The Making of
an Organizer

A History and Analysis of the
Chicago Couriers Union
2003-2006

By Andrea Murphy
WITH RESPECT AND GRATITUDE
for the work and personal sacrifices of Matt Kellard and Colin Bossen, for all of the bicycle messengers bold enough to contribute to such a radical campaign, for the vision of the equally radical ancestors of the Industrial Workers of the World and the steps they took toward it, and for the elders of the IWW and all of my sister and fellow workers who diligently take steps toward the same vision one hundred years later.

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Introduction

“If you follow your bliss, you put yourself on a kind of track that has been there all the while, waiting for you, and the life that you ought to be living is the one you are living. Wherever you are—if you are following your bliss, you are enjoying that refreshment, that life within you, all the time.”

Joseph Campbell, from Sacrifice and Bliss, part four of the Power of Myth interview series with Bill Moyers

The following document is one attempt to provide a historical timeline and analysis of what is now known as the Chicago Couriers Union (CCU). The CCU is not yet an official branch of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). It exists under the umbrella of the IWW's Chicago General Membership Branch (GMB). The CCU is a part of the Municipal Transport Workers, Industrial Union (IU) number 540 within the IWW.

There exists documentation to support perhaps half of the words contained within. The other half is based completely on the personal experiences of a single organizer. I repeat, half of the following is based entirely on the personal experiences of one single organizer, who is also the author, the "I", the eye, of this document. This is but one perspective of many, many people, some who are mentioned below not only for clarity and accuracy's sake but also to acknowledge all the voices that have shaped this campaign.

This document is intended for past, present and future members of the CCU, that they might understand how they are a part of a long, evolving history and learn
from the events of the past. It is also intended for anybody interested in my own development as an organizer; my evolution from an insecure woman conditioned to keep to herself to a capable and confident organizer comfortable guiding a group of mostly men. I could not have imagined it! For those not familiar with this campaign, I have been intimately involved with its history and prehistory. My decision to work as a bike messenger was both a simple act of following my bliss and an unconsciously profound act of turning my back on the competitive, consumptive, lonely world to which I was accustomed. It was through this job that I met the IWW, and I hope the following pages reveal how influential the union has been in my life.

In addition to a historical analysis of the CCU and personal analysis of one of its organizers, this document is also a long-overdue report on my experience working as one of the few paid organizers for the IWW from July through December of 2005. It was during this time that I began to understand that my job—quite literally, as I was getting a paycheck—was to "raise the consciousness of the working class" just as my own consciousness had been raised by leaving behind the relatively cushy university and nonprofit jobs to join the ranks of the hardcore working class.

This was a great shift in perception for me. It challenged every notion I had about work, and continues to challenge me to consider my role on this planet at this time in history. It revealed to me the power I have as an individual, and awakened the desire to uncover the same power in others. It began my education in harnessing the power of the group. Lauren Hill's lyrics "You can get the money, you can
get the power, just keep your eye on the final hour," come to mind. I now understand how failure is impossible so long as focus remains on the desired outcome, and the desired outcome is truly for highest good of all that is alive.
January 2003 – Dynamex Hires Andrea
My decision to apply for bike messenger jobs came after a period of unmotivated unemployment. I had just recently realized that bike messengers existed. I was intrigued by the idea that I could get paid for riding my bike. I didn't even bike all that much back then; like most college-grads disenchanted by the "real" world and its system I had been groomed to fit right into, I was afraid of riding in the Loop (Chicago's downtown). Nonetheless, having once rowed competitively and completed a marathon, I knew I had physical endurance and so applied myself to several messenger companies.

On my first day riding down Washington St. into the Loop, I realized that I couldn't be afraid anymore, and got over it. Approximately one month later at my first bike-messenger-scene party, I witnessed an emotional, drunken argument between Brent Olds and Guenevere Nyderek over whether or not messengers should join a union.

April 2003 – Andrea Attends AFL-CIO Organizer Training
The only possibility other than bike riding at all interesting to me during my period of unemployment was labor organizing and I applied for a free weekend training from the AFL-CIO at this time. By the time training rolled around I had been working for several months and could feel the need for organization among bike messengers. I did not get much out of the training itself, except for the glimmer of hope that something else was possible in the bike messenger industry. But that was all I needed.
June 2003 – First Meeting of the Third Incarnation of the Windy City Bicycle Messenger Association

The Handlebar, a bike-themed restaurant opened by righteous bike advocates had recently opened. To this day, messengers gather there regularly on "Messenger Monday" nights for free fries and cheap beer. It was here where I noticed that everybody, myself included, complained about the same issues, as everyone dealt with serious amounts of bullshit on a daily basis.

Messenger companies in Chicago have worker exploitation down to an art. Major issues include fees for required uniforms and equipment, low wages, tendency for companies to overhire creating ample stand-by time, no health insurance for a dangerous job, majority misclassified independent contractor worker status, and severe and inconvenient building access policies. There seemed a lack of respect at every turn—from companies, security guards and the public. We felt we were regarded as lowly servants, forbidden in the majestic public spaces in most downtown buildings although we routinely took physical risks to perform a service so essential to the operation of the capitalist machine.

In an attempt to stop complaining and start doing something, a small group of messengers decided to call a meeting to discuss what we could do about our common problems and the then-abstract idea of joining a union. At the end of the meeting, it was declared the first meeting of the Windy City Bicycle Messenger Association (WCBMA). We agreed to invite Sam Smucker, an employee of the AFL-CIO who I had met during the training weekend, to an upcoming meeting to shed some light on the union issue.
Early Summer 2003 – Building the WCBMA

Approximately 40 people showed up to the union question and answer meeting with Sam Smucker. In a nutshell, he pointed out the logistical difficulties of organizing the courier industry and explained that before even talking to any union in particular, we would have to map the industry inside and out and build a very strong community. Only then would it be appropriate to "shop around" for a union. The way he put it, the task sounded impossible. He offered minimal guidance at best. And we wondered why, after doing all that work, would we want to hand it over to whichever union was bold enough to take on the challenging bike messenger industry, and pay hefty monthly dues?

Meetings continued every other week at the Handlebar, averaging 15-20 people. We had races, parties, art shows, and a week-long "Bike Summer" extravaganza of benefit events at the Buddy Space. We organized the annual Will Rogers Messenger Memorial Picnic to honor fallen messengers, and we contemplated self-help projects such as loaner bikes and discounts for WCBMA members at local shops to encourage membership. The zine Standby was published by Mike Morell, Joe Gott, and Mark the Spark.

A strong sense of community had already existed among messengers. Perhaps because of the job's intensity, the public space it occupies, that workers must adapt to the elements, and the creative, physically active individuals attracted to this type of job, bike messengering seems to nurture creative,
inspired communities across the planet. Naturally, common feelings of exploitation also help bring people together. The WCBMA served simply to focus the community's energy.

**The Bike 2010 Plan**

Another positive experience during this time was the response from messengers to the city's Bike 2010 Plan, a list of recommendations from the Department of Transportation to the city to improve all aspects of bicycling in Chicago by the year 2010. Messengers felt that much more could be done than was suggested to improve the situation of bike messengers, and showed up en masse at a public meeting with 48 ideas to improve the Plan. Messenger, author and activist Travis Culley publicly asked the city officials why messengers themselves were not consulted in the drafting of the plan, and was responded to positively when he asked if messengers could have a seat on the advisory council of the Plan (alongside Phyllis Applebaum, the self-appointed "official" messenger voice and owner of Arrow Messenger Service). It never did happen, however, and later drafts revealed that not one single messenger recommendation made the cut. This experience demonstrated that politics is a galvanizing topic.

**Late Summer 2003 – Dissolving the WCBMA**

While the group instinctively knew how to promote creative and athletic and community endeavors, nobody really knew how to tackle the on-the-job issues, the intent that motivated the first meeting of the WCBMA. We eventually lost this focus.
Participants tried to consciously communicate collectively. We studied and used Robert's Rules of Order, but emotional and personal issues too often dominated meetings. The struggles the group faced were the natural growing pains of a community learning how to be catalytic; we were attempting to do something new to us. Specifically we had difficulty devising a membership and dues structure for the WCBMA.

I feel it’s important to note that many problems began while attempting to implement a structure. Structures are limiting by nature, and conceptually linked to control. Emotionally charged disagreements around this topic lowered the morale of the group some, and by wintertime the WCBMA had stopped meeting. The officers felt frustrated and overworked. Meetings had become more of a chore than creative, fulfilling work.

I had stopped messengering and worked as one of Mayor Daley's Bike Ambassadors from June to September. I worked within the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation (CBF), the very effective nonprofit bike advocacy group in large part responsible for all of the city's bicycle achievements. I felt even more entrenched in the bicycle community, and I liked it.

I was a link between the underground messenger world and the public advocates, and tried to bridge the communities whenever possible. The CBF was supportive of the movements in the messenger industry although I often felt like they considered us a passing, whimsical phase. I left Chicago for Portland in October when the ambassador season ended and did not return until March.
Because I was not in Chicago for the following five months, I did not write the skeleton of the following timeline and there are more question marks and less detail.

**Autumn 2003 – WCBMA meets IWW**
In Portland, I sought out my bicycle messenger community. I learned that there had been some serious labor organizing and was led to Lil'Pete for more information. Pete was a former messenger and IWW organizer who worked extensively on the Transerve organizing campaign. He also worked at the same pub as my sister.

Synchronistically, before Pete could even contact fellow workers in Chicago, local IWW members had gotten wind of messengers’ attempts to organize themselves, heard the call for help, and began to attend WCBMA meetings. IWW members Matt Kellard and Colin Bossen began a dialogue between the WCBMA and the GMB about IWW-style union organizing, offering direct action techniques, militant labor history, messenger organizing experience in Portland, organizing based on solidarity not bureaucracy, and the idea that acknowledgement from a government is not necessary to act in unison.

**November 2003 – IU 540 Organizing Committee Formed**
The Chicago IWW formed an IU540 organizing committee. It initially consisted of four IWW members.

**December 2003 – Forum with Pete**
The Chicago IWW agreed to bring Pete out to Chicago for a few days to talk about the Portland courier organizing efforts and a meeting organized by the
WCBMA and the Chicago GMB. Over 40 messengers attended.

**February 2004 – Arrow Uprising**
A couple of messengers at Arrow wanted to strike for a higher commission rate. Colin and MK met with them and talked them out of it, fearing that such an action would be very premature and that it lacked support. A number of messengers at Arrow quit.

**Leading from Behind**
I would like to point out that decisions made out of fear are bound to fail. Also, instincts to act are perhaps the only thing we have that keeps us in touch with our natural animal natures in our environments, most of which are so very far removed from nature. Instincts are survival. A couple of messengers at Arrow were feeling exploited enough to want to do the most daring thing they could do in their position. In the end, the outcome was no different than it would have been had they been fired. Because of the desire of the organizers to keep the campaign undercover and the (imagined) responsibility they assumed for the results of the campaign, a genuine passion to do something was stifled.

I challenge every organizer, myself included, to think about how best to direct energy rather than subduing or controlling it. *Consider what it might look like to lead from behind.* I caution against talking anyone out of doing anything, as this requires too much influence over the passions of peoples. I am curious to know if there was a discussion in this situation, or if anyone offered direct action techniques other than striking.
March 2004 – A New Beginning: Industrial Organizing Committee Formed

Intended to lead the organizing effort, an Industrial Organizing Committee (IOC) formed with four people. IWW organizers decided that the first tasks were to build the body of the IOC to represent the demographics of the workers, organize shop committees and map out the industry.

I returned to Chicago around this time and joined the IOC. IWW organizers were clearly guiding the process; messenger organizers were not sure what was going on exactly as we had somewhat blindly put our trust in the IWW organizers.

While MK and Colin set out to accomplish their tasks, other members of the committee were busy taking it all in—the new structure, practicing meeting procedure, the exclusiveness, our now formal roles as leaders in our community, the awkwardness of keeping the IOC a secret, getting our assigned tasks done, showing up to meetings, et cetera. During this period, compared to that of the WCBMA, I felt that I was along for the ride rather than actively creating and contributing. Alexis came to Chicago to hold an Organizer Training with MK and Colin. Eight messengers, including myself, attended. This is the only other formal organizing training in which I have participated besides the AFL-CIO weekend, and it was much more dynamic and helpful.

Pete arrived in Chicago at the end of March to work as a full-time organizer for the IWW. His presence was welcome and his experience revered. I was the messenger representative on Pete's accountability
committee. Pete wrote occasional reports on the organizing activity and there were occasional committee conference calls. I listened in, but did not participate very much. Still in the process of unconscious absorption, I felt apart from the structure of it all.

Messenger organizers sensed secrecy and felt confusion surrounding meetings of the IWW organizers, and perhaps the IWW in general. Messengers were not aware of the IU540 Organizing Committee, nor of the IWW's recent intent to actively support grassroots organizing. Few messengers had taken it upon themselves to learn about the IWW or attend a GMB meeting.

I see now that IWW organizers were aware of and motivated by the macro struggle of oppression through labor while messenger organizers were motivated by their day-to-day challenges on the job. A conscious effort to reconcile the two purposes by attempting to teach messengers how their situation was but a microcosm of the whole would have been helpful at this time.

April 2004 – Shop Committees Take Shape

Thanks to Pete's energy and guidance, workers from Standard, Quicksilver, On Time, CMS, and Dynamex began to meet regularly. Reminiscent of the WCBMA's obsession with defining and making members, IWW organizers emphasized signing people up. I was uncomfortable with this push, but lacked the experience to understand why I felt this way.
Spring 2004 – WCBMA Reassembles, Disassembles

Excited by the idea of the WCBMA, new messenger Scott Gibson motivated it to reassemble and meetings began again after an approximate two-month hiatus. Another instance of synchronicity: unaware of the messenger organizing movement, Scott had just become a member of the IWW via the internet. The WCBMA met every other week at the Handlebar and employed a pass-the-hat policy for collecting dues. Industry problems were discussed, the loaner bike program got off the ground, and members collected kid bikes and distributed them at an elementary school festival. The Handlebar became a place for organizing one-on-one meetings to bring people into the organizing and IWW member sign-up, primarily from the pool of people from the WCBMA.

Organizing consciousness among bike messengers grew during this time. Although the topic was not discussed much at WCBMA meetings, it did dominate. Looking back, it is strange to see how Scott and I acted as the "leaders" of the WCBMA at this time while MK and Colin quietly observed meetings. Contrast this with IOC meetings, where MK and Colin led and where I felt, as I've mentioned, along for the ride. Again I think that more attempts could have been made to reconcile the two perspectives and effectively combine the organizations—this happened eventually with the CCU. Between IOC and shop committee meetings most of the current and former leaders of the WCBMA, who were also heavily involved in the IWW organizing campaign, found little energy for the WCBMA. Tackling big problems in the industry had always been the goal. The IWW dominated enough to make the WCBMA feel
futile. After a couple of months meeting attendance had waned to none.

**May 2004 – Standard's Successful Shop Committee**

Scott Gibson, the main organizer at Standard Courier, was fined illegally for a uniform violation after being spotted by his boss on the street without his required vest. He was informed of the violation when he noticed the $50 deduction from his paycheck. He and his shop committee together marched in on the boss three times. Eventually the fine was overturned and the vest policy rescinded. Shortly after this victory Scott was fired. The campaign's first Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) was filed with the Labor Board, claiming he had been fired for participating in collective activity; this was also victorious. Scott received back pay and Standard was required to post notices to this effect.

**June 2004 – Organizing Continues via the IOC and Comet**

Pete left Chicago after three months off work. At the time, the IOC had about six regular members. It consisted entirely of IWW organizers and bike messengers. Despite there being no drivers, the committee roughly reflects the demographics of the industry. Workers from all three major companies, CMS, Arrow and Dynamex were represented. The group plotted a survey to reach out to drivers.

Messenger organizers at the company Comet began to reach out to other messengers at their company. Their major issue was that workers paychecks did not amount to minimum wage. Within a couple of days the
threat of organizing pushed management to comply with minimum wage laws.

**June 2004 – Quicksilver and Stop NICA**
Shortly after Pete left town, the company Quicksilver decided to change the legal status of their workers from employees to independent contractors and hire the National Independent Contractor Association (NICA) to manage them. NICA is known by workers in the industry to be a scam that charges workers for the privilege of a paycheck and enables companies to misclassify their workers. The Stop NICA Committee formed in response to Quicksilver's action. Messengers immediately flyered Quicksilver's headquarters on W. Huron.

While we did not succeed in stopping Quicksilver from contracting with NICA, we did delay the process and perhaps cause the bosses some grief. Most importantly, we began a committee with a clear and righteous goal that few could oppose. Evidence exists that the Messenger Service Industry Association, the statewide "bosses union" founded by Arrow's owner Phyllis Applebaum (she gets around), discussed the "union threat" on their email forums at this time.

**July 2004 – Driver Outreach**
IOC members began a telephone survey of driver messengers, the first organized effort to include them in the campaign. Four or five people gathered in one place for a succession to call and survey drivers. It is useful to have many people in one place at one time doing the same work. Consciously creating spaces to share experiences and distribute the work is a very good idea.
Shop committees continued at several shops, varying in strength and number. No committee was capable of functioning without an IWW organizer present. I suspect that this was because the shop committees, having been a goal handed down from the IWW organizers' concept of good organizational structure for the industry, were somewhat imposed.

**July 2004 – Successful Salting**  
IWW organizer MK took a job at Arrow. As is his nature, he did exceptional work, was valued by the company and eventually promoted to dispatcher. It is interesting that Scott Gibson, another active organizer, was also highly valued by management and promoted to dispatcher when he worked at Faster. In fact, I think he turned down a management position.

**July 2004 – Targeted Fundraising**  
The IOC discussed the possibility of hiring a full-time organizer and raised funds to this end. I believe the funds came primarily from Colin's efforts organizing a benefit dinner, a letter-writing appeal to IWW members, and a matching grant from IWW headquarters. An amazing (approximate) $5000 was raised.

**September 2004 – IWW General Assembly**  
Three active organizers attended the IWW GA in Edmonton. Scott's trip was paid for by the Chicago GMB, mine with an IWW scholarship for women organizers, and MK's by the General Executive Board (MK sat on this committee of the IWW at this time). The highlight for me was a panel discussion on current organizing that included organizers of truckers in
Stockton and South Street workers in Philadelphia. Inspire and be inspired.

This experience helped me release more fears of speaking in public. I grew up something of a loner. Probably due to poor communication skills and low confidence, people in general had been intimidating to me since childhood. Despite all this, I immediately felt very comfortable with the laid-back, Canada-style gathering in Edmonton. My nervousness and fear disappeared when I realized that all I had to do was talk about my own experiences to a mellow group of people, many of whom had been drinking strong Canadian beer for hours prior to the panel. These IWW people were nothing to fear and more like myself than I could have imagined.

Unfamiliar with the formal procedure of the meeting I did not participate much in the meetings, but I did enjoy speaking on the panel and socializing with my fellow workers. I left this gathering with a new perspective on our work in Chicago, with the new, incredible realization that there are people all over the globe doing the very same work.

On the plane ride home, MK explained to Scott and I how important it is to understand that other people involved in the campaign would look up to us as leaders even when we don't necessarily feel like one. It is therefore necessary to believe in the campaign and our ability to lead it at all times, to act passionate about it always, even when we weren't particularly feeling it. I agree with the first statement. The second I now see as too idealistic and assumes too much imagined responsibility. I find it difficult and consider it dishonest to feign passion, and cannot act like I
know where a campaign is going if I really don't. This would be a case of the blind leading the blind.

I am learning that it is better to believe in every thing I do or say, even if it is acknowledging that I've no idea of the best action in a challenging situation or appealing to the group for inspiration because my own energy for the campaign is waning and I don't know why. Such acknowledgement encourages honest communication by example and takes the pressure of leadership from the "leader" onto the group, probably few of whom have had opportunities to share responsibility and leadership before. We're all learning. We can't create new leaders if we never give anyone the opportunity to lead.

**Autumn 2004 – Standby published**
The IOC published an issue of the zine Standby. While one of the original Standby publishers was on the IOC, the responsibility to get it together fell on other members and ultimately Colin became editor. Colin is righteous and does admirable work and I have no idea how he manages to accomplish as much awesomeness as he does. However, Standby was almost too well put together for a messenger zine. It did not have the same feel as the original Standby, and as a result it aroused small but vocal opposition. It was a clash of old-timers content with their status and financial worth in the community and a younger generation of do-gooders looking out for the good of the whole. Unfortunately, not another zine was published.

During this time, many IOC members began to feel the meetings becoming burdensome and this was why once enjoyable tasks like zine making were not getting done. Simply showing up to meetings became an
adequate contribution to the organizing effort. We were often and only together in meeting situations. This is dangerous because our best ideas come when we're relaxed and open to new inspiration.

December 2004 – Andrea Leaves Town; Considers Return

I moved to Arizona at the beginning of January. I was grateful for all of the experiences and glad to have contributed to the movement towards solidarity but also glad to move on. Before leaving, however, at the last possible moment as I was walking out the door after the last IOC meeting I ever attended, MK planted the seed that brought me back to town.

He shifted his tactic to make me stay from guilt to genuine appreciation. He told me that the IWW would have an office space to work out of by the summer should I decide to take the position as the full-time organizer.

In prior discussions about the paid organizer position, I had been pushing for somebody currently working on the campaign rather than an outsider, and vocalized my opinion that that person should be Scott. I had not considered myself a possibility because I knew I'd be leaving town.

My ego swelled with the sincerity of his appreciation and the vision of working out of the IWW office. I had created the possibility of a paid job for myself—wouldn't my mamma be proud—by doing what came naturally to me. I have a lot of love; I sincerely did want to continue the righteous work for my community. I felt honored, perhaps proud, to get to
work for my friends. So for the first time I considered returning to Chicago to take the position.

March 2005 — Work Stoppage at Arrow
Over 80%, close to 20 bikers at Arrow shut off their radios for an afternoon and succeed in shutting down the bike board for the rest of the day. The work stoppage came after unmet requests to management for a raise in their commissions. A second job action a few weeks later resulted in a day long lock-out and the firing of two workers. After intense and admirable negotiations over a series of months, Arrow agreed to most of the workers' demands.

April 2005 – Full-Time Organizer Negotiations
Colin, MK and I discussed via email the responsibilities of a full-time organizer, and I drafted a job description. I thought a systematic way to handle grievances should be prioritized, as should training and encouraging interested organizers, and that there should be some system for accountability like daily logs and weekly reports and a local steering committee. I agreed to be paid $1000 per month for five months from the funds raised specifically for this purpose, and begin the job after centenary (July-Nov).

May 2005 – The IOC Dissolves
The results of organizer burnout were felt as less and less energy flowed from individuals into organizing. The IOC dissolved, as well as all shop committees but Arrow's. Much like the circumstances surrounding the demise of the WCBMA, I believe that this was a result of the imposition of too rigid an organizational structure. Organizers who remained active chose instead to prioritize work via Arrow's strong shop
committee and through the Stop NICA Committee rather than struggle to keep the IOC alive.

**On Structure**
We now have two instances within the same campaign of failed imposition of rigid organizational structures. They do not work because they do not allow for creative flow and adaptation to circumstances. They prevent people from conceptualizing responses outside the limits of the structure (it's often referred to as "the box"). We were all so wrapped up in the IOC-shop committee structure that it had to dissolve before any one of us could understand why it was not working.

**On Burnout**
When you can see burnout on the horizon and you don't have plans to relocate to another city, please be good to yourself. It just means that you have been taking in more stimuli than you are used to processing. Allow yourself the time and space to integrate the new information, even if it means taking a couple steps back from your expected activities, your community or campaign. Your friends and fellow workers must accept your decision—how can anybody argue with, "I'm starting to feel crazy and incapable of doing anything useful?" They may even learn from you if you can communicate what exactly is going on with your bad self. And surely they will appreciate you even more when you are able to step up your commitment again, much wiser and healthier for having allowed yourself time to heal. Please be mindful that stress is a killer and that we do not want it to exist in the new world.
On Responsibility
Challenging the traditionally held notion of responsibility has relieved me of much guilt. In fact, I doubt I could have produced this report had I not done so. And so I challenge every reader to consider the definition of responsibility, to quit thinking of yourselves as responsible for this or that task, this group of people, or even the ideas emerging from your own brain. This kind of responsibility requires a kind of possession over the task, person or idea. Possession creates burdens, fear of loss and the desire to control.

Do we all understand how possession of anything is an illusion? If not, consider how this entire country has been raised up on stolen land, yet still people believe that they own it, that they worked hard for it, and that they deserve it. Stolen land is divided up and sold to the highest bidder, while self-sustaining communities based on laws of nature are intentionally broken up. Yes, even the thoughts in our heads, let's quit possessing them too. Aren't even our thoughts the product of all that to which we've been exposed?

Please simply be responsible. Allow yourself the space in your body, your mind, and your environment to simply respond. It is this way that the imposing structures will dissolve and we'll have the space to create the new world in the shell of the old.

Making Space for the CCU
Both the WCBMA and the IOC had to dissolve in order to make room for the CCU. Current and future members of the CCU must be made aware of the processes that did not work so that they can recognize and resist controlling structures should they come up again. This is absolutely necessary in order to create
something new and enduring. Also, please keep in your awareness the desired outcome while cooperatively working out the details.

Don't tiptoe around the word revolution, fearing it too radical. Everyone feels the imminent change even if they have not yet thought about it; trust that they will catch on. Perhaps time should be made at the beginning of every meeting to remember where the CCU fits into the big picture. I bet it would be worthwhile to briefly report on other organizing campaigns and consider social change and peaceful revolution, just to keep everybody humble and aware of the big picture.

June 2005 – Andrea Back on the Scene

I arrived back in Chicago just in time for the IWW centenary celebration gathering, intending to work full-time on courier organizing for five months. Messengers were still gathering at the Handlebar on Monday nights. Former messenger organizers sarcastically wished me the best of luck when I told them what I was doing, claiming that "there's nothing going on." This was not at all true.

Yes, the old structures had broken down. But the torch had been kept lit by workers from Arrow, who had been through an intense, very successful campaign, and by the Stop NICA Committee, who had been meeting regularly and had put together a strategy and grievance procedure for the entire industry. Word of all this awesome activity, however, had not reached the messengers who were not directly involved. I recognized that opening channels of communication was my priority.
Revelation on Communication

The process of writing all of this down is amusing to me. Actually, opening channels of communication within myself was my priority, but because I was not yet conscious of this, the entire experience I've documented here has been a tool for me to learn how to communicate.

My father was absent for the most part. My mother was a great provider and a hard worker but emotionally distant. She had lacked the positive masculine influence in her life as well. My Gemini siblings got along great with each other, but I was the eldest, a Very Serious Capricorn, too mature for cartoons. I was shy and awkward in high-school, involved in so many clubs that I rarely had to eat lunch (or be social) in the cafeteria, but smart and comfortable enough answering questions in class that the woman groomed for the role of valedictorian feared me, while in secret I practiced the art of procrastination.

I didn't feel so smart in college. Somehow I maintained a B-average and fed my ego instead through participation in competitive rowing and becoming physically strong. Procrastination wasn't so successful at the University of Chicago, as you might imagine, and it took two years here before I let go of the belief that I wanted to be a doctor when I grew up. I didn't date until the age of 23 (I am 30 now). It was not until I found myself on the freak-laden messenger scene that my social confidence grew, and I found a voice when I noticed that the only job that had really made me feel alive was also blatantly exploiting me!
These days I am getting good at communicating with the people in my immediate environment; I am even bridging the communication gap with my parents. I am still working on communicating with the rest of the world. In fact, this report is my first conscious attempt to communicate from the heart with a potentially large group of unknown people, without regard to whether or not anybody will read through to this point, or what any of you might think of me in the end. I have had to forget that I must produce a report for the union because they funded my job, or because it is my responsibility, and respond to the internal guilt I've been carrying because I haven't been communicating that which needs to be shared. "I do not exist in a vacuum. Everything I do has an effect on the entirety of creation." (from Matisyahu, a.k.a. Rabbi Reggae's album Shake off the Dust...Arise).

**July 2005 – Andrea's Role Defined**

I was enthusiastic to get communication going via a zine and a newsletter right away until MK pointed out to me that inclusiveness trumps expediency—a lesson from the last issue of Standby and its subsequent controversy.

Ideally, sure—projects ought to be worked on by as many people as interested. But the situation I found myself in was not ideal. People didn't know there was a union and weren't interested in working on it. Like the first uprising at Arrow, a sincere passion to act was discouraged based on fear and imagined authority. Prior to my new role as full-time organizer, nobody could have objected had I desired to create a zine.
Unconsciously I resented the limitation of my new role but lacked the insight necessary to challenge MK's assertion. His simple statement drastically changed my outlook on my job. I became hyper-aware of my role in the campaign and how my decisions might affect it. I did not feel comfortable making any decisions for the group.

It seemed the only people who considered the campaign as a whole anymore were MK and I. Super-organizer Scott Gibson had fled the scene, reportedly of burnout. I became very conscious that I was no longer working in the industry, and concerned about how I might appear to working messengers, particularly to the scores of new people who had never seen me before.

**On Authority**

Ultimately all the conflicts arose from the question of authority. Who was authorized to lead this campaign, those messengers who had been with it from the beginning, or the IWW members who showed up just in time with the information needed to keep the WCBMA true to its original intent?

I have shown how both the WCBMA and the IWW leaders were keen on imposing structure. The truth was that neither the IWW organizers nor the messenger leaders knew exactly how to go about the huge task of organizing the messenger industry in Chicago.

The IWW organizers clearly possessed superior knowledge about labor organizing but only one of them had had actual experience organizing in the industry in a different city, on a much smaller scale,
and with varied interpretations of success. But they were very enthusiastic at the opportunity to organize, had a theory of how to go about it and a flock of support. They claimed the authority. Messenger organizers, who also met up with varied interpretations of success while quite innocently creating the WCBMA, recognized that the IWW had something that they needed and accepted the help blindly. Messenger organizers did not recognize the authority they had over their own experiences or their knowledge of what was best for their own community.

**Early Challenges as Full Time Organizer**

I suspect I appeared to be too passive for MK in the beginning. There was conflict between us that was felt but never spoken of until now. It encouraged the feelings of isolation and uncertainty that already existed within myself. I like the metaphor of communicating the way you ride your bike. Be quick and direct with it. Articulate thoughts when they come to mind; if you stuff them in your bag it will surely get distorted and likely covered with beer.

I felt like I was starting over, except that this time there were two motivated people who couldn't communicate effectively instead of nine or ten who at least weren't afraid to get emotional. The organizing campaign had an on-again-off-again reputation and many former organizers were disenchanted with organizing altogether and had moved on to other endeavors.

**Learning from our Mistakes**

With zero sense of authority, I felt zero support. I came to understand that the campaign would unfold in its own time. I knew from having observed the
campaign from its beginning that to force it along with my energy and my will would serve nothing in the end. I would not aggressively push people to sign up for the union, the list of IU540 members in poor standing evidence enough that that particular tactic does not work.

I was in fact starting over. I knew that the goal was to create an enduring, democratic organization of workers in the courier industry. Nobody could pretend anymore that they knew what it ought to look like—a lesson from the IOC. The umbrella of the IWW was all the structure necessary to connect the new organization with the larger struggle. We could not allow personalities and emotions to dominate—a lesson from the WCBMA.

**A New, Public Campaign**

Based on the very public actions that took place at Arrow, I assumed that the campaign was now public. I hesitated to make even this assumption, but decidedly took steps to end the secrecy. I felt that everybody needed to know that organizing was and is and will continue to move forward and that interested people needed to begin meeting regularly. I was open about the fact that I was getting paid to help the union grow.

If we had a model for the new union in mind, it was that of a worker center. MK had come up with a list of possible programs for the union such as loaner bikes, free health clinics, GED financing and loans for members, a grievance committee, tax workshops, bike repair workshops, etc., assuming that such an extensive list would give people plenty of choices if they wanted to get involved.
I agreed that all of these were good ideas, but with the understanding that people are more likely to put effort into that which they are passionate about, their own ideas. I was more interested in creating a space that allowed for the free flow of ideas. I imagined that the union would be open to every worker in the industry and that everyone would be welcome at meetings whether they were dues-paying members or not. I imagined creating a nurturing, self-sufficient community that knew how to listen and learn from each other by encouraging skill-sharing and radical community-reliance.

**Yoga means Union**
MK the taskmaster, Andrea the nurturer. Perhaps we were dealing with some deep dark gender issues? We both took steps toward creating the programs listed above and people did plug into them. I also attempted to put into practice my notion of community by offering my knowledge of yoga to messengers. We borrowed a massage table and began to meet weekly for yoga and massage. No, it was not directly related to organizing nor obviously political, but essential for messenger's hardcore bodies to move in different, more subtle ways. It subtly encourages thinking in different ways.

Remembering the stress of the IOC days and knowing that our best ideas come when we are relaxed, I felt that bringing people together in a chill environment that neither distributed tasks nor encouraged the consumption of alcohol was perhaps the most positive influence I could impart.

That nearly every social scene seems to require drinking beer and spending money is hugely
frustrating to me and indicative of how societal structure keeps us down. Still, some people brought beer along to yoga. This was fine, but the presence of mind required to lead a yoga practice in a physical space as scattered as my own mind came and went. It was nonetheless a worthwhile endeavor, as all endeavors are.

Magic at the Thompson Center
I spent a lot of time at the Thompson Center, the unofficial break room for messengers in the Loop, connecting and reconnecting with people. Confused about roles and responsibilities as I was, I felt more comfortable if I had a flyer to hand out or a survey to administer.

However, I had a wonderful revelation while just sitting around one day. I was feeling despondent, not knowing how to communicate with my fellow workers around me, when my perspective changed. For just a moment the ego faded and I became a witness to myself. I remembered that I was not a working messenger anymore, and that time hanging out at the Thompson Center was not my down time as it was for the others, as it had been for me in the past.

I literally saw myself from above—strong, hairy-legged, attractive, youngish woman—sitting there among mostly young, though a wide age-range of men. The gender difference stuck out. It looked unusual. I felt exceptional. I could no longer act like a despondent ex-messenger as if I were still waiting for the next job, resenting the call when it came. I recognized that my job was to help people out of their despondency by bring them together, by making them
strong through their union. How I'd do that was still not clear, although my purpose was crystal.

**Addictions Encouraged at Cal's**
Messengers often gather at this centrally located bar, most religiously after work on Fridays. It was one place I could hang out with my friends and not feel like I needed to be working. The alcoholism in the community is quite disturbing to me, although I recognize it as just a microcosm of the alcoholism in our whole society. I have never been a huge fan of drinking. My crutch, also shared by many in the community, was marijuana. I have since stopped using the sacred herb as a crutch and value the clarity I have claimed as a result. Interesting though, that in the process of kicking the habit I recognized that I began to use it on a daily basis when I began working as a messenger. Smoke pot! Go to work! Then poison yourself with alcohol at happy hour to bitch and forget about the day! It's a sick, sick world. Not bad, but seriously sick.

I'd started messengering in the wintertime because I thought my chances of being hired as an inexperienced woman would be higher during this season. It didn't take long before mornings started to hurt, and I wondered why I kept doing it day after day, adorning my body with layer after layer to go out in the madness of Chicago's Loop in sub-zero temperatures to push papers around to keep the machine going. Smoking a morning bowl was all I could do to get me out the door. I understand now that addiction feeds addiction and am consciously trying to replace my destructive habits with creative habits.
Before marijuana, I'd started on the cigarettes. Before cigarettes, I'd spend hours and hours picking my split ends. Before that, I obsessively bit my nails. But before any of these, I used to love to juggle. I kicked ass at handball and double dutch. Playing music was my emotional outlet in high school. Consciously tracing the history of each habit and remembering what I used to do to deal with the world before they set in has been very helpful to me while letting the destructive habits go.

**July 20, 2005 – What Happened at Arrow?**
In an effort to bring current organizing events to the consciousness of the community, Arrow messengers held a forum to explain their victorious and entertaining struggle. About 15 messengers attend, most of them from Arrow.

**August 6, 2005 – Will Rogers Annual Messenger Memorial picnic**
This particular event is totally righteous, and highly celebrated by messengers. Somebody must take the initiative to get it together. Guenevere had always done so in the past; I organized it this year. It is relatively easy to organize because people already know about it and expect it. If people want to create a physical memorial that is awesome, but always there is time to speak about and honor messengers who have sacrificed their lives for their job. Still obsessed with my "role" in my community, I was reluctant to speak, although people were probably expecting it. I am grateful for the memorable and inspiring speeches by Andre and Smokey.
August 10, 2005 – Another Large Informational Meeting

Reminiscent of Pete's days, we called a meeting to inform everyone about the union. Approximately 20 people attended, most of whom where already in the organizing loop.

We had borrowed a projector from the Bike Federation and MK had prepared a slick power point presentation. We'd assigned (we could say, controlled) different messengers to talk through various parts of the presentation. It was very well done, but probably not necessary given the crowd. An old-timer CMS biker who came to the meeting after I'd talked to him Cal's reportedly called the meeting—horror of my horrors—cliqueish.

20/20 Hindsight

Had I the sight and the strength of will at the time, I would have been more assertive. I would have recognized that the campaign was at a different place it was when Pete arrived, that the mass informational meetings had already been done, and went forward with regular union meetings right away. But I was still in fear mode and not able to identify the hyper-control-consciousness vibe in the air. Making decided decisions for the group, however scattered, was not acceptable. It was a confusing time for me.

I am trying to completely honest about how all of these experiences have been lessons in finding my voice and asserting my true self. I am reminding myself in this document of all of the lessons as much as I am to any of you.
September 2-4, 2005 – IWW General Assembly in Philadelphia

MK, Marshall, Andre and I drove to Philly for this gathering. I am grateful I went, although throughout I was torn between spending time on the Philadelphia messenger scene and sitting through Assembly like a responsible union member. My new ideas about responsibility had not yet entered my consciousness.

In the end, I benefited from both. I was inspired by the activism of our new messenger friends and the Philly messenger community. Smaller than Chicago, the messengers there were tight, and incredibly welcoming and inviting. I drooled over their newly published zine and the creative, righteous bag shop Reload which sprang up from the vision of a former messenger who kept the love in the community.

At GA, I was still not comfortable with the formalness of it all nor was I nearly as confident communicating as I was at the Philly bike messenger potluck. Like the previous year's Assembly, I felt I did not have much to contribute other than my report on my work.

September 14, 2005 – First Meeting of the Chicago Couriers Union

I felt awkward facilitating this first meeting. I sat at the front of the room, although we later arranged meetings so that everybody sat either in a circle or around a long table. I like the latter seating arrangement better.

The most memorable part of this meeting for me was voting on a name for the union. I pushed for the name "Windy City Couriers Union," in order to pay homage to our roots. I was the only one who voted for this
name, and became kind of pissy that nobody else thought it important to recognize where we had grown up from. The truth is, nobody knew. I realized then that I was the only person in the room who had been through all of it, and the only person at all who had remained committed throughout. I alone held the full history of this campaign, and I had not yet shared any of it.

Subsequent Meetings
At early meetings, I tried to have an agenda ready to go. However, remembering Colin's example leading IOC meetings, we switched to creating the agenda on the fly at the beginning of each meeting to encourage group ownership over the meeting and participation. It was entertaining to nominate different people to chair the meetings and witness their reactions and performances.

My wish that every messenger would feel welcome at CCU meetings was realized when the body of the CCU voted that every working messenger would have a voice and a vote at meetings, with the exception that only members of the CCU in good standing could vote on money matters.

Money Matters
During this time I had, as usual, my own financial issues. In initial conversations with Colin and MK regarding my pay as a full-time organizer, I agreed that the pay rate be lowered slightly in order to sustain it for a longer period of time, and accepted $1000 for five months, July through November, 2005. At the expected full-time 40 hours per week, this works out to $6.25 an hour.
I'd applied for food stamps as soon as I arrived in Chicago. My rent averaged $400 per month, which was actually pretty good. I had to reduce my $350 a month student loans payments to the absolute minimum of $50; interest is still accruing. By September, I couldn't keep up financially and had to take on more lucrative apartment painting jobs. For this reason, I requested to reduce my status to part-time and extend it one month. The body of the CCU granted my request. I worked part-time and was paid $500 a month from October to December.

Financially, this job did not work out very well for me and I am still suffering the consequences. I could not consider it again under similar circumstances. I would consider it again under different circumstances.

One month of focused, adequately compensated and supported work makes much more sense to me than six months of unsupported, scatterbrained work. I marvel now at how we labor-conscious freaks were able to justify paying and accepting such a low wage. I think that a situation more beneficial to everyone would be to spend more organizing money on the membership itself, thereby creating more organizers.

**Handling Grievances**
The Stop NICA Committee had developed a form to track individual grievances that was well done and worked to some extent. We connected with a lawyer at a labor law firm who was interested in what we were doing. It did not look like anything they had ever seen before. It was very awesome to witness MK explaining solidarity unionism and the successes we have had in its practice to a couple of expert lawyers in a corporate-looking office. They were impressed.

The workshop was open all day, although only about four people showed up, other than the organizers. Swampy, I remember, was understandably frustrated by the low turnout. He had put himself, his name and his skills out there for anybody to take advantage of for free, and only a couple of people accepted his offer to help.

We did get around to acknowledging that the workshop was indeed a success. We came to the conclusion that every event benefits everybody who participates. Even though most of the participants were the usual ones, we had a good time and an opportunity to interact in a new way. Everyone who showed up learned how to true a wheel. Thank you Marshall, Swampy, and Leo.

September 2005 – Bike 2015 Plan

On September 21, I attended a Mayor's Bike Advisory Council meeting, a quarterly meeting of city bureaucrats and bike advocates. Fortunately, it was the day of the unveiling of the Bike 2015 Plan, which is the extended version of the Bike 2010 Plan of Summer 2003. At this particular meeting, Arrow's Phyllis walked in late, kissed city officials on the cheek, presented the section on messengers and left early. Only one of the suggestions made by messengers regarding standardizing building access policies had been incorporated into the latest draft of the plan.

We called a meeting at the Handlebar to plan a response. Similar to two years ago, people were riled.
We felt ignored, disrespected, and deliberately left out of the process. I understand that direct action is preferable to political action, but it would have been hard to ignore the emotional reaction everybody seemed to feel about this subject, particularly Phyllis' assumed authority over the messenger industry.

Our response came in the form of a letter and a two and a half page response to specific points in the Plan as well as suggestions not included in the Plan at all. We included a petition of 68 signatures in support of our suggestions. It was all written collectively, we worked hard gathering responses and making it city-official presentable. Our primary request was to establish a Courier Task Force of the Mayor's Bicycle Advisory Council to address messenger issues. We signed the letter from the Chicago Couriers Union.

No further action was taken, however, on our part. I suppose the energy and focus required to work with the city wasn't there. I do believe it is necessary to work both within and outside of the system in order to create enduring change. We're going to have to revamp the system someday, remember. We ought to learn what doesn't work. Also, working within would create a job for a bike messenger to do nothing but research the industry. Sounds worthwhile to me.

**September 2005 – Messenger Ban Reversed**

Smokey the messenger had been banned from a building for having in his possession an empty pipe. This particular building has a ridiculous building entrance policy. Led by MK's efforts, the union gathered signatures for a petition, called the building management, and successfully reversed the ban. The
building manager claimed he was not aware of the decision. This is valuable information, as I've always suspected that security guards get carried away with their illusory authority.

**December 2005 – Bike Repair Workshops and Loaner Bikes**

Led by Leo and Steve, we hooked up with the community bike shop West Town Bikes to offer monthly repair workshops free to bike messengers.

**December 2005 – Here are the Voices**

This event consisted of a two-week art show and two parties at the Acme Arts Center. It was inspired back in July while I was cleaning up the IWW office. I found a large beautiful movie poster of "The Wobblies" that Carlos Cortez had donated to the GMB. Considering what to do with it, Colin suggested asking the folks at the gallery Mestizarte in Pilsen for cheap framing ideas, a gallery where Carlos had spent much time and had many friends. There I spoke to Efran Beltran, a student at the center and an activist and artist, who suggested a benefit art show for the bike messengers. Months later, with more support and sponsors than I can list here, we pulled it off and raised about $1500.

The art show featured fellow worker Carlos Cortez as well as works by fellow messengers, some members of the union, some not. There was a scheduled open mic night, where eight messenger performers entertained and everybody partied down. There was a second party focused more on the life of Carlos with spoken word and a union song sing-along led by sister worker Anna Stange, followed by more booty-shaking entertainment. There were raffles and food and drink and much merry-making. Leo and I, among others,
had spent a lot of time during the previous months preparing for this.

Here are the Voices was so satisfying for me because it created the space I imagined for the community to interact and share their creative arts. They appreciated the venue very much. We were all able to catch a glimpse of and be inspired by Carlos Cortez, who passed on shortly before the CCU evolved, and I am so grateful of how well I came to know him through his artwork and his friends.

We received a critic's choice award from the Chicago Reader and space on NPR, Steve Edward's show. They requested two people, one to sing union songs and one to answer questions about the event and speak about Carlos' artwork. Anna Stange sang and spoke. I took the other spot. Anna was awesome, but I fumbled and stammered so much I was cut completely from the final version. I suppose I wanted the glory of being on NPR, forgetting that I could not even speak in front of my own people at the messenger picnic! I still had work to do.

**December 2005 – Andrea Leaves Again**

**March 2006 – Arrow Reunion**
The CCU held a party to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the work stoppage at Arrow. Many people attended. The majority of the workers who were involved in the work stoppage have since either been fired or quit. The union was not capable of either stopping the firings or winning workers their jobs back. The NLRB did not find merit in any of the ULPs filed by the fired workers.
March 2006 – IWW Organizing Summit in Austin, TX

I am so grateful for this event. It was here where I first began thinking about the Couriers Union after leaving Chicago in December. After a change in environment, I was able to see more and it was this summit that prompted me to piece together much of what I have written down here. And the food was exceptional.

June 2006 – Food Not Standby

I returned to Chicago for a visit and managed to make this happen, an idea we'd had months ago. It came together quickly with the help of many messengers and was very well received. I have found through my time with the CCU that the best way to get a project like this done is to get people together at the same time for what might be called a working meeting. Simple enough, but it took years of sitting through talk before I understood how to make this happen. In this instance, within a couple of hours somebody had made a stencil for signage, we'd coordinated who'd put up signs and where, somebody fetched spray paint, others went dumpster diving, others planned on getting up early to cook and found a kitchen space to use, another found rickshaw transportation.

Always somebody needs to keep the focus and coordinate the effort, to make sure everyone is doing something and everything is getting done. This was my job because I made the original push for it. This might be a good example of leading from behind, because in the end it did not appear that I had led anything or anyone. It worked like clockwork, and was appreciated very much the next day. Someone said to
me, "you must have been a messenger because usually nobody cares about us." Yup.

**On Union, the Word**
At the time of this writing, I am very conscious that I have been both physically and energetically absent from the Chicago Couriers Union since I left, and am aware that this needs to change. I am seeking ways to keep communication open with Chicago, as well as new ways to get involved in the IWW as a whole.

I am working on projects in my own community, which exists in Sedona, AZ, a once free camping and gathering space in the national forest now dominated by rich republicans, their real estate, and many people profiting off of the scores of spiritual seekers who flock to this amazingly beautiful land. I just got word that Dick Cheney is moving here, which is simply motivation to get the All-American, Anti-War Marching Band together. I am carefully plotting the rise of the IWW here and already have several people to sign up, just as soon as I update my delegate credentials.

I have been thinking a lot about balance as I've been writing this history, perhaps you have picked up on some of the dualities. When I began messengering my community shifted from mostly women to mostly men, and I've been wondering why most of my friends and teachers have been men over the last several years. The lack of a positive masculine influence (which does not necessarily have to come from a man) in my early life must have thrown me way out of touch with my masculine side, and there are men in my life because I have much to learn from them.
I now recognize the I-don’t-give-a-shit attitude as a masculine trait I need to consciously adopt. This contrasts with the old obsession with appearances and what-others-might-think-of-me. I used to resent the confidence that appeared to come so naturally to men, the way my brother would blow off all the rules, for example, and the fact that I had to work so hard for the relatively little confidence that I'd developed. I now claim all the confidence I need to perform the work I was born to do. Thank you, my brothers. I don't actually think you have all the confidence you appear to have, but your excess has shown me my lack, and for this I am grateful.

I want to say a word to the women in the bike messenger community, who are so powerful and so exceptional. Yes, I do think it would be nice if more women showed up to CCU meetings. It would be nice if there were more of a balance of the sexes in the industry. It would be nice if there were more of a balance of the dualities within ourselves. We need to be conscious of this duality, consider our "masculine" and our "feminine" traits, and interact consciously to expose where the other is weak. We need to claim the power with all the love that has been granted to us as creators, the power we have been denied for generations and generations, in order to discover the true meaning of the word union. It's the yin and the yang, the patriarchy and the matriarchy, united in balance. Perhaps this quote from the beginning of Sinead O'Connor's Universal Mother can do this concept better service (I've substituted the word antidote for opposite because I think it more accurate):

“"I do think that women could make politics irrelevant by a kind of spontaneous cooperative action, the like
of which we have never seen, which is so far from people's ideas of state structure and viable social structure that it seems like total anarchy. And what it really is is very subtle forms of interrelation which do not follow a sort of hierarchical pattern which is fundamentally patriarchal. The [antidote] to patriarchy is not matriarchy but fraternity, and I think it is women who are going to have to break the spiral of power and find the trick of cooperation.”

I would like to extend extreme thanks to my bike messenger community. You showed me enough love and acceptance to break my silence and lead me down the path to discover that the true meaning of the word Union lies within my own self. It has made me very strong. I look forward to discovering my role in the future of both the CCU and the IWW, as well as the role of our One Big Union in the great revolution that is sure to come.

Om Shanti (Universal Peace) and Solidarity Forfuckingever,
Andrea Murphy
X350065