

Guest Editorial

OP-ED from Kentucky House Speaker Jody Richards

The work of the Democrat-led Kentucky House of Representatives was truly outstanding during the just-concluded 2008 session of the General Assembly. Throughout the session, our members stayed focused on making public policy which will move this state forward and benefit all Kentuckians in the future. The Senate followed our lead, the general public and members of the media would all be looking back on this session as one of the most successful in memory. But due to the very different priorities and values held by the Republican-led Senate, a session full of urgency and promise became one of disappointment and unfinished business.

The Legislature's most important function is to pass a budget, and the House passed the best one possible under tight budgetary constraints. Compared with the Governor's and Senate's attempts, the House budget much more fully funded nearly all facets of state government, including the critical functions of elementary, secondary and higher education, health and human services, and corrections. The Governor generally proposes, and the Senate counters, with a 6 percent reduction. The House budget provided for full funding of most state services including education at all levels, services to the poor and disabled, and our prisons. We accomplished this by reauthorizing restructuring our existing programs, rather than cutting funding for new revenue. Unfortunately, we could not convince our colleagues in the Senate to vote likewise. Now, as a social services agency implement layoffs and closures, and collect tuition shoots up, Kentuckians are beginning to feel the painful consequences of the cuts imposed by the Senate.

Public pension reform was also an issue at the top of all our agendas. For months leading into the session, the House worked with actuarial experts, state auditors, and teachers to devise a fair and workable solution to this drain on our state's finances. The result was House Bill 690, which passed by a 95-0 bipartisan vote. Had the same occurred, as Senate President David Williams publicly stated he would, we would have a pension bill which produced \$20 million per year in greater cost savings than any competing proposal, and had the added bonus of being the best public policy, a more and a more aggressive proposal which arrived in the House chamber about 11:20 p.m. on the last day of the session.

Some will recall that last session's beloved Senate proposal was as its centerpiece a proposal to invest nearly \$800 million of bond proceeds in the stock market in an effort to beat the interest rate on the bonds. No one is complaining about the House's prudent rejection of that plan now. In addition, the House passed an excellent executive branch ethics reform package on January 20, nearly two and a half months before session's end. Like the pension bill, this important item on the Governor's agenda was shrewdly by the Senate to the very end of the 2008 session, making compromise virtually impossible to achieve in the resulting time crunch. Other quality legislation the House passed which failed in the Senate includes protection against identity theft (the AARP's top priority), preventing cyber-stalking of children

OPINION

Heaven is A Lot Like Kentucky

THE WAR DOG
Full, 1970, somewhere near the Laotian border in Southeast Asia.

He had promised himself several months earlier, during his first mission on patrol through the thick Vietnamese jungle, that no matter what, he wouldn't ever let the enemy soldiers take him prisoner.

He knew what they did to the dog scouts and he would never let them do that to him. He carried extra grenades, extra ammunition and even some extra C-4 explosive material, along with his M-16 rifle, a prototype of the M-16. Sometimes he even carried a .45 caliber pistol, especially on the S&B, or search and destroy missions, when he was on point with Von.

Von was a war dog in every way imaginable and Corporal Carmie had witnessed what the big, smart, yet vicious dog could do in only a few seconds to the human body when he was provoked or protecting his handler from other American troops. The damage Von could inflict was very messy and often deadly.

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Steve's Report

Years ago, I heard a story about a man digging a well in his backyard. Lunchtime comes and the mother sends their 5-year-old child to take a lunchbox out to the father. The child proudly announces, "Daddy, I brought you lunch!" The father, looking up at the sky, says, "I'm sure your Momma packed enough in there for the two of us. Why don't you jump down here and we'll share it." The child hesitates for a moment, it's dark down there, Daddy. I can't see you!" The father calls back, "But I can see you. It's OK, I'll catch you. The child peers down into the darkness one more time, takes a deep breath, closes his eyes, and then... he jumps.

No matter how many times I hear that story, the pure faith of that child impresses me - the perfect trust that his father will be there to catch him and to protect him from harm. What is powerful (and so of course, that is exactly by the point the story is trying to make. The Bible tells us that we're supposed to have faith as a little child, but as we get older, it's not quite so easy anymore. We know too much - or at least, we think we do.

Maybe it's what we think we know that kills our faith. What if I come down right on top of him, or even worse, what if I jump too far and come down behind him? He'll be at the wrong angle and won't be able to catch me. And Dad's down there digging so there's probably tons lying around.

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Veloz Viewpoints
Greetings from Nevada! I hope you are all having a great week.

I want to start this week by wishing by Grandma a very happy Birthday. Her birthday, along with Steve from Steve's Report, was last Friday. Happy Birthday to you both! I hope it was a great one for both of you. My kids are growing more and more every week. As of Monday they are 16 months old. Studies call the 16th month a "milestone" month in which I guess they are supposed to start doing a lot of new and different things. I believe it is that learning and having things just all of a sudden start to happen is going on every day at our house.

They have definitely learned what it is like to get the park and play, and I get

more to go again. After a few more to go on the slide he was saying "wee" as he got to the bottom. Analyse again the slide too. She however, would try to sit on the ground and would end up at the bottom sideways. The best part of this was when her parents there was no way they could fall off, because it was the tunnel slide and the kids have been scared letting them go down any other type of slide.

Anyway, his parents got there so we decided to go to the playground equipment. I am supposed to start doing a lot of new and different things. I believe it is that learning and having things just all of a sudden start to happen is going on every day at our house.

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The Carlisle Mercury

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PHOTOCOPYING: Color, black and white and digital photos are all accepted. Digital photos should be submitted in the jpg format and can be emailed. Old photos cannot be used. Please send no more than one submission per clipping or photograph. Photos may be picked up and they are published in the newspaper. Electronic advertising must be submitted in pdf format and can be emailed at the above address.

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All submitted copy must be signed and include a daytime phone number.

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Talkin' From The Mountains

Here's to a great lady. My wife and I both cried when Eighth Bell collapsed on the tracks at Churchill Downs, after coming in second in the Kentucky Derby. I am sure many of you also shed tears.

Eight Bells ran a courageous race. She did not deserve the fate that awaited her after crossing the finish line. My heart goes out to this lovely, courageous and intelligent horse and to her owners and trainer.

Do any of our politicians have a clue? Most economists say Hillary Clinton's plan to cut gasoline costs would only create a lot of administrative... The experts say John McCain's plan would only give money to the oil companies to add to their record profits. Surprise, surprise! Give more money to the wealthy and big corporations. A Republican's answer to everything.

Barack Obama says "the only way we're going to lower gas prices over the long term is if we start using less oil." Thanks for nothing, Barack. Think we know that. President Bush's plan to solve the gasoline price crisis is downright morose (surprise, surprise). He

didn't eat much lunch, but we were finished eating but thoroughly enjoyed playing on the slide some time stayed at the park for a few hours. Both kids passed out on top of him, or even worse, what if I jump too far and come down behind him? He'll be at the wrong angle and won't be able to catch me. And Dad's down there digging so there's probably tons lying around.

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ATTENTION

Parents, Grandparents, Aunts, Uncles, Brothers and Sisters

Congratulate your favorite graduate with an ad in our Graduation Special Tribute Pullout

Sample Ad
Congratulations To Our Little Cowboy

One 6" Ad with Picture - \$15.00
Other Sizes will be quoted.

Graduation Special Tribute Pullout will be published in The Carlisle Mercury May 28.

Ads must be in The Carlisle Mercury office no later than 5 p.m. Monday, May 19.

Bring your ad into The Carlisle Mercury office at 117 S. Locust St.

or mail it with payment to POB 11 Carlisle, KY 40311

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TWIN PIN LANES

PRESENTS CATH STOREY & THE HOMESTEAD JAMBOREE BAND
COUNTRY MUSIC SHOW
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Top 3 Bluegrass Bands
Saturday, May 10, 2008
7-10 p.m. doors open at 6 p.m.
Bowling Alley/Restaurant/Dance Floor
Come early and Eat at the Twin Pin Lanes Restaurant - Featuring Jambooree Specials
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IT'S THE FINAL COUNTDOWN...

IT'S ALMOST LIKE COUNTING DOWN TO CHRISTMAS...
ONLY 6 WEEKS LEFT
MORE DAYS UNTIL YOU FIND OUT THE FINAL DETAILS: CHECK OUT NEXT WEEK'S
The Carlisle Mercury