

Polygamous Mormon group pulls children out of school

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLORADO CITY, Ariz. —Hundreds of members of a polygamous Mormon splinter group have pulled their children out of the public schools along the Utah-Arizona state line — preparing, perhaps, for the end of the world.

Only about 350 students have enrolled in the four schools

in the desert towns of Colorado City and Hildale, Utah, compared with 1,400 last year. Dozens of teachers belonging to the Fundamental Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have also quit.

They acted at the direction of Warren Jeffs, who speaks on behalf of his aged father, Rulon Jeffs, the church's prophet. In mid-July, Warren Jeffs ordered

followers to take their children out of school and cut off contact with former church members.

Church members said they are taking charge of their children's education and schooling them at home, just like other parents across the country.

Other people, particularly former members, said that Jeffs's followers are preparing for the apocalypse their leaders say is at hand.

DeLoy Bateman, a former church member and a science teacher at the Colorado City high school, said church leaders are preaching that the towns will be lifted into heaven with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Around the twin communities, the End of Days is rumored to be either a few days or a few months away.

In a statement issued through their Salt Lake City attorney, the Jeffses said: "The Fundamental Church and its officers have not made any predictions in regard to the exact date of the Second Coming."

"It has long been the teaching of the church that no man knows the hour or the date of that event."

The twin towns were settled in the late 1800s by ranchers who followed the Mormon doctrine of polygamy. In 1890, the

mainstream church disavowed the practice of plural marriage under pressure from the federal government, which threatened to refuse Utah statehood if it didn't.

But some people have clung to the practice — among them the fundamentalist sect, founded in 1929 — and have been excommunicated by the Mormon Church as a result.

Polygamy remains illegal, though it largely goes unpunished, a crime prosecutors say is difficult to prove and usually victimless. Still, members of the sect are wary of outsiders and hostile to those who have broken with the faith.

Church leaders are said to have prophesied several dates for the Second Coming, only to see them come and go.

In 1993, Rulon Jeffs told high school graduates not to attend college since the world would end before they could finish, according to Bateman.

Since the start of the school year two weeks ago, many classrooms have been nearly empty.

Attendance was down so much at one middle school that authorities closed it and sent the remaining youngsters to another school.

Most of the sect's youngsters are being schooled at home

instead.

Colorado City Mayor Dan Barlow, a church member, said the decree issued in July was merely "a suggestion that people take that responsibility for themselves." He started home-schooling his children a year ago.

"I just felt like I could do much better teaching them the things I know and give them some spiritual teaching as well," he said.

Rulon and Warren Jeffs live in large gated homes in Hildale and are said to have dozens of wives.

Lenore Holm, a former member, said Warren Jeffs moved back to Hildale from Salt Lake City about two years ago and has been tightening his grip on the flock, arranging marriages with young women — sometimes as young as 15 — and driving those who challenge him, like Holm, out of the church.

About six months ago, Holm said, she refused to let her 16-year-old daughter become the second wife of a 39-year-old handyman who did work on Warren Jeffs' home.

She said the church excommunicated her and is trying to evict her and her 10 children living at home.

Court rules ASUN must revise bylaw

RESULTS from page 1

The bill could appear on the agenda as early as a week but could easily take longer, he said.

ASUN Human Rights Committee Chairwoman Angela Clements said she has no plans as of now to introduce legislation for or against the Defense of Marriage Amendment.

The committee has not discussed the issue, but the Sexual Orientation Advisory Council has spoken about it, she said.

Clements' actions are contingent on if and how the bylaws are revised and whether they are passed by the senate, she said.

With the general election less than nine weeks away, Clements said she was unsure if it would be worth the senate's time to make a decision on the issue.

Because the Defense of Marriage Amendment and ASUN's involvement in it is controversial, senators may spend too much time debating the issue rather than looking at other topics important to students.

"We're still trying to decide if ASUN is the right route," she said.

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BY LINDSEY BAKER

March 2001 may bring some more vacancies for the university. At least in the art scene.

With the opening of the Eisentrager/Howard Gallery in the newly renovated Richards Hall, the Nebraska Union's Rotunda Gallery will most likely see a drop in the number of stu-

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dent art displays, said Joseph Ruffo, art and art history chairman.

"I won't see a need to book (student art shows) in the Rotunda," Ruffo said, adding that any students still interested in displaying art at the Rotunda in addition to the Eisentrager/Howard Gallery could contact Rotunda management.

The Rotunda Gallery in the Union, dedicated in April 1999, began exhibiting student art when Richards Hall closed for renovation in March 1999.

Daryl Swanson, director of the Nebraska Unions, said the gallery filled the void of places to exhibit student art.

"It was just happenstance that it opened at the same time they were closing Richards Hall," Swanson said. "It was just perfect

for us to go and ask (the art department) to bring student art down here."

But the gallery is open to anyone who wants to exhibit their work, Rotunda supervisor Karen Wills said.

Any department interested in displaying student works can contact student involvement to set up an exhibit, Wills said.

Architecture models, fashion projects, traveling exhibits and even biology models could all be prospective exhibits, Wills said.

"Art is different in everyone's eyes," she said. "Anything and everything can fit in there."

Swanson added that some departments may want to bring in an artist in residence.

"There are all kinds of possibilities we haven't even explored yet," he said.

Currently, the Judaic Studies

department is sponsoring an exhibit of paintings by Fay Grajower titled "Stones & Scrolls" in the Rotunda.

Swanson said student-produced art should be appearing soon.

"Student art is generally not available (this early in the year)," he said, stating that student art usually comes in sometime during October.

Wills and Swanson hope that the Rotunda will constantly have exhibits now that it is open.

"My objective would be to have something hanging in the gallery 50 weeks out of the year," he said. "That's probably unrealistic."

Student response to the Rotunda exhibits has been generally positive, Wills said.

Some students say they hope student art will continue to appear in the Rotunda even after the Eisentrager/Howard Gallery opens.

"If students put art (in the Rotunda), more people who aren't art students would come and see it," said Emily Chen, a freshman marketing major.

John-Paul Wilson, a freshman math and physics major, said he liked the idea of different departments displaying artwork in the Rotunda.

"I think it's a good idea to let departments take turns putting exhibitions in there," he said.

The Rotunda Gallery, on the first floor of the Nebraska Union, is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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