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Expulsion issue grips city

ON THE MOVE: Marchers, including Rainbow/PUSH Coalition attorney Lewis Myers Jr., center, fill East Grand Avenue during Sunday's march to MacArthur High School. Police estimated the crowd at about 2,000.

Herald & Review/Dennis Magee

Demonstrators from inside Decatur and out mobilize to march and rally.

By JEFF DICKSON, BILLY TYUS,  
HORNBECK AND AMY BURCH  
H&R Staff Writers

DECATUR — On the heels of three demonstrations involving thousands of people Sunday in Decatur, the battle between the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition and the Decatur school board is broadening.

Not only is the Rev. Jesse Jackson continuing his effort to get seven expelled Decatur high school students back into school, but a U.S. congressman will be taking the battle to Washington, D.C., and a state senator plans to take it to the Illinois General Assembly.

Meanwhile, at 7 a.m. today, a group of supporters will walk from the Rev. Jesse Jackson's MacArthur High School. And, at 7 tonight, a rally is planned at the Church of the Living God, PGT Temple 3, 1762 E. Prairie Ave.

Jackson said if a resolution has not been found in the meantime, he and other supporters will be taking the march "as far as the line" and returning them to school on Tuesday morning.

Jackson was at Eisenhower High School. Jackson asked the crowd at a MacArthur High School rally Sunday how many students had been forced to get arrested for the cause. Almost everyone raised a hand, even little children watching as they sat in their strollers.

The early stages of a state and national political campaign against the expulsions and the district's zero-tolerance policy were evident with the presence of U.S. Rep. Bobby Rush, D-Chicago, state Sen. Don E. Trotter, D-Chicago, and state Rep. Harold Murphy, D-Markham.

Jackson said he would contact U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno in an effort to have the FBI's allegation that district officials released personal student information violate state and federal privacy statutes — and about the zero-tolerance policy, which he labeled "unfair." He also said he plans to ask that the Illinois House Education Committee convene hearings on the zero-tolerance policy in the near future.

The chairman of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus, said he

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‘Stop the Violence’ march stays mostly local

By ARVIN DONLEY  
H&R Staff Writer

DECATUR — No more violence. Support the school board. Decatur's problems can be solved without outside help.

That's what most of the 250 people participating in the "Stop the Violence" march were talking about as they walked a one-mile stretch of Elizabeth Street Sunday in Decatur.

Organized by Decatur City Councilwoman Betsy Stockard, the walk drew students who supported the local school board's decision to expel seven students involved in a brawl that spilled into the stands during a football game on Sept. 17 at Eisenhower High School.

"We're here to tell the community that we're strong together and that we can a peaceful solution to this," said Carol Chiligris, a Richland Community College

KNIGHT IN DISGUISE: Member of the Butler, Ind., American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan stands alone in a Nelson Park pavilion in Decatur Sunday, looking out on 200 people assembled for the rally.

Herald & Review/Kelly J. Huff

Sunday's developments

In the last 24 hours, we reported at three separate demonstrations related to the expulsion of seven Decatur high school students. Police estimate about 2,000 people took part in the march Sunday night, led by the Rev. Jesse Jackson and his Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, though the coalition is estimating turnout at much higher. Decatur City Councilwoman Betsy Stockard organized a walk by her supporters to support the march. Many individuals wore blue ribbons to show they were behind the school

trust. "We need to stand behind our elected officials. We've not bussed people in for this march; these are people from our community."

A few blocks away, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who is fighting to have the expelled students reinstated, led an estimated crowd of 2,000 plus, including more than 2,000 Chicago, on a march organized by the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition.

Although the "Stop the Violence" march was primarily of local residents, Villa De Cello, 28, drove two hours from Manteno to take part in Stockard's march.

"Jesse Jackson has no business being in Decatur," De Cello said.

Throughout the event, people chanted "Stop the Violence" and held up their hands in support of the march. Many individuals wore blue ribbons to show they were behind the school

Sunday evening, the Rev. Jesse Jackson met with attorneys and Glenn W. McGee, the state superintendent of schools. Jackson and McGee have worked out a 10-point proposal to get the students back into school, which the Decatur school board may consider.

What's next

■ All Decatur schools are scheduled to be open today.

■ At 7 a.m. today, a group of Jackson supporters will hold a prayer vigil at MacArthur High School.

■ At 7 p.m. today, a rally is scheduled at the Church of the Living God, PGT Temple 3, 1762 E. Prairie Ave.

WHAT WAS THAT MOVE?

Bob Hazelip of Bunker Hill, left, checks out Bobby Smith's strategy as the Effingham natives on Claude Gould at Gould's home in Pana on Wednesday.

Herald & Review/Joseph C. Garza

These checker players anything but squares

PANA — Checkers, on the face of it, seems such a nice, simple game.

You sit down opposite sweet-looking, good-looking Claude Gould in his Pana living room and get ready for a pleasant session of sliding the pieces across the checkerboard.

And then you get annihilated.

Players like 92-year-old Gould eat beginners for breakfast. A quick hop, skip and jump flurry, and his inexperienced opponent is toast. But take heart, checkers needs you.

"We are always trying to get more players involved in the game, especially younger players," says Gould, who finished second in the Illinois state checker championship in 1941 and 1963. "It really is a fascinating game, and I plan for the next challenge and fellowship to keep the mental sharp, too."

Gould belongs to a loose-knit bunch of about 12 Central Illinois players, most of whom are members of the Central Illinois Illinois Checker Association and the Missouri Checker Association. They wander all over the two states — and beyond — to play in tournaments or just for friendly games with each other. They all bristle at any suggestion the passion many of them have spent their

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