

3 third coast press

October 2004 :: Volume I :: Issue 10

electoral dysfunction

LET THE VOTER BEWARE!

By James D. Sandrolini
Illustration by Emily Lonigro

"THE SYSTEM IS MUCH MORE OUT OF CONTROL THAN ANYONE HERE MAY BE WILLING TO ADMIT."

-DR. MICHAEL SHAMOS, COMPUTER SCIENTIST AT CARNEGIE-MELLON UNIVERSITY

"I THINK EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE JUST FINE."

-RECENTLY SUSPENDED MARYLAND STATE ELECTIONS CHIEF LINDA LAMONE

One of the most commonly exchanged election adages speeding through the Internet these days is one allegedly uttered by Joseph Stalin: "Those who cast the votes decide nothing; those who count the votes decide everything." Whether or not Uncle Joe, who was hardly an adherent of free elections, actually said this is the subject of another article. But for those not planning on voting Republican this November, this dark, historical warning rings like the shrillest of clarion calls.

As a student of politics, I can distinctly remember one of my more astute professors telling the class, essentially, that Democrats tend to fare better when the largest number of voters turn out on Election Day—and Republicans, the fewest. His point was based on the idea that when the larger mass of Americans stay home on Election Day ("My vote doesn't really count," "What difference does it make?"; "Who cares anyway?"), Republicans often take home the grand prize. Conservative businessmen, knowing full well who butters their bread, don't dare miss the crucial significance of the November election. They pay greatly into the system, and the system tends to return the favor if it wishes to stay in power. The big companies where these individuals work, which are often conservative in nature, strongly encourage their employees to go to the polls.

The great mass of Democratic voters, on the other hand, includes a good number of people who feel no real connection to the seats of power and influence. They don't believe anyone is really looking after their welfare, so they often become disengaged from the political process. These people are much more likely than Republican voters to steer clear of the polls on November 2. Which is just how Republicans like it. The more disengaged Democrats become, the more engaged Republicans become in shifting political power.

In the months leading up to the 2000 presidential election, record numbers of left-leaning citizens geared up for what would become a truly nasty and controversial presidential contest. Fearing the democratizing force of large numbers of poor, working class, immigrant, and

African-American voters coming to the polls, the Republican Party did what it has always done so well: It cheated. Cheated "big time" as Dick Cheney might put it. Aggressive GOP functionaries and volunteers pushed significant numbers of left-leaning citizens to the political margins and beyond. It minimized, and often eliminated, the opposition—something done far less subtly, but no less effectively in fascist police states and communist regimes.

Our last presidential election, essentially decided by the President's brother Jeb Bush, Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris, and a largely right-wing U.S. Supreme Court, disenfranchised at least 6 million voters throughout the nation. This process occurred via voter list "purges," false or misleading polling information, and all-out intimidation tactics intended to keep prospective voters from ever stepping inside the booth. One million of the disenfranchised voters were African-American, hardly strangers to Machiavellian schemes designed to undermine their influence in American politics and culture.

Overall, the great majority of the disenfranchised were either African-Americans or poor whites who call the Deep South their home. And this November, it's looking more and more like the South's gonna do it again. Jim Crow never fully fled the region. He just went underground to perfect his dismal trade.

JUST SHOPPING! WE'LL DO THE REST

Interesting to note these days is the fact that, although the Bill of Rights

grants American citizens the right to vote, nowhere in this great document does it say we have a constitutional right to vote for the *president*. The only voting right truly granted us is the right to vote for members of the House of Representatives. State legislators provide electors in the Electoral College. Ultimately, this is the only American college that counts on Election Day. We all witnessed what winning the popular vote—our vote, folks—got Al Gore in 2000.

Essentially, the Electoral College was the founders' method for keeping the most important vote in the land out of the hands of the rabble. As a result, the Federal government still provides very little in terms of safeguards and regulations to ensure voter rights. It's a bit of a free-for-all, a "wild, wild West" for democracy. Again, recall the consecutive messes of the 2000 presidential election and the 2002 congressional election. Both were utterly fraught with jarring inconsistencies, bizarre mishaps, and, without a doubt, attempts at all-out fraud. Were proper voting protection laws and rules in place—as they are in most modern democracies around the world—Al Gore would be gearing up for his reelection battle at this moment. And we wouldn't have a media and electorate fixated on who did what during Vietnam, either.

Sadly, for a nation so proud of its rich constitutional history, cherished freedoms of speech, and voting rights, the U.S. does little to really encourage its citizens to actually go out and vote. We don't hear it from our presidents or our congressmen. We don't hear it from any particular government agencies.** And we don't really get it from our schools either, other than boilerplate sermons concerning our



No One Can Fill Their Boots
More than 1,000 American troops and thousands of Iraqi civilians have died in the current Iraq war. The American Friends Service Committee works to increase awareness of the human costs associated with these numbers. To that end, they travel with their *Eyes Wide Open* exhibit, which features a pair of boots for every U.S. soldier who has died in the war.page 21



Marching for the People
The AFL-CIO won't endorse it, arguing that it's a misuse of energy before a crucial election. Still, workers will likely come in droves. It's the Million Worker March, which will deal with a variety of issues of progressive concern. It will happen in D.C., but we speak to some of its Chicago organizers.pages 8-9

The Big Brown Building That Helps the World
Many Chicagoans pass by Uptown's Institute for Cultural Affairs without knowing what it does. But they might be pleasantly surprised if they did. This exceptional organization gives people around the globe the tools to solve problems and their building houses many non-profits with similar missions.page 28

Taking on the Trib
In our first issue, *TCP* media writer Mitchell Szczepanczyk blew away a *Chicago Tribune* op-ed that argued for loosening restrictions on media giants' holdings. The *Tribune* has done it again—and nine months later, Mitchell is bringing in the big guns.page 4



That Other Candidate
To some on the left, Ralph Nader's campaign is needed to encourage political activism and draw attention to a corrupt and corporate-dominated Republican Party. To others, he is a spoiler who has greatly hurt his cause by helping Bush take office—and may do so again. Regardless, he was recently in Chicago. Nick Ladendorf offers his take on Nader as a presidential option.page 10

AND MUCH, MUCH MORE

- Opening Thoughts.....page 2
- Gripes & Grins.....page 3
- SpaceTime Continuum.....page 3
- Progressive Breakdown.....page 5
- Open University of the Left.....page 6
- Astrology & the Election.....page 6
- What's Happening to Wilson Yard?.....page 7
- Haymarket History.....page 9
- TLC at the RNC in NYC.....pages 14-15
- Media Trix!.....pages 16-17
- Fasting for Justice.....page 18
- The Glam Politick.....page 19
- Art & Death.....pages 22-23
- Reviews.....pages 24-25
- Interview with No Doctors!.....page 26
- The Coyote Howls Again.....page 27
- Taking Care of Teens.....page 29
- Events Calendar.....pages 30-31
- Virtual Chicago.....page 31

Opening Thoughts

RIK ADAMSKI Editor-in-Chief

Welcome to the tenth issue of *Third Coast Press*.

What else is there to talk about? November 2, 2004. It's coming up. I haven't been around since 1776, but I can't shake the feeling that this will be the most important presidential election in the history of the nation.

It has been said plenty of times before that the winner of this election will certainly not be good for the country. The winner will lie to us constantly, will put the corporations ahead of the people, will not have a sensible strategy to solve the quagmire in Iraq, and will most likely do almost nothing to actually protect us from the threat of terrorism. One contestant has made it clear that he will continue his own bizarre and counter-productive policies; the other's rhetoric vacillates between common sense and promises to perpetuate his opponents' errors.

So we can vote for a third party, stay at home, or vote for "the Other Guy." While some of our readers and contributors no doubt advocate taking the first (or perhaps even second) course, I am personally convinced that we have no viable choice but to cast our vote for the lesser of two evils. It may hurt my pride to spend much of my time fighting for social change yet vote for someone who has let us down so much (and I mean "us, the people of this country," not "us, the Left"). But the difference between the two candidates, to me, will equate to a real difference in the world. I do not believe the people of the world—or future generations—will forgive those who did not do everything in their power to stop the current administration. And this vote is within our power.

But make no mistake: This country—and planet—will not be made Utopia by a Kerry election, just as it might not be utterly ruined by a Bush one. Either way, we have our work more than cut out for us. And either way, when the alcohol-

fueled celebration/depression ends after November 2, we have plenty of work to do.

It is hard for many Americans to accept the fact that our government has engaged in a series of irrational actions after 9/11. Why wouldn't it be? We were the victims of a horrendous attack. If the government won't protect us, and those we love, who is going to? And if there actions aren't keeping us safe, what is? We need our leaders to be wise and well intentioned. If they are not, what is keeping us secure?

Regular readers of *TCP* know that we try to keep a fairly positive viewpoint, but sometimes the truth is not so positive. At the moment we needed our leaders the most, they abandoned us. The man who we are told engineered the collapse of the World Trade Center? As Mr. Bush said on March 12, 2002, "I don't know where [Osama] is. I have no idea, and I really don't care. It's not that important. It's not our priority."

There are certainly some whackos on the "left side" of the fence, and I've spoken to my share. But few would dare to suggest that Osama bin Laden isn't a profound and immediate threat to our safety. Isn't that why we started a war in Afghanistan? Yet President "Tough on Terror" had other fish to fry. (I could bring up many other egregious decisions he has made, but I have limited space.)

But if we only point the finger at Bush, we might make the mistake of thinking that taking him out of power will make everything better. That, again, is a pleasant thought, but not true. Make no mistake: We have been abandoned; not by one party, but by two. That Al Gore, were he in power, would not likely have created a mess of this particular magnitude seems clear to me. But it should be just as clear that this system has been built with checks and balances, and that one man—or even one party—could not have gotten us here alone.

Are we to imagine that those Democrats

in Congress who voted for the war in Iraq did not know that the weapons of mass destruction claims were likely bogus? The Internet was teeming with credible evidence from people in the know—of many nationalities, political persuasions, and levels of government—that they were. It was common knowledge with anybody who distrusted the mainstream media enough to search out that information. Certainly, Congress—along with the members of the Bush administration—knew that the evidence for Hussein's fabled WMD stash was questionable at best.

And anybody with common sense or a rudimentary understanding of history would have known that occupying a country is not easy. It could be argued that the President, a not-terribly-bright ideologue with a simplistic worldview who keeps himself surrounded by dishonest, neo-conservative hawks with delusions of grandeur, lacked the facilities to make an informed decision. The same could not be said for Sen. Kerry, who apparently lacks something other than intellectual capacity.

Right now, it is easy—and one could argue wise—for progressives to put the bulk of their energy into the upcoming election. But we must not forget: No matter what happens on November 2, we must continue to fight. A change of leadership will be grounds neither for abandoning hope nor for abandoning our activism. Some periods of history are very difficult; others are easier. We are in a difficult time, and it will likely become more difficult no matter what happens. Just remember: Real change has rarely come from a change in government (although when the house is on fire, it's not a bad idea to put it out). Real change comes from people demanding it. A radical 100 years ago would have been a moderate 50 years ago and would be an ultra-conservative today. Don't give up. Don't give in. We can change the world dramatically. We can create a better world. ☺



Photograph taken at the RNC in NYC. Need we say more? Photo by Joëff Davis: www.joeff.com

Corrections from September

In the "Experts of Panels" sidebar, Nicholas Ivan Ladendorf was credited for illustrations and story, when, in fact, the illustrations were used with permission from Scott McCloud's Reinventing Comics. Also, in "Experts of Panels," the Website for guerrilla general Jim Mortensen's Comix Revolution stores is online-revolution.com

Our Poster for the Voter Registration Party promotion had the Tenement Project misspelled "Tenament." Help us make it up to them by checking out their music at tenementproject.com.

In "It's Big" by James Sandrolini, we noticed that, after publication, the following corrections should have been made:

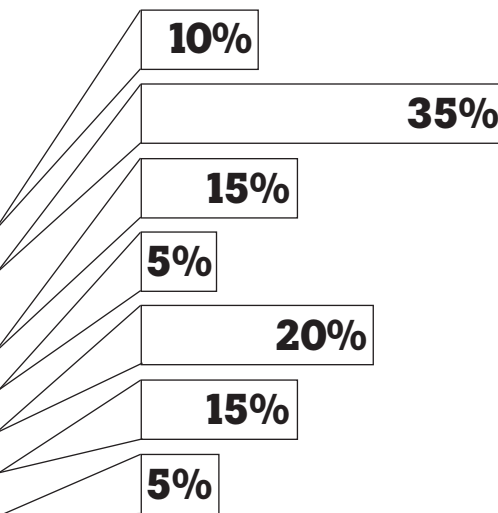
- > Mayor Daley reigns from Bridgeport and not Bridgeview. We need to make sure that the seat of royalty gets its proper recognition, after all.
- > Speaking of getting proper due, we should have been a bit more careful with our math. We reported that the Pritzker/Gehry music arena was \$21-million-plus in its cost. That's technically true, as the actual cost of the music arena is over \$60 million. That's a lot of influence being peddled there, so we need to make sure all of the pork, ham, and bacon is accounted for.

It's a poll on a poll!

We asked the *TCP* staff the question on everyone's mind:

Do you think the recent poll numbers showing W ahead of Kerry are:

1. An accurate description of current voter opinion
2. The result of shifty polling tactics
3. A fascist scam to herd gullible people into voting against their best interests
4. A good reason to check into moving to Toronto
5. Balderdash! Who cares what the corporate media say, anyway?
6. Signaling the end of the world
7. Meaningless, since there are numerous problems with polls



By the way, there are two *Get Out The Vote* posters in this issue. Cut them out, photocopy and distribute! Tell all your friends.

3 third coast press is

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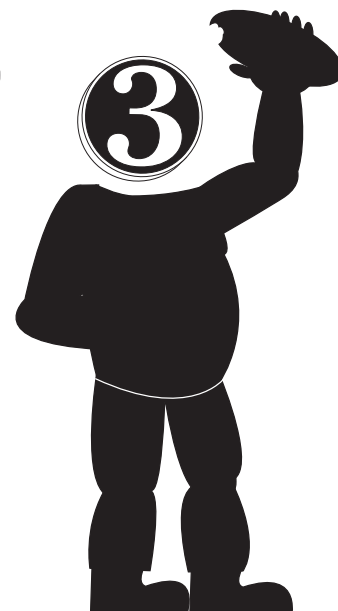
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mmm, cookies...



Like the rest of the country, we've gained weight.

Third Coast Press, now 32 big, fat pages.

Rapid Transit Veins

The Lifeblood of Our Social and Economic Prosperity

By Marc R. Keller

The abolitionist Frederick Douglass once said that without a struggle, there can be no progress. Well, this particular assertion is understandable if one defines that progress by the conditions of his/her brief journey, rather than its overall purpose.

Despite the bad reputation it's suffered in recent years (regarding poor track maintenance, service reduction/elimination, fare hikes, et cetera) from passengers and politicians alike, public transportation provides a great service to millions of Chicago-area residents and tourists on a daily basis.

As the lifeblood of this great city, "L" trains and buses rapidly travel through numerous rail line and road veins/arteries, connecting hardworking Chicagoans to countless businesses and venues. With parking becoming increasingly difficult to find within the city, our city's residents (especially Wrigley Field patrons) obviously perceive public transportation not only as a financial convenience, but also a social one.

Chicagoans have enjoyed the benefit of public transportation for nearly 150 years. In 1859, this steadily prospering metropolis implemented a horse-powered street railway line that operated on State Street between Randolph and 12th (present-day Roosevelt Road) Streets. In the 1890s, elevated rail lines and streetcars began interconnecting other Chicago neighborhoods and businesses. More transportation adjustments followed in the 1940s with the State Street subway and the formation of the Chicago Transit Authority, which assumed operation of the city's many local transportation services. After decades of city and suburban service, "L" trains finally transported passengers into O'Hare (the Blue Line in 1984) and Midway (the Orange Line in 1993) airports, benefiting Chicagoans and tourists.

So, what does the future bear for commuters? Well, the recent Circle Line "L" service proposal (which would serve the Pilsen area) certainly proves that there's still more progress to attain.

For Chicagoans, public transportation possesses an incredible financial value. Not everyone can afford to simultaneously pay their rent and drive a car in these economically challenging times. With gasoline, insurance, maintenance, parking, and vehicle sticker costs rising regularly, who wants to pay for an ant's view of the city when a measly \$2 fare (transfer included) provides the indescribable, bird's-eye view we've grown to admire? And Chicagoans could use that extra cash to shop at numerous Michigan Avenue stores or purchase another Soldier Field hot dog and cup of beer, thus enriching the city's "poor" economy as well as reducing the carbon monoxide toxins vehicles spew into

our environment. As a popular Benjamin Franklin quote suggests, "A penny saved is a penny earned."

One cannot easily deny that public transportation helps stimulate our social environment. Because the media and City Hall suits don't necessarily encourage "stable" socializing, that particular responsibility rests upon our shoulders. When riding a bus or "L" train, we get the opportunity to meet representatives of many different cultures and better recognize their customs and lifestyles, without the inconvenient media biases or customs lines.

I've met more interesting people as an Orange Line commuter than as a university student or nightclub patron. And why shouldn't I? How can life possibly function without communication? Communication rarely exists when one drives a car. With the exception of its occupants, who will listen to your problems or complement your hair as you drive that car to work? Not a single soul! To coin another adage, idle hands are the Devil's workshop, and these accident-prone drivers certainly need them to steer their fuel-inefficient, six- and eight-cylinder engine vehicles and to frustratingly toot their horns, rather than shaking a commuter's hand. After all, they *could* be using them for more productive, life-sustaining purposes.

However, as beneficial as public transportation is for Chicagoans, it has yet to earn a better reputation from the mass media. Their discriminatory tactics continue to overlook and/or ridicule the importance of public transportation for an audience that never tasted food from a tarnished spoon. Do those *Real World* upstarts ever discuss riding the subway to their boy/girlfriend's apartment? No, such means of transportation undermine their respective egos. Does Homer Simpson take the bus to work? Why should he? His limitless wisdom in a recent *Simpsons* episode plainly suggested that public transportation is for "jerks and lesbians," thus reflecting the personal biases of his multimedia parent, News Corp. I suppose the News Corp suits indirectly consider me a jerk because I use public transportation? Well, I'm simply a jerk who enjoys exercising, saving money, and refraining from listening to ridiculous political radio talk shows.

In essence, progress is better defined by the number of rail line veins/arteries extending into/outside the city's economic heart than the endless limousine convoys approaching/leaving City Hall. Although bus and "L" rides *can* be unsettling at times, I'll continue to endure the bumpy, coffee-splashing rides and late travel schedules—without hesitation or regret—for a simpler, more financially secure life. After all, isn't that what everyone fervently desires? ☺

Space/Time Continuum

Radioactive Panda

By Nicholas Ivan Ladendorf, Illustration courtesy of *Radioactive Panda*

Why am I writing about physics in a progressive community paper? I'm not, though I expect the dangers of science, radiation, and life from beyond to come up from time to time. I'm here to keep you up on the goings-on of the local comic book industry/community, and shamelessly plug my own comics (hidden away at nilgravity.com/comicshtml/comics.html) on my perpetually un-updated Website.

The reason I chose the title is that comics rely on the notion of space equating to time. Whereas a painting represents a single moment,

story arcs are rushed, but the creator hopes this flaw will correct itself when he increases his output to twice per week. The new schedule should be challenging, considering that *Radioactive Panda* is fully colored and one of the best-drawn Web-comics in cyberspace. I called Eric A. Johnson—Mr. Radioactive Panda himself—and picked his brain for a while. Here are the parts I bothered to write down:

Third Coast Press: So, why the title/what's the deal with pandas?



a comic panel represents a scene. Comics can do this by stimulating the brain into completing the actions depicted. While we are reading a speech bubble, our subconscious is moving the lips of the speaker and continuing his/her gestures and other actions. Between comics' panels are the transitions of actions that our minds create from life experience. There's nothing but blank space between the panels, yet we *know* what has happened between them.

I will be reviewing both print and Web-comics, because both use a series of pictures to tell a story, and therefore are comics. I will be reviewing action, romance, and every other genre of comics (no, they do not all have super-people). I will be giving attention to both the indie and mainstream comics. If it bears some resemblance to comics and is local, I will find it and spread the word.

So, why am I writing about comics? There is much more going on locally than most people realize, and it's a shame that the public doesn't have a connection to it. *Third Coast Press* is all about exposure for the underdogs and comics are a bastard medium. Comics are the hybrid of words and pictures. Comics haven't gotten a fair shake because neither the visual arts nor the literary community have traditionally wanted to claim their love child.

Radioactive Panda: Long holdover, from when I was on Instant Messenger. I had this name that I hated, so I wanted to change it... I liked like Japanese monster movies, so I came up with atomic panda, but that was taken as a Web domain. Radioactive Panda was the next best thing. The name was just going to be the publisher; you know "Radioactive Panda Presents..." But then, I couldn't come up with a title for the strip. I actually had no intention for there ever to be a panda in the strip. The comic was going to be a typical roommate strip, but when I started going to San Diego ComicCon, I saw that the people I admired there were all doing their own thing, and I realized that's the kind a thing I wanted to do.

TCP: What kind of genre is Radioactive Panda anyway?

RP: I've pulled away from it, but I'm trying to get back into it. It's a schlock sci-fi monster movie comic. That's the closest I can come to describing it...

TCP: So, are you doing a conscious revamp?

RP: Yeah. Definitely, I'm trying to get away from the storyline, because I only update twice a week. I have strips coming up that will have things in common, but they will stand alone. But I won't be stretching out storylines anymore. I'm a big fan of *Zim*; I love that it shows how hard the world can be on kids. Childhood is not necessarily a happy place, and I'm going to get into that when [Mad Scientist] Steve will be asked to do some substitute teaching. Experiments will go wrong. Some kids will be smart enough to get out of the way; others won't. I think I'm going to get a lot of angry letters.

TCP: Do you have any plans to collect your strips in print?

RP: That is actually a really strange topic. San Diego influences me every year. This year, I saw so many people merchandising in so many ways, but specifically the way Dumbrella did it...you could not even get to the table to just talk to the guys because they were selling \$3-\$5 square-bound collections instead of a \$20 trade. I think that's the way to go if you want to sell a book to someone who's never heard of you. I've purposely changed my strip format so I can do it this way. I think I'll have to put together all the oddly shaped strips. Then everything else, the more current stuff, will be smaller, square-bound books. ☺

Review/Interview

Title: *Radioactive Panda*
Creator(s): Eric A. Johnson
Publisher: radioactivepanda.com
Format: Web-comic
Price: Free
Pitch: It's *Space Balls* meets *Young Frankenstein* meets *Austin Powers* meets...oh, I give up....

Radioactive Panda is chock full of...well...everything. After the villagers revolt, mad scientist roommates Eric and Steve (named after *Panda's* creator and Webmaster, respectively), are forced to flee their rural castle for the big city. Luckily for them, they manage to find a Chinese restaurant with a zombie-infested, multi-dimensional-portal-ridden laboratory for rent. This is as much of the plot as I can explain with any efficiency, but that's the fun of the series.

This unlikely setup allows *Radioactive Panda* to do anything from helping monsters with infertility to over-developing moon fortresses. Each "Webisode" is centered on a gag, but manages to advance the plot as well. The plot does suffer from a disjointed feeling and the

sexual assault occurs every 45 seconds.

It is likely that you or someone you know has been affected by sexual assault. Know how to get help for yourself, a family member or friend.

The YWCA offers workshops to community and professional groups on a wide variety of sexual assault topics. For more information contact:

**YWCA Harris Center
Sexual Assault Services
6200 South Drexel
773/955-3100, ext. 56
www.ywcachicago.org**

Funding for this ad was made possible by funds from the Illinois Department of Health.

**eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca**

Big Media Bodyslam

Another Response to the *Chicago Tribune*

By Mitchell Szczepanczyk, Illustration by Hope Larson

The very first cover of *Third Coast Press* featured an article in which I obliterated, sentence by sentence, an editorial published by the *Chicago Tribune*. The topic of the editorial involved a controversial series of media ownership rule changes approved by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC). These rule changes would have made it easier for fewer companies to own more media outlets, and very likely made an over-commercialized, hyper-violent, ultra-dumb corporate media all the worse. The Tribune Company stood to capitalize on these rule changes, and editorialized last year to complain about the successful organizing efforts that had halted the rule changes and raised public awareness.

On July 17, 2004, the *Tribune* was at it again, this time editorializing against a Philadelphia court ruling that overturned in their entirety the FCC's media ownership rule changes. Predictably, the *Chicago Tribune* reacted to this major populist victory by publishing an op-ed of complaint. Time to break out the explosives again, folks. The *Tribune's* article is in *italics*.

> *The Federal Communications Commission has been trying for years to comply with a Congressional mandate that the agency justify its media ownership rules, modify them, or junk them.*

But Congress takes a back seat to the commercial broadcasters and their fanged lobbies with their mandate that the agency make it easier for broadcasters to increase profit, increase profit, and increase profit.

> *The rules govern how many TV and radio stations one company may own and whether it may*

court ruling, the court confirmed that the FCC has the authority to change the media policies in question. That doesn't presume anything about "being on the right track," whatever that's supposed to mean. And that's the *only* thing Big Media could claim from this lawsuit. Every other rule the FCC tried to change to benefit Big Media got slammed.

As the attorneys at the law firm which filed the suit, the Media Access Project, said on the day of the victory: "We were doing high four-

wedge its way into buying lots more TV outlets, they were paying close attention to this rule, and lobbied hard to have it changed.

Strike Two: The 35 percent limit got changed to 39 percent when Republican politicians met and announced the new percentage as a "compromise." That number was chosen

As far as Big Media is concerned, the public is Public Enemy Number One when it comes to media policy, because as studies clearly show, the more people know about the corruption embedded with media policies, the more they disagree with them and might work to change them.

own a newspaper and TV station in the same market. As part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, Congress ordered the FCC to conduct a periodic review to determine if the rules, some of them decades old, are still in the public interest. But doing as Congress demanded eight years ago has engulfed the FCC in litigation, protest, and confusion.

Yes, I remember. In 1995 and '96, the only thing everyone and their dog talked about at the water cooler was the 1996 Telecom Act. (O.J. who?) Just like in 2002 when Powell announced the FCC media ownership rule changes, and you couldn't turn on the tube without hearing some talking head prattle on about or against TV/newspaper cross-ownership.

That might be the case in some Bizarro World inhabited by *Tribune* management. But here in the Real World, the Telecom Act got rammed through rather quickly. And with good reason: The Telecom Act was a huge gift for Big Media, awarding vast swaths of digital media and spectrum to a handful of corporate monsters.

As far as Big Media is concerned, the public is Public Enemy Number One when it comes to media policy, because as studies clearly show, the more people know about the corruption embedded with media policies, the more they disagree with them and might work to change them. So, naturally, Big Media wants these decisions made in smoke-filled rooms behind closed doors, with zero press coverage.

And it's the *Tribune* that's actually confused, since they obviously seem to think that they and their Legion Of Doom are the only ones who should call the tune in this media policy song-and-dance.

> *A recent court order illustrates why. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 3rd Circuit struck down the FCC's latest effort to ease the cross-ownership rules. The court said the FCC was on the right track but had used the wrong methods and developed rules that weren't restrictive enough.*

To those of us who actually read the 218-page

and-a-halves."

> *That ruling, though, appears to conflict with court orders issued in 2002 by the appellate court for the District of Columbia Circuit, which told the FCC it must justify keeping tighter rules or get rid of them. The D.C. appellate court's decisions prompted the FCC a year ago to approve the rules that have now been harshly criticized and remanded by the 3rd Circuit.*

Thing is, the D.C. Circuit Court is notorious for being full of corporate-friendly hacks cleverly disguised as judges. We can blame them for the abolition of the Fairness Doctrine (that was that rule which mandated a variety of viewpoints on the air). That ruling gave the key to open the door for the modern-day menace known as right-wing talk radio.

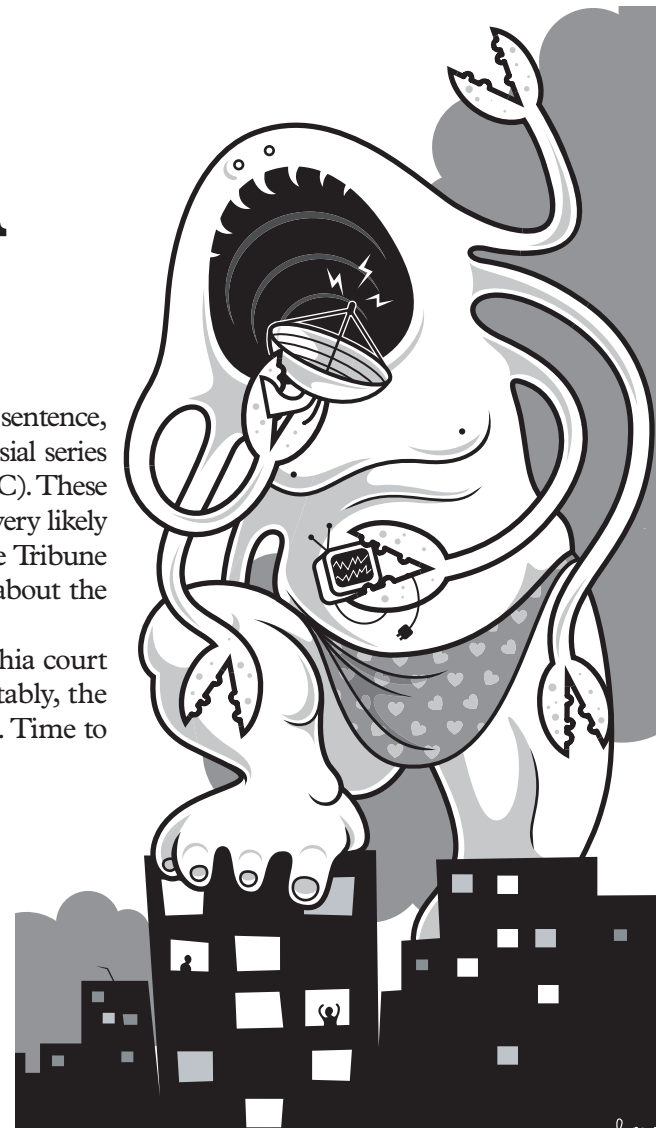
> *So the FCC is caught between one appellate court ordering full-speed-ahead and another cautioning not-so-fast. The commission now must decide whether to appeal the latest ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court or go back to the rule-making process.*

"Full speed ahead?" "Not-so-fast?" Are we on a one-way street or something? And more importantly, where is it ultimately headed?

The rumor is that the FCC will appeal to the Supreme Court, but just on statistics alone, the odds are stacked more than 70 to 1 against the FCC ever getting to the Supreme Court.

> *There's more. Congress has further clouded the landscape by injecting itself into this ongoing regulatory and judicial debate. One of the FCC rules would allow TV companies to buy stations that reach up to 45 percent of the viewers in the country. The current limit is 35 percent. But Congress earlier this year decreed that the limit should be 39 percent. That law, naturally, has been challenged in court.*

Strike One: That TV ownership cap included a proviso for exempting UHF stations, which could have made that ownership limit more in the range of 70 to 90 percent. And since the *Tribune* is trying to



because Viacom (owner of CBS) and News Corp (owner of Fox) were both violating the 35 percent ownership rule, and 39 percent was enough to prevent them from having to sell any more outlets.

Strike Three: What right does Congress have to make laws, anyway? Who do they think are, getting in the way of my quarterly profit margins?

Three strikes. Guess who's out?

> *The U.S. Senate last month voted to overturn other FCC rules allowing companies to own TV and radio stations and newspapers in the same market, and raising the limits on how many they could own. (The Senate tried that last year, too, but the House never went along and likely won't this time either.)*

We can pin much of the blame for that on a local boy from Illinois: The Fourteenth District's own Dennis Hastert. As Speaker of the House, he makes the call about what legislation can come to a House vote, and he's naturally sitting on this legislation because (a) even the Republican-controlled House will probably approve it, and (b) he doesn't want George W. Bush to have to contend with a volatile veto situation over an issue that has bipartisan support, particularly with a close election at hand. (If Bush uses the veto, it'll be his first time.)

> *So, there you have it. The future of these media ownership rules is clear as mud. That's frustrating to media companies such as Viacom, Gannett, News Corp, and the parent of this newspaper, Tribune Co., which don't know whether or when they'll be allowed to expand into more markets.*

Aw, poor baby is crying over the sound of investors walking out of the room. Well, now you know a little taste of what it's like to be frustrated at every turn. As one who's been involved in media activism, now you understand a bit of the frustration inherent in the work. I'm just amazed that we can chalk up this dramatic victory. Let's keep this winning

streak going.

> *It's also frustrating to the majority of FCC members, particularly Chairman Michael Powell. The latest court ruling, he said, "sets near impossible standards for justifying bright-line ownership rules." The result, he hinted in a Washington Post interview, might be an FCC that decides to tackle each of these rules separately going forward. Or it may jettison sweeping rules altogether and decide each request for expansion on a case-by-case basis.*

Or the FCC may force the *Tribune* to divest its cross-ownership rule holdings in New York, Los Angeles, South Florida, and Hartford, Connecticut. In each of those areas, the *Tribune* owns a TV station and a newspaper, and in doing so they are *breaking the law*. Small wonder the *Tribune* was lobbying to have this rule changed.

This Just In From The Chutzpah Department: In August, the *Tribune* Company asked the Philadelphia court to overturn the June 2004 decision for cross-ownership in New York and Los Angeles. On September 2, to nobody's surprise, the court declined the request.

> *Either way, the result is going to be more hearings, more studies, more delay, and no certainty at all for the foreseeable future about regulatory policy. Eight years after being ordered to review the rules, the FCC remains caught in the crossfire of political debate about corporate dominance of the public airwaves. This uncertainty increases the incentive for more news and entertainment to migrate away from the public airwaves—and the purview of the FCC. It's hard to see how that's in the public interest.*

That's a headline: "*Tribune* cares about public interest." It's funny how the *Tribune* invokes the public interest when it can't fulfill its private mandate.

And news on the public airwaves? It reminds me of a joke I once saw: "We're watching the news. We'll let you know if we find any." ☹



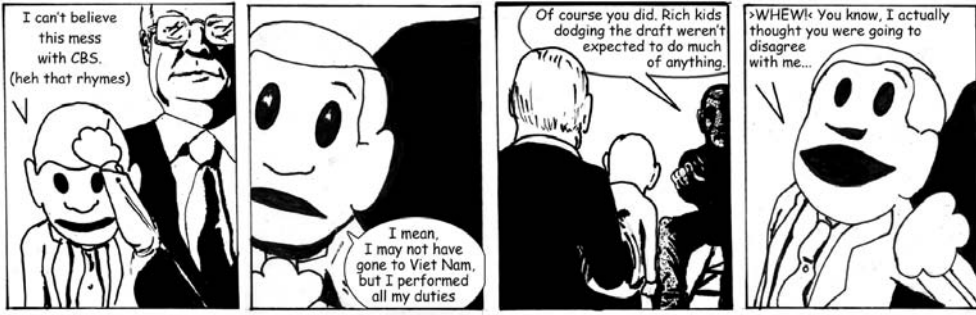
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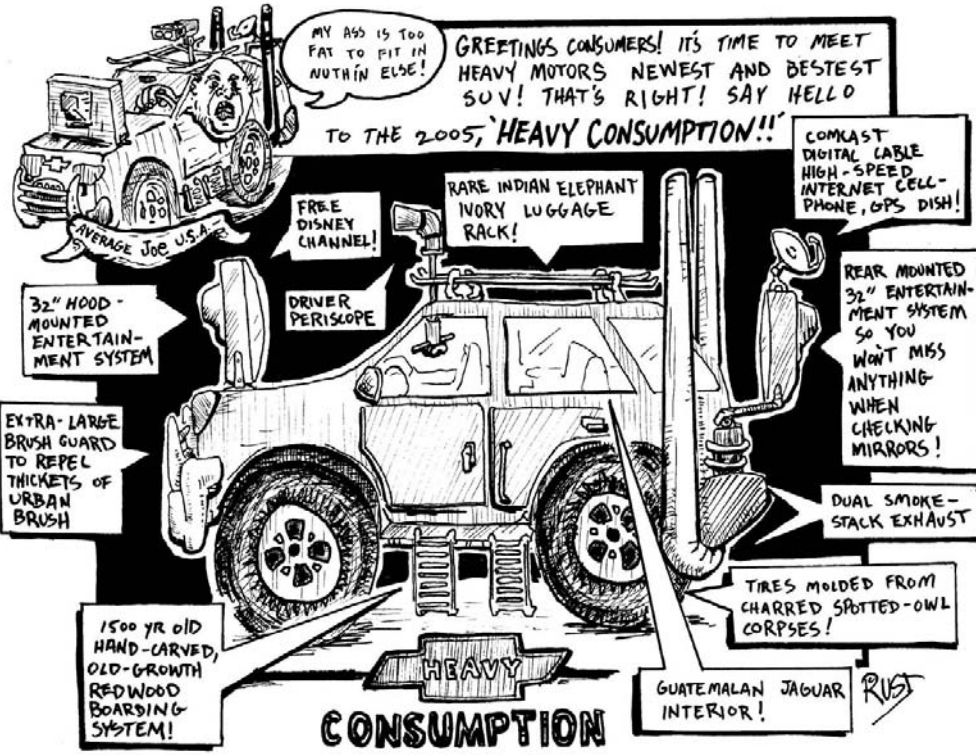
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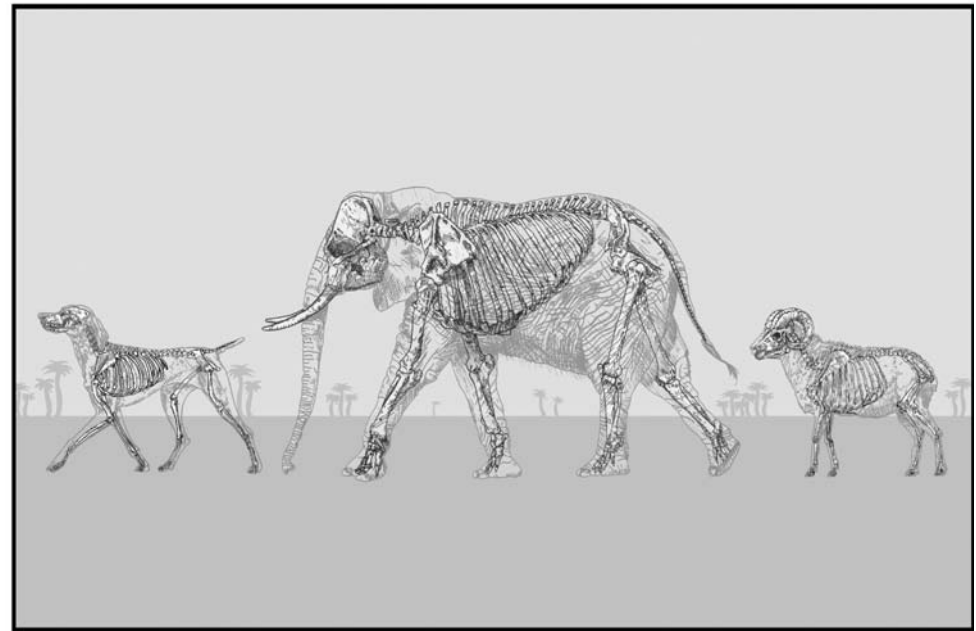
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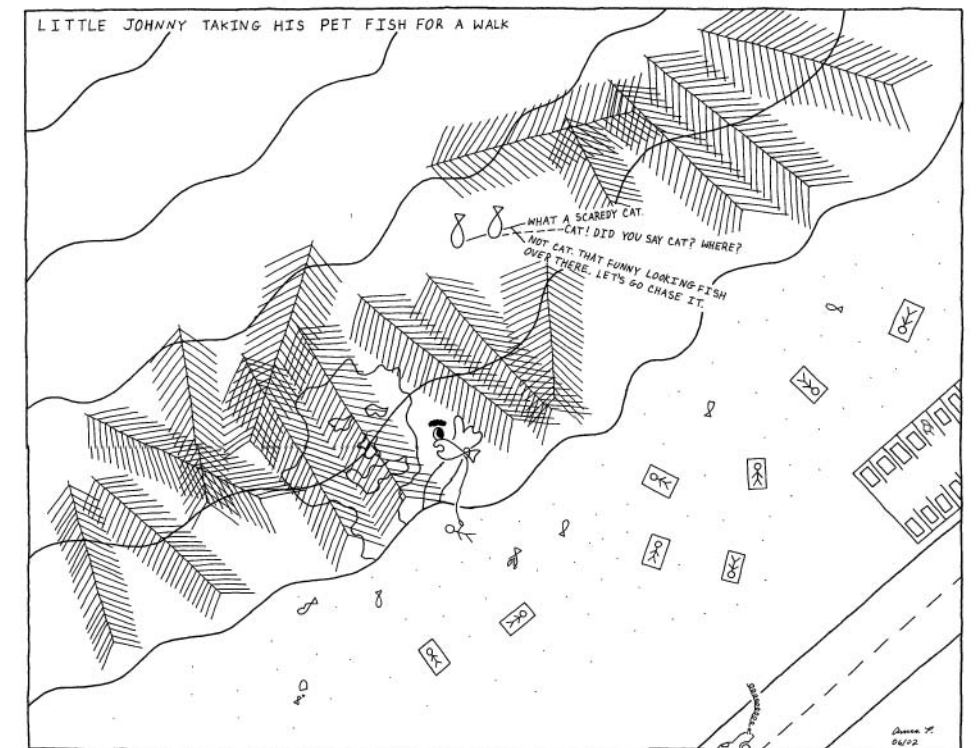
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Yes, She Really Said That

Spotlight on Ann Coulter

"God says, 'Earth is yours. Take it. Rape it. It's yours.'"

"My only regret with Timothy McVeigh is he did not go to the New York Times Building."

"The only beef Enron employees have with top management is that management did not inform employees of the collapse in time to allow them to get in on the swindle. If Enron executives had shouted, 'Head for the hills!' the employees might have time to sucker other Americans into buying wildly over-inflated Enron stock. Just because your boss is a criminal doesn't make you a hero."

"When contemplating college liberals, you really regret once again that John Walker is not getting the death penalty. We need to execute people like John Walker in order to physically intimidate liberals, by making them realize that they can be killed, too. Otherwise, they will turn out to be outright traitors."

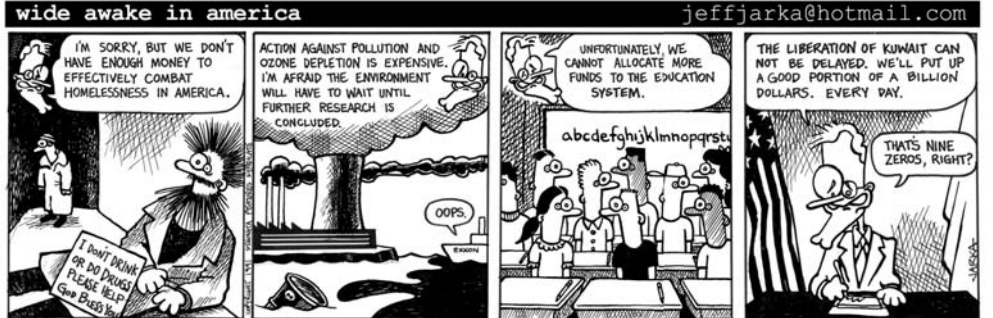
"A cruise missile is more important than Head Start."

"Americans understand that Manhattan is the Soviet Union."

John Weber's Under the Bridge Dictionary

PETER PAN: A receptacle for urinating

Déjà vu: a comic from Gulf War I



Open University of the Left A Salon for the Progressive Community

By Hugh Iglarsh

There was a time—a Golden Age, perhaps—when the life of the mind centered on the salon, that convivial urban space where opinions on everything circulated among everyone, where ideas were honed and alliances forged. The Enlightenment emerged from the European Salon and declined as the Salon Spirit fell victim to specialization and spectacle. Left homeless, secular culture then self-divided into High and Low, the one institutionalized by academia, the other commodified by the media.

The Open University of the Left (OUL) is reviving the Salon tradition in Chicago—seasoned with an inclusive spirit and a leftward tilt—with its ongoing and evolving series of presentations, discussions, debates, and showings. While the OUL maintains a progressive viewpoint, it is open to people of all political persuasions looking for substantive conversation on anything from history and philosophy to literature and art.

A typical OUL event took place this July 14—Bastille Day, 2004. A group of 20 or so souls gathered in Bucktown on a Wednesday

evening, not for the usual Bastille Day drink specials, but rather to take part in a meaty program on the revolutionary Paris Commune of 1871. Two presenters provided historical background, a couple of respondents made their points, then the group as a whole discussed the issues that interested them. Some debated the use and abuse of historical myth; others noted the similarities between the gentrification tactics used in Paris in the 1860s and in Chicago today.

Recent OUL events include a series on the history of third-party politics in the United States, a well-attended colloquium on James Weinstein's (founder of *In These Times* magazine) *The Long Detour: The History and Future of the American Left*, and a showing of Sam Greenlee's *The Spook Who Sat by the Door*, a film about black uprising in Chicago that was

essentially snuffed by theaters and distributors upon its 1973 release. After a long nomadic existence, the OUL is ensconced at Acme Art Works, a cultural hub at 1741 North Western Avenue managed by the Near Northwest Arts Council. The funky café space at Acme serves as an ideal intellectual home away from home.

"The goal is to offer a nonsectarian common ground for questioning people, who often feel isolated," says David Williams, who founded the OUL back in 1987 and still has a leading role in the organization, despite his recent move to Madison, Wisconsin. "We also help bring together the scholarly and activist communities. Our programs are an enlivening alternative to the usual diversions—you can make it a Melville night, instead of a Blockbuster night."

Unless ideas are shared, energy for change is fragmented and movements remain narrow. The OUL provides a forum for creating connections as well as individual learning and growth. The enthusiasm is infectious and, as the robust (and lively) crowds at recent events show, the momentum is growing.

For more information about the OUL—or if you'd like to host a presentation, e-mail the organization at oul.org or call 847/677-5474.

Visit Frank Pulaski's website, augustinesspiritual-goods.com, for a link to products and services of an celestially insightful nature.

Astrology & the 2004 Election Whom the Stars Really Support

By Frank Pulaski

Astrology is nothing more than a study of planetary cycles. In fact, all astrologers actually do is observe celestial bodies building, storing, and releasing energy. For example, on the first day of spring, when the sun is at the equator, it slowly builds energy, growing in heat as it rises higher and higher in the sky, and finally peaking on the first day of summer. Then it begins releasing energy as it descends back towards the equator. The rise cycle is one of growth, and the release cycle one of splendor: The breathtaking colors of autumn. More simply, think of how temperatures rise towards noon and drop towards evening. On a personal level, think of your birthday, the day the sun returns to almost the exact position it occupied when you were born. From your birthday and for six months afterwards, the sun grows in energy (think of it as your inhalation, or growth period), and during the following six months, it releases energy (your exhalation, or application period). Whether you believe in astrology or not, everyone follows one component of it: Namely, the sun cycle.

In astrology, the sun is a symbol of the life force. However, the planets that are symbols of career, success and achievement are Jupiter (representing expansion) and Saturn (representing caution and wisdom). For almost 20 years, I have noted that when these two planets rise on the Midheaven (the top) in an individual's horoscope, it is almost always indicative of success, that is, a person's inhalation, building period, making a move on his or her planned future. When these two planets are setting, the period of striving is over, and the person is usually settled into the position that he or she has created. Remember, as in sports, success always favors the rising star, (or planets Jupiter and Saturn in our case) as the energy is growing, making more of an effort.

It is with this simple idea that I approach the upcoming presidential election. First, let's look at President Bush. Jupiter and Saturn are all but exhausted in his horoscope. His Saturn has expired into the 12th house, or what is known in astrology as the house of endings. Furthermore, he's experiencing a phenomenon known as a Saturn return, which takes place every 28 years. This event is almost always associated with life changes, generally of an unpleasant nature. His Jupiter is about to enter a new cycle, but during the election it is

in its bottom phase. There's certainly nothing for Bush to be optimistic about. During the 2000 presidential election, these two planets were still high up in his horoscope (as they were for Al Gore). That election was virtually impossible to call because of the unusual similarities between their horoscopes.

Presidential contender John Kerry's Jupiter and Saturn, although well away from the top of his horoscope, are in a rise phase that will continue for some years, which suggests that his success phase is only just beginning. In fact, he won the Democratic nomination with a very difficult planetary aspect of Pluto, a planet considered to have an injurious influence, on his most vital heavenly body (the sun). The fact that he handled a difficult planetary influence in a positive manner indeed bodes well for him.

Of course, nothing is quite this simple. Right after World War I, a new type of astrology, harmonics, played down the mere symbols of the zodiac in favor of hard mathematical relationships between planets. Some have called it German astrology, because German astrologers initially practiced it. If we do a harmonic breakdown of President Bush's and John Kerry's horoscopes, we find that President Bush has a preponderance of negative aspects, two to one over John Kerry. Moreover, there are factors at work that suggest that people within Bush's own party are secretly working against him (Neptune in the 7th house), and that the money players are secretly supporting Kerry (Pluto conjunct his sun). Now, my mother has the final say in all of this. She has always said that whenever I offer a prediction, I should imagine that someone was pointing a gun at my head. So, a gun was indeed pointed there, and I had to pick the winner of Presidential election 2004, I'd have to go with Kerry.

Some of you may remember that many years ago, George Bush, Sr., called Ronald Reagan's economic policies "Voodoo Economics"—something I'll bet he never imagined that his own son would one day practice. Well, if "Dubya" wins this election, it has got to be through voodoo, because it is certainly not in the stars. ☺

Visit Frank Pulaski's website, augustinesspiritual-goods.com, for a link to products and services of an celestially insightful nature.

The enthusiasm is infectious and, as the robust (and lively) crowds at recent events show, the momentum is growing.

Scheduled to end at 9 PM, the session continued another half-hour, and some participants reconvened at a neighborhood café for further discussion. While no poll was taken, people appeared satisfied that they had gotten their \$5 worth. (Donations are requested to cover basic expenses, but no one is turned away for lack of funds.)

OUL's literary subset—Literature in Three Dimensions—has hosted presentations on classics and contemporary works, from Herman Melville's *Typee* to Palestinian writer Ghassan Kanafani's novella, "Men in the Sun," and Morris Berman's iconoclastic *The Twilight of American Culture*. The L3-D program aims at linking the artistic and political aspects of literature without slighting either. Presenters begin by offering biograph-



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Who Moves Into Wilson Yard?

Community Land Usage Battle “Developing” at Broadway and Montrose

By Grant Schreiber, Photos by Adeline Sides

The various factions gathered together at the cafeteria of Harry S. Truman College on September 8 for the 6:30 PM meeting. It was a packed, standing-room-only affair. Speakers were set up so the people in the hallway could hear what was going on. Even in the cafeteria, getting a decent view of various power point presentations was awkward at best.

The housing space isn't off the drawing board; the ground has yet to be broken. The Wilson Yard is a five-acre plot of land set in a triangle, flanked by Broadway Avenue to the east and the Red Line “L” tracks to the west. The narrow end of the triangle starts at Wilson Avenue and spreads southward to the wide end at Montrose. It's the biggest construction project in years in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood and the big debate is over who gets to move in.

Everybody appears to be mostly happy with the commercial concepts. There is some desire for the shopping complex to feature smaller boutique stores, mirroring the Andersonville section over on Clark Street, but it has been voted down. A new Aldi discount grocery store will be built north of the old store, which is set to be demolished. A three-story building will go up at the site; a new Target retail store will occupy the first two floors, while the third floor will house a 2,000-seat multiplex cinema. Sunnyside Road will become the main entrance and exit to the shopping complex. A new traffic light will ease congestion, or at least help those making left turns into and out of the Target parking garage happier.

erty values—although they word their mission statement differently. The council points out that there are already enough subsidized housing areas within Uptown already, and they don't want another. There is a steady parade of flotsam and jetsam along Wilson Avenue, and the UNC has seized upon the notion that any low-income housing must, by nature, produce greater gang violence, more drunks in doorways, and random property crimes.

But that sounds heartless and would be a tough act to sell. Rather ingeniously, the UNC has hit upon the plan of having what they call an Artists Community Residence, or ARC,

which would be a place where artists could find cheaper rents and work upon their art. Not missing a beat, the UNC has put up a Website complete with online petitions and a heavily biased FAQ section. They also rushed out dozens of orange t-shirts that say “Unite Uptown” in the front and “Building a Better Community Through the Arts” on the back.

An artist community has a certain appeal to it, although it gets difficult to define what “artist” exactly means. Does a skilled lap-dancer get preference over a mediocre poet? And if the goal is to support the struggling artist, would a painter who has one successful

gallery showing have to leave in 60 days? Nor is it entirely clear why a poor artist would make a better neighbor than a working stiff. While I greatly admire Eugene O'Neal, Vincent van Gogh, and Edgar Allan Poe, I certainly wouldn't want any of them as neighbors, and probably not even as dinner guests.

In all seriousness, the ARC has some merit. The concept is to have an area where artists could live and work. Classroom space would be provided to instruct both adult and children and performance areas would also be incorporated. Anything that brings art closer to the people is good.

But the UNC has also rejected the concept of an ACR outside of the Wilson Yard. Their desire to support the struggling artists is entirely based upon location. Or politics.

Helen Shiller, Alderman of the 46th Ward, has been the center of attacks for her work on the Wilson Yard project. Shiller is insisting upon the low-income housing and finds the UNC objections dubious at best. Recently, on WBBM's 848 show, she said that the fight over the housing “is about the next election.” The UNC, in turn, suggests that by providing low-income housing, Shiller is only trying to pad her voter base. That seems a little hard to swallow. One gets the feeling that Shiller believes in people over profits, a rare belief in any politician, and the 46th Ward should be pleased that she's on their side. She is one of the very few voices who recognize the greatest danger to a successful, vibrant community is a lack of affordable housing, not a lack of upscale shopping options.



There is a steady parade of flotsam and jetsam along Wilson Avenue, and the UNC has seized upon the notion that any low-income housing must, by nature, produce greater gang violence, more drunks in doorways, and random property crimes.

Things start getting stickier when it comes to the proposed housing units. One building is being set aside for senior citizens on fixed incomes of less than \$25,000 per year. While this doesn't make everyone happy, it's hard to stand firm on the principle of letting the elderly fend for themselves. The second building is to be for low-income units, described as singles making around \$26,000 a year and families making around \$30,000 to \$40,000. Couraj, an anti-gentrification group dedicated to affordable housing within Uptown and the Organization of the Northeast, which favors a multi-ethnic, mixed-economic neighborhood, both enthusiastically support the housing proposals.

But the concept of having a “project” within the Wilson Yard has several Uptown homeowners in a tizzy. The recently formed Uptown Neighborhood Council is sick and tired of poor people living in their area, bringing down prop-



Improvements on the Wilson Yard have been a long time in coming. The Chicago Transit Authority owns the land and wasn't sure what to do with it for years. So they let it sit. A large section of the lot is currently a rough and tumble parking lot for Truman College, with a good deal of that spreading west of the Red Line tracks which is not up for redevelopment. Another wide section of the property is where the CTA apparently stores sand in great heaps and cement blocks in neat stacks. For a city the size of Chicago, five unused acres is an anomaly. Shiller has been working on details to renovate the Wilson Yard for six years. The UNC is quick to point out that Millennium Park was completed in six years, but fail to note that Mayor Daley didn't have to fight with the CTA or the Mayor's office to get it done—and it was still behind schedule. If the City Council gives the go ahead, work on the Wilson Yard can begin in 2005. ☺

Million Worker March

One Short Walk for Many Voices, One Giant Step for Labor Equality

By Laura Crossett, Illustration by Marc R. Keller

On September 14, 2004, several hundred people gathered at the corner of Randolph and Des Plaines to dedicate a memorial some 118 years overdue: A monument to those who struggled for the eight-hour day at Haymarket Square.

Organizer Eric Piper worked through the crowd of union members, city officials, police, ordinary citizens, and organizers from a variety of causes, including the anarchists who turned out in force to protest the exclusion of anarchists in the planning of the memorial (the eight men accused of conspiracy after Haymarket were committed anarchists).

"At Haymarket, they were struggling for people to live in dignity,"

have been narrow either in their participants (black men) or their issues (hand gun violence). The Million Worker March, by contrast, comes with a cornucopia of demands and encompasses labor unions, anti-war, community, and faith groups, undocumented workers, and ordinary, unaffiliated people.

Their demands include universal single-payer health insurance, a national living wage, guaranteed pensions, affordable housing, amnesty for all undocumented workers, a democratically-controlled media, an end to the Iraq war, the repeal of the USA Patriot Act, the abolition of NAFTA, the FTAA, and related trade agreements, the repeal

3506, representing City College employees, endorsed the march unanimously.

The involvement of non-labor groups sets the March off from many union efforts. The March has consciously billed itself as an effort by, of, and for all working people, regardless of whether or not they are "organized" in the traditional sense of belonging to trade unions.

Lauren Ray, who works at O'Hare airport, read about the Chicago group at chicago.indymedia.org. "I just recently heard about the MWM and wanted to see what folks were doing and planning."

Tracy Kostenbader, a long-time Chicago activist involved in anti-

organizing for the March. "I think a lot of people can support these demands."

Yet, despite grassroots solidarity, the leadership of the AFL-CIO, the country's largest labor organization, has not stepped on board. In fact, they have specifically discouraged their members from joining the March.

In a memorandum regarding the Million Worker March dated June 23, 2004, AFL-CIO Field Mobilization Director Marilyn C. Sneiderman advised state federations and central labor councils "not to sponsor or devote resources to the demonstration in Washington, D.C."

Why the resistance? The reason most frequently put forward is that the

election, it is highly likely that a large majority of our affiliates would have endorsed and enthusiastically organized participation by their members." They end by noting, though, that even without an official affiliation, "no doubt some of our affiliates will participate in their own behalf."

Some organizers, however, are skeptical about the AFL-CIO's position. The March organizers' open letter to the AFL-CIO leadership reads, in part:

"Our aims, with which the AFL-CIO leadership purports to agree, include universal single-payer health care from the cradle to the grave—that ends the stranglehold of greedy insur-

The March has consciously billed itself as an effort by, of, and for all working people, regardless of whether or not they are "organized" in the traditional sense of belonging to trade unions.

said Piper. "And that continues today." Piper was distributing flyers for the Million Worker March, to be held in Washington, D.C., on October 17, 2004. The Chicago-area organizing committee for the March has been busy for months now, and their efforts are gearing up in the last few weeks before the buses leave town to head for the Capitol.

Like their forbears at Haymarket, the Million Worker March organizers are building a movement of working people both within and without the unions, and like them, they are facing criticism from those one might suppose to be their allies. Previous "Million" marches—the Million Man March and the Million Mom March—

of the Taft-Hartley Act, and more.

Originally called by Local 10 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union in California, the March has now been endorsed by over 200 union locals, community organizations, and individuals. National endorsements have come from the National Education Association, the nation's largest teachers' union and the American Postal Workers International union, representing 330,000 postal service employees.

Non-labor groups who have endorsed include the Green Party USA and Veterans for Peace. Here in Chicago, AFSCME Local

death penalty work and pro-choice work, is an example of the way the March is a big-tent effort. She's become very involved in Chicago area

March's timing, just two weeks before the November 2 elections, will detract time and resources from what they see as the all-important task of getting George W. Bush out of office. The AFL-CIO memorandum urges labor organizations to "remain focused on the election." In August, after two months of debate, the Leadership Council of U.S. Labor Against the War also voted, narrowly, not to endorse the March for the same reason.

In a statement to the Million Worker March organizers, USLAW Co-Convenor Bob Muehlenkamp wrote, "Had the demonstration been scheduled after the

ance companies.

"Will the defeat of George Bush result in this? Our aims include an end to the corporate trade agreements that pit workers against each other everywhere in a mad race to the sweatshop bottom. Will the defeat of George Bush change this when

"Hay!" Let's Gain Some Landmark Capitol!



the Democratic Party brought us NAFTA, MAI and Fast Track with Disney and JCPenney paying Haitian workers 21 cents per hour?"

Here in Chicago, local organizers also question the idea that a march at this time is a bad idea. In fact, they say, it is now more urgent than ever. Penny Pixler, with the Chicago chapter of the International Workers of the World, said at a recent meeting, "I feel that any pressure on the current powers that be is a good thing, and I think it's admirable that these demands are being raised one more time."

On August 9, 2004, the National Council of the AFL-CIO met at the Drake Hotel on Chicago's Gold Coast. Outside the hotel, a dozen or so members of the Chicago organizing committee for the Million Worker March chanted and handed out flyers reading "AFL-CIO: Support the Million Worker March!" "They know we're here," said Earl Silbar, the March's Midwest coordinator. Indeed, Silbar had tried himself to get into the meeting to hand John Sweeney and the rest of the AFL-CIO leadership a list of the March's demands, but he was asked to leave before he was able to deliver it.

Getting asked to leave happens a lot to March organizers. On Labor Day, they were asked to leave Navy Pier, where they had been distributing Million Worker March flyers to people attending the Chicago Federation of Labor's celebration. "The Chicago Federation of Labor used to have a Labor Day March," Silbar noted. Now, apparently, a few Ferris wheel rides suffice.

Silbar noted that Million Worker March organizing committees have formed in the Champaign-Urbana area, Cleveland, St. Louis, Madison, and southwestern Wisconsin. On the national scene, the March now has offices in Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. Perhaps the March's greatest strength, though, is the organizers themselves, whose numbers are growing every day. Rosalind Harris, who retired from the IT industry, explained how she got involved. "I met Earl at the Office Depot, where he was copying the flyer for the MWM. I said the demands looked good, and he invited me to a meeting."

Despite what would seem to be big obstacles—the condemnation of the March by major labor organizations and the disruption of leafleting activities by police—the Chicago area organizers are undeterred. At a meeting in early September, they reported on contacts they'd made and on the generally positive tenor of reactions they'd gotten from people. Plans were also made to distribute hundreds more flyers, in both English and Spanish, at a variety of events, including a Utah Phillips concert, the Mexican Independence Day Parade, and a meeting of the Chicago Teachers' Union.

In 1938, 50 years after the tragedy at Haymarket, Congress passed the Fair Labor Standards Act, which mandated the 40-hour workweek as the national standard. Today, that standard, along with overtime pay, pensions, Social Security, progressive income taxes, and a host of other issues affecting working people are again under attack. The Million Worker March hopes to bring those attacks on working people to the nation's attention on October 17. One can only hope that it will not take another Haymarket—or another 50 years—for them to succeed.

For more info, see millionworker.org, e-mail chicagoworkermarch@yahoo.com or call 773/913-6539. ③

Haymarket History

The "Rabble" Is Still Rousing After All These Years

By Laura Crossett, Photos by Garth Liebhaber

The event's MC set the tone in her opening remarks: "It isn't necessary to agree on all the details." That pretty much summed up the official part of the dedication of the Haymarket Monument on September 14. Several hundred people gathered at the corner of Randolph and Des Plaines for the ceremony. The monument is a 12-foot high sculpture of some people "either taking down or putting up" (according to the artist, Mary Brogger) a speakers' platform on a wagon.

The ambiguity of the dedication reflects the ways in which different groups claim what happened at Haymarket as their own. It has been seized on by police, who memorialize those in their ranks slain in the line of duty (they have their own monument, now housed at Chicago Lodge 7 police headquarters on the city's near West Side after having been blown up in 1969 and 1970); and by the mainstream labor movement, who similarly see the labor activists killed at and after Haymarket as martyrs to their cause. Outside the U.S., May Day is celebrated as Labor Day in remembrance of Haymarket and the fight for the eight-hour day. And it remains a seminal event in the history of anarchism, because the eight men indicted for conspiracy at Haymarket were anarchists. Those men, along with other radical and anarchist luminaries, are buried in Forest Park; the statue that watches over them is featured as the logo for the Chicago Independent Media Center.

Needless to say, none of these groups see eye-to-eye on the details.



September 14, 2004 dedicated in a ceremony, this second of Haymarket Monuments is at the corner of Randolph and Des Plaines.

SITE OF THE HAYMARKET TRAGEDY
On the evening of May 4th, 1886, a tragedy of international significance unfolded on this site in Chicago's Haymarket produce district. An outdoor meeting had been hastily organized by anarchist activists to protest the violent death of workers during a labor lockout the previous day in another area of the city. Spectators gathered in the street as speakers addressed political, social, and labor issues from atop a wagon that stood at the location of this monument. When approximately 175 policemen approached with an order to disperse the meeting, a dynamite bomb was thrown into their ranks.

In 1886, the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions called for a series of strikes and demonstrations if employers across the country did not agree to an eight-hour workday, instead of the 10, 12, or more that were common at that time. Organizers took up their cry

all across the country in one of the first great, united fronts. Starting on May Day, there were rallies, marches, and work stoppages in many cities, including Chicago. On May 4, the International Working Peoples' Association held a peaceful demonstration in Haymarket Square to protest police brutality that killed several workers earlier in the week. The rally was disbanding and only 200-300 people were left when a 175-member strong police squad showed up. Someone—and to this day, no one knows who—threw a bomb. The police began shooting madly—some reports have them opening fire before the bomb was thrown. One police officer died as a result of the bomb; others in the crowd, both police and protesters (the numbers vary wildly), were killed in the ensuing police gunfire, and many more were injured. In the wake of the violence, anarchists and socialists all over the city were rounded up; eight of them—the original Chicago 8—were tried for conspiracy. Four were executed. The trial was considered such a sham that Illinois Governor John Peter Altgeld pardoned the others in 1893.

Speakers at the dedication in September included Illinois State Senator Emil Jones, who helped acquire funding for the project, Chicago Federation of Labor President Douglas Gannon, and Chicago Fraternal Order of Police President Mark Donahue. All were on the advisory panel for the sculpture, but Gannon, in his speech, managed to mispronounce the names of all eight of the Haymarket martyrs. After he introduced the names and professions of Albert Parsons, August Spies, George Engel, Adolph Fischer, Louis Lingg, Michael Schwab, Samuel Fielden, and Oscar Neebe, the 20 or so anarchists who had assembled at one side of the gathering yelled (after offering corrections on Gannon's pronunciation), "And an anarchist!" Gannon did hit a positive note with the crowd when he announced that, "At the end of the day, all workers, union or not, need a voice."

Donahue's speech was nearly drowned out by the anarchists and others in the crowd, who booed and chanted, "No justice, no peace, no racist police!" "Murderers!" "Remember May Molina!" and "Remember Fred Hampton!"

The identity and affiliation of the person who threw the bomb have never been determined, but this anonymous act had many victims. From the blast and panic that followed, seven policemen and at least four civilian bystanders lost their lives, but victims of the incident were not limited to those who died as a direct result of the bombing. In the aftermath, the people who organized and spoke at the meeting, and others who held unpopular political viewpoints were arrested and unfairly tried, even though none could be tied to the bombing itself.

Meeting organizers George Engel and Adolph Fischer, along with speakers August Spies and Albert Parsons were put to death by hanging. Activist Louis Lingg died violently in jail prior to his scheduled execution. Meeting speaker Samuel Fielden, and activists Oscar Neebe and Michael Schwab were sentenced to prison, but later pardoned in 1893 by Illinois Governor John Peter Altgeld, citing the injustices of their trial.

Over the years, the site of the Haymarket bombing has become a powerful symbol for a diverse cross-section of people, ideals and movements. Its significance touches on the issues of free speech, the right of public assembly, organized labor, the fight for the eight-hour workday, law enforcement, justice, anarchy, and the right of every human being to pursue an equitable and prosperous life. For all, it is a poignant lesson in the rewards and consequences inherent in such human pursuits.

lance cameras and not a refuge." He also discussed the funding of the project, noting that the money came from Illinois First and was paid for by already hard-pressed Illinois taxpayers. "This could have been a grass-roots effort," he said, "but it wasn't." ③



Ralph Nader Campaign Trailblazer

By Nicholas Ivan Ladendorf, Photo by Joeff Davis

“HE does walk like a president...I do admire him for that,” Ralph Nader notes as George W. Bush’s lone presidential attribute. He said this when he spoke at Loyola University’s Mundelein Center Auditorium on September 14. Didn’t hear anything about it? Don’t worry, neither did we—until I stumbled upon a flier. No one had brought up covering Nader in the *Third Coast Press* staff meeting less than a week before the event, so I called Editor-in-Chief Rik Adamski. I didn’t realize that I was actually volunteering myself by not objecting when he replied, after a hesitant pause, “Yeah...That is something we should cover...”

Rik expanded on his lack of enthusiasm and why Nader’s not getting his vote:

“Nader is in denial if he pretends not to know who the lesser of two evils is.

“Why did he spend so much energy campaigning in swing states...what is he thinking? Is his main goal to help Bush

winning elections. Throughout the rally, he challenged the audience by making them examine what they can do, have done, or will do for their rights. He wants everyone to contribute to society. He put some responsibility back on to the voters for continuously electing corporately

He wants everyone to contribute to society. He put some responsibility back on to the voters for continuously electing corporately sponsored knuckleheads.

take office again? Voting for Nader doesn’t even help the Green Party; it doesn’t serve any type of political agenda,” Rik said, articulating some of the issues I had been wrestling with. But in spite of our Editor-in-Chief’s opinion, I went to the rally looking for reasons for people to throw their vote away.

I could bore you with the issues, but if you want that, you can go to his Website (votener.org). I also won’t actually go into what happened at the rally; it’s also redundant for people who bother to check out his site. I’d rather spend my allotted space discussing Nader’s lone presidential attribute. He doesn’t have Bush’s walk, Kerry’s Lincoln-esque demeanor, John Edwards’ good looks, or Cheney’s super-villainy appeal.

Nader’s sole attribute is his ideas.

He has this remarkable ability to generate his own ideas—ideas that he himself actually *comprehends*. This is why he is able to engage/debate his audience directly, as he did at Loyola. It was obvious that he didn’t even screen us, because a group of Communists were trying to read off their whole manifesto to the booring audience. Nader even encouraged them to distribute pamphlets along with the Greens in the lobby.

Then it hit me: Nader cares more about getting people to be active in their civic duties than he does about

sponsored knuckleheads.

Part of Nader’s civic bolstering is altruism, but it does serve other purposes (this is the part where I tell you why you should consider throwing your vote away):

1. The Squeaky Wheel Effect.

The more people who support Ralph Nader, the more mainstream his policies will become. (Kerry’s expected to flip first).

2. Unlike the other candidates, Nader is reaching out to the disenfranchised a.k.a., the majority.

Only 76 percent of voting-age Americans were registered to vote in 2000, and less than 51 percent actually dropped the ballot. What does that mean? Someone like Nader could actually win if a relatively small group of voters decide to quit settling for the lesser of two evils.

3. The other candidates don’t care about your opinion.

Bush’s party is trying to keep blacks from voting or to stop the election altogether and Kerry’s party is working hard to keep Nader and other third-party candidates off the ballot and ineligible for write in-status. Nader is currently (as I’m writing this) fighting to give you the choice. ☺



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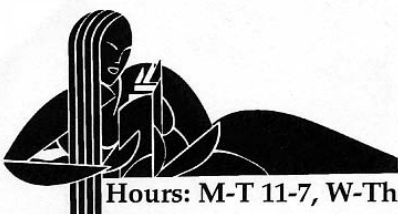
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◀continued from page 1

civic duties and responsibilities. It's as if, well, they don't really *want* us to vote.

[**The Federal Election Commission, or FEC, came into being only in 1975, likely in response to Nixonian subterfuge. According to its Website, the FEC's role is primarily to "administer and enforce the Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA)—the statute that governs the financing of federal elections." It also acts as a guide to established election regulations. It does little, as we saw in 2000, to actually guide the election process along democratic pathways.]

All parties here would say it's up to the *citizen* to tap into that patriotic fire within and learn about their great system of governance. If anyone in the nation appears as of late to be doing its best to "get out the vote," it's Hollywood and a healthy number of successful pop and rock celebrities. Even MTV got busy in the early '90s with its prominent "Rock the Vote" campaign, ostensibly to get Bill Clinton into the Oval Office.

But many Americans put a low premium on getting others excited about voting. More conservative voters tend to claim that if people really cared about their nation, they'd show up on Election Day. But many *do* show up on Election Day, only to be told they don't have the proper I.D., they're not registered properly or at all, or that various punch card, optical scan, or the new Touch-Screen voting machines are "malfunctioning." In one recent local election in New Orleans, workers simply never showed up with the machines. That's a sure-fire method of nixing the vote.

Other various historical obstacles to the vote include frustrating and complicated absentee voting—particularly for those who are overseas. Registering on time and securing ballots here can be trying. Some may recall hearing that thousands of overseas military votes in the 2000 presidential election were in danger of getting shut out by Al Gore. James Baker, Secretary of State to Bush, Sr., and "consultant" to "Dubya's" troubled 2000 campaign, demanded that the Gore people not stand in the way of honest and loyal U.S. soldiers simply trying to cast their ballots. It didn't seem to matter to anyone that a majority of these soldiers' absentee ballots weren't even mailed in until well after that year's November 7th election date, making them obviously, null and void. Recall that Bush "beat" Gore by a miniscule 537 votes.

Other gaping potholes on the highway to electoral efficiency include the dearth of "same-day

DAVID AND GOLIATH

Cook County Clerk Takes On Election Behemoth

By James Sandrolini

Mass confusion over hanging and dimpled chads, tens of thousands of voters illegally "scrubbed" from voter rolls, strong-arm tactics intimidating minorities and poor citizens from voting, and a Supreme Court all-too-willing to do the bidding of a favorite conservative son from Texas. Can it all be circumvented this election season? As far as Illinois and Chicago (with its notorious voting legacy) go, Cook County Clerk David Orr gives a determined trooper's thumbs-up.

Like many others, Orr was alarmed at the kinds of election misdeeds he saw four years ago in Florida. He doesn't want any of the sickly residue of that compromised election to infect those in Illinois and Cook County in 2004 and beyond.

But look away from besieged Florida for a moment. In 2000, according to a *Chicago Tribune* analysis, "Chicago had the most error-ridden presidential election of any U.S. city. Most striking: The error rate in Cook County (which is mostly Chicago) skyrocketed from 27 percent in 1996 to 63 percent in 2000." [from verified-voting.org]. As a result of embarrassments like this, Orr has dedicated himself to educating as many potential voters as possible and maintaining proper safeguards at polling places come Election Day. But however valiant his intentions, this feisty crusader may have his work cut out for him due to computerized voting machines that will be employed in Cook County.

At a meeting earlier this year with a dozens of polling place judges and concerned citizens, Orr detailed his plans for remedying the broken-down election system here in Cook County. The meeting, hosted by Chicago's United for Peace and Justice, commenced with

an abbreviated showing of *Unprecedented: The 2000 Presidential Election*, an infuriating recollection of the highly suspicious activity occurring under Florida Governor Jeb Bush and Secretary of State Katherine Harris four years ago. Orr then launched into his strategy for ensuring safe and fair elections in a city and state not well known for such things.

For years, Orr's office has been influential at getting out the vote in Cook County and beyond. He's pushed hard for voter-education programs, getting Election Day directives out to people in poor areas, assisting voters in prisons (where persons awaiting trials can indeed vote), and educating polling place judges on how best to aid confused voters. Orr says his office will focus perhaps most crucially on the new equipment being employed for post-2004 elections. Illinois will continue to use punch-card ballots—swinging chads and all—for this upcoming presidential election.

Orr strongly believes that the new computerized machines being used around the nation at this moment are highly flawed without paper trails of voter receipts. These audits are the only way voters can verify that their vote was correctly counted. Even this precaution, though, hardly ensures anything close to 100 percent accuracy. Machines can still be hard-wired by less scrupulous types to record one thing and print something altogether different. This is the key pitfall in computerized voting: Computers are volatile, often unpredictable machines. They malfunction, freeze, go down when you least expect, and can be fairly easily manipulated or hacked by an individual with the proper technical acumen. Hackers love to hack. Cheaters love to cheat.

There is no perfect system for voting and probably never will be. The best advice is always that which was given by Thomas Paine: "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance." Worried citizens will have to do their part from here on out to prevent another Florida 2000.

While Orr is highly concerned with the voter's ability to confirm his/her own vote—and for the paper ballot to be counted as the official vote—he seems less concerned about the matter of who actually owns these machines. Certainly the corporate ownership of the U.S. media shapes and bends the various angles of news coverage in this nation. So, why would the ownership of voting machines not be of crucial concern as well? With major Bush backers at the helm of most of these private companies, surely they'll have a vested interest in getting their man back into office. He's certainly served them well over the past four years. And since their very business is the counting of votes in our democracy, why should concerned citizens put their full faith in these very partisan figures?

Orr seems to brush off such concerns as "conspiracy theorizing" and undue pessimism. He assured the crowd in attendance that evening that companies like Diebold and ES&S (both have offices in Illinois) are "perfectly good, decent companies" and that there's little ground to fear their influencing an election one way or another. Let's hope Orr is correct. So far, there are numerous articles and instances to prove he is not. Just in case foxes guarding hen houses don't comfort you, be well on the lookout for your vote this November 2. And be ready to raise some Hell if democracy once again goes awry.

the first major attempt at providing a real, federally-mandated framework for voting rights and regulations in the U.S. Beyond its eminently patronizing title, HAVA was supposed to provide a roadmap to long-overlooked insufficiencies and inconsistencies in

much. And why wouldn't they want the system to remain broken, when it benefited them so handily back in 2000?

Greg Palast of *The Guardian*, perhaps the keenest eye in detecting the foul stench of election thievery in Florida 2000, has a few things

tially faulty computerized voting machines scouring the land, in combination with intimidation tactics at the polls, may make the disaster of Florida 2000 look like a Cub Scout bake sale. This November, one in four Americans will vote using electronic touch-screen voting

BUT FOR THOSE NOT PLANNING ON VOTING REPUBLICAN THIS NOVEMBER, THIS DARK, HISTORICAL WARNING RINGS LIKE THE SHRILLEST OF CLARION CALLS.

registration," whereby American citizens can vote on the very day they register. Studies show a marked increase in voter turnout under these conditions. For some odd reason, only a few states in the nation allow for this provision. And many Americans wonder why we aren't automatically registered to vote simply by virtue of our citizenship and our legal age requirements.

Others are perplexed why we don't follow more closely Britain and the European nations in allowing more than one single weekday to vote (actually, at 12 hours, not even a full day). Why is Election Day, possibly our most important day of that year, held on a weekday at all? Would not Saturday be much easier for voters and poll-worker volunteers? Or, barring the weekend, why does the U.S. Congress not deem such a vital day to our democracy a national holiday, giving everyone more or less equal opportunity to get to the polls? Many have suggested fusing Election Day together with Veteran's Day on November 11.

No matter what options could be undertaken, one could be forgiven for thinking our government actually seems to make voting in this nation difficult. African-Americans know this reality all too well, considering the sad legacy of racist segregation, illegal "poll taxes," and literacy tests in the South meant to eliminate their vote. Why, many Florida African-Americans residents caustically joke today about the phenomenon of "voting while black."

HAVA NICE ELECTION, SUCKERS

This isn't to say attempts haven't been made to right the wrongs of 2000 in recent years. The 2002 Helping Americans Vote Act (HAVA) is

federal elections. Unfortunately, this little-studied, much-rushed legislation was pushed through Congress with all the loving care that went into passing the USA PATRIOT Act. HAVA still doesn't address the issues of national regulatory standards, oversight, and uniformity so lacking in our last major election. Ultimately, HAVA is little more than a tourniquet to halt the massive hemorrhaging of justice in our democracy. The tourniquet isn't wrapped very tight, either. HAVA was supposed to make voting easier and more accurate in the U.S. Instead it has made things worse.

Ronnie Dugger of *The Nation* says of HAVA: "Under the act, the Election Assistance Commission (EAC), appointed by President Bush, is supposed to set standards for the vote-counting process, but four months before the election, the new agency had only seven full-time members." Dugger further says that on June 17, the EAC delivered \$861 million to 25 states, essentially for the purchase of touch-screen voting machines "for which no new technical standards have been set." Some 36 million will be using these computerized machines with no paper audit come Election Day. Nevada has been the only state so far to take the gamble on voter-verified paper audit trails (VVPAT).

Additionally, writes Steven Hill of the Center for Voting and Democracy, the EAC "was given limited powers to 'assist' states and issue voluntary guidelines." The Democrats wasted little time appointing their commissioners, but Republicans dragged matters out until January 2004. This means that there was precious little time to ensure the committee would have its act together to safeguard the election in November. Possibly, the Republicans knew this

also to say about HAVA. Not only does HAVA look admiringly upon voter purge lists, Palast mentions, it actually *requires* such purges in all 50 states. He writes, "Specifically, every state must, by the 2004 election, imitate Florida's system of computerized voter files." That Florida would be trusted with *anything* other than cleaning up after hurricanes, following Election 2000, is part of the mind-melting ethos of livin' in the U.S.A.

Palast says the law also empowers the nation's 50 Secretaries of State to enact state voter list purges at their discretion. At the moment, Republicans are dominant not just in all three branches of federal government, but also in governorships nationwide. You know where this all is going, right? Historically, state purge lists of those ineligible to vote has been conducted by bipartisan committees at the county level. Under HAVA, claims Palast, "the job of deciding who can and can't vote will fall to a single official—the 'Katherine HARRISes of each state.'" Palast touches home in recalling the Illinois office of Secretary of State, "whose former director was convicted last year of running what prosecutors called 'one of the most corrupt constitutional offices in Illinois history.'" Realize that Secretaries of State tend to be rabidly partisan and you get a good, salty taste of things to come next month.

RISE OF THE MACHINES

Perhaps HAVA's greatest triumph is acting as a massive government commercial for private companies hawking their shiny, new touch-screen voting machines. The plague of poten-

tially faulty computerized voting machines scouring the land, in combination with intimidation tactics at the polls, may make the disaster of Florida 2000 look like a Cub Scout bake sale. This November, one in four Americans will vote using electronic touch-screen voting

machines some call "a hacker's dream." Since the last presidential election—whereby democracy lost in a landslide to right-wing sleight of hand—these machines have flooded into the counties of U.S. states. The results have not been encouraging.

The key to this coming election might possibly reside in the subject of ownership. With states nationwide using their big government handouts via HAVA to purchase electronic voting machines, one might ask what any good lawyer or investigator asks in a criminal proceeding: Who benefits? In the case of computerized election machines, that would be three large private companies: ES&S, Diebold (makers of ATM machines), and Sequoia Voting Systems. And the Republicans, of course. Ronnie Dugger writes, "About 61 million of the votes in November, more than half the total, will be counted in the computers of one company, the privately held Election Systems and Software (ES&S)."

Most disturbing of all is that since these companies are private entities, they are under no obligation to open up their software to scrutiny in the case of Election Day shenanigans (pretty much a certainty at this point). Even the federal government cannot pry into the software code driving these e-voting machines. It's all a big secret. This is just a taste of what occurs when a democracy sells out its most vital public functions to a handful of corporate profiteers. And the genie is well out of the bottle by now.

Here's a quick breakdown on the three corporate kingmakers: Republican Senator Chuck Hagel was once the president of ES&S's parent company, McCarthy Group (note the irony). He was also a chairman of the company

in the mid-'90s. To date, Hagel still has between \$1 million and 5 million invested in the McCarthy Group. Good for the goose, good for the gander. Activist/author Jim Hightower writes that Hagel won his U.S. Senate Seat in

PURGE OVERKILL

On top of everything else afflicting our electoral system to date, quite possibly the gravest factor in disenfranchising people of their votes

not suppress the Detroit vote, we're going to have a tough time in this election cycle." Detroit is 83 percent African-American. Then there's Missouri. There, in an August primary, some polls in mostly African-American/Democratic

Bushites pull Osama bin Laden out of a hat? Will, defying all reasonable odds, a stockpile of WMDs magically pop up in Tikrit, the place Donald Rumsfeld told us they, without a doubt, were hiding? Is the GOP going to unearth a

REAL DEMOCRACY DEMANDS "ETERNAL VIGILANCE," AND NOVEMBER 2 OF THIS YEAR IS DEFINITELY NO EXCEPTION.

1996 "in a major upset, including his winning in majority black precincts that had never voted Republican—all recorded on machines owned by ES&S, the company he headed before running for the Senate."

Diebold CEO Wally O'Dell has acted as a major fundraiser for the GOP and George W. Bush's drive for the presidency in 2000. Here's what Hightower wrote about O'Dell's political leanings in his *Hightower Lowdown*: "How partisan is O'Dell? In August, he was a guest at George W.'s ranchette down in Crawford, Texas, where he and several other Bush fund-raising "Rangers" had a private tête-à-tête with the Prez to discuss how each of them would raise \$200,000 or more to keep him in the White House." And, "So excited was Wally to be part of Bush's team that he went home to Ohio and promptly sent out letters to his wealthy associates declaring that he is "committed to helping Ohio deliver its electoral votes to the president next year." He then invited them to attend a \$10,000-a-plate Bush fundraiser at Cotswold Manor, his mansion in Columbus." How's that for "fair and balanced"?

In 1999, the Justice Department filed federal charges against Sequoia, alleging that employees doled out over \$8 million in bribes to election officials. Additionally, one of Sequoia's top executives was indicted in 2001 for "money laundering conspiracy and malfeasance." That exec, Phil Foster, was charged also with bribing election officials to use his e-voting machines. Charges were eventually dropped in exchange for the exec's testimony against Louisiana's state commissioner of elections. So, anyone out there feeling optimistic?

There are dozens of great, mind-warping articles on the perils of electronic touch-screen machines and the subject is too unwieldy to fully cover here. Suffice to say, there have been myriad disturbing reports since the last presidential election of these machines breaking down, not turning on, producing scrambled results, and showing obvious signs of tampering and manipulation, just to name a few examples.

HAVA did include a requirement for all electronic voting machines to produce traceable paper audit trails...by 2006. So, in the coming election, if you're one of the lucky ones using these machines you won't be able to actually verify how you voted. As Big Brother might've put it, "You'll just have to trust the machines." And all those Republican-fundraising companies

is the oldest method: Voter intimidation. Who needs poll taxes and Jim Crow, if you can just slyly scare Democrat-leaning voters away? Beginning in the Florida election, various media outlets (mostly the *Miami Herald*, *The Guardian* of Britain, *Slate.com*, and *The Nation*) provided numerous instances of voting irregularities and wrong-doing, particularly with large numbers of African-American voters put on phony felon "purge lists," given false and misleading information about where and when to vote, being asked for forms of I.D. unnecessary for voting in elections, and all-out physical scare tactics by Republican party operatives. It's just a single day, so if Republicans can deprive vast numbers of largely Democrat-leaning African-Americans of their vote, the day will be theirs.

And they're at it again. In one of the more disturbing and obvious cases of Florida's GOP electioneering (so far, there are very few reported cases of Republican voters being cheated or intimidated by Democrats), a recent state purge list was provided which detailed the names of 48,000 names as "suspected felons." The list was overwhelmingly African-American. Democratic investigators got suspicious and asked Jeb Bush's people to cough up the purge list for public viewing. Initially, and for good reason, they balked at this request before finally giving up the list. Interestingly enough, of the 48,000 suspected felons, none were of Latino descent—an extreme unlikelihood in a state like Florida. When investigators accused Jeb's Secretary of State, Glenda Hood (again, note the irony) of scrubbing the lists clean of Republican-leaning Latino (largely Cuban) names, Hood responded that it was "absolutely unintentional." After the malarkey we all witnessed by these folks in 2000, that tale is a bit too tall to tell at this point.

But it's not just for Florida anymore. All over the nation there are increasing reports of voter intimidation, especially of African-Americans, even at the school and county board elections level. In her remarkable article on *AlterNet.org* (alternet.org/election04/19917/), *The Progressive's* Ann-Marie Cusac reports on a jaw-dropping array of electoral subterfuge, polling place jerry-rigging, intimidation tactics, and all-out voter theft since 2000. In addition to several Florida instances—where, let's face it, you expect it to

districts opened up several hours late, well after many had to be at work. Extended hours at these polls were often not allowed. There were also many cases of voters lacking picture I.D.s getting turned away without being offered the required provisional ballot allowing them to vote.

In what has to be one of the more brazen attempts to disenfranchise probable Democratic voters, voters have been entreated to messages over the years like one sign, appearing in predominantly African-American neighborhoods in Baltimore in 2002, entirely in capital letters, reading:

**URGENT NOTICE
COME OUT TO VOTE ON
NOVEMBER 6th. BEFORE YOU
COME TO VOTE MAKE SURE YOU
PAY YOUR:**

- PARKING TICKETS
- MOTOR VEHICLE TICKETS
- OVERDUE RENT
- AND MOST IMPORTANT, ANY
WARRANTS

Of course, the election was held on November 5th that year.

There are sad cases all over Republican-heavy South Dakota of Native Americans being fed false information like the above where they're "encouraged" to show up on November 4th or 6th to vote instead of the 2nd. These people have also been threatened with signs warning them that computerized voting machines can be linked up to a phone line giving them the capacity for federal, state, and local government agencies to instantly check if a voter is:

- A NON-CITIZEN
- Wanted on Criminal or Traffic Warrants or Parole or Probation violations
- Is behind on child support payments
- Is cheating on Welfare, Food Stamps, AFDC, Section 8, or Medicaid by earning money "off the books"
- Has defaulted on government-backed student loans
- Has failed to file income taxes for two or more years

Look out America, because here comes Hurricane Jim Crow, Jr.

SADLY, FOR A NATION SO PROUD OF ITS RICH CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY, CHERISHED FREEDOMS OF SPEECH, AND VOTING RIGHTS, THE U.S. DOES LITTLE TO REALLY ENCOURAGE ITS CITIZENS TO ACTUALLY GO OUT AND VOTE.

providing those machines.

It's certainly odd that a company like Diebold couldn't have produced a method for verifying our vote in paper form; their countless thousands of ATM machines all across the land do this with ease for every transaction we make. Yet, the company and many apologists for non-paper trail machines admonish, "The paper could jam!" and "It's just too expensive" and other lame and disingenuous fibs and follies. Actually, the estimates for such installations run between \$300-\$600 per machine. How odd that these conservative private companies, who all seem to be rooting and raising tall dollars for George W. Bush, never thought to simply put in the mechanisms for paper audits. Perhaps it's just an oversight.

And would not average Americans grant their uninhibited approval to allow Congress to spend that kind of money to ensure their votes are indeed their votes? Would anyone beyond ES&S, Diebold, Sequoia, and the Bush administration really think this kind of expenditure to be a waste of their American tax dollars?

STATES OF DENIAL/

happen—election thievery has been alive and well all over the country.

In Arizona, many voting rights organizations, many conservative in this case, are gearing up to hit the polls to make sure illegal Mexican immigrants aren't hitting the polls in large numbers. Cusac writes of one conservative vote watcher, Russ Dove, editor of *tianews.com*, the *Website of Truth in Action*. "The only people we will bother are people who are in violation of the law," says Dove. For instance, if he sees "a busload of Hispanic individuals who didn't speak English and who voted," he plans to follow that bus to make sure they aren't voting more than once.

It's rather laughable that Republicans would think illegal immigrants would risk getting outed at the polls and sent back to their respective nations all for the chance to vote illegally in a U.S. election. They may loathe George Bush...but not enough to be sent back to the Hell from which many of them recently escaped.

Other embarrassments include Michigan where, on July 16, the *Detroit Free Press* quoted John Pappageorge, a Republican state representative from Troy, Michigan, warning, "If we do

"Any way we cut it, these people are going to try to steal this election." —Representative Alcee Hastings, Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach.

DEMOCRACY, GROUND ZERO

At least when all those communist or fascist dictatorships stole elections, it was right out in the open. Everyone knew the fix was in so they'd just shake their heads and roll their eyes. What could they do? They lived in a police state. Here in the States most pretend that these kinds of things could never happen. "Not in America!" (Home to hundreds of years of slavery and Jim Crow, the McCarthy Witch Hunts, Vietnam, the Kennedy Assassination, Watergate, October Surprise, Iran-Contra, The S&L Crisis, and, of course, presidential fellatio.)

At this point, the fabled and often true "October Surprise" is looking less and less like a determining factor for this election cycle. But then, it's called a "surprise" for a reason. Will the

tawdry and illicit affair to knock John Kerry out of the ballpark, à la Gary Hart? (Remember Gary Hart?) Or, as is being heavily anticipated (mostly by the likes of Dick Cheney and John Ashcroft), will the U.S. get hit by al-Qaeda's terrible fury again with a calamity possibly touching down in your hometown?

All are possibilities, however unlikely. If Team Bush is still going at it neck-and-neck with Team Kerry well into October, the election will undoubtedly go from "negative" to all out vicious, with Dems and GOPs alike pulling out all political stops to get that crucial one-up on the opposition.

It's hardly unseen for close elections to become truly dirty in the final weeks of the grind. Daley Sr. pulled some heavy strings with his, ahem, associates in the Outfit to get Kennedy elected (and look what that got him). Then there's the case of the original "October Surprise," a notorious and well-documented stealth operation conducted by another Fortunate Son's powerful daddy. Recall that, within one hour of Ronald Reagan's induction into the presidency, all 52 hostages from the Ayatollah Khomeini's radicalized Iran were set free. In subsequent years, a check worth millions was detected via Washington en route to Tehran. Yes, these bizarre 11-hour scenarios do happen here. One may already be on its way.

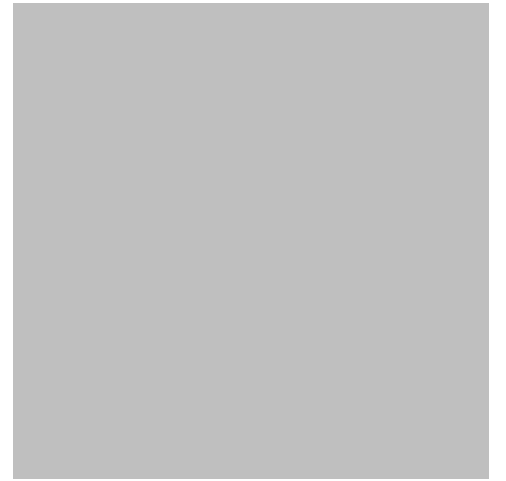
In Election 2000, we saw the brazen, stupefying subversion of American democracy take place in Miami-Dade and numerous other embattled counties in the wind-blown state of Florida. Perhaps Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne were preternatural omens compelling Florida to behave itself this November. Let's hope so. How can anyone who lived through that sad embarrassment to American democracy four years back possibly think it all couldn't happen again? Or that the same forces or mishaps behind that debacle haven't already returned to the scene of the crime for more political looting? There's a least one more storm on its way to Florida and it may be the most destructive yet.

As Fidel Castro and Vladimir Putin offered late in 2000, perhaps they can send in someone to help monitor and guide us in our sickly elections this time around. Whatever the option, let's keep Jimmy Carter stateside for this election. Possibly in a nice, pastel bungalow in Miami-Dade alongside Michael

Moore, the NAACP, the ACLU, and anyone else who is considering voting against George W. Bush this time around. But, if you reign from Chicago, you'd best stay put and keep your eyes on that black box. Real democracy demands "eternal vigilance," and November 2 of this year is definitely no exception. If Americans—right-wing, left-wing, or no-wing—get lazy and simply allow the nation to run on autopilot this year, we will once again get the government we deserve. *Caveat elector.* ☹

**FOR FURTHER
READING ON OUR
NEW ELECTORAL
DARK AGES AND
WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT
GO TO:**

- BLACKBOXVOTING.ORG
- VERIFIEDVOTING.ORG
- GREGPALAST.COM
- ALTERNET.ORG



Protesting By the Numbers

Bush's Blunders Leave No TLC for the RNC in NYC

Story and Photos by David Shuey



People always ask about the numbers.

"Ok, so you were in New York City protesting Bush and the Republican National Convention," they inquire.

"HOW MANY people were there? HOW MANY got arrested?"

It's as if quantity was the whole point. Notches on the bedpost. Forget the people, words, cries and meaning—the defiant quality of the march heard 'round the world. How those notches got on the bedpost. Go ahead: Skip the next few paragraphs.

Make a beeline into the twin columns of impassive digits. Do it and overlook the unique stories from the colorful characters that made this unprecedented democratic convergence happen:

> **The grandmotherly lady** selling her home-spun (and clearly out-of-date) T-shirts blaring, "BLUNDER-BUSH: Bush Lied, 800 Died." Her dancing and energy were impressive, but not nearly as much as her rock bottom midmarch bargain of \$3 per T-shirt (I bought three). If updated to "1,000 died" or had she counted Iraqi dead, 10-spots would no doubt have hit her wrinkled hands from hordes of admirers. *

> **Two blissed-out and tuned-in** theatrical girls from Philly and San Francisco, locking arms and telling me they were fresh off the Baghdad bus. Earlier in 2004, the frisky pair

* If I knew the bespectacled woman's address now (SEE ABOVE PHOTO), I'd mail her a \$30 check. On September 23, the connection from protest-universe to real-world manifest as I wore her "BLUNDER-BUSH: Bush Lied, 800 Died" T-shirt for subversive superstar UK DJ Adam "We Want Your Soul" Freeland's show at Chicago's upscale Sound-Bar. After a hot tip from a bartender (who "loved" the "Fire the Liar" block letters on my back), I found myself in the VIP lounge standing 10 feet from the BUSH TWINS. The disgruntled Secret Service and club security attempted softball tactics to get rid of me and my anti-Bush wardrobe, asking, "Could you please move—just as a favor? It's not their fault...I'm a lifelong Democrat, I understand." I'd leave, only to return again. And again. Just to stand there. After about the fourth minor protest, I told Freeland behind the DJ booth at the end of his set, "The feds told me to cover my up my shirt." His reply was as Euro-cynical as it was depressing: "What the hell did you EXPECT?"

played part in Circus 2 Iraq (circus2iraq.org), a post-Shock-and-Awe gift to a war-torn nation and its children.

> **Chicago's Pink Bloque** (pinkbloque.org), CODEPINK (codepink4peace.org), Pink Anarchists waving flags and infinite "Pink" consortiums of mostly female and queer activists. In NYC, "Pink" action was definitely "in."

No, their stories are secondary—lost in the crowd.

I have a tale or two about my adventures before hitting the Manhattan pavement early Sunday, August 29, 2004, to face the jaw-dropping spectacle: an endless river of cathartic signs, diverse faces and loud anti-Bush/anti-war chants flowing to Madison Square Garden.

The night before, feeling somewhat aimless in Brooklyn at dusk, I crashed an anarchist-leaning cooperative of musicians and activists, The Rude Mechanical Orchestra (rudemechanicalorchestra@yahoo.com). RMO-stamped green flags and shirts abounded as they worked through formation steps and songs under a twilight mist.

The RMO were friends of friends. However, with constant government fear mongering alerts hitting mainstream news outlets daily, I carried the "complete stranger" scarlet letter. I gingerly lingered under the Manhattan Bridge as they practiced. Then the rain poured down.

Practice over.

Martin, my friend's friend whose cell number I called to meet up for the first time, invited me to join the newly formed orchestra, stuffed in a basement rental outfitted for a jam band. Thankfully, some individuals were warm and welcoming after I brought beer and copious Mexican food to their "rule by consensus" meeting. Still, it felt like the Weather Underground—tense, dissident and even a tad paranoid.

Lacking any melodious talent, I assured the two dozen tired and skeptical musicians I wasn't undercover police or FBI—a universal concern in these Patriot Act days (just ask our Orange Alert friends at lumpen.com). I remained quiet, save for one "Hi. I'm David, I'm NOT a cop..." aside and quick tale of being detained by NYPD after taking photos at Penn Station the day before. Police numbers—and along with it, anxiety and trepidation—had built tremendously. Native New Yorkers were leaving town in droves. I found it all extremely overwrought—a sad sign of our new culture of fear.

As the meeting came to a close, I was handed a homemade "RMO"-emblazoned

painter cap and conscripted to fill an essential role: "Foodcart-pusher and water-boy. Show up at 11 AM sharp!" Yes, ma'am! I was essentially asked to be a human mule for up to five hours—and I was grateful.

I had a job.

The next day, at the protest's midpoint, separated from the rag-tag uniformed marching band (who had the upbeat crowd cheering), I found a side gig: pouring water into the empty cups and down the throats of dehydrated participants. To my surprise, many were elderly. A few were sprinkled in one 50-yard procession of oft-photographed pallbearers, creating long rows of fake coffins draped by both American and black flags, a silent metaphor of the human cost of war. By Monday, jetting between NYC's JFK Airport to San Francisco, and then Burning Man in Nevada, I saw both the *San Jose Mercury News* and *The New York Times* immortalize this emotional funeral visage. The collective vision was working and reaching the masses.

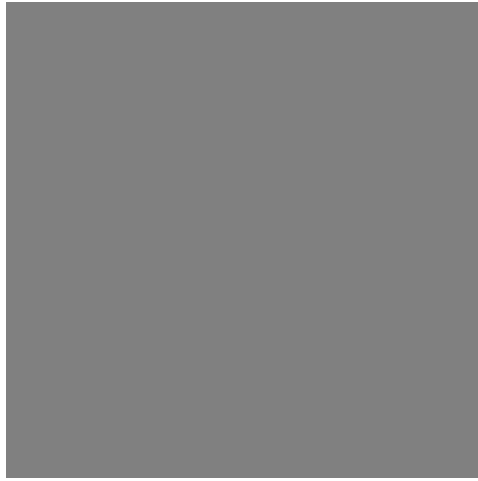
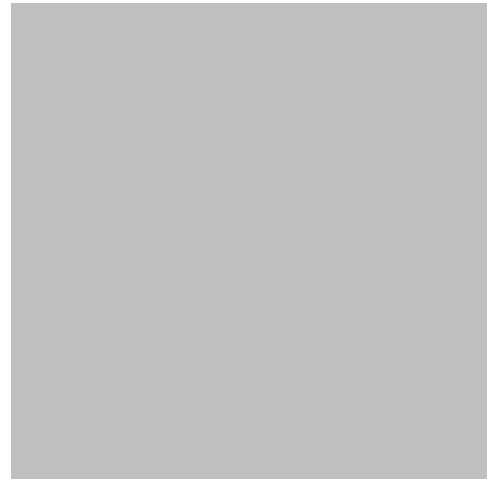
I asked one coffin carrier if he knew any soldiers who died in Iraq. "No, but this is about more than the American dead," he reminded me. "There's thousands and thousands more dead Iraqi and Afghans, all innocent people. Just like those on September 11."

I filled his barren water bottle, and thought about how three years earlier I had supported military action in Afghanistan. Today, marching through the city of the fallen Twin Towers, I knew how wrong I had been—utterly deceived by my government, shortsighted and ignorant about limited "collateral damage." I told him and others that I had made that mistake once, and was truly sorry. I was near tears. Walking away with a water jug on my head, I thanked them for remembering what so many others and I had forgotten.

On that sun-drenched steamy day, you could hook a feature story out of the air, but that's not what people ask about. In our numbers-happy society, we were there for a greater purpose: to be red, white and blue (and, yes, pink) pegs in the Lite Bright canvas of dissent. We wanted to be counted. The sum of our parts created the largest protest gathering in the U.S. since a half-million arrived in Central Park in 1982 for a nuclear-freeze rally.

You want numbers? Ok, you got 'em. In towering columns, here is a list of verifiable sums, totals and estimates from the United for Peace and Justice Protest of 2004.

Which leads to NYC's Most Overheard Lament: "Where the FUCK did those cops take my bike?"



I have a tale or two about my adventures before hitting the Manhattan pavement early Sunday, August 29, 2004, to face the jaw-dropping spectacle: an endless river of cathartic signs, diverse faces and loud anti-Bush/anti-war chants flowing to Madison Square Garden.

120,000 or 500,000: Total people slogging the 4-6 hour "No to the Bush Agenda!" anti-RNC protest on August 29. Numbers are political. The police tossed the former low-ball figure out to *The New York Times* and other media outlets (although, officially the NYPD doesn't provide crowd estimates). The organizers, United for Peace and Justice, originally expected 250,000, but estimated the actual turnout at half a million. I tend to follow the Universal Protest Golden Rule: add the cop totals to the organizer totals, then divide by two. Voila: 310,000. Sounds about right.

10,000: Extra cops hired to patrol Manhattan during the GOP convention. Total number of police announced to the world to "protect" the city: 37,000.

5,000: Republican delegates (outnumbered 60 to 1 by Sunday's peace army).

300: Total arrests at the August 29 protest, a minuscule sum. From most perspectives, including the NYPD's, this was regarded as the best-case-scenario for a largescale nonviolent peaceful protest.

500+: Participants of the DNC 2 RNC hike from Boston, eating up 258 miles in under 30 days. The trekkers reflected a simmering discontent with both major parties.

1: Michael Moores present. It's common knowledge that one Michael Moore is the minimum quota for any anti-Bush demonstration to be officially sanctioned.

0: Permits Republican Mayor Michael Bloomberg allowed for a gathering at Central Park. However, littered flyers underfoot stating "See you in the Park at 3 PM," prompted thousands to show up on the Great Lawn nonetheless. It turned out to be a mellow cool-down session after the simmering day.

1,800: Total arrested for the week of the RNC protests. This was the largest arrest total in the history of party conventions, even outnumbering the violent 1968 Democratic National Convention demonstrations in Chicago.

1,200: Total people arrested on ONE day: Tuesday, August 31. This was the official day for direct action by activists. Hundreds of the arrestees were uninvolved bystanders swept up in blanket police sweeps.

560: Number of protesters ordered to be released immediately from the activist detention center ("Guantanamo on the Hudson") by State Supreme Court Judge John Cataldo on Thursday, September 22. The city cried system overload, claiming they couldn't book and process such a vast number of people expeditiously. Many others believed the city deliberately quelled dissent by stalling the release of hundreds of people until after George W. Bush's acceptance speech on Thursday.

4: Minimum number of instruments destroyed belonging to the Rude Mechanical Orchestra on August 31, as they—and my new friends—became statistics during mass arrests. This included a sousaphone, bass drum, and flute thrown to the ground and left in a pile of trash, as well as a trombone "willfully destroyed by police." The RMO continue to look for photos and evidence of police mishandling: nyc.indymedia.org/newswire/display/120263/index.php

1: Andre 3000s present. Supposedly, Mr. Hey Ya protested the detention of two of his Outkast crewmates, also apparent victims of NYPD's arrest-everyone-in-the-area tactics.

5000+: Bikers and other wheeled warriors in NYC's largest Critical Mass ever, Friday, August 27.

264: Arrests at Critical Mass. The next day's cover of the tabloid Daily News read, "Wheel Trouble: More than 250 Arrested as Cyclists Clog Streets." The dailies were decidedly anti-protest in their coverage, reflecting a rightward bias worthy of Fox News.

400: Bike arrests during the week, with even greater number of bikes seized by police. Many bikes continue to be held in jail (times-up.org/call_rnc.php).



Strangely, I wished I could have asked the same question. I spent five days in NYC sans bike. Other Chicago acquaintances planned better, I noticed, as I took photos of them gleefully cycling off in Critical Mass' exodus from Union Square. By 8 PM that warm Friday evening, I was content to plug traffic as a vigilante traffic cop, holding up taxis and cars for 20 minutes for one latent string of Critical Mass riders in the Chelsea district, near my hostel. Playing my little part with no cabbies screaming my ear off, thankfully.

By Saturday night, I had no place to sleep. In the wee hours before the Sunday protest, I snagged a spot of floor like countless others who flocked to New York City with half-ass plans. With my international hostel overbooked, I was fortunate to stay with some Rude Mechanical Orchestra and Food Not Bombs activist friends, all of whom had ties to the Northwest like myself. One couple, Martin and Michela, were recently transplanted to a tiny apartment near Columbia University on the Upper West Side. My patrons mentioned with a sly smile, "You're welcome to stay, but you won't be sleeping alone tonight."

After 2 AM, my roommate, a 51-year-old anti-authoritarian hippie from Seattle named "Red," stumbled (slightly drunk) into the flat. A bearded smallish man, Red had borrowed a bike for Critical Mass the day before. Sadly, the bike was confiscated by police who ambushed the Critical Mass revelers mid-ride. Red, who had walked from Boston to New York after the Democratic National Convention, was lucky in one regard: he avoided arrest himself. Even so, he spent that entire Saturday slogging 10 miles on foot

between two police precincts in search of a bike he had no money to replace. He claimed aloud before falling asleep, "I'm lucky to make \$1000 in any given year."

Red's quest was in vain. The bike was never recovered. The next morning was the big day. Red woke me up. I snagged a dozen fresh bagels down the street and brought them back to our motley crew. We made more tofu sandwiches than we needed; most would later be passed around to the famished Rude Mechanical Orchestra entourage. The local community radio station was spitting out pre-Protest information, reminding us of NYC laws: no hard sticks or poles on your signs (use hollow cardboard tubing); follow sanctioned protest routes or face arrest.

"Oh shit, ARREST!" Nervous tension spread in the apartment. We wrote down emergency contacts to call if we got thrown in jail. I begrudgingly left behind my conservative Oregon parents' 503 area code home number. "Call my Mom ONLY as last resort," I wrote. She never understood why I was there, why I thought the way I did. We also applied our temporary tattoos of the RNC Mass Defense phone digits; hundreds of lawyers and volunteers were on-call to save our collective hides.

By 9 AM, three of us left for the subway. The sun hit my RMO cap, and then vanished as we dashed for the Red line. Inside, a majority of the transit cars filled with protesters. Our trio was silent, yet the excitement was clearly building. In less than two hours, we'd be joining a quarter million other like-minded peaceful souls.

It was a beautiful day to be a number. ☺



BUDDET IN CHIEF:
THE MEDIA TRIX
BY NICHOLAS IVAN LADENDORF
WWW.NILGRAVITY.COM

YOUR GOVERNMENT FAILED YOU

AND I FAILED YOU

WHO'S THAT?

HE'S HOLDING HIMSELF AND YOU ACCOUNTABLE FOR 9/11

CAN'T WE SPINDOCT-UM... CREATE... "TALKING POINTS" TO DISCREDIT HIM?

CLARKE HE USED TO DECIPHER OUR TERROR INTEL

BUT HE'S RETURNED TO THE MEDIA

WE ARE LEFT WITH ONE OPTION: LEADERSHIP

WHERE ARE WE GOING TO GET THAT?

THIS MIGHT FEEL A LITTLE WEIRD...

THE MEDIA IS THE FALSE REALITY PULLED OVER THE EYES OF THE PUBLIC.

IT IS A SYSTEM BUILT ON PROGRAMING AND HEADLINES.

THE MEDIA HAS MANY OF THE SAME LAWS AS THE REAL WORLD, SOME OF THESE RULES CAN BE BENT, OTHERS CAN BE BROKEN.

YOU MUST KEEP THE PUBLIC FROM WAKING UP TO REALITY, CONTROL THE UNWILLING SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF.

THEN WE'LL RAISE THE TERROR ALERT LEVEL.

IT SOUNDS FOOLPROOF...

WHAT IF I CAN'T? WHAT HAPPENS IF I FAIL?

HOW CAN I STOP CLARKE?

I AM THE ADVISOR.

WITH MANIPULATION OF PERCEPTION FROM WITHIN THE MEDIA.

PERCEPTION EHP?

WHO ARE YOU?

I'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU

IT HAS TO BE...

THE MASSES ARE LOSING THEIR CIVIL RIGHTS SO THAT THE ONES IN POWER HAVE ABUNDANT ENERGY.

TOPICALLY, THIS COMIC HAS THE RIGHT IDEA.

LIFE IMITATES BLOCKBUSTER MOVIES

BUT THE METAPHOR IS BACKWARDS

DUBYA IS THE ONE OPPRESSING FREEDOM, I'M THE ONE TRYING TO END THE WARS AND FREE THE PEOPLE.

I SEE NO COMPARISON TO HUGO WEAVING AND MYSELF...

...WITH PERHAPS THE EXCEPTION OF MY DEEP VOICE.

BUT THAT WOULD IMPLY THAT DUBYA HAS SOMETHING IN COMMON WITH KEANU...

WHOA

MY PARTY BEAT YOU MISTER BUSH

GORE KNEW WHAT HE WAS EXPECTED TO DO AND HE DID

SO THE PARTY SENT ME A NEW MAN

LIKE YOU, APPARENTLY RICH, A DEVOTE CHRISTIAN, YALE GRADUATE, AND HAVE SERVED IN THE MILITARY.

BUT WE'RE NOT HERE BECAUSE WE'RE THE SAME.

WE'RE HERE BECAUSE WE ARE NOT THE SAME

WE ARE HERE BECAUSE OF THE ISSUES

THE ECONOMY IS PICKING UP

BUT MORE JOBS HAVE BEEN LOST THAN THERE ARE NEW JOBS...

...THEN AGAIN I'M GOING TO FLIP FLOP

MY STRENGTH IS THAT ANYONE WHO HATES YOU IDENTIFIES WITH ME.

I KNOW YOU'RE OUT THERE, YOU'RE AFRAID OF CHANGE

AFRAID OF TERROR ALERTS STEM CELLS AND GAY MARRIAGE...

I DON'T KNOW THE FUTURE, I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW THE ELECTION WILL END.

I CAN ONLY TELL YOU ABOUT THE AMERICA I WILL CREATE IF I DO WIN.

A NATION FULL OF RULES AND CONTROLS FOR CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE, WITH BROKEN BORDERS AND STRONG SOCIAL BOUNDRIES, A NATION WHERE ANY LAW IS POSSIBLE.

THEY'RE REELING HIM IN HE CAN'T HIDE FOREVER HE'LL HAVE TO FACE US IN NOVEMBER

UNLESS THERE'S A TERROR ALERT

WHERE WE GO FROM HERE IS A CHOICE I LEAVE UP TO ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINES THAT LEAVE NO PAPER TRAIL

I MAKE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE SAFER!!

OR INVADING A COUNTRY THAT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT?

HOW? BY IGNORING WARNINGS BEFORE 9/11?

I MAKE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE SAFER

I'M DONE...



Kathy Kelly

The People's Crusader

By Carrie Maxwell, Photos by Adeline Sides

Over the Labor Day weekend, I met with Kathy Kelly of human rights group Voices in the Wilderness at their office in north side Andersonville. Kelly and I met to discuss her recent fast, Iraq, her experiences at the Pekin Federal Prison Camp (a

women's facility) and her other activities over the last nine months. We spoke on a sunny Friday afternoon in their front room, which looks out onto the tree-lined residential street that Voices staff call home.

The walls of the office are peppered with maps of Chicago, the United States, and Baghdad. They also have a bevy of photographs documenting their events and activities as well as quotes, giving their office a feel of constant activity. As we talked about her recent endeavors I got a clearer picture of Kelly the woman and what Voices means to her.

Since our last meeting nine months ago, Kelly spent three months in prison for her arrest at Ft. Benning, Georgia. She was arrested and later convicted for illegally entering Ft. Benning to protest the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (formerly the School of the Americas). When I asked Kelly about her time at Pekin she didn't speak of being angry; instead she spoke of the other women who were serving time with her and the problems they face every day.

Kelly characterizes her prison sentence as slow-going, although she was away for such a short time. Juxtaposed with the revolving door nature of her Pekin stay was the feeling that it would never end. She calls the prison a warehouse with a mentality to match that reality. There were open fields just outside the prison walls, but the fenced-in area that was used for visits

were serving sentences of at least eight years. Eighty percent of the total Pekin population was made up of non-violent, first-time offenders. Many of the women had mandatory minimum sentences of 5-10 years for drug-related crimes. Sometimes these sentences were longer than those of violent offenders. Some of these women had already cleaned up and become drug free, but were fingered by other drug offenders who made deals with prosecutors to reduce their sentences. As Kelly related these statistics she also spoke of the stupidity of locking up these non-violent offenders. She is a staunch advocate of rehabilitation instead of incarceration and has called for the abolition of the current prison system as a part of her Voices work.

Kelly also found that the neighboring Pekin Men's Prison (a medium/maximum security facility) had 1,340 men incarcerated there during the spring of 2004 and that the average sentence for these men was 27 years. Since the women were locked up for less serious offenses than the men, they were transported to the men's facility to work at the prison doing laundry, dishes, and other tasks. Even with minimum-security prisoners working in the prisons, the cost of housing a prisoner is still \$33,000 a year, according to Kelly.

Prison labor is an issue that Kelly became increasingly aware of during her three-month sentence. Prisoners get paid far less than the average minimum wage earner, earning between \$0.23 to \$1.23 an hour for companies that engage in non-competitive contract bids. Prisoners are contracted out to work on manufacturing, repairing, and laundering the uniforms for the United States military as well as other labor. One of these companies, called Unicorps, currently has a \$400 million contract with the federal prisons to employ prison labor. In addition, federal employees have shares in Unicorps, which means they make money from the cheap labor that is readily available in our nation's prisons. Since prisoners are desperate to make money, most will take any work offered so they can earn money to make phone calls and buy overpriced

and are angered at the prison abuse scandal. Her work for the people of Iraq is by no means over and she said she hopes to return to Iraq in the near future.

Along with her work on behalf of the Iraqi people, she participated in a public fast early last month. The fast was, as Kelly says, "in support of Palestinian prisoners seeking humane conditions and to increase the visibility for Iraqi detainees" as the Abu Ghraib story inevitably fades in the American media. During the fast, Kelly and other Voices members went to Water Tower Place on North Michigan Avenue to lend a public voice to their concerns. They were out there from 10 AM-2 PM, and Kelly reported that people were gentle as well as inquisitive of their cause. They were able to distribute 400 leaflets a day during the 10-day fast that began on September 1 and ended on September 10. Kelly, however, extended her fast to 14 days, using that time to slow down and reflect on what she has done. She said that fasting "keeps you sensitized to people who don't have any choice" in their present living conditions.

Due to her recent experiences, Kelly has become actively involved in the criminal justice system, including the Families Against Mandatory Minimums group and the Literacy, Education, and Rehabilitation Act that would help prisoners earn credit towards their time served by improving themselves behind bars. She still keeps in touch with her fellow detainees from Pekin.

During Kelly's prison stay, two federal agents visited her regarding a case the federal government has against Voices. The federal government has filed a civil suit against Voices over the trips they made to Iraq during the time of the U.S. sanctions. Seventy delegations went to Iraq during that period with medicines and medical aide, and the government is suing them for \$20,000 that Kelly says they won't pay. She says that the case is 95 percent locked up against Voices and they are preparing for the possibility of their assets being frozen. They have also invited the agents to search the Voices offices for any evidence that would rule against Voices.

What Kelly discovered about prisons was the sobering fact that 25 percent of the world's prisoners are locked up in the United States.

with people on the outside led to a sense of isolation from the world. She told me that while lying in her bed near the phone stalls and bathroom, she overheard other prisoner's conversations and the desperation in their voices as they tried to connect with family members on the outside. Kelly told me that she felt for those people and the situation they were in as prisoners. She especially empathized with those who were at Pekin for extended periods of time. As she got to know her fellow inmates she learned that one of the other women lost a son in Iraq. Given this knowledge, Kelly originally kept quiet about the reasons for her arrest. Only after a period of time did she begin to talk to the others about why she was at Pekin. Kelly related to me that there wasn't any hostility towards her activism from any of the other inmates. In fact, they showed an interest in what Kelly does at Voices and wanted to know more about her life's work.


In the beginning of her three months of incarceration, Kelly shared a room called "the bus stop" with nine other prisoners. She was later moved to a bed in a corridor-like setting nicknamed "the alley." While incarcerated, she worked in the dish room during her last month and was free to visit the library at any time. Instead of wasting her time in prison, Kelly utilized it to become more knowledgeable about prisons and prison labor. She also wrote articles that can be found on commondreams.org and other websites.

What Kelly discovered about prisons was the sobering fact that 25 percent of the world's prisoners are locked up in the United States. While she was at Pekin last spring, there were 300 women in the prison, one-quarter of whom

commissary items. One can only conclude that these prisoners are being exploited for the almighty dollar and the greed of big business.

During Kelly's incarceration, the story of the Abu Ghraib prison abuses broke. Kelly then became the touchstone for her fellow prisoners who were troubled by the images coming from the war. They asked Kelly many questions about Iraq. They wanted Kelly to explain to them the conditions in Iraq during the invasion and occupation by American forces.

When I asked her about Iraq and the prison situation, Kelly told me that when she was in Iraq earlier this year she visited the prisoners at Umm Quasar. The officer she spoke to at the prison told Kelly that these prisoners were lucky they were in Umm Quasar and not Baghdad. Kelly also visited with some Iraqis who are stacking up a pile of grievances against the occupation

As the civil suit progresses, Kelly continues on her activist path, which includes giving speeches and writing articles to highlight her causes. Kelly's speeches and articles are peppered with information on the School of the Americas, prison issues at home and abroad, ending the Iraqi occupation, anti-war sentiments, the environment, and political activism. These are the issues she is most passionate about and she tells me that she wants people to remain politically active following the election. She wants people to fight for what they believe in throughout their lives, and not just during an election year. Kathy Kelly continues to belie her small stature with a loud message of peace and hope for a better world at Voices in the Wilderness. 

Kathy Kelly can be reached at Voices in the Wilderness 1460 W. Carmen Ave., Chicago, IL 60640; 773/784-8065; or via e-mail at info@vitriv.org.



Glam's Sparkle Darkens

The Odd Politics of Bobby Conn

By Alan Jacobson, Photo Courtesy of Jim Newberry

Chicago glam-rock icon Bobby Conn numbers cooking, roses, and helicopters among his interests. Bobby's new LP, *The Homeland*, sports a helicopter on its cover and we can assume the rest, but if the contents are any indication, then a sharp analysis of the state of our nation via keen political awareness should be Number One on his list."

No longer delivering suites about the Antichrist, *The Homeland* finds Conn pissed off at the state of the nation. This character-study of a world-dominating villain is masterfully dished out via a wicked spoonful of sugar to help the medicine go down. Prince, Clinton, Bowie, Bolan, Slade, Roxy, DEVO, and a professed affection for The Sweet—Hell, maybe even ELO and Nilsson—all resound within the local legend's music, but Conn's work is so much more than a mere combination of his influences. This unique and powerful, yet obscure artist has been chugging away at it for over 10 years.

After Bobby's August 20 show in support of the Interact voting project, I developed a theory as to his longevity. At the show's beginning, the majority of the audience was milling about, chatting, and being almost downright disrespectful. But by "Whore," during the encore, they were gazing in awe and eating out of Bobby's hand. Conn played it up to an ironic extreme. His band, the Glass Gypsies, had the night off, and still with only a DAT, Conn and Monica Bou Bou managed to hypnotize the crowd. Conn's soulful connection to his music contains an unrelenting energy that, sooner or later, demands the attention of any audience, no matter how hip or jaded.

Speaking of cynicism, many have viewed January's *The Homeland* as a confusing switch from semi-ironic, yet celebratory *cinema fantastique* portraits of rock-and-roll fantasies to equally cinematic portraits of evil illuminati bent on world domination. As usual, this is a misunderstanding of Conn's music. The world's climate and this obvious, intense need for change naturally led to his focus shift. The teenage queen who did coke with his best friend's mom crept out from under her covers in the middle of the night, switched on the TV, and what he saw inspired grimness:

"Relax, there'll be no warning for the next attack/Relax, and there's a discount on your income tax/Relax, if they're suspicious, we'll just change the facts/Relax, 'cause once we've started, no, we can't turn back."

Naturally for Conn, his lyrics accompany the best funk lick and deep bass groove combination this side of Prince, with Bou Bou's ear-tickling violin and stand out chords giving the musical finger, as if to say, "Fuck you—I'm going to have a nasty good time no matter what!" Why? Because this is Bobby Conn. The sounds are still fun, seductive, and kind of dirty. True to form, I spoke to the man while he was in his bathroom, sans clothes, staring at a clown tile. Alas, I did not drink in this wonderful visual mix of entertaining meets disarming—I interviewed him via phone.

Third Coast Press: *The Homeland*. Fewer suites—the songs, while not more straightforward, are certainly less circuitous with a unified, almost angrier sound. Why?

Bobby Conn: I was more sort of "resigned" on *The Golden Age* (2001) and also I wanted to capture more of a band sound in the studio. That's why there's less studio trickery on this one—I mean I can't resist with all those dials, toys and all...but much less.

TCP: You've gotten more serious, but no less intense. Are



Conn's soulful connection to his music contains an unrelenting energy that, sooner or later, demands the attention of any audience, no matter how hip or jaded.

you trying for a directness to mirror a message you don't want obscured?

BC: Sure. I was down at a show in Texas and lots of people were pissed off at me for dissing Bush. My shows are not Republican strongholds. This was very strange, very disconcerting.

TCP: You are pissed off, though—with a real sense of warning. *The Homeland*'s final words: "If you're willing to die for what you believe, then we're happy to kill you all, for the Homeland."

BC: The *Homeland*'s major message is one of a fight against complacency. We are very comfortable with the life we lead here, in America. Even adolescents. And every missed vote is a missed opportunity that contributes to the slow decline into fascism. And I realize I am in a very unique position. Glam rock is probably not the best vehicle for social change. I am no Ani DiFranco. I'm more an observer than a revolutionary. I can't sing that straightforward. I'd start crying.

TCP: There's a laughing record or two. Perhaps you could do the first crying one?

BC: There's already a bunch of those.

TCP: Maybe the next Conn record will be filled with country laments.

BC: Yeah, '90s indie rock was filled with so much pseudo-poetic naval gazing. I guess what I feel like I'm doing is throwing forth this hyperbolic fantasy world. I mean I grew up on all these punk bands that did socially comment, but also had great senses of humor, like the Dead Kennedys and The Clash. So, I have seen it work.

TCP: You said at the August 20 show that you hope not to have to sing these songs a year from now. So, it'd be worth it to scapheap 10 fine tunes in order to get Bush the Hell out?

BC: Yeah, I want *The Homeland* to be irrelevant after November 2. Maybe it could mark the end of an era, like the Vietnam protest songs. They're no longer so vital or essential, now more interesting as historical. I hope to be like a modern Donovan-type where the songs have become irrelevant as time has passed rather than these gripping pieces, because we're still in the same situation.

TCP: The Antichrist or "Dubya"? Who provides better material?

BC: I see them as related. One of the beauties of George W. Bush is that he has inspired lots of serious conversations about good and evil. It's all black and white. His "moral clarity" allows discussion on what it means to be good and evil.

He's more interesting than Satan in that he puts a human face on that abstract idea. I mean, Satan is the ultimate badass. Bush has distracting qualities; he's more nuanced. And he's the most idealistic president I can think of next to Woodrow Wilson. Unfortunately, his ideals are very wrong for the circumstances. This is where I disagree with the people who say he's doing everything for oil, money, corporations, et cetera. I believe that Bush truly believes he's doing the best possible thing and is completely un-cynical. Hitler was the same—much different set of ideals. Bush believes he is the hand of God and those who don't see this are in league with Satan. He simply doesn't accept reality when it doesn't conform to his ideology.

This is why he is more compelling than the Antichrist. He knows the answers are in the Bible, and he knows his Bible. He accepts Jesus and lets Him take over. This is no way to run a country. If he wasn't such an arrogant prick, I'd feel sorry for him.

TCP: *The Homeland* is dramatic, observational, but isn't prescriptive. What do you suggest?

BC: The real work will start after the election, whether we have a new president or not. We need to realize this is an election between a revolutionary radical (Bush) and an extremely conservative "establishment" person (Kerry) who will put us back to the status quo of the Clinton years...which were all things that led us to where we could even elect Bush in the first place.

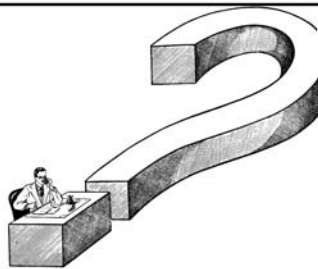
America's place in the world is very unique, but similar to empires past. What is it to be number one? The goal is that when the empire crumbles, how to make it happen in the least destructive way possible. Chalmers Johnson's *The Sorrows of Empire* lays out the U.S. as a global military empire. It's like, "we beat the Nazis, won the Cold War, Communism and Stalin were bad, and our music, business, culture, and everything are great." The best. And 90 percent of our country assumes this is the truth. Some of it is true, but it is a very convenient position. And very dangerous to assume.

I have traveled the world and I can tell you very few countries think of themselves as Number One like we do. No country's like, "We are the best in the whole world." It's a very peculiar, un-American idea: "We are the best!"

Will the future of Bobby Conn find him, as he described on "Whores," "working on the street, missing half my teeth?" Will the future of the country find our imperialistic regime continuing to alienate the rest of the world with our arrogant belief in our superiority and right to use and trample everyone else to get everything we want...all to the advantage of the few, privileged rich? Take action: VOTE! ☺

Bobby Conn will be playing at The Empty Bottle on October 30.

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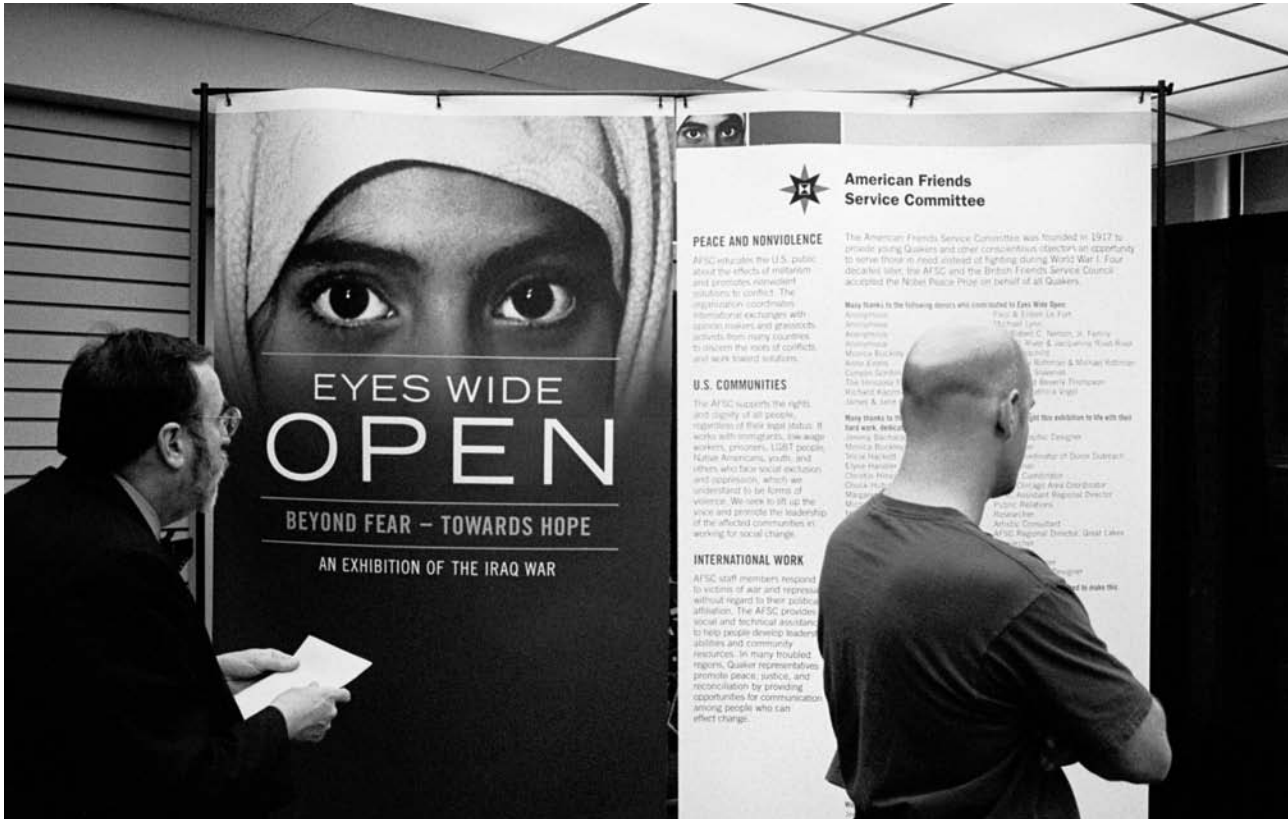
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Opening Eyes to War's Toll

Art Exhibit Serves as a Reminder to the Cost of Conflict

By Kari Lydersen, Photos by Garth Liebhaber

Fernando Suarez de Solar's son Jesus joined the military because, after seeing his hometown of Tijuana, Mexico torn up by narco-traffickers, he wanted to do something to fight drug trafficking cartels. He originally planned to be a police officer, but a U.S. Marines recruiter told the teenager, an American citizen, that police work is "too dangerous," and he'd be better off

were tight rows of civilian shoes, women's and men's and children's, representing just some of the over 14,000 Iraqis known to have been killed in the war thus far. As Suarez and several other parents of young people killed in Iraq told their stories, AFSC members intoned the names of American and Iraqi dead.

The goal of the exhibit is literally to open

living, breathing sons and daughters we will no longer be able to talk to. We have been locked into a prison of fear and hatred and let that fear drive us to sacrifice our sons and daughters."

Meanwhile another father holding a sign bearing a photo of his son wanted to remind people that Iraq isn't the only place U.S.

in suburban Schiller Park, holding back tears. "I'm torn up inside. My daughter cries every day. We need to end these wars so other families won't go through this."

Dr. Scott Lipscomb, U.S. representative for the Great Britain-based Iraq Body Count Project (iraqbodycount.net), reminded people that far more Iraqi civilians than U.S. troops

These are not static casualties, but living, breathing sons and daughters we will no longer be able to talk to.

joining the Marines and going into a special forces anti-trafficking unit.

Suarez, who has a green card, sold his business in Tijuana and moved to the U.S. so his son could finish high school in Escondido, California, near San Diego, and then join the Marines. Jesus joined in 2001. The recruiter had told him he could be working on an international drug trafficking detail after a year, but that turned out not to be the case. Instead, he was sent to Iraq. Now he is dead, killed after stepping on a cluster bomb on March 22, 2003.

Suarez told this story while standing next to a pair of boots with his son's name on them in Federal Plaza Sept. 16, one pair among 1,022 spaced evenly throughout the plaza in a somber display called *Eyes Wide Open: The Human Cost of the Iraq War* organized by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) which has been traveling around the country since March. At the back of the plaza

the public's eyes to the full impact of the war in Iraq, and to increase pressure on the government to end the war and bring U.S. troops home. Suarez has made this a personal goal, starting a foundation called Guerrero Azteca (Aztec Warrior) in memory of his son. He has traveled to at least 45 high schools to talk to other youth about the realities of the military and dissuade them from joining.

"Some boys sign up and then realize they made a mistake," he said. "The recruiters will tell them, 'You signed up, you have to go.' We help them break the contract and get out of it. After I visit schools I always get parents calling and e-mailing telling me thank you, they think differently now."

Paul Vogel's son Aaron was also killed in Iraq. At the event, Vogel spoke of his visits to Iraq before Aaron was killed and the horror that followed. "We must take this personally," he said. "These are not static casualties, but

servicemen are dying. His son Juan Torres was killed in Afghanistan on July 12, inside the base of Bagran. The circumstances surrounding his death are mysterious. Torres was told his son had taken his own life, but says that when he talked to his son shortly before the incident, Juan seemed afraid someone would kill him. Torres is pursuing a court case to find out the truth. "What happened, Bush? MY SON" says his hand-lettered plea.

"He was a smart boy," said Torres, who lives

have died. The project aims to catalogue Iraqi deaths, including the date, location, and cause.

"We've recorded 14,751 as of this morning, and that's only the deaths reported in the media," he said (Note: IBC recorded as many as 15,033 deaths at press time—ED). "Every week hundreds of more innocent Iraqis are dying as a result of this disastrous U.S. campaign. Imagine piled on top of these boots, thousands of pairs of shoes for the innocent victims killed in Iraq." ☪

Nuclear Energy Symposium Comes To Chicago

Nobel Peace Prize Nominee Helen Caldicott To Keynote

By Jennifer Roche

If you're one of those Illinoisans who dreams about our state's (or maybe even our planet's) environment being restored to health, balance, and next-to-godliness, then you must first wrap your green thumbs around the problem of nuclear energy.

That's because Illinois is home to more nuclear reactors than any other state in the nation and, for that matter, most countries in the world. Eleven active reactors surround Chicago, making dubious prairie-mates at best. Even if they're all run safely all the time (and a trail of citations and whistleblowers suggests they aren't), they still create large quantities of highly toxic, radioactive waste that will last for

millions of years. No viable disposal solution has yet been found, so the deadly waste sits in containers around the state (and the country) even as more waste is produced. Suffice to say, that's no small environmental, health, or security hazard.

That's why you may want to head over to a two-day symposium being held later this month. Renowned pediatrician and Nobel Peace Prize nominee Helen Caldicott will keynote both days of the conference. Dr. Caldicott, who founded Physicians for Social Responsibility and was featured in the Oscar-nominated documentary *Eight Minutes to Midnight*, now leads the Nuclear Policy Research Institute, one of the symposium's main sponsors.

Although the conference is called *Nuclear Energy and Children's Health: What You Can Do*, the agenda covers many pressing issues presented by nuclear energy including: protecting your health from exposure to nuclear materials, the risks of transport and disposal of nuclear waste, and the potential for non-nuclear alternative energy sources. ☪

More details, including registration information, can be found online at nuclearpolicy.org. The conference takes place on October 15 and 16 at St. Scholastica Academy, 7416 N. Ridge Blvd. in Chicago. 773/764-5715. To contact the conference organizers directly, call 202/822-9800



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The Human Experiment, 2003, Silkscreen, 32x25 inches

Art Against

By Kari Lydersen, Photos Courtesy of Leslie Salkowitz-Montoya

Malaquias Montoya Displays an

"We create the situations that lead our children to commit monstrous acts...and then we kill them."

This is part of artist Malaquias Montoya's rumination on the death penalty, which he explores in chilling detail and bluntness in an exhibit running through November at the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum in Pilsen. The exhibit, called *Premeditated: Meditations on Capital Punishment*, draws heavily on the words of condemned inmates, their families, and witnesses of executions, combined with Montoya's visual and visceral representations of the physical process of execution and its social, political, and emotional ramifications. Montoya, a life-long political Chicano artist who also teaches at the University of California-Davis, became

to do more. I ended up spending several years on this project."

The exhibit, which will be shown in other cities, includes a charcoal drawing and collage dealing with the execution of the mentally ill. The piece interprets a shadowed man with a downcast face, his utter confusion reflected on a piece of ripped notebook paper with the word fragment "does not understand."

Or *The Killing of the Innocent*, an image of a large, round-faced man along with October 3, 1997 circled in red on a calendar and a note saying, "Marge, tell Mom not to bring any more cigarettes, my day of execution has been set for Friday the third. Tell Mother I will soon be in the House of the Lord. He knows I am innocent. Marge, don't bring Mom."

Part of the purpose behind the death penalty is to dehumanize the condemned, to cast him (or her) as a monster worthy of death. And given the vast racial and class

disparities in who gets sentenced to death, capital punishment serves not only to dehumanize and distance those sentenced to death, but works as part of the disenfranchisement of whole groups of people (i.e., black or Latino men and poor people in general) from "the rest" of society. Montoya's work, using the

words of Death Row inmates and their loved ones and showing the living and dead bodies of the condemned in stirring detail and vulnerability, works to counter this dehumanization and highlight the insult to all of humanity that is the systematic, premeditated taking of life.

"The average person just thinks someone was executed, in many people's minds they probably deserved it," said Montoya. "With these quotes and words, it helps people take another look at it. To think about the whole idea of people whose lives are waiting for appeals, almost like you die many times during that period of waiting."

A number of the works focus specifically on the mechanics of execution and how they are a sick parody of the medical profession. *The Executioner* shows a black-hooded doctor with a syringe and the Hippocratic motto "above all, do no harm" penciled ironically along with

wherein the current was turned off while the victim, William Kemmler, was still alive and then had to be restarted slowly as he foamed at the mouth and moaned.

The Gentle Sleep also recounts the execution in gruesome detail: "His body lay flat and still for seconds, then a harsh rasping began. His fingers trembled up and down, and the witnesses, standing near his mid-section, say that his stomach heaved. Quiet returned, and his head turned to the right, toward the black dividing rail. A second spasm of wheezing began. It was brief. His body moved no more."

The exhibit also refers to specific Death Row inmates, including political or other high profile cases. For example: the red, green, and yellow *Mumia 911* work which was circulated around the U.S. as part of a day of action to free Mumia Abu-Jamal several years ago; a silkscreen depicting executed condemned Communist spies Ethel and Julius Rosenberg;

He hopes his images challenge people to question their own ideas and take a more human approach to capital punishment and the world in general.

focused on the death penalty during the 2000 presidential election, given Bush's record as an enthusiastic proponent of the death penalty as governor of Texas.

"I just did one piece, thinking I wanted to make a statement," Montoya said, in a recent interview with *Contratiempo*. "But you have

a quote from a book called *Who Owns Death*: "We also set off toward a terrifying land where the white gowns of physicians are covered by the black hoods of executioners."

The Human Experiment uses clinical and grisly language to describe and show a failed early experiment with the electric chair,

a striking image of Ruth Snyder, the first woman executed at Sing Sing in 1928; and a pseudo-Hollywood movie poster memorializing the death of black nationalist prison activist George Jackson at San Quentin.

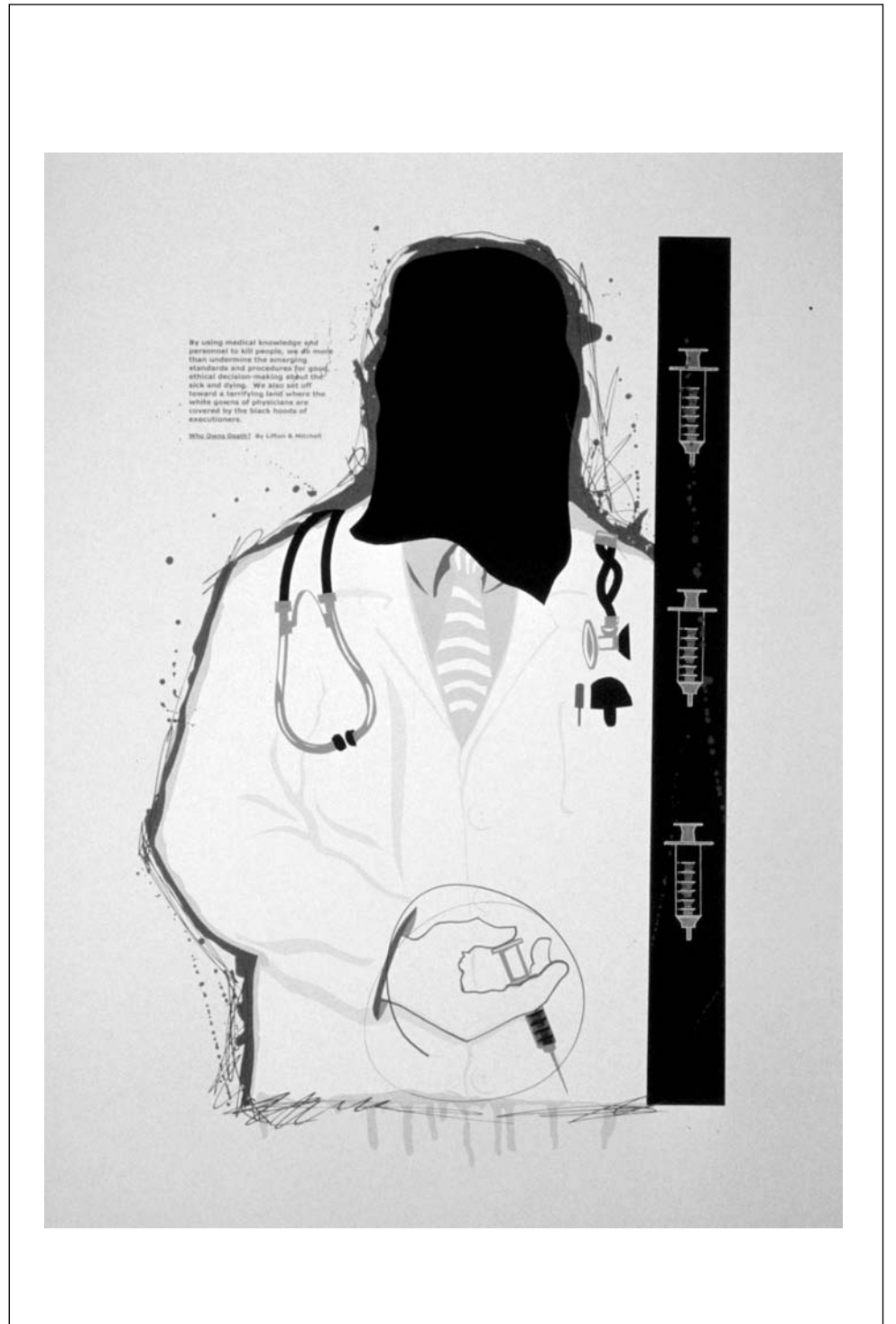
A collage dedicated to Amadou Diallo takes a different tack on the death penalty—a



The Killing of the Mentally III, 2002, Charcoal/Collage, 32x25 inches

Death

Arresting Perspective of the Death Penalty



The Executioner, 2003, Silkscreen, 32x25 inches

spontaneous, but nonetheless systematic punishment meted out to the poor and non-white on the streets. Newspaper photos and clippings, screaming faces and skulls, blood-red splotches, and stencils saying "police" and "hatred" evoke the bloody death of the Caribbean immigrant gunned down with 41 shots by police in the Bronx in 1999 who claimed they mistook his wallet for a gun.

Montoya points out that his own son died from leukemia at a young age, likely as a result of contact with pesticides as a migrant farm worker.

"And they [the farm owners and contractors] aren't held accountable," he said.

In case the racism inherent in the death penalty isn't clear enough, Montoya drives the point home with *The Hanging Series* and *The Lynching Series*, drawing parallels between the vigilante murders of African-Americans before the Civil Rights movement and the use of the death penalty against them and other people of color throughout decades and continuing today.

"You look back at the lynchings and think of what took place in the prison in Iraq," Montoya said. "Those images of slaves, of African-Americans hanging from trees and people sitting there watching them, are almost the same as these people photographing themselves torturing prisoners."

While various studies show support for the death penalty waning, Montoya feels like there

is still a long way to go. He notes that his exhibit makes many people feel uncomfortable, either because they support capital punishment or don't want to think about the issue. He hopes his images challenge people to question their own ideas and take a more human approach to capital punishment and the world in general.

"We have this idea of vengeance, maybe passed down from Christianity," he said. "There's this whole idea of wanting them to suffer as much as [the murder victim] did. Well why? What satisfaction is there in that? Why do we have this need?"

Montoya is currently working on a series on immigration and the effects of corporate globalization, themes that are linked to the issues he covered in *Premeditated*. "It's all related," he said. "That mentality that we can execute someone, or uproot people who have never done anything to us and shatter their lives, cause them to wander around looking for somewhere to survive. It all has to do with these conditions we create. By creating these horrible conditions, the outcome is children who are miserable, full of hate, full of discontent. We sow these seeds, then we end up killing them." ❊

For more information on the Mexican Fine Arts Center or "Premeditated," call 312/738-1503 or visit mfacmchicago.org.

Failed Electrocution, 2002, Charcoal/Collage, 32x25 inches

In Review



Uncommon Ground Uncommonly Good Food, Music, and Vibes on Chicago's North Side

By Beth Somers, Photos by Garth Liebhaber

Uncommon Ground was opened in 1990 as Chicago's first smoke-free coffeehouse. Since the beginning, owners Helen, Mark, and Michael Cameron have emphasized a welcoming, comfortable environment replete with nightly live music and a healthy menu that is about 70 percent vegetarian. There is no cover to get in for shows, but donations are accepted. Many shows are filled to capacity. A dinner reservation and a

red pepper, tomato, broccoli, green onions, and cilantro. It's finished off with brown rice and peanuts, both of which seem to be measured out to comply with the USDA serving size (read: they're a little scarce). The menu states that the peanut sauce dressing is spicy and they're not kidding.

The triple-decker Southwestern club puts a twist on a standard sandwich. Uncommon Ground serves theirs with thick cuts of seasoned,

easy, rancho chili sauce, and Chihuahua cheese. It is served with crispy potatoes and seasonal fruit.

If you prefer the sweeter variations of breakfast, a pancake special is served everyday and often revolves around seasonal fruit. They bake fresh scones on the premise daily, and what's a scone without coffee?

Lest all of its other offerings fill you to the brim with gastronomic happiness, don't forget that

Since the beginning, owners Helen, Mark, and Michael Cameron have emphasized a welcoming, comfortable environment replete with nightly live music and a healthy menu that is about 70 percent vegetarian.

minimum guest purchase of \$15 guarantees you a seat.

The quiet popularity of this neighborhood hangout has roused an expansion. Uncommon Ground is enlarging its dining room, and renovations are set to be complete some time this month. The extra space will push this now somewhat hidden spot into the public eye. The addition will face Clark Street at the corner of Grace. It will add 55 indoor seats and 50 more *al fresco* chairs for outdoor diners.

The menu at Uncommon Ground changes seasonally. Homemade vegetarian chili, topped with cheddar, onions, and sour cream is a hearty meal and a menu staple. The Thai vegetable salad is crisp romaine lettuce, topped with

roasted turkey breast and avocado on toasted sourdough bread. Chipotle mayonnaise adds a spicy kick. It is served with potato chips.

Other lunch menu selections—garden burgers, hamburgers, chicken sandwiches, macaroni and cheese made with aged cheddar, and pizza.

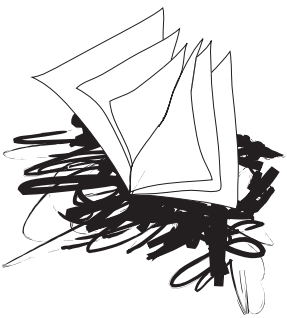
The dinner menu offers several lunch items as appetizers and entrees, and also adds dishes like pumpkin ravioli and Louisiana-spiced grilled chicken salad. Dinner specials change nightly.

Brunch is served daily. Their signature dish, uncommon huevos, is an interesting variation on Eggs Benedict. A black bean, corn, and brown rice cake replaces the English muffin. It is topped with eggs over-

Uncommon Ground is a coffeehouse and a great one at that. They serve up *Intelligentsia* coffee piping hot or iced. On their menu, their specialty espresso beverages are referred to as "liquid desserts" and are every bit as luscious as dessert should be. Try the *Giandua* if you like Nutella, or the *Orange Stick* for a fruitier flavor.

Should you find that after your sumptuous meal, enjoyable entertainment, and richly roasted coffee that the digital world is calling, wireless Internet access is available to laptop-users.

Uncommon Ground is open seven days a week from 9 AM-10 PM. They are located at 1214 W. Grace St., Chicago, IL 60613. 773/929-3680.



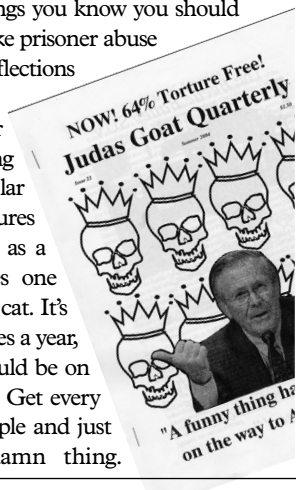
ZINE SCENE

Pages Political, Personal, and Painful

By Billy Roberts

Judas Goat Quarterly, #22

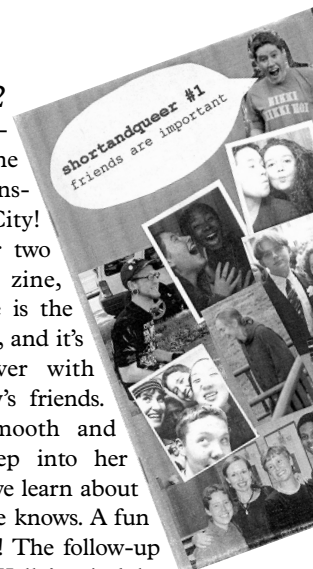
Certain things in this world are undeniable. The rich are getting richer, the government is lying to us, and *Judas Goat Quarterly* is one of the most important zines in Chicago. Take note, kids, this is a rag for the working class! This sort of stapled propaganda would have gotten someone like Grant (the zine's writer and occasional Third Coast Press contributor) beheaded back in the olden days! *JGQ* is full of rantings and ravings, all of which will make you laugh at things you know you should actually be crying about, things like prisoner abuse scandals, fixed elections, and reflections on deceased presidents. You'll get your personal, you'll get your political, and you'll get it all soaking in sarcasm and satire. This particular issue, Summer 2004, also features some well-written fiction, as well as a piece about the simple pleasures one can receive from taking care of a cat. It's full-size and it comes out four times a year, so that means the fall edition should be on shelves by the time you read this. Get every issue you can, then make life simple and just buy a subscription to the damn thing.



Shortandqueer #1 & #2

Zine gossip! Kelly Shortandqueer has picked up the Denver operations, and transported them to the Windy City! And she's brought with her two new issues of her latest zine, *Shortandqueer*. The first issue is the "Friends are important" issue, and it's packed from cover to cover with pictures and stories of Kelly's friends. The writing is all very smooth and explanatory, making our step into her personal life all the easier as we learn about how she knows the people she knows. A fun glimpse into her personal life! The follow-up issue offers another step into Kelly's mind, but this time, it's done through a series of drawings.

Shortandqueer #2 is the "Things I like, things I don't like" issue. Read through one way, and you'll learn what Kelly likes (swings, dressing up, baseball, mashed potatoes), then flip it over and see all the stuff she doesn't like (roaches, throwing up, coffee). *Shortandqueer* #1 and #2 are excellent additions to the Chicago zine scene.



Career Suicide

Life is constantly shifting from phase to phase, and our daily routines are always given new themes to be wrapped up in. A current theme in my life is bicycle accidents. A rather nasty theme that I'd just as well wish away, but I can't. I was hit. My roommate Puppy Dave was hit, Ann was hit, and Lisa, and Danny Danger, and so on. I mean, people get hit all the time, especially messengers, but lately, it seems like my friends are getting picked off one by one. It's hard not to think about as I peddle around town.

Maybe that's what Angela was trying not to think about when she quit her job. It was all too much: You get dumped, you quit your job, you freak out, and then you write a zine full of cynicism and humor about the whole ordeal. And there we have it: *Career Suicide*. Angela explains all this to us on the first page, then proceeds to go into more detail. Bike messengers, doctor's visits, sex, nervous breakdowns, strawberry soy ice cream...yes, it's all in here, and it's all down to earth. It's all real. Maybe all is not well for our Angela, but that's all right. We'll be just fine.

CAREER
SUICIDE

Rogues, Rebels, Misfits & Outcasts

Rogue Theater Produces Theater for the "Common Man"

By Heather Dewar

Nate White wants to be Superman. With short, black hair that separates into spikes when he sweats, an irreverent demeanor, and a burly build, he has an energy about him that propels him in and out of rooms and gives off the impression, which he will happily confirm, that he is his own boss.

"I don't take orders very well," he shrugs as he heads into the Breadline Theater Lab before a show.

That character trait has served him well in his pursuit of big, often risky, dreams. White is the artistic director and co-founder of Rogue Theater, a fledgling Chicago non-profit founded on the mission of producing "gender-balanced plays about rogues, rebels, misfits, and outcasts for anyone in Chicago who wants to see them." "Anyone who wants to see them" includes not just paying audience members, but "others who might not

itive to so many people."

The company's most recent production attracted a modest-sized crowd to the Breadline Theater Lab. Located at 1801 West Byron Avenue in Chicago, the theater space competes with the American Theater Company just down the street. Sandwiched sedately between the "L" and residential housing, the building is easy to miss. Inside the theater (there is no air conditioning and it's August in Chicago), it's hot. The audience sweats along with the actors and every time the train rumbles by, the actors and audience rumble along with it.

Rogue's humble trappings only make its confident performance that much more impressive.

"The actors that we have could play the lead in any show in this town," says White.

Currently, the company is made up of only

The fact that White wants to be Superman should be qualified with the aside that, while he admits that would be nice, most days he just wants people to come and see his theater company's shows.

otherwise be able to afford to come." To Rogue Theater, that means regularly offering free tickets to community groups in Chicago. On a sultry night near the end of an August run of John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, those seats are taken by three men from the Lincoln Park Community Shelter, a homeless shelter in Elmhurst.

"Those audiences are some of the best we've had," says White.

The fact that White wants to be Superman should be qualified with the aside that, while he admits that would be nice, most days he just wants people to come and see his theater company's shows.

"What I really want," he says, "is for people to feel from show in to show out that it was worth the price they paid on the ticket."

Rogue Theater charges \$10 for a night at the theater, a negligible price in a town that regularly charges upwards of \$70. It may not be the most profitable, but making theater available to the "common man" is the reason that Rogue started doing theater in the first place. In 2002, White, his wife Lisa Stran-White, and fellow actor Jennifer Milton branched out from Chicago's TinFish Theatre to found Rogue. They were driven by the desire to have control over their own artistic vision, as well as by the need they saw in Chicago for affordable, high-quality theater.

"It's something Nate's always been into," says Stran-White. "Theater is so cost-prohib-

seven people, all of whom not only act but keep the company running—Stran-White designed the set for *Look Back in Anger* and the costumes were a collaborative effort, White made the programs and maintains the Website, everyone in the company chips in with publicity, fundraising, and the box office, (which is literally in White's pocket—it's his cell phone). They are energized by what they see as a common vision for theater and a passionate belief in what they are doing.

"Rogue is a good solid theater company that shares a vision," said company member Ryan Young. "There is a community aspect. We are one big, happy family and we help each other. I find value in it; I want to see it succeed."

As for Rogue Theater's future, in July of 2005 White and his company are planning to produce the Greek trilogy *The Oresteia* in all three of its parts. Their venue is Chicago's Athenaeum, a much larger and more expensive theater than they have performed in before. The play will either establish them as a theater company or



Erin Shelton as Alison, Ryan Young as Cliff

put them in danger of going belly-up.

White welcomes the challenge.

"Even if we fail, it will be such a dynamic failure that people will remember us. If you fail in this town, you're not a pariah like you are in New York."

In the first act of *Look Back in Anger*, Nate White as Jimmy Porter stands barefoot on the stage and spits out with deep-seeded frustration, "Oh, heavens, how I long for a little ordinary human enthusiasm. Just enthusiasm—that's all. I want to hear a warm, thrilling voice cry Hallelujah! I'm alive!" The play struggles with the pain of being human, of being alive. Rogue Theater aims to make its audiences feel just what Jimmy Porter longs to be most—more human, more alive.

For more information about Rogue Theater, visit their Website at rogue-theater.com, call 773/450-0591, or e-mail rogue-theater@hotmail.com. Watch for their next production, J.M. Barrie's *Quality Street*, at the *Side Project*, 1520 W. Jarvis in January of 2005.



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The Road, the Music, the People

A Pre-Tour Interview With No Doctors

By Kate Weinans, Photo by Andrew Bruah



No Doctors, from left to right: Mr. Brian, Chauncey, Elvis, Cansafis

Chicago has been at the forefront of musical innovations even before the days King Oliver took to the Southside Pekin Stage at the start of the 20th Century. The first decade of century 21 has been fostering a deconstructionist rock/punk/metal extravaganza that can be best described as noise rock. Its multi-layered rhythms, heavy bass, distortion, seemingly liquid musical air, and vague “vocals” tell a story of pure and complicated chaos. Chicago bands like the Flying Luttenbachers, U.S. Maple, and Spires into the Sunset that Rise are local samples of this free, limitless music form.

The noise rockers of No Doctors have spent the last five years in Chicago making music, and friends, all over the city. The release of their third album, *ERP Saints*, launches their Heal Thyself Tour across the Eastern and Southern U.S., and is the foundation for a new voyage west. Moments before they went onstage at the Bottom Lounge for the last time before embarking on their tour of the East Coast, they sat down with *Third Coast Press* to answer a few questions. The modest and dedicated Mr. Brian couldn't depart from his responsibilities, but this is what the rest of No Doctors had to say.

Third Coast Press: This is your last Chicago show before heading out on an East Coast Tour, where have you toured before?

Cansafis: We've toured four times before, for a total of 60 to 70 shows across mainly the East Coast and down south. Our biggest tour before this one was in August 2002, when we also recorded *Hunting Season*, our second album, with Twig Harper and Chiara Giovando. We are about to embark on our “Heal Thyself Tour” and it's by far our longest, biggest, most ambitious tour. It's 27 shows in 30 days, starting tonight [with a farewell show] in Chicago, and heading through the whole East Coast: New York, Rochester, Maine, down south to Florida...Gainesville, Miami; ending in Columbia, Missouri.

Elvis: We really wanna do Miami; we've never done Miami. We've got good friends down there—Rat Bastard and Company. It's definitely a freak scene down there. Touring is so that you gain momentum going from playing shows, and it drives you, it feeds you. Once you're seven days in, you're floating in space and have no obligations. We're playing larger cities, but we actually experi-

ence so many other small towns along the way. America is actually *in between* all our tour stops. On the road, we find the essence of America. It's the essence of rock-and-roll and we get a chance to soak it all in. It's crazy how different a place like Lexington, Kentucky is from Chicago.

Cansafis: You can learn a lot about a city hanging with the people you meet on tour. You learn a lot about how diverse this nation is. It's amazing how much is actually here, in this country.

Chauncey: We love seeing all the other bands that are coming up, even younger than us. They're coming from different places and have different ideas. The most important thing [for us] is getting to see all these people, and to hear the different music being made around the country. We take in so much while we're on tour.

TCP: Is that your favorite thing about being on tour?

Elvis: The music, the parties, the people, the shows. Definitely.

Cansafis: New bands every single night, being at a live concert every single night, and being in a different part of the country every single night. It's all very cool.

TCP: What is your mode of transportation on the road?

Chauncey: We've got a rented van that we're sharing with the other band on tour with us, Haunted House. We're gonna fit six people in the van, and all our gear. It's definitely a communal effort to make this tour as successful as possible. We're packing everything up and, after tonight's show, we're heading out to our second stop in Minneapolis, and trekking out east from there.

Cansafis: It's great; every time we go back to a place we see amazing bands we never saw before. Like, last time we played in Minneapolis—it's our home, too—we saw bands like Oval, Happy Mother's Day: I Can't

Read, Quad Muth, Diamonds, Knife World; stuff that we're excited to be able to check out. The scene is getting bigger and stronger, and we can feel that everywhere we go.

TCP: What's your least favorite part about touring?

Elvis: Lack of clean showers on the road.

Chauncey: It takes a toll physically. Lack of sleep and you're exerting yourself every night. You're not sleeping in the most comfortable places. It's hard finding good, healthy, decent food on the road.

Elvis: Yeah, we're subjected to the food on America's interstates. Brutal. It can be taxing psychologically, but we have been doing this five or six years, and we can handle that. The mental part is okay; we can get through it. You know, we've *lived* together for years. But the physical part is grueling; you're fighting it the whole way. After 30 days, we've dropped 10 pounds and run out of multi-vitamins.

TCP: When you get back to Chicago, what are you going to do?

Cansafis: We are going to move out to California...San Francisco.

Chauncey: We've decided to try to play everywhere, and get the music out to as many people as we can. It's been tough for us to get out to the West Coast, since there is such a huge distance between cities. Chicago has been a great base to play at, and to get to other cities in the Midwest and out east. Rather than trying to do a *tour de force*, we are just moving our base of operation so we can be closer to those West Coast venues. We'll probably end up moving again.

Elvis: We all moved around when we were kids. This kinda cements us...you know, we've done time in Minneapolis, time in Chicago; going to San Francisco will cement us. We have friends and family everywhere. We're not really from anywhere; we're not tied down. It's perfect, we're 23, we'll hit the other side of the country. We're not tethered to anything or any place.

Cansafis: It'll give us the ignition we need to keep going. We've been in Chicago for the past five years and it's easy to get to around here. The more we can travel to other places, the more world we can see, the more we can do and hear what people are doing in other places; the more we can shoot out into the world.

TCP: What are some of the bands you've played with that have made the biggest impression on you...made you go “Whoa”?

Chauncey: Before we went on tour with No Doctors, I went on a tour with Reynolds from Argentina. I did a month with those guys, doing a similar tour to the one we're doing this time around. It was my first time being on the road, I was 19 years old, and it taught me a lot about music and being in another place, and it inspired me to do what I do as a musician for

the rest of my life.

Cansafis: Oh, man, there's a million...I'd say Weasel Walters. His proficiency, the vast array of music he's played, and the vast array of musicians he's played with in his career. It's inspiring to see his strength; how strong his goals, visions, decisions, and ambitions are, and the styles he's covered. He's done hard core, punk, metal, and he does them all *really* well. Just having an attitude and a mind to be able to function in all those different realms is intense to comprehend. To be able to play every night whether there are 10 people or 1,000 people in the crowd...to never get deflated or defeated after 13 years of playing; it's huge. It's gigantic and amazing that all of that can come out of one man's head.

Elvis: Life Rocks, from Cincinnati, they've got amazing guitar and a lot of youthful energy. The singer is really phenomenal.

Chauncey: We are definitely more inspired by musicians we meet personally, rather than listening to records. Being involved in a musical community has been an inspiration to us.

Cansafis: Totally. Our friend, Matt St. Germaine, has had a lot to do with that. Growing up and spending so much time listening to all the music and musicians that came through that guy's house. He's helped a lot of people that way.

TCP: Any shout outs you want to send out to Chicago folks before you go?

Elvis: Thanks to everyone in Chicago who treated us better than what we asked for, or seemed to have deserved. Definitely East Rogers Park embraced us with open arms and was very kind to us, and taught us a lot, good and bad. The Empty Bottle was always very good to us. Thanks, Chicago!

Chauncey: There are way too many names to mention. Thanks to all the record labels, record stores, clubs, bands, artists, writers, journalists, DJs, and everyone in East Rogers Park. So many people enriched our lives, and our music. We're not leaving 'cause we don't love you. We'll be back! This is a fantastic city; we love Chicago!

Cansafis: That pretty much covers everything. For all people working at the water parks, the vendors at the amusement parks, the people selling the vegetarian burritos on the sidewalk, and the corn vendors, and the ice cream vendors...definitely the ice cream man in Humboldt Park, who kept us cool during those long, hot summers. Thanks to KevEkev.com, George Wright, everyone we've ever played with, WLWU, WNUR, WHBK, WZRD, local college radio and independent radio and Isam in East Rogers Park, we thank you! ☺

No Doctors will have just finished their Heal Thyself Tour 2004, and be returning to Chicago for one day at the beginning of October. Check out their tour log, listen to their music, and keep up with their future adventures at nodotors.com or go to nosides.net to find their recent EP release, ERP Saints.

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Is that God sitting on Jim Dalling's head, or just a Cheerio?

Odd Little Bites

Around the Coyote Howls into its Fifteenth Year

By Bryan A. Bushemi, Photos by Andrew Bruah



Gloria Hernandez glows amidst her paintings.



Some of Adam Davis' photographic self-expression.



Artist Kato D and her work.



Michael Ertzen's *Wired for Desire*.

For the past decade-and-a-half, Chicagoans have flocked to Wicker Park in September for the Around the Coyote (ATC) Fall Arts Festival. This mainstay in the city's creative community has grown yearly, allowing hundreds of artists to share their passions with the appreciative masses. Here at *Third Coast Press*, we applaud both the spirit and the reality that ATC represents to Chicago's vital art scene.

This year, ATC roamed through the city even further afield than ever, showcasing visual artists in three major venues (the Flat Iron Arts Building, the Pulaski Park Fieldhouse, and the Wicker Park Fieldhouse) as well as in more than forty other galleries, studios, and art-friendly businesses. Here are a few from among the myriad, like the American Academy of Art's Gloria Hernandez, an oil painter displaying her work for the first time; pediatrician/photographer Adam Davis, whose pictures are an outlet for self-expression that contrasts with the demanding responsibilities of his job; Michael Erzen, blind at birth before surgically regaining some sight, with a background in electrical engineering and industrial design that influences his delightfully weird kinetic sculptures; and one of this year's Curators' Choice Artists, Kathryn "Kato D" Deupree, whose self-taught creative sensibilities have produced works such as the engaging-yet-perturbing "Pimp Bunny."

That was but the fang-tip of ATC's urban wilderness of creativity. The Vittum Theatre played host to a weekend of astonishing movement-arts performances. Choreographer Jennifer Sandoval's *Abstract Expressionism* provided a multimedia marriage of painting and dance. Lucy Vurusic-Riner, the Illinois High School Dance Instructor of the Year for 2004, enthralled the crowd with an excerpt from her *My Nearest Thought*, featuring powerfully mesmerizing contemporary dance from Vurusic-Riner and dancers Kristina Fluty, Martha Mulligan, and Therese Simpson.

For those with a yen for the dramatic, the Chopin Theatre showcased more than a dozen productions over three days. Among them, the Tantalus Theatre Group's *Sinister Puppetmen of the Fabrication Gallery* mocked the gravity of current international politics with sublime physical idiocy against a backdrop of—what better?—giant, doom-mongering puppets! Jim Dalling's schizophrenically scatterbrained clown act in *God is Sitting on My Head* offered melodramatic meanderings and prop utilization that ran the gamut from sinister to raucous physical insanity to strangely melancholy.

Around the Coyote definitely made itself heard, seen, and felt this year, providing a howling good time for art-lovers that sent shivers up the spine with how good it was! ☿



Abstract Expressionism dancers paint with motion.



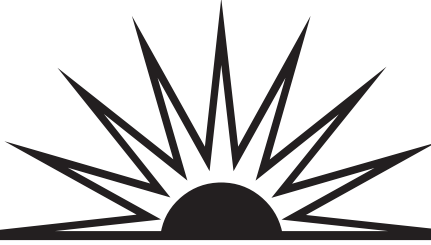
When threatened by Puppetmen, kill the Rock!



Pimp Bunny!



Kristina Fluty ponders Lucy Riner's *Nearest Thought*.



Seeking Prosperity

With the Flux of Today's Problems, the Institute of Cultural Affairs Is Here To Help

By Alison Parker

On Sheridan Road in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood, there stands a conspicuous stone building with lettering above the door that reads, "Institute of Cultural Affairs." It's large and looming, but most people would be clueless regarding what this building holds within its stone walls and what this organization actually does.

"We're not very commercially publicized," says ICA member Mary Laura Bushman. "We mainly just go by word-of-mouth."

For those clueless, the ICA is a private, not-for-profit social change organization whose primary objective is to promote positive change within communities and individual lives in the U.S. and internationally. Their philosophy is based on the idea of people finding their own solutions to problems. From the time it began, the ICA has helped effect change within governments, local communities, corporations, and volunteer organ-

izations, organizations, and individual people to have thriving lives. How did they achieve this form of education? Mainly through old-fashioned trial and error, says Bushman. "We're well-known for developing a method to train others to lead groups. We did it by leading groups for years and years across the country and internationally. We still do, but now we do a lot of teaching other people how to teach through these courses."

A current example of the ICA's programs is

also an example of the non-hierarchical, all-encompassing method the ICA embraces and seems to think is the best possible way to create sustainability throughout. That is, that everyone can learn and what is learned should be passed on. "Right now, we're working a lot with schools and young mothers. We train the teachers, so they can train other teachers and they can teach parents. They teach them how to play and learn in a hands-on way," says ICA member Carol Pierce.

Aside from various programs, the ICA

creates in the building have to be non-profit with a social service mission close to ours. There's a real serious criteria to be in this building. It creates a kind of synergy," says Bushman.

The building also is home to the International Conference Center, which non-profit groups are able to rent out, even for multi-day meetings. "A lot of church groups have used us for their conferences," ICA member Bob Hawley says. "We'd love more people to use us as a hostel. Many times they call us up, seek us out. A lot of the time it's all word-of-mouth."

Its methods are intended to generate ownership, create clear goals, open lines of communication, broaden perspectives, and motivate people to adapt to their changing environment.

izations. Areas of focus include education, leadership training, democracy building, job training, and neighborhood improvement. They even have their own copyrighted method of teaching people in order to create such progressive change. This method is founded on the idea that people learn best when they are able to teach themselves. "We don't tell people what to think—we ask questions and they answer them and make a plan," Bushman says.

Incorporated in Illinois in 1973, there are a total of 35 independent ICA affiliates located throughout North and South America, Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Pacific. Its methods are intended to generate ownership, create clear goals, open lines of communication, broaden perspectives, and motivate people to adapt to their changing environment. Above all, it

the Learning Basket Project, which teaches the Learning Basket Approach as way of teaching for infants and toddlers, caregivers, home visitors, and parents. Designed for children age three and under, its main function is to bring this way of learning to practitioners to pass on to parents, using the idea that parents are children's primary teachers. The basket also implements the idea that children learn through play, and anything can be a teaching and learning tool. For example, a basket can contain such things as separate mesh bags full of rubber balls, blocks, a plush doll that a child can Velcro clothes on, and a toothbrush, all either handmade or donated.

The Learning Basket program is an example of what the ICA is known for: training, education, and demonstration. It's

methods are also used in community meetings they hold. "People talk week after week what they want to see in Uptown," says Bushman. "Like what should Sheridan Road look like? What should Broadway be? People want Uptown to stay diverse, how do we go about doing that? Those are the kind of questions." The all-embracing, inclusive strategy of the ICA, then, comes into effect. "We've always been interested in the idea that everyone gets to speak...and that's what we're known for. One time, Case Western University did an analysis of organizations, and they said we were the 'people of the question.' I thought that was kind of cute."

The ICA building is also home to a plethora of other not-for-profit groups, such as a division of the Heartland Alliance organization and the Ethiopian Community Association. "All agen-

"It's important for many different reasons that the ICA is around," Bushman says. In this day and age, no statement seems to be truer. With consistent floods of new problematic issues ranging from ever-increasing poverty levels, crime, and new bouts of oppressive behavior, the ICA's problem-solving tactics seem to be exactly what today's environment needs, and in a desperate way. For the clueless, perhaps, that large stone building just became a little more noticeable. ☺

The next training for group facilitation and community development will be held in Chicago in November. For more information on taking an ICA program, using the International Conference Center, or for information on how to volunteer, visit them at ica-usa.org or call 773/769-6363.

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RAGSTOCK

The National Runaway Switchboard

A Lifeline for Teens in Crisis, in Chicago and Around the Country

By Sarah Warner



Being a teenager can be a tough experience. Friends, school, puberty, romance, and parents can cause a lot of conflict in a young person's life. For some teens, however, it is not the prom that takes priority, but survival. Between 1.3

from a phone booth in Nebraska can get to the nearest Omaha shelter. Liners help to develop a plan of action that serves the needs of the caller, whether that means going home or sorting out feelings. The National Runaway

does not receive much press. Because the at-risk individuals are primarily minors, their concerns often do not get public attention. "Underage youth are in a kind of never-never land. They cannot advocate for themselves," says Oldham.

Underage youth are in a kind of never-never land. They cannot advocate for themselves.

and 2.8 million teens run away from home every year, mostly due to trouble within the family. For these teens, each day can be a struggle to find a safe place to sleep and a decent meal. Who can young people turn to when they are on their own? Right here in Chicago, the National Runaway Switchboard provides 24-hour crisis line support to runaways and their families. Each year, NRS receives over 115,000 phone calls from people all over the United States. While the majority of their callers are female teens who are contemplating running away or have already done so, many of the calls come from concerned family and friends, looking for a runaway or trying to keep a teen home.

On the other end of the line, callers will encounter one of the 150 crisis line volunteers. Trained for 36.5 hours, these "liners" link callers to information from 17,000 social service groups around the nation. Their national database can help to ensure that a young person calling

Switchboard began as a regional organization, Metro Help. As their base expanded, they became the National Communication Service for Homeless and Throw-Away Youth. While it is clear by the volume of calls that their services are needed, much of the general public is not familiar with the organization. It seems that that the majority of people who know about the National Runaway Switchboard are those who use its services. Even in the age of the Internet, teens typically find the hotline number through the phonebook or by calling information. A recent teen report revealed that most kids use the Web for entertainment purposes rather than seeking vital information.

Mitchell Oldham, Communications Specialist for the NRS, believes that marketing will help raise awareness about runaways. In Chicago, one only needs to walk through the intersection of Clark and Belmont to encounter homeless teenagers, but nationally, the issue

Another hurdle that NRS has to overcome is keeping the hotline fully staffed.

"People will call at all times of the day and night. Sometimes people have to wait on hold, but we try to prevent this by having enough people there to answer the phone," says Gordon Vance, Director of Programs. Volunteers are recruited from all walks of life. "We have people in high school, college, interns...and seniors. It is a great place to volunteer...the hours are flexible." And it's through these dedicated people that the NRS has developed its proven ability to bridge the gap between teens in crisis and the services they so desperately need. ☎

If you are interested in volunteering for the National Runaway Switchboard, please visit nrcrisisline.org to find out more. If you know a teen who is considering running away from home or has run away, listen to their concerns, and direct them to the National Runaway Switchboard at 800/621-4000.

KUDRA'S KISS

A COLUMN OF DREAMS



Illustration by Nicholas Ivan Ladendorf

DEAR KUDRA,

Hey Kudra, I had a dream and was wondering if you could translate it for me...

I was locked in a room and tied in a seated position in the corner. Willem Dafoe (as the Green Goblin from *Spider-Man*), kept walking in and asking me if I was ready—for what, I wasn't sure yet. There is a towel around my neck, and Dafoe is walking back and forth, room to room, periodically stopping and asking, "Are you ready?" I decided to find out for what, so I said, "Yes." Before I could ask what for, he started strangling me with the towel and right before I passed out, he let go of me, saying that I could die on my time and just let him know when I'm ready, because it is permanent, so I could decide when...and that I'd eventually get so stressed out about it, that I would finally just tell him, "Yes, I am ready to die."

While he was out of the room, I somehow got a phone and dialed 911 and whispered, "Help me," and left the phone off the hook so they could trace the call. When the police finally showed up, he said he wasn't doing anything, that I was an obsessed fan, and he was holding me down waiting for the

police. He glared at me, and leapt to kill me, and right before I died, I woke.

Sorry it's so weird.

~mama x2

DEAR MAMA:

Wow, you are definitely feeling tied down, locked up, and pushed into a corner. Everything in this dream can be translated very literally into your feelings towards power (i.e., you feel you don't have any), control (you think someone else is in charge), and the anxiety you feel coping with this subjection.

The first thing I would seriously ask is for you to examine your relationship(s). Are you in an abusive situation? Often abusers will let you think you are in control, but wield ruthless weapons of threat, manipulation, and disgust to pull you back towards them. If this describes you, darling, then please, please, please call someone you trust to help you get out of this situation.

If this does not describe your real life at all, then the person manipulating, teasing, and holding you back is you. The compelling thing about this scenario is that, even though it is your obvious fate, you never actually die in the dream, and symbolic death is essentially a very positive thing. In death, you can forgive others, free yourself from the past, and move on to a better place. Death in a dream, just as in Tarot cards, indicates a rebirth, a new beginning.

Your "captor" (be it you or someone else) is not letting you move forward. You feel stifled, muted, and powerless. The options you feel you have before you range from bad (death) to worse (long, painful death), but the result is still the same. We often avoid the inevitable, because *change* is such a scary thing... You can certainly embrace that which is meant to be "on your time," but ask yourself if it's worth adding more painful moments.

It is, indeed, noteworthy that when you needed it, suddenly a phone appeared. In reality, even if you think there are no options, if you don't give up, something will fall in your lap. It seemed to be a lifeline, but when you called the police, you find no help or solace in them. Your captor manipulated someone else to believe you are at fault, and this leaves you alone.

Indeed, Mama, right now, you *are* alone—no "authority" can

help you. No matter what the situation is, you know that *YOU* are the only person who can *make a decision to change things* for yourself. You must either speak up for yourself and claim yourself back, or surrender to the inevitable and build yourself anew from the bricks of lessons learned. I am certain once you've made this difficult decision, you will find *plenty* of support and help to forge the next path.

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Thur-Sat: 11am-11pm

Sun: 10:30am - 2pm

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