

Educators lack skills, report says

WASHINGTON (AP) — If students are dummies at science and math, don't blame the kids, a panel of scientists and educators says. Odds are, their teachers aren't qualified.

More than two-thirds of elementary school science teachers lack adequate preparation in science and more than 80 percent of math instructors are deficient in mathematics, according to a report issued by the Carnegie Commission on Science, Technology and Government.

"Every school day, students in these grades come to school naturally curious about the world and go home having learned to hate science and mathematics a little more," said the report released Sunday.

Lewis Branscomb, a Harvard University professor and chairman of the commission's panel on science and math education, said, "Everybody can learn what they need to know about math and science, and we've got to stop accusing the kids who are a little slow with lacking talent."

Although education is mostly a state and local responsibility, Branscomb said the federal government should "play a leading, rather than a cheer-leading, role" in improving science and math education.

The panel argued that the federal government should be involved in recruiting teachers, setting curriculum goals, coordinating research into teaching meth-

ods and developing textbooks and other educational materials.

Under the commission's plan, the National Science Foundation would improve universities' education of math and science teachers.

The Education Department would concentrate on reform in the nation's elementary and secondary schools.

The panel also recommended: — Devoting part of the funding for federal science agency research to improving math and science education.

— Setting up a national clearinghouse for information on education systems and a center "to build a consensus on what American students should know."

— Creating model schools for

math and science training and setting up programs to spread their methods to schools nationally.

— Giving the Education Department more flexibility in the way it spends money. Under the present system, Congress prescribes much of its spending.

Education Secretary Lamar Alexander, who was a member of the Carnegie panel before moving to the Cabinet post earlier this year, had no immediate comment on the report.

The Carnegie Commission was established in 1988 by the Carnegie Corp. of New York, one of the nation's largest philanthropies, to study ways to incorporate scientific and technological knowledge in government policy-making.

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Air Force to reveal overhaul plan

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Air Force is poised to announce a major overhaul that will shake the service from top to bottom, transferring dozens of generals from desk jobs to the flight line.

"We have too many generals sitting on their butt doing staff work when they would be happier and more efficient out on the flight line," Air Force Chief of Staff Merrill McPeak said recently.

The moves are some of the most dramatic changes by the Air Force since it became a separate branch of the armed services in 1947.

The overhaul, which already has begun in some areas, is McPeak's personal quest and has the backing of Air Force Secretary Donald Rice and Defense Secretary Dick Cheney.

Rice is scheduled to unveil the changes in detail Tuesday at the Air Force Association annual convention in Washington. Senior Pentagon officials discussed the changes with The Associated Press in advance of the announcement on condition of anonymity.

McPeak, a 55-year-old four-star general who flew 269 combat missions in a one-year tour of duty in Vietnam, still jumps into the cockpit of an F-15 jet to

keep his qualifications up-to-date. And despite the praise garnered by the Air Force for its performance in Operation Desert Storm, McPeak insists the service can't rest on its laurels.

He's argued that the reorganization is a way to improve the combat power of the service as it's forced to become a leaner, less bureaucratic organization.

The overhaul also is designed to decentralize authority, putting more responsibility in the hands of local commanders and crew chiefs.

"One base, one wing, one boss" is the motto used to describe part of the process that McPeak hopes will help the service shed an image of arrogance and free-spending, giving more authority to base commanders and crew chiefs.

Critics have derided the service as a "fraternity in uniform."

As Pentagon budgets shrink and the superpower balance shifts, change is inevitable. One quarter of the Air Force's men and women are being cut, to about 450,000 in five years. There were 904,000 Air Force personnel at its last peak, during the Vietnam era.

Seizure leads to allegations of cover-up

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Police seized a videotape of themselves arresting anti-abortion demonstrators, in a move the demonstrators say may have been designed to cover up police brutality.

Twelve adults and one juvenile were arrested on charges of criminal trespass at the downtown abortion clinic Saturday morning.

Several protesters complained that the first two demonstrators arrested were roughed up by officers while being taken into custody, the San Antonio Express-News reported Sunday.

The protesters were arrested after twice refusing police orders to quit blocking the clinic.

Protester Sue Gasper said two officers suddenly grabbed Marion Thompson, who was arrested, and another man.

"There was no warning at all," she said. "They grabbed him so he was down on his face."

"They were causing pain," said Laurence Oebbeke, who witnessed the arrests. "The people were crying out in anguish."

One of the officers involved in the arrests seized the camcorder Mrs. Gasper's husband, Steve, was using to record the activity. The officer returned the camera but confiscated the videotape as evidence, Steve Gasper said.

"We are concerned that some police brutality may be on that tape," he said.

Sgt. Salvador Gonzales said it was unusual to take a videotape under some circumstances, but said the decision to seize it was at the discretion of the officer.

Gonzales said he will review the allegations of brutality and forward the complaints to the internal affairs unit for an investigation.

The protesters were warned to stop obstructing the entrance to the clinic, at 7:15 a.m. and again 15 minutes later. The arrests began about 10 minutes after the second warning went unheeded, Gonzales said.

Discovery launches satellite; controllers fail to gain signal

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Discovery astronauts dispatched an observatory satellite Sunday to examine the effects of pollution on Earth's withering ozone layer, but ground controllers ran into trouble communicating with the spacecraft.

The glittering, copper-colored satellite, its solar panel jutting to one side, drifted off into orbit shortly after midnight. Mark Brown unleashed the observatory from the end of the shuttle's mechanical arm as the ship flew over the Atlantic Ocean toward West Africa on its 34th spin around the world since liftoff Friday.

"It was a spectacular show," shuttle commander John Creighton said.

Those on Earth were just as impressed.

"Welcome to the era of NASA's Mission to Planet Earth," said program manager Mike

Luther. The observatory was released a little later than planned, because controllers had trouble getting a signal to pass between the craft's main antenna and a second satellite through which data is transmitted to Earth.

The problems continued after the release. Signals were gained, and lost, three times within two hours.

Project deputy manager John Donley said the interruptions were caused by a procedural problem on the ground that was corrected. But then another problem was discovered later Sunday morning — one of two satellite transponders used to receive data from Earth failed.

Controllers at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Md., could not send commands on that transponder via a network of communications satel-

lites 22,300 miles high. Instead, they used the backup transponder, which worked fine, Donley said.

"We have a redundant system, so we're still fully functional," Donley said.

Donley said engineers don't know why the first receiver failed. It would matter only if the backup system developed problems during the mission's expected lifetime of 11/2 to three years, he said.

The Upper Atmosphere Research Satellite, valued at \$740 million, including operating costs, was dropped off at an altitude of about 354 miles. Tiny thrusters are to boost it over the next few days to its final destination 372 miles above Earth.

In addition to studying the ozone layer, a stratospheric shield against cancer-causing ultraviolet rays, the observatory will measure winds, chemicals and energetic particles in the upper atmosphere.

Scientists petition for release of orca

HOUSTON (AP) — Marine scientists, afraid they are about to lose a unique opportunity, are urging Sea World theme parks to release Corky, a killer whale kept at the chain's San Diego park.

But Sea World officials say Corky is nearing the end of her life, and releasing her would surely doom her.

The coalition of scientists has begun "Project Corky" to persuade Sea World to release the 25-year-old killer whale, or orca, back where she was captured to study whether the mammal's family will accept her after 21 years of captivity.

"I think she is probably living on borrowed time right now," said Dr. Paul Spong, a Canadian researcher spearheading "Project Corky."

"If we are going to do this, it has to happen

soon. I think we are really running out of time."

Sea World officials say Corky is "generally in good health," but shows normal "geriatric signs."

Spong claims captivity has caused or exacerbated Corky's medical problems.

Also, he said, the theme parks are afraid of being pressured to free more whales — which can no longer be captured — if the program succeeds. Sea World has 12 orcas scattered among its parks in Texas, California, Florida and Ohio.

"Sea World is afraid that if this works, there might be a greater call for orcas in captivity to be released to their natural habitats, to their families in the oceans," he said. "If there is any single explanation for Sea World's re-

fusal to participate, that's it."

The two sides faced off at a five-hour secret meeting on Aug. 30 at Sea World of Texas in San Antonio where company officials told scientists that releasing Corky into the wild is out of the question, the Houston Chronicle reported.

Project Corky calls for the orca to be released near Vancouver, British Columbia, where her original "pod," or family group, still roams.

Only two orcas remain alive of as many as 60 taken from that one pod: Corky and Yaka at Marineland-Africa-USA near San Francisco.

They have been in captivity longer than any other orcas in the U.S.

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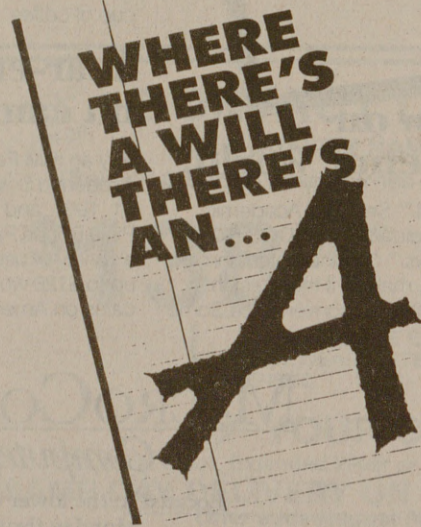
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