



DRIVEWAY MAKES PERFECT NESTING PLACE

A pair of killdeer apparently decided that the driveway at White Oak Elementary School was the perfect place to make their nest. The birds usually select a rocky area so that the eggs are camouflaged. The mother bird will scurry away from the nest, feigning an injury in an attempt to lure away potential danger. The eggs incubate for about 24 days, then upon hatching, the baby birds will leave the nest as soon as they are dry. Students at the school have placed some landscape timbers around the nest in an attempt to protect it from motorists and bus drivers using the driveway and are hoping that no one injures the eggs before hatching. (Staff photo by Deborah Collins)

Tanner Leggett attends ECU youth program

Tanner Leggett has been selected to attend the Legislators' School for Youth Leadership Development to be held on the campus of East Carolina University in Greenville, NC. Nominated by his school as a student who demonstrates leadership potential, Leggett will attend the High Session, July 5-18.

The program is funded by the North Carolina General Assembly and is under the direction of the Office of School Services of the School of Education, East Carolina University.

During the two-week program, Leggett will attend classes and participate in activities designed to enhance leadership skills, all within an



Tanner Leggett

FEATURED PET

"Ladybug", a wire-terrier mix, approximately 4 years old, is still looking for a home. She is friendly natured dog - good with children and is pretty much housebroken. The shelter still has a part-Lab mix male, that is neutered - free to a good home and also a husky-mix female. They recently acquired a beagle that will hunt. Several cats and numerous adorable kittens, including some long-haired ones, are available. If you are interested in providing one of these animals a home call the Gates-Chowan Animal Shelter at 221-8514 or stop by 138 Icardia Road, Tyner. Pet owners are reminded to have their animals spayed or neutered in order to avoid having unwanted animals. Any animal adopted from the shelter comes with a discount coupon. (Staff photo by Deborah Collins)

experience-based framework developed around the "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People," by Dr. Stephen Covey. In addition to classwork, Leggett will complete a two-day outdoor challenge program and participate in a community service project. Leggett will also develop an action plan which he will implement as part of a school or community service project once he returns home.

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Beat

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The current state of affairs teaches us that colleges and universities more and more are becoming commercial conglomerates. Some simply exploit their tax-exempt status and their on-campus location as major advantages over off-campus, private-sector businesses. One consequence is a substantial erosion of the local area base surrounding these seats of higher (learning).

These on-campus enterprises intentionally and drastically multiply their competitive advantages however they can. For example, many colleges and universities refuse to release the list of professor-required textbooks to off-campus stores. Straight-faced, they cite "confidentiality" and "privacy rights." The result is higher pre-class costs for students.

Democratic U.S. Senator Christopher Dodd recently wrote, "If college expenses continue to rise five percent a year, a family that has a child today...must save almost \$400 a month over the next 18 years to finance four years of private college. For a public school, they will have to save about \$175." A monopolistic edubusiness culture contributes to this problem.

There can be little doubt that full and fair competition would benefit students. A recent, detailed, national survey of student textbook costs at on-campus and off-campus bookstores found that textbook prices for new and used textbooks can

average as much as 31 percent less than at competing off-campus stores.

What is at stake is a lot of money - taxpayer's money. The federal aid program for students at higher-learning institutions involves \$50 billion annually for nine million students at 7,000 colleges and universities. Thus, a mere one-percent savings realized from more competition would, in the aggregate, be substantial - \$500 million.

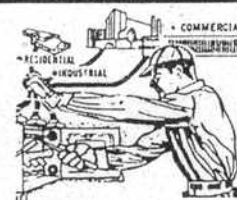
While college business administration professors teach their students about the evils of monopolistic practices, their university administration counterparts practice the opposite of what they preach.

In short, DOE and higher education institutions should not condone, promote or permit any policy or process that unfairly protects educational institutions' monopoly power. In fact, DOE should require institutions to facilitate and promote competition on a level playing field.

The fundamentals of the current abuses will not change without Congressional action. It's time taxpayers, students, parents, and small businesses combine to urge Congress to end these abuses - and soon. One senior DOE policy-maker told this writer: "We serve institutions, not students." This cannot be what Congress - or its constituents - want.

(John-Paul de Barnardo is a Charlotte attorney. This column was reprinted with permission from Clarion, the magazine of the Pope Center for Higher Education Reform, a branch of the John Locke Foundation in Raleigh.)

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