

# FOUNDATIONS AND THE SCHOOLS . . .

BY CAMILLE WAGNER

The writer is president of Parents and Professionals Involved in Education and lives in Louisville.

**M**ANY OF US are indebted to David Hawpe for his *Courier-Journal* column (Sunday, Dec. 4) highlighting the Dec. 16 *Forbes* magazine article, "Trojan horse money." However, he might have spent a little more time actually seeking documentation supporting the information given. That he apparently wanted only an opportunity to write a derisive diatribe is illustrated by the fact that he called neither the author of the article nor myself to ask for documentation. He did call the superintendent of Owensboro schools, though the child in question might have attended a Daviess County school.

Unfortunately, instead of seriously considering the main thrust of the *Forbes* article, Mr. Hawpe tried to pass on a rather altered version of a few points from the article. Just for the record, the following words and phrases did not appear in the *Forbes* article: "conspiracy," "a secular humanist subversion of parental responsibility," "Trilateral Commission," "Bildergers," and "Elders of Zion (who are they?)." These are Mr. Hawpe's own contributions — perhaps he knows something we don't! However, in view of his misrepresentation of the *Forbes* article, I suggest that *The Courier-Journal* publish it and let its readers decide for themselves.

No one has denied that the Casey Foundation funds some very worthwhile programs. It does not necessarily follow, however, that all of the projects it funds are benign. Nor does the fact that UPS's Oz Nelson is one of the chief promoters of KERA — and chairman of the Casey Foundation board — prove that all of Casey's grants are beyond reproach.

Here is the main point I wish to make: Kentucky has pursued and accepted many, many grants from numerous sources — including the Carnegie Foundation, which brought us KERA. Surely no one is naive enough to think that there are no strings attached to these grants. One of these, mentioned in *Forbes*, is the agreement Gov. Brereton Jones signed, which promised to give private medical data on Kentuckians to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to use for its own purposes or to sell. Aside from the complete disregard this shows for Kentuckians, is it even legal?

Kentucky appears to me to be a kept state. We are so tied up in these strings that we have surely lost much of our autonomy. It appears that certain legislation and/or regulations must be passed in response to certain grants which the bureaucracy of various Ken-

tucky agencies has accepted — apparently with little or no legislative oversight. In addition, we must put out millions of dollars to pay for what the foundations do not — particularly after grant money ends. I wonder if anyone in state government knows about all grants we are currently receiving — and what strings are attached.

With this letter, I am faxing copies of the "School Medical Examination Form — Sixth Grade Form," and the "School Medical Examination Form — Initial Entry." You will notice that each specifies that the genitalia are a part of the physical exam. Each is from the Kentucky Department of Education, KDE/mic approved 1671-410, and dated January 1993.

Please note that "All local boards of education shall require" the medical examination, and that a physician, advanced registered nurse practitioner, a physician's assistant or an Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis

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and Treatment (EPSDT) provider may perform and sign for the exam. (The periodic EPSDT examinations require an "unclothed physical examination" [907 KAR 1.034, Section 3 (1)(b)] for Medicaid-eligible children under age 21 [Section 1 (5)]).

Interestingly, each elementary and secondary school shall initiate and maintain throughout the pupil's attendance a cumulative health record for each pupil. "... A follow-up by the proper health or school authorities shall be made on each defect noted and the result shall be recorded." [704 KAR 4:020, Section 3 (1) Comprehensive School Health]. There is, in fact, a surprising preoccupation with the children's "defects."

Owensboro Supt. Bill Chandler states in Mr. Hawpe's article that the exams are given by nurses instead of doctors. The *Forbes* article did refer to a "doctor," though the parent has always spoken of having dealt with a nurse. However, that is not the point. The point is, whether performed by a nurse or a doctor, do these invasive procedures belong in the public school system?

In Mr. Hawpe's article, Supt. Chandler says, "There has never to my knowledge been anything that has been inappropriate, or anyone raising such an issue." However,

Sandy Barbour, School Health Coordinator for the Green River District Health Dept., which administers these examinations, recently said in the *Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer* that a visual examination of the genitals is part of the physical exam. She adds that this examination is not done if the child or parent objects. Is the parent even informed of this option? If so, how and when? The *Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer* article strangely fails to list that part of the exam when listing the other parts.

In the '93 Owensboro incident, the parent was not allowed in the room with her daughter and was told that the genital examination was necessary. When the mother refused, the attitude and demeanor of the nurse reduced this child to tears.

It is my hope that personnel in many school districts have the sensitivity to omit the genital exams. To do mass genital exams is truly abusing them all to find out if anyone else is abusing any of them. The *Forbes* article mentioned the lawsuit in Pennsylvania over this very thing — 59 little girls were lined up and given mass genital exams. Their parents were not there and not aware of the genital exam — some not even aware of the examination — some having already taken their daughters to their own doctors. Many of the girls were traumatized, sobbing, asking to please not have the genital exam, while they were told they had to have it.

The culprit in Kentucky is the Kentucky Department of Education, which should withdraw the requirement of the offending exam. The KDE should stop its efforts to manage children's health care and concentrate on education instead.

All of this was also going on during Mr. Hawpe's watch at *The Courier-Journal*. Are investigative reporters extinct now? It's not too late for a reporter to do some research on (1) what is happening in comprehensive school health programs, and (2) Kentucky's ties to foundations; how many and which of our state agencies and other state bodies can seek or accept grants, does the grant process include any meaningful legislative oversight, what amount of money must we pay out in order to receive each grant; what is the amount of each grant; is it for something we had intended to do or is it for something into which we were enticed; and exactly what strings are attached. That would be an appropriate response to an excellent *Forbes* article.

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