

Minutes of Citizens Advisory Committee on Jury Selection
Friday, November 5, 2010
Jennifer Putman Meeting Room, Brookens Administrative Center
1776 E. Washington Street Urbana, IL 61802

Call to Order: Chair Aaron Ammons called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Roll Call: Eight members appointed from the General Public were present: Aaron Ammons, William Brown, Brian Dolinar, Barbara Kessel, Joan Miller, Jennifer Putman, Patrick Thompson, Kenneth Turner. Two members appointed from the General Public were excused: Tricia Avery, Lorraine Cowart. One Elected Official was present: Justice & Services Committee Chair Matt Gladney. One Elected Official was excused: County Board Chair Pius Weibel. Three Court Officials were excused: Judge Thomas Difanis, Court Administrator Roger Holland, Public Defender Randy Rosenbaum.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes: The agenda was approved as circulated. Minutes of the September 24 meeting were approved as corrected/amended.

Announcements/Communications: Miller distributed copies of the 2010–11 edition of the League of Women Voters' *Who's Who in Local Government* directory. Dolinar read an October 25 letter from John Dorsey to Judge Difanis. Mr. Dorsey served on the jury that recently heard the case against Jonathan Brock. [Mr. Dorsey authorized the attachment of his letter with CACJS meeting minutes and the posting of it on the county's Web site.] Ammons thanked Gladney for 20 months' service on the CACJS, and noted that tonight would be the final occasion for him to participate as an Elected Official. Ammons expressed hope that in a future capacity as Member Appointed from the General Public, Gladney will remain active with the CACJS.

Educating the Community about Jury Service (Updates): Ammons reported that he, Vice-Chair Avery, and Brian Dolinar have begun a series of meetings with Unit 4 (Champaign) and Unit 116 (Urbana) educators. Their goal is to ensure inclusion in the K–12 curriculum of concepts such as: (1) jury service as an essential civic responsibility, and (2) a jury of peers as the foundation of the American justice system. Ammons stated that the curricula tend to generally cover aspects of "civic engagement," but without focus on the specifics of jury duty in Champaign County. Ammons, Avery, and Dolinar learned from Yolanda Graham of Unit 4 that concepts of "Jury of One's Peers" are conveyed in mock trial experiences offered in Champaign public schools. In their next meeting Ammons, Avery, and Dolinar plan to confer with Urbana High School teachers Mark Foley, Michael Pollock, and Chris Bedford.

Members agreed about the need to produce a "Jury Duty FAQ" pamphlet for placement and pickup in public places and churches. Whatever piece the CACJS creates could be based on previously written educational material, provided that permission is obtained from original authors/publishers. Putman volunteered to work on getting permission from the California State Bar to use the "Defendant Cat" [judged by 'jury' of 12 dogs] image used in presentations by Professor Steve Beckett. Brown commented on locating appropriate educational material available to prospective jurors in DuPage County.

Use of PSA on Community and Commercial Radio Stations: Dolinar advocated the immediate expenditure of funds on hand to begin airing the ad written/recorded by Patrick Thompson and approved by the CACJS. He noted that the sooner a check could be written to the management of radio stations WBCP and 105.5 FM, the sooner the Thompson PSA and poem by Aamons ["I'd rather be judged by twelve than carried by six . . ."] could be placed in playing rotation. Dolinar

encouraged Ammons to draw on his background as Radio Station WEFT air-shifter to ensure that the Thompson and other PSAs are aired on WEFT.

Courtwatching Project—Sixth Annual Report (Discussion): Members discussed the report on the 2009–10 Courtwatching Project, presented to the public at an October 21 press conference by UIUC College of Law Professor Steve Beckett.

Second-Notice Letter to Prospective Jurors (Discussion): Because of the lateness of the hour, members agreed to defer to the next meeting discussion of a letter provided for CACJS review by Judge Difanis. The letter informs prospective jurors that their completed Juror Qualification Questionnaire has not been received, reminds them that jury service is a serious civic responsibility, and states that failure to return the completed questionnaire may place the nonresponsive prospective juror in indirect contempt of court.

Next Meeting: Those in attendance agreed on Friday, December 10 as the date of the next meeting.

Adjournment: Chair Ammons adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Putman,
Recording Secretary

October 25, 2010
301 West Locust Street
Urbana, Illinois 61801

Dear Judge Difanis,

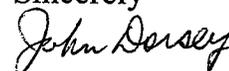
I served on the jury two weeks ago that convicted Johnathan Brock. I would like to share a few thoughts regarding that experience in light of the past 26 years that I have lived at the above address. There has been nearly a continuous string of drug dealing in my immediate neighborhood. On the evening of the first day of the trial I was standing in my front yard conversing with my neighbor. My neighborhood bent over and picked up a plastic baggie with a twisted corner and stated to me that this twisted corner indicated that this baggie had contained an illegal drug. That very issue had come up in court that day. The good efforts of the police department, the court system, my neighbors and myself over the years have not solved this problem in my neighborhood.

The evidence against Mr. Brock was undeniable. The jury did what the law instructed us to do. I think it was fair to say that the consensus in the jury room was that sending Mr. Brock to prison will have little if any impact on the problem of illegal drug use and addiction in our community. Mr. Baxter and Ms. Morris, the witnesses for the state, obviously have found other sources to feed their addictions.

As a taxpayer I am frustrated and discouraged. The most recent figure I have seen for a year's incarceration of one individual was around \$28,000 per year. I would like to see a change in approach. Maybe putting more resources into attacking the demand rather than attacking the supplier is worth pursuing. A public ad campaign featuring the real faces and sad, pathetic stories of the Ms. Morris's and Mr. Baxter's could be affective. Send these individuals into the schools to witness to children on the destructiveness of drug use. These actions might reduce the numbers who start down the path of drug use. Increased use of methadone clinics for those hopelessly addicted, as Mr. Baxter and Ms. Morris appeared to be, could further reduce demand for what Mr. Brock was peddling and literally save the lives of Baxter, Morris and other like them.

I understand you do not make drug laws or sentencing guidelines. You are, however, on the front lines of this problem and are rightly so are a respected and listened to voice. That is why I direct this letter to you. Thank you for your consideration of my thoughts.

Sincerely



John Dorsey