MCPS has more issues than bedbugs

Editor's note: This guest column includes some graphic content that is not suitable for young readers.

Several weeks ago when the news of bed bugs hit the community children were immediately pulled from the Marion County Public School system has a much more serious problem than mere bed bugs. What if I were to tell you that the Marion County Public School system has allowed to be taught and read in the libraries and in the classroom equates to mental pornography! In our society more and more things are becoming sex oriented. After all, "sex sells." Simply look at some of the billboards in Louisville, the ads on our television, and the movies that are being aimed at children. There are all sorts of sexual innuendo! While these little things that big companies are using to sell their product to the adult population these shouldn't be things that the local school system allows to be taught to our young people! Let's just think about this according to the facts for the moment, which you won't get from your school system. The CDC reported in 2013 that, "47 percent of high school students" had ever had sexual intercourse." That "47 percent had had sexual intercourse during the previous three months, and, of these 41 percent did not use a condom the last time they had sex." Also, the CDC notes that only "15 percent had had sex with four or more people during their life." Clearly, among the teenage population there is no ignorance of what sex is, because this has already become an epidemic! Thus, this is why I believe that the school system, the teachers involved, the principals and the superintendent need to be shamed. They should be the ones to make sure that books are screened of this garbage. And to show you just how bad some of this stuff is, a book that high schoolers are reading (Looking For Alaska by John Green) talks about all types of sexual and graphic material! Not to mention that the students are reading this aloud. This isn't the only book available but it is one I want you to notice. The "Fl" word used 16 times, the "S" word is used 27 times. One scene on page 126 and 127 in the book was like this, "Later I unbuckled my pants and pulled down my boxers a little and pulled out my penis. Wow!" She asked me, "Then it proceeds to state that oral sex then was performed. All of this is in detail. Now let me ask you, something, what do you think is going to go through the mind of a young man with hormones racing through his body as he sits in the middle of class?" Another scene from the book discusses the finding of a sex tape where it goes into detail of the event, take for example this quote, "We ran it with him to the TV room, closed the blinds, locked the door, and watched the movie. It opened up the eyes of the other students and made them think of what they have been doing."

See Campbell, page A7

Free people read freely

Editor's note: This column was written by an unaffiliated reader.

While Franklin, one of the prominent Founding Fathers, once said, "Without freedom of thought, there can be no such thing as Wisdom; and no such thing as public Liberty, without Freedom of Speech." As a publisher and writer, Franklin was no stranger to controversy. Certainly, the ruling British authority of the time took much offense at Franklin's writings. Yet, Franklin believed so profoundly in the freedom to seek knowledge that he said, "If all printers were determined not to print anything until they were sure it would offend nobody, there would be very little printed."

Franklin's younger fellow revolutionary, Thomas Jefferson, said that without the freedom to write and read as we please, liberty itself could be lost. A study of Jefferson's own book collection shows his voracious appetite for reading. He read widely, including from authors with whom he may have disagreed. Jefferson was certainly a fan of the classics including Socrates.

Engaging in literature makes us uncomfortable does not mean we condone the actions we are reading about. Reading about a murder in The Lebanon Enterprise does not force us to murder... However, reading about a murder in Shakespeare forces us to confront the sometimes dark reality of the human condition. Because Mark Twain used the language of his day in Huckleberry Finn, does that mean he was an advocate for racism? To the contrary, he was shining a light on its ugly realities. Because Harper Lee described in blistering detail the injustices of the pre-civil rights south, doesn't mean she condoned those injustices. In fact, she was abhorred by them. George Orwell, in painting a picture of a totalitarian government wasn't glorifying totalitarianism, he was warning us of its dangers. The Scarlet Letter does not force us to engage in adultery. The book raises questions about who should throw the first stone.

See Hardin, page A7

Senates is working toward budget deal

Long days, heated discussions, and budget negotiations marked the 13th week of the 2016 General Assembly. The Senate passed three of the five-week days while the Senate and House lawmakers kicked off the other two days to work on budget negotiations.

The Senate is working diligently toward a budget compromise ensuring the people of the Commonwealth are not left without a state budget at the end of the session. We do not want to waste taxpayer dollars by calling a special session.

Our main concern and budget priority is funding our pension liability. We have over $36 billion in unfunded liabilities and we cannot afford to keep doing our creditors dirty.

One strategy that appears to be working well is the pension crisis is equivalent to mortgaging our children's future.

Additionally, we proposed to fully restore cuts to K-12 education and the Family Resource and Youth Services Centers (FRYSC). We also proposed to fully restore the judicial branch's budget to ensure the court system continues to function.

While even busy with budget negotiations, we passed quite a few bills this week including:

- HB 39 would allow the expansion of some low-level felonies from criminal to traffic offenses.
- HB 305 is the state's road plan, which provides funding for road projects all across the Commonwealth.
- HB 382 would update regulations relating to security interests in motor vehicles.
- HB 382, which would
Benzing Franklin, one of the preeminent Founding Fathers, once said: "Without freedom of thought, there can be no such thing as wisdom, and no such thing as public liberty, without Freedom of Speech." As a publisher and writer, Franklin was no stranger to controversy. Certainly, the ruling British authority of the time took much offense to Franklin's writings. Yet, Franklin believed so profoundly in the freedom to seek knowledge that even "all printers were determined not to print anything until they were sure it would offend nobody, there would be very little printed." Franklin's younger fellow revolutionary, Thomas Jefferson, faced the same: "How can a person find or examine, from mere want of freedom, or being influenced with authors whom he may have disagreed. Jefferson was certainly a fan of the classics, including Socrates. Literature, both classic and modern, by its nature makes us uncomfortable. Socrates, one of the original classics, compared himself to a gadfly, making the people of Athens uncomfortable and forcing them to confront some of the uglier realities of their city. Unfortunately for Socrates, the First Amendment was a couple of thousand years in the future, and he was put to death. In the United States, if someone disagrees with the written word or finds it uncomfortable to look at the messiness of the human condition, they don't force the author to drink hemlock, as Socrates was forced to do. They have the freedom to simply not read. The founders would argue that intellectual freedom, even when uncomfortable, is far better than the alternative. Jefferson would argue to read well is to read broadly. Don't take it for granted, for it makes us think. Engaging in literature that makes us uncomfortable is no mean feat, and we should be happy to do so."
Campbell
Continued from p.4
with a woman standing on a bridge with her legs spread while a guy kneels in front of her, giving her... I won’t post the rest of it. I’m sure you’re reasonable adults know what is happening here. Is this really what schools are teaching our young people?
And we wonder why our teens are getting pregnant, why our young men can’t keep their pants zipped? Sex is being glorified from the tiny town school system. The Marion County Public School system should be ashamed that they allowed such a thing to go unnoticed.
Parents, faith leaders of Marion County, it is unacceptable that school officials have allowed sexually explicit books and materials to be allowed in the library and into the classroom. We wonder why our youths are troubled, part of it is because they are ungrateful, and because they give meaning to our lives. Our teenagers, like the teenagers in Looking for Alaska are capable of participat-
ing in the making of a meaningful life. Looking for Alaska was the Printz Honor book in 2006 Top Ten Books for Young Adults. The book is critically acclaimed, widely read, and is in the process of being made into a major motion picture. Having said all that, a student at Marion County High School, does NOT have to read the book. Students can opt out and read a book of their choos-
ing. We trust our young parents and their parents to decide for themselves to read or not to read the book. Laurie Followell, MCHS English teacher, has 26 of her students who plan to read this book. “There is a book for everyone. If it’s not your book, put it down. Really, it’s that simple.”
Supreme Court Justice and renowned Civil War veteran Oliver Wendell Holmes said that, “If there is any principle of the Constitution that more imperatively calls for attachment than any other, it is the principle of free thought — not free thought for those who agree with us but free thought for those who disagree with the thought that we hate.” Our Founders decided in 1776 that allowing one man to think for the rest of us was a concept whose time was gone. Monarchies and dictatorships don’t trust the masses, but want to control what they want to read or don’t want to read. Jefferson ended our ties with a monarchy with a piece of constitutional cloth. The Declaration of Independence. I’m sure when George III read it he was bit a comfortable. After 240 years of free speaking, free writing, and free reading, Americans have proven Jefferson right. In short, “free people read.”
Editor’s note: Kim Hardin is the media spe-
cialist at Marion County High School.

Hardin
Continued from p.6
Looking for Alaska, the book, in 1996 was a young adult novel about grief, loss, and coming of age in a difficult time in the life of a young American boy named Miles. John Green, the author, describes an awkwardness in his life that he could not encourage our teen-
geners to have sex, but rather, to caution against the lowliness of physicality without emotional connection to maturity. Like Mark Twain and Harper Lee, John Green presents us with a realistic portrayal of life that challenges us to encourage our teen-
geners to respect each other, to study for their future, and to become educated. Also, like Mark Twain and Harper Lee, he presents us with characters who are intelligent, thoughtful, strong, brave, confused, and completely human. The teenagers in Looking for Alaska make bad decisions and have heart-breaking consequences. However, they are on a journey towards the wisdom which Benjamin Franklin speaks so eloquently. Perhaps, the greatest challenge is, challenged by his religion teacher to answer for himself “What is the nature of being a person? What is the best way to be a person? How did we come to be and what will become of us when we are no longer?” These are not simple questions for the teenagers. These are the questions of the collective human experience we all share.

Senate
Continued from p.4
sessions are in order. The opening of the 2016-17 General Assembly will be in session dur-
ing the veto period, which concludes on April 11. During that time Senate leadership will continue budget negotia-
tions in hopes of voting on a budget on April 12.

Grapple with and give meaning to our lives. Our teenagers, like the teenagers in Looking for Alaska, are capable of participating in the making of a meaningful life. Looking for Alaska was the Printz Honor book in 2006 Top Ten Books for Young Adults. The book is critically acclaimed, widely read, and is in the process of being made into a major motion picture. Having said all that, a student at Marion County High School, does NOT have to read the book. Students can opt out and read a book of their choosing. We trust our young parents and their parents to decide for themselves to read or not to read the book. Laurie Followell, MCHS English teacher, has 26 of her students who plan to read this book. “There is a book for everyone. If it’s not your book, put it down. Really, it’s that simple.” Supreme Court Justice and renowned Civil War veteran Oliver Wendell Holmes said that, “If there is any principle of the Constitution that more imperatively calls for attachment than any other, it is the principle of free thought — not free thought for those who agree with us but free thought for those who disagree with the thought that we hate.” Our Founders decided in 1776 that allowing one man to think for the rest of us was a concept whose time was gone. Monarchies and dictatorships don’t trust the masses, but want to control what they want to read or don’t want to read. Jefferson ended our ties with a monarchy with a piece of constitutional cloth. The Declaration of Independence. I’m sure when George III read it he was bit a comfortable. After 240 years of free speaking, free writing, and free reading, Americans have proven Jefferson right. In short, “free people read.”

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Council
On Services and Supports for Individuals with an Intellectual Disability and Other Developmental Disabilities.

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To the world you may be just one person, but to one person, you may be the world

DONATE

Dr. Rod Coxon

Birmingham, Ala., April 10th, 1916

Dear Dr. Coxon:

We have been coming to Dr. Coxon for 10 years and he has improved my life style both physically and spiritually.

Lynda Cooley and Anna Mae Moore

To the world you may be Just one person, but to one person, you may be the world

DONATE

To the world you may be Just one person, but to one person, you may be the world

DONATE
YOUR OPINION

Clearing up confusion about The Caring Place

It has come to our attention that some clients of The Caring Place are getting the churches, restaurants, and private businesses to give them money and food. They are saying that we won't help them and that we are kicking them out of the shelter. (We never use language like that.) It has also been stated that they say we are closing our facility. This is a complete untruth.

If women or clients from The Caring Place approach your church or business asking for money or assistance in any way, please call us at 270-692-9300.

We provide assistance for our present and former clients. We are extremely sorry for any confusion that has been brought to you by misrepresenting concerning The Caring Place.

If you would like to donate to battered women and children or specifically to The Caring Place, please call us. We have never and will never send a client out into the public to ask for donations. This is unsafe and very unprofessional.

To clear up any gossip or rumors, please call the shelter during office hours from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Debra Trent
Executive Director
The Caring Place
Lebanon

Respect motorcyclists

Here are a few safety reminders: If you have road frontage, remember that the motorcyclist has no place for their feet for traction. Grass clippings, especially when wet, make the surface hazardous. So do the safety of the road surface. Please, when mowing roads, a motorcyclist will not throw the grass clippings away from the road surface. Don't deprive your neighbors of the road!

Also, if you have gravel washing onto the road, please take a moment to sweep it off and make the road more safe. You may save a life by doing this kind service.

If you or your family member is considering getting a bike, even if you already have experience, consider this for safety:

The Kentucky Motorcycle Rider Education Program is offered at all the colleges and community colleges.

Basic Rider Course is for the beginning rider. The rider can practice on new motorcycles of different styles to determine which is most comfortable. There are road, 50% off-road, and 30% dirt classes.

Letters to the Editor

Readers share opinions on recent book controversy at MCHS

First and foremost, I believe that the people of Lebanon are only hearing one side of the story when it comes to the actions that are currently being discussed in the English department at Marion County High School. I believe it's time to hear from a student. As a Marion County High School graduate and valedictorian of the 2013 class, I am blown away by the backlash towards the English department by some in our community. Every college student is busy, but I believe it is more important for me to address these concerns.

From walking into a seminar class my first semester at the become adults in the community.

It is easy to pick out things to support one's own argument and ignore those that refute it. However, to clearly only provide one side of the story does the community injustice. Just recently in my developmental psychology course we learned that research actually shows that teens who are the most susceptible to contract a sexually transmitted diseases have parents who tell their children about sex but tell them to avoid it! There are many facts and misconceptions when it comes to sexual education. To attempt to hide a subject or to pretend it does not exist is something that students actually will read are challenges in themselves. To a high-school student choosing between the difficult language and syntax of Hamlet or a novel like Looking for Alaska written by the author who also authored The Fault in Our Stars is an easy choice.

Parents, do not think that we are incapable of understanding the meaning behind a book such as Looking for Alaska. To pick out scenes that do not capture the true essence of a novel is to take things out of context. The real political correctness is not censoring our students from subjects on the basis that we are offended but instead is to offer environments that foster criti-
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY

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From walking into a seminar class my first semester at the University of Louisville, I was shocked by how many students were not prepared for a writing intensive and analytical course. The skills that were instilled in me by the English department prepared me to succeed. Every teacher at MCHS cares about his or her students and the community’s future. The audacity to question whether or not the school had the best interest of the students is absurd. We are not children, nor are we naive in what is constantly portrayed around us in media. To simply try to hide us from reality is to deprive us of the ability to mature and become adults in the community. It is easy to pick out things to support one’s own argument and ignore those that refute it. However, to clearly only provide one side of the story does the community injustice. Just recently in my developmental psychology course we learned that research actually also shows that teens who are the most susceptible to contract a sexually transmitted diseases have parents who tell their children about sex but tell them to avoid it! There are many facts and misconceptions when it comes to sexual education. To attempt to hide a subject or to pretend like it does not exist is something that would only promote fascination.

However, the true essence of this argument is based on censorship. To simply avoid reading a book that has language that society has deemed inappropriate is equivalent to having students walk down the hallway of the school with earplugs to avoid hearing these words. Some of the greatest novels ever to be written were controversial and spoke about contentious subjects. These books did not encourage behavior instead teaches students about human emotions, motivations, and consequences. Finding novels that students actually will read are challenges in themselves. To a high school student choosing between the difficult language and syntax of Hamlet or a novel like Looking for Alaska written by the author who also authored The Fault in Our Stars is an easy choice.

Parents, do not think that we are incapable of understanding the meaning behind a book such as Looking for Alaska. To pick out scenes that do not capture the true essence of a novel is to take things out of context. The real political correctness is not censoring our students from subjects on the basis that we are offended but offering environments that foster critical thinking, discussion, and creativity. I stand with MCPS and the choices that they make for their students!

Charles Shofner Lebanon

Editor’s note: Charles Shofner is a graduate of MCHS and currently attends the University of Louisville. He is a resident of Marion County.

Books should broaden minds intellectually, not pornographically

As a parent/grandparent I am grateful for people who will stand in opposition of books in the school systems that...
This week, the General Assembly returns to Richmond for a special session to wrap up the 2016 legislative session.

While this time traditionally has been set aside just to consider whether the House and Senate should override any vetoes a governor might issue, we now host a session that will last for two years and also use this time to vote on other bills that were not considered before the veto recess. This year, the biggest of these is the state’s two-year budget.

As you may recall, negotiations between legislative leaders stalled over a fundamental disagreement. In the House, we have a plan to split aid from preschool to postsecondary education. It was possible, and House leaders offered a plan that would address the need for higher education from severe cuts while trying to get a budget enacted. Meanwhile, Senate remains that a deal can still be reached.

One new law, for example, will put Kentucky in line with more than 30 other states that already have public-private partnerships. Like it sounds, P3 is designed to make it easier for state and local governments to work with the private sector to build projects the government can’t or won’t take on alone or to run services like a utility.

The promise of this can already be done, but this law will standardize the process statewide while making it more transparent and accountable to the public. With the federal government providing less resources than it has in the past, states are turning to P3 to boost their infrastructure. The Kentucky Chamber of Commerce is among the group’s leading advocates.

Another new law will create a review for DPU officers and double the look-back period from three years to five years. The new law also makes it easier to take repeat offenders off the road and hopefully less time to study.

Law enforcement, there were more than 15,000 first-time DUI offenders last year, and 3,500 who were convicted for a repeat offense. The numbers for a third offense topped 700, and for a fourth offense, which is a Class D felony, the total was 82. With a longer look-back period, the numbers of repeat offenders will undoubtedly rise.

Another new law is aimed at making it easier for colleges and universities to go online. In this case, the General Assembly is establishing a framework to reduce the estimated 3,100 rape kits that the state’s attorney’s office hasn’t tested in recent years. This law will likely reduce that backlog and ultimately ensure that kits in the future will undergo forensic testing within 60 days. Other states have faced similar issues and have shown it is possible to make this work.

In another criminal-justice matter, many Class D felons will have a chance to expunge their record, making it easier for them to apply for jobs or volunteer in school. The House has supported this concept for years, because countless Kentuckians are still paying for a crime that may have occurred decades earlier.

This legislation will apply to about 70 percent of Class D felony convictions, with violent or sex-related offenses not included. For those who do qualify, the process cannot begin until at least five years have passed since the sentence was served, and they cannot have been charged with another crime. Prosecutors and, if possible, victims will be notified as part of the expungement process.

Some of the other bills the General Assembly approved this year:

- Realign 9-1-1 fees on mobile/internet-based phones so local governments are less burdened with the cost of providing this emergency service;
- Support local teacher’s choice
- Establish a framework to reduce the estimated 3,100 rape kits that the state’s attorney’s office hasn’t tested in recent years.
- Help our fast-growing distilleries, breweries and wineries by increasing production limits and making it easier for them to serve their customers;
- Add emergency medical workers to the professions eligible for human death benefits from the state if they are killed in the line of duty. Law enforcement and firefighters are those already covered;
- Make it possible for the judiciary to start a pilot program to open up as many juvenile hearings;
- Establish a disabled veteran-owned business program, so the public will be more aware of these companies. Another new law calls on professional organizations to consider qualified military training when granting licenses or certificates.

Although the legislative session is over this week, it is never too late to let us know your views on issues affecting the state. You can always reach me by writing to Room 329G, Capitol Annex, 702 Capitol Avenue, Frankfort, KY 40601; or you can email me at Terry.Mills@ lrc.ky.gov. To leave a message for me or for any legislator by phone, call 1-800-372-7181. For those with a hearing impairment, the number is 1-800-896-0300. I hope to hear from you soon.

Letters
Continued from A6

subject our youth to proficiency and pornography. I am appalled to learn that the use of literature is being read aloud, discussed, and treated as normal classroom activity. These same behaviors, proficiency, sexually explicit language and gestures are not allowed in the halls, walk and lunchroom, why are they allowed in the classroom? Parents need to know that their child is being exposed to books that broaden their minds internally without being exposed to pornography.

Sherry Brady
Lebanon

Support local teacher’s choice

Laurie since she was a teenager and I trust her integrity and dedication as a teacher to reach her students. It doesn’t sound like students were forced to read the book and that parents were given a choice to opt out for their child.

Angie Mantilingy

Lori

We have been coming to Dr. Coxon for 10 years and he has improved my life style both physically and spiritually.

Lynda Cooley and Anna Mae Morgan

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Censorship infringes on our freedom

As Americans, we champion the idea of freedom, yet we must ask ourselves, to what extent are we actually free? I am writing this article in response to two articles published in The Lebanon Enterprise last week concerned with banning the book Looking for Alaska from MCHS because I believe the perspective of a student is crucial to the complete understanding of this controversy. As a dual-credit early college program student who has attended Washington County High School and Saint Catharine College, I have recently explored the very subject of literary censorship in one of my college-level English courses, and it is an issue that is very close to my heart, because not only am I a frequent reader, I have aspirations to pursue a career in law. To return to my previous question, I would like to state that any people who are restricted from knowledge are inherently un-free and restricting access to texts does not adhere to democratic principles. Therefore, literary censorship and the banning of books is an infringement upon our freedom. An attempt to restrict knowledge from students is unjust and assumes that those students are not capable of independent thinking or forming their own opinions. The explicit content discussed in Looking for Alaska is not a factor that should determine its literary merit, yet the explicit content is relevant to the outstanding thematic idea of the book, and that is why it has been included. However, one who has never read this book may fail to realize the explicit content’s relevance. The point has been made that students’ exposure to the sexual content within Looking for Alaska could influence them to partake in similar sexual activities; however, there exists no proof of this correlation. Just because a student is exposed to information about an activity does not mean that they are more likely to participate in that activity. It is actually the case that once an individual is exposed to such an idea, that they will further educate themselves upon it, meaning that exposure to sex may actually increase the amount of students who are knowledgeable about a very natural facet of many teen and adult relationships, while parents and other adults are sending the message that sex is unmentionable. This ignorance of sex is unhealthy. According to the Center for Disease Control, 44 percent of young women and 47 percent of young men ages 15-19 were sexually active last year. Such a high percentage of an age group is participating in an activity that parents believe should not be discussed in school. When information about sex is banned, students will learn misleading, inaccurate information about sex in informal ways. We should be educating students rather than shielding them because ignorance is not an effective deterrent. Looking for Alaska, or any other book for that matter, is not responsible for any of our society’s issues concerning sex, but lack of education is at the root of this problem, a problem that will only be furthered by the banning of Looking for Alaska.

We expect students to know exactly what they want to do with their lives when they graduate from high school, yet we do not see them as mature enough to be exposed to explicit literary content, so we attempt to censor what they can and cannot read based upon the beliefs of only certain individuals. Although it is human nature to try to attempt to make others conform to your own beliefs, we cannot allow conformity of ideas in a place of academic endeavor. It would be impossible to completely censor all books that include explicit content from students; therefore, it is of utmost importance that we allow students the freedom to read, explore, and think for themselves. The publisher of the poem Howl, by Allen Ginsburg was tried in court on the basis of obscenity for its inclusion of explicit sexual content. The defense attorney in the film about this censorship trial states that by opposing censorship, “you can add to educated thinking, or you can add fuel to the fire of ignorance... let there be light. Let there be honest understanding.” The fact of the matter is that the teacher who decided to teach Looking for Alaska in her classroom sent home permission slips to the parents of the students in her class to ensure mutual understanding of the book’s content. Therefore, this controversy exists not because a parent believes that their child should not read this book, but because an outside individual believes that no student in Marion County should be able to read this book, which is a clear infringement upon the freedom of others. The students reading Looking for Alaska have been granted permission by their guardians, and no other outside source should be capable of restricting what another person’s child can/cannot read. In banning Looking for Alaska, we can choose to impede students in their pursuit of further knowledge, or we can allow them the freedom of thinking for themselves.

Editor’s note: Brittany Greenwell is a sophomore at Saint Catharine College.