

OPINION

Bluegrass Beacon

Education fat cats start coughing up hairballs



Bluegrass Beacon by Jim Waters

Bills filed in the Legislature this week signal school settling days ahead for 'edu-crats' who have an ingrained, all-consuming passion for preserving, protecting and defending the status quo.

Senate Bill 1 would replace the worthless \$10 million CATS testing program with a test that compares Kentucky student performance with their counterparts nationally and allow educators to determine whether students learn.

And House Bill 578 would create a plan for "legal" charter schools for the first time in Kentucky's history. First, let's look at why some wise lawmakers want to let the CATS out of the bag. It seems, as the late American educator Laurence J. Peter noted, "... the quo has lost its state with them."

This CATS with more than nine lives features padded results, low standards and a score-reporting system

that doesn't allow parents to know how students perform until after a new school year starts. At that point, that's a parent to do?

Noted education analyst Richard Innes says it's time for CATS to be euthanized. "Very simply, CATS is an outdated, expensive and under-performing system that's too easily inflated at will by school interests, and it's past time for this costly experiment to bow out," Innes said.

Second, some lawmakers have listened to the strong arguments and data supporting school choice in Kentucky. The result is HB 578, which would allow local school boards, universities and even local governments to sponsor charter schools. These publicly funded schools—operated by parents, groups, teachers, individuals or even private organiza-

tions—have greater flexibility. They can use different curricula, emphasize certain academic areas, have longer school days, require parental involvement and maintain strong discipline. Despite what naysayers man, school choice doesn't mean school choice doesn't start at a new school year. In fact, HB 578 would require that all students be allowed to charter schools—just like a regular public school. And minority and low-income households send the nation's best charter schools. The Legislature approved \$3.2 million in 2006 for the (and Martin Gattson Academy of Mathematics and Science—a charter school on Western Kentucky University's campus.

Public money educates the academy students—just like it would in charter schools. The teachers union can't control it, and the most stifling state regulations largely don't apply to it, again.

little blood and pass out. What a wimp. All in just of them, and he has taken the teasing that he has received ever since like a champ. The nurse told me I am never going to let him live his life down, and in the right figure I have several good years of teasing ahead of me. I told him we are going to be 80 sitting on our front porch, and I'm going to say, do you remember that time when you passed out?!"

Thankfully, after a little nap he was all better. I just hope passing out doesn't affect the outcome of our life insurance tests. Until next week, make it a great one!

twins and you have to give a

like most successful charter schools. All this works at the academy, despite the fact that no Kentucky law exists allowing such schools. Is that legal?

WKU's academy sits in the district of Speaker of the House Jody Richards, D-Bowling Green. I wonder if the speaker plans on continuing to allow the illegal school to exist—or will let legal charter schools join it.

While all remains quiet on the "Western" front, an eerie silence hangs over the education fiefdom in Frankfort, too. An excellent model for a charter school already exists in Bowling Green. The Legislature approved \$3.2 million in 2006 for the (and Martin Gattson Academy of Mathematics and Science—a charter school on Western Kentucky University's campus.

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possibilities" lie ahead for 120 students lucky enough to gain entrance to WKU's academy, how do the possibilities and opportunities stack up for the rest of the state's 657,000 students? Weigh that question against the infinite ways bungling bureaucrats and pleading politicians muddle up education in Kentucky. Then get on the phone and let your lawmakers know how you feel.

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Hennessy, 48, was a freshman at Augusta High School when he came from it was all football and baseball. He was among the four or

GENERAL NEWS

GEORGE CLOONEY PAL



After 14 years on the job, the postmaster at tiny Germantown knows every patron entering his building. Shawn Hennessy also knows "the world's greatest man." It seems a bit strange when he looks into the floor and sees him starting up at me, says the 48-year-old Bracken County native.

"During my day here, I see a bundle of TV guides and all kinds of Hollywood-type magazines come through, and George is all over the cover of many of them," he said. The ponytailed ex-letter carrier is referring to his childhood chum, actor George Clooney.

Hennessy, 48, was a freshman at Augusta High School when he came from it was all football and baseball. He was among the four or

five of us boys who got into tennis when they built the new courts. The former Augusta city councilman thinks there may still be holes in the fences at the tennis courts made by the throwing of rackets when he and George became frustrated by their game. Now he's not sure if his pal was really mad or just acting.

"He was such a comedian, always cutting up and joking around. I'm surprised he hasn't gotten in the ac-

comedy because he was always the class clown," said Hennessy. With a father (Nick) and aunt (Rosemary) firmly established in the entertainment field, show biz was in his blood," said Hennessy.

According to Hennessy, the friendship waned some in the last years of high school when the two became "pretty much rivals over sports and women." About the closest he comes to his old friend these days is watching his tennis matches.

"His favorite? "One Fine Day," he said, that was George. Not like

house on Fourth Street where George lived before enrolling at Northern Kentucky University.

After leaving Northern, Hennessy began what has been a 25-year stint with the post office after attending Mayville Community College.

"I heard on the radio today that George is looking for a job. They said he just found out he lives next door to Britney Spears."

he was acting at all, just being himself." Seeing him dressed up as Batman was bothersome. I would hear that voice coming out from under his cap and think that's George, not Batman. I couldn't deal with that."

Hennessy's next contact with his old pal and former rival could come any day now via a "change of address" request.

"I heard on the radio today that George is looking for a job. They said he just found out he lives next door to Britney Spears."

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VELOZ

Continued from Page 4

Then, his eyes roll back and his head and he is unconscious. Yep, he passed out. I rushed to get a wet paper towel to try to bring him back to consciousness. The nurse and I are saying his name and I'm wiping his face with the cool cloth. Then his eyes pop open and he starts shaking his head and making noises like he is going to be sick.

Finally he stopped at that and just kind of looked at us. We told him to take it easy and that we are going to lay him on the floor. He says, okay, I told him to not look at his arm, as blood was dripping down it because there was a little more

concerned about keeping him from falling off the chair than the blood, and he has taken the teasing that he has received ever since like a champ. The nurse told me I am never going to let him live his life down, and in the right figure I have several good years of teasing ahead of me. I told him we are going to be 80 sitting on our front porch, and I'm going to say, do you remember that time when you passed out?!"

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STEVE

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new capability. I believe the United States used a ship-launched missile to China that our satellite technology is better than theirs, the same way we reacted during the space race of the 60s and the arms race of the 70s.

If you think I'm wrong about this - like maybe old Steve's gone off the deep end with his conspiracy theories - let me ask you: If it wasn't about making a statement to China - if all we wanted to do was guarantee that our two super delegates, that's what candidates do. Super delegates aren't pledged - they can change with others - and they didn't shut down the satellite using an F-15 like we did in 1988, using a triad and tested trying something we knew would

HEAVEN

Continued from Page 2

bound. When renegades had murdered Captain Boone's eldest son, young James Boone, and Henry Russell and several others, as the group entered Kentucky through the Cumberland Gap to make a settlement in 1773, it had been Gass that had given the Boone family shelter when they disbanded their attempt to settle the paradise known as Kentucky.

Gass had given aid to the family and had even come to Kentucky with them on a second and successful attempt in 1775. Now Captain Gass sought out young Flinders Callaway and comforted him as the two often hunted in the wilderness for the starving survivors of the fort.

Young John Gass, David's nephew, would also accompany them on many of these hunts. Captain David Gass had received a horrendous bullet wound to his face eight months earlier from the same Shawnee warriors that had attacked the fort and nearly shot Captain Boone's foot off.

And so Flinders found himself listening closely to the words of Gass as they sat together around a small

campfire outside of the fort while hutchering buffalo or elk or white tail deer on their many foraging journeys. Gass would speak in earnest to young Callaway and attempt to guide the heart of the young frontiersman, and give him confidence and encouragement, as he

delegates jump ship by the score after his third-place finish in Iowa? One other thing to consider: A lifetime of political insiderdom doesn't guarantee political smarts. There are a great country - the party leaders in Michigan and Florida who fast-forwarded the election calendar, and the DNC party elders who chastised them - have in common. They are

something new? And if we're trying to make a military statement to China, why not be honest about it? Why try to disguise it as a "merry mission"? A handful of news stories suggested that the U.S. used this tactic to avoid international criticism. But is this the right way to gain their respect? If we act like we can figure out what's really going on, do you think we're actually fooling anybody else? I think we are sacrificing the world's respect by pretending to destroy our satellite for humanitarian reasons.

GUEST

Continued from Page 4

There would be a block of super delegates. Their job is to win over them. Two super candidates must now win two super delegates. That's what candidates do. Super delegates aren't pledged - they can change with others - and they didn't shut down the satellite using an F-15 like we did in 1988, using a triad and tested trying something we knew would

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spoke softly while he casually rubbed that long scar that ran from his chin, up his cheek and then zigzagged beneath his left eye and ended at his left ear.

And so, eventually, Flinders would have more discussion on the subject.

He would stay in Kentucky. He would raise a family here. There was also one other decision Flinders made to himself. He would have his revenge. To be continued.

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