

AIR TIME

Cliff Arnebeck: Fighter for Democracy

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Applied Information Resources is a non-profit, public policy research and community information organization dedicated to:

- Citizen education on public issues.
- Assisting human service organizations in evaluating their programs, and
- Providing the best possible information to decision makers responding to changing human and urban needs.

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It was a hard fought case, but Cliff Arnebeck and Common Cause/Ohio won a battle against the big corporations of Ohio. Arnebeck successfully led litigation against the Ohio Chamber of Commerce over its use of direct corporate treasury money to influence the outcome of the Ohio Supreme Court election of Alice Robie Resnick. In 2000 The Ohio Chamber of Commerce ran ads bluntly suggesting that incumbent state Supreme Court Justice Alice Resnick could be bought by trial lawyers and unions. "Alice Resnick: Is Justice for Sale?" one ad's voiceover asked, as paper money rained down on the scales of justice. The spot claimed that Resnick had done the bidding of trial lawyers and unions almost 70% of the time, in return for contributions. "But the chamber never produced any evidence to substantiate [the accusation]," according to the Brennan Center report.

The Chamber of Commerce raised \$4.2 million dollars of corporate money and refused to disclose the corporations who donated. Arnebeck along with the Alliance for Democracy sued, but it took four long years to get justice. Finally, in December 2004, the court ordered the Chamber of Commerce to disclose the names of

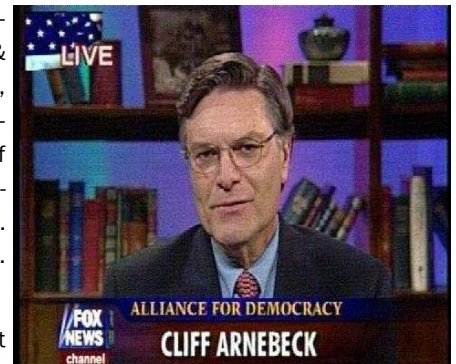
the corporations who donated or pay fines of \$25,000 a day. The Chamber released the names. Some of the corporations from Cincinnati who contributed are: Fifth Third Bank-\$100,000, Procter & Gamble-\$100,000, and AK Steel-\$100,000. The list of the other corporations is on www.ohiohonestelections.org

Cliff has not always been the activist fighter that he is now. He was born in Washington, D.C., one of three sons of a US Post Office Department official. Arnebeck received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Wesleyan and Juris Doctorate degree from Harvard. He has twice run for Congress, once as a Republican and once as a Democrat on election reform platform. He served as counsel to the Ohio Senate Republican Campaign Committee in the 1980s.

Currently, Cliff is chairman of the Ohio Honest Elections Campaign of the Alliance for Democracy. This campaign challenged the vote count in Ohio for George W. Bush in the fall of 2004.

Arnebeck also serves on the Board of Common

Cause/Ohio, as Chair of its Legal Affairs Committee, and he is on the National Advisory Board of Public Campaign.



Prior to the current public interest phase of his legal career Arnebeck served as counsel to the law firm of Chester, Willcox and Saxbe; partner in the firm Jones Day; General Counsel of Ohio Power Company; and in house attorney to Ohio Bell Telephone Company. He is currently an attorney in private practice. He lives in Upper Arlington, a suburb of Columbus and he and his wife, Sibley, have two daughters.

On Wednesday, May 11, Cliff Arnebeck will be speaking at AIR's 3rd annual dinner at the Vernon Manor.

AIR'S AGENDA FOR 2005

Three months into 2005 and Applied Information Resources is juggling a full plate of activities. Besides its facilitation of Community Issues Forums at Christ Church Cathedral and its consultation on the William Cooper Procter Fund, AIR's agenda includes work on campaign finance reform, a study on racial attitudes in Cincinnati, participation in a new affordable housing coalition, and planning assistance for a West End Church and for Community Legal Aid Services in northern Ohio. AIR's staff and board members are also contemplating better ways to inform citizens about local studies trends and pertinent data that will help in grappling with difficult and complex community issues.

These activities continue to be in sync with AIR's goal to be a research and information resource for citizens and civic, neighborhood, religious, and human service organizations, and to direct its expertise toward bringing about positive community decision making and public policies. Here follows brief descriptions of AIR's 2005 projects to date.

Common Cause and Campaign Reform

In continuing its work for Common Cause, Air finds itself broadening its focus from judicial reform to campaign finance reform in general. After testifying against the legislation passed by the Ohio General Assembly in the name of campaign reform last December, AIR staff spent time in February and March educating citizens about the negative features of this law. (For instance, it raises the limits for persons and PACs donating to campaigns for state legislative and state-wide offices from \$2,500 to \$10,000.) An initiative supported by Common Cause/Ohio and other state-wide groups is currently underway to repeal this law.

Racial Attitudes in Cincinnati

AIR is also editing a report that analyses the racial attitudes of African-American and white Cincinnatians. Conducted for the Wilder Foundation, this report constitutes a follow up to a racial attitude study AIR helped to draft for the Foundation in 1994. The 1994 research came at a time when a Ku Klux Klan cross on Fountain Square created racial tension, while the current project comes after the disturbances of 2001 caused by ten-

sion between the Cincinnati Police and many African-American citizens. Knowledge of the racial attitudes held by African-Americans and white Cincinnatians will help leaders and groups working to bridge the racial divide that still exists in this city.

Affordable Housing

Realizing the critical need for clean, safe, and affordable housing in Greater Cincinnati, AIR took up this issue again several years ago. AIR staff drafted a report for the Legal Aid Society on the viability of English Woods as a Public Housing Project, and last fall, Ed Burdell gave testimony as an expert witness in the case involving English Woods' tenants and the Metropolitan Housing Authority.

Working with the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless, MARCC (Metropolitan Area Religious Coalition of Cincinnati), the Legal Aid Society, the League of Women Voters, and other housing groups, AIR has also spent the past twelve months helping to launch a new coalition to advocate for affordable housing. A-HA (Advocates for Affordable Housing) is up and running, and it has already

(Continued on page 3)

CONTRIBUTIONS HELP AIR, INC. WITH COMMUNITY WORK

AIR depends on individual contributions to carry on its mission. Your contributions help AIR to work with community groups, bring citizens together to work on timely issues, and to form alliances among groups to accomplish a just society. We invite you to assist us as AIR takes on new community issues and challenges.

Make your tax-deductible checks payable to: AIR, Inc.

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The Need for Regional Approaches

The following is an excerpt from "the Social Areas of Cincinnati" a report documenting social patterns in the Cincinnati area from four census decades. Michael Maloney and Christopher Auffrey are the authors and Bill Woods assisted with some policy analysis. The full report is on www.socialareasofcincinnati.org

For over a decade, urbanologists such as David Rusk and Myron Orfield have examined cities and their regions while advocating regional approaches for managing the trends that are shaping these metro areas. While depleting trends such as central city population loss, the geographic concentration of poverty, and suburban sprawl, these researches also point to existing reforms such as regional tax sharing and policies that encourage the dispersal of affordable housing units throughout urban regions. Recently, Myron Orfield completed a report that includes both an analysis of the Cincinnati region and a series of regional policy recommendations.

First of all, problems that used to be associated with central city decline have taken root in the suburbs. Many of the older incorporated suburbs (often re-

ferred to as the "first ring suburbs") have suffered dramatic economic and social decline that place them at greater fiscal risk than Cincinnati. Meanwhile, the relatively unplanned growth of the outer suburbs creates escalating infrastructure cost, traffic gridlock, and air and lead pollution.

In reacting to these trends, citizens, civic groups, and certain public officials have taken steps to promote several regional responses. Citizens for Civic Renewal, a regional citizens' organization that was formed in the late 1990s, sponsored Myron Orfield's study. It currently builds supports for a regional tax sharing policy and an improved area-wide mass transit system.

In terms of dealing with affordable housing issues on a regional basis, officials from Hamilton County, the City of Cincinnati, and the Metropolitan Housing Authority met with other interested parties from 2003 - 2004 with the purpose of coming up with some common housing goals. This group, "The Housing Advisory Committee," issued its report in June with a series of recommendations that link housing

strategies with the deconcentration of poverty.

Many progressive policies and programs have been discussed here. Whatever path Cincinnati leaders take we emphasize the importance of using a multi-dimensional framework. Cincinnati has neighborhoods with various social, economic, and educational needs and a solitary program could not create lasting changes. Programs that support each other and the many demands on families are needed. As stated by Alex Kotlowitz in *There Are No Children Here*:

Many interventions may fail because we change only one thing at a time. We provide school counseling for children who are acting out, but do little to change the social and family environments that shape these children's behavior. We offer welfare recipients job training, but do nothing to increase demand for the skills they are acquiring. In short, some interventions show up as ineffective because we have changed only one factor when we need to change many to succeed.

(Continued from page 2)

testified effectively in hearings concerning the City's five-year housing plan for federal funding. A next step for AIR is to secure grant support to continue to research and publish information concerning the need for affordable housing in Greater Cincinnati.

Planning Assistance

Providing planning assis-

tance to community groups and agencies remains one of AIR's primary services. AIR is currently serving as a consultant on two such planning efforts. For over a year, AIR staff has been conducting a needs assessment for Community Legal Services, a multi-county Legal Aid Service in northern Ohio. After identifying emerging local issues that need the attention of Legal Aid attorneys, AIR is meshing the needs

assessment with a long-range plan for CLAS.

Meanwhile in Cincinnati. AIR is working with the leaders of St. Mark's in the West End. AIR is completing an assessment whether the Church should expand its successful pre-school day care program into a school that include kindergarten, and several primary grades. The school would be faith-based and provide a unique educational experience.

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We're on the web!

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*Public Policy and
Research*

**AIR's 3rd ANNUAL
DINNER To BE
HELD MAY 11**

On **Wednesday, May 11** Applied Information Resources will hold its third annual dinner. The dinner will begin at 5:30 at the **Vernon Manor Hotel**. Cliff Arnebeck, chairman of the Ohio Honest Elections Campaign of the Alliance for Democracy. And attorney for Common Cause will speak about the "Silencing of Democracy".

Also, AIR will be honoring John J. Gilligan, Marian Spencer and Mary Burke. For more information, call 381-4994

**WHO IS MY
NEIGHBOR?**

"Who is My Neighbor?" is a fair housing forum that will be held on **April 16, 2005** at First Unitarian Church, Linton Street from 9:00am to 2:00pm. Workshops and sessions include segregated living patterns in the Cincinnati metropolitan area, what is Section 8 and housing for the elderly, the role of faith based organizations as developers of affordable housing and enforcement of fair housing laws. The keynote speaker will be Sheryll Cashin, author of "The Failures of Integration: How Race and Class are Undermining the American Dream." There is no fee, but you must register.

For more information, call 513-381-4994.