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GRAND SLAM



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Vicious Puppies does some break dancing during a break at the 2012 Youth Speaks Poetry Grand Slam Friday, April 13, at the Neptune Theatre.

Georgia 6-Yr.-Old Arrested

Handcuff case renews school policing debate

By Jeri Clausing
The Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — A New Mexico teacher asked a 13-year-old girl to stop talking with her friend and move to another seat. The girl refused. The teacher called the police.

The case is among thousands across the country fueling a long-simmering debate over when educators should bring in the police to deal with disruptive students. A 6-year-old Georgia kindergartner became the latest test case last week when she was hauled off in steel handcuffs after throwing books and toys in a school tantrum.

(See The Skanner News' series 'The School to Prison Pipeline,' <http://www.theskanner.com/article/Suspensions-and-Expulsions-of-Black-Students-The-School-to-Prison-Pipeline-2012-03-06>)

"Kids are being arrested for being kids," said Shannon Kennedy, a civil rights attorney who has filed a class-action lawsuit against Albuquerque's public school district and its police department on behalf of hundreds of kids arrested for minor offenses over the past few years, including having cellphones in class, destroying a history book and inflating a condom.

Police were put in many schools across the country in the 1990s in response to zero tolerance policies and tragedies like the Columbine High massacre. But many overwhelmed teachers and principals began turning to those officers to handle disciplinary issues that in years past would have landed students in detention.

Frustrated teachers aren't getting enough support from above to deal with increasingly extreme student behavior, from sexual harassment in elementary school to children throwing furniture, said Ellen Bernstein, president of the Albuquerque teachers' union.

"There is more chronic and extreme disre-

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Accused Soldier Takes the Fifth

Bales won't participate in military 'sanity board' without lawyer

By Gene Johnson
The Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — The U.S. soldier charged in the shooting deaths of 17 Afghan villagers last month will not participate in an Army review aimed at determining his mental state, his attorney said Friday.

Staff Sgt. Robert Bales was expected to face what's called a "sanity board" examination by Army doctors from Walter Reed Army Medical Center, seeking to establish whether he's com-

petent to stand trial and what his mental state was at the time of the March 11 pre-dawn massacre in two southern Afghanistan villages.

But his civilian lawyer, John Henry Browne, said Friday he instructed Bales to invoke his Fifth Amendment right to remain silent because the Army will not allow Bales to have an attorney at the sanity board review and will not allow the examination to be recorded. The Army also rejected his request to have a neuropsychologist on

the board, Browne said.

"A member of the military does not give up constitutional rights by being in the military," Browne wrote in an email to reporters. "Since the defense will have no way to know questions asked or answers given, Sgt. Bales' civilian attorneys have instructed him to invoke his Fifth Amendment right to remain silent and NOT participate in the sanity board process, particularly since his Sixth Amendment right to counsel has been denied during the board

process."

Maj. Chris Ophardt, a spokesman at Joint Base Lewis-McChord south of Seattle, said that typically, such examinations are not recorded and defendants do not have their lawyers present. Such proceedings are medical, not legal, he said.

"They want to make sure the board can ask the questions they need to ask to make a fair determination, without any outside influence," Ophardt said.

String of Child Shootings Continues

Officer's 10-year-old daughter shoots self with dad's duty weapon

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — The 10-year-old daughter of a veteran Spokane police officer was in stable condition after shooting herself in the leg on Easter with her father's duty weapon, authorities said.

Officer Barry O'Connell, an 18-year veteran of the Police Department, has taken time off to care for his daughter. When he returns, he will be assigned to desk duty while an investigation by Spokane County

sheriff's detectives is under way, police said.

The girl was at the family home Sunday when she shot herself in the leg, sheriff's Deputy Craig Chamberlin said. She was taken to a hospital.

Detectives have not determined how she got the gun or where it was before the shooting, Chamberlin said.

"We are gathering all the facts to make a

determination if there was anything criminal," he said.

After the sheriff's investigation is complete, O'Connell will face an internal Police Department investigation into possible policy violations, police Officer Jennifer DeRuwe said.

This is the fourth reported child shooting

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