

Making pumpkin pie from scratch is a tradition in Champaign-Urbana — Features

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Gang activity not noticed at high schools, C-U officials say

By The News-Gazette
Champaign and Urbana high school officials say they haven't seen evidence of serious gang problems among their students.

But the top people at the University of Illinois say they're very concerned about unprovoked attacks — reportedly by high school gangs — in the campus area.

Champaign police this week attributed the September attacks on whites to an initiation ritual by two gangs of black Champaign and Urbana high school students.

In response, police patrols have been stepped up in the campus area, and

Champaign's secondary schools have a policy prohibiting students from wearing hats or any gang-related symbols.

The policy was enacted to prevent students from wearing hats of certain colors or at certain angles to indicate their membership in a particular gang, said Assistant Superintendent John Alumbaugh.

Neither Alumbaugh nor Joe Tomlinson, personnel director in Champaign schools, recalled previous gang-related incidents being as serious as those charged by Champaign police officials this week.

"In the past it has probably erupted into some fights, but not to the point that you'd see in large cities," said Tomlinson.

But UI Chief Dollins said unprovoked attacks like those described by police have been a campus problem for some time, and the incidents picked up considerably with the start of the fall semester.

"It's as bad as it's been," he added. He commended Champaign police for

bringing out the issue and trying to resolve it.

In the Sept. 27 Campus Crime Bulletin put out by the Department of Campus Safety and Risk Management, Dollins cited five locations where unprovoked episodes of violence have occurred recently.

■ Sixth and Healey streets, where four men were beaten with fists and kicked by a group of 12 to 14 men in a parking lot.

■ 600 block of South Wright Street, where a man and woman leaving a bar were jumped by multiple assailants and

See GANGES, A-10

FDA OKs 2nd drug to fight AIDS

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Food and Drug Administration today announced a second drug to fight AIDS.



Teen says he killed parents

Some black students at Urbana High School who say they know members of the "Dawgs" say a Champaign police official exaggerated when he said the group is a violent gang.

Champaign Deputy Police Chief Don Carter said Monday the gang is mainly composed of Urbana High School students who must "punch out" a white person to be a member.

He charged, during a city Human Relations Commission meeting, that the Dawgs of Urbana and the "Dehood" gang, mainly of Champaign high schoolers, were responsible for nine attacks in Campustown in September.

But Tracee Chatmon, 17, said Tuesday "it's not like that."

"To be accepted — to be initiated — boys get punched in the arm ... to see how many punches they can take," Chatmon said Tuesday.

CHATMON, WHO SAID she's a member of the "Sisters," a sorority affiliated with the Dawgs, said groups of whites in the Campustown area are part of the problem.

guys started a fight," Chatmon said.

Chatmon estimated 26 youths belong to the Dawgs and about 10 belong to the Sisters. Both groups, she said, pay dues to belong, wear similar clothing and throw parties.

"The police have got it all wrong," Chatmon said.

Another student, Marcus Bradley, 16, agreed, saying "the police have hyped it out of proportion."

Bradley said he believes the "Dawgs" were created as a social outlet for young blacks, adding he's even seen groups of whites start fights with other whites along East Green Street in the Campustown area.

Bradley, who said he spent the past year "at reform school" in Rock Island, said he was formerly involved with Urbana gangs but is now trying to finish high school, go to college and become a human relations worker.

"I don't look forward to football or basketball," Bradley said. "We've got to have another organization to help young blacks so

year by Urbana High School seniors, according to Sean Tatum, 16.

"Last year it was seen as a fraternity — it didn't stand for much," Tatum said. "This year, because those seniors left, different people have come in, and it has changed."

He agreed that the allegations of violence against whites have been exaggerated "far out of proportion."

TOBIE GILNER, 17, said he'd considered joining the Dawgs but decided against it.

He added that the Dawgs may be dissolving as a group "because of all the attention."

He said some racial tension had developed at the high school several weeks ago when a white student walked around school with a racially offensive slogan written on his arm.

Gilner said the appearance of police prevented a fight between black and white students after school.

"Things are much better now," he said.

Gangs

Continued from A-1

the woman was hit in the mouth.

■ 500 block of Chalmers Street, where two men were verbally harassed and then attacked by several men in a car.

■ 500 block of East Green Street where two men were beaten by four men after an exchange of words in a store.

■ 600 block of South Fourth Street where one of two men walking was hit in the mouth after being approached by a group of four other men.

Champaign County State's Attorney Thomas Difanis said one person was arrested on campus a few weekends ago who fit the pattern of what authorities have seen.

This was in connection with a fight involving about five black males and five white males, although there have been as many as 15 to 20 attackers per incident, Difanis said.

"One person was apprehended, and we charged that person," he added.

On that particular weekend, there were seven or eight such

attacks, Difanis said.

UI Chancellor Morton Weir said he is concerned about the issue.

"I think it could be very serious because someone could be badly injured in this kind of random violence," he said. "I know that there have been a number of meetings involving university and community people, especially law enforcement people, trying to find a way to approach the problem."

But the UI's resources for police manpower are very limited, especially when special events are going on, Dollins stressed.

"When we have a home football game, most of our officers are committed," he added.

Weir said publicity about the attacks also will increase student awareness, he said.

"I want our students to be aware that there is a problem," he said, adding that they should be cautious about walking alone.

Weir noted a similar problem was occurring a year ago, and stepped-up police patrols seemed to help, though "it didn't go away completely."

Erik Anderson, chairman of the UI Student Government Association's campus affairs committee, said most students are unaware of the Campustown attacks. But, he added, "Students are aware that this is a dangerous campus."

"If you go out on Quad and ask students, 'Are there groups attacking groups or individuals?,' most would probably say no. If you'd ask them, 'Does that surprise you?' the answer would also be no," said Anderson, a senior in urban planning.

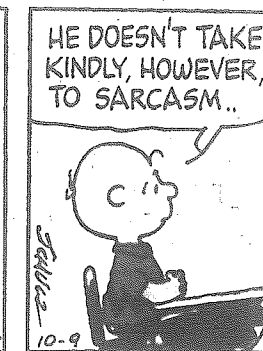
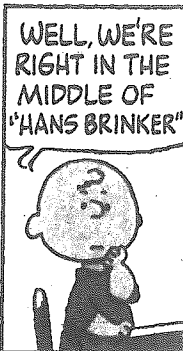
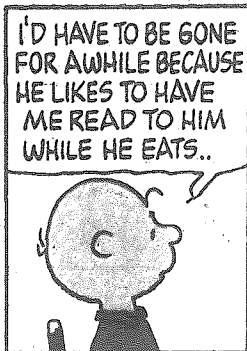
Anderson said the Student Government Association is concerned about campus safety but hasn't singled out any area.

"This campus is so unsafe, when any little thing happens it's just part of the bigger picture — rapists all the way down to gangs, drunken people coming out of the bars getting into fights."

The SGA does not view the Campustown attacks as a race issue, he said.

News-Gazette Staff Writers Michael Gray, Debra Pressey and Julie Wurth contributed to this report.

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10-9