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Herald & Review

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Decatur, Illinois

Quick Take Prep honors

Matt Peterson, the MacArthur soccer team's lifebat this season, has been named the Herald & Review's Area Player of the Year.

Preps / B3



Shelbyville's Sarah Selby and Jerod Galvin are the 1999 Herald & Review cross country athletes of the year.

Preps / B3



The Field of the Dogs Chapter 8

Lifestyle / C1

1999 UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN

Goal \$2.5 million
Raised \$2,114,403.74
Needed \$385,596.26
Days left 9

Lottery

Here are the winning numbers selected Tuesday:
■ Pick Three-Midday: 7-9-4
■ Pick Three-Evening: 4-5-7
■ Pick Four-Midday: 2-3-4-6
■ Pick Four-Evening: 5-3-4-3
■ Little Lotto: 03-04-05-13-28
■ Lotto jackpot: \$5 million
■ Big Game: 12-13-26-40-42
■ Big Money Ball: 27
■ Big Game jackpot: \$62 million

Weather

■ Today: Partly cloudy, High 71.
■ Tonight: Clear, mild, Low 42.

Details / B6

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Issue 314 • Four sections



Expulsion issue broadens

Felony charges filed; release of video dismays prosecutor



STILL COMMUNICATING: Waiting outside The Church of the Living God, PGT Temple 3, Tuesday, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, seen here talking on a cell phone, took his position on the seven expelled Decatur high school students to the federal courthouse in Urbana. The lawsuit seeks a motion for a temporary restraining order and a preliminary injunction against the Decatur Board of Education.

By BRAD MUDD, RON INGRAM & TOM COLLINS
H&R Staff Writers

DECATUR — Four adults and five juveniles were charged Tuesday with felony mob action in connection with a Sept. 17 fight during a football game at Eisenhower High School.

A home video of the incident was shown to the mass public for the first time Tuesday evening on network news broadcasts. The video quickly made its way into cable news shows for much of the night.

Macon County State's Attorney Larry Fichter had opposed the release of the video, saying it is evidence in the criminal proceedings which moved forward Tuesday.

"Obviously we have a tape that we've had for some time and it has remained in our possession. I have no knowledge of how that tape has gotten out. It is unfortunate that the information has now been viewed by many different people."

Fichter said, "Those events, I can't control. All I can control is what I do. We are apparently in the politics of confrontation, and it appears some people want to remain there. That is not how I practice my profession."

The Rev. Jesse Jackson, at a rally and vigil Tuesday night, said he saw the tape for the first time earlier in the day but that it didn't change his perception of the situation.

"They finally showed us the tape, the great and mighty moment one of them leaked the tape to CBS News to further prove their point," he said. "I saw an ugly fight that should not have been."

"I didn't see what I see in a hockey match — blood; I didn't see what I saw when the Knicks played Miami in the NBA," Jackson said. "I saw a seven-minute tape and 17 seconds of fight ... (and) it takes some effort to discern who is in that film in that 17-second frame."

The criminal charges came as Jackson continued his efforts to rally support for seven high school students initially expelled for two years by the Decatur school board for their part in the fight.

Jackson and hundreds of attendees were in high

CHARGES

Continued on A6



TOUGH SEASON: Jeff Walk of Neoga has experienced firsthand the effects this season's excessive rain, late planting and drought have had on farmers in his area.



MOTION FILED: Rainbow/PUSH Coalition attorney Lewis Myers Jr. and the Rev. Jesse Jackson explain the circumstances for the filing of a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction against the Decatur School Board Tuesday from the entrance of the federal courthouse in Urbana.

Residents unhappy over spotlight

By TONY REID
H&R Staff Writer

DECATUR — Here we go again. Decatur is once more caught in the glare of the national media spotlight, and the news is not good. The city that grabbed headlines in 1994 with three major labor disputes that put 3,800 workers on picket lines is now leading the news as the Rev. Jesse Jackson fights to overturn the expulsions of seven African-American high school students.

Decatur's on the front page of the Chicago Tribune, all over national TV news (CBS and NBC broadcast video of the fight that led to the expulsions) and

plastered all over news-related Internet sites. Decatur teachers went head-to-head with Jackson on CNN's "Talkback Live" show Tuesday while TV satellite trucks prowled the city. Nationally syndicated radio host Rush Limbaugh took calls on the topic much of the afternoon and Gerardo Rivera took it up at night.

Community leaders were chagrined, to say the least.

"Obviously, this is not the picture we want. This is not how we would like to have Decatur presented to the world,"

SPOTLIGHT

Continued on A6

Goetter re-elected president

With hugs and handshakes, school board says goodbye to Perkins, hello to Oakes.

By KEN DICKSON
H&R Staff Writer

DECATUR — Jackie Goetter had some competition, but he was re-elected president of the Decatur school board.

After the board members took turns Tuesday thanking Jeffrey Perkins for serving four years on the board, Dan Oakes, who previously served on the board from 1991 to 1996, took Perkins' seat.

The board then entertained nominations for president. Phil Wilhelm nominated Goetter, and it was seconded by D.R. Roberts.

When Goetter asked if there were any other nominations, Terry Robinson nominated Jan Mandernach, who was the top vote-getter in last April's school board election. Mike Setina seconded the nomination.

After a pause, the board voted on the motion for Goetter to be president. It passed 6-0 with Goetter voting present.

That vote was followed by another vote for Mandernach to become president. Setina again voted yes, while the other six board members voted present.

"I will proudly serve as president again," Goetter said.

Perkins, who has been publicly critical of the board's action to expel seven students for up to two years, received an award, hugs from Goetter and Roberts and several other handshakes.

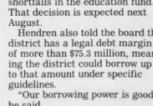
In a subsequent vote, Mandernach was unanimously elected vice president. Superintendent Kenneth Arnall, secretary and Jim Hendren, director of finances, was elected treasurer.

In other business, the board heard confirmation that it faces a \$3.8 million deficit in the education fund. Hendren said the other funds are "manageable."

Arnall recommended in September that the board consider placing a property tax increase question on the November 2000 ballot to circumvent the looming shortfalls in the education fund. That decision is expected next August.

Hendren also told the board the district has a legal debt margin of more than \$75.3 million, meaning the district could borrow up to that amount under specific guidelines.

"Our borrowing power is good," he said.



FINAL ACT: Jeffrey Perkins, right, shakes hands with D.R. Roberts and Phil Wilhelm, left. Board member Mike Setina is seated at right.

State may extend a helping hand to grain farmers

Drought has shriveled both crops and profits throughout the area.

By PAUL DRINKMANN
H&R Staff Writer

GREENUP — Weeks after farmers finished their harvest, dust devils are still whirling across the parched fields of Cumberland County.

Spring planting here was delayed by heavy rains, but weather quickly turned hot and dry in July. While most Illinois

farmers watched their healthy crops grow, farmers in parts of Central Illinois saw their late corn and soybean plants shrivel in the heat.

"It takes a really good year to make money. We've had two bad years in a row now," said farmer Jeff Walk of Neoga, president of the Cumberland County Farm Bureau.

Help may be on the way for struggling farmers. State Rep. Bill Mitchell, R-Forsyth, has proposed expanding state aid for hog farmers to include grain farmers who suffered drought and wind damage.

The existing program allows for \$2,000 payments to help eligible hog farmers pay off interest on loans.

Mitchell will hold a news conference today at the Shelby County Farm Bureau to publicize Gov. George H. Ryan's agricultural disaster declaration for Illinois counties affected by drought and wind damage.

Mitchell said few farmers in his district seem to be aware of the Oct. 4 declaration.

FARMERS

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