

Decatur, Illinois • Sunday, November 21, 1999 CENTRAL ILLINOIS WORLD A5

## MARCHES: Displaying convictions

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does except it brings to the attention of the people who are on the 'inside' and don't really know how the 'outside' feels that they, somebody who is in trouble here, and somebody who is not in trouble here," Wiedrich said. "And that's where I come in."

People who participate in marches say they do so as a public display of their convictions. Other methods — writing letters to the editor, sharing their views with friends and acquaintances — while valid ways of engineering change, lack the drama and camaraderie of a demonstration with others of like mind.

On Saturday, almost 200 people joined Stockard at 16th and Cantrell streets in another "Stop the Violence" march.

A column of people almost 100 blocks long marched down 16th, past Eisenhower High School, returning waves and "thumbs up" signs from passing cars.

Many of the people carried signs with messages such as "Peace" or "Jesus" or "Stop the Violence" and several also had blue ribbons pinned to their lapels in support of the school board.

"It's a visible way of letting everyone know, even the perpetrators of violence, that there are people who want it to stop," Stockard said.

A public demonstration like a march attracts attention, said Peg Kovach, executive director of Growing Strong Sexual Assault Center, which stages a "Take Back

the Night" march in April of each year. The walk is a nationwide observance.

"One purpose of it is to bring light into darkness, to bring out the secret of sexual assault so there is no more darkness that surrounds sexual assault," Kovach said. "The other issue is the whole atmosphere of night time and the safety issues that women feel. So when we take these walks, it's like we're emboldened to go into this dark area, to bring light into it and feel safe at the same time."

Marching is a way to take a stand so the whole world can see you, said Tim Haworth, who helped organize the annual March for Jesus last year and was the chairman of the march in 1998. "The whole point is, we (Christians) come together in unity," Haworth said. "No denominations, nothing to separate us, just our common denominator who is Jesus."

Churches are not allowed to carry banners touting their own denomination, he said, and no one uses the occasion to air any controversy or cause.

If churches do all their worshiping inside, said the Rev. Darrell C. Porter, a member of the 1999 March for Jesus committee, no one but other Christians will see what's going on. And a public demonstration can draw others in.

"We're proclaiming Jesus Christ Lord of all the earth," Porter said. "We get out and reach out and touch other people's lives, so they can know the joy of salvation

the Lord has given to us."

Stockard said, some attendees were at Saturday's Stop the Violence march because they supported the school board and were using the march to make that clear. And that was fine. But she didn't want anyone to lose sight of the main goal.

"I hope people will continue to come out and say we're marching for a cause, to stop violence of any type," Stockard said. She plans to hold marches on Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. and Saturdays at 1:30 p.m. for the next several weeks. March routes will be announced later.

How long the marches continue will depend on participation. David Childs said he attended Saturday to show support for Stockard's courage in publicly supporting the school board. "She's willing to take a stand that might not have been popular in certain areas of the community," he said.

Stockard said Peg Sheehan of Decatur has the courage of her convictions and gives courage to others because of it. That was her reason for attending.

"Stockard" has done this for years," Sheehan said. "This isn't brand new. This isn't just 'get in the limelight' stuff. She has put her money where her mouth is."

Six-year-old Chelsea Peters of Decatur rode in the march on her daddy's shoulders, carrying a sign that said "Peace."

"We teach her to stand up for what's right," said her mother, Carol Peters.

## JACKSON: Decatur praised as peaceful

**Continued from A1**  
repeatedly thanked, as well as the expelled students and some of their parents.

Also present were many from Chicago who marched last Sunday in Decatur.

Tom Spanan, a community activist who served as a security guard for marchers last Sunday, said he also had visited Decatur years ago to see a friend. This time around, he found the community to be "very neighborly."

"I don't think I received any less congeniality than anywhere else I've gone," said Spanan, a hospital manager. "And I believe it's because if you walk in peace, you are received in the same aura of peace."

Alonso Anderson of Chicago said he took his wife and three of his four children, ages 5, 11 and 12, so they could see the strides society has made since the marches of about 40 years ago, when police

"were siccing dogs on people. It's just not a fictitious story or a Hollywood story," said Anderson, a business manager at a Chicago school. "We didn't encounter any hostility. It was a good experience."

Jackson zeroed in on specific Decatur issues, such as his renewed call for the January reinstatement of at least two of the students, both star athletes who are on or ahead of schedule to graduate this academic year.

He ruled against the alleged public release of the students' records, which he said was done by angry school board members. And he expressed a desire for healing and reconciliation.

For the most part, though Jackson spoke in broader terms. He wants the state associations of school superintendents and principals to create a uniform zero-tolerance policy that will provide consistency from one school

district to the next. He also said it is crucial to ensure students receive a fair hearing.

Jackson also said schools must upgrade alternative schools for youngsters struggling for various reasons. He said they are inadequately funded in some areas, and nonexistent in others.

Jackson also responded to those who questioned why he intervened in Decatur, including criticism that he has been motivated because the expelled students are black.

He noted international efforts he has made to help people of various ethnic backgrounds, including his role in negotiating the freedom of three U.S. soldiers who were captured by Bosnian Serbs earlier this year.

"I am not in the business of trying to please people," said Jackson. "I am in the business of trying to educate and change people. I don't say that arrogantly."

### BRIEFS

**Robinson woman killed in one-car crash**

**ROBINSON** — A 34-year-old woman died in a one-car accident claimed the life of a 30-year-old Tracy D. Good of Robinson on Saturday.

Good was traveling on River Road near Palestine when her car left the roadway and struck a tree, killing her instantly. She was not wearing a seat belt.

She was pronounced dead at the scene at 10:45 a.m. Saturday by Crawford County coroner Earl Deckard. The investigation is

open and an inquest is pending. Hearing postponed on Bement issue

**MONTECELLO** — The Platt County Circuit Court hearing a temporary injunction to prevent the Bement Village Board from firing the town police officer has been reset for 9:30 a.m. Dec. 17.

Until then, the restraining order against the board will prevent the officer's dismissal. Officer Steven Bein filed the lawsuit in October to keep the board from firing him after he

ticketed village board member Joseph Durbin for riding his lawnmower on the street with a revoked driver's license.

The suit, which alleges a conspiracy among five of seven board members, also asks for "in excess of \$50,000" in damages.

**DALTON CITY** — The southeast corner of Dalton City is under a boil for drinking and smoking purposes until further notice.

## Muslim, Serb children play together

**Soccer game aimed at reconciliation takes place near site of Bosnian massacre.**

**SREBRENICA, Bosnia-Herzegovina** — In an attempt at reconciliation, Bosnian Muslim and Serb children played soccer together Saturday near the site of the worst massacre in Europe since World War II.

With help from European officials, 30 Muslim refugee children arrived by bus in Srebrenica and were warmly welcomed by young Serbs who now call the town their home.

About 2,000 bodies were later found in mass graves. Bosnian Serb forces overran the Muslim enclave in July 1995, and some 8,000 men went missing.

While international efforts at reconciliation often fail to overcome nationalist stubbornness or suspicions, the idea of bringing together the next generation succeeded on Saturday.

The European Union's Humanitarian Office spent \$150,000 on the reconciliation project, in which several cities hosted friendly multiethnic soccer matches during the summer. But Saturday's event was the project's climax because it was organized in the most sensitive spot in Bosnia.

Even five minutes before the bus was to arrive, many thought it wouldn't work. But the children surprised even the biggest skeptics.

As the bus, provided by the NATO-led peacekeeping force in Bosnia, turned into the schoolyard of the Srebrenica primary school, some 100 Serb children welcomed the guests with frantic applause followed by an uncontrolled hubbub.

"I can't believe this. This is great," said Capt. Osa Penny, from Junction City, Kan., who serves in the NATO-led forces. He and a few of his men were assigned to patrol the site, just in case.

Some of the Muslim children arrived with their parents. Safija Sultanovic, 30, watched her 10-year-old son Halid mingle with the happy crowd spreading over seven small soccer fields set up for the occasion. The children started playing without paying attention to who were the guests and who were the hosts.

Sultanovic lost a brother and other members of her family in the 1995 fighting. She now lives as a refugee in the Sarajevo suburb of Vugosica in the Muslim-Croat Federation.

"I'm here for the first time after well, what happened," she said. "I'm very excited and something was pulling me over here today. There should be more of this in the future because we want to return. What I feel now is sadness but at the same time happiness because I was able to come."

"The children made the first step," she added. One of the players, 13-year-old Bekir Hodzic, said he was also happy to be here even though he lost his father during the fall of the town.

Sadik Vilić, 30, the coach of the Muslim team, is also a Srebrenica survivor. Instead of watching the game, he couldn't help looking around at his old hometown.

"It's difficult for me," he said. "In these hills I lost 90 percent of the ones I loved," he pointed at the steep hills surrounding Srebrenica.

He said he supported this project, but said adults must do more, too.

"If we are going to wait for our children to do it, we will wait for a long time, till they grow up," he said.

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