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Narc pix; BJHS rules; Car tax; Video Xians; Bus transfer center

BLOOMINGTON—NORMAL

25¢

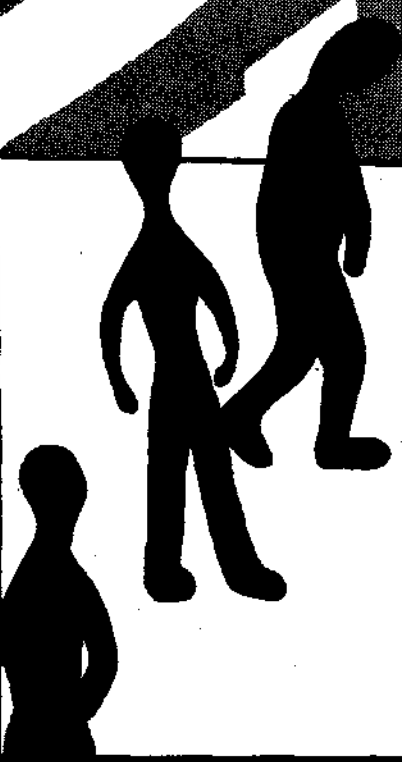
POST AMERIKAN

Vol. 8 No. 8
Feb. 1980

**FIRE HITS
PRISON BUS**
SURVIVORS TELL STORY, PAGES 12-16



NEXT



**Pontiac prisoners on trial
page 21**

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ABOUT US

The Post-Amerikan is a worker-controlled collective that puts out this paper. If you'd like to help, give us a call and leave your name with our wonderful answering machine. Then we'll call you back and give you the rap about the Post. You start work at nothing per hour and stay there. Everyone is paid the same. Ego gratification and good karma are the fringe benefits.

Decisions are made collectively by staff members at our regular meetings. All workers have an equal voice. The Post has no editor or hierarchical structure, so quit calling up and asking who's in charge. Ain't nobody in charge.

Anybody who reads this paper can tell the type of stuff we print. All worthwhile material is welcome. We try to choose articles that are timely, relevant, informative, and not available in other local media. We will

not print anything racist, sexist, or ageist.

Most of our material and inspiration for material comes from the community. We encourage you, the reader, to become more than a reader. We welcome all stories and tips for stories, which you can mail to our office. The deadline for next issue is Feb. 20.

If you'd like to work on the Post and/or come to meetings, call us at 828-7232. You can also reach folks at 828-6885.

You can make bread hawking the Post--15¢ a copy, except for the first 50 copies on which you make only 10¢ a copy. Call us at 828-7232.

Mail, which we more than welcome, should be sent to: the Post-Amerikan PO Box 3452, Bloomington IL 61701. Be sure you tell us if you don't want your letter printed! Otherwise, it's likely to end up on our letters page.

Post Sellers

BLOOMINGTON

Eastgate IGA, at parking lot exit
Medusa's Adult World, 420 N. Madison
The Back Porch, 402 1/2 N. Main
SW corner, Front & Main
Downtown Postal Substation
Bl. Post Office, E. Empire (at exit)
Devary's Market, 1402 W. Market
Harris Market, 802 N. Morris
Hickory Pit, 920 W. Washington
Biasi's Drug Store, 217 N. Main
Discount Den, 207 N. Main
U-I Grocery, 918 W. Market
Kroger's, 1110 E. Oakland
Bus Depot, 523 N. East
Wash House, 609 N. Clinton
Pat's Billiard Supply, 801 W. Market
Common Ground, 516 N. Main
Man-Ding-Go's, 312 S. Lee
Mel-O-Cream Doughnuts, 901 N. Main
Mr. Donut, 1310 E. Empire
Doug's Motorcycle, 809 S. Morris
K-Mart, at parking lot exit
Small Changes Bookstore, 409A N. Main
Lay-Z-J Saloon, 1401 W. Market
Pentagraph Building (in front)
NE corner, Main & Washington

NORMAL

Triple Treat, 1528 E. College
Redbird IGA, 301 S. Main
Mother Murphy's, 111 1/2 North St.
Ram, 101 Broadway Mall
Eisner's, E. College (near sign)
Divinyl Madness, 115 North St.
Bowling and Billiards Center, ISU
W.W. Bakeshop, 602 Kingsley
Cage, ISU University Union
Midstate Truck Plaza, Route 51 north
Upper Cut, 318 Kingsley
Old Main Book Store, 207 S. Main

OUTTA TOWN

Galesburg: Under the Sun, 427 E. Main
Monmouth: Head's Up, 123 W. First
Peoria: Sound Warehouse, 3217 N. Univ.
Springfield: King Harvest Food Co-op
1131 S. Grand Ave East
Urbana: Horizon Bkstre, 517 S. Goodwin

GOOD NUMBERS

Alcoholics Anonymous--828-5049
American Civil Liberties Union--452-3634
Clare House (Catholic Worker)--828-4035
Community for Social Action--452-4867
Countering Domestic Violence (PATH)--827-4005
Dept. of Children and Family Services--829-5326
Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare (Social Security Admin.)--829-9436
Dept. of Mental Health--828-4311
Gay Action/Awareness Union--828-6935
Gay National Educational Switchboard--800-227-0888
Gay People's Alliance (ISU) 452-5852
HELP (Transportation for handicapped and sr. citizens)--828-8301
Ill. Lawyer Referral Service--800-252-8916
Kaleidoscope--828-7346
Lighthouse--828-1371
McLean County Health Dept.--829-3363
McLean County Mental Health Center--827-5351
Men's Rap Group--828-6935
Mobile Meals (meals for shut-ins)--828-8301

National Health Care Services (abortion assistance in Peoria)--691-9073
National Runaway Switchboard--800-621-4000 in Illinois--800-972-6004 (all 800 #'s toll free)
Occupational Development Center--828-7324
PATH (Personal Assistance Telephone Help)--827-4005
Parents Anonymous--827-4005 (PATH)
Planned Parenthood--827-8025
Prairie Alliance--452-8492
Post-Amerikan--828-7232
Prairie State Legal Aid--827-5021
Project OZ--827-0377
Public Aid, McLean Cnty. Dept. of--827-4621
Rape Crisis Line--827-4005 (PATH)
SAW (Student Association for Women, ISU)--438-7619
Small Changes Alternative Bookstore--829-6223
Sunnyside Neighborhood Center--827-5428
Tele Care--828-8301
Unemployment Compensation/Employment Office--827-6237
United Farmworkers Support Group--452-5046
Women's Switchboard--800-927-5404

Boycott Red Coach lettuce

The boycott of non-United Farm Workers of America (AFL-CIO) iceberg lettuce is continuing. The particular target of the campaign is the Bruce Church Lettuce Grower's label--"Red Coach."

This new boycott began last year, as the various major growers refused to re-sign the contracts that farmworkers had won during 1975 and 1976. Beyond simple survival, the UFW for the first time was looking for a substantial wage increase, hoping to boost migrant farmworkers above \$4 an hour.

The lettuce growers held firm and the California fields were again marred by violence and arrest. One worker, Rufino Contreras, was killed on the picket line, which led the union to again adopt the boycott tactic.

At this point, a good number of large growers have signed. The largest, Inter-Harvest, signed after a boycott of a related product, Chiquita Banana. Inter-Harvest is owned by United Brands of Boston, which also controls the large banana label.

Of the big companies, the only hold-out is the third largest--Bruce Church. "Red Coach" is their most popular label, and "Red Coach" lettuce, clearly identified with a

drawing of a stage coach and horses on each cellophane-wrapped head, is the main boycott target.

"Red Coach" can be found on sale at many places, especially at Eagle Stores in the local area, where it is selling for the low, low price of 33¢ a head, prices not seen since the

boycott period of 1973 and 1974. Please boycott Red Coach in particular, and any lettuce that is not shipped in a box bearing the Black Eagle emblem of the United Farm Workers. For more information, please call 452-5046.

--MgM

Prison for childbearing

A young black woman in Macon, Georgia, has been told that she will be sent to federal prison if she bears another illegitimate baby.

U.S. District Court Judge Wilbur Owens explained his ruling saying that there is a direct relationship between the number of children the woman has and

her criminal conduct. The 20-year-old mother of three was charged with stealing a \$1999.13 government check.

"I'll revoke her probation if she becomes pregnant," the judge said. "I told her I meant business."

--Ms. Magazine.

YOU CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Boycotts have worked in the past to bring a measure of justice to farm workers and their children. The farm workers are depending on you

BOYCOTT Red Coach LABELLED LETTUCE

Yes, I want to help!

- Enclosed is my donation to feed farm workers and their children on strike
 I want to help the boycott of head lettuce

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ ZIP CODE _____

UNITED FARM WORKERS OF AMERICA/AFL-CIO

P.O. Box 6776, Chicago, Ill. 60680
Phone: 786-0528



If the city's gonna pay for 'em, let the city own 'em

Paul Segobiano, county board member, has parents who've been relocated by urban renewal once and don't want to move again. The Segobianos are against developer Jack Snyder's plan for apartments on West Washington Street.

Donn Pierce, city council member from General Telephone, has free enterprise principles. He's against Snyder's apartments too.

Even Snyder is having second thoughts about the deal: "If a lot of people will be unhappy, we'd rather forget about the project," he told the Pantagraph.

Snyder's plan involves construction of a \$2 million, 48-unit apartment complex--financed mainly with government aid--in the 600 block of West Washington, which is the block next to the Haag drugstore, which used to be the Washington Square IGA. Snyder owns the Haag building and its parking lot.

The plan calls for several forms of government assistance, including \$1 million in tax-free industrial revenue bonds to pay construction costs. The bonds, which would be issued by the city, are a way of raiding the federal treasury to aid private development. Since interest on the bonds is tax-free, the interest rate is lower than with ordinary loans. The developer gains from a lower interest rate, the people who buy the bonds don't have to pay income tax on their profits, and only the federal government loses out.

A second form of aid involves borrowing \$400,000 against future property taxes. This scheme, called tax increment financing, assumes that the new property (Snyder's apartments) will pay more property tax than the old (a parking lot and four homes). The expected increase in property taxes would be used to repay a loan that would be used to buy the old property and get it ready for Snyder. The state supreme court is reviewing this financing method.

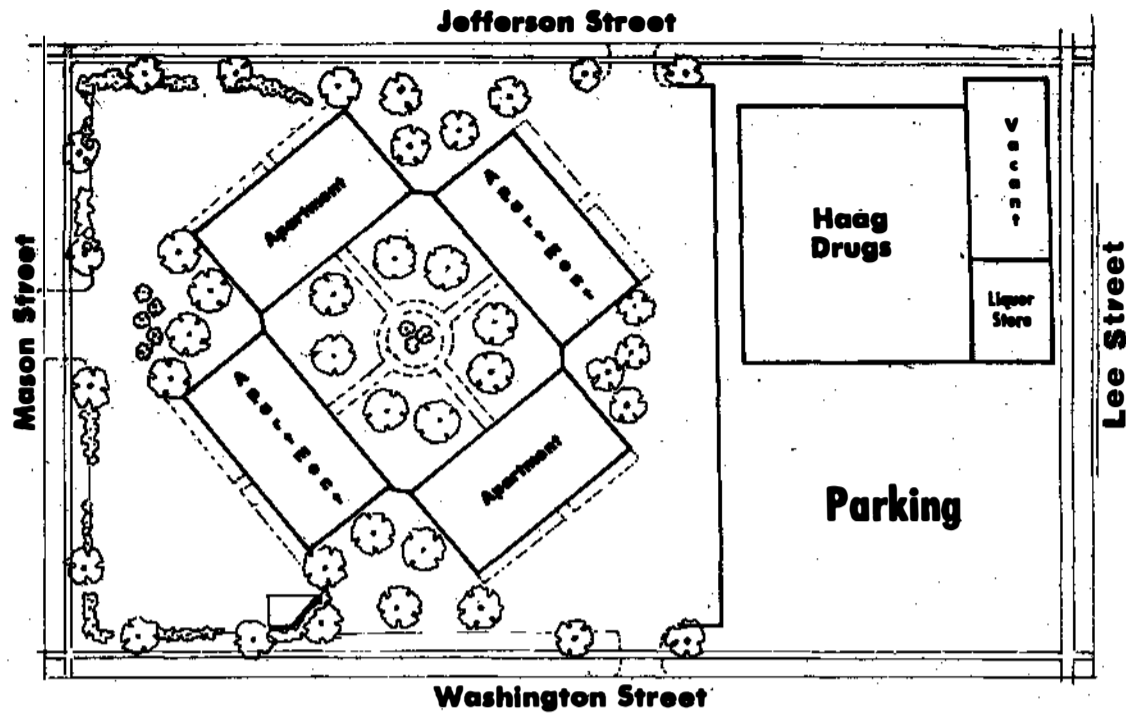
The city would also, according to Snyder's plan, use its power of eminent domain (which gives them the right to force private citizens to sell their land) to buy the block bounded by Jefferson, Mason, Washington, and Oak streets (the block next to the Haag store). The city would close Oak Street and lease the whole area to Snyder "with an ultimate option to buy at nominal consideration." Thus Snyder would get the land at a price well below its value--in addition to having his apartments largely financed by government bonds.

Cities often use their power of eminent domain to force people to sell their property. It's a standard tool of urban renewal, but it's just this tool that has the Segobianos up in arms. The elder Segobianos have been bought out once already.

According to the Pantagraph, Paul

Wine slows aging

Wine is an ideal tonic for aging, researchers at Wayne State University have determined. Elderly people living independently in the off-campus community were provided with several tall glasses of good wine every day and responded to it more positively than to most other geriatric tonics. They slept better and more regularly, had considerably more daytime energy, and just generally felt more like their "young selves."



Developer Jack Snyder wants to build a 48-unit apartment complex in the block just west of the Haag drug store building, which he owns, at Washington and Lee streets. The plan requires the closing of Oak Street (not shown), and Snyder wants various forms of local government assistance, including two forms of government-aided financing to pay for the land and most of the construction costs.

Segobiano told the city council that moving his parents "would be violating their right to own property by yielding that right to a developer's right to make money." I'm sure a lot of people who don't have relatives on the county board have felt that way.

Unfortunately for the Segobianos, urban renewal always puts some ideal of the city's good before that of individual residents. In order to accomplish this presumed community good, without abandoning the myth of free enterprise, urban renewal uses real estate developers like Snyder to rebuild what the city government bought and tore down.

County board member Segobiano should know better than to complain about the status quo. So should council member Donn Pierce.

Pierce is afraid that Snyder's plan lets the government go too far. He doesn't like tax increment financing but not because he's against profits. Pierce wants to keep government out of the free enterprise system, which means he'd rather Snyder bought his own land and found his own money to finance his apartments. Otherwise, the government might figure out that it could do without Snyder altogether.

However, Pierce's objections ignore a clear trend: fewer and fewer large projects are built without some sort of government aid. Look at Normal's new shopping center, Normal's assorted plans for new motels, even Normal's new little warehouse. The developers are against Pierce.

Theoretically, local governments use these various bizarre financing methods to encourage developers to build projects that are beneficial to the whole community. Usually--and always in Normal--benefit means raising more tax dollars, sales tax dollars as in shopping centers or property tax dollars as with any new building.

Sometimes, local governments use these financing methods to give new life to dying parts of towns--at least that's what the bureaucrats intended to do. But, as I said already, urban renewal doesn't always benefit the people who live in the area. Look at the plan to widen one block of Morris Avenue,

a plan that will close the Hickory Pit, a popular black hangout.

Of course, developer Snyder has taken care to point out the benefits of his plan: an increase in property taxes; a spur to redevelopment and renovation of the surrounding neighborhood; and the availability of 48 "non-subsidized" apartments near downtown.

I don't doubt that it's a good idea to build apartments downtown. The alternative is to build one huge bank all around the square. And I suppose \$300 a month is not unusually high rent for new apartments. Lots of people can't pay that much, of course, probably the ones that'd benefit most from living near downtown.

It's even possible that Snyder's plan is the best we can get. As long as we play the developers' game, they're going to take all the profit and all the government favors they can get. And we'll get apartments where we need them only as long as a developer wants them there too.

Then when the developers and urban planners have a scheme and they slide it by the planning commission and the zoning commission and the city council and the bankers, something will be built.

Along the way, if the rules are followed, the people who live at the site of the proposed project will get letters asking if they have complaints. Or maybe somebody'll put up a little sign with a phone number to call if you want to know what's going on. These are the latest formulas for community involvement, as mandated by Washington.

Of course, people don't care. They don't call the numbers offered. It wasn't their idea in the first place. All they can do is object and get put down anyway.

If it really isn't possible for the people who live and work in a neighborhood to decide what they want, then we can do the next best thing--cut Jack Snyder out. Let the city build and own the apartments Snyder planned. And maybe the place will draw some feisty tenants who'll want to run the place themselves.

--D. LeSeure

Recipe for frozen transfer center

3 businessmen, fatted
1 c. inertia
1 T vested interest, ground
1/2 c. federal red tape
dash of stubbornness
2 t oil of parking lot
2 bankers' hearts, stringy

Boil businessmen for their essence: dislike of people who lack money to buy things. While simmering this broth, add inertia, vested interest, red tape, and three pinches of stubbornness. Grease pan with oil of parking lot, and freeze with bankers' hearts. Serves 7000 bus riders.

For the third time in four years, city officials are faced with the issue of where to locate a downtown bus transfer center--a central spot where all bus routes intersect and thus allow easy transfer from one bus to another.

For several years bus riders have been denied a reasonably located

transfer center because businessmen, backed up by the city council, don't want bus riders hanging around their property.

Downtown Council members don't like "'undesirable characters' lurking outside their stores while waiting for the bus," according to one 1977 Pantagraph story. The Downtown Council is made up of downtown business owners.

So the city council mucked about for years, holding meetings, setting up special task forces, and moving the transfer center higher and yon. At one point the council reviewed a poll of bus riders and then chose the riders' least favorite site, a site conveniently distant from downtown stores.

Finally, in late 1977, the council settled on a system of four "random stops" scattered about downtown Bloomington--in other words, no transfer center at all. The idea apparently was to keep the riff-raff in small groups and moving. Unfortunately, it also made transferring as difficult as finding a warm-hearted bank president.

True, knowledgeable bus riders could ask their drivers to radio ahead and hold a bus they wanted to catch. But this practice disrupted schedules and did nothing to reduce the incidence of pneumonia among bus riders.

So last fall, with the restoration of full service in sight after the broken-down buses fiasco, the Transit Authority asked the city to establish a single transfer site, preferably in the 100 block of North Main Street.



August 19, 1871

This site, incidentally, has been the transfer center before, and it was also the site favored by bus riders in the poll ignored by the city council.

The transit system, particularly chairperson Robert Tate, was apparently ready to accept a simple curbside transfer center, perhaps with plexiglass shelters like the ones already set up elsewhere downtown. But City Manager Bill Vail rightly thought Bloomington's bus riders deserved better.

Although this wasn't reported by the Pantagraph, Vail had in mind an island transfer center with restrooms and--of all things!--heat.

Since both the American State Bank and the National Bank of Bloomington are planning new parking lots on either side of the 100 block of North Main, Vail thought it would be useful to coordinate plans with the businesses on the block to maximize parking and to provide for easy access.

The regional planning commission came up with a plan, but the bankers were weren't much interested in cooperation. According to the Pantagraph, merchants rejected the plan, which would close the 100 block of North Main, because of problems ranging "from bus exhaust fumes to lack of walkways." Bankers understandably prefer the smell of money.

Elmo Franklin, president of the McLean County Historical Society, was more blunt in a letter to the city. The society, which is restoring the Miller-Davis building at Main and Front as a historic site, opposed the transfer site because it "would neither enhance the utilization of the building nor add dignity to its presence."

Presumably busloads of people eager to inspect the new national historic site are not sufficient "utilization." And the last time I examined the building, on the evening of January 14, its windows were full of Reagan pictures and other Republican Party propaganda. So much for dignity.

Then in November, City Manager Vail made another suggestion: put the transfer center in the city's Abraham Lincoln Parking Lot, which is at the south end of the 100 block of North Main.

Vail estimated the transfer center would take up about 50 parking spaces, but he proposed a 150-space parking deck over the north end of the lot to offset the loss. That would take care of another objection to buses: they take up parking spaces.

This plan also featured a covered transfer center with a heated enclosure and restrooms, although this part of the plan was never mentioned in the Pantagraph.

Vail estimated the cost of the park-

Department of Urban Renewal

Rehabilitation Loan Program

The Department of Urban Development, City of Bloomington, is currently seeking qualified applicants for rehabilitation loan programs. The programs provide money for home improvement loans at below market interest rates to qualified home owners who reside in Community Development areas. No investor-owned properties are covered by these programs.

The entire thrust of the program is directed at low to moderate income families with interest rates of 3% and 6%. Rates are determined by family size and income.

To find out if you qualify,
contact Mike Claver in the
Dept. of Urban Development
at 828-7361 ext. 245.

Recipe for unfrozen transfer center

ing deck at \$600,000, half of which the city already has in its parking fund. He thought that perhaps the transit system could get a federal grant to pay for the land it would use for its transfer center, and the rest of the cost could be borrowed against revenues from the extra 100 parking spaces.

The transit system soon reported that the feds weren't eager to shell out any bucks, but Vail plans to put the parking deck in his next budget with or without a transfer center because he thinks the city needs the parking spaces. The city has a list of 50-75 people waiting to buy spaces. I guess those people won't be riding the bus.

Anyway, the transit system is not hot for the Abraham Lincoln Parking Lot. Chaiperson Tate says that using the lot as a transfer center would add about 5 minutes onto each bus route. The extra time downtown, he said, would mean cuts in service elsewhere on the routes, and changes in the routes require federal approval, a 4-month process.

If Tate is right about the cuts in service, he should fight tooth and nail against the parking lot transfer center. The only thing is, the parking lot is only a couple hundred feet from the 100 block of North Main and even traffic pattern difficulties seem unlikely to account for a full 5-minute loss.

Yet Tate is pushing for the bus riders' preferred site, and he does have a point when he says that linking the transfer center to other projects has not been good for the transfer center.

Aside from red tape, the real obstacle to a good transfer center is once again the city's unwillingness to buck downtown business lords, notably the bankers. The city council should change its policy of letting the businesspeople have veto power over the transfer center.

In fact, the city should use its

Used Car Sam's law

Used car tax runs over poor

If you buy a used car from a person (instead of from a used car lot), you now have to pay a \$30 tax.

The new tax law--passed by Illinois legislators with almost no publicity last summer--took effect Jan. 1, 1980.

The new tax doesn't apply to vehicles bought at used car lots, where you pay the usual 5% sales tax.

The new law is an outrageously regressive tax--a tax which takes a larger proportion of a poor person's income than a rich person's.

The new law also gives a competitive advantage to used car lots, whose owners have always frowned on private individuals selling their cars through classified ads.

If you buy a \$200 car from Don Stone Ford, you only have to pay \$10 tax--sales tax.

If you buy the same \$200 car from a private individual, you now have to pay the \$30 tax--the new "use tax."

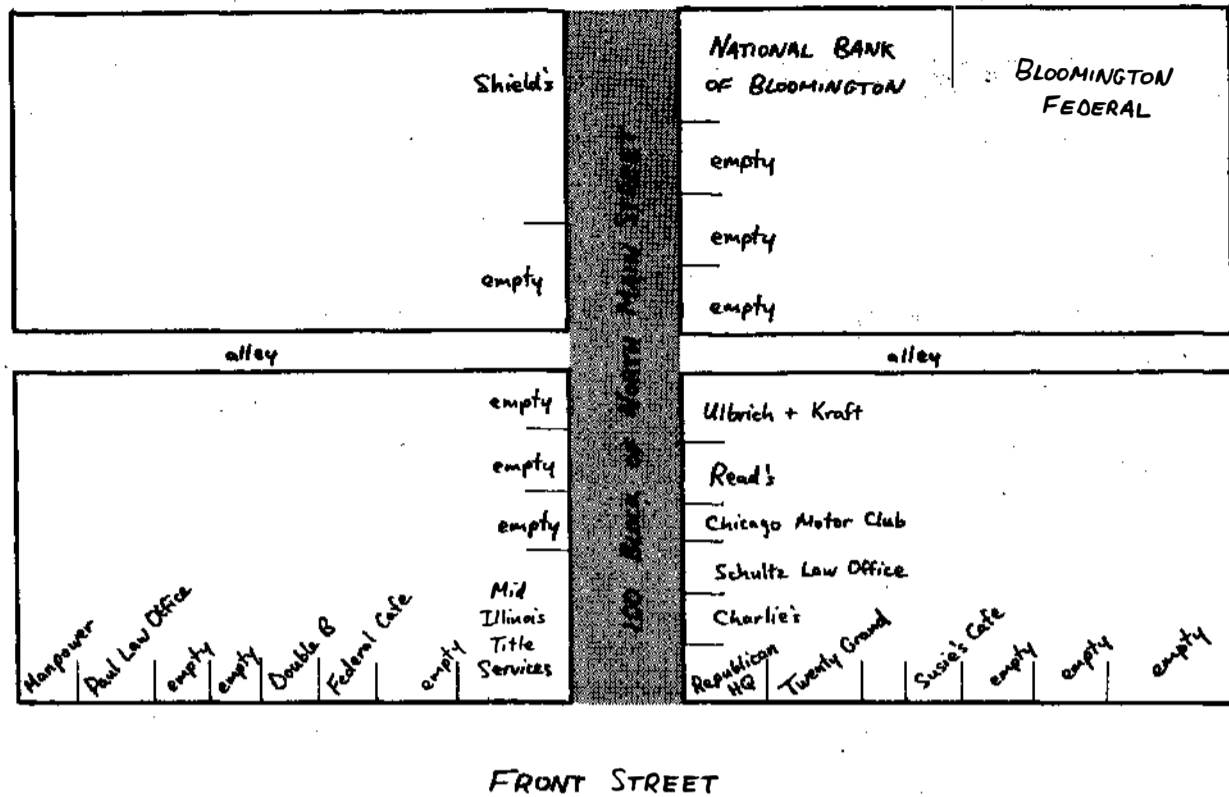
If you have money and are buying a

OLD COURTHOUSE

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February 1980 v. 8 n. 8

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N

WASHINGTON STREET



FRONT STREET

LAW + JUSTICE CENTER

A plan to build an enclosed, heated bus transfer center in the 100 block of North Main Street was scuttled recently when the National Bank of Bloomington and the American State Bank declined to go along with the city's plans. The National Bank plans to tear down most of the east side of the block to build a parking lot, and the American State Bank has similar plans for the west side. The city's plans for a transfer center called for closing the block to regular traffic and coordinating construction and access with the banks. The North Main site was favored by bus riders in a 1976 poll. Instead, they're now being offered a transfer center in the Abraham Lincoln Parking Lot, but the transit system is not eager to implement that plan because of expected cuts in service that the system expects it would cause.

power of eminent domain, its city attorney, and whatever other tools it has to harass the bankers into cooperating.

Better yet, until that transfer center is built--on North Main Street--we bus riders and democrats and ecologists and anarchists and conservationists should take to the meeting rooms and sidewalks to harass the bankers and the council members.

Until then, let them breathe diesel fumes.

--D. LeSeure

Punk music banned

"We're against punk rock that leads people into the street, causing trouble, defecating, urinating and fornicating," declared county liquor-board chairperson Robert Miller of College Park, Maryland.

The booze board put a stop to all punk rock concerts at the University of Maryland's campus this year, threatening to pull every liquor license in the vicinity of the school if students didn't put a damper on their spirits. Punk rock, as defined by Miller--"acid rock or rock 'n' roll music that is played at a high decibel level"--is forbidden now, along with any bands that "use offensive names." In the latter category, Miller cited two groups as examples: the Sex Change Band and Original Fetish.

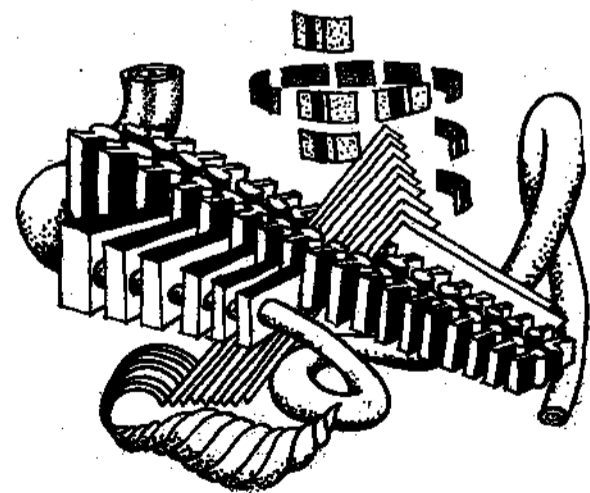
--High Times

I asked the guy at one of the title service places in town how the hell they got a law like this one passed. He thought it was an outrage too.

The guy at the title place said no one knew who the lobbyists for this law were. He thought people should write to their legislators and ask them what they thought they were doing. He agreed that maybe the used car lot owners had something to do with the legislation.

"It was a secret law for six months," the guy at the title service place told me.

--M.S.



'Be just, honest, sincere': BJHS motto explored

The above is indeed the motto for Bloomington Junior High School, as stated in the School's 1979-1980 Pupil Handbook. It seems to be the only line in the book which is those things.

The BJHS handbook is purportedly written and distributed to students and their parents to give both "some very basic rules and suggestions to help insure...success at Bloomington Junior High School." The "very basic rules" are aimed at creating the most oppressive atmosphere for learning I have seen of late. "It's Your School" says one of the headings. You may pause for a hearty guffaw at that, as I did.

The first sentence on the handbook cover reads, "Bloomington Junior High School has many traditions which have developed since BJHS was established in 1959." Apparently nothing, with very minor exceptions (such as the appearance of a police "counselor" and the allowing of girls to wear pants), has changed at BJ in 20 years.

The first right that BJHS students have (they have six rights) is "to be respected as unique individuals." The rest of the handbook goes on to negate that statement.

Students may arrive at BJ by walking, riding the bus, or riding their bikes. All activity involved seems to involve two things: 1) Don't do anything stupid because you might get hurt (which is legitimate), and 2) Don't do anything stupid because you "are seen by thousands of adults each day" and "the adults you meet are taxpayers and are helping to pay for your education" (which is, of course, far from legitimate).

If you walk, you are to "keep the volume of your voice down and control your actions so that you don't attract everyone's attention." God forbid those thousands of adults be reminded

WHAT DID YOU DO IN SCHOOL TODAY, DEAR?...

WELL, FIRST WE WERE ALL FINGERPRINTED, THEN OUR PHOTOS WERE TAKEN FOR OUR ID CARDS, THEN WE HAD TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ON HOW YOU AND DADDY VOTED... OH, WE SPENT A FEW MINUTES TALKING ON "FREEDOM IN AMERICA"...



that everyone in the world is not over 45. You are also to "leave snow on the ground." And are not to "throw snow or even pick up snow on the school grounds or on the walk to and from school." I assume the purpose of this rule is to keep BJHS students from getting frostbite or catching cold.

The rules for bicycle riders are pretty straight. They don't want them ridden on the grass, they want them locked, and they'd appreciate riders who obey safety rules. Like I said, pretty straight.

But the rules for bus riders border on the ridiculous. Bus riders have 22 rules to follow. The vast majority of them, I must admit, are necessary and are mostly just common sense things. But the ones that are stupid are pretty stupid indeed.

Students who are bussed to BJHS are to "remember that loud talking and laughing or unnecessary confusion diverts the driver's attention..." I talked to a woman who drives a junior high

school bus. I asked her about the validity of that rule, and she said, "Yeah, it's pretty stupid all right." I also conclude from reading that rule that necessary confusion does not divert the driver's attention.

Students are also ordered, in capital letters, to "NOT MAKE VERBAL REMARKS OR OBSCENE GESTURES TO PERSONS INSIDE OR OUTSIDE OF THE BUS AT ANYTIME." So it's not just that students shouldn't talk loudly but their remarks can't be verbal. If by verbal they mean oral, American Sign Language as a second language must be so available to junior high school students that it is a reasonable option for communication. If what they really mean, and of course they do, is don't talk dirty, then they should say "Don't talk dirty." And then, to make themselves even more clear, they should print a list of the words they don't want the BJHS students to use.

So now the BJHS student is at the school. And there are rules to tell them where they can enter and leave. "Pupils may use any entrance except the main entrance on Washington Street (This entrance is reserved for visitors, guests, and staff.) and the entrances on the north court area," states rule 2. Rule 3 reads, "Pupils may enter through any entrance except the Main Entrance on Washington Street and those entrances near the gyms and locker rooms. (These entrances are reserved for visitors and/or staff)." (Underlining theirs, and for clarification the gyms are located at the north court area.)

I can think of five reasons why both those rules are in the handbook: 1) Nobody proofread the handbook; 2) They really, really, really don't want students to use those doors, 3) It's a quiz like the Find-Six-Things-Different-About-These-Two-Pictures in the comics, 4) They believe in repetition, or 5) They believe in repetition.

Students can leave the building by any doors except the ones on Washington Street. Presumably they can leave through the north court/gym area so they know whether they are coming or going.

But wait, not so fast. They may not let you leave at all. "Pupils needing to get special help, to make up work, or to serve detention may be requested by any staff member to stay beyond the regular dismissal time. It is your responsibility to meet an after-school assignment and to inform your parents. Any exceptions must be worked out with the teacher involved. After-school responsibilities take precedence over athletics, cheerleading, Scouts, paper routes, choir practice, piano lessons, babysitting, etc." (Underlining theirs.)

So what they seem to be saying is that at the whim of any teacher or administrator, any student may be forced at a moment's notice to stay after school, messing up the life of the kid, the parent who has to make special arrangements to get the kid out of captivity, and the responsibilities and obligations the kid has. But remember, the first right any BJHS student has is "to be respected as unique individuals." Seems the administration forgot that one.

And lord help the BJHS student who gets sick while at school. You see, you can't just go to the nurse. That would be too easy. They first have to get sick, only between classes. "Except in an emergency, pupils should not leave a class to see the nurse." So what they have to do is this: "...secure a nurse's pass signed by the teacher in charge of the class from which you will be absent. Pupils should not go directly to the nurse, but should bring the pass to Office 213 for further directions."



Common Ground

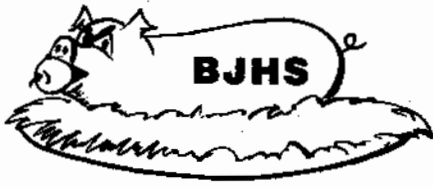
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BJHS--jail for juveniles

A Bloomington Junior High School student was so upset about the rules and regs at BJHS that when she took them home to her parents she told them she felt they were like prison rules. Her parents agreed. They showed her handbook to a friend of theirs who works as a guard at Pontiac Prison.

The guard said she was right: the BJHS rules are as bad as or worse than the rules at Pontiac.

I called BJHS and got a student handbook. I also procured a copy of the Resident Rule Book from Pontiac Prison. The two books have some striking similarities.

"Clothing must be worn in a neat and orderly fashion....There will be no altering of clothing. When wearing a shirt, only the top button may remain open. The collar is to be worn down and shirttails must be tucked in at all times." (Pontiac Prison)

"Attire for girls should be dresses, skirts or slacks with blouses and/or sweaters....Attire for boys should be slacks with sport shirts and/or sweaters....Clothing should not be ragged or soiled. It should be worn in the manner in which the manufacturer intended." (BJHS)

"No rags or handkerchiefs will be worn on your head at any time." (PP)

"Hats, caps, and other head coverings may not be worn in the building." (BJHS)

For disobeying the prison clothing rule, a resident may receive a penalty of 90 days in C grade, and/or one month of good time revoked, and/or 15 days in segregation. This is a bit stiffer penalty than at BJ, where "pupils who are inappropriately dressed will be loaned replacements or sent home to change clothes. They will be expected to make up any class-work and time lost from class due to inappropriate dress."

In dining, also, the rules are similar. "When you arrive in the dining room in formation you should sit where assigned." (PP) "Upon entering the cafeteria, be seated (4 pupils to a table)...." (BJHS) "You may be allowed to leave the dining room...as directed by the supervising staff." (PP) "Supervisors will dismiss pupils to proceed to the next class." (BJHS) All very nice and neat and tidy--yes, sir; thank you, sir; kiss my foot, sir.

There's also a distaste for noise at both institutions. "Singing, whistling, dancing, loud laughter, loud talking, as well as all forms of noisy conduct, will not be tolerated." (PP) The prison rule book mentions this only once. The student handbook harps on this subject. "Keep the volume of your voice down and control your actions....Talk in a conversational tone....Keep noise to a minimum....Pass quietly to and from the cafeteria....Talk quietly in the halls....Quiet, orderly passage to and from the auditorium is necessary....Do not whistle....Leave in a quiet, orderly manner." The BJHS administrators want to make themselves perfectly clear.

Prisoners at Pontiac may be punished for disobedience by spending time in C grade, having good time revoked, or being placed in segregation. Prisoners at BJHS may be punished by means of "paddles or other such devices which are used for the purpose of corporal punishment," suspension, expulsion, or the turning over of a kid to the police or juvenile authorities. I guess BJ is better, after all. If you try to skip out of jail, they make you stay longer, but if you try to skip out of school, they make you stay home.

Prisoners and students alike have certain responsibilities, the main ones being to blindly obey. "The residents of this correctional facility are obliged to obey its rules

and regulations....You are prohibited from violating any of these regulations....You must obey all rules.... All bulletin rules...must be obeyed....The residents of this correctional facility are obliged to obey its rules and regulations." (Yes, you did read this before. It appears twice. It is apparently a shoddy attempt at subliminal suggestion.)

BJHS seemingly does not want to push this point, especially since the student handbooks must be read, signed, and returned by the parents. Its rules for obedience are seemingly innocuous. "To accept responsibility for their behavior, to respect the rights, feelings, and property of others, to respect the skills and authority of teachers and other members of the school staff, and to obey school rules, regulations and school personnel," are the most blatant ones.



Where the Pontiac Prison and the Bloomington Junior High School rules differ massively is in the rights of the individuals involved. Pontiac says nothing about the rights of prisoners, because they have no rights. BJHS, on the other hand, pretends that students do. That is, as all of us who are or who have been students know, a blatant untruth.

Somehow I think I would opt for honesty. "...While public education is the right of youth, the right implies that pupils have the responsibility to obey the rules of the school district and the laws of the state." (Underlining theirs.)

So don't think they have rights, 'cause they don't. At BJHS the minimum sentence is three years. And at 15 when they get out, it's only been 20% of their lives. It could be worse. Or could it?.

--Deborah

motto cont.

I would imagine that the further directions are instructions on how to get to the nurse's office since there is so much red tape to go through I doubt many students actually make it. What this all means is that, say, the gets sick after P.E. and needs to go to the nurse. Now, the gym is just down the hall from the nurse's office. But the kid has to go to, say, the third floor and get the next teacher to hand over a pass. Then it's down to second floor to the office, and, after further directions, back down to first floor across from the gym where the nurse sits reading dime novels and marveling at the good health of BJHS students. A person could die first!

The school nurse cannot give a student any medication, nor can any medication be administered by the student. "However, in order to provide for the well being of students, under exceptional circumstances medicine may be administered during school hours by a designated member of the District's certified professional staff or self-administered by a Bloomington Junior High School Student in accordance with the following: A request for administering student medicine shall be submitted in advance on a form provided by the School District, and such request shall be signed by the parent or guardian and the physician prescribing the medicine....The School District Administrator has sole authority for approving or denying the request."

So it seems if they deny the physician's request and the student takes the medicine anyway, the kid is breaking school rules (read: questioning authority) and could probably be brought up on charges of possession of a controlled substance and sent to Victory Hall or Morgan Washington, where they would probably be given the medicine they need.

"It's Your School." Tell me about it.

--Deborah Wiatt,
with a little help
from a proofreader

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MEG director lies to press . . . again

Responding to inquiries from area newspapers about the "internal investigation," the MEG board launched in December, MEG Director Jerry LaGrow is back to his old tricks: telling outright lies to reporters. The investigation is supposed to check out allegations of MEG misconduct made by former informer Rod Meyer.

"Jerry LaGrow, MEG Director, said he was unaware an investigation had been ordered by the governing board," Peoria Journal Star reporter Richard Ney wrote Dec. 28.

LaGrow was lying. He had attended a MEG board meeting executive session the day before, and another a week before. The sole subject of the meetings was the investigation LaGrow claimed to be unaware of.

"He said he had not seen any of the allegations made by the former informant, nor did he know the names of the officers charged," the Dec. 28 Journal Star article continued.

Another lie. At the Dec. 27 MEG board meeting, officials, including LaGrow, went into executive session and discussed a thick packet of reports from the Professional Standards Division of the Department of Law Enforcement, the agency which first began investigating ex-informer Meyer's allegations. Since a Post reporter snuck a few quick peeks at the reports while MEG board members

were out of the room, we know what the report was about. We know the board members discussed the reports, because another Post reporter was able to hear a few telltale sentences while eavesdropping on the closed session for a few minutes through some sound-carrying louvered doors.

LaGrow also displayed his characteristic over-paranoid mentality, accusing the Journal Star reporter of having someone else listening in on the extension phone.

According to the Dec. 28 Peoria paper, LaGrow finally hung up on the reporter, saying "You're trying to dig your dirt. There's no dirt in the MEG unit."

Only a day later, LaGrow had flipped about 180 degrees. A Dec. 29 Journal Star story quotes the MEG boss claiming he "welcomes" the investigation (which he suddenly knows all about).

Desperate to discredit the informer who had turned against MEG after five years, LaGrow told the Journal Star that Meyer had a criminal record--a record which MEG never worried about before in assessing the informer's credibility.

The MEG boss also lied by implying that MEG fired Meyer before he began making charges. "We stopped using him. I think you're intelligent enough to know what that might mean.

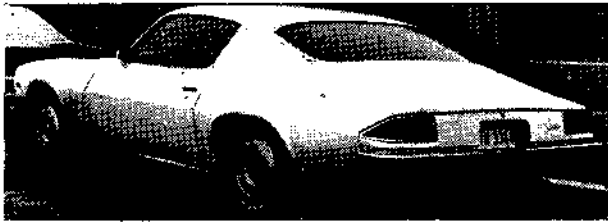


ABOVE: MEG Director Jerry LaGrow

He had motives for these charges," LaGrow said, according to the Journal Star.

Actually, Rodney Meyer first made contact with the Galesburg Free Voice and the Post-Amerikan in September. He was making allegations against MEG to the Dept. of Law Enforcement's Professional Standards Division as early as October. Meyer was still working for MEG in early November, when he participated in a buy-bust in Galesburg.

--M. S.

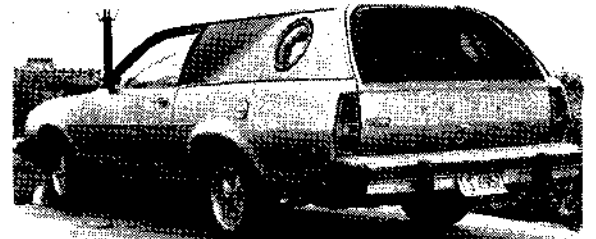


Above: MEG's white Camaro, TW 3344.
Below: MEG's black Chevy Citation, HR 9214

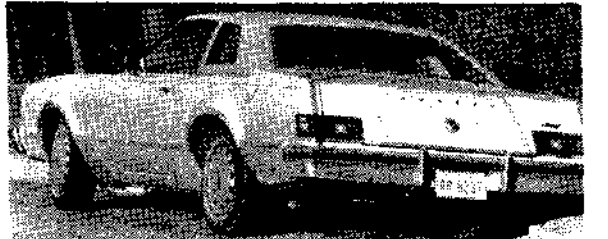
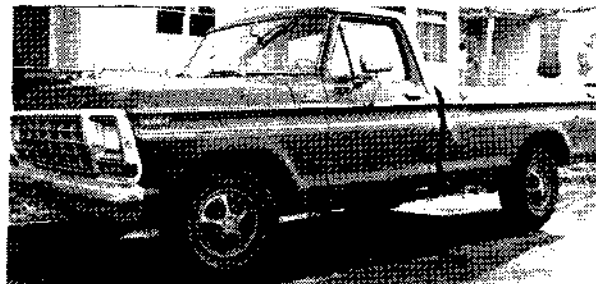


Narcs drive these cars

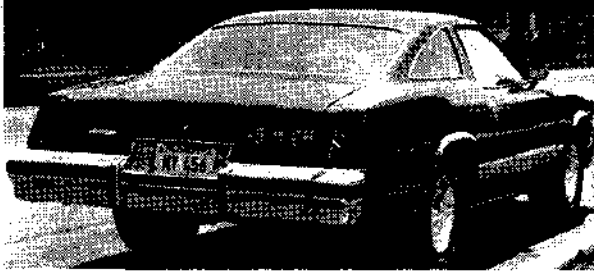
MEG has several more cars than the ones shown here. One is a maroon '79 Mustang II, DT 9239. Don't depend on identifying a narc's car by the license plate numbers--the MEG agents change the plates frequently.



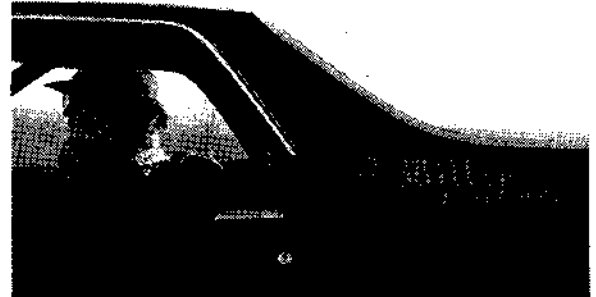
Above: MEG's Pinto wagon, LS 6952.
Below: MEG's blue Ford F-150 pick-up, 440 005 B.



The plate on MEG's new silver Mercury Cougar was AR 8237 when this photo was taken. By late December, MEG had changed the plate to JT 7241. The narcs also have a similar light blue Cougar.



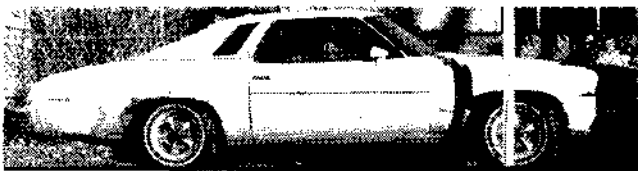
This green '77 Olds, MY 456, is Agent Paul Brenkman's personal car. According to the Secretary of State's office, Brenkman lives at 1833 St. Jude Court, Peoria Heights.



MEG's older red Ford Ranchero (above & below) says "J. Miller, Spfld" on the driver's side. In December, its license plate was 447 601 B.



MEG's older bashed-in white Catalina (left and below) was photographed at the home of MEG agent Ron Davis, 1340 S. 7th St., Pekin.



Veteran MEG snitch turns double agent; forces probe

Described in last month's Post-Amerikan as MEG's most productive and trusted "special employee," Rodney C. Meyer has turned against the undercover narc squad which he worked for off and on for over five years.

Meyer's allegations of MEG misconduct --which include entrapment, coached testimony, falsified reports, perjury, and a variety of unprofessional and sometimes illegal tactics--forced the MEG governing board into two highly unusual special meetings over the Christmas holidays. MEG is conducting its own "internal investigation" into Meyer's allegations.

For a couple months, Meyer was working almost as a double agent. As early as September 1979, while Meyer was working undercover in Galesburg, the veteran snitch approached the Post-Amerikan and Mike Richardson, editor of the Galesburg Free Voice.

After hearing Meyer's allegations that MEG boss Jerry LaGrow had knowingly approved falsified reports and tacitly okayed perjured testimony, Richardson set Meyer up with the Department of Law Enforcement's internal self-policing arm: the Professional Standards Division. Meyer began secretly meeting with an investigator from Professional Standards.

By November, with MEG still unaware its star snitch had turned traitor, Meyer was phoning the Post-Amerikan several times a week--while maintaining just as frequent contact with the MEG office. On five occasions so far, Meyer has met with Post-Amerikan reporters face-to-face for taped interviews.

Meyer did not meet Post reporters in person until after the snitch had finished up his undercover work in Galesburg November 6 and moved to another town. Though Meyer was still phoning in to the MEG office every few days, he insisted that he was no longer working at setting people up. Since we agreed to hold Meyer's information until MEG knew he had turned traitor, the story last issue included only what we knew about the long-term snitch through other sources.

An erratic, unpredictable personality, Meyer's motivations, plans and goals in betraying MEG seem to fluctuate from day to day. He has made some exaggerated claims which he has trouble supporting with specific details. Although we have caught him in a few contradictions, he has also delivered good solid information, some of which we have already verified independently.

Some of the very heaviest information --Meyer's almost scandalous description of the outrageous tactics he used to set up several of his latest defendants in Galesburg--we agreed to hold until next issue. So we decided to hold the entire story of our interviews with the ex-snitch until then.

As the Post-Amerikan reported last issue, Meyer was busted for selling speed in 1974, during his first year as a MEG "special employee." Meyer beat the sale charge after both he and his wife passed a polygraph confirming Meyer's story: that Meyer's supervising MEG agent had given the snitch permission to sell drugs.

Things haven't changed much since



ABOVE: Professional informer Rodney C. Meyer, MEG's star snitch for over five years, has betrayed the narcs who hired him to betray others. Besides passing on information to the Post-Amerikan, Meyer has been making allegations against MEG to state investigators.

then, according to Meyer's story.

Galesburg resident Richard Mitchell also doesn't think things have changed much, he told the Post-Amerikan. Mitchell says he bought MDA from Meyer twice last fall, while Meyer was working for MEG. Afterwards, the MEG snitch arranged for Mitchell to sell pot to MEG agent John Linden, and Mitchell was arrested for the pot delivery. Mitchell says he passed a MEG-sponsored polygraph on his story in early December.

Rodney Meyer hopes to get immunity from prosecution for cooperating with the investigation of MEG. Whether he gets immunity or not, we will print the story next issue.

--Mark Silverstein

MEG launches 'internal investigation' of ex-informer's charges

After learning that former MEG informer Rodney C. Meyer had been quietly making allegations of illegal and improper police procedures, the MEG Board of Directors decided--at a hastily convened special meeting Dec. 19-- to launch its own "internal investigation." A three-member committee headed by Peoria County State's Attorney Mike Mihm took charge of the probe.

Earlier, the Department of Law Enforcement's Professional Standards Division--without MEG officials' knowledge--had been investigating Meyer's allegations.

Professional Standards has halted its investigation, and copies of their reports have been turned over to the MEG board. Post-Amerikan reporters saw copies of those reports at a second special meeting of the MEG board, convened only eight days after the first.

MEG Directors have trouble enough getting a quorum for their regular bi-monthly meetings. The fact that they held two special meetings--over the Christmas holidays--shows that something was definitely up.

At both meetings, MEG directors had-

dled in closed executive sessions to discuss "personnel."

After the second meeting Dec. 27, MEG officials finally admitted publicly that they were investigating allegations of falsified reports, perjury, and other improper conduct involving several MEG agents covering a period of several years.

Meyer has also been communicating with the Post-Amerikan; a story based on a series of interviews with the ex-snitch will appear next issue. (See adjoining story.)

Two paid investigators have been added to the MEG investigation, and Rod Meyer told the Post-Amerikan that he met with them several times in January.

As the Post-Amerikan goes to press, however, the investigation has bogged down.

Meyer said he expected to receive immunity from a Peoria grand jury Jan. 8 or 9. Meyer didn't get immunity, he said, because of a misunderstanding of the procedure and the extent of the immunity. Meyer said he told the investigators he

wouldn't talk to them anymore until he talked to a lawyer first.

On Jan. 18, Peoria State's Attorney Mike Mihm confirmed that the "investigation had hit a snag." He said that Meyer wanted to talk with an attorney but was expected to contact investigators again soon.

Mihm said he didn't want to comment about Meyer's prospects for immunity at this time, nor did he estimate when the investigation would be concluded.

MEG is in a tight spot. The investigators most likely want to destroy Meyer's credibility and pay him back for betraying MEG. Sheriff Donahue, MEG board chairperson, even hinted to the Post-Amerikan that perjury charges might be filed if they decide Meyer's accusations are groundless.

But if MEG destroys Meyer's credibility too much, the organization's own credibility suffers: after all, MEG hired Meyer again and again, year after year, to make cases. Unlike many informers, he was even trusted to testify in court.

--M.S.

MEG still after small fries

That breakfast you ate last May at one of Bloomington's most popular all-night restaurants could have been cooked by (ugh) an undercover MEG agent who was working in the kitchen.

Her name is Jill Bottom. She is responsible for the mid-December suppressed indictments which nailed several Bloomington residents on MEG charges.

Ken (not his real name) is one of them. Ken met Jill Bottom because they worked together in the restaurant's kitchen.

Ken told the Post-Amerikan that after her second day of work, "Cindy" (the name Bottom used) drove Ken home. They smoked a joint together on the way, and "Cindy" explained that she and her boyfriend were both from out of town and didn't know where to get any pot. "Cindy" asked Ken if he'd get her a bag sometime. He said maybe he would.

"Cindy" only worked at the restaurant four days, but she kept calling Ken both at home and at work asking for pot. Ken is sure she bugged him at least 10 times. "It was almost every day for a two-week period," he remembered.

Finally, on June 7, "Cindy" called when Ken had a bag. He met her and sold it to her.

Ken never heard from "Cindy" or about her for seven months--not until the police showed up to arrest him for the sale in December. He lost his job at the restaurant the next day.

Not only does Ken's case smack of entrapment, but it also proves that

MEG officials are lying when they claim that their agents no longer make small pot buys a goal of their undercover work.

As early as 1975, Illinois Law Enforcement Commission (ILEC) Director David Fogel ordered MEG units to "no longer focus on marijuana peddlers unless such action will lead to bigger things," according to a Chicago Tribune story.

Ever since then, MEG officials have used the leading-to-bigger-things exception as their excuse for pot buys.

In 1977, MEG board member Allen Andrews told the Peoria Journal Star, "You work your way up from the most common drug violation. You get small narcotics cases because you can't ignore them in the process of looking for the bigger cases."

That same Journal Star story (3/3/77) also pressed MEG Director LaGrow about the undercover narcs' priorities.

"I don't even allow my men to buy marijuana except in certain circumstances," the story quoted LaGrow.

"He claims his agents do not go after marijuana cases, but they do buy marijuana in the process of working their way up the ladder of dealership," the story continued.

When MEG Agent Jill Bottom bought a bag of pot from Ken, she wasn't working her way up any "ladder of dealership," nor was she trying to gain his confidence in order to buy other types of illegal substances in the future.

Agent Bottom's almost daily pressure

on Ken ended as soon as he sold one bag of marijuana. She never tried to buy other substances, nor larger quantities. She never even called Ken again. Her goal, the apparent end point of her undercover work, had been reached: she had nailed a 20-year-old restaurant co-worker for delivering a small quantity of marijuana.

--Mark Silverstein

Sam Walley, MEG agent



A tall and very large narc, Sam Walley, may have been working in Fulton County lately. These photos were taken Dec. 10. He may have changed his appearance since then.



MEG agent is a speed freak

This unidentified MEG agent showed his respect for the law and other drivers' safety December 20, by cruising at 75 to 80 mph all the way from Peoria to Goodfield. A Post-Amerikan counter-surveillance team spotted the MEG car leaving Peoria, and followed for 20 miles on I-74 before finally catching up. Both cars were cruising at 80 when a Post photographer snapped this picture. The surprised MEG agent responded by covering his face (dangerous at such high speeds) and pulling off at the next exit. Post researchers picked up the MEG car again in Carlock, and followed it to Normal on Route 150. The agent was driving an older red Ford Ranchero, 447 601 B. "J. Miller, Springfield" is printed on the driver's side.



Narc named in complaint

Post reporter Mark Silverstein filed a formal complaint Jan. 8 against MEG agent Stephen Reeter (right). The complaint was filed with the Bloomington Board of Fire and Police Commissioners and charged Reeter with removing the license plates (UQT 38) from his '79 blue Dodge Omni (below) after the Post exposed Reeter's identity and listed his plates last issue. He has remounted the plates.



MEG agent John Linden



Picture this: you get up from your non-nuclear family dinner ready to do some tube watching. You walk into the living room and turn on your Zenith, and there's this rerun of Leave It to Beaver on the set. You change channels and come to grips with the edifying spectacle of some southern born-againer picking his/her scabs on-camera. You change channels once more and see a duo of Up With Jee-sus pop singers--weedy vocals and hair you know has been cut strand by strand. You switch again, and there's this unctuous mid-western pastor praising God like he/she/it was the only brand of detergent that can get grease out of your wash. You flick the set off and wonder how anyone can watch teevee sober.

The Christian videots are drawing closer, folks, and unless an act of God or the FCC determines otherwise, it looks like there's nuthin' we can do about it. One more slice of the airwaves is gonna be polluted with sanctimony and fifties sitcoms, with lies about a way of life many of us don't want a thing to do with. If Bloomington-Normal's TeleCable system were as large as it initially promised to be, we could slide by this piece of gunk easily enough. But because B-N's system carries the same number of VHF channels it always has, some piece of our present programming is gonna get routed.

I tell ya, they're trying to surround us.

A summary for those who came in late: Grace Communications Corp., a Peoria-based media group dominated by the Grace Presbyterian Church (see P-A vol. 8, #4, "Do They Get Donna Reed in Heaven?"), began blanketing the Bloomington-Normal area last summer in order to get donations for a new station, channel 43.

Despite a series of accusations regarding 43's proposed content by former station manager Mike Mikelson, the hype wagon for what Gracefolk were calling a "family" (as opposed to "religious") station kept rolling. Full-page ads in the Pantagraph, pamphlets in the Penny Saver, radio

The 43 story

spots--all aided an attempt to raise \$500,000 worth of two-year pledges which the station needed to prove to the Federal Communications Commission that it had community support.

Channel 43's initiators missed their deadline on raising that money, but thanks to a technicality involving the station transmitter's proposed location, the Gracers were given more time. With the extra, uh, grace period, the corporation was able to pull in \$430,000 worth of two-year pledges, and the FCC okayed the station transmitter's construction permit. Broadcast date for the new channel is estimated at a year after construction begins, though a more specific timetable has yet to be set.

Though Grace powers have assured the

public that "only 20 per cent" of their programs would be directly religious, 43's big selling point has been the "family" nature of its programming. Seems a lot of folks are tired of seeing Suzanne Somers posters on their kids' walls. I can't blame 'em for that, but 43's "family" programs don't sound that much better: warhorse sitcoms like the aforementioned Beaver, sporting events from Lord knows where, movies without too much intrusive reality. I grew up on that cowflop, and there are better ways to spend a childhood. Besides it never did me any good. (Would I be writing for this rag if it had?)

And--as has been pointed out before--most of the above material is already available in abundance on the current crop of TeleCable stations. Chicago's channel 9, for example, shows hoary classic flicks at all hours, and the amount of airtime filled with dated family comedies is truly awesome. The only thing missing from the current line-up is local religious programming, and, frankly, that sounds about as appealing as a Right to Life slide show.

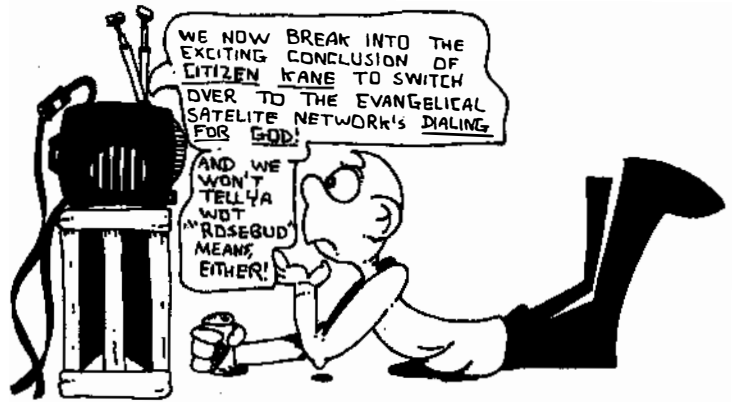
Still, 43's presence on the local scene might be manageable if it weren't for the fact that TeleCable is so limited. Though it originally promised to grow to twenty channels, B-N's TeleCable system has steadfastly remained a twelve-channel system. It makes for some weird shuffling, especially at late night when stations like Chicago's 44 change into 2 and Central Illinois' 25 becomes Atlanta's "superstation" 17. Because the roster is so tight already, all kinds of weird cut-offs take place: at least 50 per cent of the late movies the much-hyped "superstation" runs start

in the middle, a decidedly unsatisfying way to watch a flick. Tuning in on 44's Friday night horror show is a game in itself. You never know if Telecable's preprogrammed computer'll let you watch the end of the movie or not.

If TeleCable had gotten off its duff and worked towards a twenty-channel system (hey, cable TV has the potential for eighty channels!) instead of spending our rate hikes on trashy evangelical religious stations and Georgia fakeries, the spectre of channel 43 might not seem so oppressive. I, for one, would be perfectly willing to ignore it. But when it becomes one more entrant in Telecable's version of musical chairs, when it threatens to edge out programming I might enjoy watching, then I hope you can understand my annoyance.

Wanna bet whether TeleCable will try and up its rates for the privilege of watching Grace's station? •

--Bill Sherman



He loves to send 'em up!

"Fun."

That's how State's Attorney Ron Dozier described his job at a candidates' forum Jan. 10, according to a Pantagraph story.

Dozier is the man who decides which people charged with crimes will go to the penitentiary and for how long.

We like to pretend that judges figure out the sentences, but they basically just pound the gavel and fill out the papers.

The state's attorney really decides.

Since the overwhelming majority of cases are resolved by plea bargaining, the amount of time a person will do (and even whether or not they will do time at all) has already been decided before the judge even knows the defendant is officially guilty.

Since the grand jury usually does what the state's attorney wants, Dozier also gets to decide who to charge with crime.

In February 1979, for example, Dozier convinced a grand jury to indict

Courtney Darrell Hurt for murder. It was the third grand jury trying to unravel the complicated shootout that occurred near Sunnyside on October 1, 1978. But Dozier was sure he had his man.

After Courtney Hurt had spent five months languishing in the McLean

Dozier has fun

County jail, Dozier changed his mind. In the middle of the awaited trial, State's Attorney Dozier asked that charges against Hurt be dismissed.

"I wouldn't trade places with anybody," Dozier told the Jan. 10 candidates forum. "I like the fact that I'm on the right side of the fence," the Pantagraph quoted the state's attorney.

In seeking re-election to the job that he called "exciting," Dozier wants to wield this incredibly ominous power of almost life and death proportions over people for four more years.

It's his idea of fun. • --M. S.

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Chains, handcuffs trapped prisoners in burning, smoking bus: one dead, many injured

Prisoners recall horror of transport bus fire

"I've never felt so helpless in my entire life. I've been shot, overdosed on drugs, and in car accidents. But nothing has brought such a helpless feeling of impending death as being trapped on that bus!" Menard prisoner Robert Foster wrote.

"I live in uptown Chicago. I've been shot at, stabbed with butcher knives, clubbed with baseball bats, etc., and I have never been more scared in my life than I was that day I was on that bus," wrote prisoner Michael Miller.

"Now listen, I am from Detroit, Michigan, a big city, and I've been in positions where the only thing I had to depend on was myself, and I been in some scary positions, but never in my thirty years on God's earth have I been so completely and totally afraid!" prisoner Sherman Tirrell wrote.

"All this may sound a little dramatic, but believe me, pal, I've been locked up 6 years and have been through a lot of shit, but I don't think I'll ever forget that bus fire," wrote Vienna prisoner Pat Ceconci.

These horrified statements come from letters to the Post-Amerikan detailing what happened when an Illinois Department of Corrections (DOC) transport bus caught fire while stopped at Vandalia Correctional Center Nov. 29.

One prisoner died of smoke inhalation. Of the 35 prisoners caught on the smoking bus, the DOC lists eighteen as injured; the prisoners list more. Many were hospitalized for weeks, with tubes down their lungs.

Nineteen prisoners responded to my letter asking for a detailed description of that day's events. Their accounts are remarkably consistent in detail.

The prisoners' reports confirm that the injuries were directly caused by the Department of Corrections' procedures for transporting prisoners, procedures which are so security conscious that swift emergency evacuation of the bus was impossible. The problem became a disaster when prison guards acted too indecisively, too slowly and too incompetently to free the prisoners in time, prisoners' letters show.

Bus layout

Prisoner John Leigh explains the transport bus layout, and the DOC's escape-proof (and almost evacuation-proof) security scheme: chaining nine pairs of handcuffed prisoners to each other and to the bus itself:

"The bus was a regular Greyhound type with high back seats on both sides of the aisle. Directly behind the driver's seat was a security screened wall to separate the prisoners from the three guards who were to accompany us. The screen was made out of heavy steel mesh, ran the width of the bus, from floor to ceiling, and had a door cut in the middle."

Bars ran the length of the windows. A couple of traditional windows were labeled "Emergency Exit" in the traditional Greyhound manner, but prisoners found out later that the bars over them made them useless. An escape hatch in the ceiling was bolted shut.

"The guards had placed a long chain with

rings in it running the length of the bus between the aisle and window seats," John Leigh continued in his letter. "The guard put a pair of handcuffs through one of the rings in the chain, with one cuff going on my wrist and the other cuff going on the prisoner's wrist next to me. The chain was fashioned so that it ran from the prisoners' handcuffs behind us, to our handcuffs, to the prisoners' handcuffs in front of us, to the prisoners' handcuffs in front of them, etc. So with just being handcuffed to the prisoner beside me, I was actually chained to all the prisoners on my side of the bus."

The chain was padlocked or bolted to the bus itself at the front. Some prisoners

report that that chain was also fastened to the bus at the rear.

The bus trip began routinely, making stops at various penitentiaries along the way: Stateville, Pontiac, Logan, and as the last stop before Menard, the bus stopped at Vandalia.

First smoke

At Vandalia, the guards got off the bus for a while, leaving the prisoners. After a wait, a guard loaded some boxes into the baggage compartment. The bus sat for some minutes with the engine running, heater on.

When prisoners began smelling smoke, they yelled for a guard to come. A

guard walked the length of the bus, searching for the source of the smoke.

By the time the officer got near the back of the bus, John Leigh wrote, "the stench was already almost unbearable, burning my nostrils and throat. And only a minute or so had passed since we first smelled the smoke."

While the guard was still searching for the smoke's source, the smoke got worse. Quickly.

"No longer did it seem to just be coming from the center of the bus. Now it was pouring out the vents all along the bus, and was so thick I could no longer see the front of the bus," according to John Leigh.

Prisoners started getting jumpy as the officer worked his way back toward the front of the bus, according to Sherman Tirrell. "...people were asking him to get us off, no not asking him--begging him because we were helpless. We were chained to the bus and although you could still see, it was starting to burn our eyes. But this officer was too busy telling people to keep shut and stay in their damn seats," Tirrell wrote.

As more and more smoke poured into the passenger section, Robert Foster wrote, "Everyone was yelling for the officer to unlock the cuffs. The officer said that he couldn't open the cuffs unless the Lieutenant okayed it."

Guard leaves

"The officer ordered everybody to sit down and stay calm," another prisoner wrote. "But when he reached the front of the bus, he ran out and left us without even trying to unlock the trans-

port chain so we would have a chance of getting out."

And it wouldn't have been much of a chance. As Dresden Faulkner wrote, "With 16 or 17 people handcuffed to one central chain, if one or two are unable to move with the rest, it's virtually impossible to evacuate from the cramped confines of a bus. The aisle is no more than a foot wide."

As the officer was leaving through the steel mesh door, prisoners closest to the exit stood up and moved as close as their chain would allow. The officer pushed them back, according to Robert Foster.

"We begged that officer to just leave the keys. We would have helped each other," Foster said.

When the guard closed the steel mesh door behind him, Freddy Brown writes, one prisoner stuck his foot in, stopping the door from closing fully.

Panic

But the bus was so thick with smoke, and the officer's disappearance so alarming, that most prisoners thought they had been locked inside the bus.

Panic set in. "We were on a burning bus which could have exploded at any second and there wasn't any air left to breathe. We were going to die," John Leigh wrote.

Emmett Leatherwood said, "The officer had not let any one person free. He just left us to our fate. Everyone was

(Please turn the page.)

Post-Amerikan reporter solicited prisoners' letters

I've done time myself. Chained and handcuffed, I've been transported on an Illinois State Penitentiary bus following the same route as the one which caught fire Nov. 29.

When I read about that fire, the dead prisoner, the many injured, I knew the newspapers weren't telling the full story.

They almost couldn't.

"Rescuers said they were hampered because men became entangled when they attempted to free the prisoners as smoke filled the passenger compartment of the bus," the Associated Press reported.

I knew that report had to be an understatement, telling only a tenth of the horror that must have engulfed that bus.

I remembered getting on that transport bus in 1970. As shotgun toting

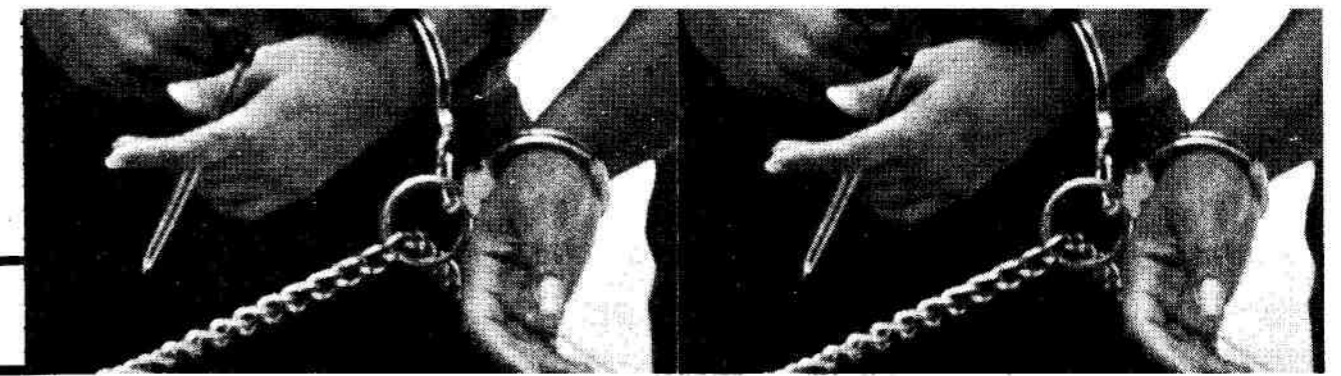
guards stood by, we were handcuffed in pairs, and about 9 or 10 pairs of us were attached together by one long chain. We had to back into the bus, carefully coordinating our movements with the others as we slowly, very slowly, made our way to our seats. Though we were handcuffed in pairs, the aisle was really only wide enough for one person--the backwards shuffling was combined with some sideways twisting. It seemed that convicts who had done time before were sort of taking the lead, helping to guide the 20 of us chained together in the obscure art of maneuvering onto the bus.

With "normal" movement on the bus so difficult, I knew that an attempted speedy evacuation during an emergency must have been a nightmare.

Only the prisoners themselves could tell the full story of what happened, so I decided to write and solicit their accounts.

--Mark Silverstein

On each side of the bus, a long chain--fastened to the bus itself--connected eight or nine pairs of prisoners who were already handcuffed to each other. Even after they managed to break the chain loose from its mooring, prisoners became hopelessly entangled trying to escape the smoke-filled bus.



Six weeks later

Prisoners still suffering from bus fire injuries

No prisoners were injured by flames, which were confined below the passenger section of the bus.

But many prisoners were seriously hurt--and one died--from inhaling the thick black smoke which the ventilation system pumped into the passenger section. Prisoners spent days and weeks in the hospital with tubes down their lungs. They still have trouble breathing.

I asked the Department of Corrections--but didn't get an answer--if any prisoners were still in the hospital in mid-January.

Prisoners' panicked attempts to escape the bus while handcuffed and chained together caused other injuries. Some prisoners were trampled; others suffered broken wrists, dislocated shoulders, bruises, scrapes and tears.

Overhearing a nurse's conversation at the hospital, prisoner John Leigh reports that injuries also included broken arms, a collapsed lung, and a heart attack.

Leigh's eye was cut by broken glass when guards finally broke the bus windows to let air in.

The DOC says only 17 prisoners were injured. But some of the "uninjured" prisoners say they were indeed hurt in the incident.

About 20-22 of the 35 prisoners spent up to a half hour unconscious in the smoke-filled bus. Before going in to carry out the unconscious prisoners, rescuers sprayed the entire passenger compartment with a hose, soaking the prisoners.

At least one prisoner caught pneumonia as a result, according to the prisoner's mother.

The accident's enduring damage is not only physical, but psychological, as these statements from survivors show:

"It is 36 days later and the pain in my head and back is no better, it is very hard for me to sleep at night, I have bad dreams more like nightmares. It is hard for me to withstand any

noise. My blood pressure is up and will not go down from that incident, sometimes I think I'm going out of my mind. I was truly horrified on that burning bus and I have not recovered from it." --Freddie Brown

"Everyone on that bus experienced some form of injury, if nothing but mental injury. If I smell smoke right now, I'm ready to run." --Robert Foster

"I still have trouble breathing sometimes and every time I stand up I get so dizzy that I have to sit back down and when this happens I feel like I got a fever of 150 because the heat rushes through my body. I won't be able to see a thing even with my eyes open." --Mickey Gazikas

"I had and still have a hard time breathing. I also lost weight and go weak. My physical condition today is nothing like it was when I left Joliet. It is worse." --Mike Mullins.

"My lungs are almost completely recovered now, but the thumb on my right hand has been paralyzed since the fire." --William Woodward

"To comprehend some of the dreams I've been having since the accident would probably startle a psychoanalyst!... I am now in this cell 23 days after the accident, my lungs burn as if on fire every time I breath hard, I cough hard and feel intense pain, also I still cough up a great deal from my lungs." --Michael Miller

And Sherman Tirrell, writing of the bus fire victims, says: "...many more were taken away, some we still haven't seen yet, others come back one by one, with canes, can't walk, can't talk; it was and is horrible. I'll never forget November 29th as long as I live." •

--M.S.

Transport bus toilet: a five gallon bucket

John Leigh sat near the bathroom, but said the door handle had been removed so it wouldn't open.

He couldn't have walked to the bathroom anyway. He was handcuffed to the man beside him, and a chain attached the pair of them to 17 other pairs of prisoners similarly handcuffed.

"My most humiliating experience," John Leigh wrote in a letter to the Post-Amerikan, "was while being handcuffed, having to stand and urinate across the man next to me into a five gallon bucket placed in the aisle for that purpose. If the bucket was in the back of the bus and someone in the front had to go, every man in an aisle seat had to lend a foot in scooting it along."

When thick smoke and panic filled the transport bus, John Leigh wasn't one of the prisoners to get out on his own power. Leigh was one of about 20 prisoners who stayed unconscious on the bus as long as 30 minutes before guards finally got in and carried them out.

"I was passing out," Leigh reported in his letter. "I was losing control as I felt myself urinating in my pants."

"Little did that matter," Leigh added, "as the contents of the five gallon bucket were all over the floor." •

Prisoners recall horror of

on their feet, pulling and yanking the chains, clawing at their handcuffs, screaming for help."

"People were shouting we were going to die," Charles W. Campbell wrote. "There was really no guards trying to do anything at first: they were just standing looking at us."

"As our last chance of being unlocked went out the door," Sherman Tirrell wrote, "panic ran rampant. Men were crying and screaming, trying to tear their wrists loose from the chains that meant death! People were being trampled, choked by the chain. It was horrible. I can remember trying to get up and being knocked down. I was bent over backward, then I was crying and I was saying over and over, I can't die like this, like an animal, not like this."

"The smoke was so thick that we couldn't see anything but the sunlight outside the windows," one prisoner wrote. "We were trying to break our wrists off to escape the handcuffs."

"People were making their break toward the one exit down an aisle not made to accommodate so many at once," Dresden Faulkner wrote. "They tried to get

ahead of one another; the chain got tangled, people were yanking, pulling, kicking, yelling, praying, and screaming."

At the back of the bus, John Leigh and his seat partner moved forward in desperation. "However," Leigh said, "some of the guys in the front didn't move quick enough and were piled up in front of the security screened door being trampled on by the rest of us. I could feel bodies under my feet. I was actually trampling on people and didn't even care. All I could care about was getting off that bus and saving my own life. Everywhere the smoke was thick and it just kept pouring in on us. I couldn't breathe."

"And when I tried to suck more air into my lungs, there wasn't any. Only smoke. Thick horrible smoke that was burning my eyes, nose, throat and lungs."

Evacuation "orderly"--DOC

In contrast to this description of wild panic, here's what Michael Lane, assistant Director of the Department of Corrections, told the Daily Pantagraph:

"Lane said about half the prisoners

moved from the bus in an orderly fashion after the blaze broke out," according to the Pantagraph. "Ironically, the inmate who later died was in the first group that moved out of the bus in an orderly fashion," the Pantagraph quoted Lane.

The only thing "orderly" about the evacuation of the first batch of prisoners is that most-but not all--were still conscious as they tripped, fell, tangled and untangled, crawled, yanked, jerked, twisted, trampled or were dragged--screaming, coughing, choking and blind from the smoke--to the doorway where officers eventually cut or unlocked their handcuffs.

These 13-15 prisoners, most of them apparently seated near the front, managed to free their chain from its anchor and escape within the first 10 minutes.

The other 20-22 prisoners remained on the bus at least 30 minutes, lying in pools of urine and vomit, unconscious, while guards slowly got them out. Many of the prisoners who passed out genuinely thought they were dying. Many of the prisoners who escaped in the first batch also thought their comrades inside were dead.

Corrections officials worried about lawsuits

It wasn't easy getting the names and mailing addresses of the prisoners caught on the Nov. 29 bus fire. It took a full week and half a dozen phone calls to Chicago to pry the information loose from the Department of Corrections' Public Information Officer, Melody McDowell. McDowell was outrageously suspicious and rude, questioning me closely to satisfy herself that I was not a lawyer. The DOC, she said, is very concerned that attorneys might obtain the names of the injured prisoners and "harass"--yes, she said "harass"--the prisoners' families into filing a lawsuit against the state.

There will be a lot of lawsuits. Almost all the nineteen prisoners who answered my letter either had a lawyer already, or asked my help in obtaining one.

After I'd read prisoners' accounts of the bus fire, the Department of Corrections was not exactly eager to answer my follow-up questions, either.

Monday morning, five days before my Friday deadline, I phoned in a list of questions to Ms. McDowell, who is employed to take reporters' questions, contact the appropriate officials, get the answers, and then relay them back to the reporters.

She said she'd have the answers Thursday morning. When I called Thursday morning, she said to call at 2 p.m. When I called at exactly 2 p.m., Ms. McDowell had already left for the day.

On my second call to her Friday morning, she didn't talk to me, but told her secretary to tell me I should call

her boss, Michael Lane, who is asst. director of DOC.

McDowell had passed my list of questions on to Lane, but I never got to talk with him. I called his office three times Friday, and he never called back.

Here are the questions the Department of Corrections avoided answering:

Has the DOC completed its review of procedures for transporting prisoners? Is it true that the security chain was bolted to the bus? Where on the bus was the prisoner who died sitting? Had the prisoner who died received any medical attention earlier in the day? Are any prisoners still hospitalized?

--Mark Silverstein

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How did the fire start?

Michael Lane, assistant Director of the Department of Corrections, told the Pantagraph that the fire stemmed from "a mechanical malfunction in the air-moving system in the subfloor of the undercarriage of the bus."

The heating system sucked the extremely thick heavy smoke into the passenger compartment. The flames were confined below.

An attorney investigating the bus fire told the Post-American that he had heard that prison officials may be putting forward the theory that the fire started because a prisoner dropped a cigarette into a heating vent.

One prisoner, who didn't want his name used, also heard that theory.

"The investigators are trying to develop a theory that one of the inmates set the heating system on fire by dropping a cigarette through the vent. But there is no way that anything could have been dropped through the steel mesh which covers the vents."

prison transport bus fire (Cont. from preceding pages)

According to two prisoners who got off the bus relatively early, some officers were actually ordering escaping prisoners to get back onto the deadly smoke-filled bus!

Thin-wristed Emmett Leatherwood slipped out of his handcuffs and tried to help his seat partner in the third row pull their chain free. He gave up and tried to save himself.

"I fought my way to the door. I could hardly see," Leatherwood said. "I stumbled out the door, and this is when an officer grabbed me and pushed me back." Leatherwood says he was pushed hard enough to cut his leg and sustain a hip injury which still bothered him in late December.

Leatherwood asked the officer to let him off the bus, but the officer said a lieutenant had to authorize it and pushed him again. But a lieutenant appeared and said, "Let him off," according to Leatherwood.

Freddie Brown reported that he was also ordered back on the bus: "I and the guy handcuffed to me made for the

door only to get nearly crushed against the gate leading out," Brown wrote. "My back felt like it would break, my lungs were on fire. I started twisting and wriggling and finally fell out the bus door on my back. Some other people were getting out at the same time and they stepped on my chest and stomach before I could get up. When I managed to get up, two of the officers said to me and the man handcuffed to me, 'don't get off the bus.' I said to them, 'People are going to die in there' and pushed them out of my way."

More "orderly" retreat

During the "orderly" retreat from the bus, prisoner Rudolph Moffett said, "I was wrapped up in the chain with which I was shackled, knocked down and run over. Subsequently I suffered

injuries to my back, legs and head."

"The way us 13 made it off the bus was pure luck and wildness I guess," said Pat Cecconi, another of the batch to escape in an "orderly fashion." "We broke the chain from jerking on it so hard. The guy that was cuffed to me had his wrist broken, along with about five others that made it."

The first prisoners off the bus were critical of the guards' dull response to the emergency.

Guards reacted slowly

Emmett Leatherwood said at least "a full minute" passed after he got off before anyone even entered the bus doorway. Leatherwood said he screamed at the guards to break the bus windows to let air in, but no one did.

Several minutes later, Leatherwood said, he saw his seatmate, Robert Foster. "His top portion hung halfway out the door. He was gasping for air, and I could see three or four more heads behind him trying to reach the portal for air," Leatherwood said.



The prisoners had broken the chain, or a portion of it, Leatherwood said, but they couldn't get past the doorway because the other end of the chain was still tangled up inside the bus.

Guards "dumbfounded"

Another man in the first batch said, "The officers were just standing around the bus, dumbfounded and frightened. None of them made an effort to try to get any inmate off the bus."

Leatherwood said he shouted to the officers to help them off. "Still no one had broken a window, nor had anyone the presence of mind to open the back door of the bus," Leatherwood said.

Leatherwood's seat-mate, Robert Foster, described how he managed to get to the door. Foster was sitting only three seats from the front, but it was a long way to travel under those panicky conditions:

"The chain got stuck between the seats because the guy in back of me got around front. This wrapped the chain around me and put my handcuffed hand in back of me. As he pushed and pulled, the two inmates in front had fallen at the steel mesh partition because the one guy in front of them had been drugged before leaving Joliet and had passed completely out.

"The guy in back of me and myself managed to pull something loose and the chain gave a little, only to tighten up with our next move.

"As we passed through the partition door, I fell over someone on the floor. This tightened the cuff on my hand even tighter because no one was walking or standing behind me. I was pulling a couple men from the cuff on my right hand.

"When I fell, I fell against an arm rest and I injured my back. As I got up, the metal from the partition dug along my left leg and tore away flesh from my knee to my ankle. The smoke was too thick to see or breathe.

(continued on next page)

Aw, he ain't sick

Only the threat of a lawsuit prevented the Department of Corrections from hustling injured prisoner Mike Mullins out of intensive care and back to Menard penitentiary, according to Mullins' mother, Lillie Mullins.

Mullins was injured in the bus accident Nov. 29, Ms. Mullins told the Post-Amerikan.

She found out about her son's injury the day of the accident, when she received a call from the Department of Corrections. She was given a number to call in Vandalia.

Calling the number at Vandalia, Ms. Mullins learned that her son was injured in the bus fire, was taken to St. Elizabeth hospital in Belleville, and that her son's condition was getting worse.

"They told me I couldn't come see my son, but I went anyway," Ms. Mullins told the Post-Amerikan. "They wouldn't tell me if he was burned or what, just that he was hurt."

At the Belleville hospital, Ms. Mullins was told she couldn't see her son.

"The public relations man said he had to keep us in this one room to keep the media away from us," Ms. Mullins

said.

After repeatedly insisting, Ms. Mullins finally got permission to see her son.

By this time, it was Sunday Dec. 2--a few days after the bus accident.

Mike Mullins was lying weak on a hospital bed, with a leg iron and chain preventing him from escaping. "He had a monitor above him, an I.V., and they kept him on oxygen," Ms. Mullins said.

Mullins had pneumonia, caught from



being soaked with the rescuers' smoke-clearing hose after spending 30 minutes unconscious and inhaling the thick black fumes.

According to Ms. Mullins, two guards from Vandalia began taking her son away right then, saying they were taking him back to Menard.

"They were taking him right out of intensive care," she said indignantly.

Ms. Mullins said members of her family finally called St. Elizabeth's and threatened to sue the hospital if they permitted the prison guards to take Mike away.

That was Dec. 2, and the threat apparently worked. Ms. Mullins said her son wasn't moved out of the hospital until Dec. 10.

"I wrote a letter to the Governor and told him how rude those guards from Vandalia were. My son might be a prisoner, but they don't have to treat him like a dog," Ms. Mullins said.

"All those prisoners should have pardons or time cuts. The State of Illinois has got to make it up to them. They've suffered enough already," Ms. Mullins said.

--M.S.

Prisoners recall bus fire (Continued from preceding pages)

"Four or five of us wrapped in the chain managed to get to the bus door. My right arm was still pulled extremely tight behind me.

"The pain from the cuffs on my hand was even in my neck. I was screaming and crying. The cuffs were cutting into my hand. When I was released from the cuffs, they had to push the skin that had swollen around the cuff away. I passed out."

Writing six weeks after the incident, Foster said, "My hand is still numb and there is a ring around my wrist from the cuffs. I have no feeling in my wrist."

After dragging himself off the bus and getting his handcuffs unlocked, prisoner Sherman Tirrell wanted to go back in to help get others out.

"But the guards wouldn't let us, even though they weren't doing anything and I mean nothing to save the men still on this bus," Tirrell wrote to the Post-Amerikan.

"They said they couldn't go in until they got masks, but there were no masks. There was no emergency door; if there was, they didn't use it. Finally after a few more got off, they thought about breaking out windows."

* * * * *

Back inside the bus, the remaining prisoners tried their feeble best to get air and struggled to disentangle themselves. Those that failed were overcome by the thick smoke, and passed out. Some prisoners, handcuffed to unconscious men, struggled on, dragging their partners with them.

Although the emergency exit windows were barred, William Woodward hoped that the glass would break to let air in. It didn't work. Since his exit was barred by a huge clump of bodies by the door, Woodward patiently waited, keeping his face close to the floor where there was more air. He thinks he waited 5-7 minutes, and knows that the shouting had died down. A lot of the men's movement had stopped, and Woodward thought many of the remaining men must be unconscious, like the man he was handcuffed to.

While huddled near the floor, Woodward wrote, with men's movement and shouting quieter, he could hear "the bus heater fan was still running, pumping smoke into the bus."

John Leigh, originally seated at the back of the bus, still thought that the fleeing guard had locked the steel mesh door:

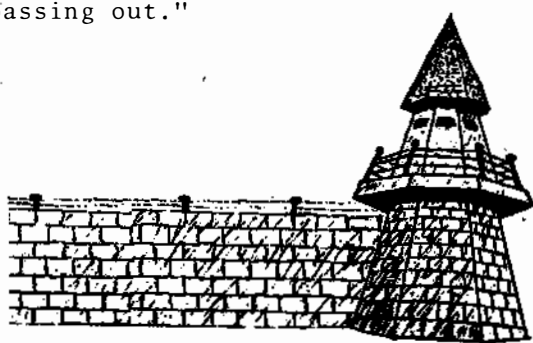
"I could hear the men in front of me, trampling the men on the floor. Beating, kicking, pushing, trying to bust down that locked security screened door. And I could hear the pleas, the praying, the calls for help, the begging, the crying to let us off that bus. And I could hear myself begging, yelling, 'Please open the door. Open the door. We can't breathe. The bus is going to explode. Please let us out. Let us out. We are dying.' And I could hear the guard outside in the fresh clean air telling us to stay calm. And I could

hear the cries of pain from the guys beating their hands and shoulders against the security screened door. And the cries of pain from the guys being stomped on. And I knew I was dying.

"Suddenly someone yelled to bust out the windows to get some air. And I pulled and was pulled to the side windows, where me and the man handcuffed to me tried our best to beat those windows out with our fists.

"Time and time again I smashed my fist into those windows, busting and battering my knuckles. The handcuffs were pulling and cutting deep when my fist wasn't moving as quickly or at the same angle as the fist I was handcuffed to. But still we pounded the window until all my knuckles were cut, battered and bleeding, with deep painful cuts covering my hand from the handcuffs.

"When I tried to breathe my throat and lungs felt like they were on fire, and there was no air. I was getting lightheaded. People were passing out all around me and I was getting dizzy. I knew I had gone too long without any air. Then I was on my knees. I was passing out."



Dresden Faulkner wrote, "I've had respiratory problems since boyhood and don't even smoke. This smoke was all in my eyes, nose, throat, and lungs. My chest was beginning to hurt. I was vomiting too, along with many others. Then I collapsed and passed out, passed out among that screaming sea of bodies, not expecting to return to the conscious world."

According to Freddie Brown, smoke was pouring out the bus door even 30 minutes after the fire started. "By this time they started to bring some of the men out of the bus," Brown wrote to the Post-Amerikan. "One officer told another, 'There is no fucking need to run--they are all dead by now.'"

Eventually rescue workers broke windows, took part of the top of the bus off, and sprayed water inside to clear the smoke. The 20-22 prisoners who had passed out inside the bus were completely soaked with cold water before they were taken off the bus.

Some prisoners went into convulsions from the cold. Many were coughing up thick black phlegm.

"I was so cold from being wet I shook so hard my whole body bounced," John Leigh reported. "But yet I still couldn't breathe. My throat and lungs felt as if they were on fire. And I couldn't open my eyes."

Leigh couldn't open his eyes because he got a piece of glass in one when the guards finally got around to bust-

ing the bus windows after Leigh passed out. Leigh estimated he was conscious for the first 9 or 10 of the 30 minutes he was trapped in the smoke-filled bus.

Most of the 19 prisoners who responded to my letter were writing about five weeks after the bus fire. All were out of the hospital, but many of the prisoners still complain of serious medical problems, especially with their breathing. Many of the prisoners which the DOC lists as uninjured did have injuries--some of them serious.

The tragedy of the Nov. 29 bus fire demonstrates that the Department of Corrections has failed to provide for the safety of the prisoners in its custody.

The guards were either unable or unwilling to deal quickly with the crisis. One guard caused panic on the bus by fleeing to find a lieutenant who could authorize the prisoners' release from their chains. Two prisoners were ordered back onto the bus after struggling to get off. It took several minutes--as many as ten by one calculation--before guards began breaking the bus windows.

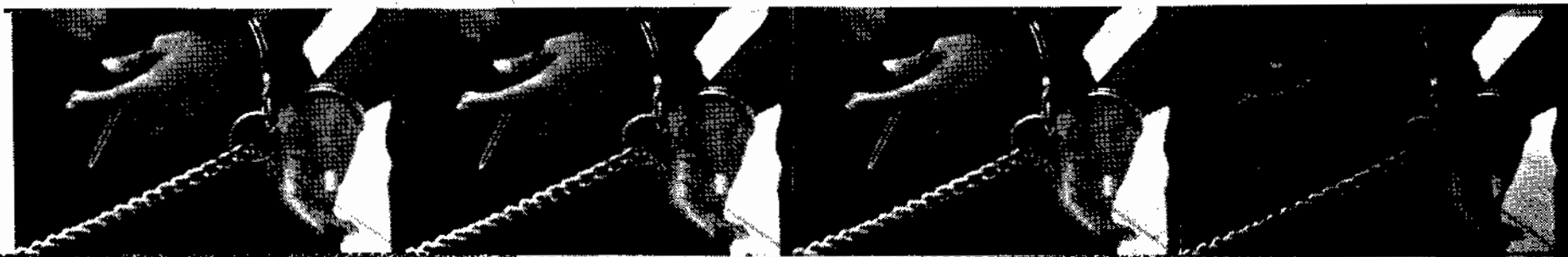
But the guards' incompetence only compounded the primary threat to the prisoners' lives in that situation: the DOC's over-paranoid security policies. First, the barred windows, bolted escape hatch, and inoperable emergency exits are not necessary to prevent escape--rifle-carrying guards follow every transport bus. The DOC is toying with prisoners' lives by chaining all the prisoners together and then fastening the chain to the bus.

Second, the prisoners were securely in prison the whole time anyway. As Freddie Brown put it, "Such a tragedy was completely avoidable. Though all of us were convicted and sentenced for crimes, we were all handcuffed and inside of Vandalia Penitentiary when this all occurred!"

Vandalia Warden Jon Heckle called the bus fire "a freak accident." But the death of one prisoner and the horrible injuries to many more were no accident at all: they were the entirely predictable result of DOC policies which disregard the safety of prisoners.

And the prisoners know it. Dresden S. Faulkner closed his letter to the Post-Amerikan this way: "To think that I almost had a death sentence for merely being a Technical Parole Violator (left the state without asking for permission). An absurd penalty, but I'm merely an inmate to those people sitting at their desks juggling people from one prison to another. One more death couldn't eat through to their conscience."

--Mark Silverstein, with Phoebe Caulfield, Freddie Brown, Charles Campbell, Ben Cantrell, Pat Cecconi, Knoxell DeBoise, Dresden S. Faulkner, Robert Foster, Mickey Gazikas, Emmett Leatherwood, John Leigh, Michael Miller, Rudolph Moffett, Michael Mullins, Robert Osborne, Michael Rucker, Sherman Tirrell, Dennis Walker, William Woodward, and another anonymous prisoner.



Hospital exec calm about doctors' screw-ups

page 17
Post-American

"There isn't a whole lot of reaction to these things," Jeffery Schaub told a Pantagraph reporter when informed of a malpractice suit just filed against Brokaw Hospital and three physicians practicing there.

Schaub is executive vice president of Brokaw Hospital.

"A physician missing a diagnosis is one of those things that happens.

That's not to say that a physician did miss a diagnosis," the hospital veep continued, according to the Pantagraph.

Claude B. Quinn sued because he thinks the hospital and the doctors who examined him and treated him should have spotted his cancer developing when he was a patient in Sept. 1977.

Because of the doctor's negligence, Quinn's suit charges, the cancer

wasn't detected until several months later--after it had done damage that early detection and treatment would have prevented.

It was a missed diagnosis.

Quinn is now paralyzed and totally disabled, with cancer spread throughout his body.

It's one of those things that happens..
--M.S.

NEWS BRIEFS

NEWS BRIEFS

Private strike force for nukes

Documents obtained by an Oregon radio station in late December revealed secret plans by Burns International Security Services to form a 100-member para-military team, armed with semi-automatic weapons, to cope with emergencies at nuclear power plants around the United States.

According to documents obtained by the radio station KZEL in Eugene, Ore., the para-military force is code-named "SCAP" and would have the capability of being deployed anywhere in the U.S. within 24 hours notice.

Now, the ranking Democrat on the House Energy and Environment subcommittee in Washington is labeling those plans as "gruesome" and reminiscent of a "police state."

Oregon Democrat Jim Weaver, whose Congressional subcommittee oversees the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, says he was unaware of plans by private police agencies to create a nationwide strike force of civilian guards armed with semi-automatic weapons.

Weaver has obtained a copy of the Burns documents on SCAP and is reviewing them with an eye on a possible Congressional investigation.

Said Weaver, "Ralph Nader has been warning for years that the nuclear industry would turn America into a police state."

--Zodiac News Service



Booze and Tylenol dangerous

Alcohol and Tylenol are dangerous in combination, according to Dr. Craig McClain at the University of Minnesota. Heavy drinkers who try to soothe their hangovers with massive gram-plus doses of acetaminophen (Tylenol's generic name) risk massive liver damage, he says, since alcohol and Tylenol seem to have harmful reactions in the liver. One patient at the university who'd been mixing both drugs died of liver failure, although he did not have cirrhosis.

Aspirin, as a hangover cure, may slightly aggravate the stomach irritation caused by booze the night before, but if it's taken with folic acid (a common health-food diet supplement), this risk can be minimized.

--High Times

VITESSE Cycle Shop

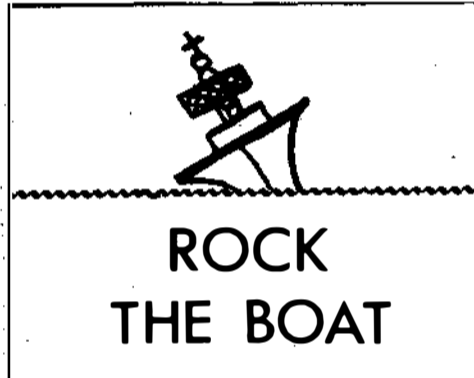
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Open mouth, insert foot

Results of the Who Can Say the Most Inane Things about Gay People contest for 1979 have just been announced.

First runnerup was Malcolm Muggeridge, British author and recent convert to Catholicism. His winning remarks, which appeared in Time magazine, dealt with the Anthony Blunt affair, in which a gay art advisor to the Queen was revealed as a Russian spy.

Muggeridge's theory of why espionage attracts gay people scored high in the

Papal Bull category: "Just common sense suggests that the same gifts which make homosexuals often accomplished actors equip them for spying, which is a kind of acting, while their inevitable exclusion from the satisfaction of parenthood gives them a grudge against society, and therefore an instinctive sympathy with efforts to overthrow it."

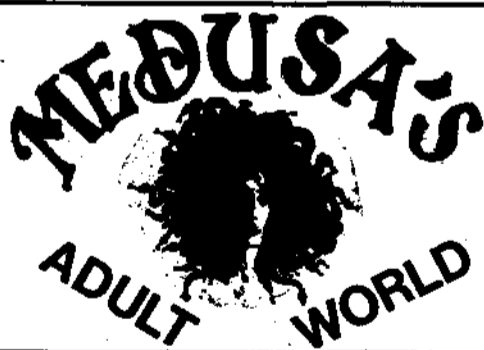
Before his religious conversion, Muggeridge wrote humor.

The winner of the contest was a Ms. Lillian Carter, Georgia landowner who now resides, sometimes, in Washington DC. Ms. Carter (aka Miz Lillian) easily outdistanced all competitors in the "Ah'm jest a poor ole country bigot" department.

Her comments were made in an attempt to explain how she turned up at a gay benefit in Los Angeles: "I don't know a gay from a hole in the ground--in my part of the country we don't have 'em. . . . At that dinner for homosexuals, one kissed me on the back of the neck. And when one of that other kind came up I was so scared she was going to kiss me I didn't know what to do." I'm old but not naive.

Ms. Carter's prize, donated by the Atlanta Lesbian-Feminist Alliance, consisted of a peanut-shaped dildo (batteries not included) and a six-foot hole in the ground. She was not considered for the Miz Congeniality award.

--Ferdurdurke



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letters

Vandals bad, Christmas good

To the Post-Amerikan:

I would like to comment on a few of the articles which have appeared recently in the Post-Amerikan.

My first set of comments concern a group of articles from your November 1979 issue dealing with the subject of vandalism. Granted, Operation Spook is not an appropriate way to deal with the problem of vandalism in a free society, but that is not justification for the glamorization of vandalism as your articles, particularly the "Vandals, Shape Up" piece and then your cover design seemed to do.

Vandalism is not merely "fun" or an assault on "bourgeois standards of taste." It is a violent act against other people's personal property. A car parked on the street or in a parking lot does not possess feelings, so seemingly no one is hurt. But what about the person who worked hard to earn the money for that car?

Not everyone who is the victim of vandalism is a "fat cat" with plenty of money to spare. I myself had a window of my car shot out last winter. It was a '69 Chevy with half the back busted out. That's hardly the type of vehicle a member of the Establishment would drive. Not having had money for insurance or to replace the window, I did without for the rest of the winter. Various arrangements of plastic just didn't do the trick. On snowy days I rode the bus or walked. I heard later some 70 or so cars had their windows shot out the same evening. I'm not a MEG agent, an oil tycoon; I don't even own a muke plant. So why did they shoot out my window? No reason. They wanted to break something and it was there. It was "fun"!

Another example of the senselessness of vandalism happened just last weekend. My mother and my mother-in-law were attending a play at the Community Players. At intermission, a speaker



had to announce the sad news that half the cars in the Eagle parking lot, mostly belonging to people attending the play, had been vandalized. The windows were smashed out. Luckily for my mother and mother-in-law, their car had not been touched, but the car next to it was. These women are not wealthy. My mother works for a non-profit organization in town. They would have found it hard to pay for the damage either in actual cost or in higher insurance rates. I can't say for

certain that no one in that theater wasn't hurting for money, but I would like to say that just because a person makes a lot of money that doesn't mean that he/she has a lot to spare. Many "bourgeois" workers have families to take care of, children in school, hope, dreams, etc., besides the bills we all live with. In short, they have a hundred other things their money could and should go for other than to pay for the damage some some teenager chose to do to his/her property.

So you suggest making it a "political statement" by directing the violence toward such establishments as the police force, GTE, IPC, etc. Just because many people own something does not mean that it is not someone's property. Those police cars belong to the tax payers of this area. GTE and IPC to the shareholders of those companies. Someone still pays for the damage whether it be the taxpaying citizens of this town and county or every person who uses a telephone or electric power to run their lights, stereos, etc. If you're going to knock those organizations, try living in a lawless society where your life and property are at the mercy of any outlaw who shoots a gun faster than you do, or where you print your newspaper by candle light and everything, I mean everything, closes when the sun goes down. Enough on vandalism.

The other set of articles I would like to address concern the Christmas decorations in downtown Bloomington (December 1979 issue). I live in the downtown area and very much enjoy seeing those decorations every night when I go home. If that's extravagance, then so is my Christmas tree at home, the lights I put around my window, or the presents I like to buy for the ones I love. I don't have to do it; I enjoy doing it. That's what extravagance means to me. To not struggle for survival but to enjoy life. Sure, I could spend my money on more useful things. But I like to feel for a month or so each year I can forget about the useful and practical and have a good time. Not that I don't have a good time the rest of the year, but Christmas is special whether you believe in its beginning or not. I wish everyone would put up lights and decorations at Christmas. Just think of it; for a month or so every year, Bloomington-Normal would look like Walt Disney World!

You are indignant about this "extravagant" spending of "public" money. By "public" you seem to think that means you. If I'm correct, most of a city's finances come from personal property taxes along with help from the federal and state taxes. How many of the people on your staff have worked long or hard enough to buy property in this town? Or contributed as much money to the Federal and State governments via taxes as all the rest of the taxpayers of this state and country who aren't complaining about those decorations? Who don't mind their money being spent on something they enjoy?

It seems that a lot of people nowadays think that plastic is a dirty word. But what's wrong with it?

What's wrong with vinyl record albums? Would you rather have wax? Or disposable medical aids (disposable syringe covers, thermometers and the like)? Would you rather that they were less sterile? Or plastic safety lenses? Or would you rather someone's eye were cut? The list goes on. What about baggies: would you rather your sandwich or whatever got stale? The tinsel on my Christmas tree is plastic and so is that Santa Claus on Center Street. I like it that way.



"Why didn't you guys tell me you were getting expensive gifts?"

People used to get an orange, a few pieces of candy, and a handknitted scarf for Christmas. We celebrate in a different way today, but the feeling is the same.

My last comment is on the combination of a certain article in your November 1979 issue and a certain advertisement on the last page of same issue. With all your talk about the inconsistencies of government officials, certain businessmen, and churchpeople, and the continual put-down of materialism you advocate, I think it is in rather poor taste to combine an article on the injustice pornography does to women and a full page ad for Medusa's in the same issue. How much did Medusa's pay for that ad? or does money have nothing to do with principles?

In closing, I would like to say that I would very much like to see this letter printed in your newspaper. But judging from the narrow-mindedness of your editorial policies, I'm not so sure I will. (Yes, Virginia, there are narrow-minded leftists too.) Let's see how far this freedom of ideas goes--

Thank you for reading,
Celia Hicklin Feaster

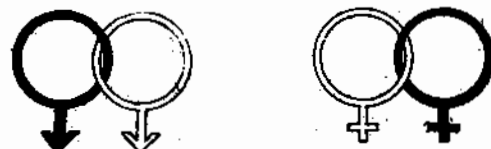
'Seriously homosexual'

Stockholm, Sweden--Protesting their government's listing of homosexuality as an "official" illness, members of the Swedish national gay organization (Riksforbundet for Sexuellt Likaberattigande--RFSL) staged a "sick-in."

Some 30 lesbians and gay men in Stockholm phoned their employers to request sick leave. Under Swedish law, the employer is required to grant compensation. When asked if his illness was serious, RFSL president Kjell Rinder replied, "Ja, sure, I'm seriously homosexual."

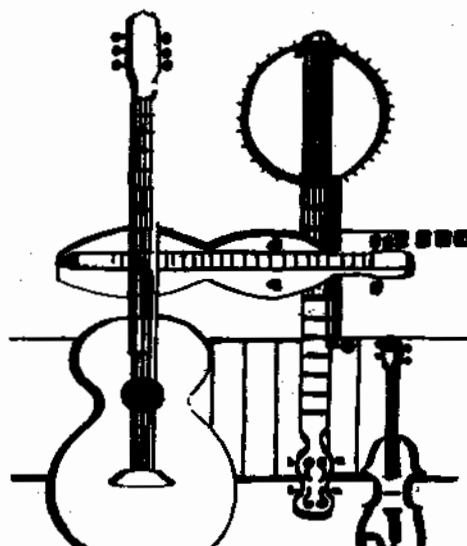
The government has since removed homosexuality from the illnesses and disorders list.

--Gay Community News



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Thoroughly enjoys Post

Newspeople at the Post-Amerikan,

My student brought home your newspaper which I enjoyed thoroughly. However, I should like to express a few points on which I disagree. (If I may have that privilege.)

I can understand gays becoming upset and intolerant of the average "square" who does not greet them with open arms. But did any stop to think that many of the "establishment" don't give a darn one way or another and simply ignore the situation? Or are tolerant of it and don't choose to take a public stand?

Most of the "younger generation" (I detest placing everyone in the pat classifications of the day) finds the "square establishment" unworthy of tolerance, understanding or patience. Why then, do they expect Utopian acceptance of everything they say or do?

The intolerant are also entitled to certain freedoms.

Now to digress for a moment. I find the continuing furor over "Miss, Mrs. or Ms." laughable and beneath consideration. With the real problems in the world today, finding people devoting so much energy to such a stupidity has to be the most ridiculous storm in the proverbial teacup that ever raged.

I'm enclosing \$3 to help you continue your noble efforts.

Thanks....
A parent

P.S. I didn't dare address you as "Gentlemen"!



Don't pay rate hike!

Dear Post Amerikan,

We really enjoyed the cover of your December issue. That's telling it like it is! Many people in Champaign-Urbana (C-U) are outraged that the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) is siding with Illinois Power. Imagine, we are forced to pay higher electric rates for a nuclear power plant most people don't want anyway!

In C-U we have started to organize a rate boycott of Illinois Power (IP) We are asking people to subtract 10% off their bill. This means refusing to pay any more than the old electric rate. We hope that if enough people do this, the ICC and IP will think twice before they try to raise our rates again.

If any readers decide to deduct the 10%, we suggest the following:

1. Save the 10% in case you are forced to pay up later.
2. Do not tell IP why you are withholding the 10%, or simply tell them you can't afford to pay the higher rates.
3. Get all your friends to withhold the 10% too. The more who boycott, the more successful it will be.
4. Drop us a line if you are harassed by IP. If IP gets too ornery, we might suggest everyone not pay the full amount. (Watch your step IP!)

For Alternative Power

Green Ban c/o Resurgence
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Prisoner ready to help Post

Dear Post,

I have been locked up in prison for the last 18 months. When I first started my sentence in August of 1978 I had very little money to spend, so I was very grateful when you sent me a free subscription.

Recently, I acquired some money and enclosed please find \$6.00 to cover cost of the two-year subscription which I am now receiving.

I have read about your benefits at the Lay-Z-J Saloon and (as a drinking man from way back) think they are great! I will be paroled in August of 1980, and am wondering if such a benefit will be taking place around my date of parole? If not, maybe I could help you organize one.

I fully intend to support the Post, Bloomington-Normal's only alternative newspaper in the future. If there is anything I can do upon my release, please let me know. Thanks again!

Sincerely,

Joseph R. Schoenbrun
Box 100, #82742
Vienna, IL 62995

POST-NOTE:

Dear Joe,
Thanks for the strokes and the bucks. We know how valuable they are where you are right now. Sliding each other a little help when we can afford it is the only way we survive in the belly of the beast. We all hope you pull through all right during the rest of your stay as a guest of the taxpayers.

--The Post



Advice

on cold remedies

Dear Post,

A myriad of medications are offered for colds and hay fever, especially colds. They vary greatly in their cost and effectiveness. Having done some research on it, I have found that the most effective remedy for nasal congestion, and also probably the cheapest and the freest from side-effects, is phenylephrine hydrochloride, available as Walgreen's nose drops (least expensive) or Neo-Synephrine. It is generally cheaper to buy ingredients separately, buying nose drops for congestion, discount aspirin for headache, and an allergy tablet for sneezing and watering of the eyes. The cheapest and effective allergy tablet contains chlorpheniramine maleate, and is available as Walgreen allergy tablets (least expensive) or Chlor-Trimeton. This allergy tablet works against sneezing whether it's from cold or allergy. With these three basic ingredients you should be able to get through a cold without expensive time capsules (which discharge at different rates in different people anyway, and thus are unreliable) and other medicines, although you might need a cough syrup.

Sincerely yours,
Dave Burdette

POST-NOTE: See last month's article, "Looking for some (Legal) Speed?", page 10, for more info on chemical cold remedies.

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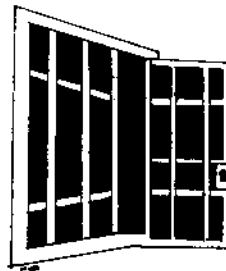
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SAMPLE ORDER 25 FOR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 5.75
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1000 SNOWBALL "POCKET ROCKETS" FOR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$130.00
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County jail conditions violate rights



Dear Post,

First I'd like to thank the Post for printing this article, if they do. And hope they keep up the good work. And for defending the rights we have.

I think it's time for the people to realize the situation here at the McLean County Jail. The rights we have are being violated; the conditions need to be better; and the so-called rules and regulations need to be changed. And, as the people, you have the right to speak out and help change things; we cannot. You are the people that voted the president in, and you are the people that voted the sheriff in. Then why can't you, the people, help change the situation here? What you are about to read are facts. I'm going to write what goes on behind the bars. How they lie to the people and to us.

First let me point out, we are not inmates, we are detainees. Detainees are people that have not been sentenced. That means we still have all our rights, the same ones you out there have. We are subject to sub-standard physical conditions; we are denied first amendment rights of communication; and we are disciplined and punished without even the rudimentary protections of due process of law. We are innocent till proven guilty (theoretically).

As for the conditions at the McLean County Jail, they are worse than a prison. Such as a smoking policy. Can anyone tell of a jail that has a smoking policy? I think this is the only jail in the state of Illinois that has one. We can't smoke any time we want; we have certain hours. We can smoke, from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. If you want a light, you ask a guard. He will light your cigarette. You'd probably want to know why there is a smoking policy. Well, some people tried burning their cells. For these

people that made that mistake, everyone has to pay. What I can't understand is how they make us pay for someone else's fault.

The food situation here is unbelievable. They feed you just enough to survive on. Once you're done eating, you're still hungry. One time I told the Asst. Warden Goldberg about the food. We had ravioli: I received three pieces on a tray and told him I was going to go on food strike. He told me, "Go ahead, don't eat." I said, "You'll have to take me to the hospital." He said, "Not for 6 to 8 weeks, so go on food strike, I don't care." This is the attitude they have.

The food is always cold when we get it, and most of the time the food is dried out. Then they expect us to eat it. Some of the dishes are rare, like corn and cracker mix, potatoes with two pieces of meat in them, greasy tomato soup, and I could go on and on. We do get some good meals, but very few. I asked a C.O. if he'd eat this stuff. He told me if it was him he'd throw it on the floor or at a C.O.

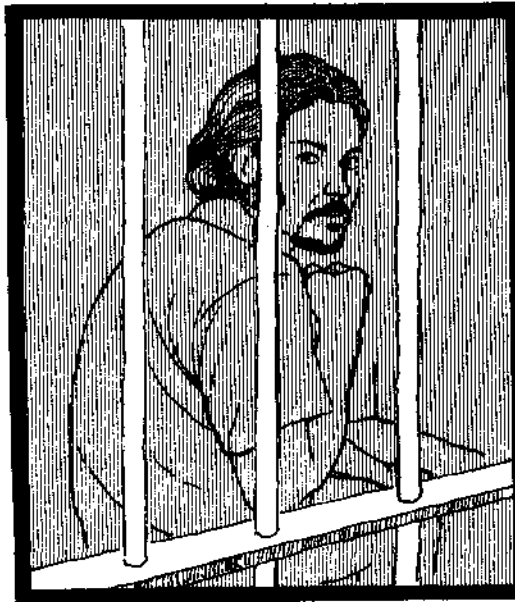
Some of the guards see our views, most don't. They know our rights are being violated, but won't and can't help us, mainly for fear of losing their jobs.

They also have a padded cell here, for those who are being punished or for mental cases. Before entering, you are to strip down and be checked. There is no bed, no sink, and no toilet. Just a drain is in that cell. If you have to go to the john, they hand you a paper plate and toilet paper. Now if this is not cruel and inhuman punishment, then I don't know what is. And how they get away with this is beyond my comprehension.

As for disciplinary procedures, they got you. For example, in their rules and regulations pamphlet it states, "After the shift commander has determined the seriousness of the misconduct and given the offender an opportunity to explain or deny it, a report of the violation will be placed in the offender's files. The offender will then be notified of the penalty for his/her misconduct." An opportunity to explain or deny his case. You're not given that opportunity; in fact, you're just given a paper that explains your offense and then you're punished for that misconduct or whatever.

Another example is shakedown. A block was shook down; one man was found with two aspirins in his cell. The result was, no one in the cell block was to receive medication till further notified. Tell me this: does this sound right?

This is what I mean by violating our rights, rights we don't see, rights we can't have; why? And what can we do? We need legal support, and we need the support of the people. We can only do so much. I just don't understand how they can punish everyone for what one man does. Also, the guards are supposed to check on everyone every hour. They don't do this. When you pound on the door to request something, they want to lock up the cell block for making noise. This is one of the many reasons they give you, so you don't pound on the door.



As for the rules and regulations here, some are contradictions. For example, "Medical Services: All inmates will be given a brief physical examination within the first week of incarceration." If you ask the people here, they'll tell you different. Sometimes you never receive a medical exam. But don't count on the first week. And when they mean brief, they mean just that. You have to fill a request sheet for any medical attention. As for the doctor here, he's slow and does not help anyone that needs real medical attention. One man had to wait 3 weeks to get a tooth pulled that was hurting. Another had a tooth pulled and it bled. He asked for gauze. The guards said they had none, but we found out they did. They also give you something for the pain; every 3 hours you're supposed to get your medication. Ask the prisoners if they got their medicine: they answer no, or they got it when the guards were ready. As far as I'm concerned, this jail has the poorest medical facilities and doctors.

Visiting hours: we are allowed two 15 minute visits a week. What can be said in 15 minutes? That's a half hour a week. The also tell you, when visitors arrive the name shall

be announced, to give you a chance to refuse a visit or not. All they tell you is you got a visit, nothing more or less. So if you don't want a visit, well you got to take a chance and go, and if it's someone you don't want to see, well you've lost one visit, cause they figure you just refused it for the night.

Phone calls: this is another problem. One phone call per week for five minutes. You can't say too much in five minutes. In the old county jail, you were allowed to call your attorney one day and your people the next: not so here. We should be allowed one for attorneys and one for family.

Mail: Here is another problem. In the rules and regulations, it says, "Mail will be delivered to you the day it is received." I've gotten my mail at 6 a.m. and it was from the day before. We have gotten mail at 7 p.m., 8, 9, and even at 11 or 12 p.m. Tell me mail comes in that late. We are not supposed to seal our personal letters. They fear that contraband may be in our letters, but we may seal legal mail. Now, what kind of contraband

they think we'd send from the inside out, I'll never know. They say they don't read our mail, but they have been caught. I'll be surprised if they don't read this letter I'm sending to the Post.

So you see our problems. You see what we go through, the bull we put up with, and the inhumane treatment they give us. What more can I say? What more can be said? That is why I'm writing to the Post: to let the readers know the situation here. To ask for their support to better the conditions here. And to help as much as possible. Sure, we have fine organizations like the ACLU and Prairie State Legal Services. But we need the people too. And as the people you can speak out and be heard. It is the people we ask for help to better the prisons and jails in this country, to rid them of inhuman conditions, and the hell we go through and the rights that are violated. With your support, we may find a way and hopefully there will be changes. Please write and let me know how you can help us. And let the keeper of jails and prisons know you care and want something done. Again, I thank the Post and hope they keep up the good work they've been doing.

J. P. Young
c/o 104 W. Front
McLean County Jail
Bloomington, IL 61701



Pontiac trials begin



For several weeks now, Judge Luther H. Dearborn has been listening (??) to pretrial motions preceding the first of several cases to come to trial involving indictments handed down after the riot at Pontiac Correctional Center on July 22, 1978. There have been 31 men indicted altogether.

In this first trial, Luis Perez and Manuel Santiago are charged with aggravated battery against another prisoner named Eddie Castaneda, a charge that could bring them a 10-year sentence. I don't believe that the State really cares whether or not somebody beat up Eddie. I feel that their strategy is to prosecute this case first in order to destroy any community support for the prisoners since this is the only case where inmates are charged with beating another inmate.

The payoff

These men were charged with this offense because some special agents interviewed and interrogated 2000 men who had been without showers, recreation, clean clothes, family visits, phone calls, library rights, or chapel rights for months. They were offered "good time" or a transfer if they would name persons who were involved in the riot. ("Good time" amounts to a reduction of actual time served.) Evidently, some of these fellas named Santiago and Perez.

These special agents were from the Illinois Department of Law Enforcement (IDLE) which was in control of the prison for the 10-month deadlock period following the riot. (You should see these guys; they're regular goons.) They were assisted in their investigation by lots of money from the Illinois taxpayers as well as two charming gentlemen from the Livingston County State's Attorney's office, David Vogel and John Beyer.

I've always viewed court as a theatre production, as most good lawyers are also grand actors, but this assistant state's attorney John Beyer is one of the most dramatic I've ever run across. His antics are simply incredible.

But this case is much more than an entertaining stageplay or a simple case of aggravated battery, as the State would like to think of it. Two men's lives are involved here.

In the pretrial motions, the defense lawyers, Shel Bannister for Santiago and William Clark for Perez, have been trying to show that the conditions of the prison and the manner in which the investigation was conducted are important matters to consider in the

credibility of statements made by inmates about what happened on July 22, 1978. They have argued two motions related to this. One was a motion to suppress statements made by the defendants. After hearing testimony by various IDLE agents, the court decided the statements were valid, even though Perez refused to sign a waiver of rights paper prior to making a statement.

If the defense had won, these statements could not have been used as evidence.



Luis Perez and Manuel Santiago (Picture compliments of the Pontiac Prisoners Support Coalition)

The other motion related to inmate interrogation was a motion to suppress photo identification of Santiago and Perez by other inmates on the grounds that the agents suggested certain people that the inmates should name and that they were bribed by offers of good time.

This motion was very interesting indeed, especially the testimony of an inmate named Charles Mitchell. Mitchell was one of the persons who identified Luis Perez in 1978 as being a participant in the riot and promised to go to court and testify for the state. It was a known fact at that time in the prison that the IDLE was offering deals to those who would name names. After he snitched, he changed his mind several times

whether or not to go through with it. The defense called him to the stand and he said that the State told him to name Luis Perez and they'd make him a deal. The State was so upset about this that they called 5 agents to impeach the testimony of their snitch.

John Beyer also testified during this motion. He said that while interviewing another inmate named Shane Alexander, he threatened him with contempt of court when he said he didn't want to get involved.

The motion to suppress photo identification was denied.

Other defense motions which were denied include a change of venue motion and a motion to dismiss a panel of jurors. The defense felt that because of the proximity of McLean County to Pontiac and the amount of local news coverage of the incident that it would be impossible to get a fair trial for Santiago and Perez here. Another factor in the motions was the small percentage of non-white persons residing in McLean County. The defendants are both Latinos.

All-white jury

An all-white jury has been selected. There was not one non-white person among the potential jurors. The trial is due to start on Monday Jan. 21. I have tried to give you a summary of what's happened in this proceeding so far. For more background, you should refer to the last several issues of the Post-Amerikan.

I feel that this case should never have come to trial. Since some property was destroyed in the riot and some people were hurt and killed, the State wants prisoners to take the rap. Seventeen persons are charged with murder and will be tried in Chicago. Fourteen are charged with various other crimes and will be tried downstate, mostly in McLean County.

The State should take the rap for this riot, because it was basically their fault. They crowd grown black and latino men into dirty cells, strip them of their dignity and hire ignorant white racists to be their overseers. How long do they expect these men to take this kind of treatment? As long as there are prisons, rebellion is inevitable. The act of rebellion is a human reaction, not a crime.

--Susan O'Neal

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SMALL CHANGES UPDATE

Small Changes Bookstore had a fabulous holiday season. We took a BIG gamble and spent an outrageous amount of money on new stock. Much to our relief and delight, we sold enough of it to pay our bills. We made over \$1,000 in December, and we're tremendously grateful to all our friends who, through their loyal support, made it all possible.

Because we really greatly increased our stock for the holidays, our shelves are still fuller than usual. And there's no stopping us either... we just keep adding more groovy stuff to our inventory.

For example, we've got some brand-new hardcover books, hot off the presses (well, at least lukewarm). These include Changing of the Gods, a feminist critique of religion and psychoanalysis, and Sunday's Women: A Report on Lesbian Life Today.

We now carry feminist and lesbian jewelry. Our limited trial selection includes womyn's symbol, lesbian (double, interlocking womyn's) symbol, and labrys (double-headed ax) pendants. They are 100% sterling silver, and are tasteful gifts for the special womyn in your life.

We have a new style of Pontiac Prisoners Support Coalition T-shirts, and No Nukes T-shirts, too. The No Nukes

shirts are available in children's as well as adult sizes.

We now carry Paid My Dues: A Journal of Women in Music. We'll soon have Mother Jones, Seven Days, Heresies (a feminist literary magazine), State and Mind (a radical therapy rag), and other movement-oriented periodicals. Check it out!

The collective would like to thank Susan O'Neal, Ann Lewis, and Laurie Dahlberg for helping us staff the store during the holiday burn-out. We couldn't have done it without them!

We're looking forward to a stimulating new year of growth, struggle, and more growth. We hope you'll share it with us.

--Julie, for the Small Changes Collective



GPA plans activities

ISU's Gay People's Alliance has planned a varied slate of programs and activities for the second semester of the school year.

The Jan. 23 meeting will feature a discussion of the problems and meanings of "coming out." Several small groups will explore the social, political, economic and personal aspects of revealing one's gayness. Although the topic is primarily aimed at gay people, non-gays will also be interested in learning about the gay struggle to be open and honest in a repressive society.

On Jan. 30 a presentation on V. D. and its specific

relation to gay people will be given.

Programs in February include a gay-straight rap (Feb 6), a report on a study of dyad communication among gay males (Feb. 20), and a reading of Robert Patrick's play "T-Shirts" (Feb. 27). A coffee house for gay men and lesbians is tentatively scheduled for Feb. 29.

The regular weekly meetings of GPA are held at 8 p.m. on Wednesdays in room 112 of Fairchild Hall on the ISU campus. More information about GPA and its activities can be obtained from Jane Scott at 454-1565 or Ivan Gronsky at 452-5852.

Jail review committee formed

An independent McLean County Jail Review Committee organized as a joint effort of four community service organizations to establish on-going contact between the county jail and the community. This citizen's group organized with the cooperation of the McLean County Sheriff and the jail staff. It will meet periodically with prisoners and jail personnel to monitor jail conditions. The committee will make recommendations on difficulties and work toward solutions.

Members of the 12-member committee will serve terms ranging from one to three years. Three members will be named to the committee by each of the participating organizations: the Central Illinois Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, the McLean County Chapter of the League of Women Voters, the McLean County Ministerial Association, and the McLean County Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Officers are: Reverend Carl Esenwein, chairperson; Francis Irvin, vice-chair; Meredith Schroeder, secretary. For information call Carl Esenwein at 828-4490 home, or 828-0235 office.

Open house at vocational center

The Bloomington Area Vocational Center will hold its annual open house Sunday Feb. 10 from 1 to 3 pm. Students will simulate a typical day at the center. Displays will depict various occupations in which students are employed. Students from 17 area high schools receive first-hand experiences in career planning and

involvement. At the area center students learn there is dignity in working with your hands.

The center is located at the east end of Bloomington High School. Please enter the northeast doors and see what vocational education is doing for the youth of your community.

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capital punishment
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get the punishment

New name for planned parenthood

Planned Parenthood of McLean County is now Planned Parenthood of Mid-Central Illinois. For problem pregnancy counseling or information on contraception, call Planned Parenthood at 827-8025 or visit at 201 E. Grove, 2nd floor, Bloomington.

Today the family-- Tomorrow the world!

In a move similar to Hitler's campaign to "restore the family to its rightful place," the New Right in this country has proposed wholesale repressions in the form of "The Family Protection Act of 1979" (S 1808).

The bill was introduced in Congress last September by conservative Sen. Paul Laxalt (R-NV), but little attention was given to it until the Gay Rights National Lobby (GRNL) recently zeroed in on it. Gay groups and gay rights are prime targets of the act.

GRNL believes that Laxalt introduced his bill at the urging of a new Christian lobby call Moral Majority, headed by evangelist Jerry Falwell. Such legislation was first discussed several months ago in a newsletter from Moral Majority.

Billed as a means "to strengthen the American family and promote the virtues of family life," S1808 attacks many of the usual causes which upset conservatives and fascists. At the same time, it proposes considerable tax benefits for marriage and breeding--such as an extra exemption in the year a child is born or adopted.

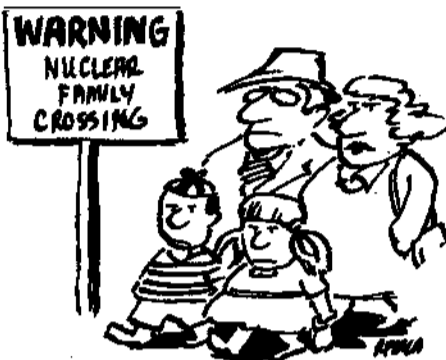
The Family Protection Act has 35 major provisions; 17 of them revolve around education. A list of some of the more odious ones follows, and though it reads like the paranoid ravings of a demented radical, I assure you they are for real. In fact, these items were all taken from Laxalt's speech to the Senate in support of his bill:

--prohibit any federal funds to states which do not allow voluntary prayer in schools

--forbid funds to states unless "parents can participate in decisions relating to the study of religion"

--"withhold funds to any program that teaches children values that contradict demonstrated community beliefs or to buy any textbooks that denigrate, diminish or deny the historically understood role differences between the sexes"

--reserve for the states the right, with parental consultation, "to limit or prohibit intermingling of



the sexes in sports or other school-related activities, free of Federal interference"

--exempt private schools from supervision of the National Labor Relations Board

--prohibit the Internal Revenue Service from "being arbitrary and capricious in granting or withdrawing tax-exempt and tax-deductible status" of private schools

--create a "legal presumption in the Federal Code in favor of the parents' role in supervising and determining the religious or moral formation of their children"

--prohibit federal funding for contraceptive, V.D. treatment or abortion services to an unmarried minor "unless there is an attempt to notify the parents"

--restrict the activities of the Legal Services Corp. in areas of divorce, abortion, gay rights, and school desegregation

--prohibit voluntarily unemployed students from receiving food stamps

--forbid federal funds to any organization which "advocates homosexuality or presents homosexuality as an acceptable alternative lifestyle"

--write into law "a statement that discrimination against declared homosexuals would never be considered an unlawful employment practice"

the nuclear family needs this kind protection, it really must be in trouble. Let's hope the outmoded institution collapses completely before Laxalt and his fellow Nazis get their bill passed.

--Ferdydurke

Sources: Gay Community News (Boston), The Advocate (Los Angeles), Congressional Record, Sept. 27, 1979.

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STOP BY AND CHECK US OUT



Free food: the WIC



program

Pregnant and breast-feeding women, infants, and children under five years old may be eligible for a free weekly care package from the WIC program.

WIC is a government-sponsored program which provides nutritious food, encourages good health care, and promotes nutrition consciousness through education.

People can qualify for WIC on the basis of physical, nutritional, or financial need. You need to be a resident of McLean County in order to be certified for the program. That's the hardest part. The rest is pretty easy.

You need to call the WIC clinic and make an appointment to apply for their program. Their phone number is 829-2221, and their address is 722 W. Chestnut in Bloomington (across the street from the public aid office--the pink/purple bus runs right by it).

When you call for an appointment, they'll tell you to bring proof of your income. A couple of recent paycheck stubs is fine. When I applied for WIC, the folks there seemed much less hard-core about finances than the food stamp people. They have a table to determine financial eligibility, and according to it, any minimum-wage slave is certain to qualify.

The way they determine physical need is by a medical exam. If you are anemic, underweight, not growing properly, or sickly in any way,

you'll most likely be certified for the program.

Nutritional need is determined by a dietary evaluation. What they do is called a nutritional recall. In other words, they just sit you down and ask you what you've eaten in the past 24 hours, and try to get some idea of what your general eating habits are. This is an easy one to cheat on... just pretend you eat poorly and you've got free milk and eggs (or formula and pablum) for six months.

Once you and/or your kids are enrolled in the program, you have to attend a nutrition education class or your certification will be cancelled. It's real basic, it's good stuff to know, and it only lasts about an hour.

Eligibility is for 6 months, after which you and/or your kids will have to submit to another blood test and medical examination to see if you still qualify.

The WIC package is delivered to your home weekly. You'll get milk, cheese, eggs, cereal, and orange juice. Babies can get formula, cereal, and juice. The cheese is actually processed Amerikan "cheese food" slices, and if you like it, you can have mine too!

WIC is a fairly new program, and they aren't overworked and understaffed, as the food stamp office seems to be. At WIC, I felt much more like a real person, instead of merely the organism that fills out the Almighty Form. All the staff women were pleasant and respectful. The milk delivery person who brings the package is real nice, too.

So although they have some funny ideas about what food is actually nutritious (the cheese and cereal leave a lot to be desired), the WIC program is an accessible source of freebies, and in rough times like these, every little bit helps. •

-Julie

One nation, under guard...

Amused by our story about how Gov. Jim Thompson thinks that saying the Pledge of Allegiance every day is good for children's patriotic upbringing, a friend gave us a transcript of how her six-year-old daughter understands the Pledge. Here's how she says it:

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for witches' dance: one nation, under guard, indivisible, with livery and justiff for all."

"One nation, under guard" is, I think, an improvement on the original.

--Phoebe Caulfield



looks like a sleepy, serene community.

If you listen to the city fathers, the Pantagraph, the civic boosters and the phony speechmakers, you would think we lived in a 1930's Hollywood set. But let's look behind the scenes. Each month since April 1972, the Post-Amerikan has been denting that serene facade, printing the embarrassing truths the city fathers would rather overlook. Take another look at Bloomington-Normal. Subscribe to the Post-Amerikan.

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