



Individual child's needs, not tests, should be focus

Attention in Washington has turned to the No Child Left Behind Act and the future of federal aid to public schools.

Almost everyone seems to agree "No Child," the offspring of former President George W. Bush, needs to go, but here we are, more than four years into the next administration, and the specter of this ill-conceived law still haunts American education.

No Child, which amounted to a massive federal intrusion into education standards, always seemed more like something the Democrats would have come up with than the GOP. The current Republican leadership seems to agree.

House Republicans voted overwhelmingly to ditch the law and its controversial standards for school "success" last month. Decisions about evaluating students should be returned to the states and local school boards, members said.

In the Senate, where liberal Democrats hold sway, such libertarian nonsense probably won't play. The Senate bill would give states more flexibility, but retain the secretary of education's authority to approve state plans.

House sponsors named their bill the Student Success Act, while Democrats dubbed it the Letting Students Down Act. It passed 221-207 with all Democrats and 12 Republicans voting no.

And while almost everyone agrees that No Child, while showing some success, is not realistic in assuming that every child will be able to achieve the same level of success in school. We all know kids

aren't made the same; they have different abilities and different problems, and each one deserves to be treated as an individual.

Not everyone is capable of earning a doctorate, and not everyone needs a college degree. American schools need to be focused on preparing students for what each one can achieve, for what each one aspires to and for what each is capable of.

That means abandoning the rather foolish idea of No Child that every kid can perform to a common standard by graduation and instead offering each child what he or she needs. That's not easy, of course, and writing some common federal standards for all students is nearly impossible.

Schools should be helping the brightest students to move along at the speeds they are capable of while bringing everyone up as much as possible. One goal of No Child that makes sense is to offer each child the best education he or she can handle. The practice, however, has been to bring everyone down to a lower, but more achievable, level.

Getting an agreement on how to do that may not be easy. We doubt the Senate will buy a plan where the federal government just gives out money with no strings attached, as the House majority might want. A compromise will be needed, but those have been tough to come by in Washington.

Instead of "teaching to the test," our schools should be teaching each child in the best way possible. Is that too much to ask? — Steve Haynes



Open Season

Not all toilets created equal

By Cynthia Haynes



Let's talk about a ticklish topic — Turkish toilets

Yep, that's right. Restrooms, bathrooms, lavatories or WC's (water closets) as they are more commonly called in the land of the Turks.

We were warned before leaving the safety of the Omaha airport that Turkish facilities would be somewhat different from what we were used to.

That is true, and it started a long time ago, we discovered.

We were taken through ruins at Ephesus, once the capital of the Roman province of Asia, and besides the statues, pillars and baths, we got to tour their public toilet.

Now when I was young, my mother taught in a county school where sometimes the outhouses were two holer. The citizens of Ephesus outdid those by a long shot.

In an open-air courtyard, a large U-shaped marble bench contained holes in this public "latrina." A water system under the bench provided for the removal of waste and bad smells.

Our guide noted that rich people probably had a slave sit on the marble seat to warm it up in cold weather. We could have used that back in Kansas when we had to use those two holer in the winter.

It was an ingenious system, if not very private, but then the Roman baths were anything but private, so I imagined nobody complained about this comfort station.

Modern Turkish bathrooms are

somewhat different from ours, also.

"Slit" toilets are common, we were warned, but toilet paper is not, and you might have to pay a toll to go.

This all turned out to be true, but the facilities were almost always clean and in many cases, surprisingly modern.

Let's start with the slit toilets. These are porcelain basins set in the floor with a large oblong hole in them. Next to the toilet is a pail of water or a faucet so that you can "flush" them.

Almost every restroom the women encountered in Turkey had slit toilets, but most of them also had the European style as well. We learned to check all the stalls before settling for the next available.

The wild thing about these toilets is that I saw many Turkish women choose them over the seat kind. I suspect they felt that the slit or squat toilets in public places are more sanitary because you don't actually touch anything.

I can't remember a public restroom in Turkey that didn't have sinks with soap and paper towels. Most often, the towel dispenser was one that automatically rolled out a fresh towel when you waved your hand in front of it.

Most places had toilet paper, but we all carried our little package of tissues, and these were sold for 50 cents a package on every street corner in the tourist areas.

To find what I considered a primitive toilet and modern washing facilities in the same

restroom was the norm. However, I only saw one on our tour that was marked handicapped accessible, and we stopped at tourist traps, a college, parliament, foundation offices, a couple of newspapers, a television station and several airports.

The one handicapped restroom was at a large newspaper in Istanbul.

It was obvious that there is no Turks with Disabilities Act.

At the college, we ran into something else interesting — lavatories.

Needing to use the facilities before a luncheon meeting, I headed for a sign with a figure in a dress marked "Lavatori." It was a washroom with a long row of sinks and the ever-present automatic paper towel dispensers. The WC was down the hall and around the corner.

Washing is a very important part of Turkish culture and the Islamic religion. Men can be seen outside any mosque ritually washing their head, hands and feet before entering these sacred places to pray.

While washing facilities always seem to be free, you occasionally need a Turkish lira (about 50 cents) to use the WC. (We had to pay just twice in 10 days, however.)

So, if you plan to visit this beautiful and fascinating country, keep a package of tissues and a Turkish lira in your pocket. You may never need them, but it's always best to be prepared.

Casey's Comments

Couple's love put to test

By Casey McCormick



By Casey McCormick
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It's good to love and like your spouse. This may sound like a "no brainer," but it is possible to live with someone in the common bonds of marriage and not be all that crazy about them. Last weekend tested the love-like concept for my wife and me.

One of the great things with living in an old 1917-built home is wood floors. One of the bad things of living in that same house is the

wood floors. Mrs. McCormick got the idea that it was time to refinish the floors that cover our front room, dining room and stairs to the second floor bed rooms. This meant that we were sequestered to our kitchen for most of the weekend.

Let me add that it was a very hot, late summer weekend and we have no air conditioning on the first floor of the house. Also added to the fun was entertaining our two chocolate labs and son's German

Short-hair in the side area of the kitchen. Oh, and the room was filled with our dining room table and chairs. It was a cozy kitchen!

I would not lie to you and say we didn't have a couple moments each where tempers bubbled close to the surface. But, all in all we survived the DIY project and have beautiful and gleaming hard wood floors to show for it. In addition we saw our relationship pass the love and like acid test.

Writer questions who is liable

Letter to the Editor:
Landowners are liable for leaks and spills.

If Canada hath oil to export-pipe it to the Atlantic or Pacific-build refineries sell U.S fuel.* Eminent domain is for roads, schools, public use *, not casinos,

Letter to the Editor

Walmarts and foreign companies *Concentration of the nations fuel supply in one spot is a perfect target for a Pearl Harbor-911-grand slam!!! "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but

the ends there of are the ends of death." Prov 16:25

Frank Sowers
Benkelman, Neb.
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GOD SAYS
The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable; but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness.
Psalms 10:32

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