

Wednesday, April 8, 2015

## OUR OPINION

## WVSDB vetoes were misguided, to say the least

Governor Tomblin, you're wrong. The bills you killed that could help rebuild the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind aren't budget-busting, aren't fiscally irresponsible and aren't premature, as your veto messages suggested.

The vetoes were, on the other hand, politically callous. Your spokesman told us in December that you didn't have any plans for a study that would delay funding for the schools, even though you weren't including any extra funds for the school in your budget. So what did you do after the Legislature overwhelmingly approved funds? After the session adjourned, at nearly the last possible moment, you ordered a study of the school's needs as part of your veto of a bill that would make WVSDB eligible for School Building Authority funds.

What are we supposed to make of that? "Enough of the studies," state Sen. Craig Blair said in December. "We know what needs to be done."

He was right then and you are wrong now. Your veto message calls for the State Board of Education to appoint an independent commission to study the school's curriculum and facilities needs.

You contend: "We do not yet have a firm understanding of what the Schools for the Deaf

and Blind's needs are to become financially viable well into the future."

Mr. Governor, educating deaf and blind children is not a service this state provides with an expectation that it will someday pay for itself. What were you thinking?

The schools already have an independent advisory board to guide their efforts. WVSDB has been overhauling curriculum and its approach to educating deaf and blind children, requiring staff to learn Braille or American Sign Language and laying plans for round-the-clock life skills instruction for students living on campus.

The State Board has been working on improving the schools for a solid 5 years. Last year the board — comprised of your appointees — declared that the schools need to be in Romney, a community that has embraced and supported them throughout their 145 years of existence.

There's no doubt the state has a need for schools for the deaf and the blind unless you're looking to ignore a nationwide standard and the dearth of qualified teachers in the state. There is plenty of evidence that the major impediment to improving the school lays in its outdated and neglected facilities.

The Legislature showed its willingness to acknowledge its responsibility. Otherwise the

SBA bill and another directing \$1.5 million in surplus funds to WVSDB wouldn't have passed so overwhelmingly. In case you missed it, Governor, the vote on the surplus funds was 98-1 in the House of Delegates and unanimous in the State Senate. The vote on SBA funding was 95-0 and 34-0.

Unfortunately, you can't undo what you just did, but you can move quickly to correct your error.

Come to Romney and visit these schools now that you're not in the heat of a campaign. Your only 2 stops here before were 2 weeks before the May 2011 special election primary and again 2 weeks before the November 2012 election.

Make sure you have the facts. As late as this February, your SBA director Dave Sneed was citing renovation plans that were 2 years out of date. This isn't a \$100 million makeover. This is a well-grounded, financially prudent plan with widespread support and undeniable need.

Then, Governor Tomblin, please find a way to get money quickly to WVSDB to begin these overdue renovations.

More dawdling only ignores the deterioration, damages the schools and, by extension, the special, fragile kids they serve.

## FACTS &amp; OPINIONS

## Go figure

36

Bills Gov. Tomblin vetoed in full or in part, of the 262 sent to him by the State Legislature. One was overridden.

## The poll

## This week's question

Have you begun preparing your tax return yet?

- Begun? I have my refunds back already.  
 Yeah, I'm working on it.  
 Not yet. I've got another week.  
 No. Lucky me — I don't have to file.

Vote by 10 a.m. Tuesday

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## Last week's question

Have you begun getting your yard ready for spring yet?

25 Votes cast

- 8 Yes  
 9 I will soon  
 5 Not yet  
 3 Spring? It was 30 degrees on Monday!

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## Did you know?

Arthurdale, located in Preston County west of Kingwood, was the first of many experimental communities founded under the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933.

## FYI

Opinions expressed by columnists and letter writers are their own. Our publication of them does not mean that the Review agrees with the opinion expressed.

If you have an idea for a "Nose to Nose" debate, email news@hampshirereview.com

Letters to the Editor are typed as submitted. No changes are made to sentence structure or grammar.

## Let's agree to disagree

Editor:

First, I would like to thank Mr. Ruggles for reminding us last week of the horrors of war. His list of statistics from the War Between the States should make each of us stop short and scream and immediately write to our various senators and representatives to cease perpetuating warfare anywhere in the world and work towards Peace on Earth. And how did all of those horses deserve to suffer what we did to them in the name of righteousness or justice? And the children around the world now?

Second, Mr. Ruggles, will you please stop denigrating and attacking my mother, Windy Cutler. This is at least the second series of Letters to the Editor in which you have done this. My mother, whom you do not know, is as entitled to express her opinion and point of view in the newspaper as you are. And your opinions and points of view and — yes — your facts, do not make you any more right than she is. Does she call you names and insult your intelligence? I do not see any point in the ramblings of your first paragraph. And I believe that you miss the point of "turn the (other) cheek" — I do not believe that Jesus meant that verbal retaliation is permitted any more than physical.

Third, my mother is a passionate progressive. She reads what is written by both sides on many issues. She cares deeply what might be happening to our planet and what world there will be for her grandchildren and great-grandchildren (and yours if you have any). Many of us see what is going on around us and elsewhere and we are very worried. If even a part of what is called Climate Change is true, this planet and the people, plants and animals on it are in for some hard times.



And I for one do not want to wake up one morning and look outside and say why didn't someone tell us? They are trying to tell us and how could it hurt to change some of the things that we do just in case?

In closing, Mr. Ruggles, can we drop this subject and go outside and enjoy this beautiful spring weather? Thank you.

Dale Brady, Romney ☐

## Should have right to choose dinner

Editor:

A hearty thank you to Senator Charles Trump for his sponsorship and support of the Herdshare Bill (SB30) that overwhelmingly passed both the WV House and Senate. This new law would permit West Virginians to own a "share" of a dairy cow and enjoy fresh, unpasteurized milk.

Although the Governor vetoed the bill after the legislative session ended, we are confident that next session, the bill will be reintroduced and passed early so that any veto can be overridden by the legislature.

We believe that we should have the freedom to eat and drink fresh, raw foods — without government interference. A most basic right is to choose what is on your dinner plate.

Beth and Tim Reese, Capon Bridge ☐

## Don't deny climate change

Editor:

If it is raining on my head, then I know there is no drought anywhere. If I can make a snowball, then I know it cannot possibly be hot anywhere. If there is a creek running through my field, then I know it cannot be that a river anywhere is dried up. If there is ice on my pond, then it cannot be that

Arctic and Antarctic ice is melting. If my woods are green, then it cannot be that the forest is dying anywhere. And if there is a late spring and my corn is only one inch tall, then I know that global warming is a hoax.

I was dreaming that I was trying to illustrate to someone the irreversibility of climate change, how it reaches the point of no return, where even closing every coal mine in the world would not reverse climate change, would not save us. I came up with this analogy: suppose you take a pan of ice water, with chunks of ice floating on it, and set it on an open burner. The water gets hot, the ice begins to melt, you turn the burner off — what happens? Does the ice cease to melt? Or perhaps, refreeze?

Denialists of global warming and climate change are like those who would deny a doctor's diagnosis of cancer, and would refuse that doctor's prescription of medicine, chemotherapy and radiation, or surgery to stop the advance of the cancer. One might say, irrationally, "I am not a doctor, therefore I cannot believe anything that a doctor says and I refuse to take any palliative measures that a doctor might recommend," just as politicians and legislators say, irrationally, "I am not a scientist, therefore I cannot believe anything that a scientist says about climate change, and I will refuse to sponsor any legislation to curb emissions or reduce fossil fuel use."

The people we elect or appoint to make the decisions to protect our future inveigh against leaving debt for our grandchildren, but show no concern about leaving a dying world for our grandchildren. It will be too late to say, "I told you so." But I could wish for Sen Jim Inhofe and his ilk, that they would live forever so that they can see, and live with, the results of their inaction. That would be the hell that they made for themselves.

J. M. "Windy" Cutler, Three Churches ☐

## This tangled web XLV

The March 20 issue of *The Week* magazine reminded me, in its "Wit & Wisdom" column, why I value G.K. Chesterton's works, not only for a great deal of humor but far more relevant philosophies of enduring value. He had once written, "Don't ever take a fence down until you know why it was put up." How pertinent in so many arenas of life, particularly in today's partisan political climate in this country (almost everywhere else, also). When a new party or individual of differing political affinity is elevated to an elected position, the most common, immediate result is a revision of all his/her predecessor's accomplishments, legislation, efforts or the color of bathroom tiles in their Capitol Hill office. Unless that new claimant to power is especially perceptive, gifted and erudite, he will almost certainly do vast damage before he comes to understand that not everything the predecessor stood for was evil.

But bounce Chesterton's epithet off Robert Frost's opening line of his poem "Mending Wall," "Something there is that doesn't love a wall," referring to the boundary stone walls that separate New England properties. Fences, of the sort. Frost's leaning towards the more egalitarian experience in neighboring was not necessarily borne out

by his own crusty, iconoclastic personality. I'm sure, had he a political bone in his body, Frost might have been less willing to advocate doing away with dividers of the physical as well as the philosophical. Chesterton's admonition still rings with conviction for me.

Now to the usual mix of meanness, madness and multi-purpose nonsense "T.web" serves. Remember my codes: AWA — a while ago; and STB — sometime back, 3 years or more.

In 1627 in Germany, a witchcraft trial resulted in Katharina Henot being convicted (was anyone ever not convicted in these travesties?) and subsequently burned at the stake. In 2012, a city councilman in her hometown re-opened the case in order to clear Kat's name, it having become evident over the centuries that a slight miscarriage of justice might have prevailed. I hope she feels better about it as the councilman gets his day in court.

I don't want to take this as an indictment of the U.S. Congress, but a Rasmussen poll AWA determined that 43 percent of Americans would rather have Congress run by a selection of people whose names were picked at random from a phone book than by those who serve in those positions. Up-to-



Bob FLANAGAN

## BITS AND PIECES

date, they would allow you to use a phone book from Finland.

A hat trick of school and school-related abominations. STB: In Wisconsin, a 7th grade girl was suspended from her school's basketball team for speaking in a Native American language. Shawano, Wis., Sacred Heart Catholic School is made up of 60 percent Native American students. Yet, when a teacher overheard 12-year-old Miranda Washinawatok teaching a friend to say, "I love you," in the Menominee tongue, the teacher, in a fit of pique, had the girl sent down saying, "How do I know you're not saying something bad?" The school later apologized to the shocked child. It ain't easy being a teacher, but come on...

A second shot at scholarly malfeasance: STB a teacher at a Nashville high school was suspended for throwing a bucket of water over a pair of teenagers he found kissing in a hallway. The teacher later petulantly posted on his Facebook page, "The dousing seemed to work.

They stopped kissing." Well, hall-monitoring has evolved also, I guess.

And to round out this squalid trilogy, consider the Virginia English teacher who was suspended for telling a black student to read a poem "blacker." A 9th grader, Jordan Shumate, was reading from black poet Langston Hughes's "Ballad of a Landlord" when white English teacher Marilyn Bart interrupted his reading, exhorting him, "Blacker, Jordan. C'mon, blacker. I thought you were black." Jordan reported that Ms. Bart finished reading the poem herself, and in his words, "...sounding like a slave." I don't know; is it possible insensitivity enters in here, not to mention plant-life mentality?

A little slow in catching on ... In Oregon STB, Jose Romero-Valenzuela of Las Vegas was pulled over by state cops 3 times within an hour, charged with speeding: 105 mph, 98 mph and 92 mph.

The cops seemed more surprised than R.V., commenting, "You'd think the message might-a gotten through to him sooner." What message? Hey, I'm outta state. How can it possibly matter?

Another in the education venue, but this from an obverse stand. A student at the John Duncan School of Law at Tennessee's Lincoln Memorial University is suing her college for

allowing her to enroll in law school.

Morgan Crutchfield charges that it cost her \$80,000 in law school tuition, all wasted as she did not complete her studies, and her grades were so bad she was not even allowed to take the bar exam. Her lawyer said, "School administrators should have known what the requirements were." And I'm sure they did. What's amazing is she didn't make it her own priority to learn the same thing.

Another education-related hiccup: AWA, New York City's new sensitivity guidelines for standardized tests ban 50 words they deem undesirable because they might "evoke unpleasant emotions" in students, including "dancing," "dinosaurs" and "birthdays."

Fundamentalists, they pout, might feel oppressed by "dinosaurs" or "dancing" while Jehovah's Witnesses don't celebrate birthdays. "Halloween" and "junk food" are terms also banned. It's quite clear the liberal Thought Police are on the prowl. Stand by, Ferguson.

Mickey-D's in the crosshairs again. AWA Californian Shelley Lynn brought suit against McDonald's alleging the hamburger chain was at fault in causing her to become a prostitute.

Her attorney (obviously another of the "oldest profession") claimed Lynn's ex-husband, a fast food entrepreneur and fran-

chise owner, had hired Shelley to work in one of his outlets, thereby making her acquaintance and ultimately leading to marriage and, somehow, to her emergence into "the game."

The lawyer blames McDonald's Corporation because "... the company failed to conduct due diligence of the husband, Keith Handley, when it sold franchises to him."

Oh, my. All you young burger-flippers just trying to make soda money, watch those seamy influences.

Earlier on, before the sophistication (?) of ISIS, a Taliban commander in Afghanistan saw his portrait on a wanted poster with a \$100 reward offered for his apprehension or death. He took a poster and went to Afghan Security Forces, said, "Hey, this is me. Do I get the reward?"

He was arrested; my guess is he did not get the reward.

An itch I've not been able to scratch: I read an article 3 years ago about Charles Ferguson of Greer, S.C., who was ordered by city authorities to get rid of his pet goat, Yogi, within city confines.

Though threatened by fines and arrest, Charlie refused. "It'd be like abandoning one of my own kids." Right on, Chuck. But afterward, I never learned the outcome of that minor drama. Is Yogi still a feature of Greer life or no? ☐