Legislative targets
Partisan control of the next General Assembly rests on the outcome in a handful of key races
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Conversing with the Publisher

by Ed Wojcicki

People like to think the media never print the good news. So I’m happy Illinois Issues is once again co-sponsoring the M otora llo Excellence in Public Service Award. Now in its ninth year, this award recognizes an innovative agency head who works for the city of Chicago, Cook County or the state of Illinois. I chair the selection committee and the N orth Business & Industrial Council and M otorallo have again joined the magazine as co-sponsors.

Congratulations to this year’s winners: M ary Dempsey, commissioner of the Chicago Public Library, and Audrey M cCrim on, assistant to the secretary of the Illinois D epartment of Human Services and former director of the Illinois D epartment of Rehabilitation Services.

D empsey has been responsible for upgrading Chicago’s library services and helping residents of some of the city’s poor neighborhoods gain access to the Internet at modernized facilities. I asked her last month what she’s most proud of, and she responded clearly: providing access to information in multiple languages. Though summarized in multiple languages, though summarized in multiple languages, though summarized in multiple languages.

What tickles me is the local reaction to New York’s Cow Parade, which has drawn mixed reviews. Some New Yorkers must think it’s not M onet, it can’t be art. They must be too snobsby to think anything cultural could be fun.

Chicago really started something with its Cows on Parade celebration last summer. The successful project to place hundreds of painted fiberglass cows on city sidewalks drew acclaim from city businesses, artists and a countless number of people who enjoyed the unexpected encounter with strange, large-life creatures. Spin-offs of the project spread to other cities. Cincinnati has pigs on parade. Peoria does, too. New Orleans has fish, Buffalo has buffaloes and Orlando will have large lizards.

What ticks me is the local reaction to New York’s Cow Parade, which has drawn mixed reviews. Some New Yorkers must think it’s not M onet, it can’t be art. They must be too snobsby to think anything cultural could be fun. The N ew York Times ran a headline in July that said, “Isn’t It Time To Put F iber glass V idders Out to Pasture?” A Washington Post reporter conducted some person-on-the-street interviews and concluded: “The reviews are not good.”

Congrats to Motorola winners and humbug on New York City!

H unks power of public broadcasting across Illinois...
by Peggy Boyer Long

Fifty summers ago, the poliomyelitis virus was scaring the dickens out of every parent in the country. The disease, which spreads through contact with contaminated feces, can cripple and kill adults and children alike. It brought special terror to mothers and fathers. The public swimming pool was out of the question. As for inoculations, however limited the protection, there was no question. Life in an iron lung seemed an all-too-real alternative.

Later reports put the panic in perspective. “Oh no cases make an epidemic?” Wilfrid Sheed asked in his profile of Dr. Jonas Salk for Time magazine in 1963. “Survivors of the great polio plagues of the 1940s and ’50s will never believe that in the U.S. the average toll in those years was only 1 victim out of every 5,000 people.”

For parents, though, that was one too many. But then, remember, this was the World War II generation, already accustomed to mobilizing against any enemy. And winning. Even the name given to the fundraising effort for vaccine research had a military ring: The March of Dimes. And Americans winning. Even the name given to the fundraising effort for vaccine research had a military ring: The March of Dimes. And Americans

In the summer of 1953, Gary Smith, 4, was one of 21,000 Macon County children who got a gamma globulin shot. At the time, it was only known, though limited, protection against severe polio. A year later, Dr. Jonas Salk field-tested his vaccine on children. In 1961, the American Medical Association endorsed Dr. A. Albert Sabin’s oral vaccine.

But in the summer of 1953, Macon County parents were grateful for any chance at preventing a dread disease. Fourteen cases of polio had been reported in the county, three of them resulting in death, three in paralysis. Local officials, with federal help, organized inoculation centers and 21,000 children got the gamma globulin shot, at the time the only known, though limited, protection against severe polio.

That was the year before Salk began field trials with nearly two million schoolchildren. His vaccine was declared 90 percent safe but, in 1955, a bad batch infected 250 children with polio. Eleven died. Still Americans pressed on. And in 1963, the American Medical Association endorsed Dr. Albert Sabin’s oral vaccine. Today, both vaccines are given in alternating cycles. Though the polio virus is still a killer elsewhere on the globe, it’s no longer a worry in this country. There hasn’t been a case of paralytic polio in Illinois since 1983.

The story of the search for a polio vaccine says much about politics, of course, as well as the clash of scientific egos. What is more compelling, though, is what it says about us. It’s hard not to be struck by the public’s willingness to mobilize in a time of crisis. We really did believe the only thing we had to fear was fear itself.

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It was shortly after the Summer of Love. The Vietnam War was at its height. A Daley was the boss of Chicago. M. e. n. had stepped onto the M o. n. and the Cubs had handed a 9-1/2-game lead to the H. ets. n. and then convention delegates from across Illinois finished remaking the state’s 100-year-old constitution. That was 30 years ago this month. That month could be called ConCon may not have had the made-for-TV glamour of a moon walk. Nevertheless, it managed to redraw the constellation of Illinois government, changing, for instance, the relationship of the executive and legislative branches, and the relative powers of local and state officials. It strengthened oversight of state finances. And it created limited citizen initiative powers.

Some of these changes are now taken for granted – “home rule” powers for larger municipalities, for example, and the establishment of a state auditor general. Others are still debated, such as the extra veto powers granted the governor. M. e. n. while, proposals that didn’t make it into the document, particularly merit selection of judges, continue to stir controversy.

Still, those who participated in the Illinois Constitutional Convention 30 years ago have reason to celebrate the document’s anniversary.

Thirty years ago, delegates from across Illinois finished remaking the state’s 100-year-old state Constitution.

The Constitution of 1970 codified what had become obvious: Illinois had outgrown its rural roots, and most Illinoisans were living in cities.

A city, but especially the city of Chicago, were winners by the time the delegates disbursed. Increased municipal powers constituted a major victory for M. e. r. R. i. D. a. l. y. He also retained authority to hand-pick candidates for local judicial offices, a great reward for the party faithful. A. s. a result, D. a. l. y. ’s Democratic political machine helped assure that the Constitution was approved.

There were new players in the political game, too. Among the delegates were D. w. n. C. w. n. N. et. s. h. next, soon to be a Democratic state senator from Chicago, and later state comptroller and gubernatorial candidate. R. c. h. m. D. a. l. y. son of the Chicago mayor, cut his teeth at ConCon. Speaker of the Illinois H. u. s. M. c. h. a. d. i. n. won his first election as a delegate. And there was J. e. f. f. y. L. a. d. d., a Republican, who is now chairman of the suburban M. e. t. r. a. train system.

There were community activists who sat on opposite sides of the ideological fence, too, including A. R. b. y, who had a back-and-forth with the turbines of more than 25,000 the ability to issue their own debt without this limitation. Cities could also regulate public health and safety, sometimes charged the dynamics of the legislative process and state government,” says M. a. d. i. g. n. “Prior to the adoption of the Constitution, a large city like Chicago had to get approval from state government to address problems and to change their taxing authority.”

The Constitution also altered the relative powers of the executive and legislative branches. The amendatory veto, a Netsch proposal, gave the governor the authority to make changes in legislation approved by the General Assembly. N. e. t. s. h. argues a final review by themselves is necessary due to the sheer number of proposals legislators must consider.

It banned discrimination in housing, education, and employment based on race, color, religion and creed, ancestry and national origin. It protected the right to an abortion.

The 1970 Constitution also enhanced the rights of Illinois citizens. The Constitution was approved, but the courts continued to work against abortion. The delegates organized themselves into 12 committees, including education, local government, revenue and judiciary.

The difficult debate over abortion foreshadowed the controversy that remains today. At the time, abortion was illegal. But Father Lawlor, a vehement opponent, says he could see the mood of the country turning. Lawlor pushed unsuccessfully to include the unborn in the Bill of Rights. He clashed a day when he brought several fetuses to a committee meeting. “I thought if they saw it, how could you vote not to protect it,” he says. “It was just a heart breaking thing.”

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Illinois farmers brace for presidential politicking

‘It’s been called the World’s Fair of agriculture’ boasts organizer Mark Randal. But this election season, some participants hope it doesn’t become a political sideshow.

The hosts for this year’s annual Farm Progress Show, September 26-28, expect more than 250 exhibitors, 250,000 farmers — and maybe a couple of presidential candidates — to converge on two farms in Centrall near Springfield. With its ability to attract crowds, much like state and county fairs, this ag extravaganza draws candidates as well as farmers. Democratic presidential nominee Al Gore and Republican nominee George W. Bush have visited previous Farm Progress Shows and are likely to make the trip again.

“I suspect both will come,” says Randal. “The ag world is still important when it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national media it comes to a campaign. In 1996, both [Al] Gore and [Bob] Dole came to the Amana show in Iowa. We welcomed them. We welcome the national.
BRIEFLY

continued from previous page

consultation with Gov. Ryan, decided in July to help private landowners indirectly by intervening in “the best interests of the state.” A former General Ryan also retained the firm of Mayer, Brown & Platt because the Chicago law firm has experience with similar cases involving Indian claims in other parts of the country.

Indian tribes have had some success in negotiating settlements on past land deals after a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 1985 sided with the Oneida in a case stemming from an unlawful ruling in 1985. The Oneida in 1985, the year after Ryan was first elected secretary of State, his campaign fund showed small contributions of $414,374. A And the latest post-ban figures indicate Ryan took in only $900 worth of small contributions during the first half of this year.

But, because they’re not itemized, you don’t know. Though it’s impossible to determine for sure how much of Ryan’s past contributions came from state employees, the concern with avoiding the appearance of undue influence may be well-founded. Guilty pleas in the Operation Safe Road investigation reveal that some former secretary of State employees funneled $170,000 in bribe money to then-Secretary of State Ryan’s campaign fund, much of it through the purchase of fundraising tickets. Ryan has subsequently given that amount to charity.

WEBSOURCE

Get an information booster on kids’ inoculations

Need a shot of information on the vaccinations kids must have before they head back to school? It’s all on the Web.

A good place to start is the state Department of Public Health’s site at www.idph.state.il.us/a-zlist.htm. Check out the vaccination listings. Some infectious diseases, such as measles, are listed separately. Go to www.idph.state.il.us/local/home.htm for a list of the addresses of local health departments, which can be located through a regional map or alphabetically.

Further, the state site has a list of links to other government sites, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov. Click on “Health Topics A-Z” for more information on specific diseases.

Parents who are nervous about shots can go to “Vaccines for Children,” part of the National Immunization Program at www.cdc.gov/nip/vfc. Under “Information and Resources” is a page titled “Six Common M isconceptions about Vaccination” that answers some of the questions parents frequently ask.

A additional information is available by going to www.healthfinder.gov/health-topics.htm and clicking on “immunizations and infectious diseases.” Or type “immunizations” in the search window on the home page.

New Books

Ban on state employees may hit Ryan’s campaign pocketbook

Gov. George Ryan’s self-imposed ban on accepting contributions from state employees may reveal the extent to which they have kicked into his campaign account in past years.

In his forthcoming book, “M oney Counts,” University of Illinois at Springfield professor Ken Redfield analyzes contributions to Ryan’s campaign that fall under $150. These are labeled “not-itemized” in campaign finance reports and their sources are not recorded.

For the two reporting periods in calendar year 1999, then-Secretary of State Ryan reported $629,656 of small contributions during the first half of this year. Though it’s impossible to determine for sure how much of Ryan’s past contributions came from state employees, the concern with avoiding the appearance of undue influence may be well-founded. Guilty pleas in the Operation Safe Road investigation reveal that some former secretary of State employees funneled $170,000 in bribe money to then-Secretary of State Ryan’s campaign fund, much of it through the purchase of fundraising tickets. Ryan has subsequently given that amount to charity.

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Rodd Whelpley
BEYOND NEBRASKA

State abortion foes unsure how to answer court ruling

A abortion opponents in Illinois, dealt a setback by a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling, are mulling how — and whether — to try to preserve a state law banning the controversial late-term procedure sometimes called “partial-birth abortion.”

The U.S. Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision handed down June 28, invalidated a Nebraska law that prohibited the procedure. The Nebraska statute made it a crime to perform an abortion by “partially (delivering) vaginally a living unborn child before killing the unborn child and delivering the child.”

The high court’s ruling in Stenberg v. Carhart prompted state Attorney General Jim Ryan to curtail his defense of a similar law in Illinois. Ryan said in July that he was “regretfully” making that decision because he believed the Illinois law couldn’t be upheld in the wake of the Supreme Court decision. Ryan personally supports banning partial-birth abortions. But he hasn’t yet decided how to proceed.

Officials from anti-abortion groups in Illinois say they would face a difficult task in continuing to pursue a legal ban on the partial-birth procedure. But they haven’t yet decided how to proceed. A outright prohibition that would pass muster in the courtroom doesn’t look feasible at the present time, says Ralph Rivera, legislative chairman for the D-owners Grove-based Illinois Citizens for Life.

The Supreme Court found that one of the flaws in the Nebraska law was its failure to include an exemption allowing doctors to perform the procedure if it is the best way to preserve a woman’s health. The health exemption can be broadly interpreted, says Rivera, referring to it as “one of those M ack truck loopholes.”

Opponents of the procedure came up with the term “partial-birth abortion.” Doctors call it dilation and extraction, or D & X. It generally is performed in the 20th to 24th week of pregnancy. It refers to a manner of abortion in which a fetus is extracted part of the way through the birth canal. The fetus’s skull is then cut and its contents drained.

Adriana Calindres
Statehouse reporter,
Copley Illinois Newspapers

GOVERNOR’S ACTION

By early July, Gov. George Ryan had acted on all 247 proposals sent to him by lawmakers during the spring legislative session, as well as one other approved during a special session last summer. He signed 239 and vetoed three, including a measure that would have denied state funding for an abortion when the health of the mother is endangered. The governor also used his amendatory veto on six proposals. Here are some of the measures Illinois issues has been following.

Tax

Spiraling prices at the pump drove Ryan and lawmakers last June to cut the states motor fuel sales tax, at least temporarily.

The legislature quickly approved the plan and Ryan signed it immediately. House Speaker Michael Madigan, a Chicago Democrat, one of only five no votes, argued the bill was a gift to gas station owners because there was no guarantee they would pass the 5 percent savings on to consumers. But gas prices were down about 30 percent in mid-July.

Republican Senate President James “Pete” Philip of Oak Dale says he will push to make the cut permanent.

Juvenile defendants

Juveniles aged 12 and under accused of murder or sexual assault must have a lawyer present when they are detained and questioned by the police. In signing the bill, Ryan urged the General Assembly to clarify how an attorney representing an indigent juvenile would be compensated.

Clear-cutting

An anti-erosion measure that would prohibit clear-cutting trees within 15 yards of the state’s navigable waters won the governor’s signature. It would still be OK to cut trees on farmland, in drainage systems and near utility lines. The measure takes effect next January.

School expulsion

Ryan vetoed a proposal that would require students who are expelled or suspended for committing a violent crime in school to serve the full term of their punishment. The governor argued he supports the idea but the measure should also have required school districts to place suspended or expelled students into an alternative education program.

Burney Simpson

Sky-high plans for Illinois high-speed rail

Prospects of high-speed rail service accelerated over the summer with the announcement of plans for a satellite system that could control trains from afar and the release of a draft environmental impact study.

The $60 million satellite system would monitor trains as they travel between Chicago and St. Louis. A command center in Omaha, Neb., will communicate with an on-board computer and have the ability, in the event of an emergency, to stop a train. By federal rule, trains traveling faster than 79 miles per hour need to be stopped. By federal rule, trains traveling faster than 79 miles per hour need to be stopped.

The environmental study outlines changes that may be necessary at 300 rail crossings. The completed study may be released by early next year. Still, those hoping to ride one of these trains in Illinois may have to be patient.

A high-speed service between Washington, D.C., and Boston that was to get underway by the end of 1999 still has not begun operating (see Illinois Issues, M arch 1999, page 16).

Burney Simpson

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Beyond Nebraska

State abortion foes unsure how to answer court ruling

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UPDATES

• University of Illinois entomologists found pollen from one type of Bt corn was not harmful to butterflies, a conclusion that differs from a 1999 Cornell study (see Illinois Issues, July/August, page 24).

• Vandalia Work Camp inmates were pressed into service this summer to clean a neglected cemetery near Sandvall in M arion County, one of many rundown cemeteries throughout the state (see Illinois Issues, June 1998, page 29).

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Due to the expiration of funding for poorer school districts in Illinois, a group of education professionals and politicians is meeting to discuss ways to improve funding for these districts. The group is led by Burney Simpson, former superintendent of the Dallas City school district.

The curious case of Dallas City

Dallas City, a northwestern Illinois town of 1,200, illustrates a contradiction occurring in many small communities. On one hand, Dallas City is a school district that is home to the state's top-winning junior high school and the state's first pre-kindergarten virtual classroom. But Dallas City is discovering that, while pride and technology are fine, neither will solve the problem of shrinking student enrollments, which is forcing the district to close the high school. In the fall, voters in this town, which sits on the Mississippi River across from Fort Madison, Iowa, will decide which nearby community will educate its children. Ryan added 13

Still, the panel's first order of business will be to revisit the guaranteed spending level. For instance, former state Sen. A. Rhett Berman, a Democrat from Chicago who is one of the panel's members, questions whether the $100 million increase in state funding for education is adequate. The general assembly will have to decide next spring whether to make up the rest. Proposals to reduce property taxes. State and federal sources have already provided $500 million over three years for school districts with high concentrations of poverty.

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Legislative targets

Partisan control of the next General Assembly rests on the outcome in a handful of key races

by Dave McKinney

R ep. Jack R. Fanks got less than a week to savor his stunning arrival in the Illinois House last year before learning what it’s like to wear a permanent Republican bullseye.

Four days after being sworn in to a post neither party thought he could win, the first Mchenry County Democrat elected to the state legislature in 15 years heard his name mentioned by Republicans not once but three times from the floor as the chamber went through the usual chore of adopting its rules. Fanks first came to House Minority Leader Lee Daniels of Elmhurst, then Rep. Tom Cross of Davenport and, finally, Rep. David Winters of Shirland.

It was a pithy script to send a welcoming shot to the political gut. Would Franks turn out to be the independent he had promised voters back home, his Republican colleagues challenged, or would he be a pawn of House Speaker Michael Madigan in edgy Republican territory?

“Those guys thought then they’d rattled the cage, but it’s going to happen. I love it. I love it. I love the give and take. I just love being on the floor. It’s never going to be a ping-pong season. I love it. It’s a great campaign where you can swing toward either party.

But Franks, whose district covers the northwest suburbs. But the campaign with a swagger that might seem more appropriate for that race in Chicago turns out to be the independent he had promised voters back home, his Republican colleagues challenged, or would he be a pawn of House Speaker Michael Madigan in edgy Republican territory?

“A four days after being sworn in to a post neither party thought he could win, the first Mchenry County Democrat elected to the state legislature in 15 years heard his name mentioned by Republicans not once but three times from the floor as the chamber went through the usual chore of adopting its rules. Fanks first came to House Minority Leader Lee Daniels of Elmhurst, then Rep. Tom Cross of Davenport and, finally, Rep. David Winters of Shirland. It was a pithy script to send a welcoming shot to the political gut. Would Franks turn out to be the independent he had promised voters back home, his Republican colleagues challenged, or would he be a pawn of House Speaker Michael Madigan in edgy Republican territory?

“Those guys thought then they’d rattled the cage, but it’s going to happen. I love it. I love it. I love the give and take. I just love being on the floor. It’s never going to be a ping-pong season. I love it. It’s a great campaign where you can swing toward either party.

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"I really think the path to the speakership comes through the 63rd House District if you’re a Democrat. I know he knows that. That’s why he’s spending time and effort campaigning for my opponent, and he’s very involved in all races. I think he’s not being very helpful, you’ll find at least one Democrat there who is underrepresented. A Democrat certainly will stand in the way of the national party’s priorities." - Rep. Jack Franks, a Woodstock Democrat, reflecting the significance of targeted legislative races.

"It’s a resource you should have an incumbent Republican governor who can raise money for you, campaign on your behalf, cut commercials, all of those things," Rep. Jack Franks says. "But it’s a resource the Republicans are not going to have.

GOP strategists in both legislative chambers are jockeying over the prospect of more indictments from federal prosecutors around election time. For all, U.S. Attorney Scott Lassar first announced indictments in the license-for-campaign-cash investigation a month before the November gubernatorial election. More were announced shortly before a major Ryan address to the General Assembly last February and while Texas Gov. George W. Bush was in Chicago last summer for a presidential campaign fundraiser. Lassar’s office has said the timing was coincidental. Ryan has not been identified as a target, but more bad news concerning his stewardship of the secretary of state’s office could hurt Republican turnout and his party’s chances in the legislature.

During Franks’ 1996 race, Ryan produced radio commercials for Brown. But this time, Ryan won’t have much presence as Franks attempts to build on the 138-vote margin of victory he scored two years ago. Since that razor-thin win, Franks has grabbed attention for himself by sponsoring bills to create a discount drug program for seniors, impose a sales tax holiday and abolish the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority. Republicans refused to release his proposals, which largely remained bottled up in their house. The only plan to emerge from the chamber was his drug-buying program, which was passed when loads of senior citizens were in the Capitol. It hit an immediate stone wall in the GOP-led Senate.

Franks, who said all of those ideas were his and not handed off by Madigan’s staff, realizes the charges from Republicans come with holding a seat the GOP must regain to win the speakership. That’s why Franks really thinks the path to the speakership comes through the 63rd House District if you’re a Democrat. I know he knows that. That’s why he’s spending time and effort campaigning for my opponent, and he’s very involved in all races. I think he’s not being very helpful, you’ll find at least one Democrat there who is underrepresented. A Democrat certainly will stand in the way of the national party’s priorities."

Franks says that if arrogance ever hits $40 a barrel, he’d like to have the drilling rights to Jack Franks’ head. "A Democrat speaking for Ryan has $1.8 million in his pockets involved in all races, and he’s very involved with his members. We think that district is not being well-represented, and you’ll find at least one Democrat everywhere that is underrepresented."

Meanwhile, Madigan has taken care of the 63rd District if you’re a Democrat. I know he knows that. That’s why he’s spending time and effort campaigning for my opponent, and he’s very involved in all races. I think he’s not being very helpful, you’ll find at least one Democrat there who is underrepresented. "A Democrat certainly will stand in the way of the national party’s priorities."

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"A Democrat certainly will stand in the way of the national party’s priorities."
The district undercuts any claims that he has acted independently of M. Madigan. "It's offensive to vote many times in the district that the state (Illinois) comptroller uses to deliver money from Springfield to the one where he either voted against or the appropriation isn't politically popular or the state legislator," Salvi says. "I think anyone in the know recognizes that a political player of the D (Democratic) Party to position him as the most effective state legislator, when in fact it's D political posturing. No reasonable political mind would think they acted nearly identical to a law."

Salvi, who was the only physician in the House if elected, wants to make healthcare one of his main issues.

A nother big suburban House matchup lies about 30 miles to the east, where Garret, a 44-year-old Republican, is in a rematch with village trustee and former Rep. Thomas Malley of Palos Park, an Evergreen Park Democrat and lawyer who has not returned to the Legislature after his defeat in 1998. Garret has developed a reputation as aggressive and outspoken in the Statehouse, and, like Francks, has endured tough primary challenges. Garret ran for the district two years, including during that same floor debate over House rules. "I've had to fight for this district every day, and I believe strongly in what I'm doing, so maybe I'm cut out to do this," she says. The GOP has dubbed Garret "Special Interest Sue," a reference to her high ratings from the AFL/CIO and her acceptance of contributions from the Chicago Teachers' Union in what traditionally is a pro-business district.

Garrett also has come under fire from Republicans for a bill that would undo some of the land-use restrictions affecting the city of Chicago. The legislation is driven by the local Democratic Party to position him as the most effective state legislator, when in fact it's D political posturing. No reasonable political mind would think they acted nearly identical to a law that struck down by the state Supreme Court, would have made illegal gun possession and transportation a felony in most cases and was viewed by law enforcement as an important tool in getting illegal guns off the streets and out of the hands of drug dealers and other felons.

Malley, a Willow Springs Democrat and village trustee, has a solid legislative record, having sponsored the state's anti-drinking law, the driving law Democrats hope changing demographics more favorable to their party — the same trend that has put most of the southern suburbs into Democratic hands — will help in Robino this time.

And in Lake County's 30th District, Link is attempting re-election after his surprise victory in 1996 that took a seat Republicans had held continuously since 1983. Link is attempting re-election after his defeat in 1994, former Rep. Thomas Lachner, lost touch with voters in this swing district. Link decided by only 82 votes four years ago, former R. Thomas Lachner, accused Link of failing to make child support payments. But to overtake Link's seat.

N ewly inaugurated state Sen. Mary Jane O'Shea M. Annadale of Highland Park, a Willow Springs Democrat and village trustee, has a solid legislative record, having sponsored the state's anti-drinking law, the driving law Democrats hope changing demographics more favorable to their party — the same trend that has put most of the southern suburbs into Democratic hands — will help in Robino this time.

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On Link's home turf with a $150,000 state grant they didn't even ask for, conducted a two-week fundraising campaign. "They called me up and asked if they should take it, and I said, 'Take the money and run,'" Link says.

That maneuver speaks to what life can be like living in a target district. Often, it doesn't matter how original or passionate he vowed to set the tone this fall. For much of the fall, Link was running as a moderate, a suburban Democrat and village trustee, has a solid legislative record, having sponsored the state's anti-drinking law, the driving law Democrats hope changing demographics more favorable to their party — the same trend that has put most of the southern suburbs into Democratic hands — will help in Robino this time.

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Spotlight on the past

**Political hits**

Throughout much of the last century, murder lent a special meaning to the term “running for office.”

by James L. Merriner

Illinois politics may be a sorry affair these days, but at least it’s relatively safe. No office-seeker has been gunned down in this state in recent decades. No official mired in public scandal has gotten buried in cement.

Who says we ain’t got reform? As they face the indignities of the campaign trail this fall, candidates might consider this: Throughout much of the previous century, murder was an occupational hazard for Chicago-area pols who stepped too close, however innocently, to criminality. As recently as 1963, a Chicago alderman seeking re-election took four bullets in the head, and in 1992 a candidate for re-election took seven shotgun blasts.

Everyone remembers the rat-a-tat rubouts of rival gangsters during the A1 Capone era, which has entered national mythology. Forgotten is that throughout much of the last century, murder lent a special meaning to the term “reform.”

In time, though, reform crackdowns were acquiesced to by forming enumerated reform commissions. The first major political assassination in Chicago set the reformist nation in motion in Chicago set the reformist

William H. M. Cswiggan was a 26-year-old star prosecutor in the state’s attorney’s office, having sent seven criminals to death Row in eight months, leaving his mother’s dinner table, saying he was going to play cards with friends. M Cswiggan was a 26-year-old star prosecutor in the state’s attorney’s office, having sent seven criminals to death Row in eight months, leaving his mother’s dinner table, saying he was going to play cards with friends. M Cswiggan instead joined two old rivals at a saloon in Cicero during Prohibition. Twenty bullets hit him and he was shot out that night. Two other men were killed and two were shot but lived.

The evidence suggests the leading gunman was Capone, though as always he had arranged a reliable alibi. Six grand juries were empaneled but no indictments were issued.

Chicago was inundated with gangsters killing gangsters, perhaps even graven by the idea, but the murder of an assistant state attorney in the illegal drinking company of hoodlums was something else.

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Vaccination vacillation

Should parents or public officials have responsibility for deciding which shots kids must get?
A state health panel’s deliberations on the chickenpox vaccine renews that debate

by Kristy Kennedy

For many parents and children, vaccines are a routine part of visits to the doctor. The alcohol swab. The shot. The tears. The bandage. But there are stories about childhood vaccines that are anything but routine. A state legislator and a doctor both have such stories to tell. Each of these stories is about a child who suffered a severe illness, and each illustrates the complexity of an issue now before state health officials: whether to require all Illinois schoolchildren to get the varicella vaccination to ward off chickenpox. Yet this question is just the latest in a much larger debate: whether parents or public officials should have ultimate responsibility for deciding which immunizations children must get.

Dr. N. Akhtar has had a private practice for 11 years and is not involved in the public debate over the vaccine. In fact, she says she was skeptical in 1995 when the drug first came out in the United States. “I have the same questions as any parent,” she says. “I was a little concerned about how safe it would be, how long the immunity would last and how it would help children. Now it is routine.

Patrick O’M alley, a Republican state senator from Palos Park, has a compelling story, too. It’s about his daughter. At six months of age, Brigid received the standard DTP vaccine for diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (whooping cough). But O’M alley says he and his wife wish the doctor had told them about potential side effects before administering the shot. Brigid later suffered an episode, that O’M alley describes this way: “She stopped breathing and had to be brought back to life.” She also suffered violent seizures for the next six years. These complications led to cerebral palsy. And today, Brigid is not involved in the debate during the mid-90s over the hepatitis B shot, the last vaccine put on Illinois’ mandatory list.
Illinois Issues the chickenpox before the vaccine was distrib-
and potentially deadly disease. There program and vaccines have proven
impacted by the immunization.
school, requirement for children to enter
death among children, it should be a 
would arm public health with a 
placed on the mandated list.
Lumpkin, who has said he favors the
information gathered during the
of Public Health
the panel has had to consider. In 
hearings.
were opened to public input. State 
tions on adding to the mandatory list 
unsuccessful. Nevertheless, delibera-
additional vaccines considered for the 
avoidance committee to review any 
legislation was
s remaining open-
’s advisory committee,
were talking about a significant budget 
get another shot. The benefits of the 
about the good of vaccines if more 
he believes there would be less debate 
the disease before they know they 
contagious two days before the rash 
appear, children expose each other 
ate adulthood. There are 
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From end-of-year burnout. Under the 
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by Burney Simpson
The neverending school year

Some Illinois kids were back in class long before Labor Day. And they seemed happy about it

C arol Slough has a problem. Her 
two daughters are so eager to 
attend school they even enjoy going in 
the middle of summer when many 
are sitting around the pool. “They are 
ready to go back to school at the end of 
July. They don’t miss the summer break,” says Slough. As 
her children don’t get bored or exhausted from too much 
class time, “I never get the sense they can’t go another day.”
This may not sound like much of a problem. But it’s her children’s happy- 
ness with Kenoedow Elementary School in Champaign that may lead to 
difficulties for this fall.
That school’s unusual approach to scheduling, called year-round educa-
is the reason Slough’s daughters 
are in classes in July and don’t suffer 
from end-of-year burnout. Under the 
year-round system, students attend 
class in blocks of nine-week stretches. 
After each block, they get a 
three-week break. Slough and her girls like 
it. But this month, the oldest is 
moving up to middle school, which 
operates under the traditional three-
month summer vacation schedule. 
With the girls on two schedules, 
and a kindergarten too, Slough and 
her husband will have to scrounge to 
keep up with them. But she’s hopeful. 
Parents are talking about pushing the middle school to shift to the year-
round system. That would follow a small, but 
growing trend in Illinois and across the nation.

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n the debate over vaccines in the
state most often has centered on 
finances, says Lisa Speissegger, public 
health analyst for the policy tracking 
project. “Once a vaccine is approved, 
you have to provide funding for those 
who can’t pay for it,” she says. “Because it is so expensive, we are 
talking about a significant budget 
item.”
Vaccines are expensive because they 
must be stored at specific tempera-
tures, often kept away from light.
Doctors in private practice are likely 
to pay more for the drugs because they 
don’t buy them in bulk. But the

price for public agencies can be steep, too. Government contract 
prices for vaccines can range from a sum for hepatitis B vaccines 
to $37.14 for the chickenpox vaccine, according to the Illinois health 
department.

Chickenpox is highly contagious with 
95 percent of Americans getting 
the disease by adulthood. There 
are about four million cases in the U.S. each year, according to the 
Centers for Disease Control and 
Prevention, a federal agency. The 
group reports there are 4,000 to 9,000 hospitalizations each year and 
thousands of deaths. Symptoms appear about two weeks after exposure. Because it 
is contagious two days before the rash 
appears, children can spread the 
virus to other children before they know they 
have it.

Symptoms include 300 to 400 itchy 
lesions, a fever of up to 104 degrees 
fatigue. The vaccine, which can be 
administered after a child turns 1, is 
85 percent effective in preventing 
the disease. Children who do get chickenpox 
after being inoculated suffer a 
very light case of it. A child who 
vaccinated shortly after being exposed 
reduce their risk of contracting 
the disease or suffer a much milder case.

It is not yet known whether a 
booster is required — something 
that also worries critics because 
adults who contract chickenpox suffer 
more complications than children do. 
Dr. M. ark Rosenberg, a Barrington-

based pediatrician for 22 years who 
sits on the Illinois School Health 
Commission, says that there should be not a reason for 
people to skip the vaccine. If people 
need a booster later, they can simply 
get another shot. The benefits of the 
vaccine are overwhelming, he says.

“Those are protecting children from a number of horrible diseases at 
a time when they are most light 
derived,” he says, adding that 
he believes there would be less debate about the good of vaccines if more

people saw how terrible some of the 
diseases are. Because vaccines keep 
illnesses like chickenpox, H5N1, 
Rosenberg says, the public do not have firsthand knowledge of 
them. He also argues the benefits of the chickenpox vaccine for parents and 
schools. “In this society, roughly 
two-thirds of families have two work-
ing parents,” he says. “It is a great 
benefit to those families to keep their 
children from missing a week of work and school.”

But Dr. Linda Shelton sees the issue 
another way. The Evergreen Park 
pediatrician says that convenience 
isn’t enough reason to force children 
to have the vaccine. To her, requiring 
the inoculation tramples on parents’ 
rfights to decide what medical care is 
best. “I don’t believe we should susp 
end our civil rights when chickenpox 
is a common childhood illness that 
generally is only an inconvenience to parents. The chance of severe 
illness doesn’t warrant suspending 
civil rights. This is not a great epidem-
ic,” she says, Shelton, who has been a 
doctor since 1987.

Although she is opposed to making 
the vaccine mandatory, she does 
recommend to parents who haven’t 
contracted chickenpox and to 
children, such as those with cancer, 
who may be more susceptible to 
complications.

Meanwhile, Barbara A Alexander, 
Ullarkey, spokeswoman for the Oak 
Park-based Illinois Vaccine Awareness 
Committee, believes Illinois lawmakers may be required to 
need to reduce the disease. It won’t be 
a easy question. “Something like the 
illnesses in check, Rosenberg says, 


The term year-round schooling scares some people because it conjures up images of students — and teachers — sitting in classrooms 365 days a year.

Last year, 36 Illinois public schools used a year-round system, up from 11 in 1993. A nd when district officials try it, they like it. Champaign School District 4 also converted Barkstall Elementary School to a year-round schedule. Springfield School District 186, meanwhile, is adding the fifth-grade to its year-round school, Southern View Elementary, and converted another elementary school to year-round this summer.

A dvocates of the trend argue schools need to take fresh approaches to scheduling, in much the same way schools need to take fresh approaches to scheduling, in much the same way.

The term year-round schooling scares some people because it conjures up images of students — and teachers — sitting in classrooms 365 days a year. But the phrase is a misnomer, says proponents, who prefer the term “balanced calendar.” In fact, students in schools like Champaign’s K enwood attend classes for the standard 180 days a year. They also have extended breaks in the summer and around the winter holidays.

But the short-session, short-break program addresses longstanding problems in the traditional schedule, says Carroll. Less time is wasted every year. The child must learn how to synthesize in test scores, discipline and the general mood at school. Students, he says, are enthusiastic about being there.

Educators must rotate students in the same grade in and out of classrooms in older buildings throughout the year. So one group of fourth-graders may be on vacation while another group is in class.

But in Illinois, more often parents and teachers are weighing the educational benefits of year-round schooling.

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Four days a week, Gary Ronnie makes the short morning commute from his breakfast table to his home office, where he develops training materials for his company’s computer software products. Ronnie’s job, which would involve spending most of his time in front of a computer screen even if he were at his company’s Arlington Heights headquarters, lends itself easily to telecommuting. Once a week, he makes the traditional in-person trip to the office, where he attends meetings and talks face-to-face with the one employee he supervises. His employer, Denniston & Denniston Inc., a 75-employee business that provides time/attendance and labor management software to companies nationwide, saw the value in allowing Ronnie to work partially from home. Ronnie, 52, who was diagnosed about two years ago with multiple sclerosis, was getting worn down by the 65-mile round-trip commute from his home in southwest suburban Riverside to Arlington Heights. But by telecommuting, he’s able to continue working for a company where his veteran skills are needed. “It has made my life much more doable,” he says.

And businesses like happy workers who are less likely to leave their jobs. “Different reasons, but you get the same result,” says Roger Kanerva, environmental policy adviser at the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. After years of pushing by environmental groups, “telecommuting is starting to be popular as an employee benefit. This thing has come full circle.” Indeed, telework has exploded in popularity. Surveys by Cyber Dialogue, a New York-based research and consulting firm, its predecessor FIND/SVP and the International Telework Association & Council show that the number of teleworkers nationwide — defined as an employee or subcontractor who works at least one day a month from home, but averages one and a half to two days a week — increased from just 4 million in 1990 to 19.6 million in August of last year. The number of teleworkers is expected to rise to as many as 23.8 million by the end of this year, meaning about 18.7 percent of the American workforce will be working at least some of the time from home, according to projections by Jack Nilles, an Evanston native and author of Managing Telework, which was published in 1998. Nilles, who coined the term “telecommuting” in the 1970s, sees a point in the year 2030 when perhaps 51 million Americans will do at least some of their work from home.

There are several reasons for the trend. Just as the automobile forced the development of highways and a different way of working than existed in agrarian societies, “now the technology is driving how and where we’re going to live and work,” says Gail Martin, executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based International Telework Association & Council. Steamrolling technological advances eventually will give wide segments of the populace access to faster Internet connections and wireless communications. Further, the growing traffic congestion — and attendant pollution — in many U.S. cities, including Chicago, is making the drive from home to work increasingly unpleasant. Finally, the healthy economy and its low unemployment is making employers more sensitive to the issues of recruitment and retention, which can mean helping workers balance careers and family.

“We do not have enough workers in this country,” Martin says. “We
really need to maximize everybody with skills.”

Telecommuting isn’t a new concept. N. Illes, a former aerospace engineer and academic at the University of Southern California, got onto the idea almost 30 years ago when he began exploring ways to use the technological improvements that could put a man on the moon to help solve the southern California travel crunch. Those were the pre-personal computer days, when the solution seemed to be set up satellite centers near concentrations of employees where people could use terminals connected to large main-frame computers. A pilot program with a Los Angeles-based insurance company found that turnover dropped from about one-third of employees who telecommute to about 18 percent, N. Illes says. Then PC’s came on the scene, making telecommuting even easier. Now, telecommuting is a more widely accepted part of corporate culture.

New Jersey-based AT&T has run a telecommuting program that currently includes a couple of thousand Illinois employees. Of the company’s 580,000 managers, salespeople, and technicians, about 10 percent telecommute exclusively, 25 percent telecommute once a week or more and half telecommute about once a month. The numbers likely will rise as high-speed, high-capacity communications systems become even more available.

The program began as a response to employees’ desires for a better balance between work and home life, says Burke Stinson, an AT&T spokesman. “Working at home seems like an obvious solution,” says Stinson, who runs the company’s telecommuting program.

“From the beginning, the problem was not technical issues, but the training,” says N. Illes, who runs his own telecommuting consulting company, J.A.L.A International Inc. in Los Angeles. “The primary problem was between the ears of the middle-level managers. They had a blind spot.”

But some managers have accepted telecommuting. AT&T, which faces a labor-management relationship that is frequently more adversarial than collaborative, has a program that allows employees to work from home. The program was started about three years ago and is run by a third-party, consulting firm based in Los Angeles.

“The company has found that the changing realities of the workforce demand such programs,” says Stinson. “People coming out of college today really are demanding much more flexibility to be able to choose and control their work schedule.”

According to Stinson, nearly 90 percent of the employees who telecommute to AT&T are satisfied with their current work arrangement, and 85 percent say they would prefer to telecommute again next year. The program has also been a boon for AT&T employees. A study of more than 100 employees who telecommute at least one day a week showed that those who telecommute are more productive, have better job satisfaction, and are less stressed than their counterparts who work from the company’s offices. In addition, the program has helped reduce absenteeism, turnover, and turnover costs for recruitment and retention.

One study led by the Telework Council cites shows that between reduced absenteeism (teleworkers don’t have to take a whole day off to deal with a sick child or wait for the cable guy), increased productivity and reduced costs for recruitment and retention, companies can save $20,000 a year on an employee who telecommutes one day a week.

Telecommuting employees don’t seem to feel left out of the office going-ons, either, provided they are self-motivated people who take the initiative to communicate with others. “We found that they not only don’t feel left out, quite often, they feel more connected with people,” N. Illes says.

Gary Ronacio, the instructional designer who runs the program, says, “We found that the biggest barrier to telework is lack of feedback. Those who telecommute say they want to talk to their managers, but don’t feel comfortable doing so.”

To raise the profile of its program, the company also held a special work-at-home day in 1994, in which managers from the chairman of the board on down did their jobs from home. Today, thousands of AT&T managers work at least one day a week from home. Some do it because of personal or family needs, but some find it’s a better fit with their personal style. “They’re kind of cowgirls and cowboys,” Stinson says. “They like to get out and sell.”

When employees telephone the company for help, they find that their telecommuting colleagues are more productive, Stinson says. “They’re up, they’re more focused, and they’re more productive.”

The program also has had a positive impact on the company’s bottom line. The company has saved about $200 million in real estate costs by reducing the amount of space it needs to rent or purchase.

So why isn’t every Illinois company with a white-collar staff running a telecommuting program? Old-school management techniques are the single largest barrier to the spread of telework, advocates say. “From the beginning, the problem was not the technology,” says N. Illes, who runs his own telecommuting consulting company, J.A.L.A International Inc. in Los Angeles. “The primary problem was between the ears of the middle-level managers. They had a blind spot.”

The biggest barrier to telework for AT&T, which faced a “traditionalist” manager who felt insecure if not present when their employees are not in their offices, Stinson says. “Number one, they’re more focused and number two, there are less meetings and interruptions.”

The company has also established a telework council, which meets monthly, to address the concerns of telecommuters and to ensure that the program is working as intended.

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Telecommuting employees don’t see B4}}
CHASING MONARCHS: MIGRATING WITH THE BUTTERFLIES OF PASSAGE

Robert M. Michael Pyle, 1999
Houghton Mifflin

It's easy to start seeing things after reading Robert M. Michael Pyle. A spot of color at the side of the road, a suddenly morph from leaf fall to willful flight. Or the other way around. Pyle experiences the same problem. But for him it's an occupational hazard, he writes, because he's been living for a living. That's tougher than it sounds, it seems. Pyle, the author of The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Butterflies, spent 57 days in 1996 trekking 9,462 miles in an effort to see. The bold-as-can-be blue-cabbage whites. The less active they are, the more likely they are to make it back. Still, they come. And, while we know they're going on, they have to spend time in these forests, so if the forests aren't there, the population is going to suffer. Now ecotourism is the big thing, and that helps. They're living off fat reserves. So with too many tourists disturbing them, they end up flying around too much. They use up their reserves and then they can't make it back. They don't survive the winter there. It's a Catch-22.

Q: Has there been a rise or decline in the population?
A: No.

Q: What about the ecology for butterflies in the Midwest?
A: It's a Catch-22.

Q: Where should we look?
A: The monarchs winter in Mexico. This is an edited version of a 4th of July butterfly counts, monarchs are doing very well. In 1993, '92 and '93, there were no monarchs in Lee County in early to mid-September. In October in Champaign, and a little later in southern Illinois.

Q: How can we look for them to come back?
A: It's a Catch-22.

Q: What is the status of the monarchs' winter habitat in Mexico?
A: It's a Catch-22.

Q: Illinois monarchs are coming from states to the north?
A: Right, the populations are concentrated along the northeast coast and in the Great Lakes region.

Q: Where do we look for them?
A: Wherever there are roosting points. In the evenings they like to come together and roost in trees and shrubs.

Q: How will they pass through this state?
A: They begin massing in northern Illinois in September. I've seen masses on single trees in Lee County in early to mid-September. In October in Champaign, and a little later in southern Illinois.

Q: There are roosting points. In the evenings they like to come together and roost in trees and shrubs.
A: Wherever there are roosting points. In the evenings they like to come together and roost in trees and shrubs.

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Q: Where should we look?
A: Wherever there are roosting points. In the evenings they like to come together and roost in trees and shrubs.

Q: Where are we looking for them?
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Q: Where can we find them to come back?
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Q: Where are they coming from?
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P E O P L E
Edited by Rodd Whelpley

BIG PEOPLE ON CAMPUS

James E. Walker, who began his career in higher education as an assistant professor of history at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, is set to become president of SIU October 1. Walker has been president of Middle Tennessee State University since 1991.

George T. Wilkins left his seat on the SIU Board of Trustees. Wilkins was appointed to the board as a Democrat, but this spring drew criticism from some student protesters who contend that his recent primary voting record was Republican, violating the requirement that the board have balanced party representation. Wilkins, who has a home in Indiana, resigned shortly after a law took effect that requires trustees to live in the state. He had been on the board since 1979.

The former chancellor of SIU-Carbondale wants her old job back. J o A n n Argersinger filed a federal suit last month against current and former SIU administrators. She is seeking reinstatement and damages, claiming that her free-speech rights were violated because she was dismissed for pointing out improprieties in insurance billings and contract awards at the school. Argersinger was removed from the chancellor's position in 1999 and returned to her tenured teaching position in the history department. She also maintains that she was dismissed without due process and that her recent pay cut is discriminatory because other administrators have returned to the faculty at their administrative salaries.

APPONTMENT

Gov. George Ryan appointed former state Rep. Pete Peters of Chicago to chair the Illinois Clean Energy Community Trust. The panel oversees a more than $200 million trust created in 1999 as a condition of Commonwealth Edison’s sale of its coal-fired plants to a California company. The trust is designed to help fund clean coal and renewable energy initiatives. Some of the dollars will be designated for the Illinois Citizens Utility Board.

Peters’ appointment does not require Senate confirmation. He will receive an annual salary of $25,000 for the position.

U OF I PROFS PIONEER HOME-GROWN SOY SNACKS

If Richard Bernard has his way, snack food addicts may soon have a new alternative to beer nuts. That’s because the Japanese snack of cooked soybeans is catching on in this country and this University of Illinois professor emeritus has made it easier for backyard gardeners to grow the nutritional food. Bernard, a plant breeder at the University of Illinois Soybean Research Laboratory, has developed six varieties of garden soybeans for harvesting as a table vegetable. “We had over 1,200 requests for the seeds. We ran out and had to take names,” he says.

A slant has been eating soybeans as vegetables for more than 2,000 years, says Bernard, but Americans think of them more as an industrial product. The Asian soybean, which tends to be bigger and tastier, does not produce well in the Illinois climate, nor does it have resistance to Illinois insects and diseases. Through cross-breeding with local beans, Bernard developed varieties that are at least 50 percent larger and, in some cases, twice as large as Illinois beans. Shiny green with a nutty taste, the soybeans are cooked in the pod, then shelled like peanuts and eaten cold or hot.

“They are easy to cook, go better to digest and have the highest amount of protein of any bean,” says Bernard, who hopes some private seed company might take over marketing and distribution.

Scandal by the number

D e a n Bauer, the former inspector general under Secretary of State George Ryan, pleaded not guilty last month to new federal charges that he failed to investigate allegations of corruption in that office. Bauer’s case is expected to go to trial in early December.

Federal authorities also charged five more driving school instructors with paying bribes to state employees. The two-year-old Operation Safe Road drive for licenses investigation is ongoing.

Q & A

Lucia Perillo

T he 41-year-old Southern Illinois University associate English professor recently received the illustrious John D. and Catherine T. McArthur Foundation’s genius grant, which awards a $500,000 no-strings-attached prize. Perillo’s poetry has been published in magazines, such as The Atlantic Monthly, and in books. Random House published her latest: The Oldest M ap with the Name America. The assistance comes at a fortuitous time for Perillo, who is facing an intensified struggle with multiple sclerosis, a disease that has often been the subject of her poetry.

Q. Before you taught English you worked as a naturalist. How did you come to make the transition?

I worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service after I graduated. I was working in the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, and when I was there I started to take poetry classes [at San Jose State] with Robert Hass, who would subsequently be the [U.S.] poet laureate. I went back to school and was exposed to a number of poets. After graduate school, I kept doing that [writing], and ended up in a teaching job.

Q. Is there a connection between poetry and the wild? Does nature figure prominently in your work?

It didn’t in the old days. It does more and more now. In the beginning I was interested in social concerns. I’m always interested in nature in poetry as it relates to the human condition. The core of my second book [The Body M utinies] has to do with the body. I’ve always written with the body in mind. That’s where my naturalist background comes into play.

Q. Do you think of yourself as a writer or a teacher?

I think of myself as more of a writer. I think most writers want to be writing. I know I’ve learned so much from teaching. My knowledge of poetry has been enhanced. I guess I never thought writing would be my profession. I feel very lucky I’ve been able to have the amount of time I’ve had to write. I know there are many writers who can’t get that.

Q. What is in your future? What will the award allow you to do?

I was planning to take sometime to address my health concerns. The award will let me do that. [With the job at SIU], my husband and I have lived apart for the last decade. Domestically, there will be more harmony and commuting won’t eat up all my time.

Q. What goals do you hope to achieve?

I hope to get settled back into writing soon. I have tons of stuff I’ve tucked in boxes. I want to work on my short stories and nonfiction.

Q. Aren’t you young to have accomplished so much?

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William Maxwell

Celebrated native Illinois writer William M. Maxwell died July 31 at the age of 91.

“We tend to talk about him as an Illinois writer. He is one of the finest writers Illinois has ever produced, but his body of work is important on a national and international level,” says Barbara Burkhardt, who turned her biographical criticism of M. Maxwell over to Barbara Burkhardt, who turned her critical biography of M. Maxwell to the East Coast, where he served as a fiction writer.

Burkhardt, who hopes her biography will come to be known as his greatest work. His fiction has been noted for its clarity and imagination, and it has been praised for its ability to capture both the provincial nature of the small town life and the beauty of his life therein.

Lincoln also played a role when M. Maxwell chronicled his mother’s death during the 1918 influenza epidemic in his 1937 novel The Cane. His writing style, which is mirrored in the action of his life, says.

Maxwell captured both the provincial nature of the small town in Illinois as well as the beauty of his life therein. The novel tells the story of a young boy who grows up in a small town and learns the value of hard work and determination.

Maxwell’s family moved to Chicago after his mother’s death, which is mirrored in the action of his 1945 novel The Field of Life. Though Illinois figured prominently in M. Maxwell’s fiction, work drew him to the East Coast, where he served as a fiction editor for The New Yorker magazine for 40 years and worked with writers like John Cheever, John Updike and Vladimir Nabokov.

“I think with his death, his fiction will come to be known as his greatest contribution to American letters,” says Burkhardt, who hopes her biography will advance M. Maxwell’s stature as a fiction writer. “It is fiction that has been unrecognized in his lifetime, I believe.”

M. Maxwell’s death came eight days after the death of Emily, his wife of 55 years.

Illinois, primarily downstate L. Lincoln, often served as the backdrop for M. Maxwell’s books, including the American Book Award-winning So Long, See You Tomorrow, a 1980 novel set in 1920 that explores a scandalous murder and its effects on the Friendship of Two Boys.

“They have called Illinois ‘his imagination’s home’,” Burkhardt says. “M. Maxwell captured both the provincial nature of the small town in Illinois as well as the beauty of his life therein.”

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Letters to the Editor

We reserve the right to excerpt keep letters brief (250 words). Columns are welcome. Please send letters to:

Letters to the Editor
Illinois Issues
University of Illinois at Springfield
Springfield, IL 62794-9243

www.uis.edu/~ilissues

In the next two editions of the magazine, Illinois Issues will help you make sense of this election year.

- We'll assess the races for the courts and Congress.
- We'll explore the implications of political polling.
- We'll examine the growing influence of Hispanics.
- And we'll consider the role of churches and unions.

There will be plenty of information to help you make informed choices.

Don't miss out.

It's campaign time and the livin' is easy

by James Ylisela Jr.

When politicians are running for re-election, they cut your taxes; when they're not running for re-election, they raise your taxes. You could look it up.

Campaign 2000

M ayor R. P. Hark jr. D. Aley has really got this down. When the mayor runs for re-election, the city budget is bursting with pork, with a little goodie bag for every alderman and city neighborhood. In November 1998, for example, D. Aley and his aldermanic buddies were thinking ahead to their next election, in the spring of 1999. So they passed a budget loaded with millions of dollars in neighborhood improvements and, most important, a $20 million property tax cut.

The astute Richard M.ell, alderman of the city's 33rd Ward, could barely contain himself. M.ell advised his colleagues to use the budget "as a cornerstone of your re-election bid." And that's just what they did.

D. Aley and his minions won another blowout that spring, then hunkered down to work on the city's spending plan for 2000. A and o, and behold, D. Aley proposed four straight years of up-to-the-hilt property tax hikes - more than $13 million a year - to pay for new libraries and police and fire stations. The aldermen, still flush from their own election victories, showed their usual courage and independence, approving the increases without a peep.

Nevertheless, last month, city officials announced a preliminary 2001 budget deficit of $135 million. But with property taxes no longer a viable political option, the Daley Administration is expected to use fee increases and cost savings to balance the books by the end of the year.

Meanwhile, some city residents already have received their new property assessments, with increases of up to 53 percent, which will be reflected in next year's tax bills.

But Chicagoans needn't worry. They've still got that $100 coming courtesy of state lawmakers, who have their own campaign timetables. Don't spend it all in one place.

James Ylisela Jr. teaches urban reporting at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism. He's the acting editor of The Chicago Reporter.
Two years ago, the Illinois General Assembly approved and then-Gov. Jim Edgar signed into law an ethics and campaign finance reform package that observers termed the most significant of the last quarter century. While that appraisal should be tempered somewhat by knowledge that the 1998 package was the only one of its kind enacted over that span, the legislation nevertheless embodied important changes in the way lawmakers and lobbyists do business. The carefully crafted measure restricted gift giving to public officials by lobbyists and others doing business with the state, limited some unsavory fundraising practices and imposed new campaign finance disclosure requirements on candidates. The legislation, Edgar said, “represents an important step forward in the reform of the campaign finance and ethics laws to improve account-ability and help Illinoisans better understand the political process in our state.”

With the November election now just two months away, however, a local judge’s ruling has left the reforms wrapped in a cloud of uncertainty. Will County Circuit Judge Thomas Evert held the law was unconstitutionally vague because its gift ban provisions did not spell out clearly enough what was prohibited.

Although the measure included a severability clause—a legislative statement that if a portion of the law was struck down, other parts could stand independently—the judge invalidated the entire act, including the new campaign finance provisions.

At presstime, Attorney General Jim Ryan, who defended the law, was awaiting a final written opinion from Evert to decide whether to ask the judge to reconsider the ruling or to appeal it directly to the Illinois Supreme Court. Whatever Ryan chooses to do, it’s highly unlikely the issue will be settled before Election Day. The ruling offers both a challenge and an opportunity to state and local candidates this fall. Although the full impact of Evert’s decision won’t be clear until a final order is issued, the doubt it casts on the law’s validity might tempt candidates to juggle on the disclosure requirements. Thus, the challenge for everyone running for state or local office is to follow the new mandates, however suspect the law.

Indeed, a citizens’ group that helped win the measure’s approval two years ago called soon after Evert’s decision for legislators to honor its intent. In letters to the four legislative leaders, Illinois Common Cause asked that they urge their candidates, both incumbents and challengers, to abide by the law’s provisions.

With the election only weeks away, it is especially important that citizens have the confidence that those who are seeking public office will conduct themselves within the parameters of these important reforms,” wrote Jim Howard, Common Cause executive director.

The request is right on target. The new mandates—particularly ones requiring candidates to list the occupations and employers of major donors and to report promptly large last-minute contributions—are designed to identify more clearly the role special interests may have in funding a particular campaign. Information that is important to voters as they weigh their choices.

One of the main arguments for the initial ban was to avoid the appearance of policy-makers being unduly influenced by those bearing gifts. The law’s 23 exceptions prove, however, the difficulty of deciding categorically exactly what is proper. Mandating full disclosure of all gifts would let voters decide for themselves whether a particular item crossed the line of propriety.

Moreover, as a side effect, a full disclosure scheme would not require a plethora of ethics commissions to review allegations of improper gift giving. Instead, one statewide ethics commission could be established to offer advice to officials on specific situations, playing much the same role as the old ethics commission supplanted under the new law.

A docket full disclosure, rather than a partial ban, on gifts to public officials also would provide a nice symmetry with reporting requirements for the other major source of concern about influence-peddling, campaign finance. For years, those opposed to any limits on who can give or how much they can shell out to political war chests have argued that disclosure is the best policy.

If sunshine is the best disinfectant for campaign donations, it should be equally salutary for gift giving.

Charles N. Wheeler III is director of the Public Affairs Reporting program at the University of Illinois at Springfield.

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The Chancellor Search Committee will begin reviewing nominations and applications immediately and will continue to accept applications until a new Chancellor is selected. To assure full consideration, however, candidate materials should be submitted by October 15, 2000 to: Dr. Patricia A. Langley, UIS Chancellor Search Committee, University of Illinois, Office of the President, 364 E. Varsity Drive, Monticello, IL 61856. 

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