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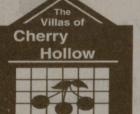
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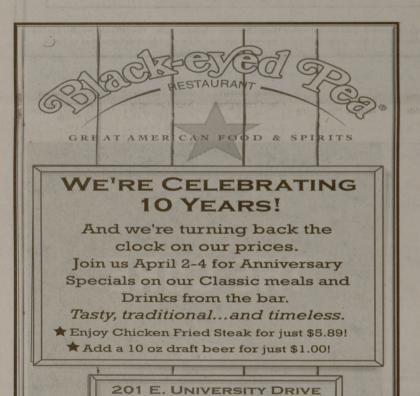
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Book on sexuality causes frenz

Conservatives assail author, publisher for conten

publication, a provocative book about children's sexuality is being denounced by conservatives as evil and prompting angry calls for action against the University of Minnesota Press.

The book, Harmful to Minors: The Perils of Protecting Children From Sex, argues that young Americans, though bombarded with sexual images from the mass media, are often deprived of realistic advice

"What's happening to me is a perfect example of the very hysteria that my book is about," New York-based author Judith Levine said in an interview.

Levine has been working on the book since the mid-1990s. With the recent sex scandals involving clergy and young people, she admits it's a particularly challenging time to make her case that American youth are entitled to safe, satisfying sex lives.

Publisher after publisher rejected the — one called its contents "radioactive" — before the University of Minnesota Press accepted the manuscript a year ago.

Writes Levine in her introduction, "In America today, it is nearly impossible to publish a book that says children and teenagers can have sexual pleasure and be safe too.'

From the outset, officials at the Minnesota press knew the book would be controversial; they had the manuscript reviewed by five academic experts, instead

NEW YORK (AP) — A month before its of the usual two, to be sure its contentions as if they cannot imagine that the were based on sound research.

The uproar exceeded expectations after the book was condemned on conservative

'We've never seen anything quite this

angry," said the press director, Douglas It's as if [parents] cannot imagine that their

kids seek sex for the same

reasons they do.

- Judith Levine

Armato. "The book isn't actually out yet. What people are reacting to is not the book itself, but the idea of the book.

In "Harmful to Minors," Levine argues that abstinence-only sex education is misguided. She also suggests the threat of pedophilia and molestation by strangers is exaggerated by adults who want to deny young people the opportunity for positive sexual experiences.

'Squeamish or ignorant about the facts, parents appear willing to accept the pundits' worst conjectures about their children's sexual motives," Levine writes. "It's condoning child abuse.

seek sex for the same reasons they

Levine said much of the furor of book stems from an interview she gar month to Newhouse News Service the Roman Catholic Church sexscandal. Newhouse quoted her as sa sexual relationship between a priest youth "conceivably" could be pos

Levine said this week that she proves of any sexual relationship b a youth and an authority figure, wh parent, teacher or priest. Howeve believes teenagers deserve more for the choices they make in con affairs, and suggests that America's of-consent laws can sometimes le excessive punishment.

She cites the Dutch age-of-conser "good model" - it perm between an adult and a young between 12 and 16 if the young consents. Prosecutions for coerc may be sought by the young person youth's parents.

"Teens often seek out sex with people, and they do so for underst reasons: an older person makes the sexy and grown-up, protected and sp writes Levine, who had an affair w adult when she was a minor.

Several conservative media com tors and activists have accused Levine

NASA starts countdown for laund

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — NASA confirmed the start of its launch countdown for space shuttle Atlantis on Tuesday, following new security guidelines intended to thwart a terrorist attack.

The countdown clocks in the launch control center had actually started the previous evening for Atlantis' liftoff Thursday afternoon on a space station assembly mission.

Under the 3-week-old policy, NASA won't announce the start of the countdown until after the fact and won't disclose the shuttle launch time until 24 hours in advance. In addition, the astronauts' movements on launch day will not be televised live as usual.

Shuttle program manager

Ron Dittemore said the policy has not hampered shuttle work or countdown activities.

"It does not change the team's approach one bit," he

NASA says liftoff will occur sometime between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. Thursday. Forecasters put the odds of good launch weather at 70 percent, with low clouds and rain the main concerns.

The only shuttle concern involves the power-drive units needed to close the pair of trapdoors on Atlantis' belly once the external fuel tank is jettisoned in space. A door on Endeavour closed several seconds slower than usual in recent ground testing, and engineers want to make sure the same problem does not happen to Atlantis.

the engineering analysis to be completed by late Wednesday afternoon and that the findings should clear Atlantis for an ontime launch.

Atlantis is loaded with a 44foot girder for the international space station that weighs nearly 27,000 pounds. It's not just a basic metal beam: This \$600 million truss has 475,000 parts, including a myriad of electrical cabling and plumbing and four sets of computers. It also has a \$190 million railcar and track for eventual use by the space station's robot arm.

Additional girders will be attached to this component on future flights, and the entire framework ultimately will stretch more than 350 feet with

Dittemore said he expects the railroad track running full length. The track is nee to move the robot arm f one end of the space station! the other, to build up the orbi ing outpost.

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Faculty

Atlantis will be propelled three new-style main engin during liftoff. The high-pre sure fuel turbopump in each engine was built without w which was expected to make them more safe and reliable

The seven assigned to Atlantis I flight will be the first for the three men who been living on the spaces since December. The s crew is taking up fresh foo clean clothes for the space tion residents.

Education

Continued from page to connect the students with

Alternative forms of education

include asynch chronous learning, Hoyle said Asynchronous includes classes over the Web

recorded lecture student respond to by email. Dr. Rod Ham, assistant dire of the Center of Distance Lean Research, said long-dis learning provides opportun

students to work around sch ing conflicts. "You've got more control how you learn," Ham said. Although these courses

non-local or commuter stude fulfill credits, local students h enroll before non-local stud Harn said. Fran Hunter, A&M pro

coordinator for distance lea said long distance learning en ages students through its free

"An alternative means of cation, like long distance lea knocks down the financial graphic and time barriers & qualified students have access to the kind of educati institutions like A&M can Hunter said.

U.S. military presence wanted to wipe out extremist Muslim rebels

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines (AP) — Officials in the southern Philippines said Tuesday they want U.S. troops to stay longer than planned to ensure Muslim extremist rebels are wiped out and planned infrastructure projects are completed.

More than 600 American military personnel are taking part in a six-month counterterrorism training exercise designed to help the Philippine military crush the Abu Sayyaf group on Basilan island. It is scheduled to end July 15

U.S. officials are also planning to improve water systems, build roads and an airstrip in the poor, predominantly Muslim island province to revive commerce and attract investment following years of fighting and high-profile crimes by the Abu Sayyaf, local government spokesperson Chris Puno said.

'We've been neglected for a long, long time and we should give the Americans enough time to help us," Puno said.

Basilan mayors are considering a request to the national government to extend the American presence by six months, he said.

National Security Adviser Roilo Golez told reporters that two U.S. senators who arrived Monday for a three-day visit are assessing how much more military aid the Philippines needs in addition to the \$100 million committed by President Bush last November.

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training, choppers, and I think that's very vital for the upgrade of our military capability," Golez said.

Tahira Ismael, mayor of Basilan's coastal town of Lantawan, said her area of more than 27,000 people has been devastated by years of violence.

'It's not just the peace and order. We badly need development," said Tahira. "Those opposing the U.S. troops do not know what we are going through here.

Left-wing groups claim the presence of the U.S. troops violates a constitutional restriction on foreign troops in this former American colony and could escalate conflict in the south, many areas of which have long been a hotbed of Muslim separatist rebellions.

Brig. Gen. Emmanuel Teodosio, director of Philippine troops in the training exercise, said U.S. military engineers may need to stay longer in Basilan if Washington proceeds with plans to finance infrastructure projects.

Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu, who heads the southern Philippine military command, said the fewer than 100 Abu Sayyaf rebels on Basilan have split into three groups to evade pursuing troops.

It is unclear whether three people kidnapped by the group —Wichita, Kan., missionaries Gracia and Martin Burnham and Filipino nurse Ediborah Yap — were separated, but indications are that the captives remain on the island.

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