

NATION & WORLD

Civil libertarians worried about new school security measures

BY RICHARD CARELLI
ASSOCIATED PRESS

INMATE
from page 5

while driving to paint a mural in downtown Trenton on Dec. 17, 1992.

Simon was sentenced to death after he pleaded guilty to killing Franklin Township police officer Ippolito Gonzalez. He later recanted the guilty plea, saying he had made it to protect a fellow member of his Warlocks motorcycle gang. The state Supreme Court, however, upheld Simon's death sentence last month.

Simon was paroled from a Pennsylvania prison 11 weeks before Gonzalez was killed. He had served 12 1/2 years of a 10- to 20-year sentence for killing his 19-year-old girlfriend, Beth Smith Dusenberg, after she refused to have sex with fellow gang members.

The Warlocks terrorized people in the '70s with hundreds of members, and Simon was particularly feared, former Pennsylvania trooper William Davis said in 1995.

"He was a sociopath. He showed no remorse," Davis said at the time. "He didn't care. He was unpredictable. He had a sick sense of humor. He looked like he belonged in the Viking days. You plunder and kill, and everything's OK, and the strong survive. He was ill-tempered and dangerous. You didn't know what he'd do from one day to the next."

The judge who handled the trial in the death of Ms. Dusenberg, John Lavelle, said in 1995 that dozens of Warlocks circled the courthouse on their motorcycles each day and frightened the jurors, possibly leading to the conviction of only second-degree murder.

EARTHQUAKE
from page 5

Mount Parnes, which is a national park and sparsely inhabited.

The quake was felt across the Aegean Sea in Izmir, Turkey, about 180 miles east of Athens.

In Athens, people sought safety anywhere clear of buildings: on road median strips, parking lots and in the National Garden in central Athens. The gardens were near the site of a concert planned for later in the day to aid victims of last month's monstrous quake in neighboring Turkey that claimed more than 15,000 lives. That quake registered a magnitude of 7.4.

"Everyone panicked, especially because of the recent Turkish quake," said Dimitris Lalas, head of the Athens Seismological Institute.

Some women dashed out of beauty salons, their hair still wet. Men bolted from their offices in the middle of a working day. Thousands tried to get through on cellular phones. Others sought out public telephones or huddled around radios at sidewalk kiosks.

Motorcycle and scooter drivers were knocked to the ground.

"We had a very strong shock," said George Skordilis, a seismologist with the Athens Seismological Institute. "There has been aftershock activity but we can't make any forecasts."

Skordilis said there was no clear connection with the Turkish quake, but "we can say there is increased earthquake activity in the eastern Mediterranean."

WASHINGTON — As schools reopen with greatly increased security, civil libertarians say concern for students' safety is overwhelming students' rights.

"It's unbelievable, on an unprecedented scale," said Nadine Strossen, national president of the American Civil Liberties Union. "We're seeing the equivalent of Fortress America, and students' privacy rights and freedom of speech are under attack from within."

Bloody tragedies, especially the April incident in which two students at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo., gunned down a dozen classmates and a teacher before killing themselves, left an indelible mark.

Police officers, metal detectors, student ID cards and surveillance cameras are new to schools across the nation. So are routine backpack searches, increased use of drug tests, stricter dress codes and less tolerance for schoolyard taunts or threats.

The ACLU, aggressively challenging policies in many public school districts, might be fighting an uphill battle.

"In the wake of increasing violence, courts seem to have become more deferential to school districts' genuine concern for student safety and security," said Cynthia Prettyman, general counsel for Palm Beach County, Fla., schools. "Students still have rights, and I'm sure the ACLU will stay on top of this, but any legal challenge will face a high hurdle."

Still, some students have won.

In Allen, Texas, senior Jennifer Boccia is back in school after having last spring's suspension expunged from her record.

She and nine other students wore black armbands to class to mourn the Columbine victims and to protest new rules imposed in their school as a result. Jennifer, an honors student, was suspended after defying an order to remove the armband.

"The school district just would not acknowledge that the First Amendment applies to students," said Diana Philip, an ACLU regional director in Dallas. "We had to take them to court before an agreement could be reached."

Ray Vasvari, legal director of the Ohio ACLU, cited two "invasions of student rights" that were challenged successfully. In one, a Stow boy was suspended from classes for a personal Web site titled "Stow High School Sucks." In another, a Youngstown area high school sought to administer drug tests for all students participating in extracurricular activities.

"The post-Columbine reaction is regrettable," Vasvari said. "When rights are whittled away, they tend not to return."

In Mississippi, the Harrison County School Board rescinded a policy that barred a Jewish boy from wearing his Star of David pendant after the ACLU sued on his behalf. School officials had considered it a gang symbol.

Julie Underwood, general counsel of the National School Boards Association, said school districts are well-served by programs em-

phasizing "culture and climate — how people treat each other, whether a respectful learning environment exists."

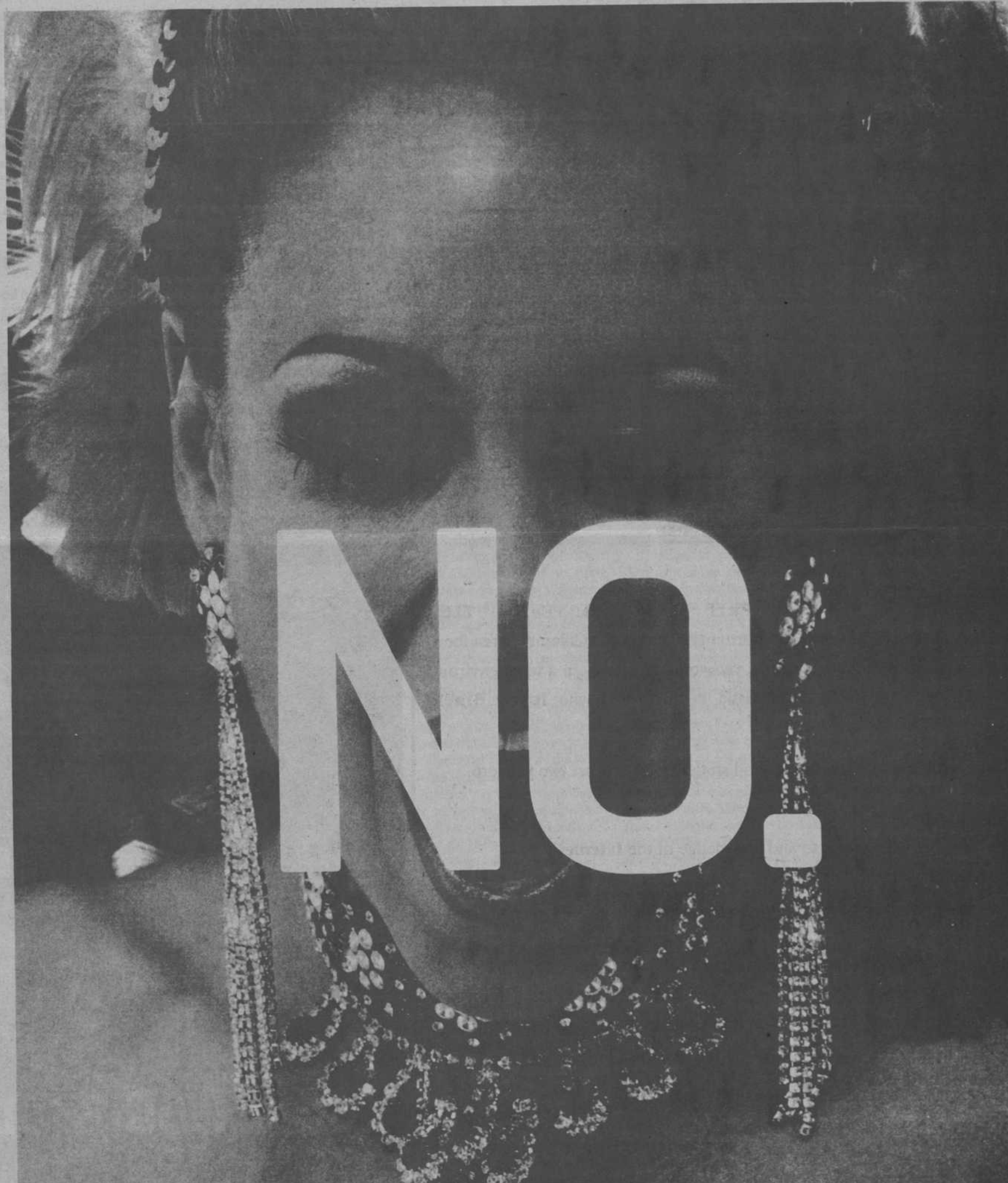
"We routinely get called for advice after a problem arises, after some policy is challenged," she said. "We would like to field such calls earlier-on."

Here, in question and answer form, is a look at what rights students have:

Q: Students are just kids. Why do they have any rights?
A: Children, like adults, have legal rights. The Supreme Court, dating back to a landmark 1969 decision, has said students who attend public schools do not surrender all constitutional rights at the schoolhouse door. For example, the court has said school officials can't squelch students' freedom of speech based on "a mere desire to avoid the discomfort and unpleasantness that always accompany an unpopular viewpoint."

Q: What about students' privacy rights?
A: The Constitution's Fourth Amendment, which protects against unreasonable searches and seizures, applies in public schools, but school officials get more leeway than police. And school searches of lockers and backpacks, even the use of metal detectors, are much easier to justify when the target is illegal drugs or weapons.

Still, courts generally require "individualized suspicion" in certain circumstances, barring school officials from searching all students in a room just because one of them might have stolen some money or smuggled in a pack of cigarettes.



IF YOU'RE A VEGAS SHOWGIRL, THEN YOU'RE PROBABLY NOT A STUDENT
AND IF YOU'RE NOT A STUDENT, THEN YOU CAN'T BUY AT WWW.EDU.COM

Introducing edu.com, the first store on the web where only students can save up to 70% on name brand computers, software, textbooks, and more, every day. Tough luck Yanda.

edu.com
students get it™

DID YOU KNOW?

A first conviction DUI in the state of South Carolina costs an average of \$13,500. Your drivers license is suspended for 6 months.

Just think of what you could do with all of that money!



You could go to the movies 2,350 times! (1,175 times with a date!)

Drinking & Driving: Is it really worth the price?

