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IN THIS ISSUE:

- \* Planned Parenthood to get over \$1 million in clinic case
- \* Professorship honors historian killed in car accident last year
- \* Wake Forest gets grant to shape divinity school
- \* Legislation introduced to boost charitable giving
- \* Correction
- \* Southwestern administrator takes Fellowship post
- \* Proposed redefining of Texas CP endorsed by past presidents
- \* Researcher says comparative list of public school problems is a hoax
- \* American teenagers divided on abortion
- \* American Baptist Churches of the South speak on sexual problems

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
 LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES  
 Historical Commission, SBC  
 Nashville, Tennessee

Planned Parenthood to get over \$1 million in clinic case

HOUSTON (ABP) -- A jury in Houston awarded Planned Parenthood more than \$1 million in punitive damages May 9 from groups that protested at Houston-area abortion clinics during the 1992 Republican National Convention.

The verdict, coupled with the finding last week that the groups and their leaders acted with malice, allows the judge to consider making permanent the restrictions she placed on how close protesters can demonstrate around clinics.

Planned Parenthood praised the verdict as a victory for women, but Rescue America leader Don Treshman vowed never to pay the judgment.

"We believe this is a totally invalid verdict," Treshman said, adding that it would not change anti-abortion activists' tactics. "I would go to jail rather than pay a dollar to the people who profit off the blood and mangled bodies of babies."

The verdict clears the way for District Judge Eileen F. O'Neill to make permanent the restrictions she imposed on demonstrators during the Republican National Convention nearly two years ago.

Those restrictions require protesters to maintain buffer zones around clinics and prohibit them from blocking patient entrances.

O'Neill said Friday that she likely will wait until the U.S. Supreme Court rules in the Florida case of Madsen vs. Women's Health Center, which challenges the constitutionality of buffer zones to keep protesters away from abortion clinics.

O'Neill said, however, that if the high court recesses in July before addressing the Madsen case, she will

not indefinitely postpone ruling on the restrictions.

Defense attorneys were already vowing to ask O'Neill, who they said was biased toward the plaintiffs, for a mistrial on the grounds that the jury was predisposed against their clients. They also said they will appeal the verdict.

"The judgment is a long way from being final," attorney Richard Schmude said. "I think this is a message of vindictiveness and hatred, and this will not stand."

Jurors said Treshman must pay Planned Parenthood punitive damages of \$155,000; Rescue America must pay \$355,000; Keith Tucci, former Operation Rescue leader, must pay \$150,000; and Operation Rescue \$355,000.

"All 12 of us just agreed that we wanted to assess them slightly more (than the \$1 million sought by Planned Parenthood) to make a statement ... that we would not tolerate this kind of blockade and harassment in Houston, Texas," said a juror who wished to remain anonymous. "In other words, we will not tolerate any illegal conduct."

Last week, the jury found that Treshman, Operation Rescue and Tucci had engaged in a civil conspiracy to disrupt Planned Parenthood's clinics and should be liable for a total of \$204,585 in actual damages.

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-- By Andrea D. Greene of the Houston Chronicle

Professorship honors historian  
killed in car accident last year

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP) -- A widow whose husband and daughter were killed in an automobile accident late last year has established an endowed professorship at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond in memory of her husband.

The John Loftis Chair of Church History was established with a \$250,000 gift from Deborah Carlton Loftis -- the largest donation from an individual in the seminary's three-year history.

John Loftis was the 42-year-old executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission when he and his daughter, Jessica, were killed last October. He was a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he studied church history under professor Glenn Hinson.

Hinson, who now teaches at the Richmond seminary, will be the first John Loftis Professor of Church History.

"We are deeply appreciative to Deb Loftis for this courageous gift which brings some good out of tragedy," said seminary President Thomas Graves. "It is appropriate that the establishment of this chair will enable other students to experience the gifted teaching of Glenn Hinson, who nurtured John Loftis' own love of church history."

Loftis, director of the historical commission since 1988, was a graduate of Furman University and held four degrees from Southern Seminary, including a PhD.

The money for the professorship came from a legal settlement related to the fatal accident. An additional \$20,000 was added by family and friends, and more funding is sought.

Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond was established by the Alliance of Baptists as an alternative to the Southern Baptist seminaries. The moderate-backed school receives funding from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and other sources.

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-- By Greg Warner

Wake Forest gets grant  
to shape divinity school

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (ABP) -- Wake Forest University has received a \$293,713 grant to help the school open a divinity school.

The grant will allow the university to hire a theological educator to structure the program, said Robert Spinks, development director for the divinity school. The university hopes to fill the position this summer, Spinks said.

The grant is from the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation of Philadelphia.

Wake Forest is one of a handful of Baptist-oriented universities opening divinity schools or seminaries -- a trend reflecting the recent upheaval at Southern Baptist seminaries and in theological education in general.

The Winston-Salem university began the undertaking in 1988. Although the university failed to meet the original fund-raising timetable, the project has continued.

The person to fill the new position will not become the divinity school's dean, Spinks said, but will work for a limited time to define plans for the school.

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-- By Greg Warner

Legislation introduced  
to boost charitable giving

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Hannah Hawkins wants to keep her after-school community recreation facility open to the children who need it. She claims The Charitable Contributions Encouragement Act of 1994 will enable her to do so.

The bill (H.R. 4356), introduced May 5 by Rep. Michael Huffington, R-Calif., is designed to help non-profit organizations by providing incentives for charitable giving.

Current law provides a charitable-gifts deduction for taxpayers who itemize deductions but not for those who use the standard deduction when filing income tax returns. Under Huffington's bill, taxpayers who use the standard deduction would be allowed to deduct charitable giving that exceeds 5 percent of the allowable standard deduction.

The bill also would remove a limitation on charitable deductions for high-income taxpayers.

The tax law was changed in 1990 to disallow deductions equal to 3 percent of one's income over \$100,000. The bill would keep in place the floor for other deductions, such as state and local taxes and mortgage interest, but would remove it for charitable gifts.

Hawkins, founder and director of the Children of Mine Center, said this bill would provide different solutions. Her community facility would be affected by this legislation, she said, because it relies solely on private donations.

Huffington added that the bill would affect the vast majority of Americans.

"We applaud Mr. Huffington for introducing this legislation," Brent Walker, Baptist Joint Committee general counsel, said. "Allowing non-itemizers to deduct their contributions and removing the 3 percent floor will encourage charitable giving. We simply should not tax money given away to help others."

The bill has 34 co-sponsors.

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-- By Ashley Householder

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CORRECTION: In the next to last paragraph of the May 9 ABP story "Religious Liberty Council elects...", please change the title for Alma Hunt from former president to former executive director. Thank you.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following stories were issued May 3 but never faxed on ABP.

Southwestern administrator  
takes Fellowship post

ATLANTA (ABP) -- A Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary administrator has been named a financial officer for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Gary Skeen, 41, currently is director of financial services and controller for the Fort Worth, Texas, seminary, where he has worked since 1981. Effective June 15 he will become coordinator of financial and administrative services for the Fellowship.

In the new position, created last February by the Fellowship's coordinating council, Skeen will manage all financial affairs for the Fellowship's national offices in Atlanta.

Skeen leaves Southwestern Seminary in the wake of the recent firing of the school's president, Russell Dilday, by trustees desiring a more clearly conservative administration and faculty. While Skeen admits the firing had an impact on his decision, he is not "running from Southwestern Seminary" but moving toward "an exciting opportunity to serve Baptists through an organization that I think is on the cutting edge of Christian ministry today."

Skeen grew up in Miami, Fla. He attended Baylor University in Waco, Texas, before graduating from University of South Florida in Tampa. He is a certified public accountant with an MBA degree with a concentration in finance from Dallas Baptist University.

He and his wife, Suzanne, have two children, Jonathan, 8, and Matthew, 5.

Fellowship Coordinator Cecil Sherman said Skeen's decision to join the Fellowship is "another affirmation of God's leadership in this new movement of Baptist Christians."

The Fellowship was organized in 1991 by moderate Southern Baptists seeking alternatives to a 12-year battle over control of the Southern Baptist Convention. In 1991, less than 400 churches gave a total of \$4.5 million through the Fellowship. By the end of 1993, annual receipts had grown to more than \$11.2 million, with more than 1,200 churches contributing.

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-- By Bob Allen

Proposed redefining of Texas CP  
endorsed by past presidents

DALLAS (ABP) -- A proposal that would alter the way Texas Baptists count Cooperative Program receipts has been endorsed by two past state convention presidents.

A special committee studying missions giving for the Baptist General Convention of Texas has not finalized its work but is reportedly leaning toward a proposal that would require churches sending cooperative

missions gifts to the state convention to designate if any of those funds are to be spent outside Texas and how.

Currently, and since 1925, state convention funds are automatically divided between Texas causes and the Southern Baptist Convention unless the contributing churches direct otherwise. The SBC now receives 37 cents of every undesignated dollar sent to the Texas convention.

Under the proposed change, churches could ask that their gifts continue to be divided between Texas and SBC causes. But they also would have new options, like the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a moderate organization offering alternatives to SBC programs, or they could pick and choose among various entities categorized as "worldwide Baptist causes."

Past Texas convention presidents Dick Maples and Phil Lineberger issued a statement endorsing the idea after it was reported in the Baptist Standard newspaper.

The two presidents hailed the plan as "completely fair to all Texas Baptists," whether they support the SBC enthusiastically or are among longtime supporters who "are struggling" with that affiliation under recent, conservative SBC leadership.

"Texas Baptists are fragmented regarding the SBC, its leadership and budget," said Maples, BGCT president 1992-93 and pastor of First Baptist Church of Bryan. Most Texas Baptists "want out of politics," he continued. The proposal "is a way of doing that while respecting the autonomy of each church as well as the autonomy of this state convention."

Lineberger, president 1990-91 and pastor of First Baptist Church of Tyler, said the plan "respects Baptist polity" by permitting but not requiring participation beyond the Texas convention.

The two presidents predicted the plan would unify Texas Baptists around the state's leadership and mission vision, diminishing distraction by national controversy.

Current Texas convention president Jerold McBride, pastor of First Baptist Church of San Angelo, appointed the 22-member "cooperative missions giving committee" after messengers at the 1993 state convention adopted a motion by Amarillo pastor Ben Loring calling for the study.

Loring, pastor of First Baptist Church, told the committee in April that his church was a longtime leader in gifts to the Cooperative Program -- the unified budget plan for the state and national conventions -- before deciding in 1990, because of displeasure with SBC leadership, to begin sending its global missions gifts to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship for distribution.

Even with that change, Loring said, the church sent about \$189,000 to Southern Baptist agencies last year through a Fellowship plan that funds SBC mission boards and other entities. That was more than the amount of undesignated Cooperative Program gifts from Second Baptist Church of Houston, where SBC president Ed Young is pastor, Loring said. But, he said, the Amarillo church feels its gifts to the Texas convention are "devalued" because they are not counted as "cooperative" gifts.

Maples and Lineberger said many Texas churches are made to feel disloyal if they choose to circumvent the "approved budget" which seems to exist in the current system.

To think that churches can return to the day when they supported unified budgeting unreservedly "is to deny the facts," they said.

The proposed plan "respects everyone's point of view," they said. "This plan would allow us to cooperate in things we agree on and to respect everyone's differences beyond the state convention," they added.

Not everyone embraces the change. Former Texas pastor Morris Chapman, now president of the SBC Executive Committee, warned the proposal is a drastic departure from the traditional understanding of Cooperative Program as the unified budget for both the national and state Baptist conventions. Chapman said the plan "would be an open invitation" for churches unhappy with moderate leadership in Texas to support SBC missions and ministries directly, bypassing the state convention altogether.

Researcher says comparative list  
of public school problems is a hoax

By Mark Wingfield

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (ABP) -- Ever hear the one about the survey comparing problems facing public school teachers in 1940 and today?

According to this report, simple school problems of the '40s, such as gum chewing, talking and running in the halls, have been replaced by the modern problems of drug abuse, pregnancy, suicide, rape and robbery.

Various versions of this list have been cited by leading figures of the Religious Right, as well as prominent news media figures, as evidence of the decline in American public education. It has been repeated by William Bennett, Joycelyn Elders, Ross Perot, Tom Selleck, Dear Abby, Ann Landers, Rush Limbaugh, Tim LaHaye, Sen. John Glenn, George Will, The Wall Street Journal, CBS News and Newsweek.

But the survey is a hoax, says Barry O'Neill, associate professor in the school of organization and management at Yale University. In a copyrighted article published in The New York Times Magazine, O'Neill outlines how he traced the oft-repeated data to its original source.

That source appears to be Cullen Davis, a Texas millionaire who gained national prominence in the late 1970s when he was charged and later acquitted of killing his step-daughter and the lover of his estranged wife.

Soon after that sensational trial, Davis turned to Christianity and became associated with Texas televangelist James Robison.

O'Neill says Davis "constructed the lists and passed them around to other fundamentalists" sometime around 1982. "They weren't done from a scientific survey," Davis admitted in O'Neill's article.

Based on further research, O'Neill asserts that Davis actually copied his original lists from two different places. As Davis' lists circulated far and wide, they often were changed by others to fit the occasion, O'Neill says.

The list of 1940s problems -- such as gum chewing, running in the halls and talking -- appears to have been pulled from a 1943 list in a Texas teachers' magazine, O'Neill says, "and fits with dozens of old research reports collecting teachers' most common classroom problems."

The list of modern-day problems, however, can be traced to a survey by the National Center for Education Statistics, which asked principals whether certain crimes had occurred in their schools in the 1974-75 school year. O'Neill says the list of possible crimes on the questionnaire -- which are not the results of any scientific survey -- became Davis' list of most-common problems in public schools.

"Davis' modern list is made up not of survey answers but of the questions," O'Neill concludes.

According to O'Neill, Davis explains the origin of the list this way: "How did I know what the offenses in the schools were in 1940? I was there. How do I know what they are now? I read the newspapers."

The original list Davis created contained 20 problems plaguing public schools today. However, that list later was pared to seven by others who passed it on.

Davis' original 20 ills were rape, robbery, assault, personal theft, burglary, drug abuse, arson, bombings, alcohol abuse, carrying of weapons, absenteeism, vandalism, murder, extortion, gang warfare, pregnancies, abortions, suicide, venereal disease, and lying and cheating.

Despite the fact that some of those crimes obviously are not occurring on a wide scale -- bombings, for example -- Davis' list gained more credibility each time it was repeated. After time, O'Neill asserts, even the normally skeptical media had heard the list repeated so often they blindly assumed it was authentic.

O'Neill concludes that the lists have been attractive to Americans because they constitute a "collective moan of anxiety over the gap between ideals and reality" in modern American life.

divided on abortion

PRINCETON, N.J. (ABP) -- American teens are nearly evenly divided over the issue of abortion rights, but a majority believe teens should have to obtain parental consent before having an abortion.

These are among reports published in the first edition of "Youth Views," to be produced 10 times a year by the George Gallup International Institute. The newsletter is based on findings from the Gallup Youth Survey.

The percentage of American teens who say they favor abortion rights has remained steady at 47 percent since 1991, the newsletter reports. However, the percentage of American teens who believe all abortion should be outlawed has dropped from 44 percent in 1991 to 37 percent in 1993. The remaining 9 percent in 1991 and 16 percent in 1993 are either undecided or take a position somewhere between the two extremes.

Among demographic breakdowns on the abortion question, the newsletter says:

- There is no significant difference in attitudes between male and female teens.
- Teens ages 13-15 are more divided over abortion rights than teens ages 16-17.
- Young Catholics are more likely to favor abortion rights than young Protestants.
- Support for abortion is weakest in the South, while strongest in the East.

"Taken together, these statistics seem to indicate that the abortion debate is just as thorny for younger Americans as for older Americans, and just as divisive," writes newsletter editor Wendy Plump. "The youngest group of teens is the most evenly divided of all, guaranteeing that the abortion debate will rage on for the foreseeable future."

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American Baptist Churches of the South  
greet churches, speak on sexual problems

By Jack Harwell

RALEIGH, N.C. (ABP) -- American Baptist Churches of the South welcomed nine churches into its fellowship, spoke out against national policies on Haiti and Cuba, and took steps toward setting a procedure to deal redemptively with ministers suspected of sexual misconduct.

The actions came during the group's annual meeting in Raleigh, N.C. About 455 delegates, plus visitors and observers, attended. American Baptist Churches of the South is a regional component of the American Baptist Churches, a denomination historically centered in the North.

The addition of the nine congregations brings to 277 the number of member churches in the regional group, which stretches from Maryland to Texas. Total membership in these 277 churches is about 300,000.

Walter Parrish, who was honored on his 15th anniversary as their executive minister of the organization, presented delegates a strong statement about American policy toward Haiti and Cuba. He urged ministers and church members to speak to members of Congress about "current U.S. policies concerning interdiction and summary repatriation of Haitian boat people without providing them with an opportunity to present their claims for asylum."

Parrish voiced support for President Bill Clinton's efforts to "encourage restoration of a lasting democratic government to Haiti." But he said, "until that is accomplished, we call upon the president to take immediate action to reverse the current policy and institute one which is more humane and just toward Haitian refugees."

The Parrish statement also articulated "our concern and support for our brothers and sisters in Cuba who, in increasing numbers and at great peril, have also taken to the sea to seek refuge in the USA." Parrish urged member churches to consider sponsoring refugee families or, "if feasible, ministering to a refugee in some other way."

The matter of sexual misconduct in the ministry came to the floor in the form of a draft proposal of a plan

being crafted by the group's general board. Member churches will give reaction to the document between now and November, when the general board meets in Washington, DC, to give final approval to the policy statement.

The plan calls for any person knowing of sexual misconduct on the part of a minister to report that charge to the executive minister, to an area minister, or to the president of the ministers' council. Formal investigation into the charges must begin within 30 days. The charged person will then be notified in writing of accusations against them, with their right to "advocates" or counsel being spelled out.

It is envisioned that the entire process must be completed within one year, with the purpose of "ministering to ministers and the need for justice, forgiveness and reconciliation of persons who are involved in situations of sexual misconduct. This concern extends to the person who has been harmed, the one who has harmed and the churches, families and friends affected by the misconduct."

Delegates also sanctioned a goal of starting seven churches by 1995 and approved \$20,000 for a new church in Bradenton, Fla., and \$18,000 for a new church in West Palm Beach, Fla.

At a luncheon honoring Parrish, Margaret Ann Cowden brought a message on leadership and renewal. Cowden, deputy executive director of the ABC Ministers and Missionaries Board of Retirement, said leaders "must not be committed to a ministry of maintenance," despite the fact economic realities dictate many decisions.

"It is hard to be a prophet in a not-for-profit group," Cowden said. "It is not easy to be an American Baptist; it is a mandate to change. We must dismantle some powerful structures which deprive people from full and rightful participation in the vision of freedom called the American way."

Samuel Proctor, pastor emeritus of the historic Abbasyinian Baptist Church in Harlem, N.Y., declared: "We're witnessing decay from within America. We see neglect of our cities, under-education of our children, failure to speak up for the chronically ill who cannot speak for themselves."

"Our country desperately needs renewal, and we in the churches are specialists in the renewal business," said Proctor, now guest professor of theology at Duke Divinity School in Durham, NC.

"If we don't get out and change some things, we are going to see some awful social changes in our country that we can't imagine. Our people are not going to let these social evils exist much longer."

Delegates re-elected Frederick Weimert to a second term as their president. Weimert is pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Towson, Md. All other major officers were also re-elected.

ABCOTS will hold its 25th anniversary meeting in Washington, DC, April 18-21, 1995.