

Shreveport Sex Ed Case Surprises Both Sides

SHREVEPORT, LA — After making national headlines on March 18 by banning two abstinence curricula in the Shreveport public schools, Louisiana District Court Judge Frank H. Thaxton III announced on April 7 that his original ruling had been misunderstood and that he was requiring that some words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs be deleted because of their "religious" references and what he considered "medical inaccuracies."

The allegedly offending references involve some words on 19 pages out of 60 in *Sex Respect* and 13 pages out of 93 in *Facing Reality*.

It is not clear how the objectionable words and sentences will be deleted, perhaps by lining them out with black magic marker before the books are put in the hands of the students.

Facing Reality and *Sex Respect* were developed with federal funds for use in public schools and contain no reference to God, the Bible, church, or any religious or moral precepts. They have met with great success in changing teens' attitudes toward premarital sex, and are being used in approximately 3,000 public schools across the nation.

Groups such as Planned Parenthood see the success of abstinence courses as a threat. Planned Parenthood of Jacksonville, FL, has another lawsuit pending against the Duval County School Board in an attempt to ban the abstinence course called *Teen Aid*. (See *Education Reporter*, July 1992.)

This test case was brought by Alyson Jones, a lawyer who admits Planned Parenthood helped her prepare the case. She is now furious that Judge Thaxton has agreed that the texts, *Sex Respect* and *Facing Reality*, can be used (with deletions). She is threatening another lawsuit.

Judge Thaxton's prior ruling of March 18 stated that certain words and passages in these texts include religious beliefs and subjective moral judgments and therefore cannot be taught in Louisiana schools.

For example, he objected to the following statements: "Human reproduction has a higher meaning than animal reproduction . . . People are more than a higher kind of animal . . . People have mental and spiritual parts in their makeup that even man's best friend doesn't have."

The judge also objected to the use of the word "spirit," accepting one witness's assertion that it is impossible to use this word except in a religious sense. The School Board is appealing the ruling.

(For details of the trial, see *Education Reporter*, February, 1993.)



STATE OF TENNESSEE SENATE BILL NO. 79

AN ACT To amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 6, Part 10, relative to the free dissemination of information in the classroom.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated Title 49, Chapter 6, Part 10, is amended by adding a new section, as follows:

Section 49-6-1011. (a) No teacher or administrator in a local education agency shall be prohibited from using or reading from during the course of educational instruction or from posting in a public school building, classroom or event, any of the following or any excerpts or portions of the following:

- 1) the national motto;
- 2) the national anthem;
- 3) the Pledge of Allegiance;
- 4) the Constitution of Tennessee
- 5) the Declaration of Independence;
- 6) the writings, speeches, documents, and proclamations of the founders, presidents of the United States, or the founders or governors of Tennessee;
- 7) opinions of the United States and Tennessee Supreme Courts; and
- 8) acts of the United States Congress and acts of the Tennessee General Assembly.

(b) The list of historically significant or venerated documents, writings or records set out in subsection (a) of this section shall not be construed to be exclusive and the doctrine of ejusdem generis [of the same kind, class, or nature] shall not be applied to prohibit the use, reading or posting of other such documents, writings or records.

(c) the use, reading or posting of the types of documents, writings and records authorized by this section shall be undertaken for educational purposes only and shall not be used to promote or establish any religion or religious belief.

(d) There shall be no content-based censorship of American or Tennessee history or heritage based on any religious references contained in such documents, writings or records.

SECTION 2. If any provision of this act or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to that end the provisions of this act are declared to be severable.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.

Tennessee Law Prohibits Censoring God in Classroom

NASHVILLE, TN — A new Tennessee law signed by the Governor April 12 affirms that it is acceptable for teachers in the public school classroom to use historical documents that mention God.

The bill's sponsor, state Sen. Douglas Henry (D), said that the law is a result of so much debate today over the appropriateness of mentioning God in public schools and what federal court decisions on the subject actually mean. This law is designed to prevent the censorship of any religious references from historical materials.

The law states that it "protects dissemination of patriotic information in schools" by making it written public policy that teachers can use the following historical documents just as they are written: the National Anthem, the Pledge of Allegiance (which proclaims us "one nation under God"), the Declaration of Independence, the writings, speeches, documents and proclamations of the Founding Fathers, Presidents of the United States and governors of Tennessee, U.S. and Tennessee Supreme Court decisions, and acts of the U.S. Congress and the Tennessee General Assembly.

Those opposing the bill question its constitutionality, claiming that it violates the First Amendment and the separation of church and state. They are suspicious of the

law and suggest it may be a subtle way to bring back prayer and Bible reading to the schools.

David Shepherd, president of the Association for Families, said the legislation was drafted because of the concern that Tennessee schools might use textbooks that exclude "references to religious events and figures in history."

"Increasingly, more and more are disappearing from textbooks," Shepherd said. "Couple that with the confusion, in fact fear, that exists with teachers with what they can and can't do in the classroom. We thought it would help clear the air a bit. It is not like prayer and Bible reading in the classroom. It is not like that at all."

Some say the legislation is attacking a problem that does not exist. American Civil Liberties Union director Hedy Weinberg opposes the bill because she claims that "what the bill is suggesting is already practiced in public schools." She says that she believes the intent of the bill is to "muddy the waters" so that principals and teachers are unclear of what is required under the separation of church and state doctrine.

Weinberg also expresses her concern that there is a hidden agenda. Sen. Henry said there is no "hidden intent" in the bill, and claims it "expresses the sentiments of most Tennesseans."

How Report Cards Are Changing

NORTHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS - NORTHVILLE,
MICHIGAN ALPS STUDENT PROGRESS REPORT
1991-1993



NAME _____

TEACHER _____

GRADE: 3 4 5

	MEETS EXPECTATIONS	NEEDS DEVELOPMENT	NO ASSESSMENT AT THIS TIME
REPORTING PERIOD I			
1. Uses Investigating Skills			
2. Uses Creative Thinking Skills			
3. Uses Problem Solving Strategies			
4. Understands Bloom's Taxonomy			
5. Demonstrates Task Commitment			
6. Demonstrates Positive Affective Attitudes			
7. Elective _____			
REPORTING PERIOD II			
1. Uses Investigating Skills			
2. Uses Creative Thinking Skills			

EDUCATION BRIEFS

The Wisconsin Education Association defeated the "choice" candidate for state school superintendent. Linda Cross, who ran on a school-choice platform, was defeated by union-supported school superintendent John T. Benson 53% to 47%. To assure that Mrs. Cross would not have an opportunity to alter the state's educational status quo, the teachers' union spent approximately \$200,000 in a campaign against her. One of their tactics was to run an attack ad in which a grandmotherly figure told viewers: "Linda Cross wants to use your tax dollars to help rich parents pay tuition at private schools!"

A bill is now before the Virginia General Assembly to make kindergarten compulsory for all children who reach their fifth birthdays by September 30 of a school year. The requirement can be met by registering a 5-year-old in either a public, private, or parochial school. Superintendent of Public Instruction Joe Spagnolo has said that the State Department of Education wants 4-year-olds under the compulsory attendance law by 1996. That is when a proposed new Common Core of Learning is to go into effect, based on "learner outcomes." David Elkind, a Tufts professor of child studies and author of 12 books on early-childhood education, disagrees with the bill, saying that, "there is no evidence that such early instruction has lasting benefits, and considerable evidence that it can do lasting harm."

Two Arizona elementary school teachers have put together a rodeo program for school children to counter anti-rodeo propaganda being spread by "animal rights" activists. Penny Conway and Nancy Parker call their program Rodeo Education and Children (REACH). Their goal is to teach children that rodeo is a worthwhile sport. The program emphasizes the humane treatment of rodeo animals, and promotes rodeo as a patriotic and positive reflection of American heritage. They have presented the program to thousands of Arizona school children with great success.

"America's public schools have strayed from curriculums that teach morals and character development," William Kilpatrick, author of *Why Johnny Can't Tell Right from Wrong: Moral Illiteracy and the Case for Character Education*, told Alabama's Eagle Forum during the recent annual leadership conference. He suggests that students don't know the difference between right and wrong and says that, even if they did, there is not a lot of incentive for them to do the right thing. He discourages "decision-making" curriculums in which no answers are right or wrong. He encourages character and moral development curriculums which teach children to practice good behavior until it becomes second nature.

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Superintendent Slays Good Dragon

COFFEE COUNTY, TN — The *Pumsy* self-esteem program is not likely to resurface in the Coffee County school system any time soon, given the strong opposition of the local school board. The board has served notice that its approval will be required before *Pumsy*, *DUSO*, or any similar programs can be reintroduced. It also prohibited the practice of guidance counselors going into the classrooms, thereby banning the group therapy approach that is a key element of such programs.

Superintendent of Schools Bobby Cummins pulled the plug on *Pumsy* in October in response to widespread public criticism of the program. Parents had objected that the program employed hypnotic techniques, promoted secular humanism and moral relativism, invaded family privacy, and undermined parental authority. They also complained that they had not been properly notified about their children's involvement in the program and that their children had been instructed to keep their participation secret. *Pumsy* was introduced into the county schools, without board approval, in 1988.

In private conversation with parents last fall, Superintendent Cummins acknowledged the validity of many of their complaints and expressed his own disapproval of *Pumsy*. But his explanation of the decision to discontinue the program differed markedly. In a lengthy report that appeared in the November 4 issue of the *Manchester Times*, Cummins argued that the *Pumsy* program "has benefited many students. It does not hypnotize children and it does not teach atheism. Children are not taught the concepts of 'Humanism' or the 'New Age' philosophy."

The superintendent implied that programs such as *Pumsy* are necessary because of inadequacies of parents. "Many students in public schools today need attention to improve their self-esteem," he wrote. "In many cases, schools are called upon to provide education to our youth about values and responsibility because many homes have not done their part."

Cummins also insisted that his decision to cancel *Pumsy* was due to the negative



publicity surrounding the program and not to its defects. "Anytime parents become concerned about any school program, the value of it will most likely be reduced," he explained. "There have been many untrue comments made by people who are unaware of how the program is used and taught."

Cummins also announced his determination to find a replacement for *Pumsy*. "The intention of our counselors, supervisors and principals is to search for alternative materials to use in place of the *Pumsy* program," he declared. Such materials, of course, will have to have board approval, and that, according to Crystal Renfrow, a parent who led the opposition to *Pumsy*, is not likely, given the present makeup of the board.

Renfrow discovered the existence of the *Pumsy* program when her 2nd grade son came home from Hillsboro Elementary School one day last year complaining about being in his "mud mind" (as opposed to his "clear" or "sparkler" mind — terminology used in the *Pumsy* program to describe moods or states of consciousness). Pressed to explain what he meant, her son reluctantly revealed details of the program, repeatedly confiding that he wasn't supposed to talk about it. The boy had even protested in class that his mother would not approve of the dragons and wizards used in the program, only to have the teacher tell him to "shut up and sit down." The teacher had further advised the youth that he need not mention the program to his parents because a letter would be sent home explaining it.

Mrs. Renfrow claims that "some of the teachers gave [her son] a real hard time"

Pumsy the Dragon, a hand puppet, became a national celebrity on April 3 as a result of an Associated Press wire service story and CNN television coverage. *Pumsy* was identified by the AP report as a "bluish-green lady dragon" with long eyelashes and large nostrils who comes into public school classrooms to foster self-esteem and "help students think clearly."

The curriculum called *Pumsy* was designed by Timberline Press Inc in Eugene, OR, for use in the early elementary grades. Introduced in 1987, it is claimed to be used in 16,000 elementary schools around the country. *Pumsy* is extremely controversial because parents believe it is psychological, not academic, and uses guided imagery and other techniques of the New Age religion.

Last year, parents challenged *Pumsy* in Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Kansas, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina. They believe that the *Pumsy* curriculum undermines parental authority by telling children to look to the dragon for advice and friendship instead of to their parents or other moral authority. Parents question the concept that a puppet or a dragon should be the source of teaching children how to "think clearly." ■

after she removed him from the program and began voicing her opposition to *Pumsy*. Though confident that *Pumsy* will not reappear in the county schools, she insists that some schools in the area still use *Pumsy* despite school officials' denials.

"The city schools are teaching it, but they will not acknowledge it," Mrs. Renfrow charges. "They're calling it something else, but kids are still coming home talking about *Pumsy* the dragon and *DUSO* the dolphin." She maintains that city school officials have devised a devious technique for responding to parental protests. "They drag out the complaint process" until the eight-week program has concluded, she says, and then argue that complaints are no longer valid because the program has ended. ■

School Tax Riles Parents

CHARLES TOWN, WV — Citizens in Jefferson County, WV, will vote on May 8 on whether to rollback the rate of an "excess school levy" (tax) which had narrowly passed on Nov. 3, 1992. The year-long controversy over the excess school levy caused the formation of a very active parents group with broad concerns about school policies and process.

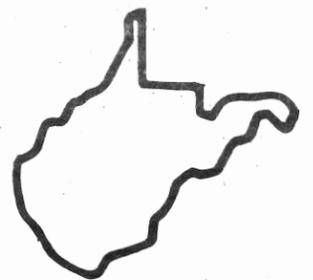
Concerned Parents of Blue Ridge (CPBR) originally organized in February 1992 to fight a redistricting of elementary school students. From the beginning, their overall goals were to improve the schools and to protect students' and parents' rights. CPBR pursued a number of issues with the school board, including bus transportation, discipline and corporal punishment policies, and the age of kindergarten entrance. Last July, the school board decided to place the renewal of the excess levy on the ballot in the November 1992 election. CPBR opposed the levy in an effort to encourage the school board to be more accountable. CPBR maintained that continuation of the excess levy at the same rate

would actually mean a dramatic increase in actual property taxes because of the reassessment of county properties that was then in progress.

At the school board meeting the evening before the November election, area business leaders and other concerned citizens requested the school board to retract the ballot item and hold a special election at a later date so that the ballot could be re-written with a roll-back provision and so that the voters could be adequately informed. The school board refused, asserting that it already had the power to roll back the rates, if necessary.

The excess levy passed narrowly on Nov. 3. However, after the election, under pressure from business leaders and the County Commission, the school board sought a legal opinion as to whether the school board had the authority to roll-back the levy rates. In February this year, the State Tax Commissioner issued an opinion that the school board did not have the authority to roll back the levy rate.

In March, the school board voted to



hold a special election on May 8 to put specific roll-back language in the law. The school district's superintendent, whose contract expires July 1, requested the school board not to renew his contract.

The members of CPBR believe that the long and complicated battle over the excess levy has had many good results in addition to keeping taxes down. CPBR co-chairman Edie Stanley puts it this way: "Parents in the area have learned what is happening in the public schools, school board members learned that they must be accountable to the public for their actions and policies, and there is a new general awareness that the public school system works best when parents are involved." ■

Survey given to all 7th through 12th Grade Students in an Ohio Public School District

DIRECTIONS: Please enter the date, your grade level and your sex. DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME. Be honest with your answers — nobody will know whose survey this is. Mark your answers on the answer sheet only. Thank you.

2. On the average how much alcohol do you drink at a time?
 - a. I don't drink alcoholic beverages
 - b. One or two drinks
 - c. Three or four drinks
 - d. Five or six drinks
 - e. Seven or more
5. How many of your friends do you feel have a drinking problem?
 - a. None
 - b. 1 or 2
 - c. 3 or 4
 - d. 5 to 10
 - e. more than 10
6. How many people in your family drink alcoholic beverages?
 - a. None
 - b. 1
 - c. 2
 - d. 3
 - e. more than three
7. How many people in your family do you feel have a drinking problem?
 - a. None
 - b. 1
 - c. 2
 - d. 3
 - e. more than three
8. What are your parents' and guardians' rules about drinking?
 - a. It is never permitted
 - b. It is frowned upon
 - c. It is permitted only on special occasions
 - d. It is overlooked or ignored
 - e. It is permitted whenever I want
10. How old were you when you first tried an illegal drug?
 - a. I have never tried an illegal drug
 - b. 17 or older
 - c. Between 14 and 16
 - d. Between 11 and 13
 - e. 10 or younger
12. How many of your friends use illegal drugs at least once a week?
 - a. None
 - b. 1 or 2
 - c. 3 or 4
 - d. 5 to 10
 - e. more than 10
14. As far as you know, how many people in your family use illegal drugs?
 - a. None
 - b. 1
 - c. 2
 - d. 3
 - e. more than 3
17. How often do you get depressed?
 - a. I am never depressed
 - b. I get mildly depressed from time to time
 - c. I get depressed about once a month
 - d. I get depressed quite a lot
 - e. It seems like I am always depressed
18. What gets you depressed the most?
 - a. Nothing really
 - b. School
 - c. My home
 - d. Things about myself
 - e. Everything
19. How often have you thought about suicide?
 - a. It has never crossed my mind
 - b. It has crossed my mind, but only a couple of times
 - c. I have thought about it several times
 - d. I have planned to commit suicide
 - e. I have tried to commit suicide
20. Regarding physical abuse
 - a. I have never been physically punished or abused
 - b. I have been physically punished but have never been physically abused
 - c. I have been beaten by an adult for no reason once or twice
 - d. I have been physically abused several times
 - e. I get physically abused regularly
21. Regarding sexual abuse
 - a. I have never been sexually abused
 - b. Someone else in my family has been sexually abused
 - c. I have felt in danger of being sexually abused before, but nothing physical ever happened
 - d. I have been sexually abused once or twice
 - e. I have been sexually abused more than a few times
23. I would describe my family as
 - a. Happy, few problems
 - b. Occasional arguments, but fairly normal
 - c. There seem to be problems, but no one talks much about them
 - d. Generally unhappy, regular arguments
 - e. In crisis, regular loud arguments and violence
24. The thing that causes the biggest problem in our house is
 - a. Nothing really
 - b. Problems between me and my brothers and/or sisters
 - c. Problems between my parent(s) and me
 - d. Problems between my parent(s) and my brother(s) or sister(s)
 - e. My parents just don't get along
25. Regarding sexual intercourse
 - a. I have never had sexual intercourse
 - b. I have had sexual intercourse with one person
 - c. I have had sexual intercourse with two or three different people
 - d. I have had sexual intercourse with four or five different people
 - e. I have had sexual intercourse with more than five different people
26. How old were you when you first had sexual intercourse?
 - a. I have never had sexual intercourse
 - b. 17 or older
 - c. Between 14 and 16
 - d. Between 11 and 13
 - e. 10 or younger
27. What kind of birth control do you use?
 - a. I don't have sex
 - b. The pill
 - c. Condoms
 - d. Diaphragm or I.U.D.
 - e. The rhythm method or no birth control
29. Regarding teen pregnancy

Girls

 - a. I have never been pregnant
 - b. I was pregnant but had a miscarriage
 - c. I was pregnant but had an abortion
 - d. I was pregnant but gave the baby up for adoption
 - e. I was pregnant and kept the baby
35. What one thing could this school district do to better intervene when these problems occur?
 - a. Increase individual counseling
 - b. Run support groups or group counseling
 - c. Work with parents and students together to resolve problems
 - d. Utilize community resources and agencies more
 - e. It isn't the schools' job to intervene in these problems

Should First-Graders Use Calculators?

ATLANTA, GA — Do calculators belong in the first grade? That's the question being asked by many parents as calculators make their way into Georgia elementary schools.

"I certainly don't have a problem with my children learning new technology. But I do believe that the basics should be firmly grounded first," says Karen Mahurin of Cobb County. Her first-grade son was introduced to calculators in his first-grade math class at Big Shanty Elementary School. She only learned of the new curriculum when her son brought home a math page that said "addition" on one side and "addition with calculators" on the other.

Another page on the worksheet that Kevin Mahurin brought home, instructed him to color a picture of a calculator and to report to the school how many calculators his family had in their home.

Fearing that the mental skills of the children would suffer, Mrs. Mahurin approached the assistant administrator with her concerns. She was told that calculators are "a part of everyday life, so children should be exposed to them." She was also told that the use of calculators was purely supplemental.

The assistant administrator gave Mrs. Mahurin a written overview of the first-grade math curriculum along with the Cobb County policy which states that, "Calculators need to be integrated into the curriculum in a way that helps children choose an appropriate way to compute. Children should not become dependent on calculators or mental computation or paper/pencil computation. They should learn to choose which method would work best for the situa-

tion on which they are working."

"I wonder which one most 7-year-olds would choose!" counters Mrs. Mahurin who tries to explain to her son why "he should depend on his own computer — his brain."

Mrs. Mahurin is concerned that her son, who is very good in math and really enjoys it, will be robbed of the joy he has in solving problems by himself. "How will we ever produce the Einsteins of this generation?" asks Mrs. Mahurin.

The use of calculators in elementary grades is spreading to other Atlanta area schools as well, but is meeting with resistance from students who feel using calculators is like cheating. "It takes all the fun away," says Parker Inscoe, a 2nd-grader at Burruss Elementary School. "It would be like cheating on a math test." Other students, like Ian Holljes, choose not to use calculators because, "I can think it up in my mind faster."

Though parents and students may be skeptical, math teachers in general are in favor of the use of calculators because they are "necessary to function in society" and can help students "tackle more interesting real-life problems."

Mrs. Mahurin says she does not have a problem with the school or the teacher, but rather the curriculum as a whole. "It's a good school," she said. "My opposition is over the curriculum issue."

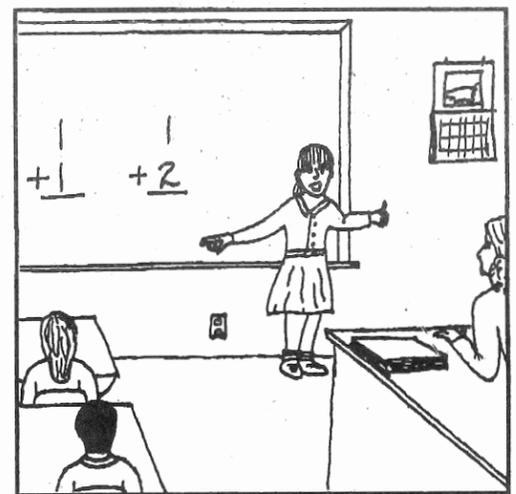
Fountain Elementary teacher Amy Latham plans to introduce her kindergartners to calculators after they have learned their numbers and counting. She said it would be more for enrichment than instruc-

tion. "It'll be an opportunity for them to touch it and explore it in a way that they wouldn't at home," Mrs. Latham said. But Mrs. Mahurin argues that if calculators are introduced to children at too early an age, they will begin to rely on them before they have had a chance to master the basic skills.

Calculators are not only being used in the classroom, but are

increasingly used on standardized tests. It is expected that college-entrance and placement exams will soon allow, or even require, calculators.

"It's a house of cards," claims Mrs. Mahurin. "The use of calculators may make the test scores go up, but the question we should be asking is, do the students really understand what they're doing?" ■



"Wait a minute. I need to ask my calculator."

One-Fifth in U.S. have a Sexual Disease

New Report Shows Women Suffer More than Men

WASHINGTON, DC — One out of five Americans suffers from a sexual disease. According to a study released on March 31 by the Alan Guttmacher Institute, 56 million people in the United States are infected with a sexually transmitted disease, and more than half of those sufferers have sexual diseases that are incurable. At current rates, at least one in four Americans will contract a sexually transmitted disease (STD) at some point in their lives.

Teenagers account for 25% of all STDs. The experts have identified 55 different sexual diseases. The new Guttmacher study lists the most common as Chlamydia, Trichomoniasis, Gonorrhea, H.P.V., Genital Herpes, Hepatitis B, and Syphilis. These are not diseases that, like AIDS, are concentrated in certain high risk groups. They infect those who don't think of themselves as promiscuous and have been practicing what is called "safe sex."

Fifteen years ago, it was commonly thought that antibiotics had erased our worry about venereal diseases, but cases of syphilis have doubled in the last ten years and penicillin-resistant cases of gonorrhea are increasing.

The study reported that sexually transmitted diseases have the greatest effect on women. According to the report, about one in nine women aged 15 to 44 is treated for Pelvic Inflammatory Disease during her reproductive years.

The report estimates that each year up to 150,000 women become infertile as a result of sexually transmitted diseases. "If current trends continue," the report warns, "one-half of all women who were 15 in 1970 will have had P.I.D. (Pelvic Inflammatory Disease), which causes infertility, by the year 2000."

The Guttmacher study reported that pregnant women can transmit venereal diseases to their children during pregnancy. Complications during pregnancy include miscarriage, stillbirth, premature delivery,

Common Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Chlamydia

4 million cases a year.

Bacterial infection acquired chiefly through vaginal or anal intercourse. Symptoms include genital discharge, burning during urination; women may suffer pain in lower abdomen or pain during intercourse. Causes infertility in women prior to detection and up to 3/4 of cases are without symptoms. Curable with antibiotics.

Trichomoniasis

3 million cases a year.

Parasitic infection most often occurring in female vagina and male urethra. Symptoms are often absent, especially in men. May include vaginal discharge, discomfort during intercourse, odor, painful urination. Curable with antibiotics.

Gonorrhea

1.1 million cases a year.

Bacterial infection of cervix, urethra, rectum or throat. Symptoms are often mild or absent, including discharge from penis, vagina or rectum and burning or itching during urination. Curable with antibiotics, but penicillin-resistant cases are increasing.

H.P.V.

500,000 to 1 million cases a year.

Viral infection spread by anal, oral or vaginal sex. Causes painless, fleshy warts in affected area. Warts can be suppressed by chemicals, freezing, laser therapy and surgery. Some strains are associated with cervical and other cancers.

Genital Herpes

200,000 to 500,000 cases a year. About 31 million Americans carry the virus.

Usually caused by virus, spread by skin-to-skin contact. Symptoms include itching or burning and blisters, usually in genital area. Causes painful open genital lesions, sometimes accompanied by swollen, tender lymph nodes in the groin. Not curable.

Hepatitis B

100,000 to 200,000 cases a year. About 1.5 million Americans carry the infection.

Virus found in semen, saliva, blood and urine and passed through sexual contact, sharing drug needles and piercing the skin with contaminated medical instruments. Infection attacks the liver. Most infections clear up by themselves within eight weeks, but some individuals become chronically infected.

Syphilis

120,000 cases a year, of which 40,000 to 50,000 are infectious.

Bacterial infection usually acquired by vaginal, anal or oral sex with someone who has an active infection. Produces painless sores which disappear within weeks, but without treatment disease may eventually damage heart, brain, eyes, nervous system, bones and joints. Curable with penicillin.

and infection or major defects in the unborn child.

According to the report, those infected with some venereal diseases are more vulnerable to infection by the H.I.V. virus which causes AIDS. However, the 56 million figure does not include the figures for AIDS or H.I.V. infection.

The report showed that federal and state programs to combat sexually transmitted diseases tend to be in clinics that mostly treat men. The sexual diseases that are most

likely to have debilitating effects on women are also harder to detect with present medical technology.

According to the study, another problem that undermines the current public health response to our national crisis in STDs is that federal programs focus primarily on controlling the spread of STDs through activities such as screening and partner notification, that is, contacting people who already have the disease.

Patricia Donovan, author of the

Contraceptives Don't Protect; Warning Labels Ordered

WASHINGTON, DC — A week after the Guttmacher report was made public, the Food and Drug Administration reacted by announcing that it will henceforth require labels on contraceptives to state that the products do not prevent HIV infection and other diseases. The FDA action was brought about by a sudden realization that many young people confuse birth control and "safe sex."

In making this announcement, FDA Commissioner David Kessler said, "We have to recognize that, as we educate about pregnancy, teenagers also need to know that avoiding pregnancy isn't avoiding sexually transmitting diseases." ■

Guttmacher report and a senior associate for law and public policy at the Guttmacher Institute, based her study's conclusions on data available at the federal Centers for Disease Control. She concluded that, because many of the diseases are viral in nature and can't be cured, the only way to fight them is to "prevent them from occurring in the first place." Her ideal recommendation is abstinence and long-standing, mutual monogamous relationships.

The conclusions drawn by the Guttmacher study expose the misleading instruction given in most public schools. After the AIDS scare hit in the 1980s, condoms became the centerpiece of all sex ed and AIDS curricula. Comprehensive sex ed courses and school-based clinics emphasize the use of condoms to protect against pregnancy and AIDS.

Pat Socia, national speaker and author, says, "It's shameful that, for ten years, we allowed adolescents to think that contraceptives and condoms make sexual activity right, good, healthy, legal, normal and safe." Mrs. Socia is founder of Freedom Road Walk, a national initiative to enable teenagers to say NO to the pressures of sexual activity as well as drugs. ■

National Geography Bee Questions More than Just Geography

WASHINGTON, DC — Participants in this year's National Geographic Society Geography Bee were asked to do more than identify countries and their capitals. A four-page "Student Information Sheet" accompanying the qualifying test included a survey of student attitudes about occupations and gender.

"We would like to know students' thoughts about who should do various jobs," the questionnaire explained. "Below is a list of jobs. Who do you think should do these jobs?" The list included such occupations as plumber, florist, police officer, librarian, ship captain, and house cleaner. The possible responses included "Only men," "Mostly men," "Both men and women," "Mostly women," and "Only women."

What could these questions possibly have to do with geography? Quite a lot, perhaps, says Bee Director Mary Lee Elden.

The National Geographic Society began its annual Geography Bee in 1989 as a way of increasing interest in geography among American students. Studies at the time had documented a shocking ignorance of the subject. The competitions led to an unexpected discovery, however. They revealed a dramatic difference between male and female students competing in the Bee. In 1992, roughly 14,000 of the 18,000 who qualified to compete at the state level were boys, as were 52 of the 57 finalists. With the questionnaire accompanying this year's qualifying test, and other efforts, the National Geographic Society is determined to pinpoint the reasons for the disparity and do something to improve the performance of female students competing in the Bee.

The National Geographic Society has awarded a two-year grant to two Pennsylvania State University professors, geographer Roger Downs and child psy-

chologist Lynn Liben, to analyze the disparity between male and female performance in the Bee and recommend ways for improving the latter.

Do boys outperform girls in the Bee because they are innately better at spatial skills associated with geography, or do geography teachers consciously or unconsciously provide more encouragement to their male students?

Do girls consider geography to be primarily a male profession and thus show less interest in the subject? (Geographer is one of the occupations listed on the questionnaire accompanying the qualifying test.) If not, could it be the competitive nature of the Bee itself that appeals more to boys?

If so, are there aspects of the Bee that could be changed to facilitate the performance of female competitors? (Downs and Liben are conducting a "nervousness study" to determine if female students react

adversely to the pressure associated with the competition in its present forms.)

Critics of the survey say they fail to see the connection between the performance disparities and the questions on the survey regarding which gender should do various jobs. They claim that such questions as, "Do you think it's important for girls/boys to know geography?" might be more appropriate. They wonder how knowing if a girl or boy thinks only men or only women should be "scientists" or "hair stylists" will give insight into the geography discrepancy.

The Bee is open to 4th-8th grade students in public, private, and parochial schools in all 50 states and seven U.S. territories. More than 20,000 schools across the country participate. Students who qualified on the local level will compete in state competitions in April. The winners of those events will meet in Washington, DC on May 25-26 for the final competition. ■