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### Volume 30, Number 6

Post Amerikan

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# POST AMERICAN



BLOOMINGTON/NORMAL VOLUME 30

FREE

NUMBER SIX DECEMBER/JANUARY 2002

*What is the memory that's valued so highly, that we keep it alive in that flame?*

*What's the commitment to those who have died when we cry out they've not died in vain?*

*Have we come this far always believing that justice would somehow prevail?*



*This is the burden and this is the promise and this is why we will not fail*

*-from the song, "Light One Candle"*

**Deborah Wiatt**  
**1951-2001**

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Bloomington, IL 61702

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NUMBER SIX DECEMBER/JANUARY 2002

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### About us

The *Post Amerikan* is an independent community newspaper providing information and analysis that is screened out of or down played by establishment news sources. We are a non-profit, worker-run collective that exists as an alternative to the corporate media.

We put out six issues a year. Staff members take turns as "coordinator." All writing, typing, editing, graphics, photography, pasteup, and distribution are done on a volunteer basis. You are invited to volunteer your talents.

Most of our material and inspiration for material comes from the community. The *Post Amerikan* welcomes stories, graphics, photos, letters, and new tips from our readers. If you'd like to join us, call 828-4473 and leave a message on our answering machine. We will get back to you as soon as we can. Don't worry if it takes a while--we don't meet every week.

An alternative newspaper depends directly on a community of concerned people for existence. We believe it is very important to keep a newspaper like this around. If you think so too, then please support us by telling your friends about the paper, donating money to the printing of the paper, and telling our advertisers you saw their ad in *Post Amerikan*.

### Subscriptions

Subscriptions to the *Post Amerikan* are available for the low price of \$6.00 per year for six complete issues. Please send a check (made payable to the *Post Amerikan*) to: Post Amerikan, P.O. Box 3452 Bloomington, IL 61702.

This issue of *Post Amerikan* is brought to you by...

David, Linda, Ralph and Sherrin

### Good numbers

Advocacy Council for Human Rights. 830-2521  
AIDS Hotlines  
National.....1-800-AID-AIDS  
Illinois.....1-800-243-2437  
Local.....827-AIDS  
Alcoholics Anonymous.....828-7092  
Amnesty International-ISU...Miomi@ilstu.edu  
Animal Protection League.....828-5371  
Better Business Bureau.....1-800-500-3780  
Big Brothers/ Big Sisters .....828-1870  
Boys & Girls Clubs of B/N.....829-3034  
Clare House (Catholic workers).....828-4035  
Countering Domestic Violence.....827-7070  
Dept. of Children/Family Services....828-0022  
Gay, Lesbian & Bi teen drop in center.828-3998  
Gay & Lesbian Resource Phonenumber..438-2429  
Habitat for Humanity.....827-3931  
Headstart.....662-4880  
Home Sweet Home Mission.....828-7356  
IL Dept. of Public Aid.....827-4621  
IL Lawyer Referral.....1-217-525-5297  
Incest Survivors Support Group.....827-0790  
LIFE-CIL.....663-5433  
Lighthouse (substance abuse treatment)....827-6026  
McLean Co. Center for Human Services...827-5351  
McLean Co. Health Dept.....888-5450  
McLean Co. Housing Authority.....829-3360  
McLean Co. Humane Society.....664-7387  
McLean Co. Peace Coalition.....828-7070  
Mid Central Community Action.....829-0691  
Mobile Meals.....828-8301  
Narcotics Anonymous.....827-4005  
National Health Care Services/  
abortion assistance.....1-800-322-1622  
Occupational Development Center...452-7324  
Parents Anonymous.....827-4005  
PATH (Personal Assistance Telephone Help).827-4005  
Phone Friends.....827-4005  
PFLAG(Parents, Families and Friends  
of Lesbians and Gays).....663-0831  
Planned Parenthood (medical).....827-4014  
(bus/couns/edu).....827-4368  
*Post Amerikan*.....828-4473  
Prairie State Legal Services.....827-5021  
Project Oz.....827-0377  
Rape Crisis Center.....827-4005  
Runaway Switchboard.....1-800-621-4000  
Salvation Army.....829-9476  
Safe Harbor Mission.....829-7399  
TeleCare (senior citizens).....828-8301  
Unemployment comp/job service....827-6237  
Western Ave. Community Center.....829-4807  
Youth Build.....827-7507

### Pick up a copy

Copies of the *Post Amerikan* are now available for free at the following locations:

#### Bloomington

AIDS Task Force, 313 N. Main  
About Books, 221 E. Front  
Barnes & Noble, Veterans & Rt. 9  
Bloomington Public Library, 205 E. Olive  
Burwells, 908 N. Main  
CommonGround, 516 N. Main  
Crazy Planet Kitchen, 414 N. Main  
Gaston's Upper Cut, 409 N. Main  
Heartland Community College, Raab Rd.  
Lizards Lounge, 612 N. Main  
Shockwaves, 415 N. Main  
To Your Health, 1214 N. Towanda, #2  
Twin City Exchange, 411 N. Main

#### Normal

Acme Comics, 115 W. North  
Babbitt's Books, 104 W. North  
Campus Town, 121 W. North  
Centennial Hall, ISU  
Coffeehouse, 14 E. Beaufort  
Deadpan Alley Records, 107 W. North  
Ecology Action Center, 208 W. College  
Mother Murphy's, 111 W. North  
Movie Fan, 202C W. North  
Normal Public Library, 206 W. College  
North Street Cafe, 205 W. North  
Stevenson Hall, ISU  
University Galleries, ISU

#### Peoria

Bicycle Bus  
Illinois Central College

### What's your new address?

When you move, be sure to send us your new address so your subscription gets to you. Your *Post Amerikan* will not be forwarded (it's like junk mail--no kidding!). Fill out this handy form with your new address and return it to us, P.O. Box 3452, Bloomington, IL 61702.

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### Due Date:

The due date for submitting articles to the *Post Amerikan* is: (please laser print your articles in columns of 3" using Palatino 10pt. type if possible.); or submit via e-mail at: pamerikanusa@netscape.net **Jan 15th**



# Community News



## Life Center for Independent Living legislative internship

Learn how to work with the state legislature about issues that affect you and your community.

Eligibility: Minorities with disabilities and/or individuals living in rural communities.

Particulars: Program involves eight weekly half-day classes at LIFE Center for Independent Living in Bloomington, and three separate trips to Springfield.

Classes: Begin March 2002 and will include sessions on how a bill becomes law; meeting and communicating with a legislator; and how to actively participate in the legislative process.

Cost: Free: All transportation, hotels, meals, and accommodations provided.

Anyone interested in this opportunity may call Jill Doran at LIFE Center for Independent Living.

Voice: 309-663-5433 TTY: 309-663-0054  
888-543-3245

## Supporter & contributor to Post dies

Frank Dockstader, a long time supporter and contributor to the *Post Amerikan*, died November 5, 2001 after a brief illness.

Frank Dockstader was born in Berwyn, a son of Raymond and Josephine Dato Dockstader. He married Carol Schnurstein.

Survivors include his mother of Aurora, two brothers, Raymond (Sally) Dockstader, New York; and Michael (Roxanne) Dockstader, Grand Bay, Ala.; one son, David (Kelly) Dockstader, Atlanta; and two daughters, Patricia Dockstader and Barbie (Bobby Angell) Dockstader, both of Asheville, NC.

Also surviving are his four grandchildren, Cassandra Amber, Melinda, Athena Marie and Evening Starr.

Frank was a talented writer who authored two semi-autobiographical novels and was in the process of completing his third book.

Excerpts from his first novel, *Scum of the Earth*, have been published in the *Post Amerikan* and can be found at [necroillusions.com](http://necroillusions.com).

## Loaves and Fishes finds new home

On October 2, our soup kitchen, Loaves and Fishes, made a new home at St. Mary's Church Parish Hall at 527 W. Jackson St. The staff and parishioners at St. Mary's have been incredibly welcoming, and over 35 volunteers have signed up to help and consistently come to work with dedication and smiles. Our dining area is spacious and with many helping hands, we decided to put up leaflets throughout the city to encourage others who may not know where we are, to come and join us for a warm meal.

Today a young man named Mike joined us for the first time. He was extremely dirty, hair disheveled, and was ready to eat. I told him it would be a few minutes, but that I would be happy to get him a cup of coffee. When I returned to sit with him, he was reading a tiny version of the New Testament and told me his luck in getting it given to him by the library. He had passages underlined in black and blue ink and had many long passages memorized. After a long silence, he finally looked up at me for the first time. "Know what my favorite passage is? It's the shortest one, but the most meaningful for me." He pointed it to me with his dirty finger. "Jesus wept." "That's my favorite." We sat in silence for a long time. No more words were necessary, and I left to stir the soup, humbled by Mike's gentleness and faith.

It is wonderful to look into the dining room and see the volunteers taking time to listen to each guest, to sit and visit with them. Dorothy Day used to say that people didn't come for the soup, but that they came for the compassion. Over the past 18 years people were treated with compassion at Holy Trinity, our first home, and now the tradition continues in the loving hearts at St. Mary's as we break bread together and teach each other the meaning of communion.

--Tina Sipula  
Clair House News

## Unemployed families Christmas party Dec. 15

The 20th annual Children's Christmas party for unemployed families is set for Saturday, Dec. 15, at 10 a.m. at Bloomington High School, 1202 E. Locust St.

The annual event is open to any unemployed or underemployed family in McLean county, for children age 12 and younger.

The Party features carnival games, costumed characters, arts and crafts, karate demonstrations, cartoons and a visit from Santa. Each child receives a grab-bag and a gift at the conclusion.

The annual event is co-sponsored by labor and management. Both the McLean County Chamber of Commerce, the Bloomington & Normal Trades & Labor Assembly and the Livingston & McLean Counties Building & Trades together organize and fund the annual event.

Volunteers are needed to assist with activities. Volunteers should be at the high school by 9 a.m.

To register for the party, send a note listing the number of children and a return address to Children's Christmas Party, P.O. Box 3248, Bloomington, IL 61702, or call 309-828-4368.

--from *Livingston & McLean Counties Union News*

<h1>MRS</h1> <p>Men's resale shop</p>		<h2>Rachelle's Macrame</h2>
<p>NUSED CLOTHING BOOKS BODY OILS (New &amp; Used)</p>	<p>BRIC A BRAC</p>	<p>glass bottom tables plant hangers • windchimes keychains • wall hangings</p>
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## Cont.

### GLT and HJO ring in the New Year at 'The Big Band Bash'

WGLT and the Heartland Jazz Orchestra present an elegant evening of dinner, dancing and merriment at the New Year's "Big Band Bash." This black tie-optional event will be held at the Interstate Center Ballroom in Bloomington Monday, December 31 from 6pm to 1am.

The evening kicks off with cocktails (at an open bar) and hors d'oeuvres at 6pm. A sumptuous dinner that includes prime rib, chicken marsala and poached salmon begins at 7pm. The jazz combo Entropy will provide tasty dinner music. And the evening continues in high style with the Heartland Jazz Orchestra, who starts off an evening of dancing and big band sounds at 9pm.

Also featured in this full evening of holiday fun will be a champagne toast at midnight, a silent auction featuring many unique items, a 50/50 raffle and other activities.

Tickets for the Big Band Bash are available through WGLT by phone at (309) 438-8910 and through the Interstate Center Box Office at (309) 829-3976. Ticket cost is \$100.00 per person. More information is available at [www.wgl.org](http://www.wgl.org) and also at [www.exposition.org](http://www.exposition.org).

WGLT is a non-profit Public Radio station and is a service of Illinois State University with a format of "News, Blues and All That Jazz." The Heartland Jazz Orchestra Foundation is a non-profit entity that funds the Central-Illinois Heartland Jazz Orchestra. \$50.00 of each ticket is a tax-deductible donation to WGLT Public Radio and the Heartland Jazz Orchestra Foundation.

For more information, contact:  
Steve Fast,  
Promotions Director  
WGLT Radio  
(309) 438-5083 phone  
(309) 438-7870 fax

### The numbers are in: no more excuses!

Did you know that 72% of incoming Illinois State students reported in 2000 study that they had performed volunteer work while seniors in high school? The summer before their freshman year at ISU, only 16% of these students said that the chances were good that they would volunteer in college. By the end of their first year of college, however, over 44% of these students had performed community service work, which is slightly higher than the national average for students at four-year public institutions. Whether through classes, organizations, fraternities and sororities, or by their own interests, thousands of Illinois State

students are involved in community service. This means that numerous lives are improved in the Bloomington/Normal community because of the generosity of students. The Student Volunteer Center helps to provide many of these service opportunities.

At the same time, it is important to analyze why more students are not volunteering at ISU. The following are possible questions to ask about ISU students:

--Are they too busy? While only 8% of seniors reported spend 3-5 hours a week volunteering, 22% spend that amount of time partying, and 30% are watching television that much.

--Is there a lack of volunteer opportunities for students? The Student Volunteer Center exists to provide students with hundred of volunteer opportunities, and there are always enough available for any student who wants to be involved. In fact, 54% of seniors noted that opportunities for community service were very satisfactory or satisfactory, which is notably higher than the national average.

--Do they not know where to find volunteer work? The Volunteer Voice, campus mailings, and other advertisements are sent to students throughout the year to inform them of opportunities.

There are no more excuses! Contact the Student Volunteer Center today to get involved on a service project that you are interested in!

--from Volunteer Voice

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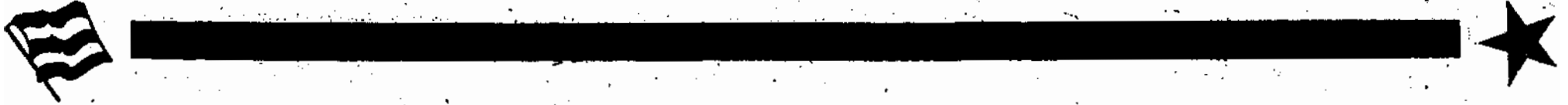
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# The Poetry Page

i make my own clothes  
 with the influence of others  
 & the belief in my heart  
 a cross my chest  
 it says  
 cometogether  
 oneworld as in oneworld onelove  
 that's the label eye aware  
 not GAP & all that other crap  
 constipating the landscape  
 cometogether  
 that's what i buy in two  
 see i got a t-shirt & a hoodie  
 nomatter what the weather  
 i'm spreadin the love  
 now i bought those not with the green  
 but with my thoughts as the current see  
 electrifying my passion to  
 pass it while its on  
 & you will see through the dark  
 times 7 'cause if you're 666 i'm 777  
 & that may put me higher but  
 i'm not putting you down  
 in fact i'm lendin you my hand  
 i'm lendin you my smile  
 i'm lendin you my heart  
 to lift you up love every moment  
 but if you ain't ready  
 take it steady 'cause i'm always  
 open well sometimes i shut down too  
 & i'll look to you to push or pull  
 change the bulb whatever is needed  
 it'll be heeded by meyou  
 preacher teacher student fluent  
 in the language of  
 what is behind these words  
 these symbols these chicken scratches  
 but i am not afraid  
 but standing alone my body  
 can be knocked down while my spirit  
 never still, holds strong  
 but when WE link arms  
 link smiles  
 link hearts and standtogether  
 cometogether  
 WE form a chain in the cycle of love  
 reachin oneandall  
 oneworld  
 onelove  
 oneworld  
 cometogether

--matt erickson

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## The Brown-Eyed Handsome Man

In the box upon my shelf,  
 is my last jar of mental health,  
 I'd been saving it for a very stormy day.  
 And that day finally came,  
 a torrential bout of rain,  
 that Monday when my Daddy passed away.  
 So I opened up the jar,  
 and I went down to the bar,  
 and I raised a glass right there with all his friends.  
 It was then I realized  
 that he will never really die  
 he will live inside our hearts until time ends.  
 And my mental health has been restored,  
 by at least ten jars or more,  
 with the words of hope that everyone has given,  
 and I know I won't forget  
 the great legacy he left,  
 All the knowledge, All the love, and all the wisdom....

--Written for Frank Dockstader (October 8, 1949-  
November 5, 2001) by barbie dockstader

## YOUR POEM HERE.

The Post Amerikan is seeking poetry  
submissions for the Poetry Page.

If interested, please mail your poem to:  
Post Amerikan, P.O. Box 3452,  
Bloomington, IL 61702 or e-mail to:  
pamerikanusa@netscape.net

We have the right to reject any poem.

## LOVES GIFT

Christmas is the time of birth  
When I think of the first  
Time

I recalled the occasion  
The preparation

For a child's day  
We carefully laid  
Love

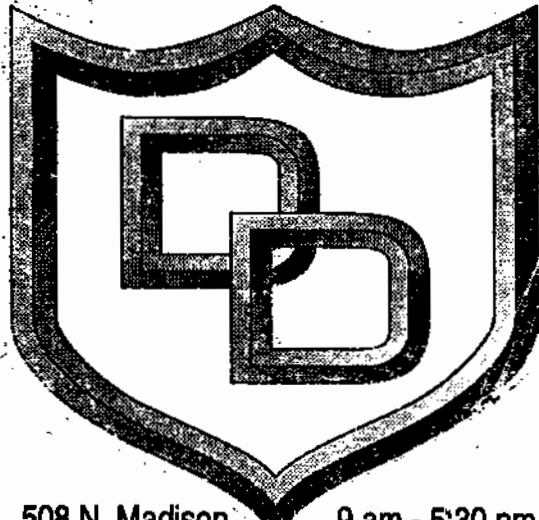
out for each other  
Can't think of another

Gift  
better to give  
'Cause the reason we live  
Is to share our hearts  
And this feeling  
charts

A course to peace  
Its light does release  
The reason we remember  
A child each December

And the Love  
he brought our way  
Endures  
its strength did stay

--Lin Frog Simmons



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# Labor News from Livingston &

## Buy union quality when holiday shopping

It's hustle and bustle time for retailers, as shoppers pack the stores, searching for that special holiday gift for loved ones, friends and family.

As shoppers pack the aisles and jam the mall, it's also time to make that extra effort to look for the union label.

Although numerous consumer goods have fled shores for cheaper wage havens overseas, shoppers can still find quality, union-made, American-made items.

In the toy department, "Little Golden Books" and Testor model kits are made by UAW members, as are Radio Flyer scooters, wagons and peddle cars. Steelworkers proudly produce Flexible Flyer sleds and outdoor play equipment.

The Oil and Chemical Workers International Union's members proudly make Dixon art products, including many Crayola products. Some play sets, tea sets and games are made by two unions for Ohio Art, Etch-a-Sketch's name brand, but sadly, this union toy maker moved much production overseas this past year, as did venerable Lionel Trains.

Sporting goods companies still produce numerous products in the U.S. Steelworkers make Louisville Slugger baseball bats, Arnold Palmer, First Flight and True Temper golf clubs and fishing reels, Big Ploy fishing supplies, Titleist, Callaway, Tommy Armor, Brunswick and Wilson golf equipment and Eagle brand basketballs, golf balls, soft balls and volleyballs. The Transport Workers make Zebco Fishing Reels. United Food & Commercial Workers produce Wilson golf clubs, Riedell ice skates and Mighty Mac, McGregor and 5 Brother hunting and fishing apparel. UAW members make Powerbilt gold clubs and IUE members complete the Brunswick golf line.

Another good source for high quality, union made products is a web-site, [www.ButUnionNow.com](http://www.ButUnionNow.com). The brainchild of St. Louis area unionists, the web site features union-made, American-made products. Secure internet credit card purchase systems are part of the web-site; or, the company offers an option of finding items on the web and then purchasing via check, to avoid using a credit card over the internet. If you don't have the internet or want an alternative means of payment or a list of products, call toll free to 1-866-289-6846.

The holidays can be a great time of family togetherness, enjoyment and good cheer. Just remember to "look for the union label," when buying holiday gifts, refreshments and groceries. Too many people around the globe labor in sweatshops and other unfair conditions. The union label is your guarantee of quality products produced under decent conditions.

—from *Livingston & McLean Counties Union News*

## Sweatshop products with ISU logo items?

The National Labor Committee is charging Illinois State University with using a Bangladesh cap maker to produce university logo materials in sweatshop conditions.

ISU has promised a full investigation and is verifying the allegations against the factory.

Charles Kernighan, NLC director, was in Bloomington-Normal Oct. 26. At a rally on campus and at a later presentation at Laborers Local 362 Hall, Kernighan, along with sweatshop workers, who traveled to the U.S. to tell their story, noted abusive conditions at the university producer.

The company, Actor Sporting Limited, working at the Dada Factory in Dhaka, Bangladesh, routinely abuses and underpays its workers, according to the NLC.

Workers at Actor produce items for Nike, Reebok and 18 universities, including ISU.

The NLC charges that workers earn just 14 to 23 cents an hour, with their helpers only paid six to eight cents an hour. There is obligatory overtime and workers are cheated from that overtime.

One worker told the NLC: "We cannot meet the most basic demands of our daily needs with the salary we are getting. How can we afford to see a doctor, and even if we could, how could we pay for the medicine?"

The factory employs 3,500 workers, 80 percent female, 75 percent between the ages of 18 and 25.

11 to 15 hours of overtime are required weekly, resulting in an average shift of 8 a.m.-7p.m., six days a week.

Bathroom breaks are monitored and timed and there is only one bathroom for 140 women.

There is no severance pay, although Bangladesh law requires it; no sick days are given and talking is strictly prohibited. If management suspects a worker of union organizing, they are immediately thrown out of the factory and blacklisted.

Workers report being cheated out of their overtime pay, working almost five overtime hours weekly without pay. Workers report needing about \$69 monthly to live at a subsistence level, 34 cents an hour, higher than the 14 to 23 cents an hour they now earn.

The caps they produce sell on the U.S. market for up to \$18.99 per cap. These caps enter through U.S. customs with a value of \$1.46, which includes labor, materials, shipping and the producing company's profit.

Rather than asking for a boycott of the company, the NLC is asking the universities and other users to pressure Actor and other producers to pay fair wages and insure worker rights.

ISU recognizes both the Fair Labor Association and the Workers Rights Consortium, both of which monitor university logo materials for sweatshop conditions. ISU requires all logo producers to sign the FLA agreement and adhere to FLA's code of conduct.

ISU President Victor Boschini noted the charges, calling the "distressing." He released a statement, asking ISU's licensing department to contact other universities named in the report to find out how they are responding.

He also said, "It is important that our goal is not to close down these factories, but to work with our umbrella organizations to resolve human rights issues and create a healthy environment for workers at the facilities."

The workers described atrocious living and working conditions. Janu Akther said she shares a small room with three other female workers, and they share one bathroom and a kitchen with 5-6 other families. She described 19 hour shift, catching naps between sewing machines.

Another worker, Nasrin Akther, said the workers have "no personal life, no social life, we live to meet the needs of the owner. If we try to organize a union we are fired and blacklisted."

Kernighan called for ending the "race to the bottom," with multinational companies seeking the lowest possible wages. He asked for U.S. organizations, particularly universities that license their logo rights, to insure decent conditions for workers. He noted that one answer to terrorism is to "end the race to the bottom. As long as there is this enormous gap between the rich and the poor there will be no peace or security in this country. Misery breeds terrorism."

—from *Livingston & McLean Counties Union News*



# McLean Counties



THE CALL/cpf

## Decatur's "war zone" alive in new book

*Three Strikes*  
by Stephen Franklin  
Guilford Press, New York \$23.95  
ISBN: 1-57230-477-4

"Play by the rules" is an old admonition. For America's workers, it meant a solid day's work for decent wages and benefits, won through union contracts. These "rules" lasted from World War II until recently, when the economic code changed, leaving American workers and their aspirations in the lurch.

In the 1970s the American dream soured; the Vietnam War sullied the national mood and growing foreign competition ate away at American jobs. American manufacturers, unions and workers were criticized as lazy, inept and greedy. The downward trend accelerated in the '80s, as factory gates closed and business and government both turned on organized labor.

Central Illinois witnessed some ragged battles in those years, as business demanded concessions and unions fought to hold on to their wages and benefits. The rules were changing, but someone forgot to tell the working class.

Perhaps no town was harder hit than Decatur, a community where prosperity was tied to factory jobs at good union wages. In the early '90s first Caterpillar, then Staley and finally Firestone were all locked in battles, not seeking union gains, but rather grasping to retain hard-won right and benefits.

Chicago *Tribune* reporter Stephen Franklin chronicles Decatur's 1990s "War Zone" sympathetically yet critically in his latest book, *Three Strikes*.

With intimate, personal portraits of union leaders, rank and file workers and community leaders, Franklin unfolds Decatur's laments. Workers and their unions played by the old rules, caught short by an international economic system that found them superfluous.

Decatur's union members responded to hardline company negotiation with a well-worn solidarity, following a decades-old pattern of striking to eventually negotiate better conditions.

But no one told them the new rules included jack-booted security guard, video surveillance, sophisticated corporate advertising campaigns and a community alienated from organized labor and jealous of union benefits, ready to cross the picket line and break a strike.

Originally sent reeling, labor responded with a dogged solidarity borne by emerging union activists, Vietnam veterans not willing to lose another war. Many were radicalized by the experience, changed by their immersion in battle with corporate power.

Critical mass, however, was on the corporate side. International companies could shift production around the globe to negate local plant shut-downs. Enough union members and new workers crossed picket lines to re-open plants. With the regular work rules gone, companies automated and found they could still produce with fewer workers.

The national labor movement was hesitant in response, still dreaming of past glory and threatened by maverick organizers and militant workers. Decatur workers dared to show up at Florida hotels for the AFL-CIO winter board meeting in February 1995, cracking a facade that would result in the AFL-CIO's first contested presidential election that fall.

Decatur's workers survived the "War Zone" with intact but battered union contracts. This was only a brief respite for the town, plunged into racial turmoil in the late '90s and now losing the Firestone tire plant, whose products were blamed for Ford Explorer accidents.

Franklin uses Decatur to tell industrial America's story, facing a global economy with few power levers within workers' grasp.

Labor can revitalize, according to Franklin. he prescribes three antidotes: an open door to women, minorities and immigrant workers; organizing both low wage workers and professionals; and finally, bottom up democracy.

Franklin richly grasps the texture of a ragged, prairie town, whose hope was pinned to smokestacks that soured the dream. The everyday workers whose lives were on the line shine through, as they wrestle with global imperatives far beyond Decatur's grasp, seeking to retain the dignity and self-respect their unions once helped them win.

--Mike Matejka  
*Livingston & McLean Counties Union News*

## DECEMBER @ THE LIZARDS LOUNGE

MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
	Every Tuesday!		Every Thursday!		
3rd: Open Mic Night; 9pm	Chris & Joe Acoustic	5th: Open Mic w/ Breanne 9pm	Evan and Patrick Acoustic	7th: No Big Loss and Madstone Transfer; 9 pm	8th: Barron James Band; 8pm
10th: Warsaw Rock/Ska 9pm	Jam	12th: Open Mic w/ Breanne 9pm	Jam	14th: None Taken; 8 pm	15th: Enamel 9 pm
17th: Open Mic Night w/ Matt Scott 9pm	9 pm	19th: Open Mic; 9pm	9 pm	21st: Frankenpony w/ the Thingies; 9 pm	22nd: The Hubbards; 9 pm
24th: Open Mic Night; 9pm		26th: Open Mic w/ Breanne 9pm		28th: TBA 9 pm	29th: TBA; 9 pm



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# News from the Advocacy

## Advocacy Council needs funds

This month the Advocacy Council is celebrating its sixth anniversary of incorporation and the passage of a gay-inclusive human rights ordinance in Normal. These are two things for which we all should be proud.

However, while there is much to celebrate, the Advocacy Council also is facing a serious problem. To put it simply...we are nearly broke. The cost of producing a monthly newsletter and paying for our hotline and post office box has nearly exceeded the donations we have received in recent months. As of Oct. 29 we have enough funds to produce a December newsletter; after that, the future is very uncertain for this organization!

We have been very frugal with the money we have received. We have no paid staff; every cent goes toward our goals of community service, outreach, and political action. Oftentimes we are able to get some printing done through our workplaces, and at other times we as a board have chipped in money and supplies to keep things going. However, we cannot continue doing business like this.

To those of you who have donated in recent months...THANK YOU! Your donations have helped to make sure that the *Rainbow Connection* is printed and mailed to more than 300 glbt and glbt-supportive households in

Bloomington/Normal and Central Illinois. Your generosity has made a difference and played a key role in helping us achieve a victory in Normal.

To those of you who have not donated recently, we are asking for your help. If you are unable to donate money, please consider volunteer opportunities with the Advocacy Council. We need your help with our street cleanup project, political action activities, newsletter stuffing/ mailing, and many other programs and activities.

Our future is in your hands. We want to keep working on equal rights and specifically on a gay-inclusive human rights ordinance in Bloomington, but we cannot do it alone. Please look inside yourselves and consider what you can do to help ACHR make Bloomington/Normal a better place for everyone.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact us by phone or e-mail. Thank you for your help and consideration!

Sincerely,

The Advocacy Council for Human Rights Board of Directors:  
Dave Bentlin; Mark Hamner; Margot Mendoza; Michael Pullin; Jacqui White

(309) 830-2521  
Achr@mailcity.com

## Bloomington mulls over discussion of Human Rights Ordinance

The Bloomington Human Relations Commission, on the heels of Normal's decision to add sexual orientation to its human rights ordinance, met on Oct. 10 to discuss the possibility of amending their city's human rights ordinance.

The City of Bloomington last addressed the issue in 1995, when the commission recommended a revised human rights ordinance that was defeated in early 1996 by the Bloomington City Council.

Commission members agreed to set up a future work session devoted solely to the issue. The public will be invited to the work session but unlike a public hearing they will not be asked for input. With the holidays fast approaching it appears that the issue will be addressed in greater detail early next year.

Since 1996 the makeup of the Bloomington City Council has changed. Of the nine members in 1996 only Mayor Judy Markowitz and council members Tom Whalen, Mike Matejka, Jim Fruin, and Mike Sprague remain. They are joined on the council by Karen Schmidt, Mike Veitengruber, Skip Crawford, and Jim Finnegan.

The Advocacy Council for Human Rights and Bloomington/Normal PFLAG plan to collaborate once again in an effort to gain eventual passage of a gay-inclusive ordinance. For more information on how you can help please call the Advocacy Council at (309)830-2521 or PFLAG at (309)862-1844.

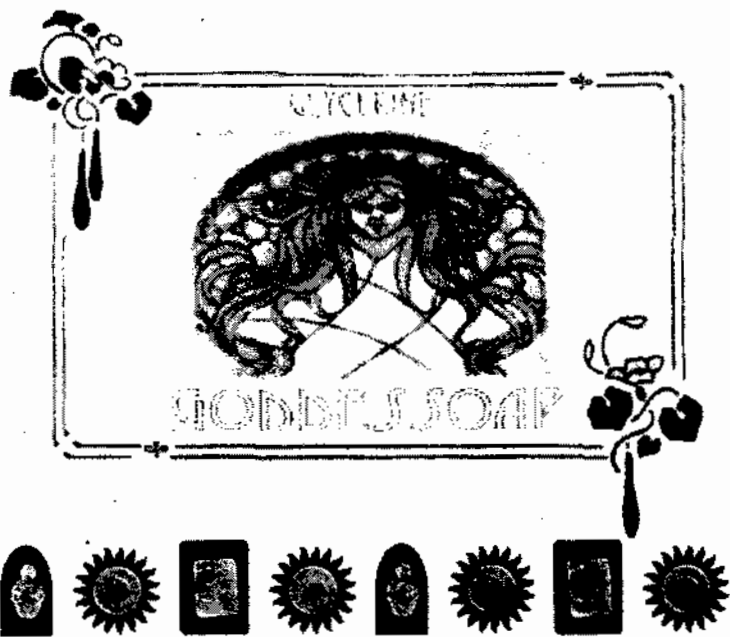
## What the Bible really says....

Last month the Normal City Council affirmed its commitment to equal rights by passing a sexual orientation non-discrimination amendment to Normal's human rights ordinance. Soon after, Bloomington's Human Relations Committee announced it would be reviewing a similar amendment. Since then, our local newspaper has printed numerous Letters to the Editor both praising the Normal decision and condemning it. It seems that a large percentage of these who oppose human rights for gays and lesbians use quotations from their version of the "Bible" to justify their prejudice. In addition, of course, many state that granting fair and just protection of our rights would be enacting "special rights."

The "special rights" argument always amazes me, as does their explanation that other groups are offered protection under such ordinances because of characteristics they can't make choices about (being a woman, African American, disabled, etc.). Despite what the AMA and many psychiatrists state and know, homophobes still believe that sexual

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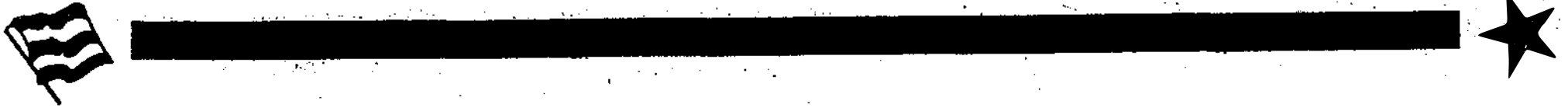
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# Council for Human Rights

orientation is a choice, and therefore should not be a protected class. That argument makes no sense in light of the fact that religion IS a protected class under human rights ordinances, yet it is a choice.

Many of the letters to the editor that quote a phrase from the Bible also state one only has to read the biblical passage to have proof that the Bible condemns homosexuality. I have read those same passages and see no such proof. What I have found is sentences taken out of context and words twisted to justify the argument.

### Examining each passage used to condemn homosexuality

In biblical times, same-gender sexual interactions could take many forms. Some were:

1. Kings of conquered tribes were sometimes raped by the invading army as the ultimate symbol of defeat and humiliation.

2. Some non-Jewish tribes in the area had male prostitutes in their temples that may have engages in same-sex activities; this horrified the ancient Israelites.

3. It is reasonable to assume that many loving gay and lesbian relationships existed, but these would normally have been conducted in secret.

Only the third type would have any similarity to today's gay and lesbian consensual, committed, loving relationships.

Many versions of the Bible exist in the English language. Each reflects the world view, beliefs and mind sets of its translators. Their personal biases distort their work. There is an additional complexity facing translators: today's society is very different from that Biblical times. It is sometimes difficult to find a current English word that matches a Hebrew or Greek term.

Many words have been translated from the original Hebrew and Greek texts as "homosexual," "sodomite," "homosexuality." However, most (perhaps all) of the references bear no similarity to today's lesbian and gay partnerships. By carefully reading the original texts and considering the societies in which they were written, one comes to surprising conclusions:

--The Bible has a lot to say about temple prostitution. It talks about being kind to strangers in a way that has been incorrectly interpreted as referring to homosexual acts

--It says almost nothing about homosexual feelings

--It says nothing about sexual orientation. The writers of the Bible assumed that everyone was heterosexual (or "straight"); the concept of sexual orientation was not developed until the late 19th century.

--from *The Rainbow Connection* newsletter





# Light ten candles

## See what the squirrels in the back room will have

As most local and many out of state *Post Amerikan* readers know by now, we here in Bloomington-Normal are in mourning for Deborah Wiatt, an original founding member of the *Post Amerikan* and one of its most stalwart supporters. Deborah and her life partner, Cathy Ahart, generously donated office and archive space for over twenty years. They could always be counted on to show up for *Post* benefits, to contribute advice, suggestions, and, in later years the occasional article.

Deborah herself had been a long time staff writer, particularly in the *Post's* first fifteen years, before other forms of community activism and child-raising took up more and more of her time. So now it's time for the *Post* to stop and reflect, to pay yet another tribute to one of the finest women I have ever had the privilege to call my friend.

### A Big Chill sets in among us in Bloomington-Normal

The day of Deborah's sudden and unexpected death, the day before Thanksgiving, her core circle of family and friends drew together in our grief, forming an ad hoc telephone tree, each of us offering to make more calls after we ourselves received the terrible news. In retrospect, I wish I owned some shares of Verizon, I could buy myself a very nice little house. Tomorrow. By personal check.

That gives you a fair idea of how long and how many of those long-distance phone calls and e-mails flew back and forth across those fiber optic cables. Think me a callous bitch if you want, for making such a crack, but I savor it, for the following reasons. (A) Deborah and I had an undeclared mutual competition to see which one could make the other laugh more and harder. (B) It would really tick her off that I'm getting the last joke. (C) Somewhere, she knows I'm writing this, and I know she's laughing. If Deborah couldn't laugh, she wouldn't want to be part of your afterlife.

*"If I can't dance, I don't to be part of your revolution."*

—Emma Goldman

Somebody as special as Deborah Wiatt deserved a truly special send-off, and by God, we gave her one. A family service had already been held Saturday, November 24, up Quad Cities way, from whence our Deborah hailed. The family is Baptist, and I'm told that she was so well-loved and held in such esteem, that the elderly presiding minister, as he read her obituary stumbled over the word "lesbian" only once. After all, he'd known her since she was a shorty.

Last Tuesday, November 27, we of that initial group of mourners held a service for her at the Unitarian Church. To quote Melissa Ahart, the daughter of Cathy, Deborah's life partner, thank God it wasn't one of those "icky, sappy funeral services we all dread." This was a Memorial Life Celebration. We opened with Tina Sipula, of Clare House, on vocals, Karrie

Sandhaas on guitar, and Mary Clusky on piano, leading us all on "Light One Candle," Deborah's favorite song.

Mike Matejka, elected by consensus as facilitator, did a lovely job. He spoke briefly about the early days of their friendship, when they were both young students at Illinois State University, both falling in love (with different people of course). They ran into each other on the quad at just the moment when they couldn't wait to tell someone how happy they both were.

### Ten Candles for Deborah

Ten of us then lit ten different candles to honor Deborah and her contributions. Cathy Ahart, to honor "a loving and beloved partner, a nurturing and trustworthy friend, with gentle and tenacious spirit." Sue Le Seure, to honor "Deborah's friendship, sense of humor, and deep loyalty to her friends." Sherrin Fitzer to honor "all of Deborah's animal friends, the birds and the squirrels she fed and watched over daily." I lit a candle to honor "Deborah the historian and life-long interest in the American Civil War." Melissa McGrath to "honor Deborah the activist, who stood up for her community and the people around her."

Two asides here, before I mention a few more candles. Deborah insisted on referring to the Civil War as the "War between the States," no doubt because she was a Southerner at heart. I couldn't resist teasing her by coming up with various sly euphemisms: the "Unfortunate Misunderstanding between States" was the one I mentioned when I lit her candle.

Deborah also loved to feed the squirrels "cookies": Twinkies, Ding Dongs, and Crocodiles (chocolate covered Twinkies), which they loved. That may sound cruel, but Deborah insisted that at least one of those squirrels lived to be twelve. A squirrel's natural life-span is three, four years tops. And you thought white sugar, white flour, and preservatives were bad for you.

Eric and David Strand to honor Deborah's love for the children of her heart, particularly Matthew and Thomas Murphy, who couldn't be with us that day. Margaret "Butch" Waimon to "salute Deborah's passion for and statewide leadership in preventing rape." And so on—bowling; the Green Bay Packers and the Lakers, especially; her family, both of birth and of choice.

Finally, after Loretta Santejka sang another of Deborah's favorites, "Union Maid," a number of us spoke to a gathering of at least 130 people, "sharing," to use that overworked verb, our memories of Deborah. They were all appropriate, all heartfelt. The stories and anecdotes mostly made us smile, some made us laugh outright, but I don't think more than one or two of us who spoke got back to our seats without breaking down in tears before we left the microphone.

We then closed with Holly Near's "It Could have Been Me," a standard anti-rape song which the Rape Crisis Center sang at one of the Lefty Follies, and another of Deborah's favorites, which brought many of the RCCs former staffers to grope for the Kleenex boxes.

**"My name is Deborah. Seven letters, three syllables. I don't think 'Debbie' fits that equation. Do you?"**

Later, we all gathered at Melissa's for the funeral baked meats, and a farewell glass (sorry Deborah, as much as I love you, I simply could not down that wretched cream sherry, even for the sake of your memory). As I reflected on this terrible season, one of too many in an awful year, I kept thinking back to the candle lighting ceremony. Susan Bunting had lovingly decorated all ten candles to symbolize a specific aspect of Deborah's life, including for the children Deborah loved. How telling it is for her absolutely favorite song to have been "Light One Candle."

*Light one candle for the Maccabee children, with thanks that their light didn't die.  
Light one candle for the pain they endured, when their right to exist was denied.  
Light one candle for the terrible sacrifice justice and freedom demand, but  
Light one candle for wisdom to know, when the peacemaker's time is at hand.*

[chorus]

*Don't let the light go out; it's lasted for so many years.  
Don't let the light go out; let it shine through our love and our tears.*

This song, made popular by Peter Paul, and Mary (they sing it in their annually aired PBS Holiday special), is actually a Chanukah song, addressed to children, but one which, like Harry Potter and "Shrek," adults also can appreciate.

Deborah Wiatt, one of the most eccentric people you could ever hope to meet, though raised Baptist, converted to and lapsed from Roman Catholicism. After Father Joe Kelly, the ISU Newman Center's beloved pastor left, she said "There's no more reason to go [to Mass]." She loved children so much, and nurtured the children of her heart more tenderly than most people do the children of their bodies. She hated violence, hated repression, and continually showed through example the extraordinary difference one person could make. May the flame of her extraordinary candle burn as long as we need it, just as that single day's worth of oil burned for eight crucial days. Chanukah, the Festival of Lights. How ironic that Deborah's life should end just as Chanukah is about to begin.

To keep her memory alive, I'll try to light more candles. Maybe I'll even feed the odd squirrel an occasional Twinkie.

--Dr. Attitude

# for Deborah Wiatt

## Deborah's obit

Deborah Wiatt, 50, of Bloomington died Wednesday, November 21. The cause of death was massive coronary thrombosis. She was in Moline, Illinois, visiting family for the Thanksgiving Holiday.

Deborah will be widely and deeply mourned, not only by her many friends and relatives throughout Bloomington-Normal, but across the country, too. Her contributions as a social activist and community volunteer were lifelong, spanning over at least 30 years, and her commitment to causes close to her heart never wavered.

Deborah Wiatt founded, created, and for 28 years worked with the McLean County Rape Crisis Center. She was also a founding member of Women Against Sexual Assault, (WASA), which eventually became the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA), headquartered in Springfield. As an activist in the anti-rape movement from its earliest beginnings in the mid-1970's, Deborah founded the McLean County RCC to "to end rape culture in America."

At a recent award luncheon, ICASA presented Deborah with a commemorative plaque, honoring her for contributions to the anti-rape movement, including her training of rape crisis center staff in Springfield, Champaign, Peoria, Chicago, Vandalia, Charleston, DeKalb, Carbondale, Rockford, Joliet, and yet more communities too numerous to name.

Deborah, a life-long feminist, became deeply involved in other women's rights' causes, including the campaign for the ERA, wage equity and safe working conditions, challenging sexual harassment, at all social and economic levels. She also pioneered the lesbian and gay rights movement here in Bloomington-Normal.

Delighted that the town of Normal recently adopted an ordinance prohibiting discrimination in employment and housing based on sexual orientation, her fondest wish was the Bloomington's City Council would soon follow suit.

Deborah Wiatt was also a principal founder and supporter of the *Post Amerikan*, Bloomington-Normal's community-based, alternative, bi-monthly newspaper. The *Post Amerikan* is the oldest, continuously publishing newspaper of its kind, and owes much of its 30 years to her vision and support.

Deborah's had many enthusiasms and interests. A life-long Green Bay Packers' fan, led her to become a stockholder in that franchise. She was also a Lakers' fan, but insisted on referring to them as the Minnesota Lakers, from where the team currently based in Los Angeles had originated. Additionally, Deborah was a Civil War Historian of considerable erudition, having visited all but three surviving Civil War battlefields as part of her research. Had her life not ended so prematurely, she no doubt would have visited the remaining three.

For the last several years, she had been working for the U.S. Census Bureau.

Deborah Wiatt is survived by Cathy Ahart, her life partner, also of Bloomington; her mother, Dorothy Wiatt of Hillsdale, Illinois; her brother Jeff (Danny) Wiatt, also of Hillsdale; the children of her heart, Matthew and Thomas Murphy, of Kyle, Texas, and Addison and Aaron Ahart, of Normal; nephew Derrick Rodgers, of Davenport, Iowa, and Angie Thorngren, of Silvis, Illinois; grandnephews, Jordan and Kyle Thorngren, and



Laurie Haag

grandniece, Emily Thorngren, of Silvis. She was preceded in death by her father, Joseph Wiatt, of Hillsdale.

A service was held in Silvis at the Schroder Funeral Home, at 701 First Avenue on Saturday, November 24. A Memorial Celebration of her life was held here in Bloomington at the Unitarian Church, 1613 E. Emerson, on Tuesday, November 27, at 3:30 p.m. in the Chapel. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that contributions be made in her name to McLean County Rape Crisis Center through PATH (309/827-4005).

## Lunch with Deborah

I believe that for Deborah, the feast of heaven could be summed up in one word: lunch.

I had the pleasure of sharing many lunches with Deborah over the course of our friendship though we were an unlikely pair; she seeking fast-food delicacies like fried things and meat things and I looking for the opposite. We found a few places that would work for both of us and never strayed. While the menu might have been fast food, the meal was anything but.

Deborah had a gift for savoring which expressed itself tangibly in the several hours that a lunch might take. Her relish for the

moment, the conversation, the pictures painted by the words exchanged are less tangible but more lasting. Her interest, questions, wisdom and insight were huge gifts to me over the years. In the last year she wrote me a letter that I treasure after the death of my partner, Trudie.

I am not sure what I gave to Deborah over the years though an unsigned Christmas card one year said simply, "Lunch is not the same." I so know that Deborah gave me the gift of delight all these years and I am forever grateful.

I had the pleasure of sharing many lunches with Deborah and always looked forward to the next time. I still do.

--Marilaurice

Continued on page 12



Continued from page 11

# All you need to know about Deborah Wiatt

*About a year ago, a friend forwarded me a quiz, part of the questions for which appears below. The idea was to get people to copy the quiz, change all the answers as they applied to them, and then send it on. It was an amusingly silly way to practice my computer skills (re: copy and paste and forward on e-mail). I sent it on to a whole bunch of friends, but the only one who responded was Deborah Wiatt (AKA Marshall Law), the Post Amerikan's own Original Founding Member and supplier of vital office/archive space for about 20 years.*

*What follows below are some of Deborah's responses.*

**WHAT IS YOUR JOB:** Field representative for the Department of Commerce, Bureau of The Census. I also collect Social Security Disability because I'm a poor little crippled girl. Either way, I'm living off the government and your taxes are supporting me.

**DO YOU ENJOY YOUR JOB:** I like the living on disability a lot—I've always wanted to be paid just to be. Jury's still out on the field representative part as I've been doing it less than a month.

**IF YOU COULD BE SOMEONE ELSE FOR A DAY, WHO WOULD IT BE?** Shelby Foote. I'd finally know everything I needed to know about the War between The States, and I'd spend all day talking into a tape recorder so I could listen to that cultured Southern accent talk to me about the war forever.

**WHO WOULD YOU HATE TO BE LEFT ALONE IN A ROOM WITH?** Charleton Heston, Eminem, Ariel Sharon, Robert Bork.

**CAN YOU TOUCH YOUR NOSE WITH YOUR TONGUE?** Yes. My brother and I used to have contests. Never knew what a useful skill it would become.

**WHO INSPIRES YOU?** Angela Davis, Linus Pauling, Susan Saxe, Yassar Arafat, Pete Seeger, Melanie.

**HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU HAD YOUR FIRST KISS?** 12, if Holly Kellums and I "practicing" kissing counts.

**BEST MEMORY:** Sitting on the back stoops of all my grandpa's friends, watching them have a beer, and listening to him tell about his wonderful little granddaughter from Illinois.

**WHAT CHARACTERISTICS DO YOU MOST DESPISE?** Bigotry, mean-spiritedness, whining.

**IF YOU HAD A BIG WIN IN THE LOTTERY, HOW LONG WOULD YOU WAIT BEFORE YOU TOLD PEOPLE?**

It would depend on which people. My mom would think it peculiar if she started getting monthly checks to the tune of three thousand dollars. Friends would wonder when digital cable started showing up on every TV we own instead of just the one. And I'd have to tell people anyway, because you know Cathy would in a heartbeat.

**WHAT COLOR IS YOUR BATHROOM?** Deep forest green on the walls, sky blue on the ceiling, and Rousseau's jungle superimposed over everything. There's even a poacher peering in one window, and two flamingoes drinking out of the sink.

**WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO RETIRE?** Virginia. Don't care where, just as long as it's Virginia. James River, Chesapeake Bay, Atlantic Ocean, Shenandoah Valley, Blue Ridge Mountains, Richmond, just doesn't matter. I love it all.

**CAN YOU JUGGLE; IF YES, HOW MANY?** I used to be able to do three, but I haven't tried in a long time. I can do two with no problem. I can do one while holding a cat. I can hold two cats and not juggle either of them.

**WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE FORM OF EXERCISE?** Running on with the mouth, rising to the occasion, throwing my weight around, taking the higher ground.

**RED OR WHITE WINE?** I don't like wine. I do like cream sherry, which is getting harder and harder to find as the population of little old ladies dwindles. I used to not mind Boone's Farm, but I was never very fond of Strawberry Hill.

**DO YOU CARRY A DONOR CARD?** No. I think about it, and Cathy would probably okay it, but "Coma" scared me a whole lot. I don't want to be placed in suspended animation while someone harvests my 20/200 eyes.

**SAY ONE NICE THING ABOUT THE PERSON WHO SENT THIS TO YOU:** Deborah Wilson is very smart and thinks I am very funny. I like someone who is smart enough to know when I'm being funny.

**Please Note:**

See the October/November issue of the Post Amerikan for Deborah's articles chronicling the Anti-Rape Movement.

If you'd like reprints of these articles, as well as the one about her winning an award, send a couple of bucks for postage to: The Post Amerikan, P.O. Box 3452, Bloomington, IL 61702-3452.

Memorials for Deborah can be made to the Rape Crisis Center, by calling 309-827-4005, or by sending a check to 201 E. Grove in care of PATH.

## Rape Crisis Center of McLean County

We're a non-profit volunteer group whose main purpose is to offer assistance and support to victims of sexual assault and their friends and families.

Female and male volunteers answer your calls and are available for crisis assistance, information and speaking engagements. You may request to speak only with female volunteers.

If you want to talk to one of us  
Call PATH 827-4005  
and ask for the  
RAPE CRISIS CENTER

# Freedom of (hate) speech

Following is a reprint of an article Deborah wrote for the August/September 2000 Post

*Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.* I always knew that particular childhood mantra was a bit bogus, especially when those words were directed at me. I cringed and cried, and then finally laughed with the other children as they taunted me with such verbal jewels as "dumb Polack," "four-eyes," and the ever popular "fatty, fatty, two by four, can't get through the bathroom door." (Variations include bedroom door and kitchen door, but my school believed bathroom was far funnier.) Add to that the ever-present, whether implied or explicit, "if you're so smart, how come you're a girl?" and you have pretty well summed up the first 18 or so years of my life.

As an adult, we can add to those all the slurs and abuses that come from being a lesbian and, most recently, physically disabled. A wealth of opportunity for anyone who wanted to use words to hurt me. One would think, then, that I would whole heartedly embrace the so-called "hate speech" legislation being debated in Washington and in state capitols all over this country.

I don't.

More important than my personal feelings about my individual situation is the welfare and well-being of a little piece of paper housed at the National Archives—a piece of paper we call the Constitution. It is more important than I am; it is more important than you are. And it is clearly more important than any spoken or written words hurled in hatred or uttered in ignorance. I did not used to be as adamant about this issue. I could hear the proponents of hate speech legislation when they talked of creating an atmosphere of hate and an environment of violence. I never bought it, but I could hear it. Then I read an editorial in the *Pantagraph* on July 4 of this year. It scared me more than I can begin to express. And it made me unable to listen to the arguments I had paid lip service to in the past.

"...the ultimate welfare of the single human soul (is) the ultimate test of the vitality of the First Amendment."

United States Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, *Gillette v. United States*, 401 U.S. 437 (1971).

According to a survey done this spring by the University of Connecticut, in case you missed it, found that:

- 67% of those surveyed believe that public remarks offensive to racial groups should not be allowed, and 36% support a law to ban such speech;
- 40% believe that musicians should not be allowed to sing offensive songs in public;
- 51% believe the press has too much freedom to do what it wants;
- 31% say a group should not be allowed to hold a rally for a cause or an issue if it offends others in the community;

-51% said art should not be placed in public places if it may offend some members of the community;

-84% believe people should not be allowed to burn the American flag in an act of political protest; and

-53% say that public speech that offends members of a religious group should not be allowed, even though 20% believe that freedom to worship was never meant to apply to religious groups that the majority of people consider extreme or fringe.

The real problem here is that almost anything can offend almost anybody at any given time, which is why "offensive" speech has always been constitutionally protected. But when hate speech is confused with offensive speech, which it will be, because there is no substantive difference between the two, then all speech which makes anyone uncomfortable can be defined as hate mongering and legally banned.

It certainly troubles me when coaches of male sports teams and armed forces drill instructors refer to their players and recruits as "ladies" in an attempt (usually successful) to humiliate them by the tactic acknowledgment that females are intrinsically inferior. (I must admit that I myself have come dangerously close to telling one of the 9-year old boys in my charge that he throws like a girl). This kind of speech is deeply embedded in American culture and probably contributes to the belief that women and girls are inferior life forms for whom name-calling, stalking, rape, battery, and murder and their just desserts. It is offensive to one-half of the population; it contributes to a rape culture and violence against women; it is, by definition, hate speech. But should it be constitutionally banned? There is a great difference in explaining to the coach what his use of language says and in jailing him for saying it.

Rather than bog down the Constitution with burdensome amendments which reflect the cause of the day, why not tackle the problem of hate speech in the arena where it belongs — everyday life. If everyone believes that offensive speech should be banned would take a little initiative and speak out for themselves, we may not need anything further. But it is much easier to support an amendment than is to support people who are different from you. The esoteric has always been easier to follow than the reality. If you tell a co-worker that his use of the term "fag" is offensive to you and to others in the workplace, he might think you're a queer. If you object to sexist comments and sexual stereotyping, you're a humorless man-hater. If you openly acknowledge as valid the Christian Scientists' opposition to modern medicine, people will say you're a godless Commie. Putting one's beliefs in justice and fairness into practice is neither easy nor comfortable. Supporting an amendment to the Constitution is both. It is also unwieldy, unnecessary, and singularly ineffective. It is a "feel good" measure which will do nothing but cheapen the document and do a horrible disservice to every American.

There are two major problems: definition and enforcement. Who gets to decide what is offensive? How many people need to be offended before an issue is banned? What, exactly, constitutes a fringe group? We will not merely be talking about Nazis marching in Skokie or Pat Robertson railing against homosexuals. Many people in this country are uncomfortable around the developmentally disabled. How many Americans would it take to complain before Special Olympics were canceled in a community? Would an irate group of Muslims or Jews be allowed to halt production of the American Passion Play if the city of Bloomington purchases the Consistory? Could the lesbian community get an injunction against public singing or playing of "Stand by Your Man"? (I certainly find it offensive.)

**"Restriction of free thought and free speech is the most dangerous of all subversions. It is the one un-American act that could most easily defeat us."**

Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, address, Author's Guild, December 3, 1952, on receiving the Lauterbach Award.

Are we going to jail Patrick Buchanan or Louis Farrakan for hate speech? Would we stop the *Pantagraph* from printing editorials critical of the Clinton administration? Will we bring charges against the City of Bloomington for offending the town's vegetarians by serving hot dogs in Miller Park during National Night Out?

Of course not, you say, that's absurd. And you would be right. Because the offensive speech would be limited in scope to slurs against Baptists, not the Ba H'ais. The extreme right and the extreme left would be denied any possibility of freedom of expression. It is far better to tell the Matt Hales of this world that their pamphlets are offensive; their web sites unacceptable, and their speech not to be tolerated than to tell them they cannot speak at all. Even small minds and closed minds need the freedom of expression, or that freedom will be taken from all of us.

There are no easy answers to ignorance and no quick fix for hatred. We need to tackle these problems one person, one slur, one act of bigotry at a time. It will be uncomfortable, and disquieting, and at times even dangerous. It will make you unpopular, and frustrated, and at times isolated from both family and friends. You will be ridiculed and harassed. The anger, fear, and hate you are trying to counter will at times be directed at you. It is the road less traveled for a reason, you know.

I would much rather defend my Constitution and demand my freedom of expression than to risk the very possibility of having my rights disintegrated and my liberty destroyed. So call me names. I don't care. You really can't hurt me, because I don't intend to give you that much power.

--Deborah Wiatt



# Families: In transition or crisis?

Since the September 11, 2001 incident, all of us have experienced some degree of uncertainty, change or even loss. Whether we have experienced it on a personal level or not, we have, as a society, experienced the trauma of that horrible day.

Hopefully, it has taught us to be thankful for every day that we have with one another and with those who are particularly important or significant to us. Maybe we have begun to recognize and appreciate the little things that our significant others do that otherwise go unnoticed.

The government has spent plenty of time and money on personal advertisements instructing us on how we should explain September 11, 2001 to our children. How do we explain it to them when we hardly know how to understand it ourselves? It is a situation for all of us to try to get a handle on. Where do we begin and how do we begin healing ourselves?

As a nation, we have united by flying flags, wearing red, white, and blue, and playing Whitney Houston's rendition of "God Bless America." But on a personal level, we need to focus on the most important social institution in our society, the family. The family is hopes and dreams. And yet, even before this incident, the family has been going through a bit of a transition and some may even argue a crisis.

The family, as we have come to know it, has changed significantly over the past several decades. We have gone from the traditional conservative "Ozzie and Harriet" to a nontraditional liberal family. This isn't an article written to argue which is better or worse.

The point of this article is to note that we as a society are capable of changing, positively or negatively, in the event of a transition or crisis. For example, when we went from a nation producing products to a nation producing information, more and more women worked outside the home in order to help support the family. With that came a decrease in "family time" and an increase in the divorce rate. This is a transition that is predictable and yet precipitates a crisis for the family as a supportive social unit.

And yet the family has managed to survive the changes that have occurred either socially, morally, ethical, or economically. It has managed to survive several wars, depression, recession, and various other catastrophic incidents. But until September 11, 2001, all you ever read about was the decline in the family and the horror of women working outside the home and how gays and lesbians should not be permitted to raise a family of their own.

Since September 11, 2001, our lives have changed, our thoughts have changed, our beliefs have changed, and hopefully our opinions have changed as well. The fall of the Twin Towers in New York City was a crucial change in the course of our history as well as our society. The things that seemed so significant before that date are insignificant to us now.

Our preoccupation with our "differences" as a society have been replaced by the many similarities that we share as a nation. Our belief in freedom, and liberty, and the pursuit of happiness has only grown and reinforced our belief that we live in a great country. Laura Bush has done several public announcements on family members supporting one another during this time of crisis.

Now is the time to move beyond the "crisis" that people believed our families are in and move towards a recovery from the petty insignificant arguments on what constitutes a "good" of a "normal" family. We should, instead, be focusing on the fact that, for most of us, our families are a safe place for us. That we have people in our lives that we can call family. That race, religion, creed, sexual preference and the like do not make up the definition of what a family is. Instead of looking at the family in crisis, we should be looking at the family as it is in transition. Transition from the negativity of the stereotypes on what "we" believe a family "should" be and move towards working on strengthening our families. For without the strength of the relationships that we have within our families, we don't hold much faith in the support of those relationships outside of them.

So, are our families in crisis or transition? I choose to see our families in transition. I believe that the crisis of September 11, 2001, though it was unimaginable horror, it may, in the end, be a catalyst for change in the perception of our families. Whether our family consists of one parent, two parents, gay or lesbian couples, is so insignificant in view of what has happened to us as a nation.

Shouldn't we hold on to the ones we love and appreciate them for who they are and where they are at? Shouldn't we accept people where they are and appreciate the differences instead of focusing on the negatives? It is my sincere hope that we can come out of this crisis with a better appreciation for our families and that we can begin to make a transition from negative stereotypes to positive role models.

The future of our families depends on us and how we react and grow from this experience. How we choose to change from this awful incident could benefit our families or it could devalue our families. The choice is ours to make. Individually, and as a nation we must stand up for not only our country, but for our families. Focusing on the similarities instead of the differences will allow us to grow stronger and be able to handle any or all crises that we will inevitably face on a personal or a national level.

--Colleen Holtz

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# Us or U.S.?

## Seeing Red

by Steve Eckardt

My buddy called me from Chicago with the news: "Well, we just bombed Afghanistan." I said, "How the hell did you get back so fast?"

Well it turns out that my buddy didn't bomb Afghanistan. And he's not the only one -- I didn't and you didn't either. Heck, even the squadrons that did, had to, unless they wanted life in prison.

Nope, it was the government of the United States that bombed Afghanistan. And that -- over six weeks later -- is still bombing ... and openly preparing to invade and conquer it.

Not us.

Hard to know it nowadays though. The propaganda engines are discharging an ocean of "we Americans" venom, trying to blind, deafen and finally drown us. Been laid-off? No unemployment benefits? No health care? Homeless? Been beaten by cops? Jailed for getting high ... or being too dark? Forget about it.

Why, this is no time to ruin American unity with your petty personal problems -- we're all in this together now. God bless America! The rest of the world -- especially the rag-heads and the sand niggers -- can suck one of our 15,000 pound bombs. And praise Jesus Christ we haven't nuked 'em ... yet.

That's the message. Patriotism. And patriotism means it's killing time.

Killing time for civilians overseas: relentless bombing of a land virtually without military targets using weapons outlawed by the Geneva convention. Cutting off food aid to starving millions as winter sets in -- and sealing the

## Drink more!

The following is an actual excerpt from this month's *Forbes Magazine*. Please make sure you read this carefully. It may change the way you think about your life and career.

A herd of buffalo can only move as fast as the slowest buffalo, and when the herd is hunted, it is the slowest and weakest ones at the back that are killed first. This natural selection is good for the herd as a whole, because the general speed and health of the whole is maintained or even improved by the regular culling of the weakest members. In much the same way, the human brain can operate only as fast as the slowest brain cells through which the electrical signals pass.

Recent epidemiological studies have shown that while excessive intake of alcohol kills off brain cells, it attacks the slowest and weakest brain cells first. Thus, regular consumption of beer helps eliminate the weaker cells, constantly making the brain a faster and more efficient machine.

borders so they can't get away. Openly discussing which country will be the next target.

Killing time for international law: no extraditions, no World Court, no UN, no discussion. Just one country ruling the whole world. Got a problem with that? Well then, you're with the terrorists, and will be destroyed. Killing time at home too. Death to Constitutional rights -- no right to a trial, a search warrant, or the presumption of innocence. The death penalty waits. Searches and soldiers everywhere ... daily life militarized.

Killing time for jobs and benefits. Killing time for Social Security.

Killing time for our tax dollars (over \$140 Billion handed out to mega-corporations by a unanimous Congress ... and that just for starters).

It's war all right -- war waged by the ultra-wealthy and their government in Washington. War against us, the working people, the students, the farmers. War against common humanity across all lands.

Wall St./ Washington Inc. wants common people to cheer for war against common people. To make them applaud the bombing of their houses, and the poisoning of their waterways. Just lay Old Glory over it and tell the citizenry that the only "we" is America. Corporate America.

But common folks should want nothing to do with their looting, ruination, repression and murder. We should defend the Bill of Rights. We should stand by the words of the Declaration of Independence: that all people "are endowed with certain inalienable Rights, that among these

The result of this in-depth study verifies and validates the causal link between all weekend parties and job related performance. It also explains why, after a few short years of leaving a university and getting married, most professionals cannot keep up with the performance of the new graduates. Only those few that stick to the strict regimen of voracious alcoholic consumption can maintain the intellectual levels that they achieve during their college years. So, this is a call to arms.

As our country is losing its technological edge, we must not shudder in our homes. Get back into the bars. Quaff that pint. Your company and country need you to be at your peak, and you shouldn't deny yourself the career that you could have. Take life by the bottle and be all that you can be. Forward this to all of your friends, acquaintances and co-workers who may be in danger of losing their edge. What more can we do??

DRINK MORE!!!

are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." And that "whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of those ends, it is the right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

And we should think like Malcolm X; "I'm not standing here speaking to you as an American, or a patriot, or a flag-saluter--no, not I.... I see America through the eyes of the victim. I don't see any American dream; I see an American nightmare."

But it's up to you. What's it gonna be -- the "us" of common humanity, or the billionaires' USA?

Steve Eckardt <Seckardt@aol.com> is a long-time Chicago railroad worker, currently living in Philadelphia. He writes the regular column "Seeing Red" and produces the website <SeeingRed.com>.

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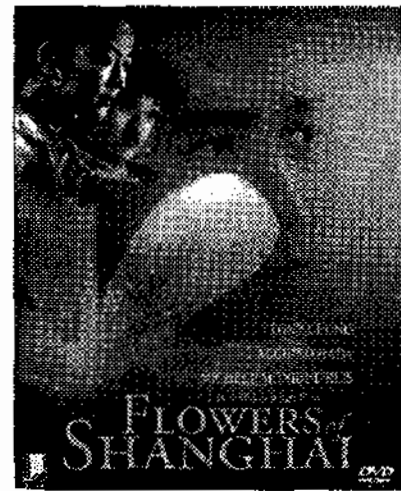
# Off the Beaten Path

Hello! Or should I say Hello movie fans? My name is David and I'd like to give you some tips on movies that you can put on your high-priority must see list. A lot of very good movies never play on Bloomington-Normal (or play a week) so catching it on video is great way to see some knock-out films. You have to love discovering a cool flick. Okay, so you walk into a movie store and suddenly your mind goes blank--you have no idea what to watch...hmmmm...take your Post Amerikan along, flip to the movie review page and then you have at least a half dozen choices. Just a slight warning: my movie tastes do run a tad off-the-path. With that in mind, enjoy the picks and write me if you catch any films that are must-see movies. OK...popcorn...remote...action!



## Hedwig and the Angry Inch

High energy musical comedy that is hard to resist because it is very entertaining. Take one part Rocky Horror, one part Gummo, add Priscilla Queen of the Desert and mix in Valley of the Dolls and you get one fun movie. East German born Hedwig charms an American G.I. and gets his ticket to America with one stipulation. In order to marry, he must lose a part of himself. Hmmmm? Hedwig makes it to the states (Kansas to be exact), only to be dumped by his would-be husband. But our plucky hero takes control of things by forming a band, finding a new beau and becoming a local celeb entertainer. Things take a bad turn again when Hedwig's beau take their songs and becomes a star on his own. Not to be stopped, Hedwig takes some rather drastic measures and verges on stalking. Way over-the-top and very cool. Hedwig is filled with great music--don't miss it!



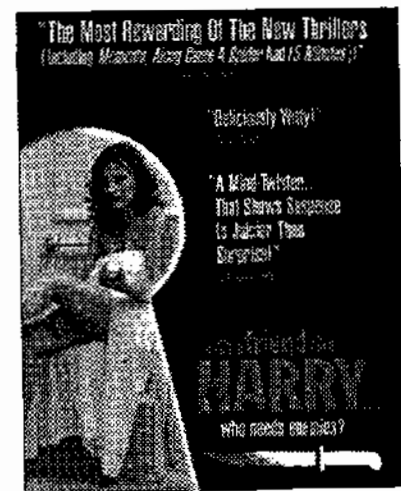
## Flowers of Shanghai

One cinematic film--every frame of this Chinese drama is a beautiful picture postcard. The story takes place in an elegant brothel of late nineteenth-century Shanghai. It's a world of highly ritualized codes of behavior where the very lives of the "flower girls" depend on their ability to attract the affections of their wealthy callers. Ultimately cool Hong Kong star Tony Leung (from In the Mood for Love) gives yet another knock-out performance. Flowers was a Cannes Film Fest selection and made many year-end top ten lists. Put this foreign film at the top of your viewing list and enjoy.



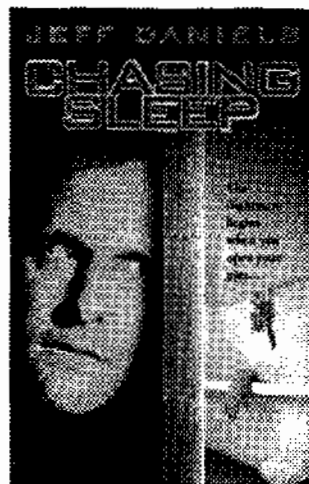
## About Adam

Kate Hudson (of Almost Famous) believes she's found the perfect man of her dreams, Stuart Townsend (from Shooting Fish). She's so ready to give up her wild ways, settle down and make a trip to the altar. While Hudson is busy making wedding plans. Best laid plans go wrong as her beau becomes the object of desire for her entire family. This smartly written sly comedy begs the question does anyone really know the truth about this man of her dreams. Hmmmm? Nice supporting cast includes the always Francis O'Connor (of Kiss or Kill). About Adam didn't get the wide-screen release it deserved so catching it on video is a must-do.



## With a Friend Like Harry

Creepy and intense, this suspenseful psychological French thriller never fails to deliver the goods. A vacation veers wildly off-course when a young family runs into Harry--a wealthy eccentric who claims to have known the husband in high school. Harry turns out to be very persuasive, and the couple end up inviting him to join them on their vacation. Not a good idea at all. Soon their road trip takes several unpleasant twists and turns as Harry's motives become suspect. Harry gets under the viewers skin as he worms his way into the husbands life. Simultaneously deceiving and disturbing, this film is a treat for those who enjoy a good mind game. Moral of the story: be careful who you pick up. Grab a friend.



## Chasing Sleep

Jeff Daniels (of Pleasantville) plays a professor who wakes up one morning to discover that his wife did not return home from work. Daniels decides not to leave the house...ever. He spends his days and nights careening into a downward spiral of paranoia and sleeplessness. We all know what even a few sleeplessness nights can do to the state of your mental health. Daniels begins having hallucinations...you know his house becomes filled with curious horrifying sights and sounds that would make even the most sane man question his reality. You'll definitely want to lose some sleep and catch Daniels in his descent into a self-made hell. Is dementia all it's cracked up to be? Find out.

Here's a checklist for some more high priority movies:

- 1) Series
- 2) Aimee & Jaguar
- 3) Chopper
- 4) Center of the World
- 5) Lost and Delicious
- 6) Following
- 7) Nico & Dani
- 8) Under the Sand
- 9) All Over the Guy
- 10) Bread and Roses
- 11) Made
- 12) Cone Undone
- 13) The Road Home

--David

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# Audio Ammo

## FUGAZI ( Dischord) The Argument

Since Fugazi's debut EP in 1988 they have become known more for their strident anti-corporate stance than their music - which is actually quite a shame because it is the music which has built the fan base without help from the mainstream press and it seems the music is always the least thing talked about. So I'm about to change that and actually write about the music which is what it's all about any way.

Did you know that back in 1993 Fugazi released their fourth album entitled *In On the Kill Taker* and broke into Billboard's Top 200 without any commercial push at all - only because the music was that good and from the heart. Here we are in the last couple of months left in 2001 and Fugazi has graced us with yet another solid record.

I have mixed emotions about this release as I have had with all of Fugazi's albums. Fugazi's real strength is their passion and unbridled desire to put all they have into every song which can make a mediocre song good and a great song fucking marvelous - this may seem hypocritical but that same strength may also be an obstacle. Let me explain.

Some songs on this record are under par in my opinion and rather than throwing those songs in the trash bin and working on something else they are such stubborn hard working guys that in their minds they can make any song work - or so they think. Hopefully I have not lost you with that theory, because I actually believe some of the new songs are their best work yet. What really sounds great on this album are the drums, in fact I can't recall a Fugazi album with a drum sound so distinct.

Stand-out tracks include "ex-spectator," "nightshop" which might actually be the best song Fugazi has ever released with a fantastic acoustic guitar riff and wonderful harmonies on top of a 4/4 beat and a dirty electric punk guitar interlude. "The Kill" is also a brilliant track with a slower beat and an almost spoken word lyric by Ian Mackaye. I do recommend "The

Argument" despite some of its over indulgent faults.

Having said all that if you ever get the chance to see this band live - please go - the energy and the passion has to be seen (& heard) to be appreciated. One thing that I find kind of ironic is that with all of Fugazi's anti-rock star stance, they have ultimately become rock stars.

## MANU CHAO (Virgin Records) *Proxima Estacion: Esperanza*

Manu Chao the former lead singer and rhythm guitarist for Mano Negra has arrived and people should sit up and take notice. This is Manu's second solo effort and it blends reggae, calypso, blues and rock into a beautiful hybrid of marijuana influenced greatness. Horns, keyboards, guitars and "Sandinista" style samples fill this album with warmth and hope.

These songs as with all his songs are performed with a punk ferocity in a variance of languages including Spanish, French and English - possibly some Portuguese as well but I'm not sure. I thoroughly enjoy this album from start to finish and do not have a negative thing to say about it.

One of the reasons I have decided to write for the *Post Amerikan* is not only to let people know what I think of records but to get the word out on musicians and get people off their lazy arses and realize there is a lot of cool music in the world to be heard...you only live once. Sorry for the rant but I have to sometimes get that off my chest to clear my mind. Some of you may be wondering what all of this has to do with Manu Chao and you would be right.

Getting back to the record "Trapped By Love" and "La Primavera" seem to almost float through your being and really have to be heard to understand. It really is so simple what is being done here, almost childish nursery rhymes in a way but done so well I have a hard time conveying the message. I do not speak any language other than English and cannot translate all the lyrics - however I can tell you that he speaks of what a scary bad place the world is and what a great place the world is as well. Sometimes you just know when something is right and it hits you in the gut.....this is one of those times. Quite possibly the best release of 2001.

## THE FALL (Cog Sinister) *Are You Are Missing Winner*

Under the leadership of vocalist Mark E. Smith, The Fall have released an enormous amount of albums since their debut in 1977. Each of The Fall's releases have explored new territory that is both complex and challenging.

The latest album to come down the pike from The Fall is in a way the least experimental of any Fall album. Perhaps because there is not much left to try after some 25 years of releasing music.

In a lot of ways this is a welcome departure for me because I have always preferred the straight ahead rock n roll sound of The Fall in contrast to the techno house influenced Fall sounds. I think it's safe to say that a wonderful deep bass groove could be the trademark sound for The Fall consistently throughout their years and this album is no different.

"Bourgeois Town" gets things going early with a rumbling bassline that brings to mind early Cramps records with Mark E. Smith rambling about everything he doesn't like about, well "Bourgeois Towns".

"Crop-Dust" is next and right away you are in for a treat from the almost Indian-style guitar picking to the constant pounding of drums in your brain all the while MES rants and raves about something I will have to listen to 10 more times to decipher.

The Fall have done a few cover songs throughout the years and here Mark E. Smith tries his hand at "Gotta See Jane" originally recorded by R. Dean Taylor that rips right through start to finish. I'm a big fan of "Hollow Mind" track no. 9 near the end of the

record where MES tells it like it is without holding back - has he ever held anything back?

Bottom line is this album should be heard by more people than it actually will - so go buy it. The Fall have a rabidly devoted cult following across the world, and have had a significant impact on the post-punk music of the 70's, 80's, and 90's. Many fans of the group have gone on to form their own band, leaving the rock underground with a wealth of bands replicating The Fall's harsh jagged guitar sounds.....you could be next.

## CANNIBAL OX (Def Jux) The Cold Vein

Back in the mid to late eighties hip-hop reigned supreme. It was in many ways very similar to punk rock and its do it yourself attitude; it was also a refreshing out-let to all the roaring guitars my ears were subject too. I must admit as with most musical styles hip-hop has really bitten the dust in my opinion. Don't get me wrong I love good hip-hop; it's just that it's saturated with crap MC's with zero originality and played out beats.

NOT SO with Cannibal Ox coming straight from the hip-hop mecca of the world, New York City. What this rap duo does best is blend mind blowing sound-scapes, legit rhymes and beats as phat as Albert. Rap started as a way for MC's to do battle on the streets with verbal assaults and self preaching bravado and the Cannibal Ox carry the torch in that respect much like Gangstarr has done so well over the years.

My two favorite tracks from *The Cold Vein* are "B-Boys Alpha" & "Real Earth" where my man Shamars snaps the lyrical snippet "I'm like Moses with the staff that parts the Red Sea.....but it's a new day so I'll use the mic to depart mc's."

Hip-Hop has got hope - keep it alive. Fuck Jay-Z and Puff Daddy....keep searching for the underground heroes where real hip-hop thrives. Cannibal Ox keeps the flame burning - long live creativity and attitude. It's what makes good music - Music with soul.

--Mark Neace



# Notes from the Land of Anti-Fat

## Wading into the Shallows

In the weeks preceding its release, there's been much discussion in the size acceptance community around the movie *Shallow Hal*.

You could hardly expect otherwise: once the ads for the Farrelly Bros.' new PG-13 movie comedy started showing on teevee and in multiplexes, the debates began in earnest. Skinny ol' Gwyneth Paltrow in a fat suit? On the heels of such unfunny abuses of special effects makeup as Martin Short's Jiminy Glick, is it any wonder that fat activists had their backs up? Add the images carefully snipped into the promo (Gwyneth diving into a pool and sending up a waterspout, Gwyneth sinking her end of a canoe while her befuddled boyfriend futilely struggles to reach the water), and a pre-movie backlash was understandable.

It's not as if fat Americans don't have weekly opportunities to hear and see fat jokes, after all -- they're all over network sitcoms -- and considering the Bros.' rep as low-brow shockmeisters (cf., *Dumb and Dumber's* bathroom scenes, *There's Something About Mary's* hair gel) this reaction was understandable. Given the boys' predilection for body humor (e.g. *Osmosis Jones*), it was all too easy to expect the worst. Anyone remember Eddie Murphy's statements pre-*The Nutty Professor* on how wearing a fat suit gave him sensitivity to the slings and arrows faced by fat folk in this country? Ever count the number of fart and belch jokes in that family-friendly flick?

To its credit, America's foremost size acceptance organization, NAAFA, held back on making any statements until the finished film was actually available to the public. According to Maryanne Bodalay, executive administrator of the organization, "Putting thin performers in fat suits is no different from putting white performers in blackface. To have these actors become 'fat' and then film them gorging on food and breaking chairs is an insult to the 55% of Americans who are deemed overweight. . . These movies are giving people permission to make fun of fat people. Hollywood is intent upon perpetuating the myth that fat people are miserable and unattractive, and that the path to happiness is through losing weight. In reality, beauty comes

in all sizes, and people can find happiness at whatever size they are."

Ms. Bodalay's response is understandable: NAAFA's mission, after all, is to restore a sense of dignity to fat people. Farrelly Bros. comedy (as any male who squirmed through Ben Stiller's zipper accident in *Something About Mary* will attest) is not about dignity. Too, one of the organization's open goals is to combat mainstream stereotypes around fatness (e.g., the myth that all fat people overeat), so you can bet that a scene like the one in *Hal* where Gwyneth Paltrow grabs a full cake quarter and walks off munching on it won't exactly win any NAAFA Community Education awards.

But is this response ultimately fair to the movie?

Let's see.

Jack Black plays the titular hero, Hal Larson, a pudgy office worker who has been short-circuited in the way he views women by a traumatic childhood incident. (As a fat little nine-year-old, he receives deathbed advice from his morphine-addled father: "Don't settle for 'routine pootang.'" When later asked if he recalls his dad, Hal is unable to come up with anything more than a statement that his father was a "great guy.") As a result of this devastating advice, Hal grows to fruitlessly pursue a succession of women who meet his physical ideal. A chance meeting with self-help maven Tony Robbins (gamely playing himself) results in our hero getting hypnotized to see the "inner beauty" of each new person he meets. The result of this intervention: Hal pursues a romance with a woman who is about as far from his original ideal as possible -- 300-plus pound Rosemary Shannahan (Paltrow).

The script plays relatively fair with its premise: Hal sees every big-hearted woman he meets as super-models because that's the image of beauty he's internalized. Thus, he visualizes Rosemary as the slender Paltrow even as we repeatedly get hints of what she really looks like (a passing reflection in a store window; two busted chairs). The women known to him -- an across-the-hall neighbor, for instance -- remain unchanged; it's

only the unfamiliar figures that he sees through this new point of view.

This proviso also extends to men, incidentally. When Hal meets two male Peace Corps volunteers, for example, he sees them both as male models, while a Zorba-esque friend with spinal bifida remains unchanged. For guys who've built their rep on shattering the boundaries of good taste, the Farrellys have a refreshingly square vision of goodness. In *Shallow Hal*, inner beauty is established primarily through personal sacrifice: Paltrow's Rosemary spends her time between Peace Corps assignments doing volunteer work at a pediatric burn unit; another woman proves her beauty by moving in to take care of her aged grandmother.

Conversely, those women that Hal encounters with less-than-stellar values look quite a bit different: an officious gold-digging nurse, for instance, is a withered crone to our hero. Even with layers of paternal conditioning removed by Robbins' hypnosis, Hal still has a coat of cultural conditioning influencing the way he sees folks. For Hal to become a whole person, he has to learn to see Rosemary as she really is -- and appreciate her that way.

This ultimately happens, of course, thanks to the machinations of Hal's comic foil friend Mauricio (Jason Alexander). Dismayed by Hal's new pursuit of women that he considers "beneath" them both, Mauricio (Alexander doing a variation on his George Costanza character -- which makes sense as the Farrellys used to write for *Seinfeld*) convinces Robbins to eliminate the hypnotic instructions that sparked Hal's new vision. Once he realizes what has been removed, Hal (who has genuinely come to care for Rosemary) begs to be re-hypnotized.

Because it is a romantic fantasy, there's little doubt that Hal will see the light by himself.

Much of the first act of *Shallow Hal* works variations on the POV joke: because Hal sees Rosie as supermodel thin, he blames flimsy chairs when they break beneath her; when she grabs that extra-large slice of cake, he confides to his astonished co-workers, "Where does she put it?" Out on a date, he mistakes a passerby's fat joke as a put-down of him; tossed a pair of exaggeratedly large underwear by a disrobing

Ro' he can only assume that she's playing a joke. These, of course, are the gags that are showcased in the movie trailer, and while some of 'em approach fifth grade cartoonishness (the unbalanced canoe joke, for example, has been subject of countless comic postcards), the greater humor is in the incongruity of seeing the near-waif Paltrow at their center. While it may not completely obviate the jokes' potential offensiveness, it does force many in the audience to re-think what they're laughing at.

It helps that Paltrow's Rosemary is such an appealing character: not just for her looks but her personality. (One of the not-so-hidden themes in the flick is the idea that a woman like Rosemary is forced to develop her smarts and

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sense of humor just to get by in the world, where a more conventional beauty is allowed to pass on her appearance.) Confronted by a Mauricio who sees her as she really is, she is able to wittily counter his weak put-downs. Suspicious at first of Hal's overtures, she ultimately succumbs and blossoms under his unexpected romantic attentions.

Hal's second act lets the audience and protagonist finally see the full frontal Rosemary (instead of the occasional body doubled back views that we were teased with earlier), and it's here that the movie puts it heart on its sleeve: the slapstick fat jokes cease, and the focus shifts to the hero's halting attempts to break through his stunted vision. (The film's one good fluid joke--wouldn't be a Farrelly Bros. movie without one --involves Hal's using a hand full of Vaseline to fake conjunctivitis and blur his eyesight.) Paltrow and the much-maligned fat suit are revealed (doesn't quite mesh with the body double we've seen earlier but never mind), and it's a tribute to Paltrow's acting that she is able to make us see the heartbroken woman within this only partially successful makeup job.

(Full Disclosure Department: a few years back a would-be movie developer commissioned me to write a script for a proposed movie comedy reverse on Steven King's *Thinner*. That script involved the use of much FX makeup, so I'm plainly not predisposed to side with NAAFA's blanket umbrage over the use of fat suits. For the record, though, I found the FX makeup used on the actress playing Rosemary's mother to be more convincing and attractive.)

As I've already noted, the movie ends positively --and, more to the point, it does so without once hinting that Rosemary will reduce. (Eddie Murphy's *Nutty Professor*, to cite a counter instance, ended with hero Seymour Klump vowing to lose weight.) Far from stating that the path to true happiness is weight loss--as NAAFA spokesperson Bodalay asserts--*Shallow Hal* states repeatedly (some would say excessively) that the way we relate to other people is more important than appearance.

Are the Farrellys being hypocrites by cloaking this message in a movie that features fat jokes? I suspect the answer to that 'un will depend on how much slack you're willing to extend to the bros. Since the movie is about a lout's redemption, you need to spend some time wallowing in that loutishness--though most of the lame verbal fat jokes are consistently put in the mouth of boobs (Mauricio, the two guys outside the restaurant). Where some critics have looked at *Shallow Hal* and seen a weak attempt to support weight-biased stereotypes with an uplifting message; others have seen a large-hearted assault on looksism.

I tend toward the second perspective, though I continue to see its critics' POV. Rosemary's excessive eating may be a stereotype--though early on the character notes that it doesn't matter how much eats, she always stays the same size

(so why not enjoy the dining experience?) First time he goes out with the thin Rosemary, in fact, Hal is even impressed by her appetite: "Nice to see a girl who orders a real meal," he says--tself a comment on the way we've demonized eating in this culture. Just as significantly, when the two leave the restaurant carrying Hal's doggy bag, Rosemary gives it to a pair of homeless men. Not only does this act serve to point out the character's selflessness, it also establishes that she's not a glutton.

As for the issue of broken furniture, this happens twice in the movie and to different purposes: the first, which occurs during that initial restaurant date, is done to emphasize Hal's blindness ("What is this chair made of?" he indignantly asks, holding up the chair so we can see its bent steel legs); the second, which takes place just before Mauricio is about to remove Hal's post-hypnotic world view, is meant to foreshadow the humiliation and betrayal Rosemary feels when Hal is not around to support her. In the showing I attended the audience clearly knew what was happening with this second incident: where the first received laughs, the second elicited an audible gasp of dismay.

As movie comedies go, *Shallow Hal* is not the Farrelly Brothers' laff-out-loud peak (I'd place

*There's Something About Mary* in top position), but it's also not the outrage that its detractors claim. The movie may drag a bit in its last third --a lot of romantic comedies do in the "let's-keep-the-romantic-leads-apart" stage--but it also creates an enjoyable bonhomie in the scenes where Hal bonds with Rosemary's Peace Corps colleagues (one of whom turns out to be a super-sized Hawaiian male) and even gives Jason Alexander's Mauricio an out from his sexist ways. The bros. work hard to create a feeling of good will toward all their major characters, and while you can sometimes see the mechanics involved in this, they generally succeed.

Perhaps in the end the question to ask about *Shallow Hal* boils down to this: would Rosemary Shannahan, a sensitive fat woman with her own clearly defined sense of humor, enjoy this movie?

I suspect she would, but I bet she'd wish it were funnier. . .

--Bill Sherman



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# The political underground press: A sympathetic

Allan Keith wrote this article in 1970 while a student at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. He thought it important to reprint not only as a "trip down memory lane" but because it includes some of the 'rationale' or justification for the existence of the alternative media."

The Commission on Freedom of the Press (the Hutchins Commission) declared in 1947 that "...it does belong to the intention of the freedom of the press that an idea shall have its chance, even if it is not shared by those who own or manage the press. The press is not free if those who operate it behave as though their position conferred on them the privilege of being deaf to ideas which the processes of free speech have brought to public attention."

In the 28 years since this was published there is serious question of whether the media have done much to implement this exhortation. Many persons believe the media generally have not kept up with the fast pace of changing social and political thought -- especially on the part of young people and minority groups.

A task force of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence said, "The increased level of violence in the country today is partially owing to the sluggish response of our institutions to social change. But the press shares in this sluggishness, and an important part of its inadequacy is the inability of new and different voices to gain routine and peaceful access to the centralized news media."

These "different voices" are finding at least one outlet for their viewpoints, however. The political underground press has not only provided this outlet, but has attracted a growing readership. In the 1950s there were very few underground papers in the U.S. Today, there are about 630, with a circulation estimated at more than 3 million. They are published not only in communities and at colleges, but by high school students and members of the armed forces.

This article will focus on the politically-oriented underground press, as opposed to those papers which deal with the so-called cultural revolution. The latter publications usually emphasize music, the arts, the drug scene and the "sexual revolution." Most of these topics are being given more and more coverage by the standard, commercial media. To a large extent, however, the standard media still do not present extensive, accurate reporting of "radical" political views. This, of course, was pointed out by the national violence commission's task force.

There are many definitions and conceptions of the underground press. The traditional definition would include only those publications which list no publisher, editor or staff members, or those which are printed and distributed secretly. However, today numerous publications which do not fit this definition are considered underground papers by a great many people. For purposes of this article the underground press will be newspapers which are generally thought of as off-beat, espousing radical views, out of the mainstream of traditional commercial journalism.

The political underground press primarily espouses views on the political left. But there are a few right-wing papers, such as White Power, published by the National Socialist White People's Party (Nazi) in Arlington, Va.

Criticism of the underground press has focused on alleged inaccuracies (which no doubt do exist), exaggerations, four-letter words and "obscene" pictures. But it may be that the major reason for criticism is simply the fact that the papers are radical politically. A strong case can certainly be made for the view that radical ideas are needed to formulate the solutions required to solve the nation's enormous problems. The underground press makes no pretense of objectivity and staff members believe the non-underground press has been dishonest and hypocritical in claiming it presents objective, or even fair, reporting.

Although the standard media have given considerable space to demonstrations, protests and riots in recent years, very little attention is given in most publications to the actual views of the protesters or the reasons for the protest or riot.

For example, although half of the world's population lives in societies which, at least ostensibly, are Marxist-Leninist oriented, there is virtually no outlet in the standard media for Marxist ideas. Many discontented person in the U.S. espouse Marxism and yet virtually their only outlets are the underground press and speeches, usually presented to those of the same

political persuasion. This is obviously contrary to the ideal that only through a fair, free and full competition between all ideas can the "truth" be arrived at by the people. If this principle is accepted the underground press becomes all the more important, because the non-underground media cannot be expected, of course, to publicize an ideology which, if accepted, would bring and end to profit-making in the media.

It follows, then, that the media today (and also the public school system) simply provide no ready means for the average American to gain any more than a cursory understanding of Marxism.

The media also give very little play to non-Marxist radicals. Time magazine noted earlier this year, for example, that Nicholas von Hoffman of the Washington Post "is the only really radical reporter working regularly for a major American newspaper." As Time said, von Hoffman "provides a point of view its (the Post's) readers would not ordinarily see."

An almost incredible number of significant stories found in the underground press somehow never seem to make their way into "mainstream" media; or if they do, the stories are very short or "buried" so deep that probably few persons pay any attention to them.

Many of the best stories are written by the Liberation News Service (LNS). More than 200 publications subscribe to the service, in addition to many individuals.

Last January, in just a single issue of the Black Panther, published by the Black Panther Party, there appeared many significant stories which most Americans may never be informed of through the standard media. Here are a few of the stories in this single issue:

--An LNS story from Ft. Dix, N.J., told of a three-year sentence meted out to a GI charged with taking part in a stockade rebellion. The story said, "No witness actually testified to having seen (the GI) do anything." Another LNS story told of a U.S. Marine who had left his unit in Vietnam and joined the National Liberation Front. He issued an appeal to other soldiers to follow his example.

--An illustrated story told of the separatist movement in Eritrea, an ex-Italian colony which was returned to Ethiopia in 1952.

--Some of the other articles told of allegations of racism at San Francisco General Hospital and of a family of 10 which is threatened with eviction because of an urban renewal project in San Francisco.

--Another article told of poor treatment of Black Panthers arrested in a raid in San Francisco. Claims that party leader Fred Hampton had been drugged before he was killed by police in a Chicago raid were reported, and an LNS story denied a report in the traditional press that Black Panther leader Eldridge Cleaver had left Cuba because of racism there.

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# appraisal

--An in-depth LNS story during the nationwide strike against General Electric said the giant firm is controlled by 19 men. The story outlined their relationships with other giant firms, colleges and universities and the political power wielded by GE's ruling elite. The story also recounted some of GE's history, including its relationship to the Krupp Corp. in Nazi Germany.

--In addition, the SDS New Left Notes covered the police-student confrontation in Berkeley, Calif. in detail, last year. (On Feb. 2 of this year a federal grand jury indicted a dozen deputy sheriffs in connection with the demonstrations.)

Underground papers many times are in the vanguard of protest movements. For example, the Big Muddy Gazette at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale made what apparently was the first public attack on the Center for Vietnamese Studies and Programs at SIU. The criticism was printed on April 9, 1969. Now, a year later, the center has become a major issue on the campus, resulting in a police-student confrontation on Jan. 30 and major protests on Feb. 20-21, 1970.

An example of what some persons would call public services provided by the underground press was publication of a list of secret narcotics agents by the Los Angeles Free Press last year. The paper said, "The people should know the men who are policing their communities. Even the Black Panthers do not propose simply abolishing police departments. Even they recognize the need for police officers -- but their program for community control of police demands that the policeman openly lives in the community in which he works so abusive exercise of power can be controlled.

"Secret police forces are a threat to democratic government. History demonstrates that the secret policeman invariably uses his anonymity to become unaccountable to the people over whom power is exercised."

The underground press is in many respects a substantial departure from traditional journalism. It is proudly radical and admittedly subjective. But it provides a medium for the "new voices" that deserve to be heard in this society.

--Allan Keith

## Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

A few weeks ago I went out to my first candlelight prayer vigil for peace in Afghanistan. It appears this fledgling group is gaining momentum and strength from the worst of American tragedies.

Seeking a solution to the world crisis by using violent means will not only cause more pain and suffering, but also will be an expensive and wasteful undertaking. I think a more just way would be to seek out the perpetrators and bring them before a world court at the Hague.

When I ran a home daycare, I learned violence doesn't work. If I spanked my children, the degree of aggression only escalated with all the children throughout the day. "Time-outs" and other means worked better.

Why not give prayer a chance and stop the bombing now?

As you might guess, I'm also opposed to capital punishment. There is always forgiveness and the possibility of change in the future. A good friend told me once, "The 5th commandment reads: 'Thou shalt not kill.' There are no exceptions to be given." It is true, that in my Catholic faith, there is a "just war theory" but I can't force myself to buy into that line of thinking.

My son is 18 and I hope he never gets drafted. From early on, I explained what a conscientious objector was. I hope he (and many others) never have to make this life-altering decision. I don't know how one lives with oneself after killing another. To me, it would haunt my every waking hour. It is a difficult situation and one must consider all the various ramifications of one's actions. In the end we all come before our Maker and shall be judged by what we did with our lives.

How many times will we re-open the festering laceration on Christ's side, as He once again hangs on a cross to be crucified? I can't picture, either, the idea of Jesus as a pilot setting loose a bomb aimed to kill and destroy. Aren't we all His hands and feet as we proceed on this journey called LIFE?

Come to one vigil, Tuesday nights, 7-7:30 PM, at the west side of the court house. Let your heart be open to new methods of conflict resolution.

--Rosemarie Moews Scarbeary



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## Planned Parenthood reports widespread satisfaction from mifepristone users

### Majority of health centers providing abortion services offer new early option

One year after the historic approval of mifepristone in the United States, approximately two-thirds of Planned Parenthood health centers that provide abortion services are offering the method. More than 5,000 American women have availed themselves of the new option at Planned Parenthood this year, many of whom said they would recommend it to other women. And health centers offering the method report a success rate of higher than 99 percent—greater than in clinical trials.

"We are particularly pleased by the high levels of success and satisfaction among patients and providers," Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) President Gloria Feldt said. "Reports from across the country have been very positive and reinforce our commitment to bring this new option to more women."

While the method has been available in the United States only since December, Planned Parenthood has participated in the decade-long effort to bring mifepristone to American women by advocating for its U.S. availability, participating in clinical trials and working with the National Abortion Federation to educate health care providers nationwide. Prior to the September 28, 2000 approval from the FDA, more than half a million women in Europe had safely and effectively used mifepristone.

"Planned Parenthood will continue to work to expand availability of this and other advances in reproductive health care and to ensure the satisfaction and safety of the women and clinicians who choose them," Feldt said.

## In 1973, the Supreme Court legalized abortion. In 2001, Bush wants a recount

Join one million voices in urging Senate leadership to block any anti-choice Supreme Court nominations at the Feminist Majority's new site, [http://www.Million4Roe.com!](http://www.Million4Roe.com)

Legal abortion hangs by a razor-thin 5-4 margin in the U.S. Supreme Court. This summer, as many as two of the nine Supreme Court justices could announce their resignation, giving President Bush the opportunity to appoint anti-choice Justices who would overturn Roe v. Wade.

Don't let ant-abortion politics win out! TELL WASHINGTON WE WON'T GO BACK at [http://www.Million4Roe.com!](http://www.Million4Roe.com)

**Filibuster strategy highlighted** while the overwhelming majority of Americans are pro-choice, there is no clear pro-choice majority in the U.S. Senate. In fact, only 37 senators are solidly pro-choice, while an additional 17 senators have mixed voting records. The vote on U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft highlighted these numbers, with just 42 senators voting against the anti-women's and civil rights nominee. A filibuster—requiring just 41 votes rather than the majority vote needed to defeat a nominee—is the most winnable strategy in the face of future anti-Roe nominees to the Supreme Court.

Both the Ashcroft vote and the close vote confirming anti-abortion Solicitor General Ted Olson suggested that pro-choice senators have the votes to sustain a filibuster. "The close 51-47 vote showed a willingness to stand up, and represented an increase since the Ashcroft vote, noted Feminist Majority President Eleanor Smeal.

--from The Pro-Choice Voice



## Schizophrenia common among college students

Abilities like holding a conversation, blocking out distractions and showing emotion seem like trivial tasks, but for people coping with schizophrenia, these everyday actions can be almost impossible.

Schizophrenia, a mental disorder that affects 6 percent of the population, occurs most frequently in people ages 16 to 25 and is affected by stress.

"The research shows that stressful conditions don't really play a part in the origins of the disease, but a number of stressors can exacerbate the symptoms," said Counseling and Psychological Services interim Director Todd Sevig. "This typically starts during the college years, so a lot of times we'll see students at early stages of schizophrenia."

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Symptoms, including paranoia, impairment of mental functions, delusional thoughts and a lack of enjoyment, are caused by a "split" in the brain between emotion and thinking.

"What is common and typical is to go through some symptoms, like delusion, hallucination and withdrawal, which cuts off the usual support system, making it even harder to ask for help," Sevig said.

Though research has found no direct link between the origins of the disease and environmental conditions, factors including stress and drug abuse can greatly worsen the symptoms.

"It's not a death sentence, but it is the most serious mental disorder," said psychiatry Prof. Rajiv Tandon.

"Drugs don't seem to cause schizophrenia, but they can adversely affect it," Tandon said. "Drug use can make the disease manifest earlier. It makes it more difficult to treat and

relapse more probable. In adolescents with substance/alcohol abuse, early onset diagnosis can be impossible to differentiate."

The similarities between behaviors of drug abusers and schizophrenics is the reason people need to be assessed by an expert in schizophrenia before diagnosis. Acute symptoms must be present for at least a month, and behavioral symptoms, including poor self hygiene, isolation and unusual behavior must be present for six months prior to diagnosis.

"Schizophrenia is an illness that really affects awareness, so what makes it double hard to diagnose is people don't realize something is wrong," Sevig said. "Our usual ways of support don't always work."

In hopes of improving living conditions for those affected with schizophrenia, health professionals are using a multi-dimensional approach to treatment, which includes support groups, medication, therapy and education presentations for the general public.

Student groups on campus, like the nonprofit organization Mentality, are also trying to create a more understanding environment for peers with schizophrenia and other mental illnesses.

"Mental illness is so pervasive on campus, but nobody talks about it," said Anita Bohn, a staff member of the Office of Community Service Learning.

"The mission of Mentality is to erase the stigma around mental health issues and concentrate on awareness on campus."

Despite the severity of the disease, Sevig stressed that it is treatable.

"There are people all over the country who are going to college. There are success stories," he said.

--Lisa Hoffman, *Michigan Daily NAMI of Illinois*

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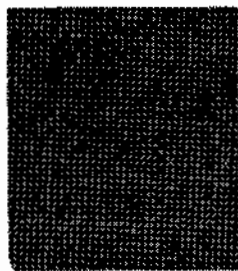


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