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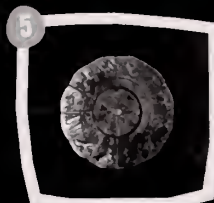
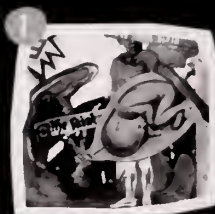
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PRINTING

Westcan Printing Group
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
Phone: 866-669-9914

Clamor is a bi-monthly magazine. Single copies are \$4.50 ppd and 6 issue subscriptions are \$18 ppd in the US (Outside of the US single issues are \$6 and a 6-issue subscription is \$25 in US Funds) Checks may be made payable to Become The Media

BACK ISSUES

Available for \$3.50 + postage
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DISTRIBUTION

Clamor is distributed to stores and distributors by Big Top Newsstand Services, 2729 Mission Street Suite 201, San Francisco, CA 94110-3131 info@bigtoppubs.com

Clamor is also available through these fine distribution outlets: AK Press, Armadillo, Desert Moon, Doormouse, Gordon & Gotch, Ingram, IPD, Kent News, Last Gasp, Media Solutions, Milligan, One Source, Small Changes, Stickfigure, Tower, and Ubiquity

Clamor (ISSN 15-34-9489) is published six times a year (Jan/Feb, Mar/Apr, May/Jun, Jul/Aug, Sept/Oct, Nov/Dec) ©2004 in the US by Become The Media Incorporated | PO Box 20128 Toledo, OH 43610 | Phone: 419 243 4688

Postmaster: Send address changes to
Clamor Magazine
PO Box 20128
Toledo, OH 43610

Periodicals postage paid at Toledo, OH

from your editors

Community is one of those words we use all the time without really thinking about it. Community organizing. Community media. "The local community." We know it's good, but what else do we really know? So we asked ourselves, our readers, and our contributors — our community — to examine the ideal, feel, and sense of community — what it is, what it should be, and what we want it to be. This issue is also about reclaiming the word and idea of community for ourselves. All too often ideas of "community" are thrown around by corporations like Saturn and Wal-Mart who, despite their million-dollar ad campaign claims, haven't the slightest interest in building cooperative connections between people.

The answers here show how differently people understand it. From helping displaced people retain a sense of connection and dignity like *Nah We Yone* (p. 32), to strengthening the labor union movement at Brown University (p. 12), to changing the way we grow, buy, and sell food (p. 8), we've only been able to scratch the surface of where and how connections are built in our everyday lives.

Community building inherently involves supporting one another in our endeavors. So it seems timely that we chose this issue introduce a new regular feature of *Clamor* called "murmurs." Murmurs will feature reviews of print, audio, and video/dvd projects that we think are worth checking out. This section allow us to expand an element that so many readers have told us is one of the most valuable things *Clamor* has to offer. We hope you agree.

Finally, this issue is going to press before the presidential election. While it's not clear who will win that contest, it is clear that many of our struggles will continue no matter who is elected. The fights for dignity, strength, and autonomy for individuals and communities seem more urgent now than ever. Our role at *Clamor* is to support you in your work by providing a forum to celebrate victories, share ideas and inspiration, and remind you that another world is possible.

Thank you for everything you do to contribute to your community and to make the world a better place.

And thanks for reading *Clamor*!



PS: Each year at this time, we offer a gift subscriptions to help spread the "clamor" to the people you love the most. Take us up on the discount and get your holiday shopping done early!

mission

Clamor's mission is to provide a media outlet that reflects the reality of alternative politics and culture in a format that is accessible to people from a variety of backgrounds. *Clamor* exists to fill the voids left by mainstream media. We recognize and celebrate the fact that each of us can and should participate in media, politics, and culture. We publish writing and art that exemplify the value we place on autonomy, creativity, exploration, and cooperation. *Clamor* is an advocate of progressive social change through active creation of political and cultural alternatives

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COSBY-FYING HIP HOP?

I know that activists have been trying to move beyond punk rock, but when I read some of the recent articles you published about other music scenes and subcultures (hip-hop in particular), I wonder what the point is. Maybe it's not punk-rock but the people in the last two articles by j-love are just the same overly educated, spacey, hippy activist types that you meet all over the activist subculture. Come on! They're talking about taking drugs to have spiritual experiences and talking to trees. What's the point of looking at other subcultures if you're just gonna talk to the same generic types of people who try too hard to sound like they're all knowing and in touch with everything?

Now I'll admit I'm not a huge hip-hop fan, but I've been around it enough to know that it's like a lot of other subculture's out there. It came from working class roots and reflected on the harsh realities of life from a class perspective. Hip-hop shares with it a lot of the good things about country, and hard-core/punk. J-love's articles don't acknowledge this. Class conflict just gets blocked out with the middle class face of a bunch of young urban, educated professionals. In other words, I have never seen a picture of hip-hop as Bill Cosby'd up as this.

Joe Levasseur
Philadelphia, PA

CHILDFREE? FREE, CHILD!

I had strong reactions to Amy Gustin's "Childfree," *Clamor Communique* #48.

Ms. Gustin makes good points about limited resources being taxed by overpopulation. Yes, we in industrialized nations abuse and overuse nearly every resource available, no news there. I was amused by her story about fleeing her urban environment for rural northern California. I'm from there; my family left, in part, because the area became too crowded with invaders like Ms. Gustin. For me, this begs the question; how can she approve of her parents' choice to have her (which, since she hasn't killed herself in protest, I assume she must), and not of the same choice made by anyone else?

She writes from a position of privilege, which she would deny others. I agree that living child-free is a wonderful option for any human being, and encourage anyone who doesn't want children to not have them. Like the sappy bumper sticker says, a world of wanted children would make a world of difference. Still, I urge Ms. Gustin to keep her moralistic judgments about our purported motivations for having children to herself, she may not view the

decision to bring more humans into existence in such a benign light," but the straw man justifications she proposes hardly serve to fully explain the very human desire to procreate. Such "holier than thou" moralizing is reminiscent of other fundamentalisms, and just as worthless.

Ms. Gustin makes another wild generalization, which reveals the limitations of her polarized viewpoint; "Raising a child reproduces your culture." She goes on to say that, no matter what ideas we try to instill in children, they're still part of our big bad destructive culture, and she decries giving that culture a "new recruit." Apparently, we are powerless to change anything.

Such fatalism is disturbing. Looking to the future, would we rather have *Clamor* readers reproducing those ideas and principles we (to greater or lesser degrees) share, or Fox News watchers reproducing theirs? If we abandon the future to children raised specifically in support of that destructive hegemonic culture, why not give up now, head down to the mall and get a job at McDonald's?

Of course, Ms. Gustin is partially right; children do adopt those aspects of our culture(s!) which we model for them. My son is a witty little vegetarian who enjoys gardening, playing guitar, ice hockey, building models, cooking, dancing and reading out loud. He thinks violent video games are silly, doesn't like to waste food, thinks solar energy is pretty cool, loves Michael Franti of Spearhead, and knows that no matter what you do around some people, they'll still be jerks.

I think these are fine attitudes to reproduce in our shared culture. If my son didn't exist, if we'd thrust our pessimistic heads in the sand with the author and said "It's really tough to raise a child who can improve our culture and the world in general, so let's just not try," there would be one less voice for such pursuits and attitudes in the future. Her bleak prognostications about misuse of resources would become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Her points about the additional freedoms available to those without children, and the challenge offered to societally-programmed and sanctioned motherhood, are well taken. Having children is definitely not for everyone, but it's also not necessarily evil, wasteful, or destructive to do so.

A proud parent of a kid who in all likelihood will be cooler than me,
Bruce Bullis
San Jose, CA

WE SUBSCRIBE TO WHAT?

In response to the "Stop Bush" issue

On 1-8-2003 I sent you check no. ##### for your magazine. I am really so very sorry. That magazine is the most disgusting thing I've seen in a long time. This is a public office that deals with children — a state government office. We'll burn the ones we have — don't send any more. You are a group of hate publishers.

Florence E Dillallo
Friends of Homer Health Center
Homer, AK

PROBLEM IS BIGGER THAN BUSH

I can understand why you had cancellations due to your "Stop Bush." Issue (*ed. see above*). In the eyes of many Bush has become sort of an annoyance in perspective — compared to the massive rotting and now centuries old infrastructure of U. S. politics, not new and not progressive — that allowed him into power. Andrew Jackson faced similar challenges to his administration did he not? Perhaps many Americans are beginning to realize that the whole "Stop Bush" thing is just part of the cult-of-personality trend that characterizes, sadly, these U. S. presidential elections — and yet leaves us with the same nagging social ills administration after boring administration. Perhaps some of your readers — if not the one who cancelled his or her subscription — are beginning to see that the problems are deeper than stopping one man. Perhaps they are aware of the hand of conspiracy that is being played as two graduates from the Skull and Bones organization vie for the top spot in U. S. politics — as if they were pretending to have different moral agendas — just to create the illusion of contrast to placate American voters. What is really developing is the fact that Constitutional Republic, a concept as hoary and situated as the place of Plato in the philosophical tomes of Western political thought, has yet to really allow Democracy to happen while screaming that that is in fact what it is — not democracy but Constitutional Republic. It's a deeper issue — what IS democracy, in a world where people globally celebrate victories for democracy in places named "Republic of —" and two similar candidates with backgrounds so similar that people have generally brushed over their fellowship in the Skull and Bones out of fear? Respect?

Mikal Howard
Philadelphia, PA

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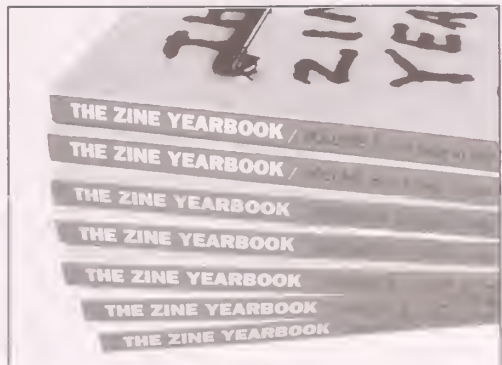
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PO Box 20128
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- 4) Repeat with every good zine you come across the rest of the year. Get your nominations in to us by February 1, 2005.

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The Revolution of Everyday Life

featuring insights, witticisms, audio clips, and pretty pictures from the hardworking editors at Clamor HQ.

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above: one of Rainbow's workers (and owners!) stocks produce — most of which is organic

Doing What Comes

Naturally

San Francisco's Rainbow Grocery Cooperative
nears its 30th Anniversary providing natural,
organic foods in an environment owned and
operated by its workers.

words: Gordon Edgar
photos: Sarah Pyle

Food and its distribution have been the spark for more riots, revolutions, and political movements than anything else you can name. Still, in a rich country such as ours, food can ebb and flow as a political issue. The mid-1970s, however, was a time when food was in the forefront of many people's political work. Rainbow Grocery Cooperative started as part of an ambitious food system in 1975 that sought to incorporate collective stores, producers, and distributors into one big counter-cultural network that would destroy corporate agribusiness by providing healthier, less processed, cheaper food alternatives.

While almost all of the food collectives that made up that network have collapsed over the last 30 years, Rainbow has survived, becoming the largest natural foods store in the San Francisco Bay Area. It has gone from an all-volunteer staff to a 200-person worker cooperative, still dealing with the ongoing issues of how to best support its community — and who their community actually is.



Economic Power

As a worker cooperative — rather than a consumer cooperative — Rainbow's workers make all the decisions. There are no community "members." There are also no managers. Big decisions are made by the worker membership as a whole or by the worker-elected Board of Directors. Day-to-day decisions are made by individual departments, which oversee specific areas of the store like produce, vitamins, cashiering, and maintenance.

The first way that many Rainbow workers identify their coop as serving the community is by creating stable jobs.

"I appreciate having a living wage, amazing health insurance for myself and my partner, and the opportunity to be involved in the direction and development of my business," said Francine Madrid, a Rainbow worker-owner recently elected to the store's donation committee.

"Some cooperatives see their basic mission as returning the profits extracted from labor to those who created them. This is very important, as traditionally secure working-class jobs are being exported beyond the US's borders," says Joan S.M. Meyers, a Ph.D. candidate in sociology who studies democratic workplaces. "In theory, worker-ownership of businesses can create stable, well-paying jobs that allow people to return to their communities with the economic means to enjoy them — money to pay rent, buy food and entertainment, even buy houses — without professional degrees or inherited wealth."

The way that Rainbow operates also makes for good jobs, not just stable ones. Sarah Jarmon, a worker-owner who has also

served on the donations and grants committees says, "I appreciate that Rainbow has been able to remain as a democratic workplace, even as the store expands and the economic climate is not friendly to independent grocery stores."

Who Gets Served?

Outside of the economic benefits to their worker-owners, the other huge benefit of coops is the goods or services that they physically provide to the community.

The biggest and most obvious example of Rainbow's support for the larger community is providing natural food, supplements, and health information to the Bay Area. In addition to running the grocery, Rainbow workers were involved with helping set the original California state organic standards in the '80s and have been committed to helping small and local farmers and producers survive in an era that is hostile to their existence. All of this is needed to help bring fresh and healthy food to an urban population.

Of course, Rainbow Grocery's customer base and its worker-owner makeup are directly tied to the question of whom within the "larger community" all these efforts serve. As with many other food-based coops around the country, Rainbow's original base of customers and workers tended to be counter-cultural — and not reflective of the demographics of the city or even surrounding the neighborhood as a whole. In recent years, effort has been made to change this, by developing an internal anti-oppression training and by hiring more people of color. These steps have brought in some new customers, expanding

the number of people who benefit from Rainbow's distribution of good food. They have also had a significant effect on Rainbow's support for organizations that were not previously as closely linked with organic foods and worker coops.

"As our work force gets more culturally diverse, those people tend to want to reach out to their particular communities. I feel like I have the opportunity and responsibility to give financial assistance to the communities I identify with — women of color, urban Native American, Xicano. Rainbow empowers me to help my community in a way that can really be perceived," says Madrid.

Beyond being a conscientious grocery store, Rainbow budgets about 4 percent of its profit for donations and grants. These range from paying for food shipped directly to soup kitchens, to support of tenant-rights organizations, to grants to help people start other cooperatives (even ones that could be seen as competition by a traditional capitalist businesses).

Food Politics, Workplace Politics

Rainbow has also displayed its solidarity with others within the grocery business. People's Grocery is a mobile market meant to serve parts of Oakland without grocery stores that sell fresh produce and healthy foods. Rainbow gave them a grant of \$10,000 to get started and has conducted some trainings while struggling with finding the best way to share its skills with others.

Brahm Ahmadi, community organizer and one of People's Grocery's founders, says, "At a certain point in my work as an organizer

primarily focused on local economic development, self-reliance, and self-determination in the community of West Oakland, I recognized the important and empowering role of worker ownership and cooperative workplaces. . . I approached Rainbow seeking assistance in developing a cooperative in my community. Rainbow was very responsive to the idea and has been a committed partner ever since, lending invaluable time, experience, and knowledge in all matters of our cooperative development. I believe that Rainbow's partnership and support has significantly moved us along the path towards launching our own cooperative."

The People's Grocery organizers are part of the growing "food security" movement which, by bringing issues of class and race into discussions of healthy and organic food, tries to address who can take advantage of food systems that are less damaging to individuals and the planet. Members of the Bay Area's active food security community have many other projects getting started as well, including a storefront Soul Foods Coop grocery store.

This is an area where some Rainbow workers admit they could be doing a better job beyond just sponsoring others to do the work.

"I'd like to see more outreach to communities of color and let them know we're here for them. Let them know there is an alternative to shitty food and bad health that

are killing people of color," says Madrid. "I'd like to see Rainbow giving more educational outreach to these communities in regards to food politics and how it affects them."

Rainbow has started a "Coop Committee" to field the calls of people interested in starting coops, to help organize the worker-coop community, and to do some kinds of technical assistance where they can.

"Rainbow Grocery is an important leader in the Bay Area — as well as U.S. — worker cooperative movement," says Tim Huet, cooperative developer, attorney, and member of the Association of Arizmendi Cooperatives. "I have had dozens of people approach me wanting to start a worker cooperative after having encountered the inspiring example of Rainbow's strong community and financial success. The vitality of Rainbow's collective model has served as an important resource and inspiration for the larger cooperative movement."

Though not a union shop, some Rainbow workers also took voluntary payroll deductions to be sent to striking Southern California grocery workers during their region-wide strike to preserve their health benefits last winter. Rainbow workers plan to do the same if the Northern California locals strike this fall.

Rainbow's grants committee also gave a grant to the "Young Workers" group of Unit-

ed Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) members, who organize political and cultural events locally.

Jarmon, who helped coordinate this support, sees the importance of not forgetting the "worker" part of worker/owner. "The union hall is four blocks from us. I was able to walk over there and give the organizer the cheek. I think the main point is that even though we aren't unionized, we understand the solidarity between workers in the same sector. The grocery industry is crucial to the functioning of the country. At Rainbow we appreciate our workers, and feel that all grocery workers should receive that kind of treatment."

Beyond food politics, the Coop Committee also works with groups of people who want to start pretty much any kind of coop. It helped the workers at The Lusty Lady, who recently bought their peep show business from the owner who was going to close it. And it helps existing coops with trainings on skills like conflict mediation.

As evidenced by an increasing budget and an increasing workload, Rainbow is showing a commitment to community empowerment through coop development that it did not previously have.

"I don't think cooperatives necessarily need to have an *explicit* goal of community building. There's a very interesting 'social dividend' that comes out of worker-owned





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businesses that decentralize decision-making and are structured around participatory democracy in terms of control: *power*," says Meyers. "In order for the business to work, members need to treat each other — and be treated by each other — with a level of respect for their autonomy and knowledge... [This social dividend] draws people back into social hours between all their weird jobs... and underwrites community-building activities with the pleasure of engaging in mutual-ity and empowerment with people you like."

"It's part of Rainbow's mission statement to help other worker coops," says Kirsten Marshall, a Rainbow worker/owner, member of the Coop Committee, and elected member of the newly founded US Federation of Worker Cooperatives and Democratic Workplaces. "This is important because we realize we at

Rainbow enjoy the privilege of being part of a democratic workplace and want to help create that for as many people as possible. I think worker-coops taking over the world will help create social and economic justice. I wanna help make that happen." ☆

Gordon Edgar has been the cheese buyer at Rainbow Grocery Cooperative for over ten years. He attends roughly the same number of cheese conferences and worker-coop conferences. His writing has appeared in places such as The Anderson Valley Advertiser, Maximum RoeknRoll, and Peko Peko. Gordon can be reached at gorzola@yahoo.com. More information about Rainbow Grocery can be found at www.rainbowgrocery.coop.

Economics has its roots in the Greek word *oikonomos* or management of a household. In the past, the household in Greek society consisted of a large kinship group or community of extended family members who shared collective responsibility and fruits of their labor. In fact, in most societies, harvests were traditionally shared according to strict customs that allowed for the survival of the community as a whole; justice was a family affair; and property was inalienable from the family. Only in recent times has the fundamental unit of economics switched from the community to the individual.

-Marianne Elizabeth Love

DEMOCRACY AT WORK

Burt Berlowe

Even as the policies of the Bush administration threaten American democracy and economic stability, an eclectic, expanding array of small businesses around the country are increasingly exercising people power. There are currently hundreds of democratically run cooperatives in the United States, ranging from small shops to large businesses.

Contrary to popular belief, worker co-ops are not limited to grocery stores and bakeries. They include steel mills and computer firms, cab companies and restaurants, even a sex toy retailer, tanning salon, and exotic dancing club. What they share is a commitment to economic democracy through worker control: a socialist concept adapted to our capitalistic times.

This spring, nearly 100 representatives from worker-owned and -operated businesses across the country converged in Cedar-Riverside, Minneapolis, for their first national conference. Their goal was not only to meet and share advice, but to create a permanent coalition to help strengthen their existing businesses and spark the formation of new worker co-ops.

During a conference business session, attendees approved the formation of a coalition and named it the U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives and Democratic Workplaces. They set up a preliminary structure and made plans to finish the job. The federation delegates came up with several main objectives, including providing training and networking for co-ops and collectives, collaborating with academic institutions, and working on legislation that will benefit members.

"Our basic goal is to spread the movement," said Tom Pierson, a worker-owner at the local Seward Café and one of the conference organizers. "But we need to be strong first so that we can be an example for others to emulate... Everyone working towards economic democracy in this country and world is part of this movement, but they are not all coordinated... Nevertheless, the worker cooperative movement

is growing. Worker co-ops are the strongest they have ever been."

Hilary Abell, the executive director of a nonprofit co-op-development organization from the Oakland-Berkeley area, found the gathering, "Exciting and historic, a chance to celebrate the creating of more power, an expanding of the movement." Abell's organization, Women's Action to Gain Economic Security (WAGES), helps Latina immigrants create worker cooperatives that provide a living wage and decent benefits, while helping to nurture leadership skills within the community.

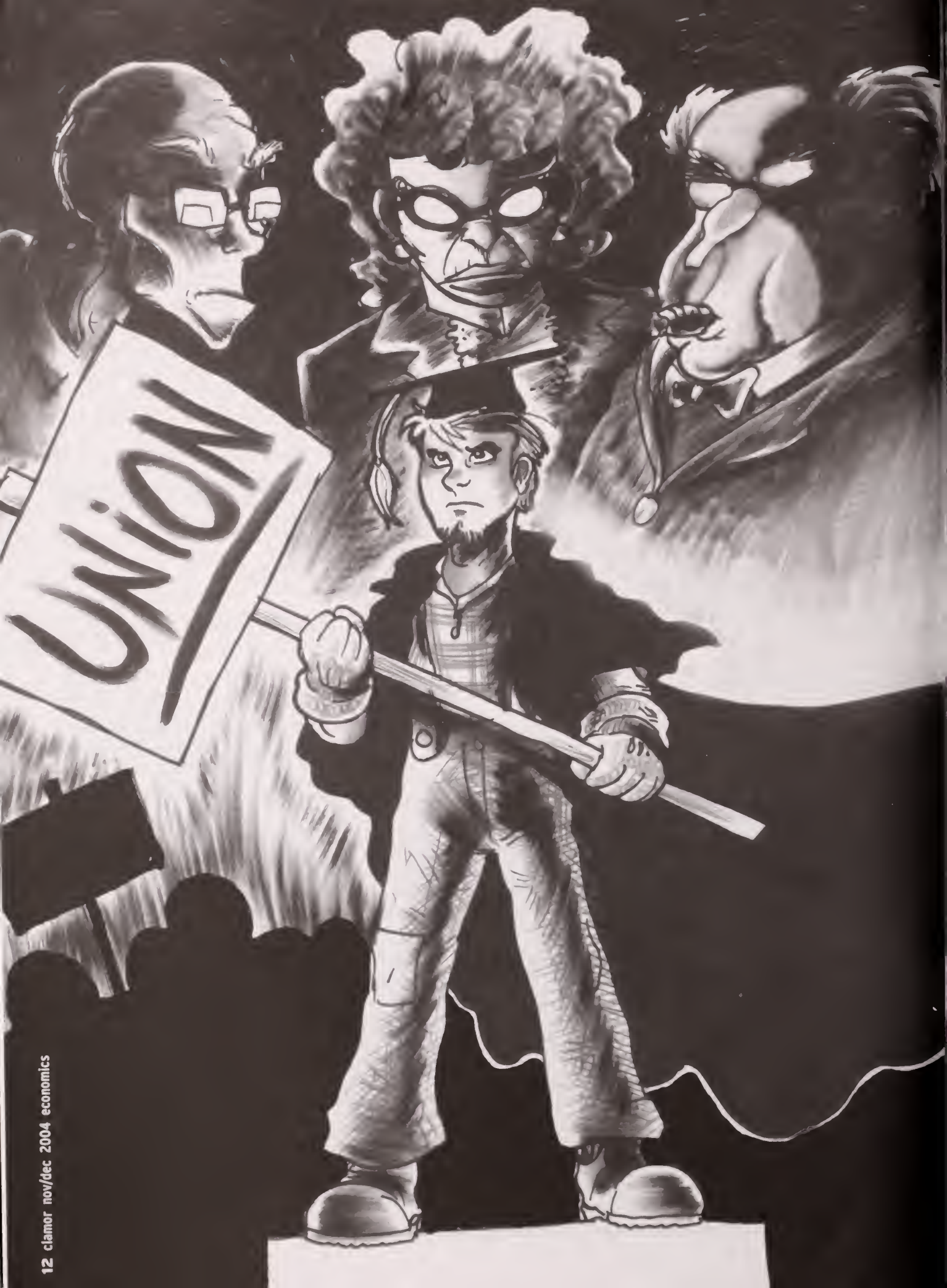
"We [worker co-ops] all provide democratic values and practices and are more concerned about those principles than about making money," Abell said. "This is part of broader movement towards a more sustainable economy and a community building process."

"I was very excited and impressed by the conference," said Jessica Gordon Nembhard, an associate professor and economist in the Afro-American Studies program at the University of Maryland who grew-up in a cooperative housing project in Pocomoke, New York. "The energy and amount of work that was done came close to achieving the goals of setting up an organization."

"Generally, economic democracy is not taught at colleges. It tends to be marginalized," says Gordon Nembhard. She is hopeful the new national federation will help change that trend.

At the moment, the Federation of Worker Cooperatives and Democratic Workplaces is continuing to develop its internal structure and processes and to plan for a second national event next year. For more information, please visit www.usworker.coop/contact.php. ☆

Burt Berlowe is a freelance writer, peace educator, and social change activist working out of his home in Minneapolis. His most recent book is The Compassionate Rebel: Energized by Anger, Motivated by Love, which contains profiles of 50 peace and justice activists. He is a member of the Seward Co-op in Minneapolis.



Brown University's Blow to the Graduate Student Union Movement

A Right Not Yet Secure

Chris Frazer came from his home in Calgary, Ontario, to attend graduate school in History at Brown University in the fall of 1997. Thirty-seven years old with a wife and two daughters, he was faced with the inability to support his family during his first year of school. First year students were not eligible for teaching assistantships, and as Canadians, neither Chris nor his wife was legally able to work outside of the university. To make matters worse, Frazer had to come up with \$2000 to pay for one year of the family health insurance plan that Brown made available to students. The health plan was "pitiful" in its coverage, he says, and without a dental plan.

In Frazer's second year, he received a teaching assistantship, but the \$12,000 stipend was far from enough to make ends meet. Frazer and another grad student formed a group called the Committee for Reasonable and Affordable Student Health (CRASH) to pressure the university to reduce the cost of the health plan.

The group quickly grew. "The response to CRASH was amazing," Frazer remembers. "It was quite clear that there was widespread dissatisfaction, and that it hadn't been brought to the surface before." By the end of the 1998-99 school year, the group had successfully pressured the university to defray a few hundred dollars of the health plan cost for each student.

Frazer was pleased with the change, but knew that graduate students at Brown could do better.

They needed a union. "Given the reluctance of the administration to even make changes with the health plan," he says, "and given our understanding that we could lose even what we had just gained, we decided that the best thing we could do was organize and compel them to bargain with us."

Frazer and other concerned graduate

students, many of whom were active in CRASH, started to hold meetings out of which the Brown Graduate Employees Organization (B GEO) was born. A few months later, they filed for an election with the regional labor board and began organizing their fellow students for a vote that would take place in December 2001.

The organizers found themselves unprepared for the harsh anti-union campaign waged by both a group of fellow students and by the university administration.

The Student Becomes the Teacher

Graduate employee unions have existed at state universities since the Teaching Assistants' Association (TAA) at the University of Wisconsin was granted recognition in 1969. Because labor issues at public schools are covered by state labor law, the battle for union recognition in state schools has had to be fought state by state.

Private schools, on the other hand, are covered by federal labor law. Up until 2000, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) refused to recognize the right of graduate students at private schools to form a union, contending in a few separate decisions — beginning with a 1974 case involving Stanford University — that grad students' relationship to the university was primarily educational rather than economic.

Over the next few decades, private universities began to take on a more corporate orientation, even as they continued to officially be non-profit agencies. The salaries of top university administrators began to resemble those of corporate CEOs (in 2002, the University of Pennsylvania's Judith Rodin received over \$800,000 in salary alone), while the pay of faculty and other staff stagnated. One important strategy to hold down labor costs has been increased dependence on the work of graduate students, not only as teaching assistants, but as the actual teachers. Between 1975 and 1995, the number of graduate students who are also faculty members rose 35 percent, according to the American Association of University Professors.

It became increasingly difficult for even the NLRB to deny the role of graduate students as university employees. In 2000, the

Words: Peter Ian Asen Illustration: Zack Giallongo

UNIVERSITY

Board overturned the Stanford precedent in a unanimous, bipartisan decision during a union drive at New York University (NYU). This emboldened graduate students at a number of other private universities — including Brown, Columbia, the University of Pennsylvania and Tufts — to forge ahead with their own organizing drives.

The movement received another boost in January of 2002, when NYU agreed to its first-ever contract with its graduate employees. The deal included stipend raises that for some reached nearly 40 percent, as well as increased health care benefits.

Organizing for Power

In February 2001, graduate students at Brown were flocking to the early organizing meetings due to frustrations with stagnant stipends, rising area rents, health insurance costs, and heavy workloads. Second-year History graduate student Jonathan Hagel attended his first BGEO meeting. “The amount of power that graduate students [individually] had to affect our living conditions was damn near zero,” Hagel says. Forming a union, students realized, was the surest way to change that power dynamic.

After discussions with a few different international unions, the BGEO decided to affiliate with the United Auto Workers. Though the academic workplace was outside their original jurisdiction, by 2001 the autoworkers’ union represented 15,000 graduate student employees at 15 universities, including the groundbreaking group at NYU. After affiliating with the Auto Workers, the BGEO began a drive to sign up their fellow graduate students on union cards and thus file for a union election.

A committed core of 20 graduate student organizers spent hours each week going department to department to convince their fellow teaching and research assistants to support the union effort and sign a union card. Of course, these student organizers also had to grade papers, lead sections, take classes, and prepare for graduate exams — not to mention research and write their own dissertations.

But BGEO members faced more than a limited amount of time and resources. They also faced a strong opposition to their union drive by a group of their fellow graduate students called *At What Cost?*

The early stages of the BGEO organizing drive were conducted in secret in order to build a base of support before provoking administration opposition. *At What Cost* criticized BGEO, characterizing the union effort as a “sort of clandestine plot to take over the university,” in the words of BGEO organizing committee member Sheyda Jahanbani.

In what Jahanbani calls “the ugliest manifestation of their campaign,” *At What Cost* began to question the alliance with the Auto Workers’ union, implying that a union of blue-collar manufacturing workers was beneath graduate students.

In retrospect, Hagel believes that BGEO did not take *At What Cost* seriously enough. “There was a decision made by the more idealistic of us,” Hagel says, “who said ‘Listen, people are smart. They know what’s going on. Let’s not even respond to these charges.’ That was a mistake.”

Meanwhile, the efforts of *At What Cost* were being bolstered by an anti-union campaign by Brown’s administration. The administration also played upon anti-union stereotypes, Chris Frazer says. “They portrayed us as goons and thugs. Right from the beginning they portrayed the UAW as an outsider coming in.”

The linchpin of Brown’s anti-union campaign was the new president, Ruth Simmons. Simmons held a dinner for graduate students in which she tried to talk them out of supporting the union, arguing that the students should give her time to make some positive changes at Brown. “A lot of people were seduced by the slogan that the administration put forward,” Frazer says, “which was basically, ‘Give Ruth a Chance.’ They used that very effectively to undermine the union campaign.”

Simmons promised that the concerns of graduate students would be resolved by administrators sitting down with the Graduate Student Council. And she defended her campaigning by saying that the university setting demanded a democratic, open debate.

But a week after the ballots were cast on December 6, Simmons threw all discussion of democracy aside. Brown filed a legal challenge denying that Brown graduate students even had the right to vote on unionizing, appealing the initial labor board decision that had allowed the vote to occur and beginning a tedious legal battle that would drain much of the momentum BGEO had built.

After the election, BGEO organizers understood that the best way forward was to keep the pressure on the university, and not let the issue fade away — after all, even if they won at the labor board, and won the election when the ballots were open, they would have to fight once again for a contract. But when they went out to organize, they found their fellow graduate students bruised from the nasty election campaign and tired of talking about the union. Jon Hagel remembers: “People would say, ‘I am a supporter, but regardless, the decision is in appeal. It’s not like we’re going to strike for recognition, so what is the point [of continuing to organize]?’”

Support for the union was also draining because the university had decided to improve graduate student working conditions. Brown increased stipends and suddenly decided to cover health insurance fully. By taking away some of the issues that BGEO organized around, Brown convinced some graduate students that there was no longer a need for a union and that their voices had been heard.

“Very simply,” Sheyda Jahanbani says, “they bought us out.” Jahanbani is glad that her stipend, once under \$12,000, has now risen to \$16,000, but she also knows that without a union, what the university has given can also be taken away.

In the face of all these challenges, BGEO members essentially lost their energy for organizing. Key organizers went away to do research or finish their dissertations; others graduated or dropped out of the organizing committee altogether. “A lot of us had to put off our work for the better part of a year,” Jahanbani says, “and we had expected that when the [election] campaign was over, we could return to our own lives.” Rather than finding new blood to keep the organizing committee running strong, the BGEO simply turned to waiting for a labor board decision. As the waiting game continued for two and a half long years, more and more of the graduate student body turned over, and the group’s base shrank.

The Labor Board Strikes Back

This July, BGEO’s drive to form a union was dealt a potentially deadly blow, when the NLRB ruled that the students do not have a right to form a union. In a 3-2 decision, the board sided with the Brown administration’s contention that the graduate students are primarily students rather than employees, and that they thus have no legally recognized right to form a union. The decision completely reversed the NYU decision of less than four years before and threatens to curtail organizing efforts at a half-dozen other private universities around the country.

Given BGEO’s loss of momentum and organization since the election more than two years ago, the labor board decision denying their right to organize could easily end the group’s union campaign. But Chris Frazer, who has since graduated and is now a professor in Canada, hopes that students at Brown and elsewhere will not take the labor board’s decision as the final word. “My fear,” he says, “is that people are going to want to wash their hands of it and not realize how important it is to fight this.”

Short of getting the board to overturn itself yet again, the only option left to BGEO and other groups organizing at private universities is to force their universities to accept a “card check.” This would involve organizing more than half of the eligible workers to

sign union cards, and then pressuring the university to recognize the union without NLRB intervention. This has occurred in some public school settings. In Massachusetts, the state labor board initially said that graduate students at UMass had no right to organize, but the union effort there trudged on and forced university recognition anyway.

"We hope we can convince universities that the card check system is inherently a democratic one," says Donna Becotte, an international representative for the UAW who has worked with the graduate assistants at Brown. "Unfortunately, universities have been turning to the corporate model, where they fight the union at any cost. So a recognition campaign is just as challenging as going through the labor board, although it may have a better result."

At Brown, the current state of the organizing effort makes such a pressure campaign highly unlikely, at least in the near future. The NLRB demanded that regional boards decide the cases of Columbia, Tufts, and Penn, which all also have locked up ballots, in accordance with the recent anti-union decision at Brown. However, graduate student union groups at some of these schools have, in Jon Hagel's words, "weathered the withering effects of time" better than BGEO.

At Penn, for instance, the Graduate Employees Together-UPenn (GET-UP) staged a two-day strike this February to protest the university's fight against their union. In a sign of GET-UP's continued strength, 83 percent of voting GET-UP members approved the strike.

At Tufts, Joe Ramsey, an organizing committee member for Association of Student Employees at Tufts (ASET), says that ASET's big mistake all along was to put so much stock in the NLRB, rather than simply organizing well enough to force a concession from Tufts. Ramsey says, "I think that's the lesson for us of this process is that you can't depend on these third-party agencies to help you. Certainly, we've endured the drag of a two-year waiting period."

During those two years, he says, ASET has tried to do more than wait. "We've done various things to keep our members conscious of workplace issues, and also try to keep them aware of issues at other campuses. But sure it's tough — it's tough because people graduate or maybe they're still finishing their dissertation but they're working two adjunct jobs in Boston."

For Ramsey, a fifth-year graduate student who has organized with ASET for years and who has a dissertation to finish, the idea of going back to square one must be exhausting. He maintains, however, that ASET has "kept a core of people still active" in spite of these challenges. "And I think that now that this decision's come down," he adds of the Brown case, "and even if the ballots [at Tufts] are thrown out, we're back on the ground again. We're back to where we were in fall of 2001, when we had a massive card drive and had a few hundred cards signed in a few months."

At Brown, not only have older organizers like Chris Frazer moved on, but younger folks like Sheyda Jahanbani and Jon Hagel are now fifth-year students. Thanks to a policy that has been instituted since the union drive, Jahanbani and Hagel have to focus on finishing their dissertations before the end of their sixth years, when Brown can cut off their access to teaching assistantships and funding.

The six-year funding limit is just one example of what BGEO organizers have said all along — the university might raise stipends and cut health care premiums, but without a union, it can also take things away. "For us, a union was basically about giving us some power over our working conditions," Jon Hagel says. "Though our living conditions have improved, the structural issues have not changed." ☆

Peter Ian Asen was a member of the Brown Student Labor Alliance, organizing fellow undergraduate students to encourage Brown to take a neutral — rather than negative — position towards the union drive. He now lives in Providence, Rhode Island, and can be reached at peterasen@gmail.com.

A Call for Action from Corporate U.

Kalamazoo, MI, like many other Midwestern cities, is experiencing the impacts of globalization. Over the past 15 years, the area has lost 3,000 manufacturing jobs and close to 1,000 high-end research scientists as the pharmaceutical giant Pfizer restructured its operations. Kalamazoo's poverty rate is 25 percent, and as Rick Stravers, director of Open Door Shelters states, "homeless shelters are literally overflowing."

Western Michigan University is the city's largest employer. As it increasingly adopts a corporate model of operation in which efficiency, speculative development and privatization become the guiding ethical principles, WMU contributes to the poor social conditions of many of Kalamazoo's residents.

In the spring of 2004, sixty unionized custodial jobs at WMU were outsourced to a private company, advertising positions paying a pathetic \$6.50-7.50/hr. The administration repeatedly asserted that this was an unfortunate but necessary action in order to keep costs low in a time of "budgetary crisis."

Tim Birch, President of American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) local 1668, which represents the custodians, sees the decision as ideologically, not fiscally, motivated. "The new contractor gave a proposal that described dramatically less work than what AFSCME provided WMU," he says. "We were not given a chance to bid on the same contract."

The custodial employees who lost their jobs at WMU were met with a complete lack of support. Recent outcry over the elimination of two financially draining sports teams at WMU was so impassioned that \$100,000 was raised in mere months, but the destruction of decent paying jobs and the creation of more poverty wages in Kalamazoo barely registered — especially among WMU faculty. Dr. Robert Ulin, Anthropology Department Chair, explains, "even though they have common interests, most faculty don't identify themselves as 'workers.'" However, many universities are phasing out faculty positions in favor of part time staff and Internet courses.

Over the past year, much of the comparative religion department at WMU was shut down. Religion is the type of humanities program that does not attract much outside corporate funding. Conversely, last fall WMU found the money to open a new engineering research park to the tune of nearly \$100 million.

If collective community action isn't taken against the corporate leanings of universities, it is not unlikely that many will soon be invoking a less horrific version of Martin Niemoller's famous anti-Nazi lament... First they came for the janitors, and I didn't speak up, because I wasn't a janitor. Then they came for the humanities faculty, but I didn't speak up, because I wasn't a humanities professor... ☆

-Boone Shear

Food Not Bombs

by Lara Stewart and Charles Suggs

Serves Up a Victory in Tampa

“I’ll get up when everyone has had enough to eat,” 19-year-old activist Jimmy Dunson told the police, refusing their order to pick up and leave.

Dunson was the lone person distributing food to the homeless in Herman C. Massey Park that day. Other Food Not Bombs members had been arrested for doing the same thing the weekend before as part of a crackdown by the Tampa Police Department. Like many other cities throughout the United States, feeding the homeless without special permits is illegal in Tampa.

“You can feed the damned pigeons but you can’t feed the homeless,” shouted Charles Hinkle, one of the homeless eating at the park, throwing bagel crumbs to the birds as the police took Dunson away.

Food Not Bombs (FNB) is a name used internationally by people connected through shared principles. The group has no formal charter; like-minded activists anywhere can form their own FNB just by showing up. The one thing all FNB groups share in common is their distribution of free, nutritious food.

According to the Hillsborough County Homeless Coalition, there are as many as 6,500 homeless in and around Tampa. The latest FNB incarnation in the city came together in November 2003 during a high-energy meeting following protests against the FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas) in Miami. One of the explicit goals of the group was to combat a Tampa ordinance that prohibited serving food in public parks without a permit.

In all, six activists were arrested over a two-month period this year for serving food in downtown Tampa. Lily Lewis, a FNB activist and president of the Student Environmental Association at Tampa’s University of South Florida, was arrested even after complying with police requests to leave. She reports being told, “This is what happens when you follow your morals,” by one of the arresting police sergeants.

After extensive reporting on the issue by the local Independent Media Center and community radio station WMNF, the corporate media began to take interest. TV crews showed up at the park during one FNB picnic, along with solidarity protesters from homeless advocacy and church groups, but the police were nowhere to be found. “Either

they forgot to set their clocks, or they’re not coming,” said one attendee.

When several activists appeared in court following their arrests, 20 protesters stood outside serving food to passersby, playing music and gathering petition signatures to change the Tampa ordinance. Some people had traveled from as far away as Gainesville to show their support.

As pro bono lawyers defending some of the activists planned how to best challenge the constitutionality of the ordinance, and as other strategies were discussed and support rallied, the city decided to drop all of the charges without fanfare in May 2004. All fines and bail money were returned.

Fran Davin, Special Assistant to Tampa Mayor Pam Iorio, says that the charges were dropped because the ordinance, which was last amended in 1978, needs to be rewritten. The city has agreed to update the law with Food Not Bombs’ input.

“I was impressed with the city for sitting down and trying to make it right, instead of defending ordinances that don’t serve their purpose,” said Mike Maddox, an attorney who represented some of the activists. “It’s noble of them.”

Still, Davin would not say whether Food Not Bombs would be able to continue using Massey Park when the new ordinance is enacted. “I will tell you this,” she said. “[The park] is undersized and under-equipped ... these parks have to be accessible and acceptable to all of the public.”

This spring, Mayor Iorio stated that feeding the homeless in public parks could have a chilling effect, preventing other people from using them. FNB activists point out that before their actions, Massey Park was a cold and desolate place used only by the homeless. They argue that their work has brought new people, increased use, and a sense of community to the park. ☆

Lara is a freelance writer whose work has appeared in several national publications. Charles is a journalism student at the University of South Florida in Tampa. They are both founding members of the Tampa Bay chapter of Indymedia and write and organize for the collective. Reach them at charles@tampaindymedia.org and lara@tampaindymedia.org



above: Mark Parrish (right) and Anthony Schmidt hold a Food Not Bombs banner across from Massey Park
above right: Jimmy Dunson is laid face down on the pavement for serving food to the homeless. Photos by Lara Stewart



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Legacies of

It happens somewhere in America almost every day. On Chicago's South Side, dozens of elderly folks gather outside the power company's gates before dawn to block utility trucks from going to shut off poor people's electricity and are arrested. In Los Angeles, African-American, Latino, and Korean bus riders, all wearing yellow t-shirts and chanting, march one week against poor public transportation, and the next against the war in Iraq.

Despite the supposed lack of class conflict in the United States, hardly a day passes without angry crowds of ordinary people confronting the elites whose decisions affect their lives. In organizing terminology, these groups are frequently called community-based organizations, or CBO's. From national networks like ACORN and the Industrial Areas Foundation to locally based groups like Direct Action for Rights and Equality in Providence or the Bus Riders' Union in Los Angeles, these groups share a particular set of organizing methods first developed in the 1930s.

words **Jim Straub**
photos **ACORN**



ACORN activists march in Los Angeles in June of 2004 against Wells Fargo and their predatory lending practices

A History of Community Based Organizations in the United States

Resistance

Although community organizing in the United States has many roots, historians frequently trace its modern genesis to a disgruntled social worker named Saul Alinsky. Born and raised in the slums of Chicago's south side, Alinsky led a colorful life during the early part of the century — brawling in Jewish-Polish gang fights, infiltrating Al Capone's crime family to write a sociology paper on it, and working as a state criminologist — before finding his true calling as a radical organizer in the 1930s.

Alinsky found himself drawn to “the causes that meant something in those days — fighting fascism at home and abroad and doing something to improve the life of the masses of people who were without jobs, food, or hope,” he reflected in an interview in the 1960s. The experience of revolutionary upheaval during the Great Depression inspired Alinsky to take things a step further. He moved back to his old south side neighborhood, the Packinghouse District immortalized by Upton Sinclair in his novel *The Jungle*, and started what he called “an organization of organizations.” Conceived as a community-wide coalition to fight for the needs of an impoverished, working-class neighborhood, the Back of the Yards Council managed to unite a poor, ethnically divided slum and score a number of surprising victories against meatpacking companies and the local government.

The larger significance of the Back of the Yards Council was that it was replicable: its strategy of uniting constituencies in a neighborhood around indigenous leadership and goals could be picked up and taken to almost any community in the country. Alinsky found himself being called around the United States to help start other community-based organizations. His brash style and the militant tactics of the groups he helped form won him suspicion and anger from local elites. The Kansas City police jailed him, while the Oakland City Council voted to ban him from the city altogether. Malcolm X, meanwhile, said, “that man knows more about organizing than any other person in the country.”

Alinsky's model called for a professional organizer to act as an outside agitator to unite existing local groups and build a membership base around issues the community felt were important. He emphasized militant confrontation against the power structure, but advocated flexibility in tactics and ideological relativism. “The question is not, ‘Does the end justify the means?’ The question is, ‘Does this particular end justify this particular means?’” he wrote in his organizing textbook *Reveille for Radicals*.

With such a flexible, pragmatic outlook, Alinsky-style groups found themselves free to use tactics ranging from protest mobs to company boycotts to one memorable “fart-in” at an opera in Rochester, New York. Alinsky extended this flexibility to politics, saying the organizer should not have an outside agenda, but should simply seek to facilitate what the people of a community already want.

This emphasis on developing the capacity and voice of local leaders and communities, however, took some strange turns. By supposedly not bringing outside values or politics to the organizations, some groups founded on the Alinsky method, such as his initial Back of the Yards Council, began using their organizations for unforeseen ends, such as keeping African Americans from moving into their neighborhood. And by downplaying issues of oppression and privilege likely to exist within organizations, many of these groups developed internal racial and gender hierarchies. Alinsky's own politics slid towards conservatism, going from fighting capitalism in Chicago in the 1930s to calling the Black Panthers “thugs” in the 1960s.

After Alinsky died in 1972, the groups that carried on with ideas he pioneered inhabited a complex and mixed legacy. On one hand, activists from the black, student, and women's movements used the Alinsky framework to craft organizations of people fighting in their collective self-interest. On the other, some liberal elites like Charles Silberman of *Fortune* magazine promoted Alinskian community organizing as a possible reformist al-

ternative to the tide of insurrection in America's ghettos and campuses. In the 1970s, the federal government actually began paying the salaries of some community organizers through the VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) program. This tension, between effective mass organizing and politically neutral clientelism, has existed in mainstream community organizing ever since.

The Development of ACORN

The best known descendent of this ambiguous organizing legacy emerged from the welfare rights struggles of the 1970s. At the time, the balance of power on welfare issues in Congress rested with the Arkansas representative Wilbur Mills, head of the House Ways and Means Committee. The National Welfare Rights Organization sent the young welfare rights organizer Wade Rathke to Arkansas to try to put together a popular challenge to this politician on his home turf. “I had never been to Arkansas, but it appealed in many ways,” Rathke said. “[The] majority of [the] population was low and moderate income, capital and largest city were the same and were centrally located, multi-racial organization was a necessity, and so forth.” The group Rathke built, which quickly became a major political power in Arkansas, went on to extend itself nationwide to become the largest and most well-known community organizing group in the country — the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, or ACORN.

ACORN moved away from Alinsky's approach of uniting existing organizations, and towards a model based on individual dues-paying memberships and intensive door-to-door recruitment. By perfecting this model, ACORN was able to grow further and faster than any comparable group, having today spread to more than a hundred cities with more than 200,000 dues-paying low and moderate-income members. With such a large base, ACORN has proved capable of winning a number of national campaigns on poor peoples' issues, squatting abandoned

buildings to demand affordable housing programs, and starting living wage campaigns in cities around the country.

Maude Hurd, ACORN's national president, describes their current national priorities as predatory lending, better schools, and living wages. Down at the grassroots level, individual neighborhood chapters organize and protest for anything from a new traffic light to better street sweeping — an approach to social change referred to either proudly or dismissively, depending on your perspective, as “stop-sign organizing.”

ACORN's growth model involves continuous membership recruitment. “Less effective groups can afford to depend on charitable foundations to fund their work. We can't,” ACORN lead organizer Jeff Ordower said. “We win battles against the bankers and businessmen who sit on the boards of grant-mak-

with the Newark Community Union Project [in the 60s], we had a major campaign around a stop sign ourselves.” But he adds, “when we did the stop sign work, we did try to bring people into a broader movement, including very active anti-Vietnam War work.”

In search of this radical but realistic model, the Strategy Center Mann works with founded the Los Angeles-based Bus Riders Union. The BRU now has more than 3,000 dues-paying members and 50,000 supporters who fight for better mass transit and public services in Los Angeles. It is also an explicitly radical, multilingual, majority people of color organization, and has won dozens of victories over the past decade. Unlike most community organizations, activists merge traditional campaign work (like protests against fare increases) with activities like popular education about the Palestinian struggle and marching



ACORN activists rally at the U.S. Capitol in March of 2004 to protest the Bush administration's education funding policies

“We win battles against the bankers and businessmen who sit on the boards of grant-making institutions. They're not going to fund an effective challenge to their power, so we have to get most of our funds right from our members.”

ing institutions. They're not going to fund an effective challenge to their power, so we have to get most of our funds right from our members.”

Young Activists Create New Models

But this model of recruitment-driven fundraising calls for a constantly growing pool of staff organizers who must work 50 or more hours a week, knocking doors for hours every day just to fund their own salary. The low wages — around \$20,000 a year to start — have led many to leave the organization, especially after ACORN leaders fought organizers' efforts to unionize and get better working conditions in Philadelphia, Seattle, and Dallas.

Criticism of ACORN extends beyond the workload it demands of its paid organizers to the ideology behind Alinsky's organizing model. For instance, a hallmark of mainstream community organizing is Alinsky's belief that organizers should be apolitical, simply facilitating what the community already wants, rather than bringing an outside ideology with them. Eric Mann, director of the Los Angeles-based Bus Riders Union, said such tactics are dishonest and manipulative, and believes it is the reason such groups often fail to take on bigger issues of corporate capitalism and imperialism. “We cannot build a movement based on isolated projects...without a transformative view of the world,” he said.

However, unlike some other radicals who demean “stop-sign organizing” as not sufficiently revolutionary, Mann is searching for a model between big-picture ideology and nuts-and-bolts victories. “When I worked

in anti-war and LGBT (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender) pride marches.

This bigger-picture outlook has attracted organizers like Kikanza Ramsey, who writes, “For my own sanity I needed to be part of something that would use my outrage at my people's oppression to make significant strides toward justice.” She adds, “The explicit anti-capitalist, antiracist, multiracial, pro-immigrant, feminist politics of the Labor/Community Strategy Center in Los Angeles attracted me as a way to ‘go back to my community.’”

Former BRU organizer Dave McClure states on the group's web site, “We were not ‘merely’ trying to win a better bus system for the half million bus riders in L.A. (as if that weren't big enough). I was also helping rebuild a left multiracial social movement led by working class people to transform mass transit, the economy, environmental policy, social services — major structures of society.”

This broader-based model has become an emerging trend in community organizing, especially in communities of color. Delgado, the historian of community organizing, wrote in *Beyond the Politics of Place*, a landmark mid-1990s survey of more than 6,000 CBOs, that many emerging local activists of color, not having access to organizing theories or past practices, have developed their own strategies. He writes, “These organizers had no roadmap or model. Nobody told them that community organizations were supposed to be strictly local and devoid of ideology.”

Delgado studied examples that broke the old mainstream Alinskian model, such as Native Action in Montana (where a person's group membership was part of tribal history,

side organizer sold door-to-door), and the Farm Labor Organizing Committee and Black Workers For Justice (both groups organizing workers in North Carolina). Delgado identified these groups' similarities — and differences from traditional Alinskian organizing — as being “a wider issue base, an analytical perspective grounded in race relations, and organizers indigenous to the community.”

Without a doubt, community organizing in the United States today has branched off in many directions. For all this revision and debate, however, the picture at the grassroots of people coming together to fight for justice often looks surprisingly similar no matter the context. From meatpacking families in Depression-era Chicago to contemporary bus riders in Southern California, the work of building peoples' power always involves long meetings in humble rooms, loud protests by ordinary people, and thousands of hours spent knocking doors or riding buses, spreading the word one person at a time. From this perspective, groups as diverse as ACORN, the Bus Riders Union, and Black Workers for Justice do all belong to the same tradition. A family tree that might fill its ancestor Saul Alinsky with surprise, and perhaps pride, and one that should certainly fill elites everywhere with fear. ☆

Jim Straub briefly worked as an organizer for ACORN in Philadelphia in 2000, but quit to do AIDS activism, accordions, anarchy and alliteration. He's presently moving from the south to the midwest for work as a union organizer. Email him at jmstraub@riseup.net to give feedback, order his zine, or tell him where he might find good coffee or bad pop-punk in Ohio.



Santa Anita La Union

Building Revolutionary Community in Guatemala

Santa Anita La Union's unique decision to run their organic coffee estate collectively was not difficult. During Guatemala's 36-year civil war, the community's members learned how to work together — whether from within the ranks of the guerilla group, the Revolutionary Organization of the People in Arms, or in refugee camps across the Mexican border where many fled persecution. Since 1998, the 160 members of Santa Anita from 33 ex-guerilla families in Guatemala have been making the transition from armed insurgents to a peacetime community.

words and photos **Caitlin Benedetto**



One of Santa Anita la Union's main streets with banana trees and volcanoes in the background

In the 1940s, after a period of military dictatorship, Guatemalans elected President Jacob Arbenz. He and his successor President Jose Arevalo instituted a land reform policy giving landless peasants shares of land from United Fruit, a U.S. banana company that owned 60 percent of the country's arable land. The United States enlisted the CIA to overthrow the government and made it look like an internal uprising and the conflict eventually led to civil war. Three guerilla groups formed and many guerillas were kidnapped and disappeared. The new regime also executed a "scorched earth" policy, killing all the people in indigenous villages and burning everything to the ground. In total, the war drove 100,000 people into exile in Mexico and at least 100,000 people into internal displacement, and left somewhere between 100,000 and 200,000 killed and 40,000 missing.



A community member diagramming the different wartime revolutionary groups and their connections

Santa Anita's members were left landless after the 1996 peace accords. Returning from a life of combat in the mountains, many ex-guerrillas and their families discovered that military personnel and civil auto-defense groups had taken over their former lands or relocated other farmers to the area.

A group of residents decided to purchase land from the government with the help of the Program for the Support of Incorporation of Ex-Guerrillas, a program sponsored by the European Union which was set up to promote projects that ex-combatants could rely on for economic support. They bought a *finca* (large estate) for 2,062,500 *quetzales* (over \$257,000) in 1998, with a 12 percent yearly interest rate and 10 years to pay off the debt.

The community decided to grow coffee because the *finca* already had some of the needed infrastructure in place for coffee production. Their land is in the country's best coffee-growing region. Guatemala's "boea costa," near the Pacific Coast.



Children at school in Santa Anita la Union

Santa Anita La Union's structure and values represent what the Guatemalan Revolutionary Unity movement fought to create for 36 years. All community members are invited to participate in the *Asamblea*, Santa Anita's highest decision-making body. Meetings can last days at a time. The *finca's* board of directors must always be 50 percent women. There is free health care and education for all, and they ensure that their products are organic and environmentally friendly.

Members of Santa Anita, speaking Spanish and four indigenous languages (Mam, Jacalteco, Quiche, and Sipakapense), hope to create a revolutionary community center incorporating the surrounding villages, thereby focusing not only on their own children's needs, but also on the needs of the greater rural Guatemalan population. Unlike other *fincas* in the area, this community has successfully built two schools, a medical clinic, and a library. Despite their poverty, Santa Anita's residents are discussing effective ways to make these resources available to the surrounding communities.



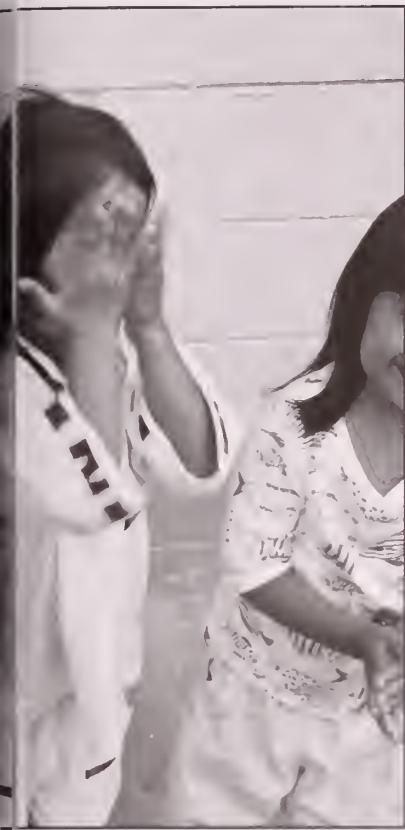
The sign leading into the community with the Guatemalan Revolutionary Unity (or URNG, an ex-guerrilla political party) symbol of corn on it

After selling the coffee locally for two years, the community switched to selling their product on the international fair trade market. Organic coffee sells on the fair trade market at \$141 per *quintal* (100 pounds), while the local market only provides 300 *quetzales* (\$37) per *quintal*. However, meeting all the regulations for organic certification was costly and discouraging. This past year's crop only paid for 10 months of the community's living expenses.

Even in this difficult situation, Santa Anita is faring much better than most agricultural villages in Guatemala. "The war may have failed to bring justice to the people of Guatemala, but at least here in Santa Anita it has succeeded," Rigoberto Agustin Ramirez said in his usual optimistic and spirited tone. Ramirez is on the current directive committee and fought in combat during the war.



Chavez and her five children in front of the coffee bushes behind their home



Jacobo Lopez left his wife and five children behind in Santa Anita to find work in the United States. He and his wife Angelina Chavez are worried about having enough money to pay for their children's education. The children are growing faster than the *finca* is. Each community member receives \$3.50 for a day's work. The community collectively covers water, electricity, and basic medical costs. Lopez, who is 50 years old, managed to get to the United States, but is having trouble finding work. He calls home every few days to let Chavez know how he is doing. Since there is no one in the family working on the *finca*, the family pays 200 *quetzales* (\$25) a month for the services generally covered collectively. Even though Chavez remains active in all community affairs, she says some of her companions treat her with disdain for letting her husband leave.



A community member unclogging pipes from one of the natural water sources on the *finca*

One of the auxiliary projects of the community is the development of agroecotourism on the *finca*. The people of Santa Anita want to take advantage of their identities as ex-combatants farming an organic product to help keep the *finca* financially afloat. Coffee and banana production remains the main focus, "because that is what puts food in our mouths today," Ramirez said.

In the long run, however, they have to expand to pay off debts. There is a rising level of urgency to pay off the debt because the government has started to throw other communities off *fincas* they cannot pay for. The kind of expansion that Santa Anita is working on would create job opportunities for the young people of the *finca* who are studying a wide range of professions, not just agriculture. It would also make it easier for them to sell their coffee.



The interment of the killed combatants

The aggression of the military during the war left innumerable mass graves in its wake. These graves are of both innocent villagers, victims of the scorched earth policy, and guerrilla combatants. The efforts to find these graves and identify the dead shape the consciousness of Guatemala and its national identity. On July 14, Santa Anita received the mortal remains of seven combatants who died 20 years ago. Their clandestine grave was only recently found in the Department

of San Marcos, where most of the ex-guerrillas of Santa Anita were in combat. Only one of the deceased was related to current Santa Anita residents, but the community took in all the remains because families did not claim them.

Many people were invited to the vigil that night and the mass burial the next day. The community bought food and *guaro* (a strong sugar cane liquor) for all the guests, and everyone had a place to sleep. Many community members spent the night drinking, crying, and sharing war stories while keeping vigil over the coffins.



Erik, a young boy at school

Another important reason to make the *finca* more open to foreign visitors, Ramirez said, is "to show the world that we are not trying to get out of working by asking for help. We ask for help internationally because our requests and needs fall on deaf ears with our government. We ask for help so we can realize our community vision."

You can reach Caitlin Benedetto care of info@clamormagazine.org

Up a River

Activists take to the water to save it.

Charles Winfrey

On a hot Saturday afternoon in July, pedestrians along the Nashville waterfront were treated to an unusual sight. Instead of a riverboat hauling another load of Music City tourists to Opryland, canoes and kayaks, a runabout or two, and even a sailboat peppered the dingy water. In the shadows of Titan Stadium, onlookers gathered to cheer the fleet of small craft — all bearing a message to Tennessee's governor — as they drifted past the downtown docks on the Cumberland River and moved to the opposite shore.

Both the welcoming committee and the boaters were made up of members of Save Our Cumberland Mountains (SOCM, pronounced "sock 'em") and the Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association. Across the river protesters unfurled a 50-foot banner that read, "Gov. Bredeesen, Don't Let Mining Turn Rocky Topless." Mountaintop strip mining for coal has come to Tennessee and SOCM, a group that has been battling the worst abuses of King Coal for over 30 years, is drawing a line in the sand.

Earlier this year, SOCM members stopped relying on regulators with the federal Office of Surface Mining (OSM) who they believe are bent on encouraging, not controlling, mountaintop mining. Instead, they decided to call on Tennessee's governor to order strict enforcement of the state's water quality law, a once-powerful weapon in efforts to protect streams from the effects of large-scale mining projects.

That's where the canoes come in. Since strip mine run-off in mountain streams often flows into the Cumberland River and eventually down to the state's capital, Nashville, SOCM members decided to put their message in a bottle.

Seven teams of paddlers carried a jug of silt-laden mine water 391 miles from Campbell County in the mountains of eastern Tennessee west to Nashville. In Kentucky, severe storms raked the river for three days and gale-force winds collapsed boaters' tents. After 16 days on the river, a hundred other boaters joined the last team for the final two miles into downtown Nashville. Bobby Clark, a SOCM member who lives without electricity or running water in his mountain home, traveled the entire 400 miles. Upon arrival, Clark presented the symbolic gallon of polluted water to Karen Stachowski, Deputy Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation.

Mountaintop mining may be new to Tennessee, where coal is generally of lower quality with limited demand, but it is old news in many areas of the Appalachian region. West

Virginians have struggled for years with its devastating effects, watching as streams rise to new levels with every spring flood, causing millions of dollars in damage. According to one report released by the group Coal River Mountain Watch, flooding destroyed over 1,600 West Virginia homes in 2001 alone. Many residents blamed the severity of the floods on the effect of mountaintop mining on watersheds. News reports in the *Charleston Gazette* and other papers placed the damage at over \$200 million in a half dozen coal counties.



Ann League speaks to the news media while canoes continue to arrive behind her in downtown Nashville. Photo by Puri Gere

In Tennessee, the coal industry and federal regulators call it "cross-ridge mining," referring to a difference in where the removed land is dumped. In West Virginia the practice has been to chop off the peaks of mountains to reach the coal and relocate the overlying rocks and soil to hollows and valleys below. Instead, in Tennessee, where dumping land directly into valleys is not allowed, the extra land called "overburden" is moved around and replaced on the flat bench that remains after the coal is removed.

SOCM activists, who suspect the change in terminology for this controversial mining technique is politically motivated, contends the overburden won't stay put. At a recent public hearing one speaker referred to the practice as "delayed hollow fill," insisting that the loose soil, once blasted from the mountaintop, will eventually wash or slide down into streams.

In 1999, opponents of mountaintop mining won a major victory when a U.S. District Court ruled that the practice of filling in streams with spoil from mountaintop mines violated the Clean Water Act. The decision was overturned on a technicality and an appeal is currently pending.

The Bush administration responded by proposing a rule change to eliminate a 21-

year-old restriction against dumping spoil within 100 feet of streams. Hundreds of citizens spoke out against the rule change at five public hearings in Washington and Appalachia, but their protests were ignored. A pre-Bush Department of Interior study revealed that, even with the 100-foot buffer zone, mountaintop mining has filled in over 700 miles — equivalent to the length of California — streams from 1985 to 2001. In 2003, a draft environmental impact study by the Department of Interior revealed that over 1,200 miles of streams have now been destroyed.

Other testimony at the public hearings focused on the human costs of mountaintop mining. One woman testified that her \$144,000 home has been devalued to a tenth of its original cost due to blasting and dust from a nearby mine. She and her neighbors in Sylvester, West Virginia successfully sued the company for damages but she said the community will never recover.

Tennessee's Department of Environment and Conservation was the only state agency to go on record as opposing the change in federal regulations to eliminate the buffer zone.

H. E. Hearn, president of the Tennessee Coal Association defends mountaintop mining as an efficient, environmentally sound way to get coal. "If you want your lights to come on, you better have coal mining," Hearn said. "The real issue is not mountaintop removal, it's valley fill. That's something that is not permitted in the state of Tennessee."

Valley fill may not be permitted, but SOCM contends that once federal inspectors begin ignoring the 100-foot buffer protecting streams, any mining that completely removes a mountaintop will have disastrous effects on water quality.

The first permit for a major mountaintop operation in Tennessee was approved last year. At a public hearing held in the community by the federal Office of Surface Mining all but one of the 30-plus speakers opposed the mine. Ignoring the protests, OSM granted the 2,000-acre permit to remove the top of Zeb Mountain. OSM and state water quality inspectors have since written up the mine for a number of water quality violations and temporarily closed it when the haul road collapsed into the valley below.

State officials insist that the current level of enforcement is adequate to protect water resources, yet on the very day that the SOCM fleet arrived in Nashville, the Water Quality Board lowered a fine against the Zeb Moun-

Unlikely Bedfellows?

tain operation from \$15,000 to \$5,250. SOCM members claim such treatment amounts to a slap on the wrist and only encourages future violations.

Meanwhile, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the region's major utility, announced plans last year to consider cross-ridge mining of nearly 60,000 acres of TVA-owned coal underlying the state's Royal Blue Wildlife Management Area. Most of that coal is in the watershed of the Big South Fork National River & Recreation Area. The Big South Fork carves a series of majestic canyons along its course from Tennessee into Kentucky, attracting over 750,000 visitors annually.

"The river is home to a number of sensitive species, including endangered mussels that are the first to be affected by a change in water quality," Don Barger, Southeastern Director of the National Parks Conservation Association, said. Concerned about the effect widespread mountaintop mining will have on water quality, Barger is anxiously awaiting the completion of a TVA environmental impact study in the fall. The agency proposes to remove coal from 13 separate mountain peaks in the Big South Fork watershed.

SOCM is aware that the 400-mile river relay is only the first step in what may prove to be a long battle. Tennessee's Governor Phil Bredesen told reporters that he knows nothing about the issue of mountaintop mining but is willing to discuss it.

"He may not realize it," Ann League, who lives near Zeb Mountain, said, "but the water that gets polluted by mountaintop removal here will end up in the Governor's back yard."

Holding up the jug of mine water, League added, "Nashville is about 400 river miles from here but it is where the problem of mountaintop removal eventually ends up. It is also where we want to see the solution come from."

Although neither had much experience in a canoe, League and neighbor Charles Blankenship wanted to do their part. They joined several veteran whitewater paddlers for the 35 miles of the Big South Fork from near their homes to Lake Cumberland in Kentucky.

It wasn't easy. Swollen by recent rains, the river was lively for this time of year. The group spent a backbreaking hour carrying canoes and gear around dangerous rapids, then encountered an unexpectedly rough section downstream. League's heavily loaded canoe took too much water and she ended up swimming.

"But we saved the water," League beamed as she held up the jug of polluted mine water, the precious cargo secured with rope to her canoe. ☆

Charles "Boomer" Winfrey is a longtime mountain activist and former organizer with Save Our Cumberland Mountains. For the past 23 years he has worked as an East Tennessee journalist and newspaper editor.

Nathan Berg mixed punk rock and politics and got the key to the city

I was born and raised in the small Wisconsin city of Chippewa Falls. While it was a charming place, surrounded by beautiful lakes and woods, it was not an exciting place to grow up. We had no movie theater, no all-ages hangout, no kid-based activities to speak of that weren't related to after-school events.

Despite this cultural emptiness — or perhaps because of it — I took a strong interest in the politics outside of my secluded little town. The more I learned, the more I came to challenge assumptions I was taught, not by my parents (though I challenged those too), but by my highly conservative, diversity-deprived surroundings. By my late teens, I was a vegetarian, anti-corporate, environmentally minded, punk music-listening political activist.

From afar, I had long admired activists around the United States who ran for political office as a means of protest. Some used the forum to bring issues to light that would have otherwise gone unmentioned. Others turned their campaigns into large-scale pranks they used to make a mockery of the election process itself. Both tactics seemed to be equally effective and entertaining. So when I noticed a blurb in our local newspaper about how no one had yet gotten on the ballot for my ward in our upcoming city council elections, I took notice.

However, it took the further convincing of my friends and family before I decided to run because, being unopposed, I was pretty much assured a victory. Two months later I was sworn in as alderman.

I soon realized that being a 22-year-old punk rock city council member in a conservative town was not nearly as cool as it might sound. The overwhelming majority of the city council's work was extremely mundane and non-controversial. I found myself sitting through two-hour long meetings about whether three parking spaces should change from four-hour to two-hour or whether to purchase a new chair for the city clerk's office.

When controversy did arise, as it did on occasion, I was continually outnumbered by my fellow council members and cast the lone vote on many issues. Our local newspaper, the only link between the public and the city council, also

refused to print almost anything serious that I said.

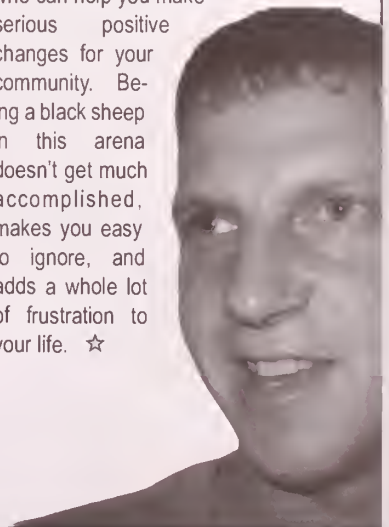
During my term, a few big issues came before the council. The state planned to convert a local treatment center for the developmentally disabled (which it had planned on closing) into a geriatric prison. Only two years earlier, Chippewa Falls' residents had voted against a Supermax prison in a city-wide referendum. Despite this, local officials were under pressure to convert the center into a prison to avoid the sting of lost jobs. After a lengthy battle, including one meeting where I had to give an anti-prison speech in front of hundreds of citizens, the call for a referendum was defeated 4-3 and the prison approved 5-2.

Victories were few and far between. At the end of my two-year term, a bike trail system and a skate park were about the only things I could safely list as accomplishments.

When people ask me what it was like to be on the Chippewa Falls City Council, I typically tell them, "I learned a lot," but that's only partially true. The biggest lessons were things that I already knew all too well: politics is yucky business, you can't trust the media, and ignorance is excessively prominent in our society.

While I would say the experience was mostly negative, it was interesting. I still believe that local government has the potential to be the most democratic form of government we have in this country. But if you're planning on running for local office yourself, make sure you have allies who can help you make

serious positive changes for your community. Being a black sheep in this arena doesn't get much accomplished, makes you easy to ignore, and adds a whole lot of frustration to your life. ☆





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dents and shells**



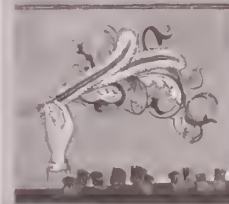
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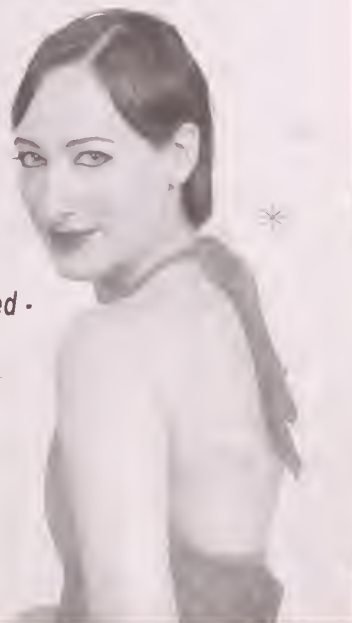
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SEEDS of POWER

2004 Jennifer Vandenplas
photos courtesy Growing Power

Settled amid rows of urban housing and apartment buildings on a busy thoroughfare of Milwaukee's north side is the Growing Power Community Food Center. What at first glance appears to be a modest roadside produce market and aging greenhouse — the last of its kind, standing in an area that was once the thriving agricultural center of the city known as Greenhouse Alley — is a pioneer meeting place and educational facility, committed not only to growing food but also to growing communities.

Nine years ago, Will Allen, a local farmer and co-director of Growing Power, Inc., tapped into a movement that was emerging from beneath the shadows of waxy apple towers and pallid wilted greens of mega-markets across the nation. However, the vision of providing a community-based education center was never a part of his original plan. "I bought this place for my own selfish reasons, to sell my farm produce," he explains. His main desire was to expose his family to the pride and integrity he associated with farming, as he had experienced it first-hand as a child growing up in rural Maryland.

But in the face of agribusiness bent toward monopolization of food production and distribution, the need to shift the paradigm back to sustainable local agriculture was clear. In 1995, Growing Power opened its doors to the people of Milwaukee and neighboring rural communities, to educate them in ways to work together to bring locally grown foods back to their tables.

Growing Power offers public onsite training in sustainable agriculture systems, including aquaponics, nutrient cycling systems, livestock care, and a biological worm growing system. "We will have a college professor standing next to a farmer standing next to a 10-year-old youth learning to do the same thing, because you're all at the same level when it comes to hands-on [work]. This diversity that we create is very important to me and this work that we do."

Making the Connection

Three years ago, University of Milwaukee instructor Amy Callahan strolled down the aisle of a neighborhood grocery store, her baby Joe on her hip, picking up ingredients to complete the family's menu for the week. Checking the expiration date on a carton of cage-free eggs, her eyed lingered a moment over the block-font letters identifying the eggs' city of origin: New Jersey. "How long did it take for them to get here, and who handled them along the way?" she wondered.

Nearly 40 years ago, amid similar concerns over the increase in imported foods, the consistent loss of farmland to development, and the migration of farmers to the cities, a group of homemakers in Kobe, Japan, approached a local farmer with a request to provide fresh, organically grown produce to the families in their village. In exchange for the farmer's commitment to the community, they were provided with advance "subscription" funds, to assist with the purchase of the materials required in order to plant the season's first crops.

The movement of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) made its way to the United States in 1985 and has been steadily developing in a variety of approaches across the country. A CSA farm may exclusively or collectively offer garden produce, eggs and dairy, meats and poultry, honey or flowers. The land may be managed by cooperative of workers, a single family or, as in the case of Laura Jean Comerford, an individual.

Comerford is the sole proprietor of Backyard Bounty, located in Plymouth, Wisconsin, about an hour outside of the city of Milwaukee. Growing Power works with farmers like Comerford through its contributions toward the organization of The Rainbow Farmers Cooperative, a group of nearly 100 local farmers dedicated to keeping small family farms from being eradicated by increasing production costs, growing inaccessibility to credit resources, and the increasing competition from mega-farms and mono-agriculture. This collective CSA approach connects rural farmers and city residents without the intense and direct need to market individually and offers the community a wide range of products from several specialty growers.

Earlier this year, a group of city residents volunteered to help Comerford erect a greenhouse so that she would be able to extend her growing season into the cold winter months. The benefit of the work of a few individuals on a single afternoon will resound with each year's supplemental yield of vegetables that escape the season-ending frost.

Community Supported Agriculture helps to strengthen local economies by keeping food dollars within a community; producers and consumers are directly linked, allowing people to have a personal connection with their food and the land on which it was produced. Community members commit to a particular farm in the late winter and early spring by purchasing an advance share of the produce the farmer intends to grow. A commitment to working a set number of hours on the farm is often accepted in lieu of cash payment. In return, shareholders are rewarded with weekly deliveries of organic, responsibly grown foods freshly picked that morning. The first delivery of fresh strawberries, rhubarb, peas, and herbs arrive in early June and continue through the first frosts in autumn.

Callahan and her family now enjoy weekly deliveries of fresh produce and eggs from a family farm just outside of the city. "I like the idea of having one person, or a family, or a cooperative — an extended family, if you will — handling the produce. They put



above: Youth workers tend to the Gallery 37 site in Chicago. Gallery 37 is an open block in the middle of downtown, on which Growing Power has installed a garden. Youth groups were highly involved in installing, harvesting, and selling the harvest at the market.

it in the ground, they take it out, it goes in the box, and it comes to me. That's very appealing."

Breaking Urban Ground

Back in the city, urban farming is finding its place in the scheme of sustainable agriculture and community building.

In an effort to revitalize a rapidly declining and neglected neighborhood known as Walnut Way, Sharon and Larry Adams took the energy and inspiration from a Growing Power forum on urban farming to transform brown vacant lots into verdant patches brimming with fresh flowers, kale, cabbage, and collard greens. The resulting Walnut Way Conservation Corp. is the first group of its kind to get perpetual possession of the three lots and two houses from the city of Milwaukee.

Bobbie Evans, a member of the Walnut Way community for 20 years, regularly participates in the maintenance of these gardens. "It's given me a peace of mind. It helps me put something back into the community, shows the kids I'm doing something positive for the neighborhood." Since the gardens have moved into the community, pride in the restoration and maintenance of the neighborhood has caught on, as many of the drug

houses have been shut down and formerly littered streets cleared.

In addition to the transformation and remediation of vacant lots, Growing Power has developed innovative techniques for gardening without digging into the ground. Demonstrations of window urban gardening, a system of building long raised channels of rich soil on top of asphalt, have started to appear in empty parking lots and mid-city concrete blocks in Milwaukee, Chicago, New York, and Boston.

Tomorrow's Farmers

Last year over 2,000 visitors from around the city, across the country, and three continents came to the Growing Power Community Food Center for hands-on training and guided educational tours. Among them were a group of teachers from Japan, members of Heifer International, and representatives from the National Resource and Conservation Service-USDA Civil Rights Division, all sharing a common interest in promoting sustainable local agriculture.

Growing Power recently hired a nutritionist with the intention of launching a training and evaluation program for after-school meals, with the hope of becoming a national model for schools and community-based or-

ganizations with after-school programs. The foods provided will come from small family farms.

Although introducing technical ways and means to improve current agricultural practices are integral parts of the movement toward urban farming and community supported agriculture, it is the impression of hope and energy that prevails. "When people come here, probably one of the most powerful things about this place is not me talking to people, it is when people come in here and start looking around, start looking at the systems, and they get excited, then they want to do something," says Allen. "So when they leave here, my goal is, not how much is learned, they can get a lot of that stuff in schools, but the main thing is for them to leave here excited about starting their project, because that is the hardest thing to do." In short, "The idea is to get them to put the shovel in the ground." ★

Jennifer Vandenplas is a grounded traveler writing from MKE, WI USA.



A Room of Their Own

It's the people that make Port Townsend's best-kept secret so unique.



words sarah contrary photos Jesse Vohs

Port Townsend, Washington is not what you'd call a punk town. We're famous for our Victorian architecture and big pretty parks and dinky tourist shops. But like most small towns, there's a wealth of secrets that the tourists don't see. One of those secrets is the Boiler Room. The Boiler Room describes itself as "a youth-oriented and community-owned coffeehouse providing a venue for growth, learning and the empowerment of individuals in their community" — and it's more than just grant writing rhetoric. Walk into the Boiler Room, and the first thing you'll probably notice is the kids. Lurking around on the sidewalk, with the sullen smirks and multicolored hair of marginalized small-town teens everywhere, clutching their paper cups of coffee and smoking cigarettes someone else had to buy for them. Maybe they'll inspire in you a little surge of nostalgia for your own painful and ugly adolescence, all your outlandish fashions and thrashy music, all the nights you spent sulking in grocery-store parking lots with your friends waiting for something to happen, waiting to get old enough to leave.

Walk in on a Sunday afternoon and you may be offered a bowl of soup by the kids who run the weekly soup kitchen. Tuesday night is zine night. Thursday night is open mic, Sunday night is movie night — the whole thing is organized by the kids. "I wanted to start a zine library and they were totally open to the idea," says Chloë, Boiler Room zine librarian, volunteer barista and self-described "windowseat frequenter." "The house carpenter [who serves double duty as the music coordinator's dad] built a shelf right away and other people brought in zines for the library. The Boiler Room is a great incubator for ideas because they're very supportive."

The Boiler Room has been around for a decade. Solo musician and Moldy Peaches frontwoman Kimya Dawson, a Port Townsend expatriate, has watched the Boiler Room grow from a hole-in-the-wall basement coffee shop to its present location in a storefront uptown. "I've been hanging out here for thirteen years and it's different kids, some of the same kids; but it's pretty much the same thing," she says. "Some years kids have to work a little harder to maintain a space for themselves. Sometimes it's established already and they're just so used to having something like the Boiler Room that they don't realize what a special thing that is. It's just a cycle. They take it for granted, it deteriorates and then they build it up again."

These days the Boiler Room is surrounded by upscale break fast joints and fancy bakeries. It's maybe the last cool thing in my tiny town, the one bastion of earthy funkiness in a place quickly becoming overrun by rich retirees and high-rolling tourists. For the past decade the Boiler Room has been run by kids, for kids; and though half the time it's at war with a township hell-bent on remaking itself as a monument to an invented past, somehow the Boiler Room has survived, remaining a haven for tiny green-haired youth in their tattered black jackets, a life raft in a sea of pseudo-Victorian architecture.

To most of the people who hang out there, who grew up throwing shows on the tiny stage or writing tortured poetry late at night on the sidewalk, the Boiler Room is a hell of a lot more than a coffee shop. It's a safe place, a little patch of love. Sometimes the coffee's not so great and the service is a little surly. The art on the walls isn't always awe-inspiring and the bands are often out of tune; but that's the best part: You are being invited in to a space that isn't yours, a space removed from the demands and vagaries of adults, and if you don't like it you are more than welcome to leave. The decisions are not yours to make. If you want to have an art show, the kids will put your art on the walls. If you want to start a band, they'll let you play a show. If you want to sit at a table all day drinking coffee and talking to yourself, no one will look at you twice. The kids will let you come on in and hang out for as long as you want, as long as you leave them alone and let them run their coffee shop. ☆

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A Community of Healing



Hawk and Yinka with students at the Forum for African Women Educationalists primary school in Freetown.

Working with the Trauma Victims of Sierra Leone

by Robert Hirschfield

A dozen or so men sat around a large table in Harlem, all from Sierra Leone, the war-torn nation in West Africa. Some had been in New York for a few weeks, others a few years. The recent arrivals, poor and illegal, carried with them the scene of the crime: a land in which thousands of people were killed, tortured, robbed, raped, and displaced in the eleven-year civil war that had ravaged their country since 1991. People slowly stood up and introduced themselves. One man gave a report on conditions back home. Another announced plans for a local summer camp for Sierra Leonean children. A shy newcomer hesitated to speak at first, and was welcomed in *Krio* (the native language of Sierra Leone), which encouraged him to relax and say a few words.

For the members of *Nah We Yone*, a support group for Sierra Leonean émigrés, these meetings are a homecoming of sorts, a safe haven, a piece of Sierra Leone transplanted

to Harlem. Dr. Yinka Akinsulure Smith and her husband, Dr. Hawthorne "Hawk" Smith, both psychologists at the Bellevue/New York University Program For Survivors of Torture, have been working with survivors of Sierra Leone's civil war since 1995. "There were only a few Sierra Leoneans at the beginning," said Hawk, an African-American originally from Philadelphia. "But as the civil war intensified, we were seeing more and more Sierra Leoneans coming for treatment. They came with nothing. Something needed to be done beyond the clinical work we were doing." The couple founded *Nah We Yone* (The name means "This is Ours" in Krio) in 1997.

"The big thing we do at *Nah We Yone*," Yinka said, "is to give back to Sierra Leoneans a sense of community. People share the same language, the same food, the same history. They feel a sense of the identity they have lost."

Safe havens are a part of Hawk's family history. His grandparents in Maryland ran a home for homeless African-American children during the Depression. His father, a successful artist, grew up in that extended family, variations of which Hawk would later find in Sierra Leone, where people took in those who had lost everything in the war.

By contrast, Yinka's family — her father was a psychologist, her mother a librarian — was one of the many brutalized by the war. Some were killed, some had their homes burned down when the rebels stormed the capital Freetown. Yinka recalled the misguided optimism surrounding the founding of the RUF (Revolutionary United Front.) "It was supposed to be a movement 'for the people, by the people.'"

Beginning with the intention to overthrow the corrupt All Peoples Congress government of Joseph Momoh and led by one-time photographer Foday Sankoh, the movement

quickly degenerated into an army of thugs that swept across rural Sierra Leone and engulfed Freetown in 1999 before being pushed back by the troops of ECOMOG (the West African peace-keeping contingent, also cited for human rights abuses). A British-led U.N. peacekeeping force finally brought an end to the war.

Yinka and Hawk tried to explain the unexplainable. Sierra Leone was noted for its history of tribal and religious harmony. It was one of the more stable countries in West Africa. (Rebels from the Liberian civil war crossed over into Sierra Leone to fight with the RUF.)

"In the case of the RUF, we can see how the nature of war has changed," Hawk reflected. "The conventional wisdom used to be that by defeating the opposing army, you control the population. Now, it seems, if you control and dominate the civilian population, the army will fall, the government will fall. We are not talking about haphazard violence, but inflicting terror so that communities will no longer support the government."

The RUF gained notoriety for hacking off people's limbs. There are not many amputees in New York — in Sierra Leone, there are amputee camps. In New York, those who go around armless can attract unwelcome attention. People pry, want to know what happened and why.

"We help refugees formulate how they want to respond," Yinka said. "Do they want to ignore the person, the questions? Do they want to get into it?"

One young man managed to turn his predicament into a university of the street. While waiting for a bus, he would educate the curious about Sierra Leone, the war, the RUF, all of it. "He was able to turn the issue away from himself, which I think is pretty amazing."

Child soldiers posed a special problem. They had been abducted by the RUF after seeing their relatives raped and murdered. The RUF armed them, turned them into themselves. Some became the worst monsters in the monster factory.

"I feel you have to separate out the child soldiers completely because one of the things about the war in Sierra Leone was that a large number of people were coerced," Yinka said. "There were Small Boys Units, Small Girls Units."

But when former child soldiers come to her seeking treatment, she refers them elsewhere. "Ethically, I could not enter into a treat-

ment relationship with someone that perpetrated crimes against the Sierra Leonean people."

Survivors of the brutal war in Liberia, the brutal regime in Cameroon, and the calamity of displacement in southwest Africa have also been appearing at *Nah We Yone's* doors. They come for the legal, medical, and mental health assistance the group offers. Clients are referred to public hospitals like Harlem Hospital that cannot turn people away for inability to pay. They are directed to Human Rights First for pro-bono legal services, and to Yinka for therapy when time permits.

For other émigrés who might be contemplating forming similar grassroots groups out of blood, ashes, and flight, Yinka advises them to "Identify the needs, identify like-minded people, and set a goal. You can do a lot with limited resources. When we started *Nah We Yone*, we had a fundraiser. We invited friends to our house, and passed around the hat. We made \$150. We used that money to buy stamps, stationary, to write to people who couldn't come. It took five years for people to see what we could do and fund us."

On one occasion, *Nah We Yone* was able to work a small miracle. A mother, arriving in America as a stowaway, was distraught at being separated from her children, thought to be refugees somewhere in Guinea. *Nah We Yone* paid for ads to run on the radio in Conakry. They said simply: "Your mother is well and living in New York. She wants you to contact her if you hear this." They may have been the only ads ever directed at a handful of indigent children. The children heard, made contact, and were flown from their refugee camp to New York.

"In our work, you are constantly hearing about and seeing the effects of the worst things human beings can do to one another," Hawk said. "You don't want to become involved so deeply that you become overwhelmed and swamped. But at the same time it's important to remain open and stay sensitive to the stories and the details."

Despite everything, Hawk and Yinka remain optimistic about Sierra Leone. A web of healing is slowly forming over its legion of wounds. Counseling centers have been set up for raped women. Ceremonies of repentance involving former rebels are taking place. The contrite perpetrators buy food for a community meal, serve everyone, and before everyone confess their wrongdoings and ask for forgiveness. The ceremonies are called *Pull Sara*.

"It is very important that people realize that Sierra Leone is not just a country of victims but a country of survivors," Hawk said. "One thing the rebel insurgency did not do was pit one ethnic group against another, one religion against another ... As a result, the tradition of people being able to relate across those lines remained intact. When there are group meetings here, you will find a Moslem sitting next to a Christian, a Mende sitting next to a Krio. There is a tolerance, an ability to look beyond tribes and social classes that helps Sierra Leoneans reconnect." ☆

Robert Hirschfield is a journalist specializing in human rights issues. His work has appeared in Tricycle, Z Magazine, City Limits, and other publications.



Yinka and Hawk outside the main offices of COMAHS — the medical school of the University of Sierra Leone

"The big thing we do at *Nah We Yone* is to give back to Sierra Leoneans a sense of community. People share the same language, the same food, the same history. They feel a sense of the identity they have lost."



a moment with

The Icarus Project

by Timothy Kelly

Ashley McNamara and Sascha Scatter founded The Icarus Project, an online forum for people outside the mainstream struggling with bipolar disorder. They have recently published Navigating the Space Between Brilliance and Madness, a Reader and Roadmap of Bipolar Worlds. Timothy Kelly met with them in Portland, one of the stops on their national book tour.

Tell us a little about how The Icarus Project got started.

Sascha: The Icarus Project started out as a way of bringing together folks who are diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder but were distrustful of mainstream medicine and corporate culture and didn't feel like they had a space to be able to find each other. Ashley and I met after I wrote an article in the San Francisco Bay Guardian about my experience as someone who really hates the pharmaceutical industry, and has been involved in radical politics for years, but takes psych drugs every day. We decided at that point that we were going to start this web site. That happened in the fall of 2002, and it has just taken off.

Ashley: Since then we've been trying to expand the dialogue that's been going on on our site beyond the bounds of the computer screen, and we ended up editing together a book of all the voices talking about everything from the spiritual dimensions of mania to the side effects of Lithium. We compiled this book to fill the void that we perceived as far as literature that is available for people dealing with mental illness. We wanted to create something that had a multitude of voices and perspectives and be critical of the mainstream conceptions of mental illness while also trying to navigate the existing mental health system. We also undertook a tour across the country because we wanted to talk to people face-to-face, to open up dialogues that were maybe not happening in their communities, about what it means to be called crazy in a crazy world and how we can take care of each other.

What are you hoping will come out of this effort?

Ashley: On a larger level, we just want

there to be more dialogue and a higher level of awareness of these things. I think a lot of the problems people go through in dealing with mental illness is that people in their communities don't know how to react to them because they aren't educated about what the symptoms are, what people deal with, what's the difference between being sad and being depressed, when medication makes sense and when it doesn't.

Sascha: I think if we could be a little grandiose for a second, one of the larger goals we have is to reframe the way people think about mental illness, and rather than seeing things like bipolar as a disease or disorder, seeing them as a dangerous gift that needs to be taken care of. That's the whole myth of Icarus, the myth of the boy who is given wings but doesn't know how to fly so he flies too close to the sun and drowns in the ocean. One of the things we are really trying to get out there is that people like us have a lot to offer and it has nothing to do with being pitied. Ashley and I don't think of ourselves at all as being disabled. We are actually really amazing people who are just very sensitive.

What kind of special challenges do you think there are for people struggling with mental illnesses in the anti-authoritarian/activist communities?

Sascha: Well just to kind of frame it, there seems to be a disproportionate amount of people within radical communities that struggle with so-called mental illnesses because folks like us have a really hard time integrating into normal society and have these opportunities to find higher degrees of freedom than we would in communities where working nine-to-five jobs is sort of the norm. That's one of the wonderful things about radical communities and it's one of the things that ends up posing a lot of challenges because there are a lot of behaviors that would ordinarily be warning signs but within our circles they are kind of normal.

Ashley: I think that within any community that has established rigid politics — whether it be the community of Christian fundamentalists or the community of anarchists — where there is a prescribed set of how you are supposed to think about

things; just a lot of different matrices that you are trying to navigate that make it difficult to live with contradictions. Like being [someone in the community of anarchists] that doesn't really want to have possessions, that doesn't want to work, or fit those molds, but needs to have health insurance so they can take medication. I think those communities can potentially make it pretty difficult to cross over if you don't fit within the lines that have been drawn.

Sascha: On the flip side, one of the things that we really have going for us is that we are part of more alternative or radical communities. I mean, it's so much easier for us to get together and organize than the average everyday American whose community and cultural activity include going to work, coming home, and watching television. While we do have a lot to work on, I think in some ways it's a lot easier.

So where would you like to go next with the Icarus Project?

Sascha: Coming out of an activist background, and looking at other models and how they work, I don't think either of us are interested in creating a typical non-profit, hierarchical structure. We really want the Icarus Project to grow. Right now it's really just the two of us and then the people who use our site. Models that I think we are both really attracted to are groups like Food Not Bombs, The Independent Media Center, Critical Mass, Art and Revolution. Different groups that have started in one place and had a really good idea on how to do things and then were replicated in other towns, so that there wasn't any kind of hierarchical structure within the organization but was kind of a network. In our case, we would be a network of radical support groups. What that actually means is still in the early visionary stages. ★

For more info www.theicarusproject.net. You can order the reader in the Clamor infoSHOP at www.clamormagazine.org.

Timothy Kelly is a case worker in a non-profit social service agency, and is attending school seeking a career in naturopathic medicine. He is heavily into mad advocacy and synthesizers. He can be reached at modliberator@riseup.net.

Finger on the Pulse



WORDS **Kari Lydersen**
PHOTOS **Spencer Cunningham**

With extensive experience as an educator, administrator, artist, and activist, Lorna Gonsalves knows where the fight for human rights and dignity really needs to start — in the communities that are suffering because various aspects of their basic material and social well-being are threatened.

Gonsalves believes that campaigns and movements should be guided by those most affected [by unjust policies and unfair treatment]; for example, people who have been cast aside because of racism, classism, sexism, and other forms of oppression, or marginalized people in developing countries who bear the brunt of economic globalization policies.

This is the central principle of Community He(Art)beats, a grassroots community art and social justice program run through an organization Gonsalves founded called Human Values for Transformative Action (HVTA). Community He(Art)beats is a wide-ranging project in which groups around her home base of Toledo, Ohio, are producing art that reflects and expresses the struggles and aspirations of mistreated groups. There is a mural painted by young artists working with youth from the juvenile detention center in Toledo, reflecting their difficult journeys through life and their hopes for the future. And there is a collection of items that residents of a Toledo homeless shelter gave to students from nearby Lourdes College displayed along with the words of the shelter residents. The artwork will be displayed at the Toledo School for the Arts on International Human Rights Day December 10, 2004.

Gonsalves hopes the program will inspire other communities around the country and the world to do the same thing. She has started discussions with human rights workers in South Africa and Geneva and community leaders in other U.S. cities about the project.

Every He(Art)beats production operates with the central idea that the work must be guided by the people whose stories are being told; for example, juvenile detainees, migrant and seasonal farm workers, people with disabilities, depressed individuals, or homeless people.

"We take a lot of inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi's concept of swaraj and swadeshi, meaning self-determination and self-sufficiency," said Gonsalves, a native of India and a former professor and associate provost at Bowling Green State University in Ohio who has now turned her attention to full-time community work.

Lourdes College social work chairperson Joyce Litten, whose students carried out the discussions with homeless shelter residents, noted that they went to great lengths to be aware of the impact their presence would have on the shelter and to be respectful of the residents and their input. She said the interaction was especially powerful since many Lourdes students are "non-traditional" college students who have themselves been recipients of social services in the past.

"We talked a great deal about the word empowerment and what that means, about allowing people to speak for themselves," she said. "We wanted to impress on the students the dignity of the individual

and the eloquence of the people receiving services. We didn't translate, we didn't add our ideas or emotions, we simply conveyed their language. And there were people who didn't want to talk to us, who basically said fuck you, and that's OK."

Dawn Miller, a 39-year-old Lourdes student who participated in a He(Art)beats program in a pottery class, described how the group brainstormed about how to make a piece of terra cotta represent the outflow and interchange of ideas in society. They came up with an urn inscribed with graffiti-style images representing qualities like compassion and courage.

"We'll cut the bottom of the urn out and make it into a fountain," she said. "It's supposed to represent an outpouring of love and communication."

Litten noted that unlike visual artists, social workers aren't used to dealing with visual images, so translating their experience into art was a challenge. Gonsalves believes in the power of art and images to engage, inspire, and involve people in a way words alone often cannot.

"Some unexpected visual images turned up in the news recently and have opened the world's eyes to the brutal atrocities committed by a few U.S. troops and other 'freedom fighters,'" Gonsalves said. "I think that visual images can at once capture minds and hearts, bringing human rights issues to life and revealing the disturbing realities around us."

Taken together, one group of images in the Dec. 10 exhibit is meant to depict the 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the mission of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization).

Another set of visual images will present the concerns and needs of marginalized groups in the local communities. A special wing will contain visual images created by members of religious organizations whose work "will bring to life the link between spiritual obligations and social action," Gonsalves said.

"We start with the global context and move to the dimension that prompts us to think about a common humanity and then move to a dimension that makes us think about community needs," Gonsalves, who formerly served as the director of global outreach at UNESCO's Institute of Comparative Human Rights at the University of Connecticut, explained. "Then we have a part where we collect community responses to collectively develop a plan of action, all emanating from the grassroots." ☆

For more information or to support the Community He(Art)beats program, visit the HVTA website at www.hvta.org or email info@hvta.org.

Kari Lydersen is a Chicago-based journalist writing for *The Washington Post*, *In These Times* and other publications and a youth journalism instructor. She can be reached at karilyder@yahoo.com

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I YA BASTA! TEN YEARS OF THE ZAPATISTA UPRISING WRITINGS OF SUBCOMANDANTE MARCOS

Forewords by Noam Chomsky & Naomi Klein

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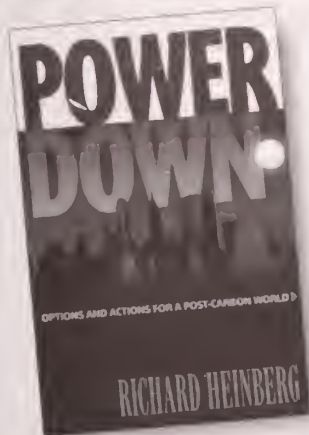
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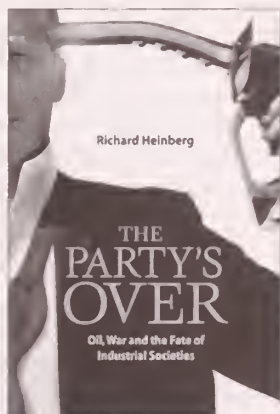
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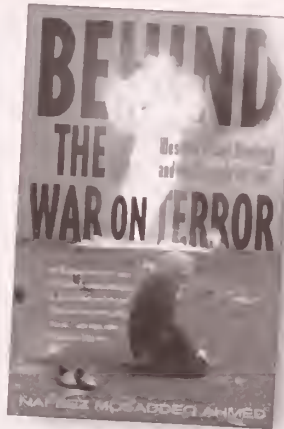
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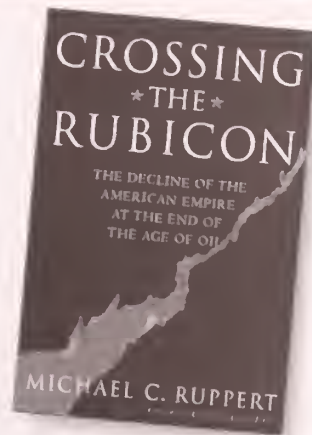
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Shovels ground into the four-foot high mound of mud in the road. Several cars were piled either on top or in front of the lump, freshly formed by a sudden landslide following a rainstorm. This was only a minor obstacle in our two-day journey through Sichuan Province to Da Ze Temple (“Temple of the Great Rule”), a small monastery in a remote region bordering Tibet. Our group consisted of over 20 people, mostly educated young or middle-aged professionals from Shanghai and Sichuan, all devout followers of a Living Buddha, or Huo Fo, whom they called “master.”

They represented a growing contingent of people in Chinese society who have both the resources and the will to pursue something beyond material existence. Overwhelmed or disappointed with the influx of material wealth, people who came of age in the Reform Era are moving away from the drive toward wealth and toward another type of success, in which the profit margin is serenity and the chief asset is contained not in a bank but in a spiritual vision.

From a Western pop cultural perspective, something about Buddhism imbues it with a sort of grace that lets it rise above Western doctrines whose public images are tainted by fanaticism. My Western peers, particularly the “crunchy granola” variety abundant on college campuses, seem fascinated by Buddhism’s ancient mysticism and seemingly precocious progressivism. Perhaps what attracts people from the developed world to Buddhism is that Buddhism doesn’t seek them out. At least on the surface, flacid monasteries, archaic scriptures, and esoteric mantras are things to be discovered. Maybe, I thought, as we flew along the mountain road past pine forests and sprawling croplands, it was the passion of searching that fueled belief.

As we climbed higher, the air began to thin and our lungs swelled steadily with the anticipation of our reaching the destination. When our three cars stopped for a rest, one of the group leaders, a real estate developer from Sichuan, got out of his car to check up on the others. He looked over at me and smiled. “This kid from America really knows how to chi ku,” he said, referring to the idiom of “eating bitter,” the Chinese virtue of being able to suffer for a goal.

above Monastery youth hitching a ride on a tractor — one of the only forms of transport available
above right The Living Buddha

words and photos Michelle Chen

in search of

THE LIVING BUDDHA

Exploring the Tibetan Faith with a Crop of New Believers in China

One of the reasons I came, admittedly, was to see if I could really take the bitterness. To an extent, my motivations were not so different from those of my companions. One of the key principles of Tibetan Buddhism is “refuge.” The stark, isolated life of religious contemplation provides sanctuary from base human impulses. Seekers of Buddhist salvation must find refuge in moral teachings and shut out “worldly deities.”

Our common destination provided another type of refuge — that of the religious community. I was asked by the other travelers whether I was a “follower.” Trying to sound as un-tourist-like as possible, I told them no, I’m just here to “*tiyan*” — for the experience. But I suppose I was a “follower,” in the sense that my main purpose in this journey was to follow, and like them, I was unsure exactly what it was I was following.

Though we were mostly strangers to each other, the warmth of siblings imbued people’s conversations and interactions as we talked and ate together on the road. The aloofness that I had frequently encountered among other urban dwellers during my time living in Shanghai had dissolved. The urban cynicism and instinctive defensiveness were temporarily forgotten. It was assumed that (with one exception), everyone was on a quest for spiritual gain.

Four kilometers in the air, the pain that was beginning to seep through our temples felt like our worldly deities trying to claw us back into the ordinary world. The China we were coming from was a China of cranes and steamrollers, Big Macs and karaoke bars, white collars, dirty hands, and clenched fists. The “bitter” we were consuming was something of an indulgence — to taste it was to realize a fantasy of self-sacrifice.

At the last turn, the empty plains that had flanked the bumpy road burst into a bustling oasis. We saw a field of grazing yaks, dotted with white square tents or *zang peng*. Though the sky was now gray and the road slick with rain, the mood was buoyant as we were led by smiling locals through a red arc supported by ropes and decorated with

prayer flags. We followed the lamas up a steep, creaking wooden staircase into an attic housing four compact rooms, the largest of which was painted with Tibetan patterns and contained a long narrow table which was soon piled for us with wrinkled fruit, plates of candy, and simple dishes that were catered specifically for us (the lamas figured we would not be able to stomach their diet of yak meat and dairy and greasy porridge). The mood of celebration was dampened by the collapse of several of our members on the long couch that ran along the wall. A young man trained in Chinese medicine had brought a small oxygen tank and went around plugging people with a breathing tube.

After our humble feast, we sat in the small living room adjacent to the dining room, sipping cloudy hot water (which they had to truck over from a neighboring region) from paper cups. I sat beside a fellow Shanghai pilgrim, a Taiwanese expatriate businessman named Steven. He showed me a young, bespectacled lama with a moustache and a lavish gold and maroon robe. This was Huo Fo, the Living Buddha. The object of our journey.

“This is our American friend,” said Steven. I stood and shook his hand, somewhat underwhelmed by the sight of the Buddha reincarnate. I thought he looked remarkably graceful, his smooth countenance distinguishing him from his gaunt, wind-burnt non-Buddha colleagues.

With the Huo Fo in our midst, the pilgrims seemed finally to feel safe in the harsh surroundings. I retired to a heap of blankets in a small square room, beside the rhythmic bowing of a girl about my age, lost in intense prayer.

In the morning, we walked about 100 meters to the monastery, a cubic red brick building. The inside was almost completely dark except for beams of silver daylight threading through the tiny square windows. Rows of monks sat on raggedy carpets before small, low wooden benches, which held bowls of food and served as prayer altars. In muted primary colors and gold, paintings, statues, prayer flags, and incense crowded into every available space, almost messy, slightly

gaudy. The place felt like an attic that had for centuries been accumulating worn, beautiful things that would not fit anywhere else. In two elevated thrones draped in green and red brocade cloth presided two Living Buddhas — the younger Huo Fo, my group's leader, and another Huo Fo of about fifty.

The scent of damp wood hung in the sedate atmosphere of the room. The oddly musical guttural chanting of mantras in trance-like, blurred unison alternated with stretches of pregnant silence. What we were witnessing, I realized, was the ritual that formed the center of the monastic life. The sole mission of the monks was to cultivate their mind through meditation and the study of scriptures. The room we had

ance, they spent hundreds of thousands of yuan to help build a local school and a new temple.

While the pilgrims found the isolation of the monastery refreshing, it was clear that this community was poor in almost every way imaginable. There was no industry, no infrastructure, and a primitive school system. Yet they prospered in the one aspect in which city life was destitute: faith. What little these people had was funneled into a communion with divinity. The Westernized pilgrims cherished their Living Buddha and ornate temples as embodiments of an internal life they had forgotten and then, through journeys like this, reclaimed.

Most of the group decided to leave after two days, ready to return



above: Tibetan girls waiting outside the temple for the ceremony to begin. above right: Two Monks pose for a picture during the break between prayer ceremonies.



entered as observers — clumsily heaped against a back wall — was their place of refuge, a sanctuary that had opened, momentarily, for us.

I hesitated as I wondered whether taking pictures would disturb them. When I saw that others were using digital cameras to record the event, including a lama in his thirties, I guiltily decided that no one would object if I joined in. Some younger monks smiled and gathered behind people's cameras, intrigued by the glowing viewfinders. It became clear that suddenly we were the spectacle.

The highlight of the mid-morning ceremonies was the procession led by the Shifu, or master of my group. He quietly led other monks through the aisles distributing shimmering colored prayer scarves to each lama, as well as to the visitors, who bowed graciously as they received the gift. After the young, handsome Huo Fo had made his rounds shaking hands with beaming devotees, dozens of followers lined up before the thrones to present the two Huo Fos with red envelopes stuffed with cash. I sensed a contrast between the stoic rituals that had occupied most of the morning and this sudden focus on the Huo Fos' celebrity. This last ritual was for us, the outsiders — a measured bit of publicity before the monastery once again retreated into seclusion. Perhaps the lama with the camcorder was filming us for a promotional video.

Compared to their humble daily existence, the expense of hosting us must have been exorbitant. The monastery, I learned from Steven, depended on the contributions of followers, who included many well-off professionals, like our group. In return for the Huo Fo's divine guid-

ance, they spent hundreds of thousands of yuan to help build a local school and a new temple. Though we had not been there long enough for either side to feel much sentimentality, each visitor had left behind an ephemeral impression of the civilization beyond this mountain range and had stolen off with a tiny piece of this place upon departing.

I myself had not been spiritually reborn as a pilgrim should. Perhaps the outside world had cut too deeply into me. But I had glimpsed a part of the world and a part of my fellow travelers that captured both the purest desires and the deepest confusions of human nature. Maybe all of us, believers and non-believers alike, were working through the same riddle, caught up in the wish that we could return to a pure way of life, a more holistic society, despite being tainted by the pollutants of our atomized modernity. Could our reality be transmuted through a simple journey? Maybe that's what faith is. ★

The reporting for this article was done during a year-long Fulbright research fellowship in China. Now back in her native New York, Michelle Chen has been involved with various independent media projects. She can be reached at michelle_chen@inthe fray.com.

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Functional Inequity

Despite progress made on many fronts in America, millions in the deaf community are still struggling to be heard.

Jamie Berke is forced to go to a doctor who doesn't speak her primary language. Joshua Flanders thinks it's wrong that millions of Americans can't walk into any theater to see a movie. Jesse Thomas is angry that he cannot watch "The Simpsons." For millions of deaf and hard of hearing people, even the most basic and necessary information is often inaccessible, and becoming even less so, as the government cuts funding for programs and services.

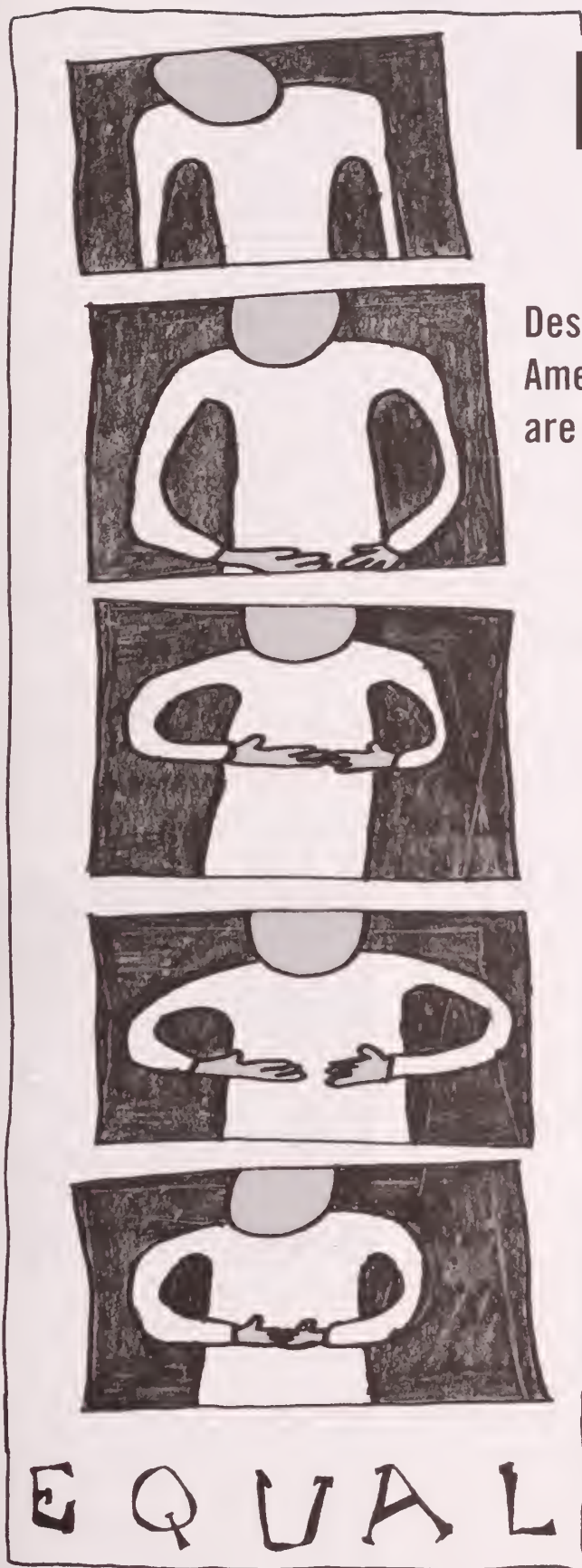
Issues of the deaf community often fall under the umbrella of the Disabilities Act, which calls for "functional equivalency." In his statement to the 47th Annual Conference of National Association of the Deaf (NAD), Michael J. Copps, the FCC Commissioner, addressed the government's accomplishments and failures in providing for the needs of millions of citizens. "The term [functional equivalency] may sound inelegant, but for the deaf and hard of hearing it translates into equal opportunity, equal rights, and fuller participation in our society." This fuller participation should be evident in all aspects of life. However, many leaders in the deaf community would argue that much still needs to be done.

Film and TV Captioning

For example, take the fight for movie captioning. Captioning of films, like television shows, is not mandatory by law. Thus, many movies and television programs are inaccessible. Recently, the Bush administration exacerbated the problem by cutting funding for a number of captioned programs and services — the government would no longer compensate media outlets that provided captions for these programs. Barry Strassler, editor of *Deaf Digest*, the largest circulation deaf interest magazine in the world, sees it as negligence on the part of the media. "Problems will continue as long as those in the media industry continue to pinch pennies," he said. "Raking in billions of dollars but pleading poverty when it comes to paying to caption a one-hour TV program."

On the subject of film captioning, Joshua Flanders, the executive director of Chicago Institute for the Moving Image (CIMI), agrees it's an issue of money. "When President Bush

continued next page



words Yolanda Best
Illustration Brandon Bauer

proposed to cut the captioning for 200 television shows that were previously captioned, without reason or warning, that could be a form of censorship," he said. "But the lack of captioning in theaters is a new subject, and recent lawsuits have forced theaters to install rear-window captioning."

Rear-window captioning shows captions on a smaller screen designed for individual use. According to Flanders, this alternative, though not ideal for deaf audiences who must focus on two screens during a viewing, has been settled on as the most equitable solution. "I have asked rear-window captioners as well as theater owners, and they tell me that hearing people do not like to see captions on the screen," Flanders said. "Theaters also complain that they will not make enough money showing captioned films, or that they cannot show them during peak hours such as holidays when deaf children are the most free to see films."

CIMI, however, is taking action to improve accessibility for deaf audiences. In 2002, it held a captioned viewing of the Pixar movie *Monsters, Inc.* "When I saw 300 deaf children with their faces in awe at the wonder of a new movie, especially when most have never been in a movie theater, there was no question why I was doing it and why I would continue to do it."

Health Issues

Not all problems of the deaf community receive such attention. Jamie Berke, the Deafness Hard of Hearing guide on About.com, points out that accessibility to proper health care and health information continues to be an issue. "Deaf people have sued for interpreters for medical appointments," she says. "My own most recent insurer did not provide interpreters and I had to make do with writing notes with my doctors." Being unable to fully communicate with doctors can become especially hazardous when serious or life-threatening health issues are involved. Currently there is no law requiring that health insurers provide qualified interpreters during doctor visits for their deaf clients.

According to Strassler, slanted coverage of many deaf issues by the media can cause the hearing world to not fully understand the needs of the community. "As long as newspapers highlight the isolated 'deaf success' stories but ignore the 'deaf failure cases' then we are presenting a false image," says Strassler. "Like the story of a deaf child being able to speak well or lip read well giving a false impression that every single deaf child can do the same." The images of the 'deaf success' story in the media coverage tend to obscure the real issues the community continues to face, especially since recently, many of these gains are being withdrawn.

Video Relay Services

Video Relay Services (VRS) are one such service. VRS are public on-demand services provided by private telecommunications companies that allow a deaf person to communicate with a hearing person over the phone. The service provides a signing interpreter who is accessible via phone or Internet camera to act as a link between the parties. The government compensates companies that provide VRS services.

In 2003, with less than 24-hour notice, the FCC cut its compensation rate. A board of members who were not identified made this decision. This board determined the cuts by a set of specifications that were not made available to the companies. VRS providers were left with no idea which cost services would be compensated by the government and which would not. In essence, they would have to submit their expenses and accept a lower rate of compensation with no explanation as to how that figure was reached. This was not an acceptable situation to most companies which, in turn, drastically reduced services for deaf clients. The FCC cut VRS provider compensation again in 2004 using the same unknown specifications.

"All of us need to remind the FCC that functional equivalency is supposed to be our guiding star," said Commissioner Copps in his statement. According to Copps, the commission is working to provide a set of clarified rules. Recently, Senator Mark Dayton of Minnesota proposed an amendment that would provide a 50 percent tax credit to both movie studios and theaters that make captioning available. In other good news, the Connecticut house raised a bill that would require all health insurers to provide coverage for interpreter services for covered hearing-impaired individuals when receiving care under a policy.

However, deaf civic organizations say it is the vocal citizens in both hearing and deaf communities that make the government act. Citizens like the 600, representing all 50 states, who attended the 2004 "Silence No More!" rally in Washington D.C. The rally addressed the issue of the absence of captioning in various venues including bus and train depots and captioning of instructions during emergencies such as natural disasters. For instance, during Hurricane Charley, which hit the southeastern United States, ABC News provided no captioning, Strassler said. According to Copps, "deaf" should not mean "silent" on important issues involving the community's needs.

"Your participation can make the difference in deciding whether we can get these latest problems behind us," Copps said, addressing the members of NAD, "and then get on with the challenges of using these opportuni-

ties - creating new technologies for the benefit of every American." It will take a serious effort from deaf and hearing communities, and a genuine commitment from Copps' own commission, the FCC, to breach the disparity and reach a greater level of functional equivalency. As Berke points out, the issues of the deaf community are really everyone's issues. "Today's hearing person could be tomorrow's hard of hearing or deaf person. Not meeting the needs of deaf people is what makes deaf people disabled - not the hearing loss itself." Together the deaf and hearing communities can ensure that the spirit of the American Disabilities Act is followed and that one day every American is given an equal functional base on which to live their life. ☆

To learn more about NAD visit: www.nad.org or phone 301-587-1788 TTY 301-587-1789. To learn more about CIMI visit: www.deafcinema.org or phone TTY (847) 332-CIMI. To learn more about AT&T's VRS service visit: www.attvrs.com

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WORDS **George B. Sanchez**
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an Interview with John K. Samson of the Weakerthans

“There’s an authenticity to distortion, you know.”

It’s hard to separate John K. Samson from where he’s from; as the singer for the Weakerthans, that guy from Propagandhi, a Canadian outsider in the world of punk & pop. Maybe that’s why his music is so endearing — it has place, it has history, and comes from somewhere outside the recording studio, far from the vapid center that most popular music tends to stream out of. One night I had the opportunity to meet up with John after a show at San Francisco’s Bottom of the Hill club and talk about his relationship to music, place, and politics.

Clamor: In an interview with a Canadian music magazine, you said that you thought the role of the artist is to point out how complicated the world is.

JKS: Sounds about right.

Is there a fine line between sloganeering and being heartfelt?

I think my point was that the world is very complicated and just full of voices. I think the role of the artist is to express or illuminate those voices and add them to the mix. If you listen and try to understand another person, you immediately invest that person with dignity and that’s a very political thing. You can’t oppress someone whose dignity you respect, so I think it’s a liberal and radicalizing idea, to try and understand another person. That’s what great music does and what great art strives for.

Is that something you strive for through your music and your songwriting?

Yeah, I think so. I think I’ve tried to take the specific details of the life I see around me and the way I fit into it and the way I think other people fit into it, in my community — and try to express that through music. That’s how I think of what I do, in a political sense.

One debate, one statement I’ve never really understood is “art for arts sake.”

Me neither. I don’t think art can exist in a vacuum. It has to be received by someone in order to exist. It has to do something in the world. Art for arts sake is never — I don’t think it can be true. If someone says that their art is not political, that’s a political statement in itself.

I always think about that John Berger quote: the art of any period serves the status

quo of that period. The mainstream art we see around us is definitely selling something, selling the status quo, selling things as they are, not things as they should be. You know, so that’s why art is important. It’s important to get up there and express yourself if you’ve got something to say.

I have a statement that I think leads into a question. I differentiate between punk and “punk rock” because I think there’s a separation between punk as an ideology and punk rock as a musical sound. Punk rock, politically and musically, is often categorized for its urgency. You left a band, Propagandhi, that had a much more urgent sound. I would say, than the music you’re making with the Weakerthans. So, I guess my question is; has the change in medium affected your message at all?

That’s a good question, I haven’t really thought of it that way. But, I think there’s still

an immediacy to what we do. I mean, frankly, it's the only music I know how to write, first off. The kind of songs we write, they're certainly not rhetorically political, they're not stridently political in any sense of the idea of propaganda.

Is there a place for propaganda within popular music?

Absolutely. I'm just not the person to do it. I can't be that person. It's important, politically, for people to figure out what they love to do. I think once you figure out what you love to do, then you can figure out how to harness that into some kind of action that makes a mark in the world. So, this, for better or for worse, is what I've figured out how to do.

Why is geography so important to you as a song writer?

I guess I've always been attracted to what people think of as regional writers. I think of novelists like Paul Auster, who writes about New York and he creates this New York that doesn't really exist but seems quite alive to me. It's his New York, you know, but it gives you a new way of looking at the world.

I think I'm also interested in margins. I'm from a geographically marginal place. It's a good metaphor for me. I'm interested in people that are marginalized and places that are marginalized have the same character as marginalized people.

That being said, would you ever think about leaving the place that you're from?

Oh yeah, absolutely. I think about it all the time. I think about it every other day.

So what keeps you in Winnipeg?

I don't know. It's the place I understand best. I love it and I hate it. It just seems that I should stay. And I want to stay. I think there will be a time when I'll go away but I'm always going to come back there. It's always the place I'm going to return to. It's home and even if I don't physically return there, I'm always going to be writing about that place. It's just the place I've figured out, I want to try and express what I feel about it and I haven't been able to do that yet. I've still got some work to do on it. You know, I'm never going to be satisfied and that's what keeps me going.

Do you think in general though, within popular music, there's a loss of a sense of place? And how does that fit into a homogenous, market culture?

I think it's really hard to locate yourself anywhere in the world because history seems to be moving so quickly. We're in this trough

of history that we can't see out of. Anything that's created is devoured and spat out by the market within twenty minutes of its creation. It doesn't have time to kind of grow and to exist, which is another reason why I'm interested in places that are isolated, like small towns, small cities. But you're right. It's a strange time to be alive. It seems really odd to me.

Is it ever really not a strange time though?

No, it's not. Yeah, you're right, but we have our specific strangeness and pop music is a reflection of that. I think the great kind of flashes of truth emerge from people expressing what may be mundane things, you know, details, the kind of nuts and bolts of life.

Doesn't it drive you nuts that those "isolated" places are also striving to be like the homogenized city centers?

In the city I'm from, the focus is entirely that life is elsewhere, that life is going on somewhere else. Toronto is the cultural center of Canada. I always think of people in Winnipeg staring towards Toronto as people in Toronto stare towards New York; no one is ever really looking at themselves, you know, or looking at each other. It's a weird feature in a sped-up culture, in a culture that has become more and less mediated at the same time.

As a songwriter, I think with this record, you experimented more with narrative. "Plea From a Cat Named Virtue," "Dinner with Foucault," What prompted that?

The narrative?

Yeah — was it a conscious experiment?

Yeah, it was a conscious kind of experiment. I think the last record was fictional too, but these ones are kind of, more blatantly fictional. I really wanted to kind of try that. You know, pop music is a very emotional genre.

Emotionally driven as opposed to technically, like classical?

It's all emotional. Another John Berger quote is that music began as a howl, became a prayer, and then a lament and it still contains elements of all three. That's a quote I always come back to and I think it's really true. It's

inescapable and great. Part of the great thing about music is that it has these elements that are just there and they're always going to be there for you, you just walk into them.

With a title like "Ernest Shackleton," you expect something pretentious, but it's sort of this bouncy, sort of a — it's a fun song.

Yeah. People have been accusing me lately of being a bit pretentious. I always say, well, I'd rather err on the side of pretension than pretending to be stupid. I think that's a real problem in the life of the American intellectual.

There's a real desire from people —

To plead ignorance.

Yeah, to just pretend that they don't read books. All these college kids in rock bands pretending that they haven't been to college and I'm like, well — I never went to college, I haven't been to a university, I'm interested in this stuff. I'm not a very intellectual person, but I'd like to be. That's what I aspire to be.

The Weakerthans, would you say they are an experiment in the greater potential of pop music?

I wouldn't go that far. I mean, in my fantasy world, sure, but that's not for me to say. There's a real impulsive thing behind creation too that you can't, that I can't, don't know how to intellectualize and wouldn't want to. It's just that impulse to make noise.

Maybe that sort of leads back to, again, academic debates about authenticity within music, which, I mean, ultimately, you just go around in circles again.

That's true. It's like when people go up to a novelist and get mad at them for their stories not being true. It's like, well, that's not what we're trying to do. There's an authenticity to distortion, you know. I think — I keep coming back to the word reconstruction. A reconstruction of reality is not necessarily any less real than reality. It's always — it's useful in a way, to kind of reinvent the world. ★

George Sanchez's work has appeared in the London Guardian, Punk Planet, Mother Jones, and El Andar, among other publications. Originally from Arcadia, CA, he now lives in Salinas and works as a full-time reporter. Write him at gbernardsanchez@aol.com.





PLATFORM PROJECTS

Projects Helping Projects Helping Projects

by Daniel Tucker and Rini Templeton

Michael Wolf admits that what he does is essentially the same thing that everyone else does. Informally sharing resources among family and friends is something that most people do just to survive, cut costs, or save space. A year ago, Michael, an artist living in Chicago, started the NCAAV (the Network of Casual Art Audio Visual department) which lends out a small pool of good quality A/V equipment like video projectors and cameras to "out-of-pocket initiatives run by artists and activists, people whom I admire and whose work I want to support."

Asked about the motivation for starting the NCAAV equipment lending library Wolf says, "I wanted to meet new people." Mike had been an artist working in fairly conventional ways for a while, making "pictures hung on walls." "I really felt like that way of working was coming to a dead end on some level, and I thought about finding some way to expand my associations. I thought that a way to meet those people and participate was to play a supporting role in the culture that interested me." Essentially what Mike gets out of providing a free service to artists and activists in need of audio/visual equipment is the opportunity to help strengthen a community of like-minded individuals, the possibility of chance encounters with interesting artists, and the occasional free ticket to a community theatre event.

The work of NCAAV, and many other similar projects, is part of a long history of small and subversive groups of artist/activists creating their own ways of sharing information, skills, and ideas through informal and non-commercial networks. In the '60s and '70s there were tool libraries and neighborhood technology groups that advocated for

inner-neighborhood sustainable living. More recently, everything from zine libraries and discussion groups to skill-sharing events have been popular, proving helpful as artists and activists continuously try to find ways to build their communities.

A "platform" is an initiative that helps to foster/create/enable other initiatives. Like events in punk and activist communities spawned by the DIY (do it yourself) ethic, platform projects attempt to create situations that build alternatives to profit-centered, impersonal, and unethical methods of exchange. Instead, they foster alternative economies where sharing, cooperation, collaboration, bartering, and/or gift-exchange are the systems at work. The platform created by these projects is not the literal physical space or stage for exchange seen in the banks and institutions that flourish under capitalism. They are more conceptual and virtual spaces where creative exchange occurs, spawns more exchange, and continuously expands. Platforms are projects that help projects help projects.

Graphics Platforms and Reproducible Art

Rini Templeton dedicated her whole life to creating easily reproducible artwork primarily around Central American struggles; she called it "xerox" art. Her 30-year history of radical graphic art production created some of the most easily recognizable and familiar images for social justice and have continuously been reproduced copyright-free on placards, shirts, flyers, and the occasional tattoo. The book *The Art of Rini Templeton, in both Spanish and English: Where There is Life and Struggle* was created as a reproducible portfolio and was intended to further disseminate

Templeton's graphics to a broader audience for use in political campaigns.

The book is out of print, and Rini passed away in 1986, but the web site created by her foundation continues to distribute her work for free. The web site's format is not uncommon these days; sites featuring downloadable materials for use in political campaigns have proliferated in recent months. For instance, see the download section of the Rincnotwelcome.org site or the pictures of street art collected at Stopbushproject.com. This mode of information collection and dispersal is reminiscent of an earlier, more centralized New York-based initiative of the 1980s called Political Art Documentation/Distribution. PAD/D wanted to encourage and share the many political street graphics of the early 1980s, as well as serve as an archive and a resource.

Artists and activists have always found ways to spread graphics, images, content, and slogans to create a visible presence in the world and more engaging forms of resistance. The methods, though not the strategies, pioneered by artists like Rini Templeton and collectives like PAD/D have shifted with the growth of the Internet. The ideas are very much the same even though the tools have been updated.

Web Tools

Platform projects make a lot of sense in the virtual world. This is partly the case because of the so-called democratic characteristics of the web. Anyone can have a personal website, blog, or email address and broadcast their message to the world.

The relatively short history of the web is filled with examples of individuals and collec-

tives using the Internet as a way of advancing issues of social justice, cultural expression, and freedom of information. Perhaps the most obvious example is Indymedia.org. Begun as a means to allow activists to post news and updates during the Seattle WTO protests in 1999, Indymedia.org is now the world's largest all-volunteer organization, spanning every continent with sites and subcollectives doing much of the maintenance to keep it running. The open publishing format that makes Indymedia possible is called *Active*. *Active* can be distinguished from most open source/publishing applications in that its creators are explicit about its intended use towards the goals of political action and social justice. *Active* software enables anyone to publish their news stories or announcements on Indymedia.org anytime through their local Indymedia or that of another city. With similar goals in mind, *Mute* magazine, a London-based publication dedicated primarily to the intersections of culture, activism, and new technologies, has recently launched a web project called OpenMute. According to their web site, this web platform was created in response to the growing number of "powerful, free online tools becom[ing] available," and the fact that "individuals without relevant technical skills are often unable to independently engage with

them." OpenMute responded "by making a selection of trusted tools available from one, easy-to-find, web location." Basically, what OpenMute provides is an easy-to-use, pre-designed (but still flexible) web site which can be obtained mostly for free by art and activist groups (though some packages cost a small fee). These feature the latest open source community building tools, allowing the site owner to tailor his or her site to meet their specific needs. The content can be changed or added using any computer anywhere that has Internet access. The kinds of community building tools that are available include: News publishing, Wiki (a "collaborative" software that allows multiple users to both post and edit each others texts), photo galleries, group calendars, links, and forums.

Projects that help produce other projects can proliferate and document rich and complex lineages of radical culture without clear beginnings or endings. The projects mentioned in this article all exist differently and produce different ends. However, each attempts to provide us with the means to achieve similar goals: enabling small pockets of political and cultural resistance to communicate and to better facilitate our current projects, and to expand those efforts into larger communities. When there is a commitment

to building radical culture and resistance, these platforms only help us expand in the right direction. ☆

Resources

For more info on the NCAAV:

www.stopgostop.com/nea/neaav.html

For more info on Active:

www.active.org.au

For more info on OpenMute:

www.openmute.org

For more about Rini Templeton:

www.riniart.org/

Daniel Tucker is an artist and activist living in Chicago, generally interested in art that happens in streets. his group projects range from working in several different collaborative groups and collectives, to a variety of organizing initiatives like microcinema screenings and discussion series. Tucker is currently serving as a Corresponding Editor of the Journal of Aesthetics and Protest. He is in the process of initiating an independent research project about group process and organizational structure of activist organizations. Email him at Daniel@counterproductveindustries.com



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A Poet's Challenge to the Unelected President



In Memoriam

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bookstores and Amazon.com
or downloaded (\$3.95) at
1stbooks.com

In Memoriam was originally inspired by a person full of hope, curiosity, and goodness, Tatiana Prosvirina, a student who died at the age of seventeen. The later poems of the collection were written in response to the reckless and immoral celebration of the militarism of the Bush Administration. After the 9-11 attacks the world needed vision, humanity, and sophistication; instead it got blind, simple-minded warmongering. The Bush Administration's selfish commitment to war and wealth has been barbaric, obscene, and monstrous.

The Administration's declaration of global war on terror is an antediluvian approach to finding ways to address the world's problems of sectarian conflict, organized crime, overpopulation, poverty, hunger, despair, increasingly virulent diseases, environmental depredation, reckless depletion of global resources, and degradation of traditional cultures by the West's culture of consumption, amusement, and spectacle.

That so many Americans voted against George Bush indicates that many millions of Americans are still inspired by a romantic idealism and spirituality rooted not in blind nationalism but in the love of family and community and in a reverence for nature--God's handiwork. This is a spirituality of love, not hate, a spirituality of the sacred moment, not of an eager anticipation of Armageddon, a spirituality of sharing, not of greed, a spirituality that comes from living wisely, not simplistically.

It will be task of Tatiana's generation to restore spiritual health to an American way of life that has become obscenely wasteful and destructive of habitat, human and natural, of families and communities, and of individuals. It will be this younger generation that will reestablish America's moral authority in the world and make America a force of good for all human beings.



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The Right Wing on College Campuses and the

Battle of the frame

words: Jon R. Pike illustration: Matthew Andrews

“Liberal Arts faculties at most universities are politically and philosophically one-sided, while partisan propagandizing often intrudes into classroom discourse. It is appropriate for faculty to want open-minded students in their classes, not disciples.” This dire quote about academia is on the website of a group called Students for Academic Freedom, a

Washington D.C.-based group supported by right conservative activist David Horowitz. What the quote doesn't say is that the group only approaches this issue from one side and that the group's mission is to win the war of words on this issue using a tactic called “framing.”

In a 1993 scholarly article one of framing's chief theorists, Robert Entman, defined framing as, “to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.” Like a picture frame, framing shows some parts of the world outside the window, but not all. Framing is successful when it becomes part of the media discourse.

In December of 2003, the Colorado State Legislature heard from students and faculty about alleged persecution of conservatives on campus. Brian Glotzbach, a student who worked at the bookstore at Metro State University in Denver, said that while conservative authors like Sean Hannity were not making it on to required reading lists, authors like Michael Moore were. About 30 students and faculty members were there to testify in favor of a nationally promoted measure called the Academic Bill of Rights. Coverage of this hearing by the *Rocky Mountain News* demonstrates that the frame has been successfully embedded in this paper's coverage. The article says that the Academic Bill of Rights is “a proposal to ensure political diversity

on campus.” The article goes on to say, “The bill was dropped by its sponsor earlier this month after he received assurances from officials of several colleges that students would be protected against discrimination for their views.” The article carries the frame that conservative students are being persecuted for their views and need protection.

This frame has traveled through Colorado, Georgia, Missouri, Michigan, Oklahoma, Massachusetts, California, Utah, Washington, and Ohio, where state legislators supported an Academic Bill of Rights. Student governments at Brown, University of Montana, and Utah State passed resolutions supporting measures similar to the Academic Bill of Rights. Chapters of Students for Academic Freedom exist on 135 college campuses. The frame is traveling through the media as well, as a search of the Proudest database shows that over the last year, at least 69 newspapers and newsweeklies covered this issue.

But, as a picture frame only shows part of the view, a news frame tells only part of the story. Students for Academic Freedom encourage members to keep records on the party affiliation of faculty. This has already produced faulty data. According to data compiled by Horowitz's Center for the Study of Popular Culture, registered Democrats at 32 schools far outnumber registered Republicans. However, an even greater number are listed as unaffiliated. A footnote says the unaffiliated category includes faculty for whom they could not find voting records. The categories are blurred. There is also no way of knowing how many of the registered faculty are conservative Democrats or liberal Republicans. There is no justification for the conclusion that “most students probably graduate without ever having a class taught by a professor with a conservative viewpoint.” Also, keeping track of party affiliation just doesn't sound like a non-partisan activity.

A survey by the Center that purports to show that Ivy League faculty have an overwhelmingly left-wing bias has an unacceptably high sampling error of plus or minus 8 percent. A 5 percent margin of error is the usual acceptable limit for survey research. This high sampling error comes from the fact that the survey got responses from only 151 faculty members from all the Ivy League Schools. Statistician Howard Feinberg raised questions about the sample size in an article for the liberal Internet magazine, *Alternet*. He wanted to know if the pollster hired to conduct the survey only intended to survey that number of professors, or if that was all that

resolution supporting the Academic Bill of Rights, in the most recent session of Congress with 36 sponsors. It was referred from the House Committee on Education and the Workforce to a subcommittee but had no further action taken on it. Beyond the attention to the Academic Bill of Rights at the state and federal levels, there are other concerns. The frame has already been established and when the issue resurfaces, reporters who are familiar with it will likely return to those frames. And reporters unfamiliar with the issue may draw information from articles using those frames.

The issue will come up again. An Au-

together and one person could play the role of a hostile interviewer.

Another step should be to take a page from conservatives and organizing nationally. Thankfully, students and faculty on the left are beginning to recognize the seriousness of the right winning this war of frames. For instance, University of Southern California student Joshua Holland, editor of that school's left-of-center, *Trojan Horse*, is calling for liberals and progressives on today's college campuses to develop a long-term vision on this issue. The stakes are high and the right wants to win this war. Holland warns that the next generation of conservatives will be even

... framing isn't a rational argument, it's a story. If the frame of campuses dominated by left-wing professors is accepted then it doesn't matter if the data used to support that position is faulty.

they could get. He didn't get a response.

But framing isn't a rational argument, it's a story. If the frame of campuses dominated by left-wing professors is accepted then it doesn't matter if the data used to support that position is faulty. An April 13, 2004 editorial in the *Washington Times* repeated the survey's results with no mention of the sample size or margin of error. While the *Washington Times* is a conservative news source, framing is successful the more it gets repeated.

A May 23, 2004 article from the *Christian Science Monitor*, speaks of the frame when reporting about the congressional and state initiatives to support the Academic Bill of Rights. "Horowitz, who wrote the bill, said it was intended to protect conservative academics from discrimination on overwhelmingly liberal campuses." This is the frame in its entirety, reported as objective news. *Los Angeles Times* syndicated columnist, David Kelly, wrote in a November 29, 2003 column: "Some students have complained of being forced to attend abortion-rights rallies, of being required to write essays critical of the Bush administration and of having a strident anti-religion agenda pushed on them. Some who protested have said they received poor grades or were asked to leave the class." Kelly provides no evidence for these charges. But, again, a frame isn't an argument, it is a story. A March, 16, 2004 *USA Today* article adds to the story as it discusses the movement "to create an 'academic bill of rights' for college campuses, which sponsors say would promote intellectual diversity among faculty and protect students whose political views differ from those of their professors." This quote carries the frame.

Georgia Republican House Member, Jack Kingston, introduced a congressional

resolution supporting the Academic Bill of Rights, in the most recent session of Congress with 36 sponsors. It was referred from the House Committee on Education and the Workforce to a subcommittee but had no further action taken on it. Beyond the attention to the Academic Bill of Rights at the state and federal levels, there are other concerns. The frame has already been established and when the issue resurfaces, reporters who are familiar with it will likely return to those frames. And reporters unfamiliar with the issue may draw information from articles using those frames.

But, frames can just as easily be used on one side of the political spectrum as the other. In her book, "Prime-Time Activism," sociologist Charlotte Ryan provides detailed case studies of groups that have used frames well. People opposed to US foreign policy in Central America had to work against a powerful frame to justify military aid to the government of El Salvador and the Nicaraguan contras. This was the frame of Soviet expansion in Central America. A frame used to counter this was the "Human Cost of War," which stated that US policy caused death and injury to civilians and was not helping the most vulnerable.

Ryan says that those involved in issues that largely proceed from a liberal, or left wing perspective, are often fighting a losing war in the media as they often operate on a story-by-story basis. This is especially inefficient, as these groups do not have the resources to regularly manage news. She says that there are a few simple steps any group can use in the war of the frame. The first step is to identify the frame. The second step is to monitor news coverage and see how the frame is being used. Third, Ryan says that people have to recognize that frames are stories, not logical arguments. Lastly, she suggests rehearsing frames. A group could get

more dogmatic and uncompromising than the ones in power today. The ground the right has gained in the battle of the frames doesn't have to be lost to the left forever. ☆

For more information:

www.Studentsforacademicfreedom.org

Jon R Pike is a Ph.D. student in communication at North Dakota State University in Fargo. He researches and writes about media issues and how activists are using the Internet. He is writing a book chapter on Moveon.org for the book Cybermedia Go To War which is scheduled to be released in August of 2005. He can be reached at profpike@yahoo.com.

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Dancing with the Devil

For activists, using mainstream media to get a message out can be an effective strategy — not just a necessary evil.

words Peter Wirth photo Brandon Constant

Martin Luther King Jr. had a favorite saying, “One tiny little minute, just sixty seconds in it. I can’t refuse. I dare not abuse it. It’s up to me to use it.” Today we call it the sound bite.

King and Andrew Young, the resident Southern Christian Leadership Conference expert dealing with the media, understood the importance of the role of the media in the civil rights movement. King and Young emphasized the need for a new kind of daily message, one that was visual, that would dramatize the purpose of the campaign and bring public opinion to their side.

Activists and the Media Today

It is highly unlikely that a handful of activists, no matter how dedicated, will achieve broad social change if the majority of the public does not support their efforts or sympathize with their goals. To be successful in progressive campaigns involving public policy issues today, we need to mobilize public opinion to support our efforts.

In 35 years of working both as an activist and public relations consultant, I have been involved with a number of activist issues — the war in Iraq, civil rights of Arab Americans, US policy in Latin America and the Caribbean, recycling issues, refugee concerns, racism, organized labor, and occupational safety issues. Through my experiences, two dominant messages stand out regarding activists and the mass media.

First, lack of coverage of activist issues and events is often explained by “corporate control of the media” or “the media doesn’t care about our events.” But lack of media coverage can result from poor press work or a flawed media strategy. One prevailing attitude is that the media owes activists coverage regardless of what we do. This attitude can produce an environment where developing public relations skills is a low priority, allocating little resources to media relations training and failing to integrate a media plan as part of an overall strategy. Second, press work is much different than most activist activities. Press work by nature is a solitary activity. It is you and the media — a reporter, editor, or producer. You draft a press release and make a “pitch” to an individual. It is essentially sales, with a different emotional feel than demonstrations, civil disobedience, and community projects. These are empowering and inspiring experiences that create bonds and solve problems. But for most activists, press work doesn’t have that empowering result.

You and many other individuals are also competing for limited “news holes.” Newsrooms receive dozens if not hundreds of press releases everyday from nonprofit organization, politicians, advocacy groups, cultural groups, and businesses. Your chances for success in selling your piece of news, event, speaker, or op-ed article are dependent on a number of factors. Your knowledge of what an editor or reporter is looking for, and your working relationship with reporters, are key. Reporters are always facing deadlines, and appreciate prompt

Besides the obvious benefit of getting your message before a larger audience, press work also forces an organization to integrate into the community and engage people with issues and ideas.

return calls and emails, discussing human-interest aspects of the issue, and suggesting supplemental sources for the story.

Press work can be extremely frustrating. You can do everything right and still get your story bumped by a breaking news event or change in an assignment desk editor. If you are turned down, be persistent, patient, and skillful enough to see other news angles in the story to pitch at a later time.

Press Work and the Community

There is a tendency with any organization to be insular. Activist organizations are no different. Newsletters, speaking presentations, videos, and web sites are all appropriate means of communication. But they are often self-selecting, reaching only a limited audience.

Besides the obvious benefit of getting your message before a larger audience, press work also forces an organization to integrate into the community and engage people with issues and ideas.

Preaching to the choir will not change the people in the pews. If your position is a minority one, you need to be able to reach out to those people who have a different view. Using language and symbols that many people relate to will help send your message to the largest audience possible. For example, the colors red, white, and blue and the American flag are important symbols to many Americans, even those supporting peace, justice, and social change. Consider using these symbols in your anti-war banners and flyers.

In the process of drafting a press release, making a pitch to news producer, or writing an op-ed piece, reflect on what language will resonate with the largest audience possible. When reporters begin a story, one of the first questions they ask is "Why should the public care?" When you're preparing to talk to local TV, radio, and newspaper editors, ask (and answer) the same question. If you're planning an anti-war demonstration, find out which residents have family members stationed in Iraq, or if there are any veterans who will speak against the war. If you're holding a forum on civil liberties, find a community member who many have been a target of repression. Look for ways to demonstrate that your issue affects the community at large.

The Media Relations Budget

Most activist organizations run on shoestring budgets. However, media relations can be cheap and significant coverage can be generated on a limited budget. Press releases can be sent across the country and around the world for little or no money by e-mail and fax from your computer, or even from the local library. Your local issue might appeal to national or even international media outlets, and potentially reach thousands of people in the process.

For example, when a local activist and engineer partnered with Pastors for Peace on a trip to Cuba to deliver medical supplies and work to end the embargo, we devised an effective, but cheap media outreach campaign. A volunteer committee was formed and within a two-month period, the group generated about 40 news interviews for the price of a few postage stamps.

The following events were used as "news pegs" to pitch the story to local media outlets: an upcoming fundraiser for the trip; the arrival and departure of the caravan from Syracuse; passing the Mexican border; the arrival in Cuba, and the return to Syracuse.

We also got creative and pitched sending a reporter to Cuba to

the Syracuse newspapers. To sell the idea, we emphasized the stream of visitors from Syracuse to Cuba over the years and the Cuban refugee population in Syracuse. The reporter wrote a series of 13 articles. In the end, the story garnered radio and TV news and talk show coverage, newspaper articles, and a meeting with a news editorial board to discuss why the US embargo on Cuba should be lifted.

The Future for Activists

Generating news coverage is a skill that needs to be developed, but it is not as difficult as many activists would believe. It does require basic writing and communication skills. An outgoing personality, a dose of humility and persistence also helps - qualities many activists already have.

The more proficient activists become at writing press releases, understanding timing and news pegs, being persistent and following-up, developing relationships with reporters, and creating activities with the media in mind, the more news coverage they will generate.

The activist community is barely scratching the surface of what is possible with media relations, and the result - getting their message out to the largest audience possible.

The lessons of Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement and their strategic use of the media are clear. The ability to generate significant press coverage can change public opinion, and consequently public policy.

Representative John Lewis, D-Georgia, was a young college student in 1965 when he led more than 600 marchers along US Route 80 in Selma, Alabama, in a peaceful protest for voting rights. Many of the marchers, including Lewis, were beaten by state and local police when they reached the Edmund Pettus Bridge six blocks away. But the media coverage of "Bloody Sunday" and other Civil Rights demonstrations helped to change public opinion across the country. Five months later, President Lyndon Johnson signed the voting rights act. "Without the media," said Lewis, "The civil rights movement would have been like a bird without wings." ★

For more information:

Media Relations Conference: Pricy but worth every penny. Taped sessions are available for purchase at www.infocomgroup.com

Bacon's: National Media Directories and Electronic Database Services - www.bacons.com

U.S. Newswire: Electronic distribution service for news releases; reasonably priced - www.usnewswire.com.

Talkers Magazine: The bible of talk radio and the new talk media - www.talkers.com

Bulldog's Reporter National PR Pitch Book: www.infocomgroup.com

Peter Wirth is CEO of GW Associates, a progressive public relations consulting firm. For additional info go to www.come.to/public.inter.est.media. He can be reached at pwirth@acncom.net.



The *Indydependent* Sells Out?

NYC Indymedia editors wrestle with the age-old publishing question — does accepting paid advertising change the media you make?

by Courtney E. Martin

The *Indydependent*, the newspaper of the New York City Independent Media Center, negotiated a \$20,000 advertisement contract with clothing-maker American Apparel. Not only do these dollars double the grassroots paper's total budget (last year it was about \$18,000), but they could add up to an impending shift in philosophy among the global Indymedia network.

According to its web site, Indymedia.org is a "network of collectively run media outlets for the creation of radical, accurate, and passionate tellings of the truth." This lofty mission was born during the World Trade Organization protests in Seattle in 1999. Its work as a hub for independent journalists and producer of up-to-the-minute online coverage propelled IMC into worldwide notoriety as a leader in independent alternative media. IMC urged everyone — laymen and experts alike — to "become the media."

Independent Media Centers (IMC) all over the world have realized this dream in various ways, but most focus on the Internet. There are no official numbers, but IMC estimates that Indymedia as a whole has between 500,000 and two million page views a day. Unlike most other IMC's, the New York City center has poured substantial effort into producing a print newspaper. The *Indydependent* is distributed all over the five boroughs at cul-

tural centers, clubs, coffee houses, and events — anywhere, essentially, where potential readers hang out — because as Jed Brandt, advertising editor, explained, "Contrary to what people seem to think, not everyone in New York City has a computer." The newspaper is grassroots through and through, boasting no board of directors, no editor-in-chief, and very few paid staff members.

Given its roots, it is logical that IMC is philosophically tied up with the anti-consumerism/anti-corporation movement. Many of IMC's writers, editors, and designers are not only media activists, but are involved in the growing movement against the almost total infiltration of advertising into our daily lives. Brandt says, "I remember first coming to New York City as a little, little kid and it was like a playground to me. There were murals everywhere, parks had jugglers and musicians ... there was this idea that there was a civic space." He pauses, takes a drag of his cigarette, and then goes on. "Now the entire city is draped in advertising; murals turned into giant vinyl ad wraps."

The *Indydependent* has had no significant or consistent source of funding in its three years of existence. No big foundation. No trust fund kids. Not even a liberal think tank has offered to help out. So what does a group of activists and writers do if it is against

advertising in principle, but has to fund and grow a grassroots newspaper with virtually no financial support?

That's the \$20,000 question.

Brandt rephrased the dilemma that his colleagues and he face at the *Indydependent*. "Are we trying to create a space that transcends the problems of the world or are we creating a medium for exchange of information broadly? Basically, is it our content or our form that is most important?"

Brandt's own answer is content. After being part of the exhausting struggle to raise funds through grassroots organizing (mostly consisting of house parties), Brandt contends that it is just too much time and energy taken away from the real purpose — publishing the paper. The ad from American Apparel — a clothing company that prides itself on its commitment to the living wage and environmental protection — will bring in more money with its summer-long back page ad than the *Indydependent* was able to raise all of last year.

Further, the option of applying for funding from liberal foundations and think-tanks has proved fruitless and controversial as well. Even if the *Indydependent* were able to find such support — which seems unlikely to staff members — there are concerns about being beholden to the foundation's philosophy.

Such an arrangement could, in the long run, influence their content in opposition to their mission: keeping the media untangled from the sticky web of moneyed politics. The IMC is technically a non-partisan enterprise and wants to stay that way. In theory, accepting an ad from a capitalist company may raise questions about the ethics of advertising, but the integrity of the content can be maintained through editorial policy.

Other newspapers in the IMC network, though few and far between, have chosen to avoid testing that theory, instead relying on grassroots fundraising that the *Independent* has now abandoned. Sascha Meinrath, co-founder of the Urbana-Champaign IMC and contributor to their ad-free monthly newspaper, *Public 1*, pines for "altruistic venture capitalists supporting programs like the *Public 1* and the *Independent*." He doesn't believe that *Public 1* should include ads but, on the other hand, recognizes that "advertising provides one pragmatic solution that can often mean the difference between these organizations and projects staying afloat or ceasing to exist." Further, Meinrath explained, "I trust that the *Independent* staffers will not allow their content, or their radicalism, to be affected by this decision."

Though there has been some debate over the ad contract within the Indymedia community, the staff is hesitant to label it "controversy." There have been few voices of resistance, Brandt reported, but added, "For every person who doesn't want advertising: feel free to cut us a check and we will give you a space that says 'no ad here.'" In fact, out of the dozen people I spoke to in the IMC community, none had a decidedly anti-ad stance.

Chris Anderson, who originally wrote the ad policy and has been involved in the *Independent* for over two years, has no moral qualms about the ad or American Apparel, but does worry about the *Independent's* ability to handle the potential growth. "Money changes

everything," he explained. "I hope our process and structure are strong enough to handle the infusion of cash."

As Anderson knows, with big success comes big responsibility. The philosophical questions, it seems, will just keep getting more complicated — especially given the grassroots nature of the organization. According to the web site, Indymedia is currently developing a global decision-making process that will enable all IMCs to make decisions that affect the whole network. It states, "The current proposal is for Indymedia to form a 'global spokescouncil' that will confirm decisions on global Indymedia issues that local IMCs have made through their own decision-making processes." The *Independent's* decision to accept large-scale advertising, then, could influence the dialogue and decision-making process of the future council. The *Independent's* bold move to prioritize content and make life a little easier through advertising may become an important philosophical statement in the future of alternative media, even spilling from print to the Web page.

Meinrath reflected, "The continuing success of the global Indymedia network is predicated upon mutual trust, respect, and relative autonomy of individual IMCs. We are voluntarily affiliated because we share common goals of supporting participatory media and amplifying the voices and perspectives that the dominant media would rather ignore. Some IMCs will probably decide to use advertising to raise revenue; as long as the overarching goals and mission of the network is respected, I believe that the individuals on the streets and in their communities know best how to achieve these goals." ★

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What is Indymedia?

Looking at the past and future of Independent Media Centers on the five-year anniversary of the birth of a movement.

Most stories in the U.S. are told by five major corporations that determine, in part, who lives and who dies, who is important, and who is not. Dinner table conversationalists, voters, and elected leaders hum along with CNN and Fox News. Yet, adhering to tradition, we still stage protests on the White House lawn, as though that is where meaning is made.

In this world, capital is free to roam, but the movement of laborers is highly restricted. Global trade meetings hop around the globe, while those who protest these meetings are corralled far away in "protest zones." Wars expand and information contracts.

It is upon this stage that the Independent Media Center (IMC) movement enters. Since 1999 this network has sprouted 130 heads across 50 countries. In addition

to web sites, there are IMC print publications and a radio network. To participate in this global conversation about local struggles, you need no passport, no visa, no permission to enter. Perhaps that is why Indymedia has spread so widely, so rapidly. When given the opportunity, information and solidarity can move as fast as capital.

In Urbana, Illinois, the IMC had its humble beginnings meeting in living rooms four years ago. We collectivized our equipment and started to produce media. Now we are regularly producing content for radio, print, web, and cable access. We have a performance space, a library, an art gallery, and a community wireless cloud blanketing much of downtown with free internet access. Next spring we will flip the switch on a new

low-power FM station. And we have raised enough from our community to buy a building and create a larger media and arts center downtown.

Sure, we're producing a lot, but are we having an impact? We've grown fast, but is this sustainable? As for impact on a local scale, it is clear. IMC video footage was used in court to clear gay rights activists charged with felonies. Detailed reports about an Urbana resident abducted by the FBI and facing trial with secret evidence informed the movement to free him and helped lead to the dropping of secret evidence. Local mainstream journalists, editors, and government officials read our newswire.

Globally, the network is still at the beginning of the difficult project to generate a global awareness and global conversation. IMCs in Africa

are lacking. Language barriers exist. The IMC network is working out its process. Our strength is in bringing the full force of the network to bear on the reporting of a single event, such as global justice or anti-war demonstrations.

The core principles of the Indymedia network help sustain it: independence from state and national forces; open access to information and transparency of process; and decision-making by those who contribute labor. But principles don't make a movement, people do. The Indymedia movement will exist as long as people participate in it. If we get what we want, we won't need the qualifier "independent" anymore. We will have "media," heaps of diverse "media" pointing spotlights on many stories, many lives.

-Danielle Chynoweth



Countdown to Putsch

Sara Tretter

It's common knowledge that punks don't seem to age gracefully. Either you become that creepy old dude hanging out at shows with kids at least 15 years younger than you, or you hang up your mohawk, sell your records, and put on a suit. Are there any viable alternatives for punks who are getting older but are still holding on to their political ideals? Countdown to Putsch (CTP), a veteran New York-based hardcore band, is in the process of creating their own such alternative.

Asked recently if they had chosen to leave the hardcore/punk scene or felt that had been forced out due to their age, CTP responded that for them, it was a combination of the two. They say the scene isn't welcoming to "older" punks, and lifestyle choices to find a job, rent an apartment, maybe get married and have kids are often criticized. Regardless of whether this pressure is internal or external, sooner or later, most punks will feel it. How they respond is the interesting part.

At CTP's inception, the musicians were already a little old for the punk/hardcore scene: Ben Kates was 21, Rich Gilman-Opalsky was 26 and Chris Jensen was 27. Over the life of the band, CTP has departed more and more radically from the punk/hardcore scene. First, all three have always sought music and projects more interesting and chal-

lenging than what they were hearing at shows and creating with others. Second, while the politics of the band's members have shifted further left, their lifestyles have grown more mainstream: they took fulltime jobs, married, Chris even has a baby daughter. They were growing more and more out-of-touch with lifestyles that define your typical punk band.

CTP's process of growth and change is evident in their music and their packaging. In terms of musical evolution, Chris, Ben and Rich all have vivid memories of how they first got into punk, all saying it was exciting to hear music that challenged the senses and lyrics that challenged the status quo. "What drew me into hardcore and punk," says Rich, "was that I couldn't stand the sound of it at first! I saw in its sound and approach that hardcore punk was a challenge to mainstream music and values." CTP says it's disappointing today to hear new "punk" music that is no more challenging than what they heard all those years ago — the anthemic, rhetoric-driven songs that are so easy to sing along to that the message is lost. "The problem is that there isn't a lot out there for those of us who have been in punk for a long time," says Ben.

If you listen to CTP's three releases, you can hear how this discontent affected their

songwriting. The first release, *Handbook for Planetary Progress*, is fairly straightforward hardcore with some improvisation. The second release, *Ideas for the Living and Willing to Act*, combines their hardcore sound with a significant amount of improvised music/noise. And the third release, *Interventions in Hegemony*, is two CDs of fully improvised music, with lyrics vocalized over it. CTP really can't even be classified as a hardcore band anymore, but as a free jazz/improvisational noise project. For CTP, improv is constantly new, exciting, and challenging. For CTP, it's the perfect, cacophonous canvas on which to lay down political and thought-provoking lyrics. It meets the standard of being difficult to listen to, forcing accountability on the listener to actually work to enjoy the music and thoughtfully consider the lyrics. Rich says the move from making rock-structured, pre-arranged music towards wholly improvisational music was more than a practical or personal choice. "Improvisation may be the largest evolutionary marker I would call 'political' in the band's recent history." In their song "On Words," CTP calls improvisation a way to "discuss freedom by demonstration" and calls "narration" the "dominant tongue that is too much of everything we seek to be free from."

CTP's releases have also taken a new direction in packaging. *Handbook* comes with a 100-page handmade book of essays, stories, poems, and lyrics, mostly written in a somewhat self-righteous, heavy-handed tone. Style is noticeably all but absent — the book has a brown cardboard cover and is printed in small, black and white font. *Ideas* comes with a magazine, also containing lyrics and essays, but also containing humorous pieces, satire, and tons of pictures — not to mention full-color front and back covers that are politically on-point and attractive. *Interventions* is simply a 2-CD set, in a regular old jewel case, with a booklet containing lyrics and a short manifesto on the back. Very saleable.

CTP said that since lifestyle changes have prevented them from touring or even playing many local shows, they wanted the most recent release to get into as many hands as possible. Record stores didn't seem to know what to do with the handbook or the magazine — *Interventions* doesn't have that problem. However, CTP isn't trying to fool anyone into buying *Interventions* — it's got a "manifesto" on the back cover that gives the potential buyer a good idea of the expected accountability mentioned above. But these changes in packaging reflect an important aspect of CTP's growing up — the handbook was almost completely DIY — they assembled each one themselves. *Interventions* was just the opposite, a move away from traditional punk ideals. But the priority was to get the messages out to as many listeners as possible, a real political concern trumping the pseudo-politics of scenester-credibility.

What exactly are these messages? CTP doesn't have one particular topic on which their lyrics are focused. Rather, each release offers a broad spectrum of ideas and suggestions on an extremely wide variety of topics. On *Interventions*, songs address everything from criticism of Bush Administration and western medicine, to critiques of pacifism, distribution of wealth, and body positiveness.

While their politics have shifted from the far left to the even farther left, Ben says, "This shift has been gradual and small, and someone unfamiliar with the nuances and schisms of far-left politics probably wouldn't even notice that it had occurred." In general, CTP's message seems to be: Stop accepting what you see around you as the way things have to be. Look closer, see how fucked up it is? Now start thinking about what you can do to change it. Several songs focus on actual lifestyle changes you can make to make things better (in songs "Hours I Stole From Myself," "A Letter to my Mother About Vegetarianism," "Time's Up" and "One dollar, One vote, Many Dollars, Many votes.")

Countdown to Putsch hasn't perfected the punk aging process. In terms of the music, relying mostly on improvisation can poten-

tially mean not having to work together as a band nearly as much as with rehearsed songs. *Interventions* was less of a unified group project and more of a three-way split. The lyrics contradict each other in several places, leaving the listener somewhat confused. If you know whose voice is whose, then by the end of the CD you'll have an intimate knowledge of the personal politics of Ben, Rich and Chris, but little more than a general idea of the politics of the band as a whole.

Also, while CTP has not yet succumbed to this, their evolution has the potential to decrease musicianship. To the musically untrained ear, it can be difficult to distinguish between a skilled musician whose desire and interest has taken him past mainstream, easily digestible sounds, and a musician who just doesn't play his instrument all that well. Any three people with instruments could produce dissonance and non-traditional sounds, but it takes skill and work to do this in an interesting, engaging way.

Stop accepting what you see around you as the way things have to be. Look closer, see how fucked up it is? Now start thinking about what you can do to change it.

As far as the packaging project has gone, the intention to get that message into as many hands as possible may be the right one, but it isn't working. Sales on all three releases have been very poor. *Ideas* was bolstered by the band's 2001 tour, and for a band on a scale this small, touring is probably the only thing that's going to do it. Which leads to the last and most serious criticism of CTP: their lack of action.

All three members of CTP are very interested in social and political activism, and the ways in which they do this have matured right along with their music. However, as a band CTP is about as dormant as you can get. Chris says the releases are the action. "While it would be great if we could do more to 'promote' our product, the product itself is a coherent intervention, and consistently putting out music for a long period of time will have an impact" What this translates to is that CTP almost never plays shows, their last tour was three years ago and only lasted three weeks, and they do very little to publicize or promote themselves.

All CTP members are either in school or have full-time jobs, and all work in some capacity as teachers. They've have made ca-

reer choices that fit with the politics they sing and write about. They are not making a case for a punk to hit 23, graduate from college, and decide that it's okay to go and work on Wall Street or something, as long as you're still making political and musically challenging music. Rather, CTP is showing that you can make adult choices that gel with your grown-up punk philosophy, and you can gracefully move away from punk music into other genres that move and challenge you in the way punk once did. You have to re-assess your philosophy all the time, and adjust your actions accordingly. You also have to be willing to make some compromises, something which zealots of all stripes are resistant to, punks being no exception.

Despite the lack of record sales and non-existent tour schedule, CTP is still a model of a successfully aging punk band. They are largely able to hold on to punk ideals without making hypocrites of themselves or compromising the quality or intention of their



sound. They are taking part in what could be a revolutionary movement in the punk scene by opting out of the two options of growing stale or selling out. They have settled firmly into adult lives, but rather than be complacent about their music (which given the packed schedules of those adult lives, it would be very easy for them to do), they continue to push themselves to seek out and create music that is challenging, difficult, and innovative. Rather than make their band a fun side project or, at the other end of the spectrum, make it as marketable as possible, CTP prioritizes politics and sincerity, attempting to get their releases sold, enforce listener accountability, and encouraging listener reader feedback and interaction. Their politics have not suffered from their lifestyle choices but have deepened and become more refined and more mature. ★

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Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

1. Publication Title: Clamor. 2. Publication Number: 1534-9489. 3. Filing Date: September 27, 2004. 4. Issue Frequency: Bimonthly. 5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 6. 6. Annual Subscription Price: \$18.00. 7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (not printer): PO Box 20128, Toledo, OH 43610. Contact Person: Jason Kucsma. Telephone: 419-243-4688. 8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (not printer): PO Box 20128, Toledo, OH 43610. 9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor: A. Publisher: Become The Media, Inc. PO Box 20128, Toledo, OH 43610. B. Editors: Jen Angel, Jason Kucsma, PO Box 20128, Toledo, OH 43610. C. Managing Editors: Jen Angel, Jason Kucsma, PO Box 20128, Toledo, OH 43610. 10. Owner (If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.): Become The Media, Inc. PO Box 20128, Toledo, OH 43610, Jason Kucsma, PO Box 20128, Toledo, OH 43610, Jen Angel, PO Box 20128, Toledo, OH 43610. 11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: None. 12. Not Applicable. 13. Publication Title: Clamor. 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: July/August 2004. 15. Extent and Nature of Circulation, Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: a. Total number of Copies (Net press run): 7449. b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation: (1) Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions stated on Form 3541 (Include advertiser's proof and exchange copies): 936. (2) Paid In-County Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541 (Include advertiser's proof and exchange copies): 0. (3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution: 4642. (4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS: 103. c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 5681. d. Free Distribution by Mail (Samples, Complimentary and other Free): (1) Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541: 93. (2) In-County as Stated on Form 3541: 0. (3) Other Classes mailed through USPS: 4. e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means): 1362. f. Total Free Distribution: 1458. g. Total Distribution: 7140. h. Copies Not Distributed: 309. i. Total: 7449. j. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 80.80. No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: a. Total number of Copies (Net press run): 6527. b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation: (1) Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541 (Include advertiser's proof and exchange copies): 1027. (2) Paid In-County Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541 (Include advertiser's proof and exchange copies): 0. (3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution: 4864. (4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS: 80. c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 5971. d. Free Distribution by Mail (Samples, Complimentary and other Free): (1) Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541: 74. (2) In-County as Stated on Form 3541: 0. (3) Other Classes mailed through USPS: 3. e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means): 257. f. Total Free Distribution: 334. g. Total Distribution: 6305. h. Copies Not Distributed: 222. i. Total: 6527. j. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 94.48. 16. Publication of Statement of Ownership: Publication Required. Will be printed in the Nov/Dec 2004 issue of this publication. 17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner: Jen Angel, Editor. Date: September 27, 2004. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

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-Henry George

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Unlikely

When Michigan inmate Kebby Warner attempted to call her daughter on her fourth birthday, she discovered that the telephone number, which she had been calling once a month, was restricted. The reason? Michigan Department of Corrections had started a new telephone program with Sprint. Those on an inmate's telephone list had to pay a minimum of fifty dollars before they could receive a call from their incarcerated loved one. If the outside person was unable or unwilling to pay, Sprint and the prison kept the number restricted. The new system reinforced the sense of isolation and alienation that prisons inflict upon their inmates.

by Victoria Law



Communities

"Roberta," an incarcerated mother in California, learned of Warner's situation and offered to pay the fifty dollar deposit from her own prison wages. (The pay scale at Roberta's facility ranges from eight to thirty-two cents per hour.) "I know how it is not to hear your child's voice," she wrote in her offer. "I've been there. And thank God for the kindness of strangers that I was able to talk to them [my children] a few times during the roughest times. I would give it [the deposit] to her [Warner], just let me know if I can and where to send it, okay?"

Within prison activist circles, women's concerns have often been dismissed as personal, self-centered and apolitical. At the same time, women prisoners' resistance is often overlooked—usually because it is not as dramatic as the hunger strikes, work stoppages and riots seen in men's prisons. In addition, women in prison often complain about the apathy among their peers, furthering the impression that there is little to no unity in female facilities. However, women in prison have also demonstrated their capacity to network, share and help each other in times of need.

Prison activists and scholars have usually overlooked such actions, examining networking in female facilities through the lens of the prison family instead. However, the prevalence of the prison family—in which inmates take on traditional roles such as mother, father, daughters, aunts—declined after the 1971 Attica Rebellion as prisoner groups and social services for inmates began to emerge in its place. Women behind bars today are attempting to create community and share the few resources available to them without replicating the traditional gender roles of the patriarchal family.

Some acts have been as simple as comforting an ill companion. When Oregon prisoner "Boo" was taken to a prison infirmary after turning yellow, her fellow inmate Barrilee Bannister made a get-well card and had 80 women sign it. When Boo was released from the infirmary, the women on

her unit, seeing how much weight she had lost, shared their food from the canteen with her. While such actions do not overtly challenge or change Boo's medical condition or the inadequate health care system, they do break through the sense of isolation that prisons inflict upon their inmates.

Other strategies have had even broader effects. In New York State, inmate Kathy Boudin discarded the standard method of having women answer multiple-choice questions about unrelated paragraphs and instead used the issue of AIDS to teach literacy to her fellow inmates in the Adult Basic Education class. She handed out vocabulary worksheets drawn from an AIDS program the class had recently watched, encouraged students to write about their feelings about the disease and had the class write a play about the issue. Her students became aware of themselves as a community—first in the classroom and then in the larger setting of the prison. They not only began to help one another over the stumbling blocks towards literacy, but also used their newfound knowledge of the disease to support and comfort others.

Sometimes the networks have multiplied available resources, such as when women have assisted their peers with their legal work. After losing custody of her own daughter, Kcbby Warner used the

knowledge she had gained in the prison law library to assist another inmate with the legal paperwork that kept her from losing her child. Likewise, Margaret Majos and "Elsie," in two different Illinois prisons, have assisted women around them with their legal work. This sharing of resources is often reciprocated. When "Elsie" was placed on a suicide watch after engaging in a hunger strike against the unsanitary preparation of food, another woman on the unit lent her a pen and paper to write letters to outside supporters. Similarly, when Warner filed a grievance against a male officer, the



Women in Prison Break the Alienation of Incarceration

woman she had helped agreed to hold her paperwork so that prison officials would not "lose" or destroy it during a search or transfer.

Some inmates have been more systematic in their sharing and networking. Rhonda Leland, a California inmate, stated, "My greatest concern, outside of the personal issues of my children, are the women here." While other women have complained that those around them will not share or network but would rather squabble and complain, she has stated that they "do their best to network together but there is never enough resources or help." Despite the limited resources, Leland decided to reach out to people outside the usual prisoner support groups. She contacted Krista Buckner, an author of *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, and W. Mitchell, a motivational speaker, to promote self-esteem and positive self-images to the inmates at Valley State Prison for Women. However, Leland's work on women's self-esteem issues have by and large been ignored by scholars, academics and even prison activists; the lack of self-esteem, more specific to women than to men both inside and out, is not considered an exciting or glamorous topic nor are there striking and visible means to organize around this issue.

Not all attempts at networking and sharing are ignored. In 1987, the women at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility in New York started the AIDS Counseling and Education Project (ACE). By forming an official group — one that was approved by the prison superintendent — women were able to reach inmates throughout the facility instead of the limited few they encountered throughout the day.

Inmates involved in ACE not only educated and counseled their fellow inmates about HIV/AIDS, but also helped care for those with AIDS in the prison infirmary, breaking through not only the isolation of prison but also the stigma of AIDS.

Even with the administration's permission, ACE continually faced staff harassment and interference. Fearing that the group's one-to-one peer counseling sessions would lead to inmate organizing, prison staff made both counseling and life more difficult for ACE members. After an HIV positive inmate overdosed in the prison infirmary, prison staff demanded that ACE members take urine tests or leave the group. At times, prison officials also restricted inmates from meeting at their regularly scheduled time or using the meeting room.

ACE members not only managed to continue their program, but also received support from outside AIDS and health organizations: volunteers from the local hospital did seminars and trainings, and the AIDS Institute awarded the group a quarter million dollar grant. ACE members also wrote and published a book detailing the group's history and its impact on women with AIDS.

While the seemingly simple acts of sharing resources and comforting one another may not seem as threatening to prison control and security as inmate organizing and agitation, the potential power of women sharing and networking undermines the operations of a system that seeks to foster an atmosphere of alienation and isolation. The administration at Bedford Hills scrapped Kathy Boudin's literacy education model in favor of multiple choice questions. The Idaho Department of Corrections has an outright ban on its inmates sharing resources or materials. One inmate at Idaho's Pocatello Women's Correctional Center circumvents this policy by donating her books to both a books-to-prisoners program and the facility's library so that other incarcerated women may also read and enjoy them.

Women who reach out to their fellow prisoners risk repercussions. After nine years of assisting her fellow inmates with their legal work, California inmate Marcia Bunney was fired from her position as a law library clerk.

Despite the risk of retaliation, women in prison continue to help each other. California inmate Charisse Shumate taught her peers with sickle-cell anemia about both the disease and the necessary treatments. She also advocated the right to compassionate release for any prisoner with less than a year to live and was the lead plaintiff in a class-action lawsuit about prison health care. Shumate died in prison after the Board of Prison Terms denied her compassionate release. "I



Despite the risk of retaliation, women in prison continue to help each other.

took on [the battle] knowing the risk could mean my life in more ways than one," Shumate wrote before her death. "And yes, I would do it all over again. If I can save one life from the medical nightmare of CCWF Medical Department then it's well worth it."

Shumate's death did not deter others from continuing her work. Those she taught now teach others how to understand their lab work, chart their results, keep a medical diary and hold prison officials accountable for what they say and do. ★

Further Reading:

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Victoria Law has been doing prisoner support work for over a decade and has focused on women in prison since 2000. She is one of the co-founders of New York City Books Through Bars, a group that sends literature to inmates across the country, and is a co-editor of the zine Tenacious: Art and Writings from Women in Prison. You can contact her at vikkiul@yahoo.com

Reel Democracy

Jennie Rose

Are film festivals the last refuge?

A town hall with hundreds of benches and rows of chairs provides seating for people from all walks of life who sit down and share their views. This sounds too good to be true. The last place I would expect to witness this scene is in the red carpet setting of a major film festival. But nowadays, it's at the film festivals in such far-reaching locales (for some) as Pusan, South Korea and Saint Sebastian, Spain that the last platforms for truth telling still exist.

"I have begun to think of film festivals as the last refuge of democracy in this increasingly controlled and manacled world of ours," says feminist film scholar and author B. Ruby Rich who is an Adjunct Professor of Film Studies at the University of California at Berkeley and the author of *Chick Flicks: Theories and Memories of the Feminist Film Movement*. Rich is currently working on a book that re-reads cinema in the post-9/11 era. According to Rich, film festivals are "the last place where a true participatory discourse can prevail and where persons of deep-seated convictions and open minds can come to exchange views, surrender control, and be changed forever by what goes by on screen."

From humble beginnings (both the 1948 and 1950 Cannes festivals were cancelled due to lack of funds), film festivals are now covering the global political arena like a vast cult of democracy. "Once everybody wants a piece of the action, then more festivals are inevitable," enthuses Rich, who has worked in film exhibition for the last 30-odd years.

Nowadays it's Cannes, Berlin, Venice, Sundance Toronto, Saint Sebastian, Havana, Buenos Aires, Pusan, Tulluride, New York, Vancouver, Karlovy Vary located in

Czechoslovakia (former), Edinburgh, and Locarno, Switzerland. Each festival has become "important" in the global discourse of culture and cinema.

Like weeds, film festivals have a way of popping up in repressive environments. In fact, the first ever festival took place in Venice, Italy in 1932 against the backdrop of Mussolini's fascism. Giuseppe Volpi di Misurata, a complex figure who did not always bow to Mussolini, obtained an independent manifesto from the government that freed the festival from all government pressure. The festival's regulations made clear the intent to "exclude all interference of a political nature." As a result, amidst the thuggish atmosphere of the Mussolini regime, fair awards were guaranteed (audiences chose the winners) and thanks to a "special concession by the Head of Government," no one censored the festival entries.

Since then, festivals have often been sites where people bear witness to events they were never supposed to know about, where programmers exercise free speech in the face of repressive regimes. Take the example of the 1996 New York Film Festival. The festival was slated to premiere the landmark documentary *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*, about the events leading up to the massacre at Tiananmen Square. The Chinese government did not want to share this subject with the world. In the end, though, The New York Film Festival declined a formal request from the Chinese government to censor the film, and the documentary premiered before a rapt audience.

B. Ruby Rich was a part of the audience at that premiere and counts it as one her most memorable festival experiences. Rich shares the belief with others who support film festivals that if you reach even one person, the struggle to find distribution is worth while. To this end, her moment of glory came two decades earlier when Rich organized her personal tribute to the Stars and Stripes during the bicentennial.

"I got the *Chicago Tribune* (a traditionally conservative paper) to underwrite a festival of revolutionary cinema to commemorate the bicentennial," says Rich, who was associate director of the

Film Center of the Art Institute of Chicago at the time. "Everyone else was doing John Ford retrospectives and 'The History of the Western,'" so I did a two-week festival of revolutionary film. I showed all the Latin American films. I did American documentaries on university sit-ins. It was a great shot in the arm for people at that time in Chicago."

Of course, not all festivals are created equal. And over the years, the glitz of Cannes can eclipse the fact that many festivals spring up to fill political needs. It may be too easy to forget that all you need to have a film festival are a projector and an audience. For instance, The Conscientious Projector: Films for the People and the Planet, a small festival on Bainbridge Island, Washington, showcases film projects that underscore the connections between foreign oil, national security, global climate change, and energy conservation. It is now in its third year and growing.

Yes, there's both less and more than the "city on a hill" democratic utopia at work at film festivals. But, there's enough true democracy on the scene to take note. At film festivals, audiences may vote for their favorites, viewers may question filmmakers, stars may mingle with plebeians and films from rich countries and poor countries may get to share the stage. "We may give up on participatory government some days," says Rich, "but there's always hope in the cinema to get us by." During these days when heckling the president can get you fired, it turns out that we may have to look to film festivals as some of the last venues of free speech. ☆

A San Francisco survivor of the dotcom era, Jennie Rose has also survived as a music and film writer, an animator, and a corporate lackey. She usually writes about science and nature. Reach her at jemmeric@pacbell.

Critical mASS!

The Ride for Humanitarian Exhibitionism

words and photos Teri Danai



In the middle of an urban summer cook-out, the Charles Manson doppelgänger lifted up my skirt with a branch from the backyard and asked if he could take my picture. I was sixteen and thought the situation novel as hell. Photos were snapped, and fifteen minutes later this love-repressed vestal virgin found herself agreeing to model nude for a figure drawing class at his art studio. I justified the activity by its monetary value. A few weeks later, it was my first time naked in public, in front of a group of students. I quivered and fumbled on the art room podium as I changed poses. Years of negative body image reinforcement, layers of classic morose Christian values, and everyday experiences that brainwashed me into equating nudity with sexuality fell away in a mere three hours. The advent of artists worshipping my form for the express purpose of aesthetics was all it took to change my mind. So my life as an exhibitionist began, which soon turned into a tool for social change.

I experienced similar spiritual ecstasy on June 12, 2004 during the three hours of the World Naked Bike Ride. Globally, over 1500 naked riders from twenty-nine cities took to the streets. In Chicago, more than 250 naked cyclists collectively sought to face automobile traffic with our naked bodies. We sought the most efficient way to defend our dignity and expose the unique dangers faced by cyclists and pedestrians as well as the negative consequences we all face due to oil dependency and other forms of non-renewable energy. Additionally, we sought to renew publicly the sense of joy and wonder-

ment we hold in our most common experience: our body unclothed, in its simplest form.

Privatization of land and space seem to afford humans valuable experiences, such as sheltering, nurturing environments that foster community. However, when done without careful design consideration, these shelters and transportation structures become the prisons that keep us from having a community at all. Some people think that driving hybrid cars and vehicles that don't use fossil fuels alone will create social change. Unfortunately, when people go out the doors of their homes, immediately into an automobile, and arrive at their destination with no time outside, contact with others becomes extremely limited. When we don't have access to the people around us, we stop viewing one another as more similar than different. Instead, we grow to fear one another as we fear the unknown. Cycling together, clothed or unclothed, helps us stay in touch with one another. Cycling, and especially nude cycling, brings us to a place where we are willing to like one another because we are humble and vulnerable to each other. Cycling makes everyone around you aware that you are willing to do what seems more difficult in order to make progress. The rewards of physical health and a heightened social life make the choice that much easier.

During our ride, passers-by and auto-clad humans' responses ranged from drunken astonishment to deep-seated glee, from horrific amazement to wild laughter. The police did not arrest anyone. They didn't

even attempt to arrest anyone as our sea of naked cyclists, following our map-maker Travis Culley, made its way through some of the most wealthy, repressed and prestigious neighborhoods in Chicago, including the Gold Coast, the Magnificent Mile, the Gallery district, Bucktown, and Lincoln park. There were many highlights, such as the girl who carried a dog on her back, the pantsless priest, all the participants who employed many glittery accessories and body paints, and of course the nude tuba player carried by pedicab. Considering the Buddhist teaching, "we are what we think," we focused on pure enjoyment, functionality, and natural status for three hours. This truly led to elation, unpolluted breathing, and unspoiled love glow, which we will continue in many other naked cycling and socially conscious events.

The World Naked Bike Ride is a free, fun, non-sexual ride, organized by many different groups. It happens annually in 29 cities worldwide, and several times a year in Spain, Italy, Vancouver and Chicago. You can visit www.worldnakedbikeride.org to participate and to nominate your city for participation if it is not listed. ☆

For more information, email teri@worldnakedbikeride.org.

Teri Danai is a polymath living in Chicago IL who likes to ride her tallbike, paint murals, read, sew, garbage pick, and bring peace to her neighbors. She has written four books, and will read your ama if you ever meet her.

Orgasm: The Faces of Ecstasy

Blank Tapes and Libido Films
www.libidomag.com

Orgasm: to grow ripe, be lustful, akin to strength; intense or uncontrollable emotional excitement; the climax of arousal typically occurring toward the end of coitus. Orgasm: to lose control; embarrassment, private, secret; to finish, reach a goal; self consciousness, shame, fear, regret. Orgasm: to claim control; respect, dialogue, political protest, public, laughter, delight.

Orgasm: The Faces of Ecstasy, the latest documentary from Libido Films, approaches orgasm aware of the complex and contradictory definitions and implications surrounding sexual arousal. Shot over four and a half days, with 22 volunteers aged 22 to 68 from various backgrounds, *Orgasm* is a non-linear look at people before, during, and after they get off alone or with a partner. The twist? Hafferkamp and Beck shot the volunteers' from the shoulders up and asked them to look back at the camera while they came.

This looking back dares viewers to turn the mirror on themselves and ask how they look at and are looked at during sex. And, when one man smiles, waves, and says, "Hi Mom," this dialogue assumes entirely different dimensions. These are human beings who can make us laugh at all this serious sex talk.

Reminiscent of Yoko Ono's 1966 *No. 4 (Bottoms)*, *Orgasm* also confronts a common representation of sexuality. *Bottoms* is shot after shot

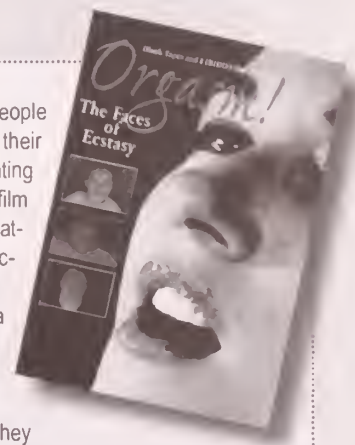
of close-ups of the bottoms of naked people walking on a treadmill. While they walk, their interviews play on the soundtrack, creating amusing and discordant effects. Ono's film refuses conceptions of acceptability or attraction as it turns butt cheeks into abstractions.

The central sequence of *Orgasm* is a close-up study of the aroused face which creates new intimacy and new explicitness. The interviews before and after this sequence ask the volunteers why they would participate, what this public display might mean, and how they look and sound when they fake an orgasm. Together, these three sections cohere into a funny and expressive hour.

The film's focus on climax as the goal of sexual arousal does limit its conception of sexuality. This may not be its intention, and the interviews work against such a simplifying of the focus, but this limit seems almost inherent in the project itself.

Still, *Orgasm* is definitely an enjoyable and valuable film. It is an extended redo of a project shot by Joani Blank, the founder of Good Vibrations, who made a 10-minute short about people coming at a sex party. Here, Libido has taken on a sexy and smart project in a sexy, smart, and delightful way, as usual.

-Brian Bergen-Aurand



THINK PINK!

by Justin Carter

Queer Radio Rocks Chicago

When *Clamor* first approached me to profile Think Pink, a queer radio show on WLWU 88.7 FM in Chicago, I wasn't all that intrigued or interested. I had never listened to the show; I had never even heard of it; and when I hear the words "queer radio show" or "queer music," my first reaction is to cringe and plug my ears.

Let me explain. I grew up in Iowa City, Iowa, and when I actually listened to the radio, I listened to University of Iowa radio because they played the good music. On Friday afternoons they ran the queer radio show. The playlist usually consisted of the stereotypical "queer music." They featured Pet Shop Boys, Donna Summer, Erasure, anything from the '80s, Dead or Alive, Madonna, and Cher. Are you following me? I, like many other queer people, do not listen to only that kind of music. Sure, maybe I am guilty of listening to it in the '80s but by the late '90s, I had evolved.

So, against my better judgement, I tuned in to Think Pink to give the show a listen. Only, I couldn't tune in because of the limited area that can receive the broadcast from the Loyola University campus on the North East side of Chicago. Luckily we live in the 21st century, and I was able to obtain a copy of the show from the co-hosts Ali & Erik. I received a CD a few weeks later and put it aside because I was still very skeptical and wanted to avoid an hour and half cringing and holding my hands over my ears. Finally, as the deadline for this piece approached, I listened to the CD. I listened again. Then, I listened one more time.

I couldn't believe what I was hearing. It's different; it's something on the radio that I actually have on my iPod. It's Magnetic Fields, it's Belle & Sebastian, it's the Pixies. And, oh wait, it's also Pet Shop Boys, Indigo Girls, and Morrissey. But wait, what's that? Could it be punk rock? Ahhhhhh, indeed it is. Think Pink is also the band Pansy Division.

See, there is this preconceived notion, correct me if I am wrong, that queers all listen to the same typical "gay" music. Showtunes, Barbara Streisand, Celine, Whitney, Cher, Madonna,

anything with a house techno dance beat. Sure, maybe some of us do listen to that, and when walking through Boy's Town, you can hear plenty of it. But, some of us still want our rock and roll, our pop and hip-hop, and, even, our punk.

Ali & Erik, Think Pink's hosts, do a great job mixing up the show and not just sticking to one genre. Sure, a vast majority of the musicians on the play list may be gay musicians, but you have to remember it is a show geared toward the queer community. Still, sometimes they break from the expected, and it is nice to know that they are playing new music for people who have been prisoners of stereotyping.

If a queer teen in small town Nebraska is only exposed to typical queer music on radio and television or in film, the vicious cycle will continue. They will think, "I better stop listening to Metallica and better start listening to Madonna, otherwise I'll be in this closet forever." Without alternatives, queer youth will continue being pulled into the typical factor: One day they are alternative rock teens listening to Nirvana or Smashing Pumpkins, and then they see a gay character on TV or in a movie. The next day they adopt a higher voice, maybe a lisp. They trade in their music collection at the local used CD shop for Madonna and Cher collections. I know, I did it. We become other people's stereotypes. Eventually, I learned that I am my own person and what others projected on to me was not my scene. But other people want to be accepted by their community, and isolated queers will sometimes not see that it is okay to be different.

Shows like Think Pink will help and, we can hope, broaden their music and cultural palettes, and also let straight people know that we don't always fit that "friend-of-Dorothy-Barbara-Streisand-ice-skating-Madonna-loving-dancing-queen" prototype. Think Pink is music made by and for the GLBT community in Chicago and beyond.

To listen online go to www.wluw.org. Think Pink airs Tuesdays, 6:30-8:00p.m. (CST).



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what we're talking about

[PRINT]

[Best American Erotica 2004]

Susie Bright, ed.
Touchstone Books
www.touchstonebooks.com

We will never discover universal truths about the realm of sex and desire. No one act will turn everyone on, which means no one erotic story will excite everyone. However, we do have Susie Bright, the unofficial observer and recorder of sex and sexual desire in America, and she comes close to finding a little something for everybody in *Best American Erotica 2004*. Each year she puts together a sampler of the best American erotica published around the country and tries to find at least one sexy truth (in fantasy form) for everyone who picks up the book.

The submission policy for her collection requires previous publication, but that is a pretty broad requirement. Bright includes personal web sites and zines in addition to books by major publishers. The result is a cross-section of talent

and topics in sex, a big celebrity name (an excerpt from actor Alan Cumming's novel), a pseudonym, and every kind of writer in-between. The variation in style and experience is exciting and refreshing, but occasionally the juxtaposition works against the writer and the story: not every piece is as refined as the others, nor does each stand as strongly on its own. But this is often the burden carried by a collection.

As an editor, Bright's talents lie not only in selecting the best of each erotica genre, but also in her arrangement of the stories. While each story could be devoured singularly with each sitting, reading straight through creates a delightful ebb and flow for the reader, switching activities and partners, varying pace and rhythm.

I was immediately drawn to "A Red Dress Tale," a story about a woman's first-time negotiation and experience of a submissive exploitation fantasy. Though I didn't initially enjoy another story of oversexed backstabbing astronauts filming sexual exploits in space. I couldn't get the idea out of my head afterwards. For some, the lesbian softball players doing it under catcher's gear might not electrify the

same as the man trying on women's lingerie in a public dressing room while being humiliated by his wife. However, I always felt compelled to continue reading and see where the story would end. If I ended up closing the book and rewriting the fantasy in my head to better suit my personal needs, the erotica still did its job of connecting the two most important sex organs in a reader: the brain and the, well, you know.

-Raymond Johnson

[Girls Rock!: Fifty Years of Women Making Music]

by Mina Carson, Tisa Lewis, and Susan M. Shaw
University Press of Kentucky
www.kentuckypress.com

I'm driving across New Mexico en route to Utah, repacking a tent, cello, guitar, and review copy of *Girls Rock!* into my truck every morning. The book is billed as bringing together "history, feminist analysis, and developmental theory to look at how and why women have become rock musicians." The authors deliver on their promise, alternating between quotes and summaries of all the Judith



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Butlers, Andrea Dworkins, and Adrienne Riches of the West and the curt peppered statements of female musicians local, famous, and infamous.

The book starts slow, the first chapter reading like a 20th century Genesis from Lillith's perspective. This is our feminist rocker genealogy illustrated in line after line of "first guitar" creation stories. Paz Lenchantin, Bitch (of Bitch and Animal), Emily Saliers (of the Indigo Girls), Rana Ross, Kate Schellenbach (of Luscious Jackson), and the Wilson sisters (of Heart) are some of the familiar names to make an appearance.

The rest of the book is more interesting, if not always more accessible. The authors do a wonderful job highlighting oppression — primarily race, gender, and orientation — and its effect not only on female musicians, but on the music, the creative process, the business, and the largely untold herstory of rock. I was amazed at how many of these women I had never heard of.

Lack of familiarity is what makes this book difficult to absorb. Without a prior at least cursory knowledge of feminism and the herstory of rock, it would seem difficult to care about the plights of girlocker x or y at the label, in the dressing room, or in the studio. But most of the stories are touching, personal, gritty, real, and political. In fact, many of the most influential female musicians were also known for their activism or personal strength. Some of the most prominent include Malvina Reynolds, Aunt Mollie Jackson, Peggy Seeger, Kathleen Hanna, Joan Baez, Ani DiFranco, Sweet Honey in the Rock, and Tracy Chapman. And, brief memorials lend weight to the accounts: "Balladeer Ella May Wiggins sang her protest songs in the coalmines of Kentucky and was shot to death for her activism." As well, the stories' attention to rock 'n' roll's black roots was also crucial in making this a complete and

accountable work. From Missy Elliot and Queen Latifah to all the women of Motown, black women tell their distinct but related history of rock.

The structure of the book is cyclical, striding through eight broad topics and examining rock herstory, psychology, and process through each. The book discusses the girl and her instrument, the girl and her race, the singer and the song, the band, the women's music movement, the girl and her image, the business, and survival. Though repetitive, I got used to the authors' style: smart and truly feminist analytical poetry.

The most invigorating bits of the book were about people, places, and events I know, like Ladyfest Midwest the Chicago scene. In fact, I laughed aloud when I came across a mention of my own band. It is exciting to see my own experiences part of such a work but also a bit sad that we can even begin to fit our history into one short book. So much gets erased.

In the end, as a female rocker, I learned a lot from *Girls Rock!* It gave me a concrete encyclopedia of names and faces of women in rock, places to store away in my mental roll-o-deck. It gave me a real sense of a legacy, that we have grandmas who've been building these bridges for us. It's a powerful thing to be written into being, to illuminate the hidden stories with joy.

-Natalie Nguyen

[Globalize Liberation: How to Uproot the System and Build a Better World]

Edited by David Solnit
City Lights, 2004
www.citylights.com

Chock a block with over thirty essays, *Globalize Liberation* came to me on the same day we

learned that 'W' was coming to our little town of 15,000. I'd been hearing about this book from a friend in London. Read it, he said. With three days to organize, 1,500 demonstrators turned up to say no to Bush (the largest political protest in our town's history) and by the end of his visit, three of us were in jail. I was in the middle of George Lakey's chapter, "Strategizing for a Living Revolution" about how Otpor, a youth movement in Serbia, organized to oust Slobodan Milosovic, when were informed by the authorities that they'd be gathering evidence before deciding how to charge local activists.

I mention this because too often really good books seem far away from our everyday struggles; disconnected from the solutions we muster and the larger movements into which we fit. We feel clumsy and flummoxed while the writer's we most admire make it all seem so much sexier, lyrical, and in any case, never boring. Solnit's collection is an antidote. It took me away and brought me back-inspired, more defiant, ready.

An activist himself, Solnit's twenty years of experience in direct action manifestations, Art and Revolution, as well as his carpenter's hands have resulted in a poetic, smart, and immediately useful volume of essays on topics ranging from Post-Issue Activism, Prefigurative Politics, Street Theater, Forward Movement, and Anti-racist organizing. The pieces in this collection are grounded in real stories and real lessons, bringing the rebellions in Argentina, poll-tax resisters in Scotland, and farm workers in Immokalee to readers with passion and the intention of advancing concrete, practical, and beautiful solutions. Standout offerings include Patrick Reinsborough ("Decolonizing the Revolutionary Imagination"), John Jordan ("The

Zine Spotlight

Verbicide #11

Jackson Ellis, Editor-in-Chief
Scissor Press
www.scissorpress.com

Twenty-Four Hours #4

Josh Medsker, publisher/editor
www.geocities.com/twentyfourhourszine

Ooh, I love magazines, so much that tossing another one on the leaning tower of must-reads risks serious detriment to my social life. But for Verbicide the risk must be taken. It captured my imagination so fully that I can't wait for the next issue.

On the cover *Verbicide* claims broadly to cover "independent literature, music and art." What ties together the short fiction, band interviews, photography, poetry, and non-fiction is the challenging nature of all the art — rebellious and hard to classify, sparking my interest rather than making me feel alienated from a particular genre. Even the coverage of bands I'd never heard of made me want to check out some samples on the internet. Faves were "KALM Correspondence" by B. Brandon Barker, a short story in the format of letters written and received, about one man's battle against the tyranny of lite FM, and "Bill Shields: The Seal Who Never Was," by Seth Gotro, a non-fiction piece exposing one of the author's literary heroes as a fraud, and exploring the deep relationship between artist and audience.

Ok- I'll admit that I volunteered to review *Twenty-Four Hours* simply because I liked the name. What I found was a thoughtful literary zine, mostly short fiction with a small poetry section and two excellent interviews.

The conceptual bridge between fiction pieces seemed to be the highly personal nature of the stories. Only one of the five stories was not written in the first person. Although the plots differed greatly, each story explored one character's relationship to a situation, surreal or mundane. I found the quality of the writing to be somewhat inconsistent, but one standout piece was "Epilogue (Part 2)" by Jeff Burandt, a futuristic story written in a slang reminiscent of "A Clockwork Orange" or Frank Miller's "Dark Knight Returns."

Josh Medsker, the editor/publisher, conducted both interviews in the zine, one with Levi Asher of LitKicks.com, and one with fellow 'zine publisher Susan Boren, creator of the 'zine *ClipTart*. I fully enjoyed both, especially Boren's. As a zine happy urbanite recently relocated to a more mainstream cultural zone, I appreciate any introductions to independent writers and publishers.

Overall I thought *Twenty-Four Hours* was well put together, and I plan to check out the next edition, but I liked everything about *Verbicide*, so enough said — head out to an alternative magazine rack or get on the internet and keep these magazines in business!

-Stella Meredith

Sound and the Fury: The Invisible Icons of Anti-Capitalism"), and Manuel Callahan ("Zapatismo Beyond Chiapas")

Globalize Liberation is a diagnosis, prescription, and the evidence of wellness in many small and large instances around the world. If you want to make change, this will set you on your way with strategy (because it "counters despair and fosters vision"), tactics, and abundant creative inspiration like "fire in dry grass."

-Holly Wren Spaulding

[The Spirit of Terrorism]

Jean Baudrillard

Verso, 2003

www.versobooks.com

"Allergy to any definitive order, to any definitive power, is — happily — universal," Jean Baudrillard says in his work *The Spirit of Terrorism*, observing that hegemony is, at least, universally distrusted and, at worst, loathed. What, then, allows a confrontation with hegemony? Baudrillard posits that only singularities, individualized cultural situations, can threaten this definitive power. Competing hegemonic regimes can't — they will ultimately be consumed dialectically by merely following their hegemonic impulse to join in the creation of a broader universal order. September 11th and our ongoing war on terror is not, then, "a 'clash of civilizations', but (a) confrontation between undifferentiated universal culture and everything which...retains something of an irreducible alterity." Islam, in this reading, is "merely a moving front" where opposition to hegemony can find temporary shelter. It is singularities, defending themselves against hegemony, that perpetrated the 9/11 attacks and it is against them that hegemony now defends itself.

The Spirit of Terrorism is Baudrillard's consideration of the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center, this conflict's most famous battleground. Early in the first of the four essays compiled here is the following declaration: "Terrorism is immoral. (A)nd it is a response to a globalization which is itself immoral. So let us be immoral, if we want to have some understanding of this..." He further urges us, before considering this event, to "try to get beyond the moral imperative of unconditioned respect for human life" and give credence to the decision to put other values before human life — things like justice, freedom, and the dignity of others. In order to address 9/11, we must realize that the enemies of hegemony are driven, not by a "hatred bred of deprivation and exploitation, but (by) humiliation." The architects of the 9/11 attacks were not the poor and desperate, they were educated and relatively affluent. Their motivations can't be understood with the same tools used to understand the Intifada, for example. This is a new terrorism, a terrorism of living room televisions more than of body counts, of "death in real-time — 'live' This is the spirit of terrorism" in evidence in the 9/11 attacks according to Baudrillard

The goals of this new terrorism are not new. Like many terrorist strategies, these new terrorists aim to disrupt the system. What distinguishes this terror is tactical. "As soon as they combine all the modern resources available to them with this highly symbolic weapon, everything changes." The weapon in question is the terrorists' own deaths. These tactics reflect a competence at using hegemony's own weapons and a profound understanding of the symbolism and utility of a willingness to die.

Baudrillard's analysis of the American response to this new landscape follows and is not, primarily, a discussion of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. It focuses rather on the emotional response to 9/11's symbolic and very public attack. The most notable visceral response, on Baudrillard's view, is the "American people's immense compassion for itself — with star-spangled banners, commemorative messages, the cult of victims..."etc. This attack vindicates all that came before. America, to Baudrillard, is given "the right to be the best...from now on, Americans are victims." We are learning the hard way what humiliation feels like, a day-to-day cultural fact of life for much of the Third World. "The worst thing for global power is not to be attacked or destroyed, but humiliated," Baudrillard offers.

Tragically, since the attacks, America has faced a "challenge (that) can be taken up only by humiliating the other in return." This desire for humiliation has led us to wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and, more troublingly, we find that "freedom is already fading from minds and mores, and liberal globalization is coming about in precisely the opposite form — a police state globalization."

-Keith McCreia

[The Journal of Aesthetics & Protest]

Marc & Robby Herbst, et. al Editors

www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org

This, my first Journal, proves that no subject is too erudite or too specific for indy media to address. Our intrepid editors tear it up on a variety of subjects and never leave you feeling as if your intelligence has been doubted. Corey Dickey's excellent discussion of Japanese playwright and author Yukio Mishima more than covers the six buck cover price. Dickey powerfully reminds us that the anti-modernisms that inform post-modernism, whether in the aesthetics of Mishima or the philosophy of Heidegger, remain indigestible medicine — a clump in throat of any critique of mercenary liberal capitalism. Other subjects include the role of beauty in revolution and the difficulty of maintaining truly open art spaces and communities for practicing artists. Really a great zine

-Keith McCreia

[The No-Nonsense Guide to World Poverty]

Jeremy Seabrook

New Internationalist / Verso, 2003

www.versobooks.com/www.newint.org

When I first saw the title to this book I was turned off because it sounded like an embarrassingly insulting Fodor's travel guide. Fortunately, it ain't. It's a beautifully written and information filled indictment on the ideology of Capitalism worldwide and the myths it perpetuates. Some of those myths, that poverty can be cured through charity, "development," or more capitalism, or that market culture and 'free trade' create more jobs in the third world, are torn apart and dispelled by Seabrook. Not only in a manner that is backed up with hard facts, but with a language that, while describing a world filled with exploitation and manipulation, is also direct and poetic. The different indictments on the post-Cold War poverty that grips most of the population of this planet, is chopped up into bite-sized pieces that make the subject easy to digest. This book (and all the books in the *No-Nonsense Guide* series) is pocket-sized and only 130 pages. But in those short 130 pages Seabrook manages to show both the personal affects of poverty of individuals around the world thru short biographies, and also show how the West systematically creates this situation to our own benefit and the rest of the world's detriment.

Through six chapters, Seabrook tries to dispel how those who create poverty, the West, define what it is through the use of facts and statistics, and how they are presented to us. For example, one statistic says that 1.2 billion people exist on less than a dollar a day, but what it doesn't say is that many of those people are making less than a dollar a day because they exist through barter, and are not part of the global economy where people work for wages. Seabrook contends that one of the goals of international capitalism and colonialism is make the inhabitants of the world part of a global economy controlled by the West, where "third world" nations are to be used as Producers for us, the Consumers. Most of us are led to believe that poverty is something that is the fault of the people that are its victims, or an unfortunate circumstance resulting from one's surrounding environment (such as starvation). But, in reality, it is more than likely created from outside sources. Seabrook points to a culture of Colonialism and Imperialism that is endemic in the West. We live in a culture that survives off of the poverty we inflict on the rest of the world. As the author states, "colonialism was not an event, it was a process and it continues today"

The No-Nonsense Guide to World Poverty is excellent not only as a primer on poverty for those who are ignorant about it, but also provides more ammunition for those well versed in the subject matter. (Another excellent book on this subject that I highly recommend is *The Lords of Poverty: Power, Prestige, and Corruption of the International Aid Business* by Graham Hancock)
-SKOT!

For Your Coffee Table ...

Brian Bergen-Aurand

**Women by Women:
Erotic Photography**
Edited by Peter Delius
and Jacek Slaski
Introduction by
Sophie Hack and
Stephanie Kuhnen
(Prestel, 2003)

This is an aggressive investigation. It centers female photographers to ask how the female lens alters the erotic. It also centers the relation between the subject, artist, and spectator to ask how women photographers challenge these boundaries. After a long history of men looking at women, this book asks how women look at women.

Included are images by internationally recognized female photographers Eve Arnold, Sylvia Plachy, Lillian Bassman, former model turned photographer Ellen von Unwerth, and Ellen Auerbach. So small a sample would provoke long conversations about women photographing women in an erotic light. Among these women, though, is an outstanding collection of newer lenses presenting the female form from multiple angles.

Katrina Webb's black and white bed-play is a ticklish and athletic jaunt between the curve of a calf muscle and a lampshade on a woman's head. Lucia Ferrario hides her model's face behind jet-black hair, a contrast against pale skin and white sheets. Freckles, blemishes, the slight black lines of cleavage and the gap between front teeth press against the frame in Melissa Ulto's close-up work.

Ivana Ford's woman in the doorway is the most seductive of the collection. A yellow spotlight on a black dress, hair, and background, and an eyebrow raised enough to rhyme with the curl of a bang take hold. In contrast, Dianora Niccolini's giant body against a cityscape, reasoning the neighbors from a rooftop, is spiritedly defiant, comical, and even slightly intimidating. Merging with their black background, Nana Watanabe's cartographies of the body verge on abstraction.

Most exciting of all are Erika Langley's collaborations. Her beautiful, bold, unabashed, and interactive approach to women and their bodies refreshes old ideas of what happens between a photographer and her model. Seeing her in the frame with her models blurs the assumed boundaries and interrupts the standardized hierarchy. I wish there were more of her here.

Love and Lust
By Donna Ferrato
(Aperture, 2004)

How do we keep love *and* lust alive? This is the question behind Donna Ferrato's follow up to her acclaimed documentation of domestic violence, *Living With the Enemy* (1991). In her latest collection, Ferrato photographs people engaging with multiple partners, highly charged sexual personas, or more traditional relationships to show how love and lust are intimately connected. Restrictive morality is her target, and, as she



says, "I offer these images as another way to think about how to live in the spirit of both love and passion — in all their tantalizing varieties."

Her lens focuses on the normalcy of all these activities. Playing a dominatrix is as normal as kissing a camel at the zoo or tugging on your sister's braids. Dawn hugging her dying great-grandmother, Mark and Steve lazing in bed with their poodle, and a woman emerging from the "car wash" at the Lifestyles swingers convention share a common ground. Annie Sprinkle's "tittie chapeau" fits as well as Patrick Buckley's "mangina" or a traditional white wedding dress. An older couple holds hands, two elephants nuzzle, one woman takes four partners, and no one seems hurt, manipulated, or objectified. In these photographs, people hold hands, eat breakfast together, suck on and spank one another, lie in the grass together, climax together or alone, and march side-by-side for women's rights. All the while, the emphasis is on honesty, love, lust, and respect.

Ferrato's images challenge monocular visions of relationships as she repeatedly asks why we can't have more than we do. Cultivating a healthy lust "is central to a healthy and vigorous psyche," she says. Perhaps that's the most important point of all.

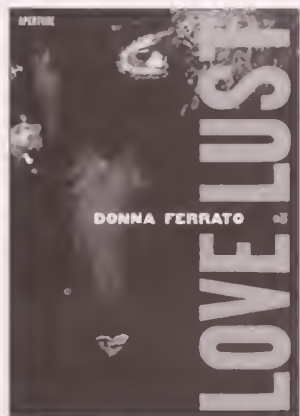
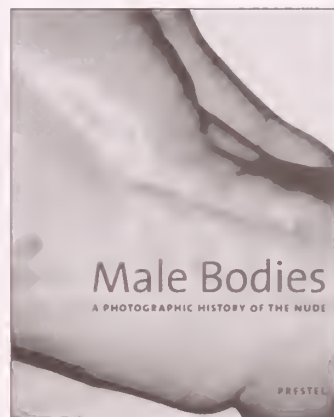
**Male Bodies:
A Photographic
History of the Nude**
By Emmanuel Cooper
(Prestel, 2004)

When it comes to the history of the male nude, Emmanuel Cooper wrote the book, literally. From his first study of the male nude, *Fully Exposed: The Male Nude in Photography* (1990), Cooper has immersed his readers and viewers in the sexual politics of representation. An art and photography historian and regular contributor to major gay periodicals, Cooper brings his formidable historical knowledge to bear on this chronological collection of 50 provocative photographers to ask: How have images of the male body been used?

Since 1839, images of the male body have documented physical perfection, medical ailment, anatomical study, portrait modeling, athletic prowess, erotic pursuit, gay iconography and the effects of HIV/AIDS. Cooper brings these images together against the backdrop of their cultures to show us the multiple histories of the male nude. Strikingly, he argues, how cultures continue to play hide and seek with images of the penis speaks loudest about when the male nude is the most transgressive.

Some of the most canonical photographers are here: Eakins, Muybridge, Sandow, Weston, Cunningham, White, Warhol, Leibovitz and my personal favorite, Nan Goldin. Their presence reminds us of a crucial photographic trajectory. In addition to these touch points, the collection also includes some outstanding entries on Will McBride, Duane Michals, Robin Shaw, Tony Butcher, and Jonathan Webb.

With each of these male and female photographers, we gain another view of the less studied history of the male nude and a new point of departure. In bringing these studies forward, Cooper asks us to contemplate why the male nude is so important right now. He says, "This is an appropriate moment to look at the new wave of photography of the male nude within its historical context, and how this reflects and comments on the times in which we live." What we see and what we don't see tells us a lot about ourselves.



... a welcome entry into the arena of teen media that very well may, given time and a few more pages, give the media its much needed kick.

[Rebel Lives: Sacco and Vanzetti]

John Davis, ed.

[Rebel Lives: Louise Michel]

Nic Maclellan, ed.

Ocean Books, 2004

www.oceanbooks.au

Ocean Books' *Rebel Lives* series is an accessible introduction to the lives of men and women whose actions had a profound influence in the radical movements of their times. Some, like Chris Hani, Haydee Santamaria, and Louis Michel, are unfamiliar to most of us. Others, like Albert Einstein and Helen Keller (reviewed in *Clamor*, Jan/Feb 2004) are well-known, but their radicalism has been left out of conventional histories. The books begin with a short introduction to the topic, followed by excerpts of primary and secondary sources including writings by the subject, their contemporaries, and works by later historians on the subject. The editing is excellent. Selections are short and varied. Each chapter has an introduction explaining the relevance of the texts included. The books are easy to read, even with no prior knowledge of the subject. I had done prior research on Sacco and Vanzetti, so their story was familiar to me, but Louise Michel I had never heard of. In either case I found the books to be interesting and informative.

Louise Michel was a leader of the Paris Commune of 1871. Though short-lived (it only lasted two months) the Commune served as an inspiration for later revolutionary movements. Michel was the head of the Women's Vigilance Committee, but also a part of the men's committee. She fought with the men and during her trials refused to have a lesser sentence than her comrades due to her sex and proved an inspiration to Emma Goldman, whose story of their first meeting is included. Also included is a poem about her by Victor Hugo, and writings on the Commune by Marx, Engels, Bakunin, Kropotkin and Lenin. Michel's story is inspiring in her complete devotion to the revolution. As Emma Goldman wrote, Louise Michel stood out sublime in her love for humanity, grand in her zeal and courage.

The book on Sacco and Vanzetti is more interesting due to its relevance in today's political climate. Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were arrested in 1920 for the murder of two men during a payroll robbery. They were wrongfully convicted and sentenced to death, and

were executed in 1927. The men were convicted because they were immigrants, the lowest caste of society. And even worse, they were anarchists. The evidence against them was flimsy and the trial was a mockery of objectivity. The judge in charge of their sentencing was quoted as saying "Did you see what I did to those anarchist bastards the other day? That will hold them for awhile."

The book includes writings by both Sacco and Vanzetti, Eugene Debs, Upton Sinclair, H.G. Wells, Emma Goldman and Howard Zinn. During the appeals of the case there was an international movement in support of the two men. People gave what little money they had to the defense fund. There were protests around the world. And still the men were executed. Sacco and Vanzetti were considered terrorists and were convicted due to their ethnicity and political beliefs. It is a story that should be remembered in this climate of fear in our country today.

-Heather Mayer

[Serpents In The Garden: Liaisons with Culture and Sex]

Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair

CounterPunch/AK Press

www.akpress.com/www.counterpunch.org

Serpents In The Garden is a new book by the editors of *CounterPunch*. If you are familiar with the reporting and good old muckraking found in *CounterPunch* you will have an idea of what to expect from this collection of essays. The subtitle claims the essays in this book are liaisons with culture and sex, but that is hardly an adequate description of the breadth of essays contained in this book. There are four main sections in the book covering culture in general, music, art and architecture, and sex, as well as a smaller section on the topic of death. The essays are written by several different authors, some taking a step back and looking at their topics from the outside, and others speaking very much from within their given topic. The essays are human, filled with humor, honesty, at times biting, and all very well written. For a book covering the range of topics, it's a very satisfying read.

Some of the topics taken to task in this book include: the ecological fetishism of Julia Butterfly Hill, the unabashed fascism of Salvador Dali, and an in-depth essay on the red and green history of Mayday, and Suge Knight and the story of Death Row Records, as well as a very thoughtful and insightful look at the paintings of Lucian Freud — this is only the tip of the iceberg. There is also a wonderful personal story of being on the line in Detroit, and great writing on the death of Edward Said by Alexander Cockburn. Also included by way of an introduction is a list of what the editors consider to be great books of the twentieth century in English as well as in translation.

I read this book straight through for this review and there was never a dull moment, I learned and was exposed to the history of some musicians I had never read about before or was

only passingly familiar with, as well as more in-depth looks at topics I was already very familiar with. I can see that this book would also lend itself well to being read in parts, to being picked up and put down as the mood strikes you. With the wealth of topics it can also be used a great resource, or can be read for pure enjoyment. Pick one up, flip through it, read an essay that catches your eye — I'm sure you will agree.

-Brandon Bauer

[Shameless Magazine #1]

www.shamelessmag.com

The summer issue of *Shameless* doubles as its premiere issue, pointing the way to what will hopefully be a long and bright future for this much needed magazine. Various subtitled as being "an independent magazine for strong, smart, sassy girls for girls who get it," *Shameless* sets out to, in the words of co-editors Melinda Mattos and Nicole Cohen, "give teen media a serious kick in the ass." Rather than simply reproducing the largely false and trite characteristics of teenage girls peddled in other rags (you know who you are), *Shameless* aims to, as per its name, offer a more realistic approach that sidesteps the foundational shame of the previously mentioned offenders. The point here is a combination of inclusiveness and a pointed evasion of artifice, both noble goals but difficult to achieve, much less in a first issue. However, where others have failed, *Shameless* succeeds admirably.

Though I can't speak for the highlighted audience, being neither strong, sassy, nor a girl, *Shameless* has much to offer readers within and outside its focus. Anchoring this first issue are a diverse group of articles that make up in interest what they lack in length; perhaps the only real problem plaguing this offering is just that, articles that while tackling important topics in interesting ways, stop all too soon. From Marlin Saraiva we get, in the section "Women on the Job," an insightful examination of the benefits and problems awaiting women working as sound engineers/house technicians; from Anna Leventhal, a look into the still largely male-dominated and misogynistic world of community radio and its role as a venue of self-expression in "Making Airwaves." These and many more like-minded articles fill the 48 pages of *Shameless*, as well as a handful of one-page write-ups concerning such diverse topics as advice upon discovering your dad's porn stash, a narrative of vegan survival with a nifty hummus recipe to boot, and alternatives to tampons for those with medical, environmental, or other objections. Something for everyone to say the least, and to say more, well, here goes.

I could hardly imagine a teenage girl reading this premiere issue of *Shameless* and treating it as less than an epiphany, barring a kind of worldliness unavailable to most at that age. There is certainly enough helpful, informative, and at times troubling information in these pages to galvanize even the most apathetic of teenage girls, much less the

various and sundry others who may come upon the magazine. Though the stated demographic may be very specific, the audience that could stand to read *Shameless* is large, making it a welcome entry into the arena of teen media that very well may, given time and a few more pages, give the media its much needed kick.

-Isaac Vayo

[Terrorists or Freedom Fighters]

Edited by Steven Best, PhD and

Anthony J. Nocella II

Lantern Books, 2004

www.lanternbooks.com

Terrorists or Freedom Fighters takes a comprehensive and exhaustive look at the inner workings, tactics, ethics, organization and history of the Animal Liberation Front. In the foreword, Ward Churchill sets the stage for readers to examine the methods and belief system of the ALF, a non-hierarchical organization of autonomous groups and individuals bound together by a simple set of guidelines for the protection and equal rights of all animals. Churchill draws correlations between the significance of the ALF's struggle for an end to the subjugation of animals and the great battles fought against apartheid, Nazi genocide, and Jim Crow laws, while analyzing the effectiveness of direct action resistance as opposed to more passive protest. The numerous writers who have contributed essays, for the most part, seem to view the actions of the ALF as imperative steps to combat the genocidal mentalities that allow humans to exert their believed supremacy over animals. The book is an impressive and extensive primer to those outside and inside animal rights communities for understanding the motivations of actions that many consider extreme — even terrorist. An underlying theme of the book and the ALF on the whole is a re-evaluation of the inherent speciesism that allows humans to justify animal abuses such as livestock factory farming, lab testing, and fur farming.

A quote in the ALF primer (reprinted in the book) says, "When you see the pictures of a masked liberator, stop asking who's behind the mask and look in the mirror." Certainly these founders were the ancestors of the anarcho-punks and black block protestors of new millennium direct activism. Dr. Maxwell Schnurer points out in his essay "At the Gates of Hell: The ALF and the Legacy of Holocaust Resistance," that these were pages the ALF took from the books of Jewish activists who fought against Nazis in the Third Reich. And these were tactics of the suffragettes fighting for women's rights in the early twentieth century, notes Dr. Mark Bernstein in his essay "Legitimizing Liberation."

Any successful movement should initiate self-reflection and Dr. Judith Barad looks at anger and its link to the motivations for animal liberation acts in her essay "Aquinas' Account of Anger." Should the activist achieve pleasure from fighting for animal lives? The subtlety between

retribution as impersonal, implying fairness versus revenge, being personal, involving bias, is defined by revenge being rooted in feelings of anger and its ability to imbue zeal and righteousness when vindicated. Barad looks at the causes of anger, the quandary of its power and the dangers of its excess.

Read either front to back or independently by essay, *Terrorists or Freedom Fighters* is a powerful compilation of essays that demands readers to question the important issues of animal exploitation and how each of us plays into this systematic oppression. Best and Nocella have compiled an essential reader for both the animal rights newcomer and the seasoned activist.

-Michael Wilcock

[AUDIO]

[85 Decibel Monks]

Tack-Fu Presents the Production Team

Tack-Fu Productions

www.tackfu.com

Iowa City doesn't possess the most illustrious history in regards to hip-hop. But, it's kinda like Howard Dean being harangued for not having more black folks on his staff in Vermont. But some white folks, most likely sporting a delightful accent of some variety, have come through with a pretty damned quality hip-hop album. The master of the production is Tack-Fu, accompanied by his team of ruffians (The Chaircrusher, Hartless and drunk). The fact that DJ Vadim, Manchild, Illogic and Blueprint appear on this release solidifies that fact that there is talent behind the boards in the mighty land of Iowa: those folks aren't collaborating outta pity. The first track, "Enter Dependents," sports Mars III. The viola drone, hand drums and echo-laden snare hit make the track float, while it's being ridden by average raps. Tack Fu spends time with the sounds he uses so he oftentimes feels whether or not an emcee or a vocal sample is needed. More frequently than not he figures correctly. "Oh Yeah," featuring DJ Skwint, comes off without any vocal accompaniment as does "Interlude in E-Minor." Occasionally, he figures wrong ("Mr. World"). A tune by drunk, however, is the highlight of the instrumental numbers. His "Mongolian Fire" best uses the eastern theme that is visited on this album a few times. A couple of electro-glitch tracks ("Hot Water for Tea" "Key Player") get stowed away on here as well, showcasing the collective's ability to leave the complacency of most hip-hop and try somethin' new. So friends, in closing, simply contribute to our national pastime of buying stuff and buy this. Go.

-Dave Cantor

[Brightback]

Ala.Cali.Tucky

galaxia, 2003

galaxia-platform.com

This 2003 release was written and recorded while Brightblack members were homeless and camping out in rural places, including the three states which make up the album name. The result of so much time under the big bright black sky with stars and wind as inspiration is a deliciously comforting, spacious, warm and breathy album. Sighing their way through these slow, rhythmic jewels, Nathan Shineywater and Rachael Hughes weave an almost gospel-like web that settles on you like the night sky. The simple lyrics don't attempt to dig too deeply; instead they whisper of summer nights, of wandering with no compass for direction and that feeling that comes with being alone but not lonely. Besides the gorgeous shimmering male and female vocals, all washed out in steel pedal guitar and backed up by rich piano chords, the entire album is drenched in heavy reverb, almost smothering you with that southern comfort. Occasional tambourine punctuates these slow and captivating songs, which are even complete with cricket chirps! Ala.Cali.Tucky was produced by Paul Oldham, brother of the prolific troubadour/songwriter Bonnie Prince Billy (Will Oldham). In fact, Brightblack recently toured the Midwest and Texas with Bonnie Prince Billy, and their songs were even more hypnotic and alluring at the live show than on the album. Be careful, this album can suck you under and hold you there — you may even be tempted to sell your possessions and go a-wanderin'. It makes you wish for nothing more than a night sky overhead and a whiskey bottle by your side.

-Emily Sloan

[Bullet Teeth]

Drive Yourself to the Hospital cdr

bulletteethmusic@hotmail.com

Man, why doesn't everyone live around Toledo? Fuck 'em, it's their mistake and Bullet Teeth is but one example of why I love living in the 419. A deft melding of old-fashioned DIY punk, post-American Tapes/Wolf Eyes noise, and late '80s Touch & Go pigfuck, Bullet Teeth tear shit up in a big, messy, noisy way. The songwriting is focused, the band uses the (limited) musical tools at their disposal to the max, and the production is remorselessly asskicking. Contact 'em, buy their shit, book a show for them, and stand the fuck back. If this fails to kick your ass, you probably have no business reading *Clamor* in the first fucking place.

-Keith McCrea

Iowa City doesn't possess the most illustrious history in regards to hip-hop. But, it's kinda like Howard Dean being harangued for not having more black folks on his staff in Vermont.

[Coyote Shivers]

Gives It To Ya Twice

Foodchain Records, 2004

www.foodchainrecords.com

"There will be sluts and drugs and fags and rock-n-roll ... should be fun ..." Coyote Shivers belts out the first line of his latest album with such hope and excitement that convinces the listener that it "should be fun," and it is. As once a guitar player for The Conspiracy (the band who went down in rock history as the first non-Soviet band signed to the Soviet run record label MELODIYA), this Ramones inspired rocker "Gives it to ya Twice," with his double disc album. The first disc entitled "One Sick Pup" includes energy and punk infused songs such as "Just Be Friends" where he explains, "I've got what you want and you've got what I want."

The Toronto native once said he knew he wanted to be in a rock band the first time he saw the Ramones live. Rock is exactly what he does for those of us who can never get enough of that New York punk influenced sound. This album is absolutely a treat for the ears and mind.

Although a lot more mellow, the second disc entitled "From My Bedroom to Yours" does not disappoint. Beginning with a slow acoustic version of "Sugar High" (from the movie *Empire Records*), this part of the album goes on to songs like "She Won't Fuck Me" about his girl loosing him to the girl next door. After enjoying this album, I would recommend keeping an eye out for more Coyote Shivers in the near future.

-Ashley Cressoine

[Old Time Relijun]

Lost Light

K Records

www.kreecs.com

Old Time Relijun from Olympia, WA, continue to mesmerize with a trademark sound that is honed by extensive touring, and they make me move every time I've caught them live. This generally takes place in someone's low-hung, dangerously cramped basement with lots of eccentric types, generally in an undulating sweaty mass situation. The Old Time Relijun really have a way with their audience. Definitely loud and cacophonous, often experimental but then super-catchy, with an accomplished rhythm duo on upright bass and stripped down drums that really carries it all, and a mad preacher of Bacchanalian-rock getting all spiritual on the mic, guitar, and clarinet. With songs guaranteed chock-full of birth, blood, water, monsters, copulation, alchemy, mythology, and sometimes even throat-singing! And I believe this album, the third full-length, to be their most accessible and movement inducing release to date. This album features a weird, cyclical birth to death/rebirth theme and favorites include "Vampire Victim" (the new Monster Mash), "Cold Water" (w/ catchy sing-a-long), and "The Rising Water, The Blinding Light" (trance-swamp rocker!).

Old Time Relijun remain a unique transcendental experience that you'll probably enjoy, if you're so inclined, in somebody's basement. Awesome! Get your freaky dance party on.

-vigilance

[Sandman]

The Long Walk Home

Crimethinc, 2004

www.crimethinc.com — www.rappincowboy.com

Sandman is the uber-prolific leading contemporary cowboy poet of now. He's also Montana's very own rappin' cowboy whose hardly ever at home in Olympia because he's always touring like mad. With several releases on his own label, L-ONE-R Records and various others scattered about from a handful of other small, underground labels, he is hustling non-stop. The Long Walk Home showcases his characteristic acoustic crooner style, with an accapella, some whistling, a tiny smattering of hip-hop, and even a touching sing-a-long for good measure. But, you know, mostly this record is all "sad cowboy with acoustic guitar" songs. Favorites were the opening accapella, "The Cowboy's Life is a Very Dreary Life" and the closing ode to MLK, "Folk Legend," followed by a short but sweet hidden track. Sandman's style and delivery can wobble from sincere to tongue-and-cheek, and sometimes it's hard to know just where he's at. And that's ok. He can bust a mad freestyle like it ain't no thing and then turn around and yodel like he's home on the freakin' range. A working class hero for the people, Sandman talks the talk with his music and walks the walk with this release on Crimethinc — a fitting destination and proper pairing for one rabble-rousing drifter and a collective anarcho-clearinghouse. Undeniably enigmatic and ironically iconoclastic, he's threatened to get more serious with his song-writing, so I would recommend picking up his most recent self-released *A Year In the Life of Slippery Goodstuff* while it lasts — especially if you're looking for a thematic recording of full-length Sandman in unfettered dirty hip-hop mode.

-vigilance

[Saul Williams]

s/t

Fader Label

www.thefader.com

Saul Williams isn't content to stick to any prescribed formula — this is not purely a hip-hop album, it's not solely a spoken word album either but there are elements of both on this disk. William's sums it up in his own words: "The tracks range from politics to relationships and the politics of relationships. What I ended up with was something that captured the authoritative cool of hip-hop, the playful angst of rock and roll, the raw torment of emo (and, my favorite, screamo), and the fuck offness of punk."

There are beautiful moments on this disk — hard hitting moments, slamming beats, insights,

and truths spoken and delivered. There is also a great sample of a classic Bad Brains riff on the track "Telegram" where Saul's voice sounds very reminiscent of HR's.

The song directly after "Act III, Scene 2 (Shakespeare)" titled "Reparations...(for an unrequited love)" more than makes up for the previous track, and is one of my favorite tracks on the album. Another stand out is the song "African Student Movement" which is very minimal and subdued, combining a synthesis of industrial beats and acapella vocals that really grounds the track in a powerful way. This track hits hard through its restraint and precisely because of it.

I was surprised by some of what he was doing in this album upon the first listen. This album gets a hold of you initially, but I think it really gets better the more you listen to it. After the first few listens the music starts sinking in and becomes more nuanced. All of the tracks on this album are delivered with passion and force. Even when the lyrics are spoken softly passion and urgency hangs off of every word. It is refreshing to hear an artist taking these kinds of risks. The press sheet says that most of the songs were experiments Saul was working on before crafting it into an album, and it retains that experimental feeling. It is very fresh in its experimentation and has come together as a solid album- check it out.

-Brandon Bauer

[Semi.Official]

The Anti-Album

Rhymesayers

www.rhymesayers.com

Semi.Official stands tall as a true representation of the culture and the movement of underground hip-hop. The debut of mastermind collaboration, *The Anti-Album*, was most definitely the hottest record I heard in 2003. And the best thing about it, is that it will never burn me out. It's that solid. And truthfully, I feel bad for any so-called head that has not yet heard it. A project that has been in the works since late '99 but didn't drop until Sept '03, Semi.Official remained a strictly subterranean word of mouth release with no publicity. It features all-the-way-innovative production by DJ Abilities, who weaves outrageous sample interludes throughout the joint while dropping well-crafted beats with perfection. Combined with the master lyricism of veteran translator and project conceptualist, I Self Devine, whose always on point with his delivery and content, the Semi.Official word is borne Behold another dope release on Rhymesayers Entertainment (MNPLS!). Sick tracks like the mind-boggling "Semi Official?" intro, the visceral

"You know, we just drop the shit out and let the music stand for itself."

"Songs in the Key of Tryfe" (feat. MF Doom), the funk of "Systems Goe." "Hit the Deck" (feat. Budah Tye), the power of "Crime" (with a 12" single that devastates!), the serious mover "Get Up," and "Wishing for a Miracle" (feat. Gene Poole). Especially fond of "Transitions," with its message that, yeah, we're all going to die so get your thoughts in order and focus on how you're going to live. And the graffiti writer's joint, "Nocturnal Terrorist Squad," is a well-constructed musical triptych. While discussing the album recently with I Self Devine, he sums up the underground nature of the project by saying, "I personally think Semi. Official's gonna be a cult. It's gonna be something that'll sell slow like a steady stream. Because everybody that hears it and marinates with it, they really love it. You know, we just drop the shit out and let the music stand for itself."

-vigilance

[The Six Parts Seven]

Everywhere and Right Here

Suicide Squeeze Records, 2004

www.suicidesqueeze.net

The cover of this latest release from the Six Parts Seven depicts a snake weaving through a formation of giraffes, a fitting visual for an album dominated by some of the most restrained serpentine guitar work since, well, Television maybe. A headphone album to say the least, *Everywhere and Right Here* recalls nothing more than *Apollo*-era Brian Eno in its wistful use of lap steel, creating stark tumbleweed dreamscapes delivered straight from the horizon. The aforementioned guitar work, along with the lap steel and judicious washes from the vibes — all soaked in an ample amount of reverb — combine in tranquil songs that come and go without demanding much more from the listener: than an open ear and a relaxed posture, since anything but is an impossibility in light of the calm it produces. Previous tours with TV on the Radio and shows with Shannon Wright and the Unicorns seem perfectly natural given the Six Parts Seven's sound, and their aim of providing fresh sonic additions to the independent rock canon. Maybe the perfect moment on this disc is the guitar coda to "Already Elsewhere," where everything drops away but the shimmering lead and a touch of vibes. Beautiful. Elevator music it may be, but it's the coolest elevator ever.

-Isaac Vayo

[Thee Snuff Project]

Dyin Ain't Much of a Livin

Hackshop Records, 2004

www.hackshoprecords.com

If you turned down the volume on your stereo to Thee Snuff Project will still make blood spurt from your ears. Scott Taylor has one mode of singing and it's called attack. The whole album is just unrelenting. From the guitar drone on the longest intro ever, "Intro to Every Black Window," to the varied tempos on "Start Your Own Cult," the rage doesn't let up. I don't know if these kids were

beaten just prior to the recording and this is how they got out the aggression, but this disc doesn't lack energy. It also doesn't hoard talent, but it's a trade off. Pretty much the groove that's reached amidst the crunch of every track is minimalist. And while I enjoy everything simple from Kraut Rock to Steven Reich, the reliance on the wah-wah peddle ("Little Strange," "Random Deity") is a little disturbing. Fortunately, the tempo changes on "Next Time I'll Be a Spider" hints at the practice that theses DC natives have put into their craft. The track sounds like Sabbath listening to The Who while trying to cover a Stooges song. The Stooges connection ain't done yet either. Thee Snuff Project, when they keep the tracks short, are effective. And even though I don't think that they're gonna become millionaires, they should at least make gas and beer/liquor money wherever they go for a decade or so.

-Dave Cantor

[Who's America?]

URB Magazine presents a compilation by

System Recordings & Definitive Jux

www.definitivejux.net

This is a no-brainer. A well-done, collaborative CD compilation that dropped in Sept '04 containing ten tracks of alternating electronic and hip-hop music from innovators in each genre. Their mission is simple: Draw attention to the upcoming presidential election with this CD, which is an attempt to raise money and awareness to get-out-the-vote and toss the Bush junta out on its proverbial elephant ear. Plus this is a non-profit endeavor with proceeds going to The League of Pissed Off Voters and Music for America to further those causes. All the tracks contributed to this release are solid hitters and most are exclusive to the compilation. To name a few, Mr. Lif tells it like it is on two tracks, one solo ("Home of the Brave" remix) and one with Akrobatik as The Perceptionists ("Memorial Day"), and Camutao shows off his crooning skills in Central Services w/ El-P on "I Work For the Government Now." Really, it's all good music for a good cause, what more do you need? Props to URB, System Recordings, & Definitive Jux for doing the right thing and leading the charge. Let's all make it happen on election day (Nov 2nd!!!) and exercise our right for a taste of democracy in action.

-vigilance

[VIDEO/DVD]

[The Miami Model DVD]

FTAA IMC Video Working Group

www.ftaaimc.org

The Miami Model is an Indymedia production that focuses on the events surrounding the FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas) talks held in Miami, Florida in November of 2003. A diverse coalition of groups including Union members, students, human

rights activists, environmentalists, and anarchists converged on Miami to protest these talks.

"The Miami Model" as it came to be known describes the actions taken by the city of Miami to control and contain the demonstrators. To the organizers of the trade talks the Miami Model was an overwhelming success and is a model to be replicated around the country in cities faced with demonstrations this scale. This documentary clearly shows the anti-democratic tactics taken and the police state atmosphere that the Miami Police Department cultivated.

The Miami Model begins with a very informative segment about police brutality in the city and about the Overtown neighborhood, a predominately African-American and Haitian area of Miami. It also shows the hype and fear that was created by the corporate media about violent anarchists who were coming to Miami to protest the FTAA. This demonizing of demonstrators led the Miami City Council to pass a law banning assemblies of more than seven people without a permit. Intimidation of activists and harassment soon followed in the days and week leading up to the protests. By the time the protests began they were met by a highly militarized and overwhelming police presence.

The Miami police attempted to divide the protesters and break up their marches by using every means at their disposal — pepper spray, rubber bullets, pushing into the protesters' lines and provoking the demonstrators. In some cases the police forced the protestors out of the streets but offered them no escape route and no where to go as they came down on them with their batons. Protest footage from the front lines shows the police causing situations, not simply reacting to them. The city looks as if it is under siege by walls of black clad riot police.

The documentary does a good job of showing how the corporate media is far from being unbiased in their coverage of the talks. Major media outlets were embedded with the police in the same way journalists have been embedded with soldiers in Iraq. Corporate media outlets were reporting solely from the police perspective, making any claims to objective journalism a farce. Journalists who chose not to be embedded faced the same heavy-handed police response that the protestors faced.

It is documentaries like this that make Indymedia so important. The video activists who contributed the footage and those who edited the final documentary should be lauded for giving us an honest on-the-ground account of the protests and the police tactics used. I am sure we will increasingly see this type of militarization of our police and the disinformation through the corporate media of opposing points of view.

If you are interested in screening this documentary as a joint benefit you are encouraged to contact the FTAA IMC Video Working Group to set up a screening — ftaaimc.org. Proceeds from the benefits will go to the production of this documentary on DVD and to various other projects.

-Brandon Bauer

Community in the Jails



activists in NYC welcome a friend as she was released from jail

from left: Sarah Palmer, Peter Holderness

The protest actions against the Republican National Convention in New York City between August 27 and September 2, 2004, were centered around creating and promoting community. Events included bicycle rides, vigils, music, plays, film screenings, die-ins, party flashes, and other non-violent forms of culture and counter-culture. And, while there was a good deal of (justified) anger at the unwelcome take-over of our city by the anti-intellectual, anti-art, anti-First Amendment GOP, the city and the thousands of visiting protesters vowed they would eke life, art, and solidarity out of this exploit.

The Bush Administration, aided by New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Police Commissioner Ray Kelly, as well as a willing army in blue working serious overtime for the event did their best to curtail those freedoms as much as possible during that week, which began just before the RNC.

By Tuesday, August 31 (dubbed A31 by organizers), several friends of mine had been arrested and spent time in the now-infamous Pier 57, where many were held after arrest. They had told us about filthy former bus depot, about bicycles confiscated by the NYPD, but also about a high degree of solidarity and organization within the cells. A31 was to be a day of massive civil disobedience and non-violent direct action across the city, and the NYPD had been preparing during the weeks prior to arrest huge numbers on that day.

And, sure enough, people were arrested in large groups, the police employing orange nets to close off entire blocks. I met people arrested at a vigil and march between Ground Zero in Lower Manhattan and Madison Square Garden, at a die-in on 25th Street, at a street party on 16th Street near Union Square led by marching bands, in front of the main New York Public Library at 42nd Street and 5th Avenue, and elsewhere. We descended that evening upon Pier 57 with fire in our

hearts and a collective energy about the week drawn from the size of the actions and the peacefulness of most gatherings. And, of course, there was an inevitable sense of shock at the NYPD's seeming eagerness to arrest as many as possible — dare I say it — preemptively.

In the holding pens and jails, as in the streets, the police had various community-breaking tactics that they employed repeatedly. One that was used in the pens at Pier 57 and in the holding cells at Central Booking was to constantly be mixing up the groups of people in hopes of destroying solidarity and making it difficult to organize.

Perhaps, though, this technique backfired in that messages were spread more easily among everybody, and we got to know the faces and stories of a great many of our fellow detainees. It didn't hurt that we did not change clothes so we seemed to become cartoon characters of ourselves, dressed the same for the entire period of detention — always identifiable, just getting filthier.

Strong solidarity came from without as well. In the dark and quiet of our second night, I was in an 8- by 10 1/2-foot cell with 10 other young women. Our small cell faced a high window across the hall from which we could hear the streets erupting below with the cheers and screams of the hundreds of people — family, friends, lawyers, activists — outside the courts trying to get us free. And this gave us strength. So we all began to talk more slowly, quietly, and freely than before. And in this small cell way up on the 12th floor of 100 Centre Street, we vowed

as did the hundreds of other men and women in other cells throughout the building and the city — we would try to let the world know that these tactics of preemptive arrest, these favors to George Bush, will not be tolerated in our cities. Not to young educated Americans, not to illegal immigrants, not to middle-aged dissidents. ★

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