

The **ACLU** News

Chapter Update

The Steering Committee was saddened, along with the entire community, to lose long-time activist and our treasurer Joan Severns in August. Joan's contributions to progressive causes have greatly enriched the Champaign-Urbana community and the State. Her role as mentor, friend, and conscience will continue to influence those whose lives she touched.

Committee member Ward Henson was appointed to the vacant treasurer position. With the Committee also losing Kathy Claar, who moved out of state, we voted to add Esther Patt. Esther has been a member and officer previously, and is currently an Urbana Councilwoman and is coordinator of the UI Tenant Union.

In June, Stuart Laird attended the inaugural membership conference in Washington DC, where he participated in workshops relating to Patriot Act legislation. We are hopeful he will post a report to our website.

The Committee initiated two new email lists in response to members who desired more discussion of local issues and for dissemination of timely information. Our updated website also includes past newsletters and Committee agendas and minutes.

Privacy concerns prompted the Committee to look into policies of local libraries concerning what records are kept on individuals' library use. While some libraries purge a record once the book is returned, there is still concern about records kept on backup files. There was also discussion of providing signs or encouraging libraries to post notices regarding what records are kept and their responsibility to comply with Patriot Act requests.

ACLU-IL Legislative Director Mary Dixon attended the September meeting. She provided information on local legislator voting records and talked about other initiatives such as the national ACLU effort to encourage communities to pass resolutions that protest federal

measures that violate civil liberties in the name of the war on terrorism. Of local legislators, best was Jakobsen, voting with the ACLU-IL positions on 8 of 10 issues and worst was Cultra, voting with our positions on 4 of 10 issues. Key votes considered were on SB15, SB30, SB472, SB690, SB880, HB211, HB416, HB469, HB2330, and HB2486. (Also see article on page 2) Copies of Mary's detailed 12-page legislative report will be available at the Fall Gathering.

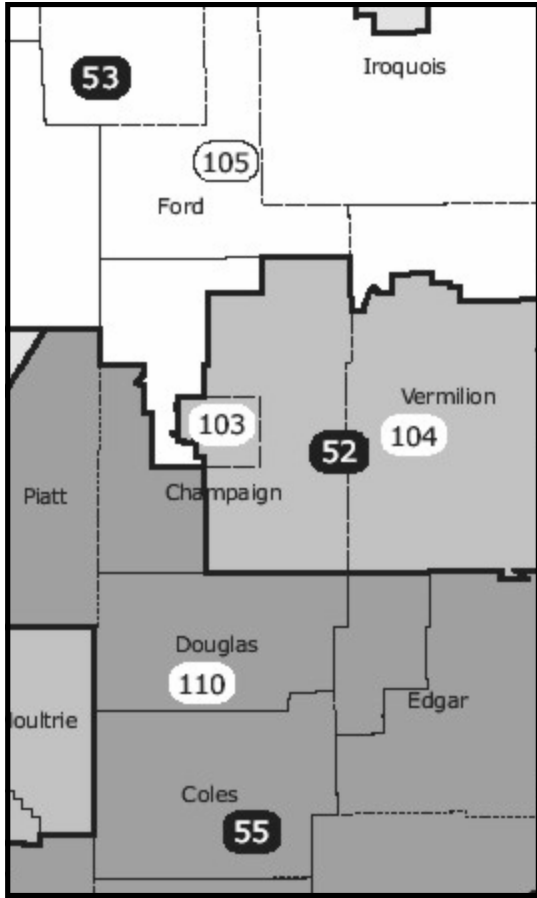
Our guest for the October meeting will be Champaign County Sheriff Dan Walsh.

Victor Stone served on a panel for a town hall meeting on security vs. civil liberties, at the Champaign public library in August.

Hiram Paley and Stan Levy, along with ACLU-IL Executive director Colleen Connell and Communication Director Ed Yohnka met with several members of the News-Gazette Editorial staff to discuss implications of the Patriot Act, establish local contacts and provide informational resources.

Stan Levy and Shirley Stillinger remain active in juvenile justice issues. In September, they joined with Tracy Parsons of the Urban League and Joan Miller of the League of Women Voters in reporting results of interviews to Judge Townsend and various agencies and departments involved. Their report highlighted a lack of cooperation and coordination among agencies providing follow-up services and monitoring of delinquents and a lack of services to at-risk juveniles and their parents and guardians.

Monthly meetings of the Steering Committee were shifted from the first Thursday of the month to the last Thursday in order to better accommodate members of the County Board who had conflicting meetings. Upcoming meetings are scheduled for October 30 and December 4, avoiding the November 27th holiday.



STEERING COMMITTEE BEGINS VISITS TO AREA LEGISLATORS

Champaign County is divided into three Legislative (Senatorial) and four Representative Districts, allowing seven elected members (six Republicans and one Democrat) of the Illinois General Assembly to represent our interests. One of the goals of the Steering Committee is to meet with most, if not all, of the seven during the next session.

Four committee members met with Naomi Jakobsson in early August, discussing votes during her first term and views toward future legislation. In particular we were asking for support to override the Governor’s veto of a portion of HB 472 which would have provided a process for stripping a law enforcement officer of their badge for life for perjury in a homicide investigation. We also questioned “no” votes on HB 416, which would allow some juvenile offenses to be kept in juvenile court (at the discretion of the judge) instead of automatically being transferred to adult court, and SB 880, which passed, allowing needle purchases with the intent of preventing HIV/AIDS transmission. In general the visiting group found Jakobsson to be in agreement with our issues, but she was unable to adequately explain her vote on HB 416, leading some Steering Committee members to conclude it may have been politically motivated (as in appearing “soft” on crime). She said she thought SB 880 didn’t go far enough in providing treatment of addicts, although members argued that the intent of the bill was to prevent the spread of HIV rather than to treat addicts.

Following this meeting, the visiting group decided they needed to prepare better by reviewing the voting record of the legislator, bringing a one-page summary of topics that they could leave with the legislator as a reminder, and being better informed on specifics of the bills. As a result, we invited ACLU-IL legislative director Mary Dixon to our September Steering Committee meeting where she met with a small group for two hours over dinner discussing legislator visits, and provided fact sheets on key legislation.

We hope that by meeting with additional legislators, we can have meaningful discussions about pending legislation and where necessary, educate them on the civil liberties impact. While Jakobsson was supportive of the Human Rights Act, SB 101, we may be able to help change votes of other area legislators.

Since these are strictly considered visits from constituents, we hope that at least one of the ACLU group meeting with legislators is from that legislator’s district. The Steering Committee has members in most of the seven districts, except for Bill Black’s 104th. We would encourage general members living in the 104th who would be interested in meeting with Rep. Black to please contact the Steering Committee.

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EMAIL LIST REMINDER

In an effort to improve communication among our 600+ members, two new email lists are available. The "Announce" list is for timely announcements of local events or requests to contact legislators on pending legislation. The "Members" list is for general discussion of civil liberties issues. Complete information and sign-up is available on our web site, www.aclu-cu.org.

Our September mailing announcing the lists generated some subscriptions, but list traffic has been minimal—so if you're worried about being inundated, relax! E-mail addresses of subscribed members are kept confidential.

2003 Fall Gathering

Please join us Sunday November 9th at our annual Fall Gathering, an informal setting to meet other members and discuss your favorite civil liberty issues.

There should be a flyer insert in this newsletter providing an RSVP form — but last minute phone calls are always welcome, and checks are accepted at the door! If your copy is missing the insert, you may call Allan Levy at 359-8148 or reserve on-line at www.aclu-cu.org.

ACLU Officers & Steering Committee

The local ACLU Steering Committee meets on the last Thursday of each month at 7:30 pm, in the conference room at Campbell Hall (WILL studios) in Urbana.. Meetings are open to members—if you would like to be placed on the agenda, please contact Steve Portnoy or any other committee

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We're on the Web!
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COMMEMORATION OF *BROWN VS BOARD OF EDUCATION OF TOPEKA*

Throughout the school year, the UI is sponsoring speakers and events to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court decision aimed at ending segregation in public schools. On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court unanimously declared that separate educational facilities are “inherently unequal” and, as such, violate the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution, which guarantees all citizens “equal protection of the laws.”

Several key figures associated with the decision and its inter-

pretation and implementation are leading discussions. Cultural, social and scientific contributions of African-Americans are being celebrated as well through lectures and performances.

For details and schedules of upcoming lectures, performances, and symposia, see:

www.admin.uiuc.edu/Brown/

The associated Parkland events are available at:

www.parkland.edu/cetl/brown.htm

BEN WOLF TO SPEAK AT LAW SCHOOL OCT 28TH

Ben Wolf, Associate Legal Director and Director, Institutionalized Persons Project of the Roger Baldwin Foundation, ACLU-IL, will speak at 4:00 PM October 28th in room D of the Law School, 504 E Pennsylvania Ave, Champaign.

Wolf has recently been active with the ACLU-IL Children’s Initiative, involving reform of the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center, DCFS and Maryville Academy.