

**Minutes of the Champaign County Chapter of the ACLU**  
**Location: Clark-Lindsey Retirement Village, Urbana**  
**7pm January 3, 2013**

**Present**

Present: Bill Brown, Carol Leff, Diana Lenik, Faruq Nelson, Esther Patt, Stephen Portnoy, and Richard Schnuer.

**Others Present:**

The meeting was convened in the Simon Room at Clark-Lindsey Village, with about a half dozen resident ACLU members in attendance including Lillian Katz and Richard Rogers. Several Clark-Lindsey residents said that they found it informative.

**1. Presentation by Zoe Shein on the ACLU Prison Project**

Invited guest Zoe Shein worked as an intern on this project last year after graduating from Grinnell College. She has an interest in prisons, having worked as a volunteer in them and participating in prison tours. Ms. Shein described several ACLU initiatives regarding prisons as described below. She did research on some of these projects.

- HIV lawsuit: The ACLU litigated against on segregation of HIV positive inmates (both physically and in some cases by required armbands) because this policy is based on a misconception that HIV positive inmates are a risk to the health of other inmates. The case has been tried recently and the ACLU expects its position to prevail.
- Overcrowding: the A is litigating in many places concerning many issues including overcrowding.
- “Stop Solitary”: This project is to limit or eliminate the use of sustained solitary confinement in prisons. A recent thrust of the ACLU concerns juveniles held in “administrative segregation,” which prison officials often state as necessary for the juveniles’ protection. The Stop Solitary effort also hopes to stop prolonged seclusion of children in schools; e.g., keeping a small child in a small room for hours. Based on behavioral control studies, many people involved in education policies recommend no more than 20 minutes, stating that seclusion is effective for only one minute for a child’s age.

**2. Approval of Minutes of the December Meeting**

Esther Patt, and Faruq Nelson seconded, a motion to approve the minutes with one correction, to record Steve Portnoy has having participated in the meeting. The Steering Committee approved the motion.

### **3. Treasurer's Annual Report**

Steve Portnoy distributed the report and noted that the chapter made a small profit. He noted that most costs were similar to the prior year. A motion and second to approve the report was made and approved by the committee unanimously. The note-taker failed to note the persons making the motion and seconding it.

### **4. Announcements and Communications**

- a. State ACLU Conference Call. Bill reported that the state chapter is litigating the following three cases:
  - Freedom to marry
  - Seeking permanent injunction against arresting and prosecuting people who recording police officers on the job
  - Just recently the ACLU dropped its litigation against Cook County for improper treatment of juveniles due to a settlement amount the parties.

Bill also shared information on the state chapter's legislative efforts. Details on these efforts will not be recorded in these minutes because the information is now outdated. The efforts included:

- Allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain drivers licenses: the state adopted this measure subsequent to this meeting
  - Freedom for same-sex couples to marry – the State Senate approved subsequent to this meeting.
- b. Immigrant Forum Update. The forum is working on the following:
    - Drivers licenses for undocumented immigrants
    - Providing certain recognition for individuals under 30 years of age, similar to the Dream Act
    - The forum continues to help individual undocumented immigrants
    - The forum plans to set its goals for this year shortly.
  - c. Letter from LaSalle County. Bill described a letter supporting two Muslim doctors who were "forced out" from a hospital after a Catholic organization purchased it.

### **5. Old Business**

- a. FOIA Request Concerning Police Complaints. Belden Fields was not able to obtain the names of officers against whom complaints were made, despite the Attorney General's "Access Counselor" by writing two letters in support of his request.
- b. Champaign County Drone. Sheriff Walsh said that the current drone does not function and cannot be repaired, but that Hobbico is developing a drone and may give one free to the Sheriff's office. Sheriff Walsh said that he wants one mostly for searching for missing persons and for rescues. However, he said that he might also use it for recon on a hostage situation; e.g., to look for weapons.

The ACLU's position is that use of a drone is fine as long as it meets the "plain sight" rule. Sheriff said that the plain sight standard would probably not be met when looking for weapons. He said that he is willing to talk about this further and that obtaining a drone is not a high priority now.

- c. Champaign County Community Justice Task Force. The TF has dissolved and is reconstituting itself. Sheriff Walsh would like to discuss the jail with the ACLU and would like our support
- d. Annual Meeting Date and Speaker.
  - Date: Sunday April 7<sup>th</sup>
  - Location: I Hotel & Conference Center.
  - Speaker: Robert Naiman will speak on "Transparency and Accountability for the Drone Strike Policy: A Winnable Fight".
- e. Website Update. Bill said that his next project is to edit the site. The Steering Committee also discussion renewing the domain registration.
- f. Next Social Hour. The SC decided to defer action until Carol Spindel returns to town.

## **6. New Business**

Nominations and Awards Committee. Bill noted that we need a new president since he is stepping down. He, Carol Inskeep, and Richard Schnuer volunteered to comprise the Nominating Committee.

SC members informally discussed holding a future meeting at Clark-Lindsey Village since several ACLU residents said that they found it informative.

The meeting adjourned about 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Richard Schnuer