

— 'People are mad as hell. I'm right there with them.' —

Republican fissures widen

Infighting flares over 'fiscal cliff,' geography, Sandy, political identity

By Steve Peoples
The Associated Press

BOSTON — The Republican Party appears divided and angry. Infighting has penetrated the highest levels of the House GOP leadership. Long-standing geographic tensions have increased, pitting endangered Northeastern Republicans against their colleagues from other parts of the country. Enraged tea party leaders are threatening to knock

off dozens of Republicans who supported a measure that raised taxes on the nation's highest earners but did not rein in spending.

"People are mad as hell. I'm right there with them," Amy Kremer, chairman of the Tea Party Express, said late last week, declaring that she has "no confidence" in the party she typically supports. Her remarks came after GOP lawmakers agreed to higher taxes but no

broad spending cuts as part of a deal to avert the "fiscal cliff."

"Anybody that voted 'yes' in the House should be concerned" about primary challenges in 2014, she said.

At the same time, one of the GOP's most popular voices, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, blasted his party's "toxic internal politics" after House Republicans initially declined to approve disaster relief for victims of Superstorm Sandy. He said it

was "disgusting to watch" their actions and he faulted the GOP's most powerful elected official, House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio.

The GOP's internal struggles to figure out what it wants to be were painfully exposed after Mitt Romney's loss to President Obama on Nov. 6, but they have exploded in recent days. The fallout could extend well be-

SEE **GOP, 9A**



AP photo

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie on Wednesday blasted his party's "toxic internal politics" after House Republicans initially declined to approve disaster relief for victims of Superstorm Sandy. He said it was "disgusting to watch" their actions and he specifically faulted House Speaker John Boehner. Read about Christie on Page 8A.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Residency issues hit veterans on GI Bill

By Allen G. Breed
The Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — In choosing to serve her country in uniform, Hayleigh Lynn Perez knowingly accepted a nomadic life. Now the former Army sergeant said she and thousands of other veterans trying to get a higher education are being penalized for that enforced rootlessness.

Under the Post-9/11 GI Bill, the federal government will pick up the full in-state cost for any honorably discharged servicemember wishing to attend a public college or university. However, because the often intricate rules governing residency differ from state to state, and even within university systems, many veterans face a bewildering battle to exercise the benefits they've already fought for.

"It is part of our contractual agreement when we join the military," said Perez, who filed a \$10 million federal civil rights lawsuit against the University of North Carolina Board of Governors after one of its schools denied her resident status. "It's been paid for — with blood and sweat and tears and deployments."

SEE **GI BILL, 9A**

OLD TANNENBAUM, OLD TANNENBAUM



ABOVE: Harper Gardner of Charleston drops off his Christmas tree Saturday at the Capitol Market during part of the Rehabilitation Environmental Action Plan — a statewide cleanup program from the Department of Environmental Protection. The trees are used to create fish habitats in lakes, providing them with breeding grounds safe from predators.

RIGHT: Wayne Batten and Michael Graham of Graham Excavating load the old Christmas trees into a large truck for transport in the REAP program.



CHIP ELLIS | Sunday Gazette-Mail photos

FREE SPEECH VS. PRIVACY

Mug shot websites suit filed

Clarksburg man charges ex-inmates for photos' removal

By Travis Crum
Staff writer

For many former West Virginia jail inmates, their mug shots are a visual reminder of some of the worst moments in their lives.

One Clarksburg man has capitalized on this by creating a website compiling booking photos from every jail and prison in the state. The man then charges a steep fee to get those mug shots scrubbed from cyberspace.

Ohio lawyer Scott A. Ciolek said this practice "amounts to nothing short of fraud" and extortion. He has sued five similar websites to prove his point.

The website registered in Clarksburg, WVjails.info, is next on his list, he said.

Jason Watson of Clarksburg owns WV-Jails.info and its main company, US Support Services LLC, according to the West Virginia Secretary of State's Office.

The site is licensed as an "information and data processing server." That server is registered online to a "Mr. Watson."

Watson has created about 30 similar mug shot websites in Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, North Carolina, Tennessee and Pennsylvania, according to the server's information.

Watson also created a separate server, Arre.st, in which mug shots from West Virginia and the other 30 websites are double posted.

He charges \$51.80 for West Virginians to remove a photo from Wvjails.info.

On Oct. 29, the Better Business Bureau launched an investigation into Watson and his business practices after receiving four complaints in the past three years. Investigators couldn't follow up because a working phone number for Watson could not be found.

SEE **MUG SHOTS, 8A**

In W.Va. 5th-graders, blood pressure, cholesterol, obesity fall

By Kate Long
Staff writer

The percentage of West Virginia fifth-graders with high blood pressure dropped significantly in 2011-12, according to measurements by West Virginia University's CARDIAC program.

So did the percentage of fifth-graders with abnormal cholesterol.

"This is fantastic news," said Dr. Ron Stollings, D-Boone, a physician and chairman of the Senate Health and Human Resources Committee. "We may be at a tipping point for child obesity."

"Obesity, blood pressure and cholesterol are

"If the numbers are still down next year, we'll know it's a genuine trend.

So this is no time to ease off in our efforts."

DR. BILL NEAL
CARDIAC program director

closely related," he said. When people exercise and become more fit, blood pressure and cholesterol usually drop, and obesity is likely to follow suit, he said.

The fifth-grade obesity rate nosed downward to 27.8 percent. The kindergarten obesity rate also

dropped sharply to its lowest rate in nine years, 13.6 percent.

The CARDIAC program screens fifth-graders, second-graders and kindergartners statewide each year.

In 2010-11, one in every four fifth-graders screened had high blood pressure. In 2011-12, the number with high blood pressure dropped to one in five for the first time in CARDIAC's 14-year history.

Dr. Bill Neal, CARDIAC program director, cited the school system's statewide campaign to improve school meals and get children more active. "If the schools keep up their efforts to improve nutrition and increase physical activity, I expect

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SHAPE

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we'll see significant drops in obesity next year," he said.

Children with high blood pressure, abnormal cholesterol and/or obesity are at high risk of future diabetes, heart disease and other costly chronic illnesses, Neal cautioned, so West Virginia still has reason to worry.

"This is cause to hope and reason to keep trying," he said. "If these numbers are still down next year, we'll know it's a genuine trend. So this is no time to ease off in our efforts.

"It's important to remember that one in five 11-year-olds with high blood pressure is still very alarming," he said. "We can't get complacent. But the numbers are going in the right direction."

A drop in child obesity — or obesity at any age — would be very good news for the state budget, Stollings said. Seven out of 10 state health-care dollars already pay for obesity-related chronic diseases, according to an analysis health-care economist Ken Thorpe did for the Legislature.

Thorpe predicted the state's health-care costs will double by 2020 if the spread of obesity cannot be stopped.

"If we can get kids healthier, we're turning off the spigot, where diabetes and other chronic illness is concerned," Stollings said. "We can't do as much about the water in the pipelines, but if we can turn off the spigot, we're making big progress."

CARDIAC has been screening in the schools statewide since 1998. "High blood pressure" means the child's blood pressure is higher than 95 percent of children in a national sample.

■ In the 2010-11 school year, 24 percent of fifth-graders screened had high blood pressure, one in four. In 2011-12, that dropped to 20.3, one in five.

■ In 2010-11, 26.1 percent had abnormal cholesterol. In 2011-12, that number dropped to 23.5 percent, a 10 percent decrease.

■ The fifth-grade obesity rate edged down from 28.9 to 27.8 percent.

The kindergarten obesity rate dropped from 17.5 percent of children screened to 13.6 percent, which puts it below the national average.

The second-grade obesity rate climbed a point, to 24.5 percent of children screened. "We'd like to bring that down too," said Rick Goff, director of the state Office of Child Nutrition. "The drop in the other numbers shows us we can."

In 2011-12, while the numbers were dropping, the school system was increasing physical activity and improving the nutritional quality of meals statewide. School cooks in 26 counties were trained to cook from scratch. Processed



KATE LONG | Sunday Gazette-Mail

This year's healthier CARDIAC results may well have been sparked by statewide school nutrition and physical activity campaigns, state officials say. Salad bar vegetables and homemade lasagna make a healthy meal at Lincoln County's Midway Elementary in October.

LEARN MORE

CARDIAC

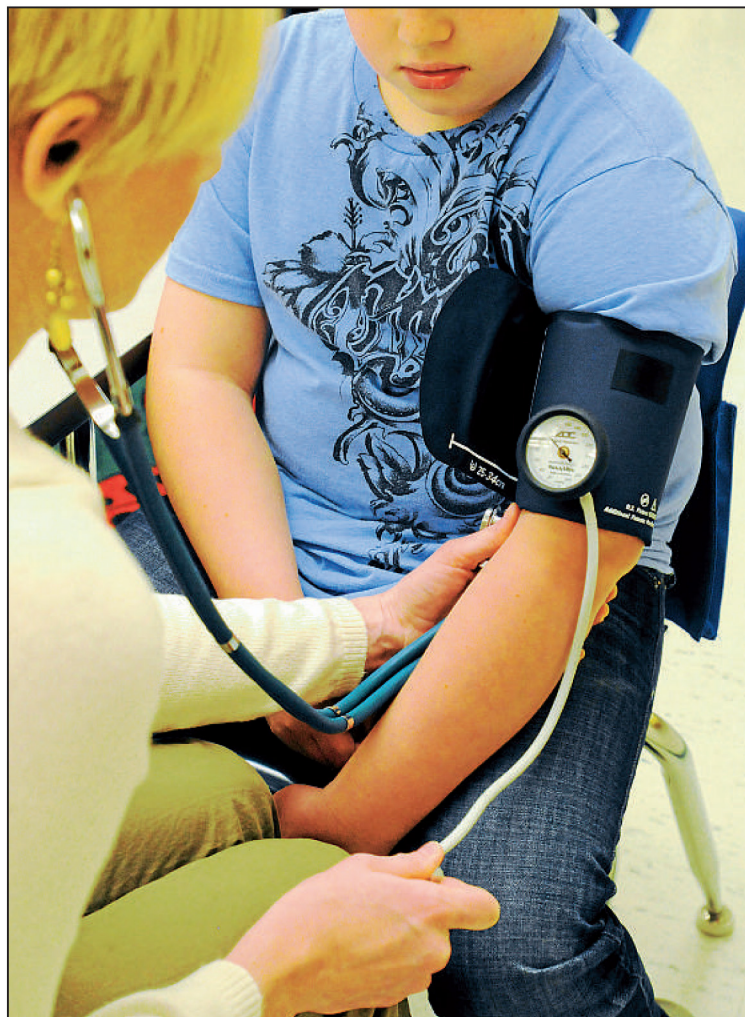
Want to know more about CARDIAC? West Virginia University's unique, nationally-praised CARDIAC project has screened fifth-graders for obesity, blood pressure and cholesterol levels for 14 years. They have screened kindergartners and second-graders for obesity level only for seven years and are starting to screen middle-schoolers. All children are screened for the AN diabetes risk marker. Complete charts at www.cardiacwv.org/results.php

RIGHT: West Virginia University's CARDIAC program screened 4,780 fifth-graders for blood pressure, cholesterol and obesity in 2011-12. "The fact that those numbers are all dropping together is significant," said Dr. Bill Neal, CARDIAC director.

CHRIS DORST | Sunday Gazette-Mail

food served in the schools dropped sharply, Goff said.

Then-Superintendent Jorea Marple spearheaded a statewide push to get kids more physically active. "She deserves a lot of credit for that," Neal said, "and I'm happy to hear the new su-



perintendent will continue the push."

"I supported it as a county superintendent and will support it as state superintendent," new superintendent James Phares told the Gazette-Mail.

Increasing numbers of parents are also becoming aware of the health risks of obesity, inactivity and junk food, said Stephen Smith, director of the West Virginia Healthy Kids and Families Coalition. "We've done 42 community meetings statewide, and children's health is a top priority everywhere. People keep saying kids need to be outside instead of sitting in front of screens."

Neal credited the media for stirring up public conversation and awareness.

"This is very good news," said Delegate Don Perdue, chairman of the House Health and Human Resources committee. "Whatever productive things we've been doing, we need to continue to do them."

"When we see the [2013] numbers, we'll know if we have a sustained trend," Neal said.

Fifty-three of 55 school systems are signed up for CARDIAC screening this year.

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