

EDUCATION REPORTER

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Armeiy Amendment Passes Congress by Big Vote Overturms Rep. Miller's Effort to Certify Homeschool Parents

WASHINGTON, DC - Grassroots activists flooded the U.S. Capitol switchboard the week of February 20th and scored a stunning and surprising victory over the entrenched education establishment. At issue was a provision of H.R. 6, the giant education funding bill authorizing \$12.4 billion to public schools, which had been expected to pass without controversy.



Congressman
Dick Armeiy

Parent groups, however, had read the 901-page Elementary and Secondary Education Act and discovered a provision inserted by Rep. George Miller (D-CA) that

could be interpreted to require all homeschoolers and private and religious school teachers to be state certified in the subjects they teach. Homeschool organizations sent out alerts to their members, pointing out that this provision would prohibit nearly all homeschooling parents from teaching their own children.

Former Secretary of Education William Bennett said, "This legislation would render the federal government and the education unions virtually unchallenged control over American education. And that would be bad news."

Michael Farris, president of the Virginia-based Home School Legal Defense Association, described it as "the most dangerous assault on the freedom of home schools and private schools ever seen in recent history."

Rep. Dick Armeiy (R-TX) originally

proposed an amendment to House Education and Labor Committee members that would have protected private and homeschoolers from the Miller amendment. It was defeated in committee by the Democratic majority on a straight party line vote.

But home education organizations, pro-family and conservative groups, and religious broadcasters accelerated their alerts, and the phone calls and faxes poured into Congressional offices.

Stunned Congressmen received thousands - some said tens or even hundreds of thousands - of telephone calls, letters and faxes from those who were outraged the Federal Government was trying to control homeschooling. Rep. Miller was so inundated with calls that he turned off

his phones and turned on a recording that greeted all callers with an apology to homeschoolers and a promise to "fix" the problem.

The Congressmen were especially surprised at the outpouring because there had been almost no media coverage of the contents of H.R. 6 or its impending vote. During debate on H.R. 6, one Congressman exclaimed to the Speaker of the House that, if the homeschoolers taught their children as well as they were organized, he was assured that "the children's education would be just fine!"

"I've worked here for seven years, and I've never seen anything like it," said Armeiy Chief of Staff Brian Gunderson. "Congress has found itself in the biggest

See H.R.6, page 2

Pressure for Sex Too Young Is Number One Teenage Threat

NEW YORK, NY -- Pressure to have sex at too young an age tops the list of issues that both parents and adolescents see as a threat to children, according to a new poll.

Roper Starch Worldwide conducted a telephone survey between Jan 25 and Feb 8 on a random sample of 1,003 U.S. parents of 12- to 17-year-olds and 253 young persons in the same age range.

The New York City pollsters found that 46 percent of the parents and 44 percent of the children ranked pressure for early sex as "somewhat" or "extremely" threatening to young people.

Fifty percent of the parents also cited entertainment's "negative influence" as a threat to children, and 48 percent of the adults identified declining moral values as a threat.

But pressure for early sexual relations emerged as the largest threat to adults and teenagers alike. The two groups also ranked AIDS, street crime and teen pregnancy as top threats to young people.

Nick Torello, senior vice president of Roper Starch Worldwide, agreed. "When kids watch MTV, and they see heroes on there like Madonna, they feel society is sending them a message" to be sexually active, he said.

Kristine M. Gebbie, new director of the administration's AIDS policy, angered many Americans over her contention that America should portray sex as a "pleasur-



able" experience and stop being a "repressed Victorian society."

Joycelyn Elders, the surgeon general, has been criticized for her insistence that young people need easy access to condoms to be "responsible" if they refuse to remain abstinent.

The parents' survey has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points, and the children's poll has a margin of error of 6 percentage points.

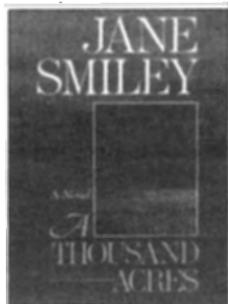
The survey was commissioned by Eagle Forum Education and Legal Defense Fund.

Percentages of parents and teens who feel the following factors pose a threat to children:

Problems	Parents	Teens
Negative influence of TV, movies or videos	50	29
Declining moral values	48	27
Pressure to have sex at a young age	46	44
Pressure to use alcohol	44	35
AIDS	44	44
Street crime	42	42
Violence in schools	42	34
Teen pregnancy	41	37
Poor job prospects	37	22
Pressure to smoke	30	33
Insufficient parental guidance & time	30	19
Poor reading skills	29	24
Sexual abuse by adults	26	28
Not having enough money	24	38
Sexual harassment by other children	22	27



War Wages in Washington State Over Shocking Fiction Book



LYNDEN, WA - Citizens were astounded by the contents of *A Thousand Acres*, a book recommended for the college prep English class at Lynden High School. It caused such a commotion

among concerned parents that the high school principal, Ken Axelson, and the teacher, Carole Hanaway, decided to remove the book from the class.

The controversial, Pulitzer Prize winning novel by Jane Smiley is a story about

a struggling Iowa farm family. It purports to be a 20th-century version of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, but it contains sexually explicit passages and incest.

The book first sparked a complaint from Warren and Carol Rinehart, parents of a Lynden High School student who was not in the class. "This was written to be stimulating and titillating," Mrs. Rinehart said in her complaint. "No normal 16-to-18-year-old boy could read this material and be unaffected."

The complaint received the support of Cathy Mickels, president of the Washington Alliance of Families, whose son Erik also attends Lynden High school.

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EDUCATION BRIEFS

In a major setback for parents, the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled that the "Impressions" reading series can be used in Wheaton and Warrenville, IL elementary schools. The controversial series of supplemental readers had ignited a storm of controversy in 1990 and 1991 in Wheaton - Warrenville Unit School District 200 when some parents said stories and poems focused on themes of witchcraft, fear, despair and disrespect for adult authority. The judges ruled that the books do not constitute a "pagan religion" as the parents had argued, but are an exercise in "make-believe." The court said that use of the "Impressions" series does not violate the constitutional rights of parents and their children to religious freedom.

The new SAT exam will now allow students to take along a calculator. Effective March 19, the Scholastic Aptitude Test, which is used by most U.S. Colleges to evaluate potential students, will focus more on testing critical-thinking skills. The changes are the first major overhaul of the SAT since 1974.

The vote to remove a book titled *Human Sexuality* was unanimous by the Belleville High School District School Board in Belleville, IL. The book, which was being used in health classes at Belleville's two public high schools, generated concern from about 40 parents who complained that the book, among other things, "did not concentrate on abstinence."

More and more schools across the nation are banning certain teen apparel because of concern for safety and moral hygiene. Items forbidden by some schools: backpacks, bandanas, baseball caps (they are ideal for hiding handguns and knives), gold chains and bracelets, beepers, cellular phones, skimpy tops and net blouses, leggings, starter jackets, and baggy jeans.

The principal of Wydown Middle School in Clayton, Missouri, has been charged with the sexual assault of a 13-year-old boy. Joe M. Bartlett, the principal, was arrested after an interview with police. He is accused of sodomy and two misdemeanor counts of sexual abuse, with bond set at \$40,000.

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School Children Today: Armed and Dangerous

ST. LOUIS, MO - A teacher at Beaumont High School told students to "run for their lives" when a gang of up to 20 youths terrorized her classroom.

A youth entered the classroom of Nina Pritchard, who teaches classical fiction to high school sophomores, and threatened to kill one of her students, Shaun Ollison, 16, who had just been involved in a fight between two gangs in the school cafeteria. Mrs. Pritchard pleaded with him not to start anything in her classroom so the youth refrained, but glaring at Ollison he told him, "I have respect for Mrs. Pritchard, or you'd be dead now."

The intruder left the classroom but waited outside. Mrs. Pritchard locked the door and tried to calm her students. A frightened girl told Mrs. Pritchard she needed to use the bathroom, and when the teacher unlocked the door, 20 youths - some of whom were not Beaumont students - poured into the room.

"You're dead now," one of them told Ollison. Mrs. Pritchard saw a handgun under an intruder's shirt. She begged him not to shoot anyone. The intruders knocked down and shoved students, and they began to beat Ollison. Mrs. Pritchard screamed for the students to run for their lives. The students fled in terror, including Ollison who jumped out the window and fled to his grandmother's house.

The frightening incident spawned a three-hour teacher's meeting to discuss the problem of violence at the high school, as well as a news conference to call for tighter security. The teachers said they were dissatisfied with how Beaumont administration reacted to the classroom vio-

lence. They were especially outraged that assistant principal, Charles Migneco, played down the severity of the classroom violence by rating it a "3" on a scale of 1 to 10.

Such incidents have become so commonplace in America today, that just going to school represents an act of courage for many students. According to a *U.S. News & World Report*, more than 3 million crimes a year are committed in or near the 85,000 U.S. public schools. Sixteen percent of 8th graders, 14% of 10th graders, and 12% of 12th graders told University of Michigan researchers that they fear for their safety.

School crimes have grown more violent and the perpetrators steadily younger, such as the three teenagers who rushed into a government class last April at Dartmouth High School in a university town 50 miles south of Boston. The three boys - two of whom were Dartmouth High students - were armed with a bat, a billy club, and a hunting knife. They attacked freshman Jason Robinson. One went after him with the bat and, while the teacher wrestled with the assailant, a second plunged the knife into Robinson's abdomen, killing him.

Behind all this violence is a startling shift in adolescent attitudes against respect for life, and not just in the inner cities.

Of the suburban high schoolers surveyed by Tulane researchers Joseph Sheley and M. Dwayne Smith, 20% approved of shooting someone "who has stolen something from you." Eight per-

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A ccording to a *U.S. News & World Report*, more than 3 million crimes a year are committed in or near the 85,000 U.S. public schools.

H.R. 6

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firestorm since it voted itself a pay raise in 1991."

Rep. Arney announced that he would offer his amendment again when the House debated the issue the afternoon of February 24. The Democratic leadership tried to preempt Arney by having a liberal Congressman introduce a weakened version. That amendment, offered by Rep. William Ford (D-MD), passed by a vote of 424-to-1. It stripped the Miller amendment from the bill and added language stating the bill should not be construed to affect homeschoolers.

The lone dissenter was Rep. Miller, which reinforced the views of those who believe that his language was definitely planned to outlaw homeschooling.

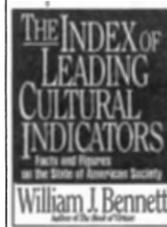
Rep. Arney then introduced his amendment anyway, with Rep. Ford urging Congressmen to vote against it. Mr. Arney argued the Ford language was in-

adequate because it only excluded homeschoolers from the bill. He pointed out the need to also protect private and religious schools and that in 17 states homeschoolers are referred to as private schools. To the surprise of almost everyone, the Arney amendment passed easily by 374-to-53.

The Arney amendment states that the Act would not permit or encourage any federal control over any aspect of any private, religious or home school. Also, it states that the bill "shall not be construed to bar private, religious or home schools from participation in programs or services under this act."

As amended, H.R. 6 is moving forward to final passage. The bill is still a matter of great concern because it increases federal control of education, and promotes Outcome-Based Education and school-based clinics.

The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators:



Facts and Figures on the State of American Society, by William J. Bennett, Simon & Schuster, New York, NY, 117 pp., \$8.95.

If America were to be graded for its moral, social, and cultural condition, it would surely receive failing marks - this according to William J. Bennett's most recent book, *The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators*. In this shocking "report card," the former Secretary of Education and drug czar takes a compelling look at our country's three-decade decline.

For years, Americans have relied on the Commerce Department's "Index of Leading Economic Indicators" to predict economic trends. Now, in *The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators*, Bennett provides a guide to measure the moral, social, and behavioral health of American society.

Drawing on data from the Census Bureau, the FBI, and other governmental sources, Bennett provides hard facts and numerical breakdowns, charts, and a brief analysis of the data. The chilling statistics reveal that since 1960 - while population, wealth, and welfare benefits increased - there has been an alarmingly consistent corruption of America's values.

"The purpose," writes Bennett in his preface, "is to provide an empirical assessment of the 'condition of America question.' And, according to the findings in this book, in many ways the condition of America is not good."

The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators explores areas such as crime, family and children, youth pathologies and behavior, education, and popular culture and religion. Here are some of the startling findings:

- violent crime has increased by 560%
- the number of unmarried pregnant teenagers has doubled
- the rate of teenage suicide has tripled

The findings for education are equally alarming: "While expenditures on elementary and secondary education have increased more than 200% since 1960, SAT scores have declined 73 points."

Bennett also points out that, "While educational achievement has dropped, grades in American high schools have actually increased. In 1966, twice as many Cs as As were handed out. By 1978, the As exceeded the Cs. And by 1990, more than 20% of all entering college freshmen averaged A minus or above."

"Our injury is self-inflicted," writes Bennett. "The good news is that what has been self-inflicted can be self-corrected." Parents, educators, and everyone who is concerned about the condition of America will find *The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators* a valuable sourcebook as well as a dramatic call to action.

FOCUS • Gerald and Sally Jessy Go to School

• High School Health Texts Dangerous to Teen Health

by Anne Newman

"Gerald and Sally Jessy Go to School" isn't a new children's book or a television sitcom, but it could be the title of a report about five high school health textbooks headed for the nation's public school classrooms. Health has historically been a course in basic health and personal hygiene, but some of the content in these books reads more like a *TV Guide* listing for the Gerald or Sally Jessy Raphael shows.

Death education, sex with condoms, homosexuality, surrogate motherhood, and a child's right to divorce his parents — are just some topics in the books. God is out, but the "force" is in, as one publisher defines spiritual health as belief in a "force or order in nature." Student "life skills" exercises include developing a stress-reduction plan for someone with herpes and learning to obtain contraception.

One book, *Holt Health*, informs teachers it is "clearly important to educate all students about homosexuality," and directs teachers to raise the issue of "gay families." Holt has a section on teenage homosexuality, as well as anti-discrimination exercises. It commends Project 10, a program based on the erroneous concept that 10 percent of the population is homosexual. Project 10, developed by Virginia Uribe, who is a self-identified lesbian, supports homosexual programs, curricula and counselors in schools. Uribe is listed as a reviewer of the Holt book, indicating the publisher specifically sought input from a homosexual perspective.

Recommended resources for teachers and students in the health books include:

- Planned Parenthood
- The Sex Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), an organization that advocates teaching five to eight year-olds about masturbation, intercourse, and homosexuality. One assignment is a guided reading activity about the founder of SIECUS.
- Homosexual hotlines and organizations, such as the Gay Men's Health Crisis, the Campaign to End Homophobia, and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.
- *When Someone You Know is Gay*, by Susan and Daniel Cohen and *One Teenager in 10: Writings by Gay and Lesbian Youth* by Alyson Publications (recommended reading for students).
- Phil Donahue's video, "The Human Animal Series."

Following a public hearing in which the only persons supporting the books represented the homosexual movement and family planners, the Texas State Board of Education ordered publishers to modify or delete over 300 areas of book content. This was far less than the 1100 changes conservative Board members had re-

quested, and the 600 to which the Texas commissioner of education initially agreed.

States adopting health books in 1995 or later may be offered the revised texts adopted in Texas, but those adopting in 1994 may get the unedited versions. Some of the content ordered deleted in the Texas adoption includes:

• "Vocabulary Dice," a game that uses terms such as foreplay, sexual orientation, erection, masturbation, aphrodisiac, and wet dreams.

• Discussion of penis size and the female erogenous zone.

• Writing a self-obituary and reading assignments of *The Goodness of Planned Death* by Jack Keivorkian and *Final Exit* by Derek Humphrey.

• Condom demonstration activity and debate on condom distribution on high school campuses.

• Homosexual adoption.

• Non-governmental, toll-free 800 numbers and hotlines.

Some of the more offensive content is ancillary material, also called teacher resources, which is not subject to public scrutiny during a typical textbook adoption process. Ancillaries, which include transparencies, student worksheets, video and audio tapes, guided readings, etc., provide an opportunity to sneak offensive content to students without parental knowledge. For example, West Publishing includes explicit transparencies illustrating a condom on an erect penis and a female condom in place, as well as other methods of contraception.

D.C. Heath's supplement on human sexuality describes voyeurs, exhibitionists (also called "flashers"), sadists, masochists, sadomasochism and warns about people who become sexually excited by touching and rubbing against strangers in crowded public places. Female orgasmic

dysfunction, bisexuals, and homosexuality are other topics. Students are told to have "safer sex" and that sexual partners can share masturbation as a way to learn how to please each other, noting it is done with the hand or an object.

A student reading assignment in the ancillaries describes tribal rites of passage occurring at puberty: subincision (underside lengthwise slit of the penis), body piercing, anointing with blood, cutting of the female hymen, and surgical removal of the labia majora. Students are then asked to compare these rites to college and fraternity initiations and other initiation ceremonies "such as a bar mitzvah." With gang initiation rites on the increase, the wisdom of this type of assignment is highly questionable.

Since the books contain inaccurate and conflicting information about condom failure rate, Texas ordered publishers to use an overall failure rate of 12 percent, which is also inaccurate. Because condoms do not cover all of the affected areas of the body, they do not always prevent herpes or Human Papilloma Virus, a cause of cervical cancer. A recent analysis of 11 studies shows the condom failure range for HIV transmission is 18 to 46 percent, according to the University of Texas at Galveston Medical Branch.

These books have some excellent material on important health issues; however, it is clear that they are being used as a vehicle to further a political and social agenda with the nation's children as the target. More often than not, parents do not learn about offensive and desensitizing classroom activities until after they occur. It is much easier to prevent a problem than to get rid of it. Once these books are in the classroom, it will be too late.

Anne Newman is an author, speaker and free lance writer in San Antonio. She is the Director of the Texas Council for Family Values.

What You Can Do --

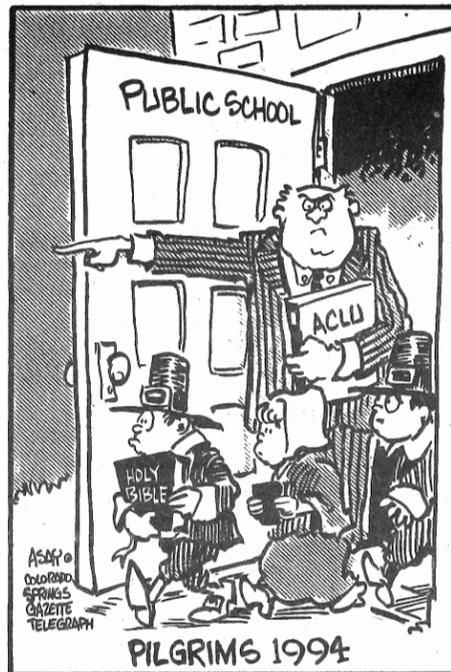
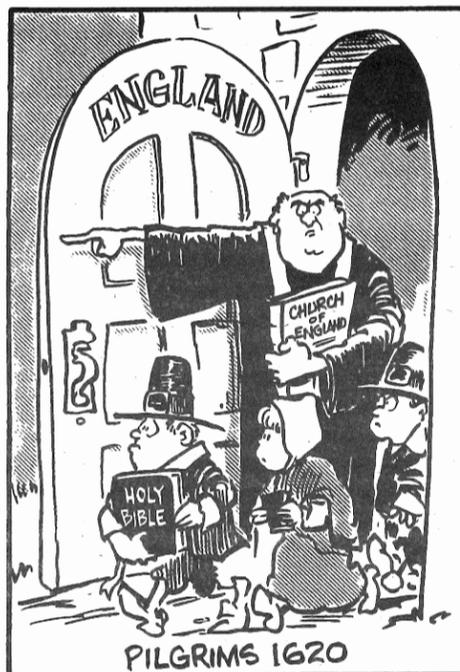
1. Find out about your state and local textbook adoption process. Ask about public hearings or other opportunities for public input, which may be required prior to the adoption of books by a state or local school board.

2. Express your opinion to board members, and find out if school board candidates share your values. Inform your friends and neighbors. Inform your parent/teacher organizations, school board members, and superintendents about the problems in the books that they'll soon be looking at. Be persistent. Never give up.

3. Order a report on the five textbooks. Send a \$7.00 donation (includes postage) to Texas Council for Family Values, 5202 Timberhurst, San Antonio, TX 78250. The report contains actual quotes from each book, with page numbers cited.

HEALTH TEXTBOOKS

Making Life Choices, by West Publishing
Holt Health, by Holt Rinehart and Winston
Perspectives on Health, by D.C. Heath
Health Skills for Wellness, by Prentice Hall, a division of Simon and Schuster
Health, A Guide to Wellness, by Glencoe, a division of Macmillan/McGraw Hill



Violence

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cent believed that it is all right to shoot a person "who had done something to offend or insult you."

According to the American Psychological Association, children watch an average of 8,000 murders and 100,000 other violent acts on television before finishing elementary school.

Education Secretary Riley has sent Congress two bills. The first, called the Safe Schools Act, would provide \$175 million to school systems trying to improve security. The second would start long-term funding beginning in 1995. The Riley bills include violence-prevention curricula and training in peer mediation and conflict resolution.

Teacher Censors Child's Story About Baby Jesus at Christmas



Sara Dudley

WINSTON-SALEM, NC - Sara Dudley, a 2nd grader at Rural Hall Elementary School, was told that her story "What Christmas Means to Me" would not be posted on the bulletin board because it was about Jesus.

Last Christmas, the class of 2nd graders was given an assignment to write a story about the meaning of Christmas. The stories were then posted on bulletin boards so that all the children could read each others' essays about Christmas.

In February, when the papers were returned, Mrs. Dudley discovered that Sara had written two stories about the meaning of

Christmas. (see box)

"The teacher told me to write it over," Sara told her mother. According to Sara's teacher, Mrs. Montgomery, she was trying to "separate church and state." Mrs. Montgomery said that Sara did not have to re-write her essay, but if she did not, her story would not be posted on the bulletin board.

"We never realized that she would be censored as to what she could write about Jesus," said Mrs. Dudley. Sara's parents have written to the principal of the school to request that the teacher apologize to their daughter.

Censored Story

Christmas means to me love and hugs. At Christmas time Mary and Joseph had to travel and that is when Jesus was born. Christmas is a important Holiday. If you don't go to chruch you should. Because Christmas is so important. Don't you ever think about baby Jesus on Christmas? Mary and Joseph really loved Jesus very much. I really loved him. He died on the cross for our sins.

Acceptable Story

To me Christmas means love. The most important thing about Christmas is Jesus. At Christmas we get presents from Santa Claus. Christmas is important. I wonder why they call Christmas a holiday. The most funnest thing of all is decorating your Christmas tree. I like opening the presents. On Christmas I think you can get lucky. On Christmas it might snow.



Book

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She criticized the use of *A Thousand Acres* on her radio talk show and issued a news release that included photocopied pages of the novel, underlined for emphasis.

"I seriously doubt that the Lynden School Board would allow students to watch a movie in class containing the profanity and sexually explicit, stimulating material contained in this book," Mrs. Mickels stated, "and neither should the board encourage students to read it."

But the book had, in fact, been unanimously approved earlier by the Lynden School District's Curriculum Advisory Committee, which includes four parents, four teachers, and four principals.

It was not until the Lynden School District was seeking two levies that all the furor surrounding the book suddenly became a great concern to school officials.

Bernie Bovenkamp, president of Lynden School Board, commented that, "People have told us that, because of the book, they are going to vote in opposition to the levy." So, shortly before the vote on the tax measures, the novel was pulled from the English class.

"When I first heard that my novel had

been banned in Lynden, WA," wrote author Jane Smiley for the Feb. 15 *Chicago Tribune*, "I thought, At last! My hard intellectual labors of linking Shakespeare with incest, Christianity and ecologically destructive agriculture had finally been rewarded with what I've always thought they deserved - the outrage of the very people I had been intending to challenge and offend."

Mrs. Hanaway, the teacher of the advanced English class from which *A Thousand Acres* was removed, had written to Jane Smiley about the situation.

Mrs. Hanaway says she expects more challenges to school books in the future. She currently serves as president of the Lynden Education Association and, after the book was removed from her class, she invited a representative of the state and national teacher unions to talk to teachers.

In inviting the Lynden Education Association Board as well as other teachers to this meeting, Mrs. Hanaway wrote:

"... I feel I have failed all the Lynden teachers. In an effort to respond to the inordinate pressure on both the district and all the kids, I have censored the novel *A Thousand Acres* and canceled future classes of Advanced Placement.

"I do not want to quit this 'war' with Cathy Mickels and the Washington Alliance of Families (what an oxymoron!). Please help me plan a process to counter the damage done.

"Do we have a grievance? Should we contact the ACLU? Who are the supportive parents out there? Can we send out our own press releases? Can we challenge the board's failure to follow policy? I have ideas. I need yours.

"Please do not be discouraged. I do not want to quit. By canceling the class, my goal is to get those supportive parents to speak up."

Commenting on the letter, Mrs. Mickels said, "It's really not a war with Cathy Mickels, it's a war with the traditions and values in this community."

"I'm really shocked she would use such a term to describe this," Mrs. Mickels continued. "That's precisely why parents are afraid to question teaching material." ☺

Students View Homosexually Explicit Movies in Film Studies

DOWNERS GROVE, IL - A senior at Downers Grove South High School in suburban Chicago has kicked up a storm over a Film Studies course that satisfies an English Department requirement to graduate. Films shown in class were so explicit that Scott Kerr said, "I feel like going home and taking a shower."

The course requirements included the film *My Own Private Idaho*, an explicit story about male homosexual prostitution. The teacher, Rick Brickwell, told Scott he was showing this film as "an experiment" to see the students' reactions." Brickwell said this film came under the "youth and film" unit of the course which is meant to explore "alienation and the search for self."

Brickwell also showed his students *Heaven's Gate - The Director's Cut*, which uses a documentary style, and is described by Kerr as "a really bad X-rated type of film." Other films that Kerr and his classmates endured in the name of English literature were *Pump Up the Volume* and *Victor/Victoria*.

Kerr, who said he signed up for the course in order to learn film history and film-making techniques such as camera action, asked the teacher if he could opt out of the dirty films and do other activities such as a research paper. The teacher refused to give him this option, as did the guidance counselor, Jose Randall, who has a Ph.D. in education counseling.

Kerr also met with the head of the English Department, Patrick Monahan, and the vice principal, Jim Geocaris, whose solution was to revise the course description to admit "adult content." Scott doesn't know of any adult high school students who would be eligible to view the explicit films if they applied the same rating code used by the movie industry. "They mostly treated me like a zealot and just said 'don't worry about it.'" ☺

