

National News

Independence co-signers to convene July 2-4

It was announced on May 31 that a convention will be held in Philadelphia to co-sign the Declaration of Independence. The conference is sponsored by the Baptist Ministers Conference and the AME Preacher Meeting of Philadelphia, the International Civil Rights Movement, the Student Non-Violent Constitutional Committee, and Students for Educational and Economic Development. The steering committee is chaired by the Rev. James L. Bevel and co-chaired by the Rev. Marshall L. Shepard, attorney Almanina Barbour, and Amelia Platts Boynton Robinson. The executive director is Dennis Speed.

As Reverend Bevel put it, "With the right of citizenship and the sovereignty of our nation being undermined from within and without, it is imperative that we as citizens purify ourselves and clarify our Declaration of Independence. The fundamental truth captured in the Declaration of Independence is universal. As the 1960s civil rights movement asserted these principles and broke down the walls of injustice, in the face of today's national and international chaos and crises, we must reassert those principles of the Declaration of Independence once again."

New York voters reject 'gay' agenda for schools

Following the ouster earlier this year of New York City Schools Chancellor Joseph Fernandez by parents angry at his sponsorship of the pro-homosexual "Children of the Rainbow" curriculum, advocates of "alternative lifestyles" received another setback in citywide School Board elections May 4. A record high turnout of 425,000 voters gave victory to more than 60 candidates who campaigned on a "pro-family issues" platform. In the Bronx, voters returned to office a number of School Board officials who had been thrown out by Fernandez.

The elections had turned into a pitched battle between supporters and opponents of Fernandez's New Age agenda, which included the promotion of sexual promiscuity under the guise of "AIDS prevention," and the teaching of homosexuality to children as young as first grade.

The opposition to the Rainbow Curriculum was spearheaded by a loose alliance of Protestants, Jews, and Roman Catholics, including the New York Catholic Archdiocese. The coalition distributed 500,000 copies of a voters guide, drafted by the Christian Coalition, which reviewed the candidates' positions. Staten Island Rabbi Saul Eisner, chairman of the Community Resources Corp., a Jewish coalition organized to defeat the homosexual lobby, told this news service, "I can't conceive of any Jewish organization that would put these camps' 'social mores' ahead of real education."

Falsehoods uncovered in ATF's Waco affidavit

"Unsettling Questions in Probe of Waco" is the title of a June 1 commentary in the *Washington Times*, by free-lance writer Thomas Fiddleman and David Kopel of the Firearms Research Project and the Cato Institute. The original federal raid on David Koresh's Branch Davidian compound "never should have occurred," they wrote. The original affidavit was procured by an inexperienced Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms agent, Davy Aguilera, and the affidavit "failed to establish probable cause. . . . Some parts of the affidavit were plainly false. For example, Agent Aguilera told the federal magistrate that Mr. Koresh had possession of a 'clandestine' firearms publication."

"The 'clandestine' publication was *Shotgun News*, a national newspaper that carries want-ads by gun retailers and wholesalers. The newspaper is sold at newsstands all over the country, and to tens of thousands of subscribers. With a circulation of 150,000, it's no more clandestine than the *New Republic* . . ."

"Why did the [ATF] think Mr. Koresh was violent, thereby justifying its perpetrating an armed assault to present a simple

search warrant? The affidavit contained an allegation that Mr. Koresh had told a social worker that he was a messenger of God and that, when the time came, the violence in Waco would make the Los Angeles riots pale in comparison. The statement, however, was supposedly made on April 6, 1992—three and a half weeks before the L.A. riots began. Apparently somebody lied about Mr. Koresh's 'threat,' and the magistrate didn't notice."

As outcry mounts, Texas court stays execution

The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals voted 5-4 to stay Gary Graham's execution for 30 days on June 2. The ruling was the result of an international mobilization based upon his strong proofs of innocence. Only three weeks earlier, on May 12, the state had executed Leonel Herrera despite extraordinary evidence of innocence.

Graham's lawyers asked for the stay of execution on four grounds, two of which were related to Graham's new evidence of innocence. While four of the nine judges of the Texas Court voted to hear the new evidence, the relief granted was more narrow. The court said it would stay Gary Graham's execution until the U.S. Supreme Court rules on the case of *Johnson v. Texas*, which challenges the constitutionality of Texas's refusal to consider "youth" a mitigating factor in imposing capital punishment. Were he guilty, Graham would have been a minor (17) when he committed the crime. The court's order states: "This petition represents the worst case scenario—the possibility that a person might be unconstitutionally punished by the legal system; that is, the appellant could be put to death for something which is, within 30 days, determined to be unconstitutional. With this much at stake, the state will wait 30 days." The U.S. Supreme Court must rule on *Johnson v. Texas* before June 30.

The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles met the same day, but took no action after the court's stay. The board has reportedly received thousands of calls since April 6. The very fact that the board met is also due

Briefly

to the mobilization: Since the U.S. Supreme Court declared in *Herrera* that state clemency proceedings were the remedy for cases where new evidence of innocence was obtained, the Texas board and Gov. Ann Richards, who says she lacks the power to grant clemency without the board's authorization, have been broadly attacked. Calls continue to Gov. Ann Richards to grant clemency at (512) 463-2000 as well as to the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles at (512) 406-5867.

USDA disputes EPA's methyl bromide phaseout

A dispute is building within the Clinton administration over the Environmental Protection Agency's mandated phaseout of methyl bromide in January 2000. That target is too early and too drastic, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. There is no scientific evidence that the widely used chemical depletes the ozone layer, and there is no replacement developed for the pesticide and fumigant.

Nancy Ragsdale, who directs the USDA's National Pesticide Impact Assessment Program, said of the EPA action: "We would prefer better science before such drastic action is taken." It will cost farmers \$1.6 billion to replace methyl bromide. USDA environmental toxicologist Willis Wheeler stated: "There really isn't good solid evidence of methyl bromide's ozone depletion potential. This order could be off by an order of magnitude."

Science panels debunk environmental frauds

More than 200 scientists, intellectuals, and journalists met over May 24-25 in Washington, D.C. for a conference on "Scientific Integrity in the Public Policy Process," to examine the impact of scientific frauds on science, public policy, and legislation. Some of the world's top experts in various scientific fields debunked the most popular scares in the press today, including global

warming, ozone depletion, acid rain, nuclear winter, radon, and cancer risks from chemicals. The last panel was on the role of the media in spreading lies and disinformation. The conference was co-sponsored by the International Institute of George Mason University and the Science and Environmental Policy Project.

It was clear from the presentations and discussions that there is an upheaval in the scientific community against the environmental frauds that have been perpetrated in the past several decades. At the same time, the speakers on the media panel emphasized that the most prominent newspapers and magazines in the country, have decided to shift their coverage of environmental issues to reflect some scientific truth, not just the claims of the environmentalists.

Separatist Lombard League called model for U.S.

Thomas Fleming, editor of the Rockford Institute's *Chronicles* magazine, called for setting up a U.S. separatist movement along the lines of Italy's Lombard League and organized a conference along the same theme in March.

Fleming, who is avidly pro-Confederate, wrote in the February issue of *Chronicles* that "the reality of life in America" is "the rioting and rampages perpetuated by an underclass that consists, for the most part, of unassimilated minorities. . . . There are only two alternatives for this continental empire that has never been a real nation: either we find the means to decentralize decision-making and restore authority to the old institutions of family and town and country (and even state), or else we lapse into a multifaceted civil war of blacks against Hispanics against whites against blacks against Jews."

He called for the creation of a movement devoted to "political devolution," privatization, and "protection of the national interest." "If there is no movement or party willing to embrace a Leghist program," he wrote, "then one needs to be formed, and if that is impossible, my advice is to stockpile ammunition and invest in bullet-proof doors and shutters."

● **DOUGLAS WILDER**, governor of Virginia, called for "forgiveness of debt" for Africa to allow it to develop, in a speech on May 25, at the second African-African-American Conference in Gabon. Wilder has invited 20 African leaders to attend the Southern Governors Conference in Richmond in mid-September.

● **NANCY SPANNAUS**, political associate of Lyndon LaRouche, announced on May 28 that she has officially qualified to be on the ballot for governor of Virginia this fall. Spannaus will run as an independent against former state attorney general Democrat Mary Sue Terry. Spannaus is heading a slate of some 20 candidates under the banner, "Bring Justice to Virginia."

● **HIV INFECTION** rates have made a big jump among Texas women who have given birth, going from 0.9 per 1,000 in 1991 to 1.14 per 1,000 in 1992, a 27% rise. The figures are based on random blood samples drawn from newborns by the Texas Department of Health. The testing is anonymous, so there is no way to inform the women that they, and possibly their infants, carry the HIV virus.

● **A CLASSIFIED CIA** report says that Kuwait may have "cooked the books" on the alleged Iraqi plot to assassinate George Bush, according to the *Boston Globe* on May 28. The May 13 analysis by the CIA's Counter Terrorism Center says that the Kuwaitis may have used an unrelated Iraqi weapons-smuggling operation to try to puff a threat to western interests.

● **FLORIDA** state legislators approved a bill to cut back mandatory sentencing, by rewriting the state's 10-year-old guidelines on May 28. Attorney General Janet Reno, a former Dade County district attorney, has pointed to Florida's sentencing laws as an example of an ineffective policy which is forcing the state to release violent criminals because of prison overcrowding.