

GUEST COLUMN

Pro-life or pro-choice?
Doesn't matter at forum

Thirty-five years ago the Supreme Court handed down the Roe v. Wade decision, effectively legalizing abortion in the United States. Instead of being the final answer to the abortion question, Roe remains the most disputed and attacked Supreme Court decision of all time. It has become a rallying cry for various political factions and the quintessential political litmus test. The oft-quoted adage of today's politics — that polarization has drastically increased as middle ground has wilted away — can find no better example than the pro-life/pro-choice firestorm surrounding Roe. Common ground is impossible, unthinkable and not even a consideration.

I suggest it's time we reconsidered.

Tuesday night the Illini Collegians for Life, a pro-life RSO, of which I am a member, is hosting a Pregnancy Resource Forum. The PRF is a concept developed by Feminists for Life of America. For more than a decade FFLA has helped colleges across the country — Harvard, UC Berkeley, Vanderbilt and dozens of others — to enact this program, designed to ease the burdens on pregnant and parenting college students. Instead of stoking the fires of Roe, the PRF circumvents what we cannot agree on and focuses on what we must, making our campus a friendly and accessible place for students with children.

The PRF involves three stages. The first is a campus-wide inventory of services and resources available for pregnant and parenting college students. The second is Tuesday's forum, which is from 7-9 p.m. in the Illini Union's Pine Lounge and is open to the public. FFLA President Serrin Foster will moderate a roundtable discussion between campus units concerning these resources. Finally, after the forum, ICFL will consolidate and make relevant information readily accessible as well as encourage policy changes and check-up on campus units to ensure implementation.

For the past three months we met with campus units — McKinley Health Center, Women's Programs, Emergency Dean



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and many others — ascertaining what services and resources are already offered and asking what more could be done. Those we contacted agreed these needs should be better met.

We also worked with student groups. The Illinois Student Senate and the Student Trustee gave their full support, as well as the campus chapter of the National Organization for Women.

At first glance, ICFL and NOW seems an odd pairing. NOW has always been at the forefront of pro-choice activism while ICFL's efforts are unabashedly pro-life. But the beauty of the PRF is that it's an opportunity for both sides to momentarily put aside this polar disagreement and make actual, concrete headway in helping women on this campus. Each side professes to want what's best for women, children and society, and though we may disagree on what exactly that means, in this instance we don't have to.

If pro-life advocates mean what they say about the value of life then it is imperative upon them to create a society in which mother and child are supported and cared for. Likewise, those who are pro-choice must work to ensure women have real options, and equal awareness thereof.

A couple weeks ago The Daily

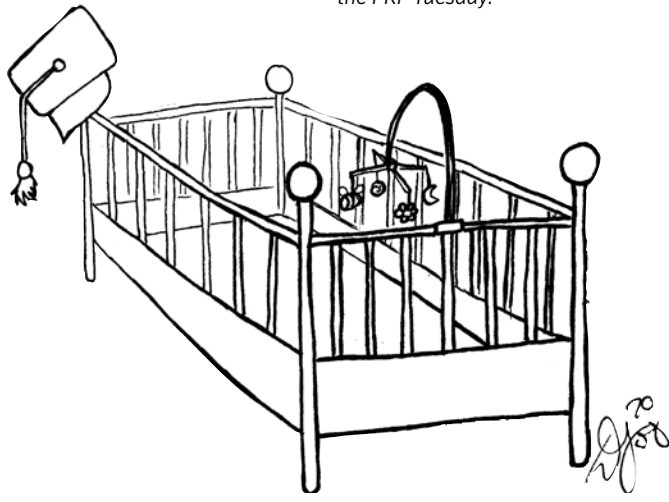
Illini ran a story about a girl who dropped out this semester to have a child but plans on returning in the fall. The online comment board evidenced how vitriolic our campus is to this particular choice. One (anonymous, cowardly) poster wrote, "She would have been well-advised to abort the fetus." Others were hardly better, expressing disdain, disrespect and outright hatred. This hostility, which has sunk deeply into our culture, should be absolutely unacceptable to thoughtful people on either side of the abortion question. This societal fault is what the PRF seeks to address.

And so this is the beginning of true choice. Not the false choice between having a university degree and a child. Today we put into place the structures and support necessary so that tomorrow's students with children will be empowered to make free and informed choices.

The abortion debate isn't going away anytime soon. And while there's a time and place for that debate, this forum is not it. In the meantime, we should embrace what common ground we have, working together for meaningful improvement on our campus, putting people before politics.

The status quo for the past 35 years has been polemics and polarization and little actual change. It's time we question whether the needs of women really are being met.

Brenda is a senior in political science and English. She wants you to visit illiniforlife.com and hopes you'll attend the PRF Tuesday.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rep. Johnson shows leadership on engagement with Iran

Our representative in Congress, Tim Johnson, is an original co-sponsor of a bipartisan resolution (H. Con. Res. 321) introduced by Reps. Gilchrest and Murtha which urges President Bush to support a comprehensive diplomatic initiative in the Middle East aimed at helping to stabilize Iraq, including direct U.S. engagement with Iran and Syria, as unanimously recommended by the bipartisan Iraq Study Group.

As Gen. Petraeus stated in congressional testimony, "there is no military solution" to the problems of Iraq.

In its recommendation for engagement with Iran and Syria, the Iraq Study Group said: "the United States should engage directly with Iran and

Syria in order to try to obtain their commitment to constructive policies toward Iraq and other regional issues. In engaging with Syria and Iran, the United States should consider incentives, as well as disincentives, in seeking constructive results." The resolution co-sponsored by Rep. Johnson calls for this recommendation to be implemented.

The resolution also calls for implementing the recommendation of the Iraq Study Group that, "There must be a renewed and sustained commitment by the United States to a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace on all fronts."

I want to express my profound gratitude to Rep. Johnson for his leadership on these issues.

ROBERT NAIMAN
Just Foreign Policy
University alumnus

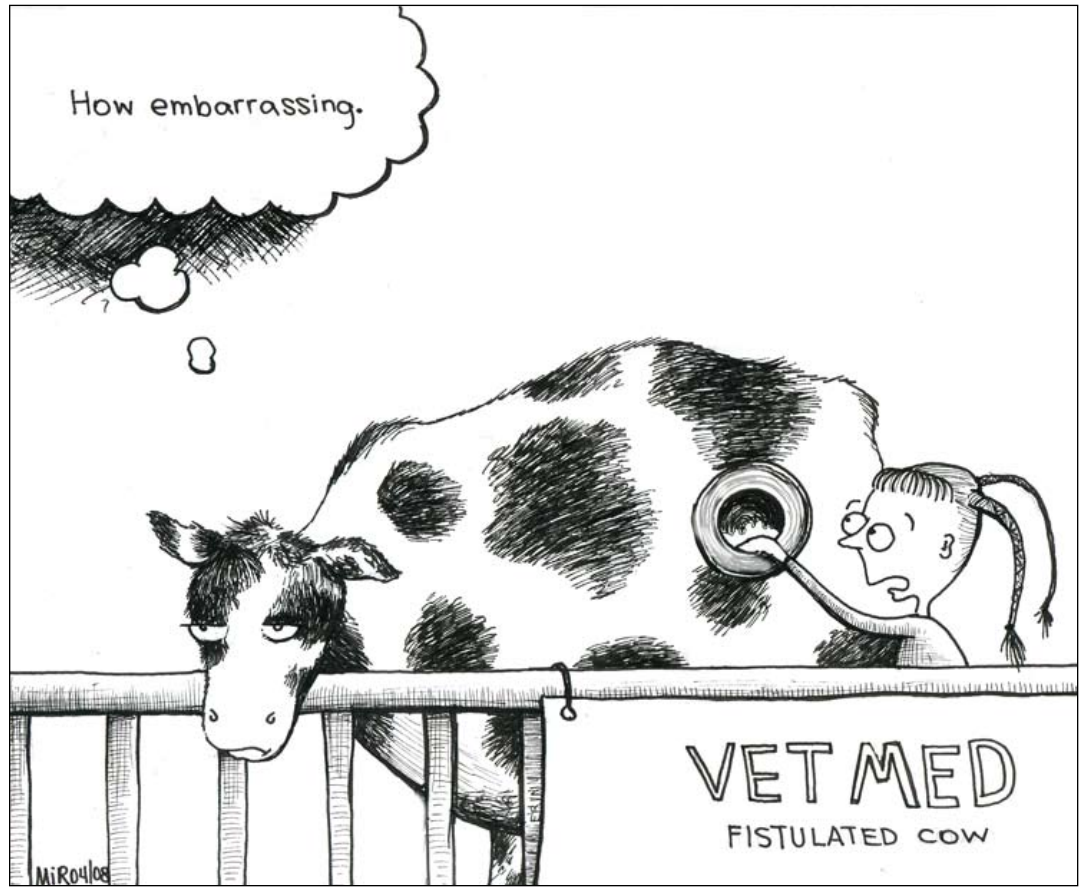
Building design not sustainable

With all this talk about promoting sustainability, let's start by ensuring buildings on campus run efficiently. Temple Hoyne Buell Hall is burning up! It's 85 degrees in my studio. During winter it was freezing. Students had to bring in space heaters to stay warm because it seemed like the AC was on. Now that it is getting warmer, it's like a toaster? What's going on here?

The architecture department wanted a building designed to teach architecture students about different components within a building. What they got was a perfect example of how to build an inefficient, poorly designed and very unsustainable building.

JIM UTTERBACK
Junior in FAA

EDITORIAL CARTOON MIRANDS SINGLER, THE DAILY ILLINI



Time to change the math about African problems

We have been constantly bombarded with images of suffering. One consistent source of these images and tragic stories is Africa. Africa has so many problems that we would not be faulted for forgetting about an epidemic here or a civil war there. Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Sudan and the Republic of the Congo are only a few examples of the cruel cocktail of conflict and death that plague the continent.

But what is this beguiling amnesia that seems to strike us when genocide raises its deadly grin over the continent? What is this peculiar calculus that says that the longer genocide persists in Africa, the less we eventually care?

In Rwanda, 800,000 people were killed by mobs carrying machetes and sticks. The international community stood by and watched as this insanity continued. When the violence broke out, a quick and decisive action by the United Nations and the international community may have prevented Rwanda's descent into madness. In fact, a small U.N. force was already in place. Did they then go about restoring order? No no. Quite the opposite. The cruel arithmetic was done and resulted in the decision that as many U.N. troops as possible should leave. The rest as they say, is history.

So one may say that we learned our lesson, albeit at the cost of 800,000 Rwandans (naturally, the cost of our apathy can be found on someone else's ledger). "Never Again!" was the new slogan of the international community. Then came Darfur, where Sudanese-backed militias are cleansing Darfur of Darfuris. Now that chant is, "Never Again! But first let us express our shock and our deep commitment to the people of Darfur and investigate the proper avenues to arrive to a satisfactory conclusion of this deeply tragic event."

This is not to say that the U.S. and others were not genuinely



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concerned initially. The U.S. was quite bold at the outset of the violence. Astonishingly, our government is one of the few in the world that recognize that an actual genocide is taking place in Darfur. In September 2004, our commander in chief walked up to a podium, looked us square in the eye and said "we have concluded that genocide has taken place in Darfur." Now, I have not agreed with our president very much in the past, but on this issue, I found the two of us on the exact same plane along with a million or so Darfuri villagers.

I was certain the U.S. and the international community were going to do something to stop the killing. I do not think my faith was misplaced either. Remember that this was September 2004, only 18 months after we invaded Iraq. This was Bush: Dictator Bounty Hunter. Remember? He was ready to send the world's bad guys to The Hague or Hades. At last, we were going to alter our math in favor of the victims of genocide. I was ready for something to happen.

Nothing happened. As with most things, this administration proved to be strong on the rhetoric, weak on the delivery and with a few hundred thousand people left to suffer the consequences.

Where are we now? I look at the media landscape and find Darfur conspicuously absent from the public discourse. Where are the headlines? Where the brave pronouncements from podiums in air-conditioned government buildings around the world?

Where are the multilingual beatings emanating from the chambers of the U.N.? Where is the EU and where are the Arab states, two groups that have much more influence on the government of Sudan than we do? What about China's complicity in Darfur? China acts as a reliable customer of Sudan's oil and as an equally reliable supplier of Sudan's arms.

Unfortunately, the people of Darfur have been left to rely on the impassioned voices of students, journalists (Nicholas Kristof among them) and citizens of good conscience. At the University, the efforts of Action Darfur, and Amnesty have been admirable. There is little we can do as students. But raising consciousness and maintaining the torch that sheds light on the suffering of the people of Darfur is important. Let us show our solidarity with the people of Darfur and show others that our cruel African calculus is at an end.

Othman is a senior in political science and applauds our University's move to divest from Sudan and urges you to visit genocideintervention.net.

WHIMS AND WITTICISMS

McKilling the bad press on McKinley Health Center

Our 21st-century measurements of historical importance have not been kind to President William McKinley. Of the top five Google search results for "McKinley," our nation's 25th president — general of the gold standard, troubadour of the tariff — is mentioned only once, third in a line of ego-deflating contenders.

But bad news for some is fantastic news for others, namely the University's very own McKinley Health Center which nabs the top two spots in this illustrious line of who's whos.

In light of the health center's preeminence in cursory Google word searches, I visited McKinley for a study abroad physical examination. As it was my first visit, I received several grave warnings before making the trek, mostly stuff along the lines of "physician-assisted suicide is illegal in Illinois, so don't let



HENRY SOONG

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McKillme pull any fast ones on you," and "if they want to stick you with a needle, you've got to run like hell."

My stroll over to McKinley was mostly spent pondering the possible accidents that could result from my check-up. The consensus on campus seems to be that the "McKillme" Health Center is a place of last resort even in a time of plague. I've heard horror stories of misdiagnoses and medications that exacerbated illnesses, so I prepared myself for the experience by dreaming up scenarios where doctors tell me they discover a new strain of Ebola in my body.

After getting lost in my daydream and ending up at the National Soybean Research Center, I did find the building, and checked in for my appointment on a nifty computer console in the lobby. A receptionist found me wandering the halls as I looked for the proper waiting room.

Surprisingly, there were no agonizing screams behind any closed doors, nor were there any patients in nightgowns fleeing the premises. We walked up a concealed flight of stairs and wound around several corridors before coming to the clinic. If there were anything suspicious going on at McKinley, the place is definitely labyrinthine enough to keep any experimental subjects from escaping.

I made mental notes of each right and left turn we made. Just in case.

The nurse who took my blood

pressure was brusque. Maybe I'm still used to my pediatrician's nurse in Elmo scrubs who calls bribes "boo-boos" and offers lollipops before leaving the room, but this one was all about business.

"Fill out these forms. Give me your arm. Sign here. Stop eating the Popsicle sticks."

She left as fast as she had come, telling me to wait for the nurse practitioner.

The nurse practitioner (we'll call her the NP, as in Not-quite-a-Physician) had a similar approach to running my physical. She walked in without any sort of introduction, carrying a bundle of papers, and sat at the desk filling out paperwork. I snuck a glance at her name tag as she scribbled away.

NP, curtly: "Where are you traveling to?"

Me, chirpily: "Well, I'm going to England in June, but first I'm

going Turkey for two weeks right after school ends!"

The NP rifled through the forms and turned to me, exasperated. There weren't any papers in the stack for Turkey because I had only arranged an appointment for traveling to England.

NP, bemoaningly: "Turkey and England are two completely different worlds. You're going to need several boosters."

I froze as she pressed the stethoscope to my back, waiting for me to inhale and exhale deeply. If they want to stick you with a needle, you've got to run like hell! I really considered refusing the shots and following the advice, but instead resigned myself to death by lethal injection.

The shots came quickly and painlessly, and the NP and I made small talk about traveling abroad. She laughed and I laughed, and she even offered

me a glass of apple juice after I signed yet another barrage of forms. Somewhere in the midst of the travel tips and advice, the NP (who looked strikingly like the mom character from "Little Miss Sunshine") suddenly wasn't so much executioner as she was just a normal, misunderstood nurse practitioner.

As I threw on a windbreaker over my bandaged arm and waved goodbye to the NP, I considered the circumstances under which McKinley Health Center might have first earned its flattering alias. Like killer whales, the good folks at McKillme are just misunderstood, squid-eating gentle giants. We would all do well to visit the Health Center for a second impression.

Henry is a freshman in Business. Even as a fan of McKinley Health Center, he still thinks President McKinley should get first mention on Google.