

Friday, February 17, 2006

1. DOVER EFFECT: HAS INTELLIGENT DESIGN SUFFERED A MORTAL WOUND?

The Ohio Board of Education voted 11 to 4 on Tuesday to scrap a requirement that "critical analysis of evolution" be taught in biology classes. Ohio's "critical analysis" ploy for teaching intelligent design had been hailed by The Discovery Institute as a model for the entire nation. Rejection by the Education Board came as a direct consequence of the Dover ruling by U.S. District Court Judge John E. Jones III: teaching ID is unconstitutional ([WN 23 Dec 05](#)). A Discovery Institute spokesman publicly scoffed that the Dover ruling was not binding elsewhere, but Judge Jones expanded the blast radius by awarding damages to the parents who brought suit. That got the attention of school boards. The Discovery Institute has bet the farm on selling ID as science, but the Dover effect has blunted it in California, Indiana and Wisconsin, and now Ohio.

2. EVOLUTION SUNDAY: CHRISTIAN CHURCHES HONORING CHARLES DARWIN?

Go on! Yes, Sunday was the 197th birthday of Charles Darwin. At 450 churches around the nation it was celebrated with sermons and programs that mingle biological evolution and faith. Something is happening. The public is getting an unprecedented exposure to evolution in books, museum exhibits, and news programs. Coming soon to a theater near you is Flock of Dodos. Film maker and marine biologist Randy Olsen has made a movie about evolution and intelligent design <http://www.flockofdodos.com>. It has what fundamentalists all lack a sense of humor. And we owe it all to the Discovery Institute and intelligent design.

3. MELTING: GLACIERS IN GREENLAND ARE RAPIDLY BECOMING OCEAN.

New data from satellite imagery show the glaciers to be melting twice as fast as they were a decade ago, according to a report in today's Science. The study focused on the rate of glacial ice flow. Meanwhile, NASA's budget is focused on finishing the ISS, which everyone now seems to agree is pointless, and preparations for the Moon/Mars, which is equally pointless and won't happen anyway. NASA's Deep Space Climate Observatory, which was waiting to be launched and would have given unique insight into global warming, is terminated because it had Al Gore's Initials on it ([WN 6 Jan 06](#)).

4. ENVIRONMENT: EPA TO SHUT DOWN LIBRARY NETWORK AND E-CATALOG.

The Bush budget cut the EPA's \$2.5M library network budget by 80%. Well, you gotta cut someplace. Yesterday, Bush asked for another \$72B for the war on terror and \$20B for Katrina relief.

5. ARMED AND DANGEROUS: DOMESTIC SURVEILLANCE CONNECTS THE DOTS.

Why was the White House so secretive about a Texas quail hunt and what happened to Vivy, the champion whippet, in Kennedy Airport? The NSA put it all together: The Vice President shot the whippet.

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