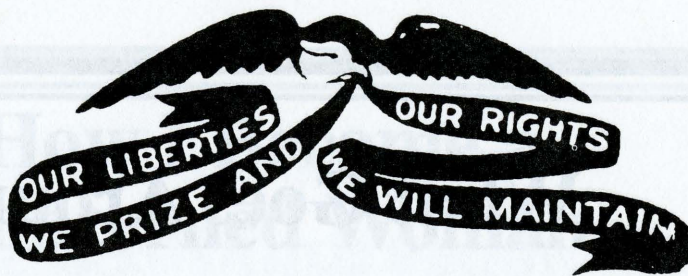


THE PRAIRIE PROGRESSIVE



22

Winter 1993

A NEWSLETTER FOR IOWA'S DEMOCRATIC LEFT

Prairie Dog's 7th Annual Honor Roll

Bill Crews—The mayor of Melbourne's house was vandalized after he spoke publicly about being gay. Crews, a popular Republican who was unopposed in his last reelection, said, "I had the guts to say it out in the open and these animals had to vent their hate under the cover of darkness."

Mary Robinson—The Waterloo lawyer and educator became the first African-American woman to be pastor of a white Baptist congregation among the 160 Baptist churches in the Iowa-Minnesota region.

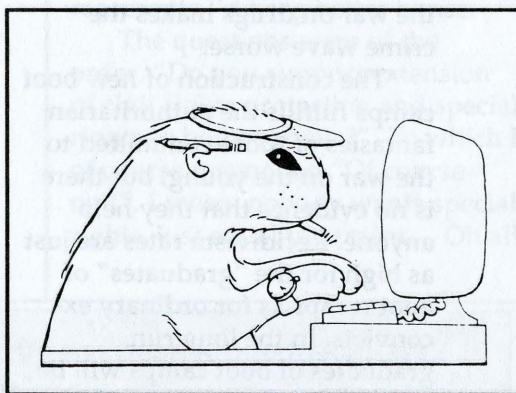
Joe Bolkcom—The lone member of the Johnson County Board of Supervisors who resists its obsession with secrecy.

David Bedell—This Iowa City doctor gave up a soft practice in his home town to vaccinate children, conduct health workshops, train "barefoot doctors," and introduce chlorination & safe human waste disposal in El Salvador. Send contributions to the Latin American Human Rights Advocacy Center, Box 8852, IC 52244.

Citizens of Wayne County—Despite promises of construction work and hundreds of permanent jobs, they fought off developers wanting to build a nuclear-waste storage-facility in their county, one of the poorest in Iowa.

Sally Halford—The new State Corrections Director's first act was to appoint a task force for hiring and retaining more minorities and women.

Harvey Siegelman—Asked if national publicity resulting from The Flood would scare tourists away, the state economist replied, "It's better than a mass murder, but it's not as good as *The Bridges of Madison County*."



Gayle Sand—Her article "Surviving a Holy War: Health Care Providers Cope with Anti-Abortion Harassment" (PP, Spring '93) was reprinted in the *Des Moines Register*, the *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, and the *Daily Iowan*.

John Deeth—His article "Rock & Roll Confessions of a Clinton Campaign Staffer" (PP, Fall '93) appeared in slightly different form

in the September '93 *Rock & Rap Confidential*.

State Senator Al Sturgeon (D-Sioux City)—"We have a bunch of people with white collars & ties asking this legislature to ask people who work on a factory floor in t-shirts & blue collars to urinate on demand in a bottle."

Inadvertent Moment of Truth Award: When Governor Branstad insisted that a law allowing freer use of employee drug-testing would attract and retain businesses like Lennox in Marshalltown, Lennox spokesman David Chase said that he was unable to think of a single example in which the company wanted to test for drugs but couldn't under Iowa law.

Campaign to Organize Graduate Students—It began as a small canvassing effort on the University of Iowa campus, then grew into a spirited drive to carve out a bargaining unit for teaching and research assistants. Currently negotiating with the Board of Regents, COGS is on the verge of becoming the largest public sector local in the state.

Chris P. Carrot—The intrepid vegetable refused to cave in when denied entrance to Des Moines schools. Undaunted by officials

Honor,
Continued on Page 5

What Goes Around, Comes Around

Attorney General Bonnie Campbell will probably be the Democratic nominee for governor in 1994. She has made the construction of a new prison the centerpiece of her campaign, and advocated the creation of "boot camps" for young offenders.

It is difficult to think of anything that Iowa needs less than a new prison. Campbell appears to be unaware of what has been going on in America during the last ten years. We have engaged in an orgy of prison construction and incarceration at the state and federal level, and now imprison a larger percentage of our population than any country except South Africa. Yet the crime rate continues to grow, and prison overcrowding gets worse. The supply of prisoners grows faster than the space allotted to them.

There is every reason to believe that the construction of new prisons makes crime worse. People do not get better in prison. Prisons brutalize people, and teach them more about crime. When they get out (as they will, since we cannot imprison all criminals for life), they are more likely to commit violent crimes. Consequently we are in greater danger because of prisons, yet politicians call robot-like for more prisons and tougher sentences.

Between 25% and 35% of young black men are in prison, in jail, on probation, or on parole. A new prison will make that problem worse, and hasten the very rapid deterioration of race relations in America. How many young black men do we have to re-enslave in order to deal with the crime epidemic? 40%? 50%? Perhaps the

Attorney General could set a target figure for the campaign.

Prisons are overcrowded, not merely because more people are committing violent crimes, but because of the criminalization of non-violent, victimless crimes. Roughly 25% of prisoners in Iowa are serving time for dealing in marijuana and amphetamines, and the percentage is growing. Both the president and vice-president have used marijuana, and amphetamines were until recently widely prescribed as diet pills for teenage girls. Campbell is partly responsible for this overcrowding herself because of her unscrupulous drug hysteria during her race for Attorney General. Surgeon General Jocelyn Elders at least has the courage to point out that the war on drugs makes the crime wave worse.

The construction of new boot camps fulfills the authoritarian fantasies of those committed to the war on the young, but there is no evidence that they help anyone. Recidivism rates are just as high for the "graduates" of boot camps as for ordinary ex-convicts. In the long run, graduates of boot camps will be an even greater danger to society. Governor Branstad has compared a boot camp to the expensive private military school that he has chosen for his delinquent son, but a boot camp is in fact little more than an opportunity to systematically mistreat young people. Treat young people brutally, and they will treat you brutally in return.

The problem of violent crime is serious and getting worse, and Iowans are quite rightly fed up

with having to live in fear. But Campbell's approach will merely divert attention from the proper approach which is neither simple, nor fast, nor cheap. Much of the solution lies not with government, but with homes, families, and churches. But government is not helpless.

The first thing we should do is reduce the sentences for drug dealing, especially marijuana and amphetamines. A Cedar Rapids man was recently given 15 years without parole for growing marijuana. In Kansas a 48-year old man was recently given 36 years without parole for growing marijuana. We are not safer because he will be incarcerated until he is 84. We would be safer if people like him were given supervised probation, and prison space allocated to those convicted of murder, rape, and assault.

If we build a prison in Iowa, we will have little money to spend on any new initiatives in health, welfare, and education. Our social workers will continue to be the most overworked people in the state. Tuition will continue to grow at our community colleges and state universities, pricing working class students out of the opportunity for an education. The growing population of very poor children will continue to do without decent education, child care, and health care, while their mothers are persecuted under new "welfare reform" measures. As a result, crime will get worse.

Because of changes in our position in the world marketplace, Iowa is a relatively poorer

Prisons, Continued on Page 5

NAFTA And Labor: Where Do We Go From Here?

"The labor movement has repeatedly made new beginnings after devastating defeats and in moments of apparent weakness."

— Staughton Lynd

By accounts in the traditional press, you'd think that the passage of NAFTA points to Labor's final demise. I think not. In our campaign against NAFTA, Labor did many things right and quite well. To begin with it listened to the concerns of its own rank and file and articulated their issue.

Secondly, Labor acted beyond the traditional boundaries of wages and benefits for its members. Believing that this agreement was bad for ALL workers, Labor successfully brought it to public attention and stimulated discussion and debate that is rarely heard in this country, around an issue that normally would have been ignored by most.

Thirdly, Labor worked in coalitions with many non-labor organizations opposed to NAFTA. They, like us, value the dignity of workers, human rights, and the quality of life.

Finally, the NAFTA debate opened the doors to communication between the rank and file in Canada, U.S. and Mexico. Doing so has broken down

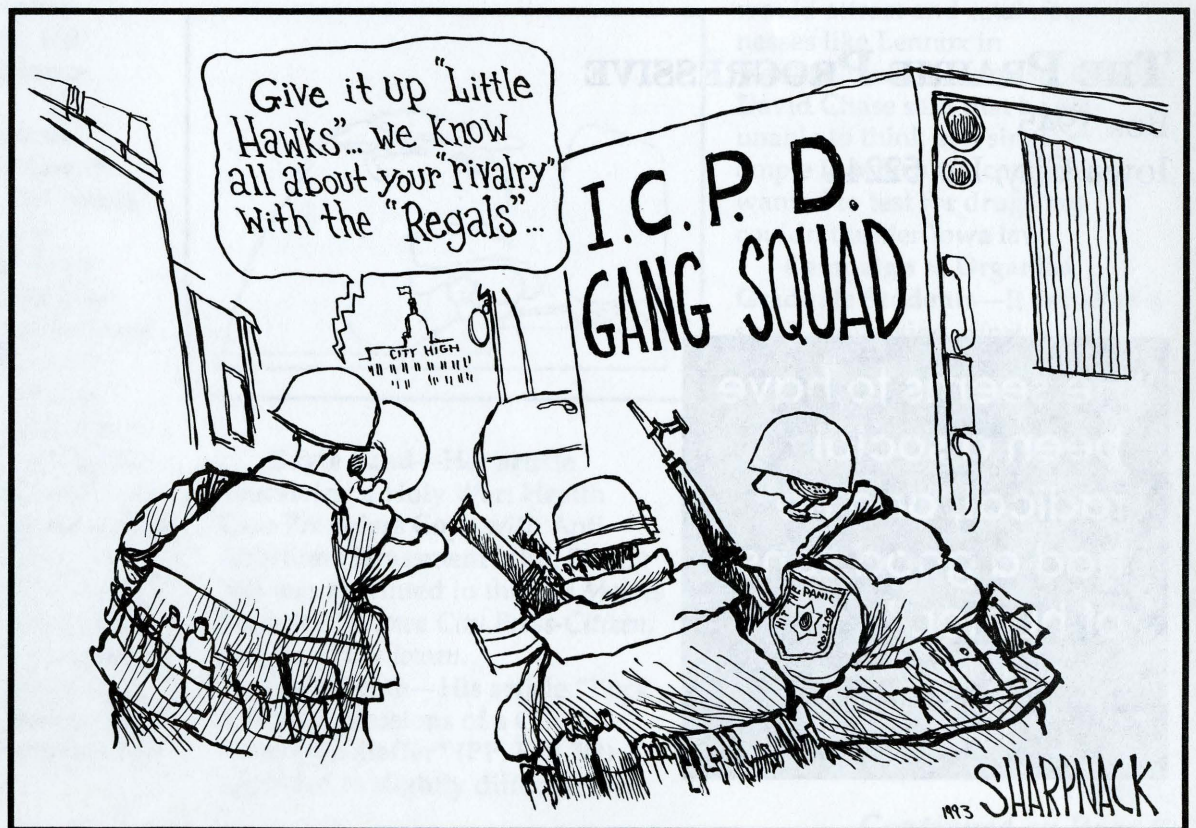
stereotypes and encouraged a much-needed move for more cooperation and mutual activity.

Labor lost the battle but not the war. We must use the same vigor we used in opposing it to demand compliance. Like the Reverend Martin Luther King, we must continually point out inconsistencies between what is on paper and what is being practiced, especially in regard to labor.

The real challenge for Organized Labor is to match the growth of multinational corporations with multinational unions to collectively bargain with them. As businesses pick up and move to wherever wages and conditions are the worst, Labor must see to it that workers' rights are protected, including the right to organize.

An important step in that process must be the exploration of growing alliances, cooperation, and mutual aid within the labor movements of Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. When workers in any of those countries lose, we all lose. ☪

— Patrick Hughes is president of the Iowa City Federation of Labor



It's the Sodomy, Stupid: Sex, Violence and Free Speech at the U of I

A free-speech crisis is raging on campus over issues of sex and violence, and sex is losing. On one side we have videos of gay sex shown in the classroom, on the other we have a columnist for the student newspaper endorsing pro-life murder. The videos unleashed warnings and demands by the Board of Regents. The column received no official reaction and bathed its human rights-bashing author in notoriety. (The Des Moines Register, confusing infamy with fame, even asked him his opinion on gambling for a feature article.)

This university enjoys a national reputation made from young men fiercely grappling on a wrestling mat, but the sight of men lovingly groping set off a storm that reached the governor's mansion. Same-sex sex is simply too much sex for the university. Is it any wonder that people are crying homophobia, given the things that are tolerated by campus officials?

The university allows the gerbil quilt, vile product of a vicious myth, to be displayed at the student union in mockery of the AIDS quilt. Try describing this homophobic Renanderthalian artifact to an outsider: you will get a howl of disbelief in response. Human behavior seems always able to stay ahead of our ability to describe it. If there is ever an AIDS museum, the gerbil quilt should hang there as testament to the fact that, despite its unrelenting obsession with saving public money, what the political right is most conservative with is compassion.

Nor was there any official outcry when David Mastio wrote his column favoring the killing of

doctors who perform late abortions. He became a symbol of free speech, with the specter of book burnings in the Third Reich as a backdrop. What a crock. I refuse to put the name David Mastio in the same sentence with Thomas Mann. If it's not okay to yell "Fire!" in a crowded theater, why is it okay to yell "Shoot!" in a crowded clinic?

A favorite argument of free speech purists is to let guys like Mastio expose their opinions for all informed people to ridicule. But more people in this country are laughing with than at Mt. Rushbaugh. And years of trickle-down economics have made survival, not learning, the number one aim of university students. Producing richer, not better and more informed, human beings is a new goal of universities.

The premise behind First Amendment debates seems to be that free speech is an absolute right that exists absolutely in a moral and political vacuum. Yet there is no level playground for targets of free hate speech. "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me" is a white children's chant. I suspect that most First Amendment absolutists are white males, the least vulnerable members of our society. What do you call a white male to really sting him--a white male?

At the recent university Free Speech Forum the debaters agreed on one thing: they both hated not racial insensitivity, but political correctness. With all the critical glare aimed at "PC," the letters "NAZI" and "KKK" have been multiplying in the dark.

These two have merged to form the American version of the skin-

head. I recently saw two of these creatures on a national talk show. The host periodically reminded the unruly audience of her guests' right of free speech, but she would allow no swearing. Couldn't say the F-word, but the N-word, our most powerful racist epithet, was flying unrestricted all over the set. The "guest" in the "White Power" t-shirt declaimed that Hitler was his god, and as the camera faded into a commercial, he gave us the Nazi salute. What the hell is going on? Santayana would've saved his breath had he known we wouldn't even be able to remember Hitler. These guys live only to do to all non-whites what Mastio would have done to doctors who perform third-trimester abortions.

For all the wonderful work the ACLU does, I could never belong to an organization that would have a Nazi or Ku Klux Klanner as a defendant. Applied to Nazis and the KKK the free speech issue becomes a case of: I'll defend to the death your right to kill me.

The recent racist and misogynistic letter to the president of the Black American Law Student Association may at last force the university to wake up to the fact that there are malevolent forces at work in this community. Evils far greater than the sight of more than one staff of life on the screen at the same time. If the Board of Regents enacts its "explicit materials" policy, will it also require the Mastiodons to fire warning shots?

Still, after all is said and done, and with the above exceptions, I have to be in favor of free speech. Without it my last line would have to look like this. ____ you, Mastio. ☹

— Jae Retz

*Prisons,
Continued from Page 2*

state than it was ten years ago. Government can't do everything. If we devote new resources to building a new prison, we can't do other things that will make Iowa a decent place to live, and reduce the crime rate in the long run. If we want Bonnie Campbell to be a decent governor of Iowa, we will have to figure out some way to force her to break her promises. ☛

— Jeff Cox

*Honor,
Continued from Page 1*

who acted as if the animal rights mascot were Pablo Escobar, he/she distributed literature to children on their way to school.

Laurie Clements—The director of the U of I Labor Center is believed to be the only Iowan to have actually read the entire NAFTA. He opposed it.

Bonnie Campbell—Speaking at a University Democrats' banquet in Iowa City, the Attorney General cited DSA founder Michael Harrington's book *The Other America* as one of her greatest sources of inspiration. Could the next governor be a closet socialist? ☛

How I Became a Concerned Woman

It was simple enough for me to become a concerned woman. I didn't have to wear dresses or put on make-up. I didn't have to mask my voice. It didn't even require hormone shots, or (gulp!) gender reassignment surgery.

All I had to do to become a Concerned Woman for America was to answer a direct-mail survey. What list they bought is beyond me. ACLU? I doubt it. A.F.S.C.M.E.? Doesn't seem likely. National Gay and Lesbian Task Force? Maybe if they felt that they needed some tough women and "sensitive" men.

Maybe.

Anyway, all I had to do was honestly answer a brief survey. Of course when I sat down to write this I just couldn't find the copy I kept. If I were really the model of Christian womanhood that CWA represents I'd keep better house.

The questions were of the order, "Do you support extension of civil rights protection and special rights to homosexuals?". To which I of course responded "Of course not!". I mean, nobody wants special rights, just equal treatment.... Oh all

right! It would be kinda cool if only queers got double coupons, but there were only blanks for "yes", "no", and "don't know".

But seriously, since I'm now a Concerned Woman, I can't take these things so lightly.

Concerned Women's literature, sadly, proves that they are just another feather on the religious right wing of the Republican Party. While their fundraising hooks snag mostly those who are fearful of sexuality, their agenda extends to turning back the clock on a number of issues: civil rights (not only lesbian/gay civil rights, but even the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act), education reform, and universal health care (can't tax those families to pay for it). Their icons are a pantheon of religious conservatism (Jack Kemp, William Bennett, and Pat Buchanan).

The warning to Progressives is clear. The right wing will continue to organize those who are uncomfortable with sexuality to further a social *injustice* agenda. Although the tide on abortion turned when Bill Clinton became President, the right will continue to use homophobia, opposition to sexually explicit materials, and sex education as organizing tools. Progressives cannot afford to surrender this ground in silence. ☛

— David Tingwald

THE PRAIRIE PROGRESSIVE has been published quarterly in Iowa City since 1986. Editor for this issue is Jeff Cox.

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WAFT Warning: Mamas, Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to Be Hawkeyes

This is the season when bright-eyed recruits for Hayden Fry's football program arrive with their parents for the annual seduction to replenish the main testosterone dump site for Johnson County.

This year, Women Against Free-floating Testosterone (WAFT) is taking a proactive approach. As part of its Early Intervention Campaign 2000, WAFT will be sending out Parental Advisory notices to warn parents about the toxic nature of the Fry environment.

The parental advisory will include information on Fry's shameless defense of John Hartlieb,

the 6'2" 225-pound linebacker who lost his temper at an Iowa City Burger King when some fans made derogatory comments about the team's loss to Michigan. Hartlieb, arrested for public intoxication and disorderly conduct, was exonerated by Fry for his behavior. "It would be like someone talking to you about your mother," Fry explained. "For someone with pride, it's kind of hard to turn and walk out."

Fry's criticism of the equal sharing of scholarship funds with women's athletics will be included in the advisory, as well as his comments about women's basketball coach Vivian Stringer's high

salary. WAFT asks: When was the last time one of Coach Stringer's girls grabbed ass on the Pentacrest?

Accompanying the advisories will be x-rays of smashed knees and dislocated shoulders, and photos of normal high school boys bulked up by the football program into real men, men who will have to wear bras for the rest of their lives.

WAFT concedes that these advisories are necessary because, despite a losing season, Fry still poses a hormonal threat to our prairie youth. ☹

— *Sundy Smith* covers the hormone beat for the Prairie Progressive.

THE PRAIRIE PROGRESSIVE

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"He seems to have been a social radical, and he had a good sense of humor."

— *Robert Funk*,
Jesus scholar,
December, 1993

