

NEWS CLIPS

PROponents OF EVOLUTION CLAIM THEORY OMITTED FROM SCHOOLS

NEW YORK (IPS/GIN) — Proponents of evolution and champions of creationism are squaring off for new classroom battles after school officials in Kansas voted to delete virtually any reference to evolution from the state's science curriculum. At a high school in Topeka, teachers vowed to continue teaching science as before with the support of their superintendent. But, in another Kansas school outside Wichita, the principal approved the decision and hoped it would lead to elements of creationism — or at least skepticism toward the theory of evolution. While the decision by the Kansas Board of Education does not ban evolution in the classroom, it will not be included in tests taken by students, which may discourage teachers from spending time on the subject. Kansas is the latest state to face a clash between evolution and creationism that has rocked U.S. schools in recent years. Alabama, Arizona, New Mexico and Nebraska have all made changes that challenge the preeminence of evolution in the scientific curriculum. Other states such as Washington, New Hampshire and Tennessee, have considered but ultimately defeated similar bills. At the local level, dozens of school boards are trying to implement similar measures.

AMERICA'S LOVE AFFAIR WITH GUNS TOPIC OF EXHIBIT

NEW YORK (IPS) — Seemingly not a month has gone by this year without news of a mass shooting somewhere in the United States, so the latest exhibition by photographer Zed Nelson is nothing if not timely. In his New York exhibition "Gun Nation," the British photographer displays 100 black-and-white images featuring middle-class U.S. citizens with their guns. Instead of relying on the common belief that guns are used only in crime by gang youth or gangsters, Nelson said he wanted to illustrate how widespread gun ownership has become in the United States. "I wanted to show that guns effect people of all races and classes," Nelson said, noting that since 1960, more than 500,000 people have been shot and killed in streets and homes across the nation. In 1996, the last year for which statistics are available, more than 34,000 Americans died from gunshot wounds — including 18,100 suicides and more than 1,100 accidental shootings — according to the Journal of the American Medical Association.

CONFEDERATE FLAG BIG ISSUE IN SOUTH CAROLINA

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — The Democratic mayors of South Carolina's two largest cities said Friday the Confederate flag should be removed from the Statehouse and put in a granite memorial on the Capitol grounds. Columbia Mayor Bob Coble, who along with business leaders unsuccessfully sued the state in 1994 to force the flag down, and Charleston Mayor Joseph P. Riley Jr. made the proposal. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has sued over Mississippi's flag and wants tourists to boycott South Carolina. While opponents say the flag is a symbol of racism, supporters say it represents Southern heritage and South Carolinians' sacrifices in the Civil War. The idea of moving the flag to a memorial has been offered in the past, but this is the first time specific design plans for a monument have been made. Legislators, who have the sole power to remove the banner, have squashed similar ideas in the past. The \$1.5 million monument's 4 1/2-foot-tall granite wall would be engraved with the names of more than 20,000 South Carolina soldiers who died in the Civil War. The five flags of the Confederacy would fly on poles at the wall and at the center would be the flag now atop the Statehouse. Thirteen stars on the monument floor would represent the states of the Confederacy. "The monument we believe takes the Confederate battle flag away from those who have misappropriated it and puts it in a revered, moving and appropriate historical shrine," Riley said. South Carolina is the only state to fly the Confederate flag over its Statehouse, though parts of the flag, with its blue cross and white stars on a red background, are incorporated in the Georgia and Mississippi state flags.

Jackson may help free Iranian Jews

NEW YORK (AP) — The Rev. Jesse Jackson, who has often negotiated freedom for foreign-held captives, says he's now trying to help 13 Iranian Jews awaiting trial for espionage in Iran.

"We are working diligently to try to get 13 Jews freed from Iran. We hope that Iran will assume its rightful place in the family of nations," at the United Nations, Jackson said Sunday after delivering a guest sermon at a Manhattan church.

The Jews being held include at least one rabbi and several educators who were arrested in March as alleged

spies for Israel and the United States.

They could face the death penalty if convicted.

Both Israel and the United States have dismissed the spy charges as unfounded, and along with France, Germany and Amnesty International lodged protests.

Asked whether he was planning a trip to Iran, Jackson replied, "Well, we're trying — we're working on it."

In June, Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, reached out to Jackson for help after weeks of what Foxman called "quiet

diplomacy" failed to win the group's freedom.

On Aug. 19, Iran rebuked a call by the U.S. State Department for the Jews' release.

"It is as though Iran asks the U.S. to release, before trial, all those who are arrested in the U.S. on espionage charges," the official Islamic Republic News Agency quoted Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi as saying.

Iran has tried and executed 17 Iranian Jews for espionage in the past two decades, including two in 1997.

Jackson has worked to free captives before. He

negotiated with Yugoslavian President Slobodan Milosevic for the release of three American servicemen in May.

In 1984, he went to Syria and won the release of a Navy lieutenant whose jet was shot down during a raid over Syrian anti-aircraft positions in Lebanon.

Several months later, Jackson talked Fidel Castro into releasing 48 American and Cuban political prisoners. In 1990, he helped win the release from Iraq of more than 700 foreign women and children detained as human shields against an American military attack.

Riley pushing more after-school programs

ATLANTA (AP) — Meaningful after-school programs could prevent violent tragedies like Columbine's deadly shootings, Education Secretary Richard W. Riley said last week, but he stopped short of advocating tougher policies against schoolhouse bullying and teasing.

"When you look at behavior issues, those are local decisions best made on an individual basis," Riley said as he celebrated a new national after-school partnership at a stop on his back-to-school bus tour. "Something as serious as firearms is a different matter."

Riley, who's touring about four schools a day as he travels through the South this week, stopped in Centennial Park to rally a crowd of 2,000 behind boosting after-school programs.

A new survey, released last week, showed 75 percent of adults think after-school programs could have prevented the Colorado high school's shooting rampage that has become the symbol of U.S. school violence.

In the survey of 1,100 adults, 92 percent also believed there should be some type of organized activity or place for the nation's 15 million latchkey kids to go after school.

Some 86 percent said after-school programs were a necessity for their community. For all the good these programs are thought to do, nearly two-thirds of the surveyed adults said such programs just don't exist.

"Schools might close down at 3 p.m., but children's minds don't," Riley said. "That's why we're asking Congress to triple funds for after-school spending from \$200 million to \$600 million."

The survey, which had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percent, was funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and JCPenney, which are helping the Education Department with a new initiative to boost after-school programs nationwide.

Elsewhere on his tour Wednesday, Riley encouraged children to stick to their lessons and avoid

conflict.

"We need to be interested in working together, just as you all are working together, trusting each other and loving each other," Riley told first- and second-graders in an innovative arts program at Harmony Leland Elementary School in Mableton, Ga., a small community west of Atlanta. "It's a much more powerful force in working toward school discipline."

An Illinois teen who was bullied by older schoolmates recently shot himself to death in his basement. High school administrators have vowed to punish the bullies.

Riley supports federal mandatory suspensions for kids who bring firearms to school, but his support for harsh penalties for students who bully or tease is not as automatic.

"I can't imagine any child bringing a gun or any other firearm to school and not getting disciplined," he said. "It's national law and it's working well."

Marion Bledsoe, a parent in Mableton, Ga., said discipline is best left in the hands of the school board.

"You're dealing with individual people and individual situations and those are the people who will understand where the needs are," said the mother of two high-school students.

But Farah Tabet, a fourth-grade student, said there is something Riley can do to help kids.

"He should visit more schools," she said after showing him her classmates' art projects. "Maybe that could make students want to do better in their classes."

Census

(Continued from Page 2) counted," Prewitt added. "So there is no way we will get to 100 percent. Our best estimate right now is that we are going to run harder to stay in place."

That running will use up a lot of resources, according to Prewitt, who offered the following statistics:

- The forms being mailed out will fill nearly 700 tractor-trailers.

- Printing the forms will use 14,000 tons of recycled paper and 15,000 gallons of ink.

- There are 85 different

questionnaires, including the long and short forms and special forms for group quarters, military bases, ships, homeless shelters, soup kitchens and the homeless.

- Forms will be available in English, Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese and Tagalog, which is spoken in the Philippines.

- Printing began March 17 and will continue nonstop until Jan. 21.

- Addressing the forms and inserting them in envelopes will continue until March 1.

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