

Herald & Review

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Decatur, Illinois

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Expulsion hits blacks hardest

Quick Take



VICTORY: Triumphant Rams lineman D'Marco Farr celebrates after sacking St. Louis Rams' quarterback Billy Joe Hobert.

Rams win again

The St. Louis Rams, beginning the season as the NFL's losingest team of the decade, continued to dominate the NFC West on Sunday, beating the New Orleans Saints 43-12.

Sports / B1



HOMECOMING: Meridian's Ben Haynes, left, and Steve Sprague chat during the celebration Sunday.

Hometown heroes

Blue Mound and Macon hailed their Meridian High School heroes Sunday for their 13-1 season.

Central Illinois / A3

Lottery

Here are the winning numbers selected Sunday in the Illinois State Lottery.

- Pick Three-Evening: 7-8-9
- Pick Four-Evening: 7-2-1-1
- Lotto jackpot: \$4 million
- Big Game jackpot: \$7 million

Weather

■ Today: Sunny, High 44.
■ Tonight: Mostly clear, Low 21.

Details / B14

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Issue 333 • Two sections



African-Americans make up 72.8 percent of students expelled in Central Illinois.

By JOHN C. PATTERSON
High Springfield Bureau Writer

SPRINGFIELD — Across Central Illinois, large school districts have expelled black students at a greater rate than white students.

A computer analysis of expulsions and enrollment in public schools in Peoria, Bloomington, Normal, Springfield, Decatur and Champaign-Urbana shows that during the 1997-98 school year, black students made up 34 percent of the enrollment and 72.8 percent of the expulsions.

In contrast, white students made up 62 percent of enrollment and 25.2 percent of expulsions that same school year. The remainder of enrollment and expulsions was spread among stu-

dents of other ethnic origins.

These figures are the result of comparing ethnic enrollment in each of the communities' schools with similar expulsion data. The 1997-98 school year was the latest information available from the Illinois State Board of Education on both enrollment and expulsions.

Decatur's numbers fit the regional trend. During the 1997-98 school year, 23 students were expelled. Five were white. The other 18 were black.

Black students accounted for 39 percent of the enrollment that year, but 75 percent of the expulsions.

White students accounted for nearly 60 percent of the enrollment and 22 percent of the expulsions.

This was before the Decatur School District adopted a "zero-tolerance" resolution regarding violence. That was not approved by the school board until earlier

this year and most recently has been at the heart of the controversy regarding seven expelled black students who were disciplined after a fight in the stands at Eisenhower High School during an intracity football game.

The expulsions led to the Rev. Jesse Jackson marching in Decatur and getting arrested while television cameras broadcast the event worldwide. The events have invited criticism that severe discipline in Decatur is unjustly heaped upon black students.

Decatur schools Superintendent Kenneth Arndt could not explain the differences in expulsion rates between white and black students but rejects any racist insinuations. "I can't explain it. It's one of the series of questions that we'll look at."

Arndt said the school district

EXPULSION
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CENTRAL ILLINOIS SCHOOL DISTRICTS Enrollment vs. Expulsions

Figures based on percentages

	White	Black
Decatur	59.53 enrollment 21.74 expulsions	38.99 enrollment 78.26 expulsions
Peoria	43.49 enrollment 21.85 expulsions	62.77 enrollment 74.83 expulsions
Bloomington/ Normal	80.68 enrollment 100 expulsions	14.17 enrollment .00 expulsions
Champaign/ Urbana	62.00 enrollment 20.83 expulsions	30.17 enrollment 79.17 expulsions
Springfield	65.91 enrollment 36.00 expulsions	31.46 enrollment 64.00 expulsions
Region	62.00 enrollment 25.20 expulsions	34.00 enrollment 72.80 expulsions

Administration defends WTO

Organization draws fire from Teamsters leader James Hoffa

SEATTLE (AP) — The World Trade Organization, getting ready to stage the largest trade event ever in the United States, was attacked Sunday by the Teamsters union president for putting "corporate greed" ahead of human rights.

With much riding on the outcome of the talks, the Clinton administration defended its decision to invite trade ministers from around the world to the Pacific Northwest in hopes of launching a new round of global trade talks.

Commerce Secretary William Daley said the administration's embrace of the global marketplace and lower trade barriers has contributed to booming U.S. exports and the country's longest peacetime economic expansion.

"This economy is strong ... and it will remain strong because of the sort of outward view we've had about trade, not an inward view," Daley told Reform Party presidential hopeful Pat Buchanan in a joint appearance on NBC's "Meet the Press."

WTO Director General Michael Moore, the former New Zealand prime minister who has made a point of reaching out to critics, told a conference of union representatives Sunday that opponents were trying to create a false debate between labor and the WTO.

"Trade is the ally of working people, not their enemy," said Moore, who received a polite but lukewarm response from the crowd of union leaders from more than 100 countries.

WTO
Continued on A8

Thousands plan New Year nuptials

By RON INGRAM
High Staff Writer

DECATUR — Tammy Smith and Dennis Ritchard will be among thousands of couples worldwide saying "I do" with the coming of the new year.

The Decatur couple plan to get hitched a few minutes into the new year during a very informal ceremony at the AIF Hall, where they met and fell in love.

"I said I wanted to start the new millennium off right," Ritchard said of the decision to tie the knot New Year's Day.

"We're hoping everyone has fun."

The couple is planning what is calling a "preception," complete with a small wedding cake that will be cut as guests party at the hall before midnight on Dec. 31, Smith said.

"We've both been married before and didn't want to go through a big wedding," she said. "We've asked the guests to bring something to put into two time capsules we'll have rather than give us gifts. We plan to seal them up and then open them in about 20 years."

Smith said they will reserve a champagne toast for after the ceremony.

The desire to start the new year in a state of matrimony is a near craze in some larger

Y2K
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POWERFUL POTTERY



LIFE MASK: Sculptor Clark Dickerson of Noble makes his life masks out of clay and uses ostrich feathers for a plume.

Noble artist courts incendiary muse

Clark Dickerson coaxes beauty out of blazing heat and clay.

NOBLE — Clark Dickerson is a god of fire.

He brings forth his artistic creations from kilns heated to a blistering 2,000 degrees, snatching out clay pots that are glowing white-hot and breathing on them to send an explosion of tiny cracks flashing through the molten glaze.

Placing his pots into a pit filled with straw and newspaper, he stands back as flames shoot waist high, the inferno delineating in smoke the intricate network of cracks forged from the artist's breath.

"What happens is all the oxygen in the pot gets replaced with the carbon from the smoke, and the dark carbon makes the cracks show up in the glaze," said Dickerson, 34.

The effect is delicate, intricate and mesmerizing, blending neatly with American Indian-style designs that Dickerson painstakingly outlines in sticky tape before the pot is glazed; the tape is removed before firing and the areas kept free of glaze by the tape darken in dramatic shades.

His adoring customers can't get enough of this pottery style, called "raku," and he regularly sells out at art shows all over Central Illinois. He's been setting up a stand at the Decatur Celebration for the past 10 years and



BAKED SUN: A clay sun sculpture is just one of the many pieces by Dickerson.

has never failed to sell out there, either. "I want anybody who likes my work to be able to afford it," explains Dickerson, whose art sells typically in the \$50 to \$150 range; call 618-723-2897 for details. "If someone comes up and says 'I like your work but I'm running a bit short this week,' I'll ask them what they think is a fair price and we'll go from there. If you want it, I want you to take it home."

Dickerson works from his home, a circa-1900 house that belonged to his late parents in Noble, a town about 40 miles south of Effingham. He is fixing the place up with a distinct Western flavor, turning his skills to building wood-burned ceilings and a show-piece fireplace decorated in geometric patterns executed in wood and marble.

Dickerson has never remodeled a house, but has always been able to mold success from his willingness to experi-

ment and try new things. As a kid he dreamed of playing pro baseball (Millikin University was willing to give him a scholarship) but discovered his hands contained other magic and decided to try for a home run with art. He wound up graduating with a fine arts degree from Eastern Illinois University and has been working as a full-time artist for 13 years.

"My college instructors would say 'Go to the library and read books for five hours,'" he recalls. "But I didn't really need that kind of help with my work; I always had plenty of ideas right up here in my head."

One of his notions was raku, a Japanese art form tough to master, as all that heating and cooling leads to a lot of broken pots and frayed nerves. Practice makes perfect, however, and Dickerson has got it down to a fine art. Holding up one pot, he twists it to reveal a rainbow of iridescent color.

"This is called copper firing," he explains, setting it carefully back down on the elaborate home fireplace. "I shattered a lot of pots learning how to do this."

Copper oxide mixed with water is sprayed on the pot and then fired in the kiln. The pot is black when taken out and placed in a pit of straw and paper so everything catches fire. Dickerson watches, carefully waiting for the precise moment when the flames oxidize the copper. "When it reaches the right temperature there is a chemical reaction and you see this burst of color," said Dickerson.

"There are blues and reds and all kinds of colors going in all directions."

POSTCARDS
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