

World and Nation

Causes found for mass extinctions

From Associated Press reports

LOS ANGELES — Researchers who contend the dinosaurs died because a comet or asteroid struck Earth 66 million years ago say they have found evidence a similar catastrophe caused the most recent extinction about 11 million years ago.

The findings "indicate the impact of a large extraterrestrial body on the Earth could have caused the extinctions" of 25 percent of the species on the planet between 10 million and 11.7 million years ago, nuclear chemist Frank Asaro of Lawrence

Berkeley Laboratory said Thursday.

If the theory is confirmed, three mass extinctions — including one about 38 million years ago — will have been blamed on comets or asteroids by a team of researchers from the lab and the University of California's Berkeley and Santa Barbara campuses. The team was led by Berkeley's Nobel laureate physicist Luis Alvarez, who died last month.

Asaro said evidence that comet or asteroid impacts caused three mass extinctions supports a more controversial theory that extinctions occur

at roughly 26-million- to 30-million-year intervals when comets are hurled toward Earth by the gravity of an undiscovered companion star to the sun, nicknamed the "Death Star" or "Nemesis."

Other new studies bolster support for rival theories that blame mass extinctions on gigantic volcanic eruptions, on changes in sea level, or on global climate changes unrelated to objects smashing into Earth.

The studies are being presented at a four-day conference, "Global Catastrophes in Earth History,"

which opened Thursday in Snowbird, Utah.

The theory that mass extinction could be caused by comet or asteroid impacts was first proposed in 1960 by Alvarez's team.

They found thin layers of the metallic element iridium deposited around the world in 66-million-year-old rocks, suggesting that a comet or asteroid striking the Earth kicked up enough dust and triggered enough smoky fires to block out sunlight, either freezing many species or destroying their food.

Reagan to help GOP fight complacency

From Associated Press reports

RALEIGH — President Reagan will be the star attraction at a Friday rally that North Carolina Republicans hope will immunize their workers against overconfidence as state and national campaigns enter their final weeks.

"Our biggest problem now is complacency," said Steve Schwartz, state director of George Bush's campaign. "People tend to think they have it in the bag when they read all these favorable polls."

A Charlotte Observer telephone survey of 870 registered voters taken Oct. 9 through Oct. 12 showed Bush leading Michael Dukakis 53 percent to 40 percent. The margin of error

was 3.3 percent.

GOP leaders scarcely have been able to contain their glee this week as polls have shown Bush, Gov. Jim Martin and Jim Gardner, the party's nominee for lieutenant governor, running ahead.

But the candidates, their strategists and party officials have cautioned repeatedly that any or all of their ticket leaders could lose if Republicans prematurely declare victory and stop working.

The primary purpose of Reagan's appearance is "firing up the troops," Schwartz said. "I think we have a good double-digit lead in the state but that doesn't mean anything. We've not strayed one iota from our original

plan, which includes a massive get-out-the-vote drive."

Doors open at the Raleigh Civic Center at 9 a.m. for the rally, which is free and open to the public. Martin and other Republican candidates for state and local offices are expected to attend.

Reagan will speak around 11 a.m. Afterward, he will attend a private, \$500-per-person fund-raiser in one of the civic center's meeting rooms. The president will pose for pictures with contributors of \$5,000 to GOP campaign coffers.

Democrats have downplayed the impact of Reagan's appearance, pointing out that his three visits to North Carolina in 1986 did not

prevent former Republican Sen. Jim Broyhill's loss to Democrat Terry Sanford.

"Ronald Reagan is a popular personality but his policies are not popular," said state Democratic Party chairman Jim Van Hecke. "I don't think his popularity is transferable."

State GOP Chairman Jack Hawke disagreed, saying Bush had overcome a formidable Dukakis lead by emphasizing his loyalty to Reagan and contrasting Reagan's administration with Jimmy Carter's.

"Nobody brings that message home like Ronald Reagan," Hawke said.

RJR Nabisco executives consider buyout

From Associated Press reports

ATLANTA — Food and tobacco giant RJR Nabisco Inc. said Thursday some of its top executives were considering taking the company private in a leveraged buyout valued at nearly \$17 billion, which would be the largest corporate acquisition in history.

The company, known for products that include Camel and Winston cigarettes, Oreo cookies and Ritz crackers, also announced a 10.9 percent increase in its third-quarter income.

The announcement of the possible \$75-a-share offer — which came in the midst of takeover activity involving other big food companies — sent

RJR Nabisco's stock prices soaring, but it also left investment analysts puzzled about the purpose and price of the proposal.

RJR Nabisco said President F. Ross Johnson and Edward Horrigan, chief executive of the company's tobacco business, had notified the firm they "intend to seek to develop, with a financial partner, a proposal to acquire RJR Nabisco in a leveraged buyout merger transaction."

The company said the group was considering offering about \$75 in cash for each of the company's approximately 285 million common shares outstanding, making the proposal worth about \$16.88 billion.

Shearson Lehman Hutton Inc. said

it was advising the management group and would provide equity and financing for the deal.

Analysts said the proposal was too low, and investors apparently agreed. RJR Nabisco stock surged \$21.37 a share to \$77.25 on the New York Stock Exchange, where it was the most actively traded issue.

"Valuing Nabisco as a food company and discounting the tobacco operation, I arrive at a value somewhere between \$65 and \$90" a share, said Paylos Alexandrakis, an analyst with Argus Research Corp. in New York.

"I'm telling our clients to hold onto the stocks. I think something else is going to happen," he said.

Lawrence Adelman, an analyst with Drexel Burnham Lambert Inc., said the deal was an indication of how undervalued RJR Nabisco's stock was, having been driven lower by worries over recent tobacco liability lawsuits.

But Adelman said investors currently are paying more attention to companies' ability to generate cash rather than provide earnings, and that makes companies with undervalued stocks especially attractive.

He said RJR Nabisco's stock should trade at between \$90 and \$100 a share, and said Johnson, the company president, "is trying to steal the company" at \$75 a share.

Thursday's announcement moved Standard & Poor's Corp., the credit rating service, to place RJR Nabisco on its "creditwatch" list because "such a deal would severely weaken the firm's balance sheet."

If the deal were completed, it would be the biggest leveraged buyout of an American corporation by far, surpassing the \$6.1 billion buyout of Beatrice Cos. by an investment group led by Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co. in 1986.

Soviet official says reform of economy led to inflation

From Associated Press reports

MOSCOW — President Mikhail Gorbachev's economic reforms have begun to produce the unwelcome side-effect of inflation, a top government statistician said Thursday.

The official, Nikolai Belov, deputy director of the state committee on statistics, said his department hasn't yet figured out how to measure inflation and therefore doesn't know how serious it is. But he acknowledged that wages rose nearly twice as fast as real income, a clear indication of inflationary forces in the economy.

Soviet officials traditionally have contended that inflation did not exist in the Soviet Union, where wages and prices are controlled by central planners.

Nazi destruction criticized

FRANKFURT, West Germany — Roman Catholic bishops from Germany and Austria on Thursday sharply questioned the failure by Christian leaders to publicly condemn the "Crystal Night" of Nazi terror on Nov. 9, 1938, when thugs destroyed Jewish stores, homes and synagogues throughout Nazi Germany.

The bishops, in a statement, also implied that Christian "failings" were partially responsible for the holocaust, in which 6 million Jews died.

Jewish leaders frequently have alleged that the Vatican and local German bishops failed to do

News in Brief

enough to prevent the Holocaust.

British legislation to hurt IRA

LONDON — Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's government announced Thursday it will abolish the right of suspects to remain silent under police interrogation, ending a centuries-old pillar of British jurisprudence.

The latest measure in Britain's crackdown on the Irish Republican Army provoked outcries that historic civil liberties are crumbling in Britain and followed Wednesday's government ban on broadcast interviews with members of the outlawed IRA and 10 other militant groups in Northern Ireland.

In the House of Commons, the government put forward legislation — expected to take effect early next year — to end the right to silence in Northern Ireland, and said it planned to introduce similar restrictions in England and Wales.

Bakker trial continues

COLUMBIA, S.C. — A former bodyguard testified Thursday before the close of PTL's \$52 million lawsuit against Jim Bakker that the ministry's founder had told his former top aide, David Taggart, to be sure the board of directors approved bonuses for their use.

McKinley

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members affiliated with the Chapel Hill Coalition for Freedom to Dissent (CFD) attended the trial, and several members expressed dissatisfaction with the University's handling of the protests and possible disciplinary action against McKinley.

"I don't think the Honor Court should have the jurisdiction to prevent students from expressing peaceful dissent," said Joel Segal, UNC law student and CFD member. "I think it's vital that we go beyond whether you like Dale or don't like Dale. How can you have covert action in a democracy?"

"One major issue in all this stuff is campus and University democracy. Do you expel a student for speaking his or her conscience? Does the Honor Court have that right? The answer is absolutely not."

Annie Duehring, a junior from Brooklyn, N.Y., said the University's prosecution of the activists spurred her to join the CFD. "The reason I'm here is that this scares the hell out of me," she said. "Civil disobedience

and dissent is the key to democracy." Several students were concerned with the lack of communication between students and administrators in the enforcement of the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance.

"We have to obey their laws, but we don't elect the people that make the laws," Duehring said. "What's the point of having students run it (Honor Court) if they have to obey rules made by someone else?"

McKinley said he is pleased with the rising level of student involvement in the freedom of dissent issue. "I think it shows that students are sick and tired of being trampled on at this University."

CFD members and others, including students, faculty members and community members, will meet for a rally today at 3 p.m. in front of South Building. Several speakers will address the group, which will then move on to Franklin Street for the beginning of a 21-day vigil marking McKinley's jail term.

For the Record

In Wednesday's article, "Student Congress supports dissent," the DTH incorrectly reported the vote count on a resolution supporting students'

right to dissent. The correct count was 20-4 in favor of the resolution, with two congress members abstaining. The DTH regrets the error.



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