

Depression hikes risk of Alzheimer's

CHICAGO — Depressed people are more likely to develop Alzheimer's disease, two studies say. One report claims chronic stress could cause brain damage.

"Depression truly is a risk factor for Alzheimer's disease, and not simply a sign that the disease is developing," said Dr. Robert Wilson, a neuropsychologist at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, who led one study.

Wilson's team tracked 917 retired priests and nuns, 190 of whom developed Alzheimer's.

Those with more symptoms of depression at the beginning of the study were more likely to develop Alzheimer's disease.

He said researchers think depression causes damage to parts of the brain that play key roles in emotions and memory.

Wilson said chronic stress from depression releases excessive amounts of a brain hormone that damages connections between some brain cells. **Reuters**

Stone Temple Pilots to reunite

LOS ANGELES — After a five-year breakup and a nearly eight-year absence from the concert scene, the Stone Temple Pilots will reunite for a North American tour.

Singer Scott Weiland, guitarist Dean DeLeo, bassist Robert DeLeo and drummer Eric Kretz yesterday revealed the details of their 65-city tour, set to begin May 17 in Columbus, Ohio.

"The story's not finished," Weiland, 40, said. "There's more to be revealed and more to be told."

DeLeo said the band plans to record a new album after the tour, which is set to wrap in November.

Formed in 1992, the band has sold more than 35 million albums worldwide.

The band will play the PNC Bank Arts Center in Holmdel, N.J., on May 31.

The Associated Press

400 kids from sect are now in custody

SAN ANGELO, Tex. — Authorities say they have now taken more than 400 children from a polygamist compound and put them in state custody as they investigate whether one of them had been an underage bride.

Authorities have uncovered the equivalent of a small town on the 1,700-acre property in rural West Texas they raided last week.

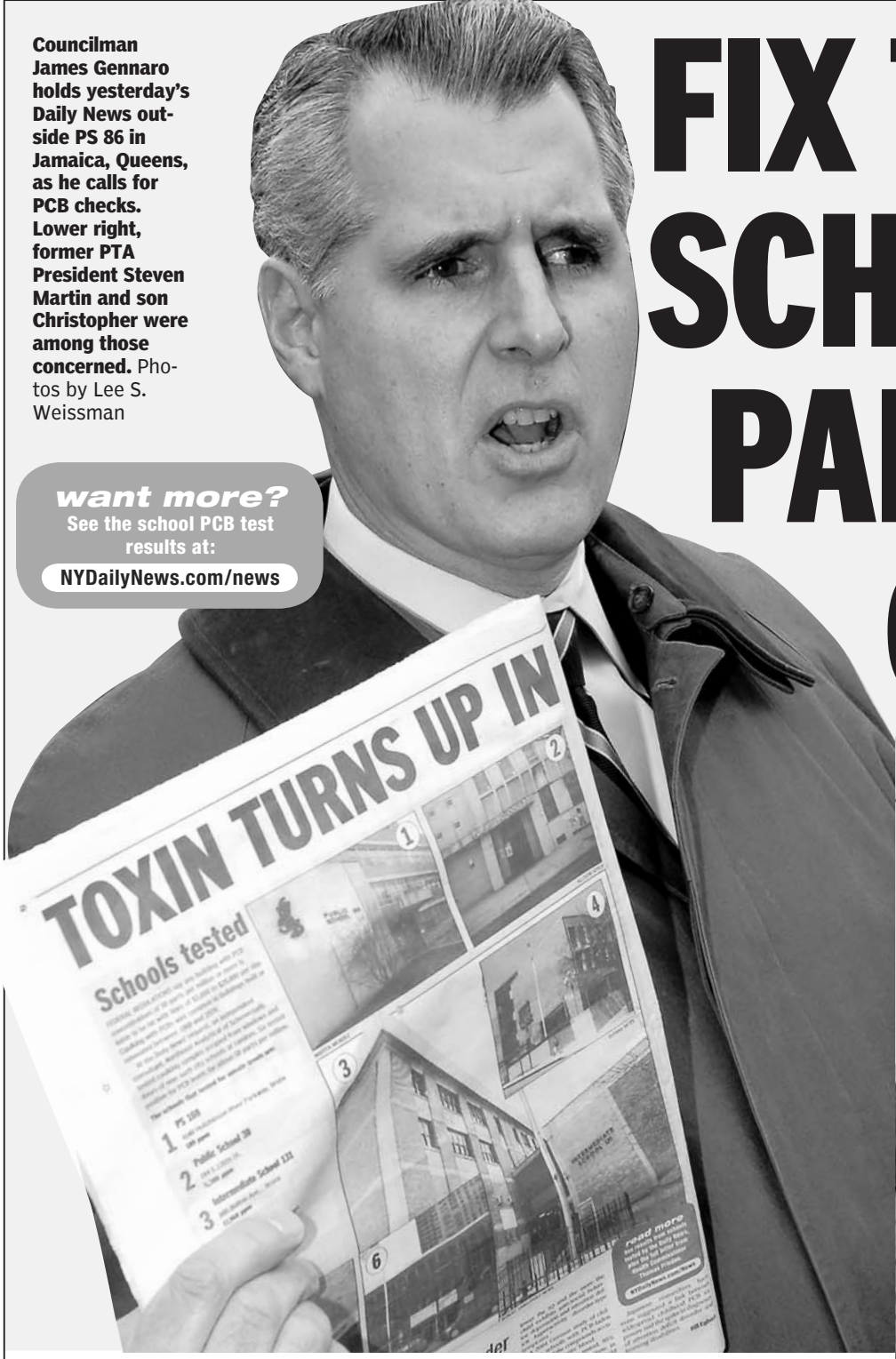
They say 133 women left voluntarily and an unknown number of men remain.

Officials say it is the biggest operation of its kind in Texas history. A girl's report to authorities last week that she was abused led to last week's raid.

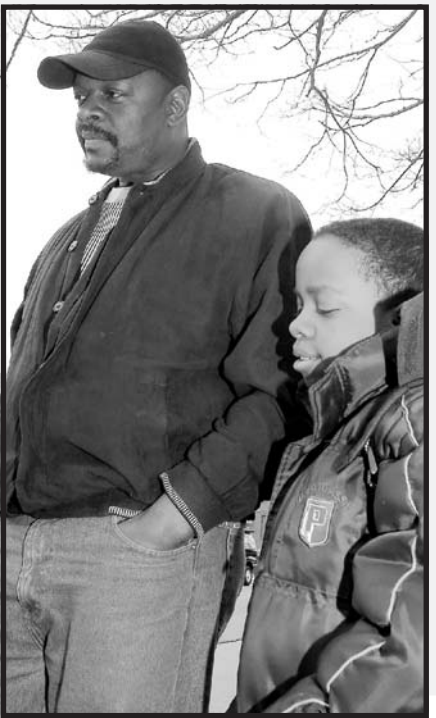
News Wire Services

Councilman James Gennaro holds yesterday's Daily News outside PS 86 in Jamaica, Queens, as he calls for PCB checks. Lower right, former PTA President Steven Martin and son Christopher were among those concerned. Photos by Lee S. Weissman

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Probe urged after News exposes poison PCBs around kids

POLITICIANS, PARENTS and teachers demanded an immediate response yesterday to the Daily News' revelation that toxins lurk in the caulking at dozens of city schools.

One City Council member demanded an inspection of every affected school, while another promised to hold hearings on the city's response to the presence of PCB-laced caulking in window and door frames in 266 schools citywide.

Polychlorinated biphenyls, which have been linked to lower IQ, asthma and cancer, were common in caulking used in the 1960s and '70s.

The News tested nine city schools built then and found traces of PCBs in eight. Six contained PCB levels well above what federal regulators deem acceptable. City schools could be hit with hefty fines for not removing the material.

In response to The News' inquiry, a city-hired consultant obtained air and swipe samples from the eight schools. All but one, Public School 199 on the up-

BY KERRY BURKE and BILL EGBERT
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITERS

per West Side, tested negative for PCBs in the air and areas surrounding the caulking.

The consultant found low levels of PCBs in air samples and dust swipes in the school's first-floor cafeteria.

Over the weekend, emergency cleanup crews wiped down the entire school.

Teachers and angry parents confronted school officials at a hastily called meeting at PS 199 and questioned how reassured they should be by the city's recent air and dust-swab tests.

They said the tests were done weeks after renovation work caused a chronic dust problem in many parts of the school.

"We would have to wipe down our classrooms once, maybe

twice a day, every day for 10 days," said Debbie Jones, a teacher for 17 years at the Center School, which is housed in the same building as PS 199. "And it wasn't just the teachers — the children helped, too."

Earlier, some parents expressed outrage as they picked up their children at the school.

"I'm alarmed," said Tawana Bracey, 33, mother of a 6-year-old first-grader.

"I'm taking my daughter to the doctor now. I have to get her checked out. This school should take care of this."

"They are endangering our kids," said Willis Ifill, 38, the father of two boys at PS 199.

At a news conference called yesterday in response to The News' findings, Deputy Health Commissioner Jessica Leighton assured parents their children were safe.

"At the levels that we found, there is not an exposure risk to children that we are concerned about," Leighton said. "We estimate that a child would have to

be in their lunchroom for a number of months to get the exposure they would in eating one hamburger."

Food can be a major source of human PCB exposure.

Randi Weingarten, president of the United Federation of Teachers, called for a "coordinated" response, starting by checking the condition of caulking at all city schools built before 1980.

Councilman James Gennaro (D-Queens), standing outside PS 86 in Jamaica, Queens, where News tests found PCBs in the caulking, called for an immediate inspection of all city schools suspected of containing PCB caulking.

Another Council member, Eric Gioia (D-Queens), promised to hold hearings on the problem. Reps. José Serrano (D-West Bronx) and Joseph Crowley (D-East Bronx, Queens) announced yesterday they were crafting legislation for a national PCB-caulking cleanup for schools, housing and hospitals.

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