

*Our Mission is to eliminate discrimination in Iowa.*

# Iowa Civil Rights Commission Communicator

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## 16 Iowa Communities Boast Diversity Appreciation Teams

Sixteen Iowa communities have now formed diversity appreciation teams. Cedar Valley (Waterloo/Cedar Falls area) Charles City, Hampton, and Mason City are the latest to begin the work of building a local coalition or network of persons and organizations to develop and then implement a community-wide plan to (1) fight discrimination, (2) respond to reported hate crimes, and (3) teach the value of diversity.

Other communities with teams include: Sioux City, Storm Lake, Denison, Ames, Davenport/Quad Cities, Marshalltown, Webster County, Polk County, Tama County, Estherville, Iowa City, and Cedar Rapids.

Team members typically include: mayors, city council persons, county supervisors, school superintendents, teachers, business leaders, advocacy group representatives, librarians, real estate agents, landlords, county extension directors, county attorneys, county sheriffs, police chiefs, and other interested citizens.

Three years ago, the Iowa Civil Rights Commission (ICRC) began helping communities form diversity appreciation teams as a way to activate more people and organizations in the fight against discrimination.

For more information about teams or to obtain a copy of ICRC's bimonthly newsletter **Team Diversity**, call Don Grove at 515-281-8084 or 1-800-457-4416 ext. 1-8084. For a directory of all the Teams, visit ICRC at <http://www.state.ia.us/government/crc>. ☞

## Commission Promotes Study Circles on Race Relations

The Iowa Civil Rights Commission is promoting the use of study circles on race relations to build community and fight discrimination.

Study circles are small-group, democratic, highly participatory discussions. Organizers of large-scale study circle programs bring hundreds or even thousands of citizens into study circles to address such issues as race relations, education, and crime and violence.

Community-wide study circle programs are underway in scores of cities, ranging in size from Yarmouth, Maine, to Los Angeles, California. These programs aid community problem-solving at a number of levels, from greater individual volunteerism, to increases in small-group collaborations, to new city-wide policies and plans.

A number of Iowa communities are in various stages of planning and organizing community-wide study circles programs, including Des Moines, Sioux City, Muscatine, and Dubuque.

By participating in study circles, citizens gain "ownership" of the issues, a recognition that there can be a connection between personal experiences and public policies, and a deeper understanding of their own and others' perspectives and concerns. They discover

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## Governor Recognizes ICRC's Volunteers

Governor Terry E. Branstad will present Volunteer Awards to more than 70 persons who have donated their time, experiences, and energies to helping the Iowa Civil Rights Commission fight discrimination in Iowa.

The Governor will present the awards at the 15th Annual Volunteer Awards Ceremony on May 8, 1997, at the Iowa National Guard Recreation Hall, Camp Dodge, Johnston, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

*Below are excerpts from the nomination letters for this year's winners.*

**Janet Parker**, Des Moines, was nominated by Commission staff member, Al Falconi, who supervises her work screening newly-filed complaints. Falconi wrote, "Both the quantity and quality of her work has been excellent. As her volunteer coach, I can truly say that is a pleasure working with Janet. Her willingness to be of service to our Commission, her positive attitude and friendly manner make Janet an outstanding volunteer whose efforts deserve recognition."

**The Volunteer Mediation Program** was nominated by Executive Director Don Grove. There are currently 63 volunteer mediators in the program, and about 90% of them are attorneys. The goal of this program is to bring faster yet equitable resolution of complaints awaiting investigation. Grove wrote in the nomination, "Since this program began in July 1993, the volunteer mediators have resolved 82 cases. This has meant not only resolution of these particular cases, but it has also meant the Iowa Civil Rights Commission is now able to get to other cases awaiting investigation five months sooner." ☞

**Mark Your Calendars!**  
**"The Faces and Voices of Iowa-  
Building COMMUNITY"**  
October 21-22, 1997  
Convention Center, Des Moines  
Featuring:  
**Simon Estes - talking!**  
**Victor Villasenor, author of *Rain of Gold***

## STUDY CIRCLES

The Iowa Civil Rights  
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### Iowa Civil Rights Commission

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### Study Circles... *continued from page 1*

common ground and a greater desire and ability to work collaboratively to solve local problems — as individuals, as members of small groups, and as voters and members at large of community organizations. Community-wide programs also facilitate cooperation between citizens and government, both at an institutional level and at the level of parents and teachers, residents and police officers.

The Commission is promoting the use of study circles on race relations in an effort to engage more people and more communities in the fight against discrimination. For more information about the Commission's Study Circles Program, please call Don Grove at 515-281-8084, or 1-800-457-4416 ext 1-8084. ☞

## New Resources

Several new and revised publications and new videos are available. To request publications or videos, call Carol Leach at **515-281-8354 or 1-800-457-4416, ext. 1-8354**. Most of the publications are also available on our Web Page, [www.state.ia.us/government/crc](http://www.state.ia.us/government/crc).

The Commission's **1996 Annual Report** has been published. It contains information on the Commission's programs and activities, and charts on the numbers and types of complaints filed in FY 96.

The agency's fair housing brochure has been revised, and is now entitled **Fair Housing and You**. It is designed to inform the public about their fair housing rights, and how to proceed if they feel they have been discriminated against.

New **FactSheets** include the **Iowa Diversity Quiz** and **Fair Housing for Families with Children**. The FactSheet **Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: It's Against the Law** has been revised, with the employer and employee information combined.

### *New Videos:*

**One of Our Own: Dealing with the Impact of AIDS in the Workplace.** A dramatic presentation of what happens when an employee reveals that he has AIDS. Information in this video helps to dispel the myths and fears about AIDS, and emphasizes the employer's responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to accommodate a person with HIV or AIDS. Leader's Guide. (35 mins., VHS)

**Fair Housing ... Remember the Message**, with Avery Friedman. A comprehensive fair housing training program for anyone involved in the sale, ownership or management of real estate. This program emphasizes how to limit your liability under the law without limiting your profits, not just because it's the law but because it's the right thing to do. Produced by the Diamondback Corporation. Handbook. (VHS, 83 mins.)

**Getting Along: Words of Encouragement.** This four and one half minute video of printed messages and music reminds all types of audiences to work and live together with open hearts and open minds. Excellent as a discussion starter, or for an uplifting closing to a meeting. Produced by Cross-Cultural Communications. (VHS, 4 1/2 mins.)



## Five New Commissioners Appointed

The Iowa Civil Rights Commissioner has five new commissioners appointed by Governor Terry E. Branstad. At their meeting on May 23, 1997, the new commissioners will join present commissioners Bernard Bidne and Liz Nichols to begin working as a group. The new commissioners will also be participating in a training and orientation program.

**Blanca G. Flores**, Muscatine, is a bilingual secretary at the Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency. In the community, she has been a board member of the Muscatine Center for Strategic Action, the YWCA, and the KWPC Spanish radio show.

**Mohammad W. Khan**, Pleasant Hill, is a field specialist/horticulturalist with the Iowa State University Extension Service. He is a member of the Lt. Governor's Committee on Diversity, the Polk County Diversity Coalition, and has been a member of the Iowa State University Affirmative Action Committee. He has also held leadership positions in the Muslim religious community.

**Flora M. Lee**, Sioux City, is a program supervisor at St. Luke's Gordon Recovery Centers. She is a member of the Iowa Prevention Network, Minority Substance Abuse Coalition, and the Board of Directors of the Sioux City Community School District., and has been a member of the Iowa Board of Substance Abuse.

**Jack L. Morlan**, West Des Moines, is a hair designer with Studio 409. He has been involved with the American Cancer Society, Food Bank of Iowa, Variety Club Telethon, and Freedom Ministries.

**Robert L. Smith, Jr.**, Waterloo, is Director of Educational Opportunities Center Program at the University of Northern Iowa. He is a member of the Board of Regents of Wartburg College, president and co-founder of The Black Alliance, as well as involvement with Covenant Foundation Board of Trustees, Boy Scouts of America, Exceptional Persons, Inc., and Mercantile Bank Trust/Foundation Department.

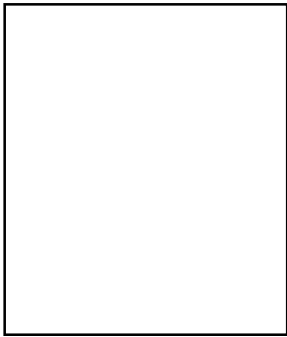
Flores was appointed to fill an unexpired term until April 30, 1999. The other four commissioners will serve four year terms, until April 30, 2001.



# Volunteers Make the Difference

Volunteers are a gift that the community gives us! For the past several years, the Commission has had an active and growing volunteer program. Our volunteers come from all walks of life, and bring us a variety of knowledge, experience, and skills. Their work has given our agency the edge and made the difference between doing an adequate job and doing a great job!

We're pleased to introduce two of our volunteers.



Cheryl Moore



Laticia Buchman

**Cheryl Moore** — Cheryl's relationship with the agency began a little differently than most of our volunteers. She was not recruited, but called and invited herself to join us because of her interest in our work. She has always been interested in social concerns, discrimination, and racism.

Cheryl's assignment with us is as a telephone housing tester. She calls in response to newspaper rental ads, posing as a single mother or inquiring as a person with a disability. She says that it has been an eye-opening experience for her to find that discrimination in housing does exist.

Cheryl's community experience includes board membership with the Iowa Civil Liberties Union, a telephone recruiter for the Blood Center of Central Iowa, working on a crisis line and being a friendly visitor. She says that more than any other volunteer job, she feels that here she's making a difference and is educating people about discrimination.

Personally, her greatest accomplishment has been completing her degree at Simpson College. Her dream is to attend law school, and she plans to continue working for the causes in which she believes.

**Laticia Buchman** — Laticia is a junior at Drake University in Des Moines, majoring in sociology,

with minors in women's studies and multi-cultural studies. She chose to come to the Commission as a work study student because she was interested in the idea of testing for discrimination.

Her job is looking through statewide newspapers for advertisements that appear not to comply with fair housing laws. She conducts familial status tests by telephone, and drafts complaints. She also was on the committee that devised the Iowa Diversity Quiz.

Laticia is from Rock Island, IL, and notes that she was the first youth in Rock Island to be appointed by the mayor to a city committee, as a representative to the Martin Luther King Community Center Advisory Board.

When asked what she likes about volunteering at the Commission, she replies, "Everybody's cool!" She adds that she's learning a lot and feels that she's making a difference with her work.

Sound interesting? We have volunteer assignments for information gathering, case review, mediation, testing programs and administrative support. Work assignments are varied and flexible; many do not have to be done in our office. If you'd like to be an active participant in the fight against discrimination, call Don Grove at 1-800-457-4416, ext. 1-8084. ☘

## Workshop on Self-testing for Mortgage Lenders Available

The Iowa Civil Rights Commission is now offering a workshop on self-testing for mortgage lenders. Through a grant from the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Commission has gained a great amount of experience in testing mortgage lenders at the pre-application stage and is now offering to share their expertise with mortgage lenders.

As part of a law signed into effect on September 30, 1996, HUD and the Federal Reserve Board were required to promulgate rules to make self-testing by mortgage lenders privileged information. The rules on the self-testing privilege should go into effect on April 1, 1997.

The workshop will address these new rules and will show the mortgage lenders, through videotapes and demonstrations, how to design and conduct reliable and effective self-tests. For more information, or to schedule a workshop, call Tim Cook at 800-457-4416, ext. 2-6138, or 515-242-6138.





# Strategic Planning Process

by Mary Cowdrey, Strategic Planning Chair

The Mission of the Iowa Civil Rights Commission is “to eliminate discrimination in Iowa.” For many years the agency has labored toward that goal. Though many believe that these efforts have been successful, there has not been a definitive measure of the amount of discrimination in Iowa. The Commission is now working to measure our success through the strategic planning process.

A “strategic plan” is a long-term plan that envisions a future and maps the strategy to create that future. During the planning process, Commission staff and volunteers are developing strategies and performance measures for the agency in five goal areas.

The Team working on **Results Measures** is determining the variables which affect the level of discrimination in Iowa. The variables will be used to find out which programs are most effective in the fight against discrimination. The **Staff Development Team** is developing strategies to further the staff’s expertise in computer skills, diversity appreciation, and job skills.

The **Technology Team** is planning the Commission’s strategy in utilizing technology to further enhance the services of the Commission. They are assessing computer imaging, the Internet, and the ICN, among others. The **Resource Development Team** aims to improve the Commission’s resources through grants, volunteers, EEOC and HUD contracts, as well as collaborating with other agencies and organizations.

Finally, the **Agency Services Team** looks at our Quality Improvement, in addition to the newest programs of Study Circles and Diversity Teams.

The planning process involves virtually all of the staff and many volunteers who work in teams. By the end of 1997, our results measures, or benchmarks, will be in place to begin determining the effectiveness of our programs. The information garnered will allow the Commission to make better decisions about how to channel resources to the programs that are most effective in eliminating discrimination. The result, making Iowa a better place to live, work, and raise a family, is something everyone can identify with. ☞

# Contested Case Decision

Edward D. Tillman, Complainant, and the Iowa Civil Rights Commission vs. Monfort of Colorado, Inc., Con Agra, and Bret Goken, Respondents.

Tillman, a Black male, alleges that all Respondents are liable for a racially hostile work environment which was inflicted on him by Goken and other co-workers. He also alleges that he was discriminatorily discharged by Monfort and Con Agra.

The complaint alleges that during an altercation at lunch with co-worker Goken, he was called “nigger” by Goken. Tillman reacted by slamming Goken into a table. While both of them were discharged for this incident, Goken was subsequently reinstated, while Tillman was not. Tillman alleges this constitutes racial discrimination by Monfort and Con Agra in his discharge. The question of racial harassment of Tillman by Goken was also addressed at hearing.

The Commission established its case of harassment against Goken with evidence that Tillman was subjected to unwelcome harassment based on his race. The Commission did not prove, however, the allegation of harassment by Monfort because they failed to prove that the employer knew or should have known of the harassment.

The Commission also failed to prove that Complainant Tillman was subjected to racially discriminatory treatment in his discharge as the evidence indicates he was not treated differently than non-Black employees who were also discharged for fighting.

The Administrative Law Judge proposed remedies of \$8,500 for emotional distress damages resulting from racial harassment by Respondent Goken.

The Commissioners voted on December 13, 1996, to accept the proposed decision as a final agency decision. Tillman has filed an appeal in district court on the part of the decision regarding Monfort. ☞

**Please help us keep our mailing list current.  
If you have name or address changes, or would like to add or delete names, please let us know.  
Bulk mail is not forwarded.**

## ICRC FactSheet... Iowa Diversity Quiz

Following is a sampling of questions from the Iowa Diversity Quiz. The complete text is available in print (see p.3) or on our Web Site (see next column).

1. What Iowa city became the home for the first Mosque for Muslim worship in the U.S.?  
a) Des Moines            b) Waterloo  
c) Cedar Rapids        d) Council Bluffs
2. The Old Order Amish, known as the "horse and buggy people," settled in Iowa in the 1840's.  
a) True  
b) False
3. What city is home to the oldest Hispanic community in Iowa?  
a) Ft. Madison        b) Dubuque  
c) Decorah            d) Spirit Lake
4. George Washington Carver, the African American scientist, studied at which two Iowa schools?  
a) Simpson College    b) Iowa State University  
c) University of Iowa   d) Grinnell College
5. Iowa's largest Native American population can be found in this city.  
a) Ames                b) Tama  
c) Clarinda            d) Sioux City

### Check Your Answers

1 - c; 2 - a; 3 - a; 4 - a; b; 5 - c, d

<http://www.state.ia.us/government/crc>

Did you know that we fight discrimination five ways? Can you name the ways? Did you know that Iowa has 22 local human/civil rights commissions, 16 diversity appreciation teams, and four coalitions sponsoring study circles? Did you know that our backlog of cases waiting assignment to investigators has dropped below 100? Did you know that we've already recorded more than one million dollars in annualized benefits this year? Did you know that we have the "Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965" and all of our administrative rules on-line?

**Come visit us at our new and exciting web site!**

You'll find lots of information about our mission and how we fight discrimination. You'll find quizzes to measure your knowledge on anti-discrimination law and on Iowa's diversity. You'll find directories of staff, commissioners, local commissions, community teams, and sponsoring coalitions.

You'll find all the major State and Federal anti-discrimination laws. You'll find press releases and a calendar of current events. You'll find FactSheets on a variety of civil rights and diversity-related topics. You'll find video lists, book lists, fiscal year 1996 highlights, complaint forms, and descriptions of each step in the complaint process. You'll find all of these things and lots more. Check out our web pages. You'll be impressed.



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Iowa Civil Rights Commission

## Communicator

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