

The **ACLU** *News*

Update on Chapter Activities

Earlier this year, the city of Urbana retained a University of Illinois Chicago graduate student, Tom Christoff, to analyze the IDOT racial disparity traffic stop data for the Urbana police department. In July, the city held a joint meeting of the Human Relations Commission and Civilian Police Review Board for the purpose of discussing the report. Steering Committee member Esther Patt attended the meeting and commented for the ACLU on the particular practices of consent search requests, and asked the city to acknowledge the problem of racial disparity in traffic stops and begin seeking solutions. Much of the meeting was consumed by presentations from the Urbana police on police procedure, including reviewing one complete traffic stop video. (Also see story on page 2).

Also in Urbana, a new ordinance restricting panhandling was proposed in July which went through several re-writes over the period of more than a month. Several committee members attended meetings and proposed specific changes to the ordinance, some of which were adopted. The ACLU as a policy matter opposes solicitation restrictions in public areas. While several of our free-speech issues were addressed, the revised "aggressive solicitation" ordinance still penalizes ordinary panhandling by two or more people acting together. Champaign also has a similar ordinance where aggressive panhandling is somewhat more narrowly defined.

On June 1, the new Civil Union law went into effect and as couples went to the Brookens Center that day to file paperwork, they were provided with a recep-

tion area where friends and family gathered in support. The Chapter provided celebratory gifts in the form of miniature Liberty Bell replicas, wrapped with rainbow ribbons and stickers saying "Congratulations from the Champaign County ACLU."

Champaign mayor Don Gerard was a guest at our September meeting, openly discussing a variety of policing issues, including the selection of a new police chief, the IDOT traffic stop study, and the apparent practice of some officers to issue costly jaywalking tickets in some neighborhoods as a pretext for looking for drugs or evidence of other illegal activities.

After meeting with UI Police Chief Barbara O'Connor last year about excessive consent searches by the UIPD, we received an update from her recently that she has now mandated training on biased-based policing and is requiring officers who conduct consent searches to record the reason for the request. They will also begin monitoring their traffic stop data on a quarterly basis.

We are looking forward to our annual Fall Gathering fundraiser on Sunday November 13th at the home of Jerry Wray and Dirk Mol. Please consider supporting us there and feel free to bring membership "recruits". You can RSVP via our website, on facebook, or use the enclosed response form.

The Chapter continues to staff a table at various community events such as Urbana's Market at the Square, CU Pridefest and others. If you see us out there, please stop by and visit!

NOW WE'RE ON FACEBOOK , TOO!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CCACLU/>

IDOT TRAFFIC STUDY DATA PROVIDES FOCUS FOR ADDITIONAL LOCAL STUDIES

While the ACLU of Illinois is pursuing the discontinuance of consent search requests by the Illinois State Police with a complaint to the US Department of Justice, local focus has been on leveraging the IDOT traffic study data to try to develop specific responses in order to reduce racial profiling.

Earlier this year a statistical study performed at the request of the Urbana Human Relations Commission contained a couple of interesting observations concerning the often-heard claim that traffic stops in a neighborhood are related to the amount of crime or calls for service:

“Beat 61 consistently showed the highest amount of stops, but in no instance did Beat 61 have the highest number of Calls for Service. The results also indicate that the number of Calls for Service had very little relationship to whether an individual received a citation or warning as a result of the stop.”

“Beat 64 consistently had the highest amount of Crime Reports but never did it have the highest amount of stops (in all analysis, it had either the third or fourth amount of stops). As with Calls for Service, the number of Crime Reports had little relationship with whether a citation or warning was given.”

See: <http://urbanaindinois.us/departments/executive/human-relations>

We have discussed this question of geography in Steering Committee meetings before, and have also wondered whether the demographics of a particular neighborhood compared to the traffic stop data would shed any light on policing practices. Recently we were contacted by Profs. Tom Bassett and Sara McLafferty who teach a graduate course entitled “geospatial technologies and society” and were looking for potential student projects involving the use of geospatial technologies to inform public policy decisions. Chapter president Bill Brown, who has a professional background in Geographic Information Systems, gave a presentation to the class detailing the social issues, the challenges of interpreting the data and potential analysis that could be accomplished.

Two students have since indicated an interest in pursuing the topic. We obtained the “raw data” CDs for the past 3 years, which contain a record for each traffic stop including a “geocode” identifying the stop location. The students may also be requesting crime and “call for service” data and using recent Census data to try a unique approach to understanding the data.

Champaign County ACLU voted 2011 Best Advocacy Organization by *Smile Politely*

The editors at the Champaign-Urbana online magazine *Smile Politely* gave a nod to our local chapter this spring in awarding us “Best Advocacy Organization.” Actually, it was a tie with Champaign County Health Care Consumers, an organization we have recognized in the past and with which we are proud to share this honor.

They write, “Champaign County ACLU was at the front lines in the fight for civil unions and the abolition of the death penalty in Illinois — two huge wins this past year. We’re lucky to have them. They make Champaign-Urbana — and our state — a better and safer place in which to live.”

The Lord is Not on Trial Here Today Continues to win Awards and earn Accolades

The Lord is Not on Trial Here Today by local filmmaker, UI Professor and former Steering Committee member Jay Rosenstein, which premiered last fall at the Art Theater as a fundraiser for our chapter, has accumulated an impressive list of awards from the film and legal community.

The documentary is about the landmark separation of church and state US Supreme Court case *McCullum v. Board of Education* (1948) which tested the principle of “released time”, where Champaign public schools set aside class time for religious instruction. The court found the practice unconstitutional.

The film has shown more than 180 times on dozens of public television stations around the country. Jay has also traveled around the state for public screenings and discussions sponsored by other ACLU chapters.

Besides a Peabody award and two Mid America Region Emmy awards, it received the Silver Gavel Award from the American Bar Association as the “best television program for fostering the public’s understanding of law in 2010.” For the full list, visit: <http://jayrosenstein.com/>

Law School Chapter Reports Work on Variety of Issues

This year, the ACLU U of I College of Law chapter is focused on maintaining our traditional awareness-raising events, attracting new students and expanding our presence on campus, and increasing student activism.

This Fall, we will be hosting several speakers and starting a new tradition of small group lunches intended to foster discussion on various civil rights issues. In the community and on campus, you could find us last month at the “Know Your Rights” crawl, and later in the semester we will be dispensing condoms and information on abortion to students at “Condoms on the Quad.” We can also be found petitioning for 1st Amendment rights at various times during the year. For details on assistance circulating your ACLU petition in the College of Law, email us at aclu@law.illinois.edu.

As Roger Baldwin said, “So long as we have enough people in this country willing to fight for their rights, we’ll be called a democracy.” To us, this not only means getting students involved in the civil rights issues which drive us,

but helping students to discover what issues of civil justice they find most empowering. To this end we want to connect students to legal positions supporting the public interest. In January, we’ll be hosting a Public Interest Alumni night in Chicago where students will be able to find out about non-firm career options. We want the College of Law to focus more on careers protecting the civil liberties of the public, and the only way to accomplish this is to establish ourselves as a training ground for activist students of every creed. To further this goal in the Spring semester, we will be hosting a program incorporating all students and open to the public. The program will feature a panel on feminism and civil rights, as well as a session on sustainable blogging for civil rights causes.

If you would like to participate in our ACLU/Public Interest Alumni Night, please email aclu@law.illinois.edu. We want to provide activist mentors to a new generation of law students! We also welcome ideas, comments, and interested speakers.

- Submitted by Catherine Page

STEERING COMMITTEE CONTACT INFORMATION

The local ACLU Steering Committee meets on the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm, in room 3405 of the Siebel Center, 201 N. Goodwin Ave, Urbana. Meetings are open to members—if you would like to be placed on the agenda, please contact Bill Brown or any other committee member ahead of time.

OFFICERS

President:
Bill Brown
304 W. Nevada, U 61801
344-3797
urbanabill@yahoo.com

Vice-President:
Carol Inskip
606 E High, U 61801
carolinskeep@yahoo.com

Secretary:
Carol Leff
604 W Washington, U 61801
leffc@uiuc.edu

Treasurer:
Stephen Portnoy
112-D Whitehall Ct, U 61801
367-8853
sportnoy@uiuc.edu

STEERING COMMITTEE

Paul Debevec
708 W. California, U 61801
debevec@illinois.edu
337-4752

Elaine Gallagher Gehrman
502 W. Oregon, U 61801 gehmanns@aol.com

* Bob Illyes
illyes@illinois.edu

Barbara Bailey Kessel
904B E Colorado Av, U 61801
365-9473
barkes@gmail.com

Stuart Laird
306 N. State St. #6, C 61820
369-9612 (h)
stubearto@gmail.com

Diana Lenik
1110 S. Mattis, C 61821
337-5610 (w) 356-7982 (h)
dslenik@gmail.com

Faruq Nelson
336 Paddock Dr W, Savoy 61874
faruq_nelson@hotmail.co

Esther Patt
706 S. Coler #3, U 61801
344-8394
estherpatt@hotmail.com

Richard Schnuer
2303 Savannah Dr, C 61822
351-2948
rschnuer@alumni.tufts.edu

Carol Spindel
608 W. Delaware, U 61801
337-6809
cspindel@illinois.edu

Shirley Stillinger
1003 S. Busey, U 61801
344-6743
shirley.stillinger@gmail.com

Marsha Woodbury
310 W. Iowa, U 61801
marsha@uiuc.edu

EMERITI

Susan Cohen
3506 S. Vine, U 61802
384-7871
s-cohen3@uiuc.edu

Harry Hilton
1513 Maplecrest, C 61821-4401
352-8372 (h), 333-2653 (o)
h-hilton@uiuc.edu

Hiram Paley
706 W. California, U 61801
384-8165
hpaley@gmail.com

STUDENT CHAPTER

Lauren Simon
lauren.smn@gmail.com

John Motylinski
jmotyli2@illinois.edu

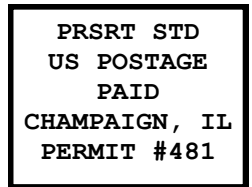
LAW SCHOOL CHAPTER

Catherine Page
cjpage2@law.illinois.edu

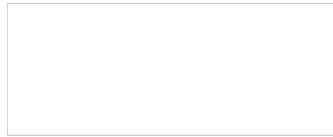
Noelle Dupuis
noellemariejd@gmail.com

**American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois
Champaign County Chapter**

P.O. Box 2651, Station A
Champaign, IL 61825-2651



Address Service Requested



**Fall Gathering
Sunday November 13th!**

ACLU Attorney to Discuss DCFS Catholic Charities Case

Wednesday, October 19th

12:00 Noon at the College of Law
- legal issues

6:00 PM at the Urbana Free Library
- community discussion

Staff attorney Karen Sheley will discuss the ACLU of Illinois' intervention in the case Catholic Charities v. Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) at a forum on October 19th at the Urbana Free Library. The ACLU has intervened on behalf of the children in the custody of DCFS and a lesbian couple from Champaign who are interested in adopting in the future.

The case, brought by Catholic Charities in four dioceses, seeks to reverse a DCFS decision to end its foster care and adoption contracts with these agencies, based on their unwillingness to serve lesbian and gay couples and couples with civil unions as required by law. The ACLU, based on decades of representing the interests of children in the custody of DCFS, intervened in the suit to ensure that children are placed in homes based on their best interests, not the religious beliefs of a private foster agency, and that lesbian and gay couples wishing to provide such homes are not discriminated against.

The Diocese of Peoria has recently announced that it is abandoning litigation and transferring all of its foster care and adoption operations, including children, case workers, supervisors and clinical services, to a new, separate entity. The new organization will not be bound by the religious tenets asserted by Catholic Charities. At press time, the Joliet, Springfield and Belleville dioceses are still pursuing legal options.

Join Karen Sheley for a lively community discussion **Wednesday, October 19th at 6 p.m.** at the Urbana Free Library (210 West Green Street). The ACLU College of Law Chapter is also sponsoring a talk focusing more on the legal issues involved in the case at noon on the same day at the UI Law Building (504 East Pennsylvania Ave, Champaign).