since dropped), and then for felony aggravated resisting a peace officer, and was taken to jail.

Something is fundamentally wrong with police procedure where a mistaken assumption about
burglary leads to guns drawn, ransacking of a home, and killing of a young person—with the
Chief of Police present!

CU Citizens for Peace and Justice Are Calling For:
• Resignation of Champaign Police Chief R. T. Finney
• Dropping of all charges against the arrested youth
• Rewrite the new Use of Force Policies which allows police to shoot to kill to "prevent the
  arrest from being defeated by resistance or escape"
• Independent Citizen Police Review Board with subpoena power.
• No Tasers!
• Protect our rights of freedom of movement. Police need to stop racial profiling, ID checks, forced "consent" searches, jay walking tickets, and noise violations that have become the common form of harassment in North Champaign.
A Conference With Mexico City’s Youth
By Daniel Cruz

It was an early Sunday morning and my phone was urgent—building military bases, arming and training elements of the Honduran pouring in millions of dollars in military caught up in bloody civil wars, the United States stepped into nial oppression, in 1982 Hondurans voted to end military rule throwing the cell phone with anger, awe and great frustra-
ly ringing. I usually do not receive calls so early . The call committed political assassinations, tortured opponents, and
Squads and police as being responsible for these acts. The violations give Mexico City a chance to dispel false perceptions. In response to these actions multitudinous demonstrations. In response to these actions waged more than 80 days of nonstop resistance, organizing
In response to the recent coup, the Honduran people have many actors in hopes of creating a more coordinated effort. By Daniel Cruz

Early last month I joined over 1,300 UN delegates, NGO workers, and policy was around the world, the emphasis has descended on Mexico City to attend the 82nd annual UN Department of Public Information/NGO/Globalist Organiz-
the title of this year’s conference, “Disarm Now!” aptly illustrated the sense of urgency that members of the UN associations feel in promoting peace and development around the world in pursuit of their Millennium Development Goals. The three-day conference consisted of various workshops and roundtable discussions, each with a different focus related to disarmament and global security. With such a diverse range of actors working toward a similar goal, a lot of time was devoted to finding ways to increase dialogue between the many actors in hopes of creating a more coordinated effort. The Department of Public Information for the UN stressed the importance of a mobilized and informed civil society, cit-
in the ways in which nongovernmental organizations can form a bridge between the UN and the global community. In recent years, Mexico’s negative image has been largely reinforced by international media coverage. From organ-
ized drug cartels to the recent H1N1 outbreak, the common perception of Mexico is that it is dirty, drug-ridden, and spiraling out of control. However, the capital is a sym-
bol of its development, and it is not the same metropolis that it was ten years ago. Now, with the flu under control and the drug cartels kept outside the city, the Conference gave Mexico City a chance to dispel false perceptions. This is only the second time that the DPI/NGO Conference has been held outside UN headquarters in New York City. The Selection of Mexico is even more suitable given that Maria Luisa Chavez, director of NGO Relations for the DPI and chief organizer for the conference, is a native Mexican. With a turbulent history of violence and political insta-

It was an early Sunday morning and my phone was urgently ringing. I usually do not receive calls so early in the morning. The call seemed to begin the morning of the coup when an army truck with army trucks. Army snipers was frustrated by police and army units who blocked the road to the airport. By Daniel Cruz

The IACHR reports that the police and army used disproportion-
ate force against unarmed demonstrators, brutally beating, shooting and killing men, women and children. There have also been wide-scale threating and harassment. The IACHR states that more than thirty-five hundred Hondurans have been arbitrarily detained. Others have been “disappeared,” and sexual violence and rape were used against women active in the resistance movement. On July 5, Zelaya attempted to return to Honduras, but was frustrated by police and army units who blocked the runway with army trucks. Army snipers fired indiscrimi-
ately into a large crowd that had gathered to welcome Zelaya back, killing a young boy, Obed Murillo, and wounding several other demonstrators. Four days later, police arrested Jose David Murillo, the boy’s father, as he left a human rights organization where he had reported his son’s death. While claiming to have acted to preserve democracy, the de facto regime has seized control of radio and television stations. Private stations, backers of the coup, continue broadcasting sports and cartoons, and omit any report on the coup or pro-Zelaya demonstrations. Reporters and jour-
nalists critical of the coup have frequently been attacked, harassed or detained. It is an outrage that conservative elements of the U.S. Media have attempted to justify and legitimate the actions of the de facto regime. Right wing pundits have portrayed Zelaya as try-
ing to illegally extend his term in office. This is hardly the case. What was proposed was not a referendum to extend Zelaya’s term in office; it was a non-binding referendum intended to let

the people’s voice be heard in the November elections regard-
ing the need for constitutional reform. While Latin American nations have been unanimous in condemning the coup, the U.S. response was slow and tepid. Though they eventually did condemn the coup, they did not do so until September, more than two months after the coup. Furthermore, statements and visits from several U.S. representatives in support of the regime have undercut the official position of condemnation. Unfor-
nately the regime is still stubbornly holding on to power, still abusing human rights, still repressing dissent. The U.S. could do much more. It could explicitly denounce human rights violations. Punitive actions could be taken against de facto regime leaders. It is time that the U.S. Government admits the role it has played in the past in Honduras and Central America—supporting reac-
tionary regimes, and backing U.S. businesses in exploiting the indigenous peoples. It is time for reform.
Free Trade & the Economic Crisis in Nicaragua

By Shara Esbenshade

October 2009

The global economic crisis that began at the end of 2008 has hit Nicaragua hard. Over a dozen maquilas, factories, that import all the primary materials, export all the products, and comprise the primary source of employment in Nicaragua, have already left the country, and tens of thousands have lost their jobs. The very real fear of the flight of investment has caused the previously populist government to turn to supporting labor-abusing companies, either outright or tacitly, by choosing not to enforce the law while companies are increasing violent, threatening workers' rights. This is a shift back into the state's former role under the 16 years of neoliberalism that followed the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in 1990.

As a United Students Against Sweatshops International intern, I spent the summer in Masaya, Nicaragua with a union federation that organizes with workers of the maquilas, which primarily produces apparel for American consumers. Yutex, a factory making shirts for Walmart, provides one example of the growing trend among corporations to capitalize on the financial crisis and the government's weakened position by disrespecting labor laws in obvious and devastating ways. Workers at Yutex finally formed a union last winter to resist forced overtime, abuse by supervisors, and other oppressive practices of the company. The new union members were laid off by the hundreds and met with a vicious propaganda campaign on the part of management, which accused the union of driving the company out of Nicaragua. “We [the unions] must be flexible with the companies. Because if we continue struggling 100% they will leave and the workers will be left without a job,” explains Wilfredo Guerrero, a young union leader at Yutex who was fired and threatened with death by the factory owner. Guerrero tells me, one cannot allow the company to continue its current practices: firing at will, underpaying workers, and refusing to accept unions. He and the union organizers are some of the most committed and fearless activists I have known. However, there is a creeping feeling among labor in the Nicaraguan apparel industry of being stuck with no way out.

The government, organized labor, and big business formed a tripartite commission in response to the crisis. On March 12, they signed an agreement in which the companies promised to establish and maintain communication with workers, including consulting them in responding to financial difficulties caused by the crisis, and to follow proper legal procedures in cases of company closures (as opposed to fleeing the country without paying workers their due benefits, a common practice in the Free Trade Zones). Labor leaders agreed to have minimum wage negotiations once a year rather than every six months. The labor movement had fought hard for twice-a-year negotiations and the tripartite agreement was a sacrifice decided upon in a top-down manner within the labor organizations, one that workers were extremely upset about. In one labor organizer's words, however, “this was the only thing to do: sign this agreement or else there, would have been a massive closing of factories, like there was in Honduras. A lot of companies left Honduras and came here. In El Salvador and Guatemala the same thing happened.” Nevertheless, the agreement did not stop many signatory companies from leaving the country, often in outright noncompliance with the conditions set by the commission. Nicaragua has among the lowest wages in Central America. Since the crisis, companies have been leaving nearby countries and moving to Nicaragua where they can profit more because the price of labor is lower. This cycle continues as companies facing financial hardship in Nicaragua move to countries in Asia and Africa, where labor is even cheaper.

The union members I got to know have a strong analysis of the way their struggle fits into the global situation. What is happening at Yutex and the many factories with similar cases is only possible within the context of the global race to the bottom, the process of companies constantly chasing the economies with the lowest wages and most vulnerable labor force. Critiquing, actively opposing, and finding alternatives to the free trade policies embodied in agreements that facilitate this disastrous race, such as CAFTA-DR (the Central American Free Trade Agreement implemented in 2000), is part of the Nicaraguan labor movement’s work. The free trade system puts Nicaraguans in a vulnerable situation. If companies operating in the country did not all depend upon imports and markets abroad to make money, this crisis would not be hurting them nearly as much. The few companies that do obtain their primary materials from within Nicaragua or from bordering El Salvador have been surviving the crisis far better than the maquilas that are at the mercy of fluctuating foreign markets.

A question many have been asking in the US, since the economic crisis hit is, “why should Main Street pay for Wall Street’s actions?” However, we usually aren’t thinking about the price of this crisis on a global level. The people of the poorest countries in the world are affected the most. The free trade policies that the United States and international institutions, such as the World Bank, have imposed upon Nicaragua and other impoverished or indebted countries have ensured that the lowest-paid and most abused workers of the world take the greatest hits from a crisis caused by a system these same workers have resisted from the beginning.

Shara Esbenshade is a native of Urbana, She is currently studying history at Stanford University and is active in the Campus Antiracist Network and United Students Against Sweatshops.
By Conar Gillard

Community Protests “Chief Illiniwek”

The air was cold and the sky grey as students huddled together around the Alma Mater in anticipation of the march to Assembly Hall for the Not Our Mascot Rally on Friday. According to the iResist Web Site, Chief Illiniwek was retired as of March 13, 2007. However, the Registered Student Organizations (RSO) and students for Chief Illiniwek have since been hosting events to further the mascot’s tradition.

According to a press release from the iResist Coalition, the march would begin at the Alma Mater then weave across campus to arrive at the Assembly Hall to protest the “Next Dance.” The release stated that the coalition was comprised of a multitude of groups, such as Movement for Mexico, Estudantil Chican@ de Aztlán (MECHA), Red Roots, Latin@ Studies, Campus Antiwar Network, and Students Transforming Oppression and Privilege (STOP).

“It’s a stereotypical image of a Native person,” Thomas Garza, human resources staff and member of the iResist Coalition, said. “And what does that have to do with Champaign-Urbana?”

Garza said the organization, MECHA, protested last year’s rally, but due to the stressful and dangerous nature of the protest, the organization turned to the coalition for some local help.

“If you want to honor people, you honor them by listening to them,” Carlos Ramirez-Rosa, junior in LAS and member of MECHA said. “And Natives on this campus, the Natives which the Chief supposedly represents, have all said this is offensive to them.”

Rosa said he helped organize the rally. He added that the organization works as an advocate for social justice on behalf of the Latino students at the University. Rosa said the coalition wants to end this dark chapter of University history and that, “they want to move on.”

“If the students want to make a costume and go dance at the local VA (Veteran’s Association) hall, that’s fine. Saying they don’t have rights to that,” Rosa said. “But to use University of Illinois logos, to use University of Illinois logos, and to use University space, they don’t have rights to that.”

The Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma is a descendant of the Illiniwek Tribe, also known as the Illini or Illinois Nations. The university passed a resolution stating that the image portrayed by Chief Illiniwek does not accurately represent or honor the heritage of the Peoria Tribe and is a degrading racial stereotype that reflects negatively upon all American Indian people.

Steven Wyatt, senior in LAS, said he chose to attend the rally because he had been dealing with this issue since he was a freshman at the University.

“It’s terrible that something like this is still allowed to go on in our society,” Wyatt said. “People have images and ideas of Native stereotypes and don’t even realize they are stereotypes.”

Wyatt said he would ask students how they would feel if there was a mascot who made fun of their religion and cultural heritage. He felt Natives have been abused in society and that the event was honoring the tradition.

“We want peace, we don’t want this symbol dividing our campus any longer,” Henkels said.

Mario Munoz, freshman in DGS and member of Students for Chief Illiniwek, said the organization respected the iResist coalition’s view on the mascot. He said the University of Illinois uses the Chief as a symbol, not a mascot. He added that the two words are often thrown around interchangeably and people need to understand the difference.

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“When they understand that we respect and honor the Chief, as opposed to mocking him and making him a minstrel show, I think they’ll probably get a better idea,” Munoz said. “We’re not racists, that’s not what we are about.”

Megan Laley, sophomore in Kinesthesiology, said she was attending the “Next Dance” event on Friday evening. She added that she thought it was a symbol that people “generally” respected and she felt the event was honoring the Illini.

“People from the Illiniwek tribes are in general not offended by this, it’s white people who are,” Laley said.

Fawad Ahmad, sophomore in ECE said he is in support of the Chief. He added that he thought they were not degrading anyone with the use of it. He said he felt having the state as well as the University named after the Illini was an honor.

“I mean it’s all for fun, there’s the Florida State Seminoles, the Washington Redskins, if they want money. I’m sure Illinois can provide money to them,” Ahmad said. “It’s not like we’re trying intentionally to harm anyone.”

Chief Regalia Is Finally Returned To the Oglala Tribal Council

Only one day after the anti-“Chief” rally at Assembly Hall, protesting the Students for Chief Illiniwek’s “Next Dance,” the News Gazette had a major story buried on A8 of the Sunday newspaper.

In the middle of the page is a headline, “Regalia returned.” There is a picture of former “Chief” portrayers and representatives of the Oglala Lakota College. The caption reads: “Former Chief Illiniwek portayers and representatives of the Oglala Lakota College gathered outside the Vanir Room at Memorial Stadium on Saturday before the Illinois-Penn State football game in preparation for a transfer of the University of Illinois’ Chief regalia to Oglala Lakota College. A News-Gazette photographer was refused admittance to the ceremony by UI Associate Director of Athletics Dana Bremner, who told the photographer it was a ‘private function.’”

This return comes after past statements from Frank Fools Crow disapproving of how the University used the regalia it purchased from him, the Executive Committee of the Oglala Tribal Council passing a resolution asking the regalia be returned and the subsequent retirement of the “Chief” by the University in 2007.

Friday Forum Fall 2009 Lecture Series: Beyond 100 Days: Is this the Change We Need?

October 23: U.S. Climate Change Policy in the Obama Era: A Progress Report. Ron Burke, Mid-West Climate Campaign Director, Union of Concerned Scientists.


November 6: The Recession and Recovery (?) in the State of Illinois. Fred Giertz, Professor of Economics, University of Illinois.

November 13: Keeping secrets: Why Covering up Bush-Era Transgressions is Contrary to the Rule of Law. Calame Connell, Executive Director, American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois.

December 4: Ecology of Place and Sustainable Urban Areas. Brian Deal, Professor of Architecture, University of Illinois.

All lectures are free and open to the public at Latzer Hall at the University YMCA, 1001 South Wright Street, Champaign, 12:00 to 1:30. Voice 337-1500

SPEAK CAPE (OPEN MIC/POETRY SET)

Nov. 12, 7-9pm. Theme: “SPEAK 4 YA SELF.” Kranzett Art Museum (500 E. Peabody)
The Really, REALLY Free Market Comes to C-U
By Laurel Nobilette

Imagine stumbling into the park to find what looks like a festival, picnic, yard sale, or all of the above. Hungry and low on funds, you ask a kindly merchant, "How much for this food?" They reply, "It's free. Everything here is free." Your heart sinks and you die of shock. How much for this food? It's free. Everything here is free.

The Really Really Free Market, held Saturday October 10th at West Side Park, aimed as a shift from daily life being dictated by the market to life dictating to the mar- ket. Adding Really Really as a challenge to the popular notion of free market capitalism, where the only freedom realized is for a small group of people to gain enormous wealth at the expense and by the exploitation of the majority.

At the Really Really Free Market, there were no profits. No money was exchanged, no bartering or haggling. People brought food, skills, and goods for the sharing. The spirit of "Give what you can, take what you need" dominated. A variety of books covered the ground. A delicious spread of food, provided by Food Not Bombs, et al., was enjoyed by attendees. Clothes were mixed with dinner plates. Some talented young men serenaded the crowd with music, while someone offered free bike repairs. Haircuts and cute dogs abounded. Community was under construction. Relationships were strengthened through celebration and conversation rather than being mediated by money. Motivation to interact was not profit-driven.

A market is not free when individuals are coerced by deprivation to take part in a system that exploits them in order to acquire resources, and when distribution is controlled not by need but by purchasing power. One's ability to gain purchasing power is also restricted by the same system. The sale of labor is not determined by the laborer, nor does it guarantee that the basic needs of the laborer will be met.

Shifting to a system that, in the words of Karl Polanyi, is built upon redistribution and reciprocity, and the concept of gift economies, is the driving force behind events like the RRFM or Food Not Bombs. In this idealized system, giving freely is a virtue, and generosity is a heavily emphasized social obligation. Communities and the individuals within work to ensure that everyone's individual needs are met, and personalism is more important than personal economic interest. Call it reciprocal altruism, if you will, I call it love.

Get Involved with the Public i
You don't need a degree in journalism to be a citizen journalist. We are all experts in something, and we have the ability to share our information and knowledge with others. The Public i is always looking for writers and story ideas. We invite you to submit ideas or proposals during our weekly meetings (Thursdays at 5:30pm at the UCIMC), or to contact one of the editors.

GEO Update
By Rich Potter

Despite having worked for over two months under the terms of an expired contract, the Graduate Employees’ Organization (GEO) continues to seek a negotiated agreement over the terms of their new contract. The GEO platform includes a living wage, tuition waiver, security, and better coverage of health care and child care.

The GEO advocates for greater access to education and support from the University, and the University has claimed that the University cannot afford to provide a $16,086 living wage and health benefits. The GEO continues to seek a negotiated agreement over the terms of their new contract (GEO).

The University of Illinois has recorded an increase of 10.2% in investment income from the endowment, resulting in revenue growth of 14.5%. Investment income from the University’s endowment rose 5%. Former President Joe White, who collected $550,000 for his work during the 07-08 academic year, has stated that the endowment has performed better than expected during the recession. Fiscal year (FY) 2009 was among the most lucrative of the University’s 142-year history, representing a 2.6% increase from 2008.

Overall, the campus budget increased $103 million, or 7%, in FY 2009. However, the percentage of the budget directed to instruction rose only 0.8%. At the same time, the Chief Information Officer’s budget rose by 10.9% and the Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement saw an increase of 13.1%. “Other Administrative Units” recorded an increase of 10.2%.

The GEO advocates for greater access to public higher education for all and stands in solidarity with campus and local laborers. Learn more at uigeo.org.