

Constitution Day at DMACC

Written by Judith Vogel, Member of the first First Amendment Fest Committee

Each year, the DMACC campuses offer opportunities for students to learn more about the United States Constitution. In 2005, Julie Roosa, who was then an instructor of Journalism at the Ankeny Campus and who also had a law degree, received approval and initiated the planning for the first "First Amendment Fest" at DMACC. She believed firmly that the First Amendment was critical to the existence of a democracy in this republic and that it was important for students to learn and appreciate the rights listed in the First Amendment. To accomplish this goal, she formed and chaired a committee composed of volunteers from DMACC campuses to plan the events. Members included Rose Toubes, Bradley Dyke, Jan LaVille, Greg Martin, Steve Udelhofen, Judy Vogel, and several others. Over the years, the name of the event was changed to "Constitution Day & First Amendment Fest," and finally to "Constitution Day."

For the first several years, the "First Amendment Fest" was literally a festival! T-shirts were designed (pictures at end of this article) and given to students; an "all-American" lunch was provided; a "Soap Box" was built and set up so students could express their ideas and opinions publicly, "Uncle Sam" (sometimes played by Steve Udelhofen) roamed the courtyard, and quizzes were created as a competition for prizes. Special events at all campuses were planned with speakers, panels, and debates. Sometimes events from one campus would be streamed to all campuses. More recently, observance of the day has evolved into primarily inviting guest speakers.

The speaker selected for the first festival was John Tinker. He was one of the students in the Tinker vs. Des Moines case in 1965. He, his sister Mary Beth, and other students wore black armbands to school to protest the war in Vietnam. They were told by the administration that they could not wear the armbands and that they could not return to school until they removed them. Students removed the armbands, but four years later, the United States Supreme Court decided in a 7-2 decision that students in public schools have the right of freedom of speech as long as it is not disruptive to the educational process. Since armbands were not disruptive, the students should have been allowed to wear them. The Supreme Court stated that students do not "shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate."

In 2004, Senator Robert Byrd introduced a bill in Congress to create "Constitution Day and Citizenship Day." This idea had its origin with the 1940 "I Am an American Day" joint resolution which asked the President of the United States to proclaim the third Sunday in May to recognize United States citizens. In 1952, the joint resolution was repealed and a law was passed to establish a "Citizenship Day." Citizens were to be instructed by civil and educational authorities "for the complete instruction ...in their responsibilities and opportunities as citizens of the United States and of the state and locality in which they reside." This federal law also moved the day to observe to September 17 to commemorate the signing of the Constitution of the United States on Sept. 17, 1787. Senator Byrd's law kept the September 17 date for observance, but added two other requirements: 1) Every federal agency should provide employees with education and materials on the Constitution, and 2) Each educational institution which receives Federal funds should hold a program for students every September 17.

DMACC 2015 **Constitution Day: Past and Present** Celebration – Paul Byrd, Chair

Ankeny Campus

- Free speech activities and celebration in the courtyard outside Building #4, Ankeny Campus. DMACC English Professor Darwin Pagnac will serve as moderator.
- John Douglas Hall presentation of James Madison. Auditorium.
- Constitution Trivia Contest. Bring a team of up to 4 students to answer questions and win prizes in a game format. Building 6 Auditorium.
- Screening of the documentary "Caucus." Relive the drama of the 2012 Iowa caucuses. Tentative guest speaker: the director, A.J. Schnack. Building 6 Auditorium.

Boone Campus

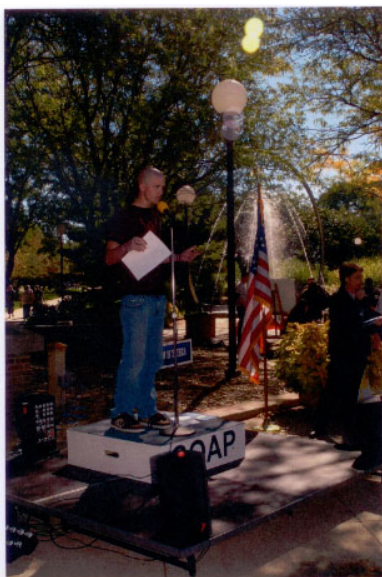
- **Boone Campus Auditorium**, John Douglas Hall presentation of James Madison.

Newton Campus

- **Auditorium:** John Douglas Hall presentation of James Madison.
Drop in as your schedule allows
Fresh popcorn and Constitution Day Cookies
(Live stream from the Ankeny Campus).
- **2nd floor landing:** Panel Discussion--learn more about the role our Constitution plays in everyday life
- **Lobby:** Constitution Trivial Contest--all day, get your copy of the Constitution
- **Lobby:** Register to Vote--sponsored by the League of Women Voters
- **Lobby:** Constitution Cake--as long as it lasts

Urban Campus

- **12:50 p.m., Urban Campus**, Brad Anderson, candidate for secretary of state, and Brad Zaun, Iowa Senator.



Student at Ankeny Campus
expressing his views on the "Soap
Box." Constitution Day 2007.

Picture by Dan Ivis.

Campus Chronicle Article by Bria Robeson, Executive editor

Photos by Chad Aldrich

September 26, 2007

Wednesday, September 26, 2007

THE Campus CHRONICLE

An independent student publication of Des Moines Area Community College, Ankeny Campus

News that is timely, relevant and interesting to the DMACC community.

Students flock to free speech and food



Photojournalist Chad Aldrich/Campus Chronicle Photos

By BRIA ROBESON
Executive editor

Continuation Day this Monday brought a day of petitions, surveys, free food, and students standing on the soapbox expressing their opinion.

Criminal Justice 132 held a survey asking DMACC students and faculty if they would sign a petition, they asked four things:

- 1: No smoking on campus
27 signatures
- 2: No tobacco on campus
41 signatures
- 3: Smoking in designated areas
67 signatures
- 4: Smoking anywhere on campus
56 signatures

A total of 191 students participated in the survey.

"I found it to be very odd the number of students who said they 'don't have an opinion.' How can they not have an opinion?"

Either they are afraid of giving their opinion because they think some one or somewhere [from DMACC] might find out. Or maybe they really don't care. Don't care about their health or anyone's," said De'Ann Mallers a second year student of criminal justice, who helped conduct the survey.

The student activity council sold shirts for a dollar, though students who spoke on the soapbox received a shirt for five.

A few issues voiced by students on the soapbox were regarding the Iraq war, freedom from prejudice for homosexuals, the disgust towards America for putting Saddam Hussein in power, religious views from the point of view from an atheist and a Christian were expressed, as well as how in-home daycares should be required to take drug tests.

Two female DMACC students

expressed their opinion by kissing on the soapbox.

Many students enjoyed the free lunch that was provided for them.



Constitution Day 2008

Panel takes aim at Second Amendment, U.S. Supreme Court decision on gun ban

By ALEX MURPHY
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

A legal adviser for the Des Moines Police Department told an audience at the Ankeny DMACC campus on September 17, that a U.S. Supreme Court decision this summer upholding an individual's right to own a gun will not affect a particular group more than another.

"As for groups in society that will be most affected, I can't think of any one group in society that will be more affected than any other," said Doug Philip, an assistant attorney for the city of Des Moines and legal advisor for the Des Moines Police Department.

Philip was one of four panelists who participated in a discussion called "The Bill of Rights in an election year" as part of DMACC's Fourth Annual Constitution Day and First Amendment Fest. An estimated 1,000 people stopped by outside Building 5 to partake of the activities.

The panel discussion took place under a tent on the lawn of Building 5. Also on the panel: Renee Cramer, a political science professor at Drake University; Thomas Abt, director for voter protection for the Iowa Obama Campaign; and Charlie Smithson, executive director/legal counsel for the Iowa Ethics and Campaign Disclosure Board.

Bradley Dylke, a DMACC political science professor, moderated the discussion and asked pre-arranged questions of each panelist. The audience asked questions at the end.

Dylke's first questions were based on the Second Amendment, which states "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms shall not be infringed."

The first question was how should the Court's ruling on the Second Amendment in the summer handgun ban case should be interpreted. The decision pertained to a law in Washington, D.C., that restricted citizens from



Charlie Smithson, executive director/legal counsel for the Iowa Ethics and Campaign Disclosure Board



Thomas Abt, Iowa Obama campaign representative



Doug Philip, Des Moines assistant attorney and Des Moines Police Department legal advisor



Renee Cramer, Drake University political science professor

Four panelists discuss the Second Amendment during DMACC's Constitution Day event September 17 outside of Building 5 on the Ankeny campus. Photos by Mark Smith.

owning hand guns with some exceptions.

Cramer said the court made it clear that the gun ban in Washington, D.C. was unconstitutional.

Philip, who told the audience that he was a gun owner but not a hand gun owner, said the Court's decision should be interpreted that gun ownership by an individual is a pre-existing right. He made it clear that it should not be infringed.

"Each individual has the right to have lawful guns and the Second Amendment protects that right against any legislation that would infringe that right," he said.

Another question posed to the panel was whether the

Supreme Court made a wise choice in reopening debate over the meaning of the Second Amendment, or "were we better off with the old ruling?"

"I don't know if I should second guess the Court's decision," responded Abt. "There's a tremendous amount of interest in the case because we (the American people) feel strongly about gun control."

Abt also said citizens need to move away from the areas where there is disagreement and figure out the areas where there is agreement on gun control.

Smithson said, as a lawyer, he was hesitant to criticize the U.S. Supreme Court "too



The Chronicle/Mart Smith

A student speaks out on the soapbox during Constitution Day on Sept. 17. Below, Uncle Sam encourages passersby to pick up a free Constitution.

much," but he agreed that any time, "You get questions answered" by the Court, it's a good thing.

Other activities at Constitution Day included a table for voter registration, soapbox speeches and a free barbecue lunch.



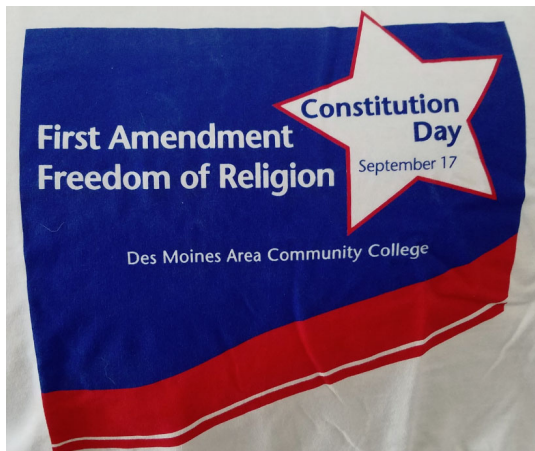
The Chronicle/Mart Smith



T-shirt 2005



T-shirt 2006



T-shirt 2007



T-shirt 2008