

NATION & WORLD

Four teens plead innocent for alleged school rampage plan

BY THOMAS J. SHEERAN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

CLEVELAND — Four white ninth-graders accused of making plans for a racially motivated rampage at their predominantly black high school pleaded innocent on Sunday and were sent back to a juvenile lockup.

The boys, one 14 and the rest 15, were accompanied by their parents and arraigned separately before Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court Magistrate Dick Walsh in closed hearings.

They allegedly planned to set off bombs and open fire on classmates at noon last Friday.

The hearings were in a room on the ground floor of the Cuyahoga County Detention Center.

The four will continue to be held there.

They were kept out of sight from the public.

Reporters were allowed to see the hearing room, but were ushered outside the building before the arraignments began.

Larry Zukerman, an attorney representing one boy, emerged from the arraignments upset that the names and photos of the boys have appeared in print and on television.

Juvenile court proceedings, by law, are confidential in Ohio.

"The identities of the juveniles are supposed to remain confidential," Zukerman said.

er man said.

Dan Bailey said after the arraignment for his stepson, Adam Gruber, that the boy is well-behaved, respectful and would never get involved in violence.

"He's dealing with it the way any 14-year-old boy would," he said. "He's fairly high-spirited, and his feelings are hurt not being at home. This is his family. He's got a lot of brothers and sisters that love him."

Adam was charged because his name was on a school map, with shooting locations marked, that was seized from another suspect, Bailey said.

"My son was not caught with a map. He was not caught with a firearm. He was not caught with bomb-making materials," Bailey said.

Authorities said a school map marked with shooting locations and comments reported by classmates convinced them that the threat was real.

Two weapons were found at one boy's home during a series of police searches on Friday.

The plan was never carried out at South High School, which was closed Friday as a precaution.

Classes will resume Monday under tightened security at the 1,500-pupil school.

The boys felt alienated and at least part of their motive was race, said Mayor Michael R. White.

South High is 70 percent black.

Federal agencies say they'll be ready for Y2K

BY JIM ABRAMS
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The Social Security Administration is readying jet-fueled generators, the Internal Revenue Service is prepared to write tax refund checks manually and the Pentagon is sharing secrets with the Russians as part of a government effort to avoid crises related to the Y2K computer problem.

IRS chief information officer Paul Cosgrave, questioned at a House hearing Friday about concerns that the tax agency was prone to Y2K disruptions, gave assurances that systems are ready and no one will lose a refund check.

Federal agencies are given high marks for fixing computers so they won't misread the year 2000 for 1900, a mistake that could cause widespread computer breakdowns. Friday's hearing focused on the contingency plans the agencies have for unexpected problems and what they'll be doing just before and after the new year.

The White House office on the Y2K problem, headed by John Koskinen, is to run an information coordination center to monitor developments in the public and private sectors as the new year begins. Most agencies will have command centers to assure a smooth transition to the new millennium.

John Dyer of the Social Security Administration said his agency will take its system off-line Dec. 30 to allow the collection of all 1999 computer transactions, and that just before midnight on the 31st, the main data center in Bal-

timore will switch to jet-fueled generators to guard against electrical surges.

Dr. Martin Langston, the Defense Department's top Y2K official, said the on-duty staff will be boosted by up to 10 percent in the New Year period. Russian military officials will arrive in Colorado Springs, Colo., on Dec. 22 for a joint exercise aimed at assuring that problems in early warning tracking systems don't lead to mistaken perceptions that the other side has launched a missile.

Norman Lorentz, chief technology officer of the Postal Service, said the mail agency has placed a freeze on all computer systems changes through March. Postal officials expect more people to mail letters because of concerns about the reliability of computer e-mail.

Joel Willemsen of the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress, said the Education Department is encouraging schools to obtain information before Jan. 1 so it won't have problems in determining student financial aid eligibility.

The Veterans Affairs Department has suggested that its hospitals prepare bottled water and stock waterless soap for the possibility that water supplies are interrupted.

Cosgrave said the IRS has been working for about 15 years on the problem of highly decentralized records in some 800,000 pieces of equipment, with the accuracy rate now increased to 90 percent.

New evidence suggests first Americans might have crossed the Atlantic

BY JOSEPH VERRENGIA
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SANTA FE, N.M. — In a radical new view of pre-history, two prominent archeologists say North America's first inhabitants might have crossed the icy Atlantic Ocean some 18,000 years ago from Europe's Iberian Peninsula.

The theory, presented at a weekend conference, is at odds with the long-held notion that the continent's first settlers came across a land bridge from Asia.

The conventional view is the stuff of college entrance exams and Far Side cartoons — wandering cavemen wrapped in animal hides and lugging enormous spears, crossing the land bridge from Asia to hunt woolly mammoths.

Archeologists say some nomads almost certainly made their way into Alaska and found an ice-free highway down into the continent some 13,500 years ago. Their culture has been named Clovis for their distinctive weapons that have been

found in digs nationwide.

But according to the new theory, the continent's first inhabitants might have crossed the Atlantic more than 18,000 years ago from Europe's Iberian Peninsula — the area that's now Spain, Portugal and southwestern France.

Belonging to a group known as the Solutreans, these pre-modern explorers are believed to have originally settled the Eastern Seaboard, according to the researchers. Over the next six millennia, their hunting-and-gathering culture might have spread as far as the American deserts and Canadian tundra, and perhaps into South America.

The researchers, Dennis Stanford and Bruce Bradley, concede that the Solutreans might not have been the only paleo-explorers to reach the Western Hemisphere.

But judging by their distinctive style of projectile points and other clues in the archeological record, they might have been the first settlers who

brought to North America what, until now, has been considered the Clovis culture.

"There is very little in Clovis — in fact, nothing — that is not found in Solutrea," said Stanford, who is anthropology curator at the Smithsonian Institution. "Their blades are virtually indistinguishable."

Stanford and Bradley, an independent researcher from Cortez, Colo., offered their stunning reinterpretation of the standard settlement theory at an archeology conference in Santa Fe.

The meeting was devoted to re-examining Clovis research seven decades after it was accepted as historical bedrock.

Other scientists say the Solutrean alternative is such a radical departure that it might take years to adequately evaluate. Stanford and Bradley's new explanation, they noted, is based primarily on comparisons of projectile points and other artifacts already discovered on both


sides of the Atlantic.

No unequivocal Solutrean settlement remains have been found in North America, they said.

Researchers who believe that Clovis and the Bering Sea land-bridge theory is outdated point to sites at Monte Verde, Chile as well as Pennsylvania, Virginia and South Carolina as being settled in 12,500 B.C. to 16,000 B.C.

But Clovis defenders say many artifacts from those digs are so crude that they might be rocks that have broken naturally rather than actual stone tools fashioned by prehistoric hands.

Still, observers said, the older Solutrean projectile points from Europe and the more recent Clovis points from the Americas closely resemble each other. That's what makes the new "Out of Iberia" theory so tantalizing.



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