

44 CENTRAL ILLINOIS/STATE Decatur, Illinois • Saturday, November 6, 1999

Howley, Stockard support expulsion decision

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sinners, if God didn't have mercy, we wouldn't be here. "We're not talking about getting in a fight with anybody. We're just wanting due process. We're asking (the school board) to help turn their lives around. It is these students today, but it could be some students you know tomorrow."

The Decatur school board expelled seven students through the 2000-2001 school year but board members said they will review the students' participation in a community-based study or service program and conduct the remainder of the expulsion period at the end of the current school year.

But even as plans for the demonstration were going up Friday, two more city leaders voiced their support for the expulsions.

During a news conference Friday afternoon, Decatur Mayor Terry Howley and city council member Betty Stockard pledged support for the school board's decision, with Stockard last night urging people with no direct involvement in the matter to stay home Sunday.

In city council chambers, Howley placed a flag-sized placard against the podium, bearing the words of the board's resolution to expel the students.

Howley said the resolution has been widely misunderstood, and he appealed to all citizens to "look at the facts, not the spin" and to support law enforcement and the school board's decision to keep the community safe.

The concern expressed for those who were punished for their actions on Sept. 17 needs to be there 365 days a year, not just when high-profile politicians see a chance to use our school kids to further their agenda," Howley said. "These kids have not been banished from the learning process, and if they choose to, they can be back in school in a short period of time."

Howley said the expelled students need help but "must also be held responsible for their actions, which clearly created a very dangerous situation for many innocent people."

Stockard agreed, announcing that she has reversed her position since viewing video footage of the fight and interviewing eyewitnesses. She said she now supports the school board after hav-

Church event organizers invite the Rev. Jackson

DECATUR — Main Street Church of the Living God will sponsor its third annual Fall Feast from 1 to 3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 7, at the Masonic Temple, 224 W. William St., Decatur.

The event, which is open to the public, is an effort for churches and community leaders to spend time socializing in an effort to foster cooperation and improve the quality of life.

Church event organizers invite the Rev. Jackson

had the chance to see and hear both sides of this issue. "And I resent the pressure of those with a political agenda coming into our community," she said, "to tell us how to discipline people who are innocent people, break the rules and break the law."

Stockard went a step further and said she discourages anyone in the community from participating in Sunday's march "if they where the fight took place (or) if they have not seen the video (footage of the fight)."

But some of those planning to rally see the issue differently. "A lot of people seem to be uniformed about the situation," said Ricky Williams Jr., a senior from Danville. "The school board is being unreasonable for just a slight fight. I don't think it has given fair play to these students."

Kelsey Meadows, a junior from St. Louis, said on one hand she can understand why the school board is thinking of the greater good, not just of the individuals involved, and is trying to crack down on gangs.

"But that way of thinking doesn't work for everyone," she said. "Keeping them out of school for two years is ridiculous. What are the students going to do for two years? Schools have to have policies to deal with individual situations, not blanket policies."

Meadows said she will definitely attend the rally on Sunday. "It's one of the most exciting things to happen in Decatur in a long time."

Elisenhower High School Principal Walter Scott said Friday that not all special preparators were being dealt with during Sunday's march.

Decatur School District Superintendent Kenneth Arndt said that Keith Anderson, a local Rainbow/PUSH leader, picked up a building-use application on Thursday. He said, however, the school district has a building-use

Macon County Sheriff Roger Walker and neighborhood planner Shelli Hansbro will emcee the program, which begins at 2 p.m. and includes a performance by Youth With A Purpose, Direction, the Main Street Combo, and announcements of upcoming community events. Organizers have invited Mayor Terry Howley and the Rev. Jesse Jackson to attend.

policy which the group would have to follow. That policy calls for filing the application at least seven days in advance of an event, Arndt said. At that time a group must also have a certificate of insurance on file to remove any liability from the school district for damages, have an estimate of the number of people participating on file, and have made provisions for additional security, if such is required, to insure the orderliness of the meeting and safety of those involved, he said.

"Rainbow/PUSH won't be using force," he said. "We're not using force. We're using our voice. We're using our right to free speech. We're using our right to assembly. We're using our right to petition. We're using our right to peaceably assemble. We're using our right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Asked about school security measures planned for Monday, Arndt released to the Herald & Review a memorandum which he said was issued to staff members.

"The school administration has met with city officials to discuss the safety of students and staff on Monday," read the statement.

"Appropriate precautions and security measures will be in place at our school buildings. At no time will we jeopardize the safety of our children in reaction to statements by outside organizations. We enlist your support in making Monday's school session a normal and productive school day."

Any announcement about a school closing, if needed, would be disseminated through news media channels, as it would during a snow day, for example.

"We've obviously had crises before," Arndt said afterward. "I'm fully confident the staff will take whatever action is necessary to make sure the kids are safe in school."

Rainbow/PUSH Coalition contacted him or sought his input before taking action in Decatur. "They used to contact me when they came to town," Livingston allowed, "but his lack of notification in this instance 'unusual.' Livingston declined to speculate on Jackson's motives or interest in the expulsions.

Thomas F. Roesser, a conservative commentator based in Chicago, said there's no rhyme or reason for Jackson to intercede in this issue, save one: headlines.

"Jesse Jackson is a positive genius for entangling himself in local activities involving race that have nothing to do with any national or international civil rights effort," Roesser said. "It's really a lamentable attempt to gain publicity for himself."

Roesser said Jackson should be more selective in picking his fights, saying that involvement in parochial matters "cheapens his value."

"I mean, if there's a battle on my block in Park Ridge between my neighbors and one of those happens to be an African American, and (Jackson) shows up with TV cameras, he looks kind of ridiculous. He should have better things to do."

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BRIEFS

Pana school board elects new president

PANA — A 10-year veteran of the Pana school board has been elected president of the board, according to Superintendent Larry Marsh.

Prudy Osborn will serve as president, a position that had been held by Jim Michael since 1989. Michael, who served from 1989-99, was not re-elected during the spring election.

The street will be closed from

Don Allen was re-elected as vice president during the Wednesday meeting. The board will continue meeting on the third Monday of every month, Marsh said.

N. Monroe St. section to close on Monday

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State takes disciplinary action against area nurses, physician

SPRINGFIELD — The Illinois Department of Professional Regulation has taken disciplinary action against five area people — four registered nurses and a physician.

The physician and surgeon license of Dr. Robert Foreman of Casey was suspended pending a hearing before the Illinois Medical Disciplinary Board after a mental evaluation revealed he suffers from a psychological disorder and alcohol dependence that affect his ability to practice medicine.

The registered nurse license of Cheryl Broadby of Villa Grove was placed on probation for three years for diverting controlled substances from her employer.

The registered nurse license of Karen L. Hicks of Decatur was placed on probation for one year, and she was fined \$1,000 for engaging in irregular billing practices when she submitted claims for her employer for nursing services involving a home health patient.

The registered nurse license of Douglas Holt of Mattoon had his registered nurse license placed on probation for two years after allegedly diverting Vicodin and Darvocet while employed at Charleston Health Care Center.

Gary Vaughn of Taylorville had his registered nurse license placed on probation for one year for unprofessional conduct by failing to be accountable for his nursing actions or seeking instruction from qualified individuals when implementing activities such as ordering medications.

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