

Look ma, no claws



Lisa Hobbs photo
This green-eyed beauty needs a home. She has been de-clawed and spayed. Her adoption fee can be waived for the right home. Warren County Animal Control and Adoption Center is located at 169 Paws Trail. Serious inquires only may call 507-3647.

McQueen defends achievement testing in Tennessee schools

BY **BILL ZECHMAN**
*Special to the Southern Standard
(McMinnville, Tennessee)*

Despite the widespread criticism of student achievement testing in Tennessee, a clear majority of Tennessee teachers report the assessment process has made them better at their job, the state's Commissioner of Education, Dr. Candice McQueen, told the Rotary Club of McMinnville on Thursday.

McQueen indicated 71 percent of educators say evaluation has led to improvements in their teaching, quoting from the 2018 statewide educator survey conducted by her Department of Education.

She added 65 percent of teachers "reported they feel more empowered, versus constrained, to teach in ways they feel are best for their students."

The state's climb in national educational rankings has been a hard-won success, and there are areas where progress has been uneven at best. But the three-year-old Tennessee Succeeds initiative has set out definite, transparent goals and has ramped up the accountability for all players, from classroom teachers and students to political leaders and the general citizenry, McQueen emphasized.

Among those targets is placement in the top half of states in the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), popularly known as "the nation's scorecard," by 2019.

Already, Tennessee has "moved into the top half in both grade 4 and 8 science, and all other rankings are solidly in the 30s -- up from a decade ago, when we were consistently a bottom 10 state," McQueen said. Last year, the Volunteer State was recognized for charting the fastest educational improvement in the nation.

While schools systems and states are often appraised on the basis of high school performance -- notably in ACT scores and placement of graduates in



Education Commissioner Dr. Candice McQueen contends a vast majority of teachers enjoy the evaluation process.

top universities -- parents and communities must realize the foundation for all future success is built in the earliest grades.

That's why the second goal in Tennessee Succeeds calls for 76 percent of third-graders to be proficient in reading by 2025. The Read to Be Ready emphasis and summer reading camps for pupils with the greatest needs are just a couple of elements to strengthen early childhood literacy. Parents are reminded of the lifelong advantages to be gained in reading at least 20 minutes a day to their children from birth until they can effectively read on their own.

Preparing students for the high-tech, knowledge-intensive jobs of the present and the future, the commissioner stated, is another major objective. Already, Tennessee "has increased by 70 percent the number of advanced manufacturing courses in high schools."

One of the state's top achievers in that area is Warren County High School, the first secondary school in the nation to offer a complete, self-contained program leading to certification in Mechatronics, an internationally recognized standard in automated and computer-assisted manufacturing.

WE ARE MORE THAN JUST A HARDWARE STORE

"THE LITTLE BOX STORE"

MH 141 East Maple Street
MORRISON HARDWARE & INDUSTRIAL SUPPLY Morrison, TN 37357
931-635-2265

Peaches & Concord Grapes

Available Now

Fresh & frozen fruits available!

Randall Walker Farms

Visit our fully stocked sales yard for trees and plants year round.

Monday-Friday 7am-5pm • Saturday 7am-4pm

8240 Manchester Hwy • Morrison, TN 37357
931-635-9535 • www.rwfarms.com

Hair-brained thieves steal \$20,00 in wigs

Armed thieves in New Delhi, India, left a craftsman deep in debt after they made off with 500 pounds of wigs and raw hair worth more than \$20,000 on July 27, according to the Associated Press. "People think wigs are cheap, but they cost a fortune to make," wig-maker Jahangir Hussain said. In fact, he had borrowed more than \$17,000 to buy hair last month from South Indian wholesalers. India exports wigs and hair extensions to the tune of \$300 million a year; much of the raw materials are collected at Hindu temples where people shave their heads as a religious sacrifice, a practice called tonsuring.

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

Cave Creek, Ariz., struggled with workers but eventually fell unconscious and was transported to Mount Sinai St. Luke's Hospital, where he was pronounced dead, the New York Post reported.

Authorities don't know (1) why and how he entered the freezer and (2) why he died, but they did determine he was charged last year with two 1988 cold-case murders in Boston. He had been released on bail the week before the freezer incident and was scheduled to appear in court on Aug. 14.

BRIGHT IDEA!

Zemarcuis Devon Scott, 18, of Texarkana, Ark., REALLY wanted to attend a rap concert in another state, so on July 4 he executed his plan to get there: Scott was seen by Texarkana Regional Airport security officers around 2:30 a.m. jumping a fence and trying to get into an American Eagle twin-engine jet parked there. When police arrived, Scott was inside the cockpit, sitting in the pilot's seat, the Texarkana Gazette reported. Scott, not a licensed pilot, told officers he thought there wasn't much more to flying a plane than pushing buttons and pulling levers. On July 31, he was charged with commercial burglary and attempted theft; he's been grounded at Miller County jail.

NERD ALERT

Who knew? Apparently the unofficial "uniform" for Bay Area techies and venture capital investors is a vest, so the Japanese company Uniqlo is cashing in with a vest vending machine at the San Francisco International Airport. The airport's public information officer, Doug Yakel, says the machine is no joke; it earns \$10,000 a month on average. Do the math: At \$49.90 apiece, the company is selling about 200 of its

ultra-light down vests each month. "This is the first time we've had clothing available for sale from a vending machine, which we thought was very unique," Yakel told Business Insider.

COMPELLING EXPLANATION

In Bluffton, S.C., 32-year-old Lauren Elizabeth Cutshaw informed police officers she was a former cheerleader, sorority girl, good student and National Honor Society member after they pulled her over at 1:45 a.m. on Aug. 4 for running a stop sign at 30 mph over the speed limit. According to The Island Packet, she also told officers she shouldn't be arrested because she's a "very clean, thoroughbred, white girl." She said she'd had only two glasses of wine, but then allowed, "I mean, I was celebrating my birthday." Police arrested her anyway and booked her into Beaufort County Detention Center.

QUESTIONABLE JUDGMENT

Farah Hashi, 25, of Newport, Wales, is "mad about cars," so while he was visiting friends in Dubai, they arranged for him to drive a \$350,000 Lamborghini Huracan. Hashi, who has one leg shorter than the other and typically drives a custom Vauxhall Corsa mobility car, took full advantage: He was caught on roadside cameras 33 times in less than four hours on Aug. 7 as he reached a top speed of 150 mph and racked up more than \$47,000 in speeding fines.

Send your weird news items with subject line WEIRD NEWS to WeirdNewsTips@amuniversal.com.

Summer Can Be the Season of Comfort!

PARAMOUNT ELEVATING SLEEP™ RESTONIC Best Home Tensisings® Sealy

LAZBOY ComfortStudio Broyhill PULASKI

Barr's INC.

Fine Home Furnishings

(931) 473-3536

643 BEERSHEBA ST. MCMINNVILLE

www.barrsfurniture.com