Opinion

Abolish the page system

Congress is getting millions of dollars worth of bad publicity over the current sex-and-drug allegations involving a handful of its members and congressional pages.

So far, the "scandal" involves uncorroborated claims under investigation by the FBI that some of the teenage boys who serve as pages may have been involved in homosexual relationships with possibly several congressmen, and that an unspecified number of the errand boys procured drugs.

House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill Jr. was prudent to quickly convene a congressional probe by the House Ethics Committee. If ever an accusation needed a speedy resolution, it is this one. Even if some of the charges prove true, they appear to involve only a small number of congressmen. The other members of Congress do not deserve to be implicated.

At the same time, it is obvious that the 155-year-old tradition of congressional pages is in need of drastic reform, if not outright abolition.

Having teenagers run errands, deliver messages and fetch food and drink for congressmen is a throwback to medieval courts. And paying teenagers $6,000 a year to live unsupervised in the high-powered, Washington atmosphere is only asking for trouble.

Unfortunately, one of the reform proposals for the 101 House and Senate pages shows that old congressional tendency to throw money at any problem. Rep. Vic Fazio, D-Sacramento, plans to meet with House Majority Leader Jim Wright of Texas to discuss the possibility of building a dormitory for Capitol pages. One can expect that if the building is authorized by Congress, it will put many luxury hotels to shame.

Sen. Alan Cranston, D-Calif., has a better idea. The second-ranking Democrat in the Senate appoints no pages, believing that high school students should not be living in Washington, away from their homes. Instead, he appoints interested college students to non-paying summer internships.

Flat-rate tax reform

Paying income tax is bad enough, but when the burden is patently unfair as America's is, it can be downright painful.

Our present system of progressive tax rates that supposedly tax according to the ability to pay has turned into a bureaucratic nightmare. It hurts the vast majority of working, middle-class Americans, while allowing the wealthy, who can afford to hire expensive lawyers and accountants, to take advantage of numerous loopholes to avoid paying their fair share of taxes.

So it is that a coalition of national conservative leaders has called for enactment of a flat-rate tax for all Americans. Recent studies have shown that a rate of between 10 and 15 percent would maintain necessary revenue levels.

The concept has been endorsed by Nobel Prize-winner Milton Friedman. Among conservatives calling for its enactment are Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., National Taxpayers Union Chairman James D. Davidson, and George Gilder, author of "Wealth and Poverty."

Individual taxpayers in the upper-income brackets aren't the only ones who take advantage of loopholes now. Big business employs batteries of high-paid professionals to effectively minimize the taxes of their corporate bosses. Meanwhile, millions of small business men and women are pressured by the current system which taxes unincorporated small businesses at the higher individual rates instead of corporate rates.

A flat tax rate may well be the only solution that can give every American a fair and equal share of the tax burden. The conservative coalition's proposal is a constructive point of departure for a national debate leading to reform of a tax system that socks it to the middle class.

Letters from our readers

To The Carlisle Mercury:

Thank you for taking some time from your busy day to spend a few moments with me.

I am glad that I could be of some help to you concerning the enfranchisement of Nicholas County as a national disaster area. I know that was an issue of great concern to the people of Carlisle and Nicholas County.

I want you to feel as though you can call on me and my office at any time. Thank you for sharing some of your time with me and please do not hesitate to contact me if I can ever be of assistance.

Very truly yours,
Larry J. Hopkins
Member of Congress

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Women's political clout--what will they do with it?

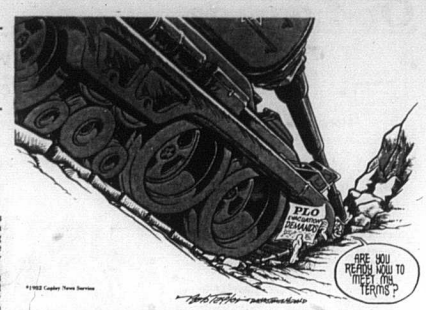
by Vicki Dennis
Kentucky Commission on Women

"My main goal is to get the women's movement off the defensive, and the best way to do that is to get back to our original purpose — increasing the number of women in political office." — Kathy Wilson, head of the National Women's Political Caucus.

"Over the past year, in one poll after another, women have staked out a position on issues like Reaganomics, against nuclear arms — and gradually men have drifted over to share these beliefs. If President Reagan has modulated his tone on nuclear disarmament, it is largely because of this constituency." — Ellen Goodman, national columnist.

If the recent polls are right, women are on the brink of having, for the first time in history, considerable political clout. This news has set media antennas to quivering, political pollsters to pondering and the parties to worrying about the "women's vote" and the consequences of this newfound female power. But it has also caused women across the country to start asking some hard questions among themselves: Now that we have this political clout, what do we do with it? How can we translate it into some real solutions to the severe socio-economic problems facing women today? How can we use it to reflect all our concerns, for women, yes, but also for the very young, the very old, the handicapped; for the cleanliness of our environment, and for the keeping of peace throughout the world, all the concerns that Ellen Goodman says can be "placed under the umbrella labeled values"?

On stuffing through the political options open to women in the upcoming years, two clearcut answers seem to be heard the loudest: Women can effect change within the system by joining in the established partisan political process, or they can cause change outside the system by joining in the non-partisan development of a strong voting constituency built on their concerns and their convictions.



Agree or not

Governor Brown has had plenty of small scandals

by S.C. Van Curon

While there have been no major scandals in Gov. John Young Brown Jr's. administration, there have been some minor ones that got exposed before they became full blown embarrassments.

Although scandal has been kept to a minimum, the Brown administration has been marked by turmoil, feuding, dissension among his lieutenants plus disillusion and loss of morale in the employee ranks.

The governor has worked at a disadvantage in comparison to recent administrations since the recession started to show its effects when he took office and has continued to worsen.

In the face of all of this, some good marks have been scored. He has reduced the number on the payroll although payroll costs are at an all-time record. He insisted on state money earning more interest while lying idle in banking houses in the state.

The old political patronage system has been abolished although party politics still plays a big part in state job placements, especially in the higher paying ranks.

The governor's announced policy of "running government like a business" has run headon into the normal system of government operation. The collision has not always been fruitful or satisfying to the public.

He did away with the long-established Department of Public Information with the statement that "its purpose was to present the administration in a good light," or words to that effect.

He transferred the Department of Tourism from the abolished Information to Commerce. Tourism advertising promotion has featured the governor and his wife.

Gov. Brown sold off the fleet of state airplanes in the name of economy and purchased a $1.8 million helicopter for which there was no provision in the budget. He uses the plane to commute from his home near Lexington to Frankfort.

W.T. Young, a dollar-a-year cabinet adviser to the governor resigned after receiving a permit to build a new hospital in Lexington.

William Sturgill, a successful coal operator of Lexington, and holding three important advisory positions with Brown, drew unfavorable publicity about an interest in a coal loading facility that would have an important role in the export of coal to Europe.

Two Commerce officials embarrassed the governor by charging airplane tickets for a round-trip to Europe for a wife and girlfriend to the state.

Labor department officials recently entered guilty pleas to padding their expense accounts.

As chairman of the state Racing Commission, Sturgill is drawing criticism from the thoroughbred horse industry.

Brown fired his first Revenue Commissioner because "he had a penchant for creating trouble."

The present move on the part of Finance Commissioner Fisher to reclassify all state employees is a continual source of criticism and dissatisfaction among state employees.

Transportation Secretary Frank Metts is the target of most criticism because he heads the second largest department in state government and is Brown's closest confidant in government.

In addition to transportation, he was responsible for corrections at one time.

Metts abolished the division of photogrammetry and sold all of the equipment from this division of the highway department.

He is now in federal court over the firing of two highway engineers and was criticized by the Personnel Department for transferring almost the complete staff of one highway district to another and threatening to transfer them.

State Justice Secretary Neil Welch and State Police Commissioner Marion Campbell are disagreeing on a recent personnel action, and Kentucky State Police Professional Personnel Association has decided to file suit in the same disagreement.

The "running the state like a business" team has 17 more months to go. Then, another regime will take over to start the changing process all over again.

Down Memory Lane

The Mercury gets 'new look'

Thursday, August 2, 1962

With this issue The Carlisle Mercury took on "the new look" when they changed from the letter press type printing to the sheet fed 5-41. Harris Offset press, producing a slimmer, easier to handle page, pictures with more detail and "snap" and being able to bring more photographs of happenings in Nicholas County.

The erection of a stone bulletin board was started this week at the First Christian Church. It is a memorial to the late Robert W. Neal, by his wife and children.

Miss Sidney Davis Crouch, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A.B. Crouch, has taken a position as counselor at the University of Akron in Akron, Ohio, and left Sunday.

Cornelius Watkins, 30, Route 2, Carlisle, Friday caught his hand in a power saw he was using and suffered severe lacerations of the hand and wrist.

MARRIED — Mrs. Edna Dale and W.D. Boddie, July 16 at the Christian Church in Clarksville, Ind. — Miss Sue Hopkins and James Howard, July 28.

DIED — Mrs. Sarah Elizabeth Hunt, 86, July 25 at the home of a daughter, Mrs. Jesse Crouch in Pleasant Valley. — William Yasell, husband of Mrs. Carrie Conway Yasell and brother-in-law of Mrs. M.H. Ruddell.

Thursday, July 29, 1942

Webb Buntin, Carlisle garage owner, will start instructing a class in auto mechanics under the auspices of the local Red Cross chapter and any interested person is invited to attend.

Emmett Hill, manager of the Carlisle store of the Kroger Grocery and Baking Company for the past six years, has been promoted and will leave Monday to assume management of one of the stores in Cincinnati. Stanley Galbraith will succeed Mr. Hill as manager of the local store.

BORN — To Mr. and Mrs. Cleary Fightmaster Jr., a daughter, Nancy Preston, July 24 at Massie Memorial Hospital, Paris. — To Mr. and Mrs. Jack Clark, a son, William Earl. — To Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Jackson, a daughter, Mary Lou, Monday at home.

MARRIED — Miss Alberta Jane Miller and Sgt. Gaay Coleman Jr., July 4 at Hutchinsburg, Miss. — Miss Dosha Caudill and James Reese Roberts, July 17 at Lawrenceburg. — Miss Mildred Myers and Pvt. Houston McIntyre, July 4 at Lancaster, S.C. — Miss Emma Orine Shankland and Robert Hilton, Aug. 16, 1941.

DIED — O.B. Bowles, 67, Montgomery farmer, Friday at home on the Levee Road. — James H. Martin, 78, Sunday at home on West Main. — Cornelius B. George, Friday in Winchester.

The Carlisle Mercury
(USPS 090-820)
Established 1867
Phone (606) 289-2444
Published every Thursday at 234 Locust Street, Carlisle, Nicholas County, Kentucky 40311. Postage paid at Carlisle.
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Op-Ed page

It makes sense . . . Sometimes you'd be crazy not to go crazy

You can't blame the jury that let John Hinckley off the hook for shooting at that president. He was trying to win the heart of a movie actress he'd never seen and he was crazy. That makes sense.

Under the law, the judge had to send this nut to a mental institution until he isn't crazy any more, which could take a month or two.

This outraged the entire nation. People and politicians didn't want him rehabilitated or even cured. They wanted him punished. There are far too many crazies wandering around loose these days and a good flogging, imprisoned for life or hanged to the nearest tree limb would have satisfied most everyone.

Hanging Hinckley would have undoubtedly prevented him from going crazy the second time. But even more important, it would have made a lot of irresponsible, self-centered people think twice before taking the crazy route out.

In our all-too-permissive society now we allow anybody and everybody to lose their marbles at the drop of a hat. The temptation is almost irresistable.

Take my buddy, Fred Flake. We were having lunch the other day and I said, as a matter of making small talk, "So how are things with you, Freddy?"

"Not too swift," he said. "In fact, I am thinking about going crazy."

"Don't do it, Fred," I tried to reason with him. "Think of your home, your family, your debt to society."

"That's what I am thinking about," he said. "My kidneys are stoned, my kid's entire vocabulary consists of 'Zap!', 'Ka-pouie' and 'gimme another quarter, Pop'. As far as my debt to society, with prime rate at 16½, society is going to have to wait 48 years until the rest of my debt is paid off. I'm a prime crazy candidate."

"At least you've got decent health."

"I didn't tell you about my trick knee?" he said. "No, I guess not. It gives me fits on cold, damp days and during long cocktail parties. I think I am ready for the peace and quiet of a dull, gray room, those cool, white sheets, that solid locked door that will keep me safe from muggers, bill collectors and crab grass."

"Going bonkers isn't all a bed of roses," I tried to warn Fred. "For one thing, all those places isn't all that good."

"Who cares," he said. "When you're crazy, you don't worry about such things."

"And what about television. Some nut will probably demand to watch Captain Kangeroo or General Hospital and whatever marbles you went in with will be lost down the drain in no time at all. You could even forget how Lord Anderson is pushing."

"Maybe so, but I'll still catch the evening news to stay up with what is going on outside."

"Nonsense, Fred, you'd be shirking your duty as a citizen toward helping make decisions that control our destiny, like whether we should manufacture 37,000 nuclear warheads in order to further the case of disarmament or whatever . . ."

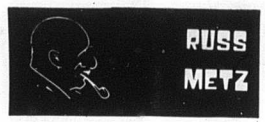
"A-e-e-e," cried Fred, diving under the table. "Deploy the pancake batter. Launch the M-1 brussel sprouts. I've just got a message from my left knee and the aliens from Andromeda IV have got us surrounded!"

After waving the check at him to assure him everything was back to its ridiculous normal state on Planet Earth, Fred came up for air.

"To tell the truth," he said, "as long as they say I can go crazy, I'd be crazy not to."

That's why we need to hang a few of those crazies. That'll make other nuts think twice before taking the easy road to Whackoville and leave us stuck with all those psychiatrists' bills.

—RM—



Each time I pop into Washington to check out the latest plots against the people, I manage to include a stop at the U.S. Department of Defense Weapons to see the current arsenal our cowheads have come up with.

I could hear the popping of corks and raucous singing and whooping as I neared the office door. The dedicated civil servants were pouring champagne, mostly over each other.

I asked what they were celebrating.

"We are celebrating," said Colonel Osgood T. Heatseeker, the bureau's director, "a tremendous victory for American arms." He adjusted the propeller on his beanie so it would spin longer.

"We haven't licked anyone since World War II," I said. "Where have our arms won this tremendous victory? Do you mean we have finally wiped out the fruit fly?"

"Hell, man, haven't you read the newspapers? Col. Heatseeker sneered. "In Lebanon, baby!" Our Shrike and Maverick missiles knocked out every Russian-built site in Lebanon and our new Sidewinder air-to-air missiles show down 79 Russian MIGs without a single loss of our F-4, F-15 or F-16 jet fighters."

"That's nice," I said. "But weren't the downed planes flown by Syrians and the shooters were Israeli?"

"WE don't sell pilots," said Heatseeker. "There could have been chimpanzees at the controls and the results would have been the same. With our missiles and radar planes and our electronic jamming equipment, it was a massacre. I can tell you heads are rolling in Moscow for a humiliation like this."

"Don't you give any credit to the Israelis?"

"Absolutely. They've never paid cash for anything yet. And, anyway, they have earned our eternal gratitude for proving the superiority of American arms. I mean this is a welcome change from the beating we took in the Falklands War."

"Who beat us, the Argentines?"

"No, dummy, the French. Them and their Exocet missile. It sinks a couple of British ships and everybody in the world is flooding the French with orders. And there we are, offering rebates on our M-1 tanks and pulling in Lee Iacocca for a commercial and no takers. I tell you it was gloomsville here for a while."

"Iacocca?"

"Yeah, Chrysler builds the M-1 tank, so we have him pound on the turret with his fist and say, 'If you can find a better tank, buy it.' He even offered a 10-minute or 10 yards limited warranty on all M-1s sold before Aug. 1."

"So you needed this Lebanon thing to get your department back on the respectability charts?"

"Right. And we're going to make the most of it. We're signing up Israeli Defense Ariel Sharon for a television commercial series. We show a Sidewinder blowing up a MIG and then he leaps up the air and shouts, "Oh, what a feeling—Sidewinder!"

"It'll never fly, Orville."

"That's what you think, you moron. We can now advertise our wares as desert-tested, desert proven. We'll say, 'Don't be half-safe with old, outdated missiles that require your pilots to get behind the enemy and squint down a sight. Now you can be the first in your block to own the all-new, battle-tested AIM-9Z Sidewinder that you can fire head-on at approaching aircraft and blow them out of the skies. Ask the man who owns one, Menachem Begin.'"

"I guess you'll make billions," I said.

"Probably, but that's not the point. We're doing this for national security?"

"National security?"

"Bet your life we are. What is the point of spending a trillion or two dollars on weaponry you cannot be sure will work under battlefield conditions? We must have testing before we can put the seal of Good Weaponskeeping on them. We couldn't have done it without the help of our good friends, the Israelis!"

He walked away singing "There's no business like weapons business . . ."

For once, I had to agree.

Onward, upward.

An editor's random thoughts...

by Warren R. Fisher Sr.
July 29, 1937

Back in the days of plush albums and antimacassars and waxen artificial flowers in glass cases; when parlors were cool and dark and musty (which I would have you know is not so many years ago after all) we remember that one of the favorite indoor sports, vying with Jackstraws and Old Maid, was the Cruciftion and Art Study.

Sedate enjoyment of peering through the lenses of a hooded contraption at pictures of the Grand Canyon and the Crucifixion and of John L. Sullivan — the latter if your paternal ancestor happened to be a bit develish, or sportively inclined.

We remember looking through one of these doodads into the heart of a luscious blossom which embellished pictures of the Manger and the Wise Men, the latter by a somewhat generous stretch of the imagination; yes, of almost catching a whiff of heavy perfume from the waxen depths of the night-blooming Cereus. One's eyes became crossed or got out of focus somehow after looking through one of these hooded things. But it was a wonder, and, of a rapidly moving age for which Nancy Hanks set a dizzy equine pace and there were to be found foolish dreamers who continued to talk about "horseless carriages," despite guffaws from sane people. At least it served, did this thinguma — "stereoscope," I believe you called it — Mary's beau grew a bit too playful or began to slip boldly herward along the horsehair sofa. "Have you seen the night-blooming Cereus through the stereoscope, Mr. Terwilliger?" If he hadn't and showed no interest, but continued to slide — well, deponent sayeth not, being at that time of an age to hide beneath the sofa, rather than sit primly at one end thereof. One imagines that Nature took her course, although "necking" was unknown (by that name) of course, when Mary "entertained" her male caller, or discouraged any sign of intrepidity by clapping this hooded bot over his eyes and letting him peep at Niagara Falls in Winter, Niagara Falls in Summer, or gaze into the scented depths of A Night-Blooming Cereus. But ask mom — she ought to know.

Strange that the memory lingers. Of all these wondrous "views," only that of the night-blooming Cereus stands out as it did when one achieved the magic focus by sliding the twin pictures, on their usually warped cardboard backs, to and fro on the stick. Strange that this offshoot of the Torch Thistle, this cactus, should bear a bloom so exquisite and that it alone, of all the flowers and scenes of natural beauty which brought exclamations of polite wonder in the days of horsehair sofas and antimacassars and waxen flowers under glass cases on the marble-top tables of parlors cool and musty, should have the power to wave the wand of necromancy over sleeping memories — unless Whittier explains it in a line: "Beauty seen is never lost;" or a greater poet, when he said:

A thing of beauty is a joy forever:
Its loveliness increases: it will never
Poss into nothingness.

***

Last week I republished a eulogistic essay that I wrote some years ago on the delights of blackberry cobbler. This week comes a gift of delicious honey, wherewith to "paint the lily" of this seasonable confection, from Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wagoner, of the county. For which my grateful thanks. I wonder if along about Thanksgiving I might not be able to turn out a panegyric about turkey, and along about Christmas another one painting the delectable qualities of well-cured Nicholas County old hams, with the same pleasing results?

***

The other day I browsed through the files of The Mercury and read again some editorials written during a heated Democratic primary campaign. I had a lot of fun in that campaign and tasted the joys of internecine warfare and whooped it up with a vengeance for our chosen candidate. But, kind reader, if you would read something flat, stale and unprofitable, try writing laudatory editorials in a political campaign and then read them after many years have passed.

Those who grow excitedly vocal over their favorite candidates, as "dog days" come on, are fortunate that their vociferations come not back to plague them. For there would be considerably less raving from the roaring stump, did all of the sizzling words cast upon the muddy waters of the average raging election torrent come floating back to plague the speaker after many days.

But when one writes his rave and it gets into the printed page, I advise him not to look back into the files, after many years. This writer, at least, after reading some of his eulogistic political screeds written during the "dog days" of a sizzling hot primary of the past, feels that it might have been well had he followed the advice frequently given in these columns to unfortunates who have the urge to dabble with the blue-black fluid which is supposed to make millions think — towit, and borrowing from Lord Byron:

Shun, shun the bowl — the fatal focile drink
Has ruined many geese who dipped their quill in't.
Bribe, murder, marry, but steer clear of ink.
Except to write receipts for paid up bills in't.

In this corner.... by Jim Butler Wanke

A tornado with a silver lining

From what we can tell, a tornado skipped over our hilltops just north of Carlisle Thursday evening and did considerable damage.

There was a lot of scattered stories down through the years and doubtless you have seen many on television.

Our front page story about the wind picking up only the top of a trailer and moving it through the air over the tops of cars and setting it down in a pile of junk convinced me that it was a tornado.

In 1934, our family was on the brink of bankruptcy in western Minnesota during the big drouth of that year. We had cattle that died in the field and our wheat crop that ordinarily grew to a height of three feet or more was one foot tall and matured a month early. There was no water, anywhere.

No baths

We took a bath in the spring of that year and made the old story come true, because we took another in the fall whether we needed it or not. We gave new truth to the saying, "We were a family apart from each other."

Some of the town kids had "armpit fights." They would raise their arms, blow across their underarm into the other boy's face. Gross, but true...and guaranteed to foul the nose of the other boy.

The tornado came in the spring, from the, west, miraculously missed the house, picked up a chicken house with 500 baby chicks inside and put it down in the pasture about 100 yards away.

Mixed in with all this action it also leveled the barn, leaving only the stone and concrete foundation standing. Some of the animals in the barn were killed.

And by the favor of God, no doubt, the baby chicks were largely unharmed and still in their brooder house although it was now in a new location.

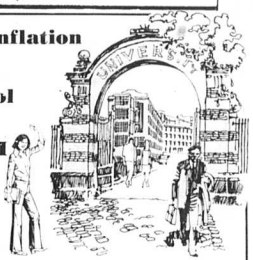
But the tornado that caused so much damage to our family also saved us. For my family had a small insurance policy protecting against hail and windstorm damage, and we collected $2300 on the barn.

It bought our food for the rest of 1934 and seed for the spring of 1935.

My mother did not cry when the tornado came through but she cried when the check came from the insurance company.

We've taken inflation

Out of Back to School with NO MINIMUM BALANCE checking for students!



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One — This special offer is our way of say 'Congratulations' and 'Good Luck' as you go back to school. We recognize that these are trying years and we want to help.

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