

SONOMA CIVIL LIBERTIES

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SANTA ROSA, CA
PERMIT # 165

DATED MATERIAL

Fall, 2000 #37

THIS ISSUE:

OUR AWARDS CEREMONY & DINNER FEBRUARY 3RD
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AND MORE...

EDITED BY STEVEN FABIAN

COME TO OUR AWARDS CEREMONY & ANNUAL DINNER FEBRUARY 3RD

Susan B. Jordan was one of the first female trial lawyers in the country. She has practiced criminal defense and civil rights for 30 years. Nationally renowned, she is credited for developing the battered women syndrome defense representing Inez Garcia (acquitted of killing the man who raped her). Jordan has been involved in many high profile cases: Sara Jane Olson (alleged member of the Symbionese Liberation Army conspiracy to bomb L.A. police officers), Emily Harris (Patty Hearst kidnap), Earth First activist Judi Bari (FBI investigation of car bombing), *Tamara A. v. Berkeley Unified School Board* (civil rights suit on behalf of 12 minors and their mothers arising from sexual molestation and harassment by a teacher) *U.S. v. Ukiah Cannabis Buyers Cooperative* (defending a marijuana club against the government's attempt to close it), and numerous sexual harassment and discrimination suits against law enforcement offices and financial institutions.

Susan's address is entitled: ***Old Story, New Plot Line: Police Misconduct and the War on Drugs in Sonoma County, or You Don't Have to Live in L.A. Anymore.***

The event begins 6:00 p.m. at the Sebastopol Veterans Hall, 282 High St. A silent auction and no-host bar precedes a delicious full course dinner (vegetarian available with advance reservations) prepared by Pearl Lopez. The awards ceremony and keynote address follows. **This is our chief fund raising event, so come and help ensure that the chapter can remain effective.** Dinner & ceremony is only \$20 (\$10 low income) prior to January 26th, \$25 (\$15 low income) thereafter. Paid reservations will be held at the door, no tickets will be mailed. Admission to award ceremony only is \$20 (\$10 low income) available at 8:30 p.m. at the door. Sign up a new ACLU member, and their dinner is free!

Publicize your business and support your chapter: donate to the silent auction (call Neva Turer at 539-1220), place a program ad for only \$25 (send business card with form below), or bring a prize for our raffle to the dinner.

This is always a fun event, so come enjoy yourself, bring a friend, & support your chapter. Send in your check with the form below today. For information: 765-5005.

Send Check with Form to: ACLU OF SONOMA COUNTY, P.O. BOX 14181, SANTA ROSA, CA 95402 CNV

Name(s): _____

Address: _____ Apt: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____

No. Dinners (\$20; \$25 after 1/26): _____ Vegetarian: _____ Low Income (\$10; \$15 after 1/26): _____

I Want to Join The ACLU & Get the Free Dinner(s)! BASIC INDIVIDUAL: \$20 (1 FREE DINNER) _____

BASIC JOINT: \$30 (2 FREE DINNERS) _____ CONTRIBUTING: \$50 (2 FREE DINNERS) _____

I Will Place a Dinner Program Ad (\$25 - enclose business card): _____ **I Will Bring a Raffle Prize to the Dinner:** _____

I Will Donate to the Silent Auction (Receive Recognition for Your Business or Service): _____

PLEASE PRINT

CRUZ REYNOSO ON POLICE – COMMUNITY RELATIONS IN SONOMA: “THERE ARE PROBLEMS”

“Very often ... it helps to have a third party come into the community and sometimes say the obvious: ‘There are problems.’ ” On August 10th, three months after the release of the report by the California Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights: *Community Concerns About Law Enforcement In Sonoma County*, Vice Chair Cruz Reynoso came to Santa Rosa to speak about *Police Abuse: Can We Change The Culture?*

Over 250 people came to hear and talk with the former California Supreme Court Justice and Presidential Medal of Freedom winner. The Sonoma chapter organized the event with other community groups. Reynoso has visited Sonoma County regularly over the past thirty years. He spoke of the many hearings on police – community relations he has attended on behalf of the Commission. Here are excerpts (read the complete talk at www.aclusonoma.org):

“It seemed to me that from what I heard in Santa Rosa ... that I got the sense that the division in Santa Rosa was even stronger than in Los Angeles or Miami or New York ... As soon as we showed up, before hearing one word, to see the massive numbers of folk who had come to express their concern, we in the Commission knew, there’s a problem... The interest of the hearings that we had was so great, that folk couldn’t fit into the hearing room...

“I’ve been taken aback by those hearings in this respect; generally, we have come before us ... the officials of the city and the county, the state sometimes, testify about the issues that have brought us to the community... The mayor of this city, the district attorney ... and others testified before us. But I would say that the general sense of the testimony of the officials was basically that ‘all is well.’ That there are a few things that have gone awry but that would be a sign to, what I would call, the ‘Bad Apples Syndrome.’ That is, there are a few bad apples that create problems... But, that generally things were well. In fact, ... Santa Rosa itself runs surveys ... and the last survey indicated that over 80% of the populace in Santa Rosa was pleased with the work of the police department and the relationship that the community has with the police...

“So when I heard the officials say ‘Look, 80-some percent of the people are happy with the police,’ I asked myself, ‘How about the other 20%, how about the other 19%?’ When a mayor or a councilperson or, indeed, a chief of police swears to uphold the Constitution, it’s to every single citizen in this community...

“The testimony by those religious leaders, by those community leaders and by the individuals was of a series of events that their parishioners or the members of their community groups had had with various police or with the police departments in the various jurisdictions of the community that were not good. And so, they were there to express their concern...

“Now, what I’d like to emphasize is that even those who believe that all is well between the community and the police must recognize that some believe that it’s not true.

And that the fact that some believe that that’s not true [and] say there are problems is a fact that we must all recognize...

“...Most police officers are well trained, try to do the very best they can and try to treat people respectfully...The police are very important, they do a good job, but very often, as we heard, ... things go awry. But they don’t go awry, it seems to me, just because of a ‘bad apple.’ There is something very often fundamentally wrong or not right in terms of the relationship that the police departments have with some sections of the community.

“That some citizens and some residents of this community feel that they’re not being well served by the police. Is it a matter of training, is it a matter of who gets recruited to be a police officer, is it a matter of misunderstanding based on language or ethnicity or culture, is it simply unsubstantiated complaints against the police? What is it? It seems to me that as citizens we have a duty to ourselves, to our families, to the community to explore those questions. My own tentative conclusions, and in difficult issues my conclusions always seem to be tentative, is this: ...we need to examine what is the system that within a police department rewards an officer. What is the reward system? And by reward system, I’m not talking about money. I’m not talking about promotions. I mean what makes an officer think that she or he is doing a good job? What will make a fellow officer come by and put his arm around his fellow officer and say: ‘Boy, you really did a good job!’ In some ways that’s the greatest reward system.

“The [Commission’s] report comes out and some folk apparently still say there’s not a problem. I just came at the invitation of the various community groups to share with you the simple observation that there is a problem and when there’s a problem, we can’t depend on a majoritarian democracy. We have to look beyond a majoritarian system of government and ask ourselves the question, how can everybody in the community not just the majority, have a part in establishing policy for that community and that police department to make sure that it’s responsive not to 50%, not to 51%, not to 80%, not to 90% but to 100% of the folk who live in this community? ...

“We’ve got to come up with a system of involving citizens more in those important decisions. ... Right now there’s a tendency to say: ‘We’re a police department, our bosses are the city council, we report only to the city council.’ I think that’s responding in the majoritarian democratic tradition. But in this area of concern, ... I don’t think that our majoritarian tradition has worked all that well and so we’ve got to go beyond that...

“The [Commission’s] report suggests that a citizen community review board would be of help. I’ve never understood, personally, any resistance by any police department to complete involvement of citizens in reviewing police practices, police regulations and so on. Because the police ... have to have the confidence of the citizens whom they serve.”

**NOMINATIONS FOR JACK GREEN CIVIL LIBERTIES AND MARIO SAVIO
STUDENT ACTIVIST AWARDS WANTED**

The ACLU of Sonoma County is seeking nominations for the Jack Green Civil Liberties and the Mario Savio Student Activist awards. The Jack Green Civil Liberties Award was established in 1989 to honor a Sonoma County resident who has played a significant role in promoting civil liberties. The Mario Savio was created in 1997 to honor Sonoma County

students whose leadership has made a difference in their school or community. The awards will be presented at our 2001 Awards Ceremony and Annual Dinner. For nomination forms, contact Judy McCann at 824-1063, call our hotline at 765-5005 or e-mail us at aclu@monitor.net. The deadline for the nominations is December 9, 2000.

WIN \$500 IN THE ACLU STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

The Boy Scouts recently won the right to discriminate against those who are atheist, gay or lesbian. The ACLU is sponsoring its second Student Essay Contest for Sonoma County high school students. The topic is: Should the Boy Scouts be allowed to use public school facilities, if they

discriminate against people because of their sexual orientation or religion?

There will be cash prizes for best essays from a high school student. Deadline is December 9th. For essay contest packet with rules and further details, call us at 765-5005

SANTA ROSA ANTI-PANHANDLING ORDINANCE UPDATE

The last night of this season's Wednesday Night Market, a street artist was set up on the corner, without an official booth. He painted for a gathered crowd, without saying a word. His completed paintings were spread out around him, signs on them reading "\$20." He had left out a mug for people to put money in. The gathering was peaceful, the artwork inspiring. However, since he was asking for money, no matter how silently, and non-offensively, he could have been arrested for "aggressive panhandling" under the current Santa Rosa City Aggressive Panhandling Ordinance. Passed a year ago by the Santa Rosa City Council, it criminalizes the speech of a "street" person passively holding a sign for work, a stranded person asking for change for the phone, a young person at night asking for

assistance from shoppers, merely because of their non-threatening request included asking for exchange or donation of money or services. To placate the Salvation Army and Girl Scouts whose seeking of donations or sale of cookies would have been criminalized the city passed an amendment to the ordinance to exempt certain groups.

This past year, the Chapter's David Grabill and Susan Williamson, have been negotiating with the city to address the chapter's concerns (during negotiations, the city has agreed not to enforce the current law). As a result, a scaled back version has been drafted at the City Attorney's office, which will soon go before the City Council. The new version eliminates most of the free speech violations, and the discriminatory effect of the amendment.

TEACHERS - HAVE AN ACLU SPEAKER COME TO YOUR CLASSROOM

The ACLU of Sonoma County will send speakers to Junior High and High School classrooms to discuss with students the Bill of Rights, Student Rights and other civil

liberties issues. If you are a teacher who would like to bring these topics of discussion to your classroom, call Steve Fabian at 823-1667 to arrange for a speaker.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the American Civil Liberties Union of Sonoma County is to protect, support and defend civil liberties, rights and freedoms guaranteed by the United States and California Constitutions.

JOIN THE CHAPTER'S E-MAIL TREE

You may receive a call in the next few months, asking you if you would like to update our member list with your e-mail address. Now, we only have our member's phone number and mailing address. We want to start using e-mails for "phone-tree" like communications with the members.

includes your e-mail address, which will be used only by the ACLU for short, timely, notices. This will allow us to mobilize our membership instantly when important civil liberties issues arise. You can also send your email address to us by completing the form below or e-mailing us at aclu@monitor.net

As always, ACLU membership is confidential, and this

I WANT TO BE ADDED TO THE ACLU OF SONOMA COUNTY'S E-MAIL TREE

Name(s): _____

Address: _____ Apt: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____

U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION: CITIZEN REVIEW BOARDS NEEDED

After much anticipation, the California Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued their report *Community Concerns about Law Enforcement in Sonoma County*. Numerous changes were recommended including the creation of independent citizen review boards for the Santa Rosa Police, Rohnert Park Public Safety and Sonoma County Sheriff departments. Moving the complaint process away from police headquarters and increased

oversight by local government was also recommended. The Committee recommended increased gender and ethnic and language diversity in the county's police agencies and increased training of officers in numerous areas, including review of police policies on use of force to incorporate mediation techniques and less violent methods.

Read the complete report at our website or write or call us for a free copy.

CHAPTER FORMS WORKING GROUPS

At the Chapter's annual Board Retreat, small working groups were formed to focus work on issues important to the civil rights in our community. These groups are now

meeting and working. These groups are open to those who would wish to volunteer and would benefit from your energy. The focus areas are:

Education: Equity of Opportunity, Students Rights, Censorship – Chair: Susan Williamson

Police: Jails, Citizens Review Boards and Driving While Black or Brown – Chair: Steven Fabian

1st Amendment: Privacy, Political Process – Chair: Marvin Pederson

Gay/Lesbian, Youth Rights, Discrimination, Hate Crime, Alternative Families - Chair: Susan Williamson

Economic Justice: Affordable Housing, Special Needs, Farm Worker Conditions – Chair: David Grabill

Volunteers willing to work to help make a difference are wanted. If you want to become involved, call our hotline at

765-5005 or send us an e-mail to aclu@monitor.net, and a contact person will get back to you.

HELP MAKE OUR SILENT AUCTION A SUCCESS

Help publicize your or your friend's business, service, art, or talent while supporting your local ACLU chapter. Artists, restaurants, stores, wineries, or service providers (hairdressers, masseurs, accountants, gardeners, interior decorators, chefs, etc.) are all invited to donate to our silent

auction at our Awards Ceremony. Are you an amateur chef willing to cook a gourmet meal for 8 or 10? How about creating a basket of goodies? If you can't donate, ask your friends, the places where you shop or obtain services to donate. Contact Neva Turer at 539-1220 for details.

UNITED WAY SEEKING INPUT ON WHETHER TO CONTINUE FUNDING BOY SCOUTS

The United Way of Sonoma–Mendocino-Lake is reviewing their anti-discrimination policy and wants input. Should it continue to fund the Boy Scouts, who discriminate

based on religion & sexual orientation? Give your opinion to President Yale Abrams: 731 4th St., Santa Rosa, 95404, e-mail: yaleabrams@cswebmail.com or phone: 528-4483.

GREG DOWNING LEAVES ACLU BOARD OF DIRECTORS

After five years, Greg Downing has left our Board. Greg created the ACLU of Sonoma County website and was active in computer technology and civil liberties issues.

The current Board of Directors are: David Grabill – co-

chair, Victor Chechanover – co-chair, Leslie Pederson – treasurer, Irma Ramirez – secretary, Steven Fabian, Wayne Gibb, Virginia Heck, Marvin Pederson, Alicia Sanchez, Ben Terry, Judith Volkart and Susan Williamson.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

The Sonoma Chapter Board of Directors meetings are open to our members. The board meets the third Tuesday of the month at the Peace & Justice Center 540 Pacific Avenue, Santa Rosa at 7:00 p.m. If there is an issue you

wish to discuss at the meeting, contact David Grabill at 528-6839 a few days prior to the meeting and let him know. Next meetings are: November 21st, December 19th and January 16th.

GIVE THE GIFT OF CIVIL LIBERTIES – SIGN UP A NEW MEMBER & DINNER IS FREE!

Many say: "There's no such thing as a free lunch." That may be true, but there is still a free dinner! Just sign up a new member at the regular rate or higher to the ACLU (must never have previously been an ACLU member) and their admission to the chapter's Award Ceremony & Dinner is FREE! This is a great deal. Know someone you are just dying to ask out for dinner? Do it! For \$20, dinner is

covered and you can give them a membership in the oldest, finest and most effective civil liberties organization America has to offer. Want to take out a couple? A joint membership for \$30 includes two free dinners! So come on out and bring some friends. You know people who are civil libertarians who have not yet joined. Help them join and have a good time eating out with them.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.ACLUSONOMA.ORG.