

The Day the PTA Stayed Home

In the wake of all the bad publicity our public schools received this past year, education has become a major political issue. But one politician—Lamar Alexander, the Republican governor of Tennessee—had public education on his mind long before the latest flurry of commission reports and stump speeches by presidential candidates. During his 1978 campaign, Alexander took a much-publicized 1,000-mile walk across the state. He spent four months on the road, slept in 81 homes, and visited dozens of schools. His impressions were dismal: “I met teachers, saw the elementary school curriculum, saw some schools didn’t have any curriculum. I saw poor management, lazy management . . . [and] how dominant the teacher union was, how inattentive parents were. And I saw the results—poor scores.”

Some of the problems in Tennessee were directly traceable to money—or the lack thereof. The state ranks 47th in spending per pupil. Average teacher salaries—in 1983, estimated at \$18,230 a year—put the state 43rd. Starting salaries in some rural Tennessee districts were as low as \$12,170.

But Alexander realized the problems in Tennessee went deeper than money. There was something fundamentally wrong with how the state’s teachers were evaluated and rewarded. He described the problem bluntly in a television commercial he made in 1983, exhorting viewers to join his ad hoc group, Tennesseans for Better Schools.

Hope Aldrich is a writer living in Washington.

“After 10 years, our best teachers make this much,” he says, as the camera zooms past him, jacket cast aside, chalk eraser in hand, to the figure \$16,079 scrawled on the blackboard. “And our worst teachers make this much,” he explains, as viewers see a close up of the same \$16,079. “That’s not right,” he continues. “Our best teachers should get higher pay for doing a good job.” Alexander had a plan that would do something about it.

That plan was first presented to the Tennessee legislature in January 1983. It called for the creation of a “career ladder” for teachers that would offer the best instructors raises of up to \$8,000. But to get those raises, the teachers, called “Senior” and “Master” teachers, were to be judged by their classroom performance—not solely according to their seniority or academic degrees.

By proposing that teachers be paid according to some measure of merit, Alexander was endorsing an approach that would soon gain wide public support; a Gallup poll a year ago found that the public supported merit pay by a 2-1 margin. A number of commissions, including the President’s Commission on Excellence in Education, would shortly recommend such a plan. Even so, by the prevailing standards of the teaching profession—where tenure was granted routinely after a few years, where raises were based solely on seniority and the possession of academic credentials, and where firing a teacher was nearly impossible save in the case of gross misconduct—Alexander’s scheme was nothing short of radical.

BY HOPE ALDRICH

It was also full of political risks. Alexander, a Republican governor, faced 2-1 Democratic majorities in both the state Senate and the House. His plan would cost \$1 billion over three years, which would require a hike in the sales tax—this in the fifth poorest state in the country, where unemployment stood at an unprecedented 13 percent. But he was determined. “This is the most important proposal I will make in my eight years as Governor,” he declared upon unveiling the plan. “I’m going to fight for it as hard as I’ve ever fought for anything in my life.”

Few doubted that Alexander could muster a good fight. He was popular—reelected to a second term in November 1982 with 60 percent of the vote—and politically savvy. His connections to the Tennessee business community gave him ready access to money. Yet his roots in the small town of Maryville, where his mother taught kindergarten for 35 years, made him just as comfortable talking to concerned citizens in the state’s many small communities.

But on January 26, 1984, almost a year from the day he first introduced his plan, Alexander’s allies in the Tennessee legislature were forced to strike a muddy compromise with opponents of the bill. Alexander won his much cherished “career ladder”—but he lost or compromised on several other key issues he believed necessary to insure that the ladder didn’t become just an expensive, and perhaps ultimately useless, addition to an already complicated system. “It could turn out to be no more than a bloated piece of machinery that falls down, or a bloated seniority plan based on no strong evaluation system,” observes Lewis Lavine, one of Alexander’s aides. As the legislature hammered out the final points of the bill last February, Alexander seemed more like a beaten man than a victor. “I’ve run for office three times,” he said wearily. “But nothing compares to this. It’s by far the most difficult thing I’ve ever been through in my life. I’ve spent 70 percent of my time on it.” He tried a weak smile. “The idea seemed so simple—rewarding outstanding teachers.”

Building a summit

What happened in Tennessee has national implications. More than 25 state legislatures are grappling this year with innumerable proposals to improve the schools. Proponents of such bills—and everyone else concerned about the quality of our schools—would do well to understand some of the lessons Alexander learned in Tennessee.

The call for a career ladder was just one part of a ten-point reform package that also included many other improvements, such as mandatory kindergartens, more computer classes, and some attractive sweeteners for higher education interest groups, such as building a new library for the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. To finance the reforms, Alexander proposed a one-cent increase in the state’s sales tax. However, the governor made it clear from the start that he would not sign the omnibus package if the controversial career ladder plan was chopped out. No career ladder, no bucks for anything else, he warned, using the same tactic that Bill Clinton, Arkansas’ governor, would use successfully later in 1983 (see sidebar, p.50).

As for the career ladder—the centerpiece of the reform program—Alexander proposed creating three different categories for tenured teachers: Professional, Senior, and Master. This contrasted with the existing system, which made no distinctions among tenured teachers. After a teacher gets tenure—in Tennessee usually three to five years after entering the profession—he or she receives predictable salary increases based solely on seniority and the academic degrees they possess. Alexander wanted to build a summit into the flat and unvarying career track. “We wanted teachers to look up to the top of the mountain and think, ‘I could get there some day,’ as one of his aides put it.

The plan went through many changes over the months. But originally five key principles underlay Alexander’s call for a career ladder:

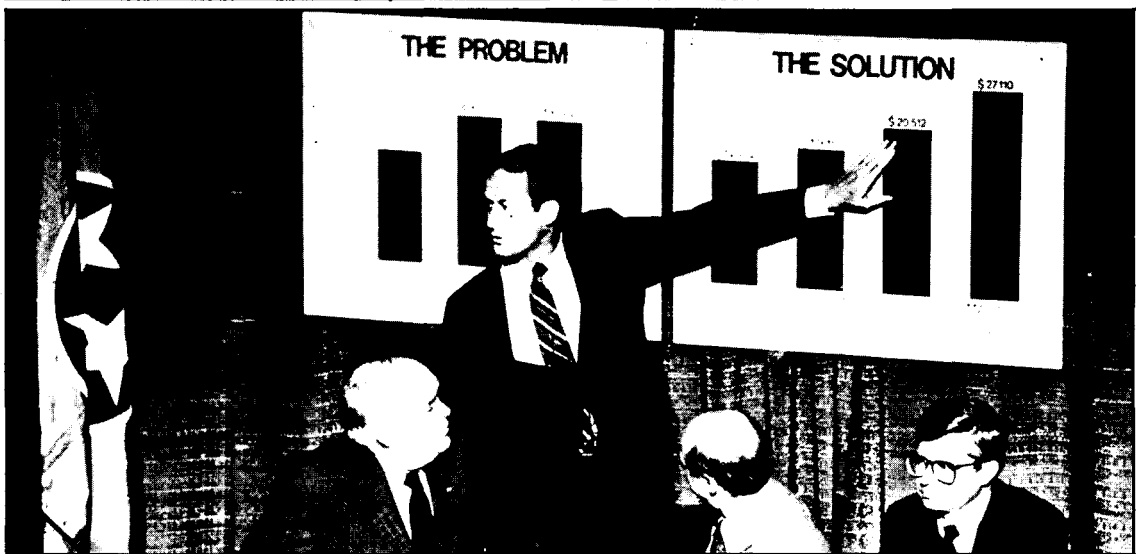
- 1) Major salary increases would go only to those on the top two rungs of the ladder. To become a Senior or Master teacher, an instructor had to demonstrate “proof of successful continuing performance in the classroom.” (Senior teachers also needed at least eight years of experience, master teachers at least 13.) Those who qualified received pay hikes of \$4,000 and \$8,000, respectively. Teachers in the professional category would get only a minimal pay increase of less than 2.5 percent during the first year of Alexander’s program.

- 2) A teaching certificate would be valid for no more than five years for teachers on the career ladder. Currently, a tenured teacher in Tennessee can renew a 10 year certificate simply by completing eight credits in education courses during those years. If he has a master’s degree, no coursework is required. Under Alexander’s plan, teachers could avoid recertification only if they elected not to get on the career ladder. Those who wished to compete for the large bonuses—and

Governor Lamar Alexander of Tennessee was popular and politically savvy. But not even the national publicity his Master Teacher plan received could keep the teachers lobby at bay.

the top two rungs of the ladder would be strictly limited. The quotas Alexander proposed were 11,500 Senior teachers, and 4,650 Master teachers—16,650 slots in all for Tennessee's 46,000 teachers. This would keep costs manageable, and insure that the top two rungs on the ladder retained their distinction.

5) A cap would be placed on the number of Senior and Master teachers funded by the state in any one district. This would help poor districts compete for talented teachers. Without the cap, wealthy districts like Oakridge, which pays a teacher with 15 years experience and an M.A. degree a hefty \$25,682 a year, could easily lure away the most talented teachers of districts with lower salaries such as Hancock, which pays the same teacher \$15,675.



all new teachers— would be reevaluated every five years. The evaluations would be based heavily on classroom performance. If the teacher failed repeatedly, he would lose his license—that is, he would not be permitted to teach.

3) The evaluation of teachers would be shifted from the school district level to the state. To avoid cronyism and possible use of the system to get rid of teachers for political reasons, the evaluations would be performed by Master teachers and others from outside the district. A special certifications commission would develop stiffer and uniform standards for all the state's school districts. The evaluation procedure itself no longer would be a negotiable item in local collective bargaining.

4) The number of teachers who could reach

How did this plan compare with the final compromise signed into law this March? Alexander got his career ladder. But he lost or compromised on most of the five key principles he felt were necessary to insure the integrity of the plan. He lost on salaries; increases of 7 to 10 percent will go this year to all current teachers, regardless of performance. He lost on the quota proposal. There are no limits on how many teachers can become the "best." After a fierce battle, he also had to compromise on his desire to switch the evaluation process from local to state control. The result was a clumsy system where local districts will evaluate teachers who are on the first rung of the ladder, but the state will do so at Level II and III. (The titles Professional, Senior, and Master were changed to Level I, II, and III

Meanwhile in Arkansas and New Jersey...

Tennessee isn't the only state where reformers like Lamar Alexander have been willing to risk the wrath of entrenched interest groups to improve the public schools. But just as Alexander saw his program diluted, in part because he failed to work out his evaluation plan for teachers before presenting it to the legislature, the efforts of Governor Bill Clinton of Arkansas and Governor Thomas Kean of New Jersey, while commendable, also could have gone further.

In Arkansas, controversy erupted last fall when Clinton proposed that all teachers pass tests before being recertified. The Arkansas Education Association called the tests "insulting and degrading" and threatened lawsuits; the National Education Association spoke of a national campaign to dissuade teachers from going to Arkansas. Nevertheless, the bill passed, along with a one-cent increase in the sales tax to support an increase in the base pay of all teachers.

Clinton's plan requires two tests: the first measuring "functional academic skills," the second, knowledge of subject matter. The clear though unstated purpose of the bill is to weed out bad teachers *already in the system*, a problem Tennessee's new plan inadequately addresses. The trouble is teachers who flunk the subject area test only need to take six hours of additional college credit in their subject area. (Education courses will not count.) Once recertified, teachers apparently are home free; the new law says nothing about subsequent retesting.

In New Jersey, there is a quieter—but in many ways more profound—educational reformation occurring. For the past few years the administration of Governor Thomas Kean has been remaking the state's teacher certification apparatus. New Jersey, like other states, receives hundreds of offers each year from eager, capable people to teach in the public schools. The state must refuse them because they lack the proper credentials from an education school. (Horror stories abound: one man, a retired professor of college physics, head of the New Jersey Physical Science Association, and an experienced tutor of high school students preparing for the Advanced Placement physics test, was not even allowed to *donate* his time to a high school physics department.) Beginning this May, qualified individuals with no education school training can acquire "on-the-job teacher certification."

Before the reform could be adopted, Kean had to outmaneuver the teachers union as well as the deans and professors of education schools, who feared a threat to their livelihoods. He won the unions over by asking them to help design the on-the-job training program. As for overcoming the doubts of the education establishment, a particularly effective lobbyist was Dr. Leo Klagholz, himself a former dean of an education school, who backed the plan.

Unfortunately Kean's efforts have not included a major initiative to improve the quality of teachers already in the system. Nor is it any easier to fire bad teachers to make room for the new ones under Kean's plan. This was the price, his supporters concede, of avoiding all-out fights in the state legislature, where the teachers unions have as much—if not more—clout as they do in Tennessee.

—Paul Glasco

because the Tennessee Education Association objected to titles that "implied competency," and because black legislators complained that the term "Master" conjured up disagreeable connotations of servitude.)

Alexander also had to make serious compromises on recertification. The five-year recertification requirement remains intact. But whether it will actually have any teeth at Level I—where at least 65 percent of the state's teachers will be—is now a "big if," according to state Senator John Rucker. He points out that evaluations at that level will be controlled locally, and subject to the collective bargaining process. Though the state is supposed to "review" all 145 districts' evaluation procedures, Rucker says it's difficult to predict how effective this mammoth review process will be.

Moreover, all current teachers were in effect grandfathered onto the career ladder's first rung, where the bill provides an immediate bonus of \$1,000, via a special "fast track" with such minimal requirements that legislators say even the weakest teachers should be able to pass. Gone is the risk of losing tenure. "You don't have to change one thing you're already doing in teaching," explains Senator Anna Belle O'Brien, chairman of the Senate Education Committee.

In its final form, the plan gives more teachers a little, fewer people a lot. The method of selecting the "best" has been muddled, clumsily split between local and state authorities. There are no limits anymore on how many can become 'best.' And it may be no easier to fire a bad teacher.

TEA with sugar

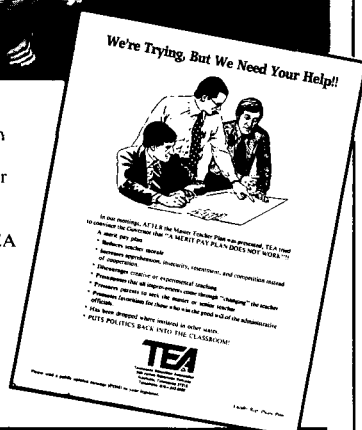
Why was Alexander thwarted in his efforts to dramatically restructure the teaching profession in Tennessee? The major reason was the opposition of the teachers' union—a force he admits now that he naively underestimated.

The Tennessee Education Association, founded in 1867, boasts a membership of more than 80 percent of the state's 46,000 teachers. TEA flexes its muscles not so much with money—the group gives only from \$300 to \$500 to each local candidate it endorses—as with its extraordinarily efficient manpower machine. TEA has a political action committee in almost all the state's 145 school districts. On the state level, more than 30 lobbyists are on call and can follow up on their candidates once they are in office.

John Rucker, for example, is a Democrat from Murfreesboro who first ran for the state Senate in 1976, in a three-way primary. Once he an-



Above, Alexander shakes hands with his opponent on the master teacher plan, TEA president Marjorie Pike. Right: a TEA leaflet.



nounced his candidacy, he said, the local teachers union immediately called him in for an interview. The state's Education Professional Negotiations Act—a bill the teachers strongly supported—was coming up in the legislature. Would Rucker support it? When Rucker said yes, they endorsed him, gave him \$500, and went into action: "They run ads in the paper for you, they go out, door to door, handing out cards for you," said Rucker. "They show up at your rallies. On election day, there were eight or ten of them out by the polls for me, saying, 'Don't forget to vote for John Rucker for state Senate.' They know 50 percent of your neighbors." Rucker said they're more active and aggressive than other groups. "They don't mind getting out and saying they support you. . . . That's where they get their power. I was convinced I won in '76 because of their support."

Once in Nashville, a legislator finds that the TEA has hardly forgotten him. There are the TEA mailings at least once a week, says Anna Belle O'Brien, including newsletters, announcements of "meetings in your area, or an award they want to give you for your help with the handicapped." She adds that they visit her office every week, and she never fails to see several of them attending her education committee meetings: "No other group is that thorough." She

says, "They're also fair, honorable, factual. They respect you when you can only support them nine times out of ten. They don't sever relations over one bill." (Rucker and O'Brien will soon find out how true this actually is. Both broke with the TEA over the career ladder bill. Rucker became one of its sponsors and admits he fears what the consequences may be in his reelection campaign this year.)

TEA also has a long-standing reputation for being the "good guys" in the education arena. Union members have fought for such popular issues as free textbooks, state-funded kindergartens, special education programs, and improved vocational education courses. "They're very respected people in my counties," says O'Brien. All the more reason O'Brien and Governor Alexander were upset when, only weeks after Alexander proposed it, the teachers announced their adamant opposition to his reform bill, and began a massive campaign to kill it.

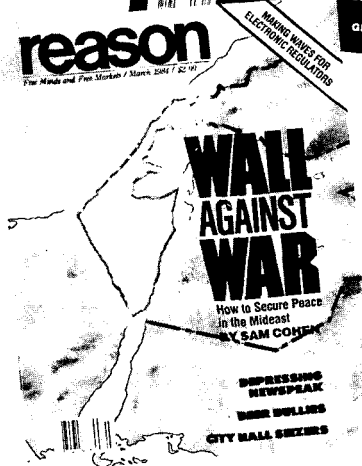
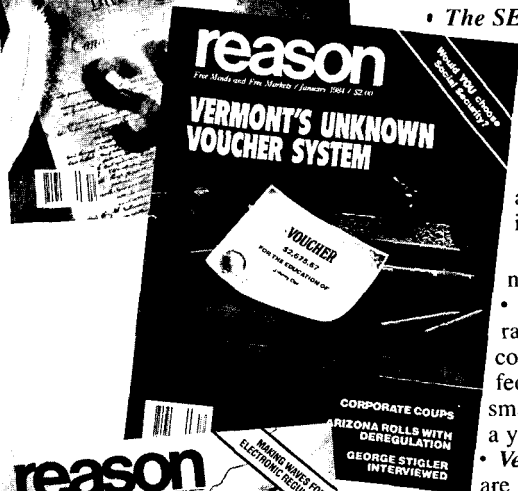
The TEA's opposition was hardly surprising. Like its parent organization, the National Education Association, the TEA has long fought efforts to institute merit pay and stiffer evaluation standards.

But the union had some legitimate concerns about the new plan. The bill might have offered a substantial, across-the-board salary increase for all teachers in exchange for their support of the new career ladder. Tennessee, remember, had some of the lowest salaries in the nation. But Alexander only offered a 2.5 percent increase the first year. (Over 4 years the total would be 20 percent.) "That was a big flaw in [Alexander's] argument," says Marjorie Pike, president of the TEA. "He didn't take into account that for just that little bit of money, teachers could have lost so much." Alexander finally responded to this initial criticism by offering a \$1,000 bonus for most teachers.

Another complaint of the TEA was that teachers were being asked to accept a whole new evaluation procedure that hadn't been tested anywhere—or, for that matter had not even been written. In fact, the criteria for evaluation weren't drawn up until April, and the complex details weren't finished until 11 months *after* Alexander introduced his reform package. Even then, the preparation was so rushed that the associate professor from Vanderbilt University hired to develop it resigned in disgust.

The bungled timing gave the leadership of the teacher's union a tactical opening they could exploit to mobilize opposition to the plan. One of their leaflets, for example, pictured a Pac-Man

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- **The SEC versus the First Amendment.** For decades the Securities and Exchange Commission has been subjecting financial newsletters to licensing and censorship. Shortly after *Reason* blew the whistle, a federal court ruled that the SEC was violating the First Amendment.
- **Defense rigs the tests.** A detailed *Reason* exposé of conflict of interest in the testing of new weapons led to a "60 Minutes" broadcast and legislation to set up an independent testing office.

Reason's nose for news extends to little-noticed good news, as well. Among our recent discoveries:

- **Towering entrepreneurs.** Last year *Reason* discovered a rapidly growing industry—private firms that operate airport control towers for half what it costs the usual operator, the federal government. If private operation were extended to small airports alone, taxpayers could save \$60 million a year.

- **Vermont's vouchers.** Most people think education vouchers are just a gleam in Milton Friedman's eye, but *Reason* found that they have been used in Vermont for decades, giving parents a choice of schools.

Reason also turns up provocative proposals for change:

- **A wall against war for Israel.** In this controversial article, Sam Cohen, the inventor of the neutron bomb, proposed making Israel's borders secure by means of a permanent radiation barrier—a high-tech version of an electric fence.
- **Private weather forecasting.** An economic journalist surveyed the potential market for weather forecasts and concluded that the taxpayers don't need to keep government in the business of providing weather data. Specific customers (airlines, shippers, newspapers, broadcasters) can and should pay for the information they value.

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as an underpaid teacher about to gobble up the \$1,000 bonus. "WOW! A \$1,000 Supplement!!" the ad sneered. "All you have to do to receive an extra \$1,000 per year under the Master Teacher plan is virtually give up tenure, agree to some kind of evaluation by your peers who have been labeled Master Teachers, and agree to a five year or less employment contract with your local school system..."

Town without PTA

The tenor of this ad confirms the judgment of Keel Hunt, Alexander's staff advisor on education, that "there would have been union opposition [to the evaluation plan] in any event." Still, the absence of a plan gave the TEA one more argument to use in its strategy of portraying teachers as victims, and helped dilute the grassroots support Alexander needed to fight his battle in the legislature.

In his 1978 campaign, Alexander says he found parents generally "inattentive to their schools"; just how inattentive, he now found out. As soon as he unveiled his reform package, Alexander appointed a 13-member staff to galvanize public support. Janice Shelby, an assistant commissioner at the state Department of Education, was assigned the task of mobilizing parents; David K. Wilson, former treasurer of the Republican National Committee, was instructed to raise money.

Wilson did fine; he raised \$110,000 within the first ten days. Shelby's experience was dramatically different. After sending out mailings about the new incentive pay plan to many of the state's local Parent Teacher Associations, she tried to arrange informal meetings to explain the plan to members. Instead she would usually arrive to find that formal debates had been scheduled. Shelby would speak for "her side," and a union spokesman was ready to tell "their side." Sometimes her advance mailings were thrown out and never reached the membership. "Often the PTA local chairman turned out to be a teacher, and if that were the case, they were accepting mail only from the union," Shelby says.

These "discussions" often were "disasters," she recalls: "Sometimes there were 150 people, many of them teachers. If parents came at all, they were overshadowed by the teachers. The teachers were much more vocal. The parents were intimidated. They were leery to speak."

"I'd have thought the parents would be a strong advocate group for children," she says. "But it's just been 'listen to this side,' 'listen to that side,'

and don't take a position." The PTA State Committee failed to endorse the plan until the following November; even then the PTA didn't register a lobbyist at the legislature to work on the plan's behalf.

Constance Elliot, state president of the PTA, claimed that policy decisions are a matter for school boards, not PTA's. Why haven't they spoken up? she was asked. A pause. "Maybe parents were concerned about how their child would be affected in school," she began. "You know, if word got back to... their teachers..." She paused again. "Oh, that sounds so terrible," she said, adding that she knew of no specific incidents where children had been penalized because their parents took a stand in favor of the incentive pay plan.

School board members paint the same scene of apathy by parents and subtle pressure by the union. The Tennessee School Board Association endorsed only the concept of career ladders, but never any of the actual bills. Kent Weeks, president of the Nashville school board, which has jurisdiction over 10 percent of all the students in Tennessee, says his board never took a public stand on the plan. He also testifies to having felt pressure from his teachers. "Those teachers were very quick out of the gate, very clear, very opposed," he said. "And they are talking to parents, talking to school board members. After all, school boards employ teachers, and teachers are the essential ingredient that make schools work."

Soon Alexander and his staff had to concede they had miscalculated: there would be no grassroots support for his plan. "Legislators would talk as if their only constituents were the TEA," Alexander said. "They would tell me 'I've got 400 teachers. I've got to go hear from them.' I'd say, 'Well, you've got thousands of parents too.'" It was not an argument to which Alexander found the legislators receptive.

It was too late to plan a strategy to save the plan in the 1983 legislature. In April a committee vote shunted it aside for a year's study by a select committee. "There we were, a 13-member staff, \$60,000 sitting in the bank, and a governor who was pretty frustrated," said Lavine. For all intents and purposes, the plan was dead. Alexander had suffered the worst defeat of his governorship.

Then he got a lucky break. It was just at this low point that the Reagan administration released the now-famous "Nation At Risk" report—a report that loudly applauded incentive pay plans. Alexander was quickly transformed from a bruised and defeated local reformer to a national

celebrity, a crusader ahead of his time. Invitations poured in for him to appear on "McNeil-Lehrer," the "Today Show," "Nightline," and more. An editorial in *The Wall Street Journal* hailed him as one Republican governor who "has put his money where his mouth is."

Alexander and his staff shrewdly realized that this flurry of national attention might pay off with the legislators in Nashville. There was a chance "to educate them," as Lavine put it. Legislators who had seldom set foot outside of Tennessee soon found themselves being flown in the state plane to education conferences across the country. Representative Stephen Bivens, for example, a schoolteacher-turned-local banker from east Tennessee, a longtime TEA supporter, and chairman of the Select Committee studying the plan, was flown to conferences in Denver, West Palm Beach, San Antonio, Williamsburg, and New York City—to "present the views of the study committee."

Plans to convert the elusive Speaker of the House, Ned McWherter, were even more carefully orchestrated by the governor's staff. In May, he was hustled off to Raleigh, North Carolina, to attend a conference sponsored by the Education Commission of the States. There, he hobnobbed with governors Bob Graham of Florida and Jim Hunt of North Carolina, who had also proposed major school reform bills. In June, McWherter, a Democrat, found himself on a speaker's panel with President Reagan when the President visited a Knoxville high school and the two exchanged pleasantries about the future of American schools.

Hunt, Graham and others encouraged him to get interested in school reform, McWherter recalled later, pensively puffing on a long cigar, "Because it would be good for the South. That made me think this was an opportunity for Tennessee to really step out front in a bold way. I thought it was time to put partisan views aside."

But the TEA had its own battle plan. One of the union's major tactics was to shift attention away from issues like competency and evaluations, and to focus on stiffer standards for student teachers and the need for a pay increase. The union also made efforts to portray Alexander's plan as politically motivated, a thinly disguised step toward national office. The TEA criticized his having a Washington based public relations firm "that told him what to say," and charged that the petitions he had gathered with the names and addresses of citizens supporting him were really collected for use in later campaigns.

The TEA also selected a new "general," who

in many ways was Alexander's match. Marjorie Pike was elected president of the union in July, soon after Alexander regained momentum. "I've seen her knock, scratch, and pinch," says McWherter, "but she's also practical and reasonable." Even Alexander admits to a begrudging admiration for her tenacity and political skills.

But the TEA's main strength, as always, lay in the legislature itself. Alexander had spent a lot of time cultivating Republican and Democratic leaders in the House and Senate; he didn't offer the same enticements to the less influential members, many of whom felt obligated to the TEA for years of political support. So this January, when Alexander decided to try and rush his plan through a special session of the legislature, Pike had her troops firmly in line. An informal head count revealed that Alexander was about 20 votes short of the number needed in the House to pass the crucial sales tax. It was at this point that McWherter helped engineer the compromises that diluted the major provisions of the plan but allowed Alexander to salvage the career ladder concept. Even so, the sales tax barely slipped through with a 52-45 vote in the House, and by a 19-13 margin in the Senate.

Alexander and his team had hoped that the group of "educated" legislators would carry the plan, even in the absence of grassroots support. But there were too many legislators who didn't hear from parents, not to mention voters who had no connection with the unions. Representative Bob Rochelle, a freshman, was typical; he says he was on the fence about the plan until the final vote. He then voted against it, in part, he says, "because I never detected a consensus from the local citizens."

Of course, considering the strength of the union, Alexander did win some important victories. Merit is now a recognized criterion for paying teachers. And with strong leadership, the new evaluation system, confused as it may seem, may prove superior to the current evaluation procedures.

Still, the experience in Tennessee is a vivid illustration of the obstacles awaiting reformers in other states who take on vested interest groups like the teachers' unions. Not every state has as persistent a school reformer as Alexander. And in some states, the teachers are even more powerful than they are in Tennessee. Politicians who are willing to take the considerable risks necessary to improve the schools must do more than educate people. They have to mobilize the public to fight alongside them. ■

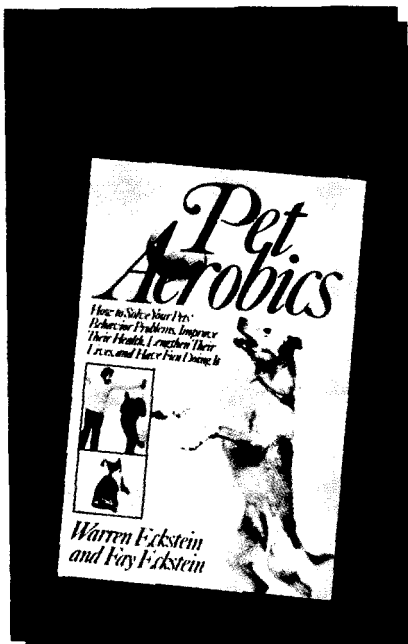
TIDBITS AND OUTRAGES

Charles Manson, for example, has committed only 15 years to his.

When Kathy Boudin, the former member of the Weather Underground, pleaded guilty to murder and armed robbery in the 1981 hold-up of a Brink's armored car, her lawyer, Leonard Weinglass, described her 20-year sentence as "extraordinarily harsh." His reason: "Kathy has lived 12 years underground and now faces 20 years in prison. Thirty-two years is a longer commitment to ideals than most people ever make."

Now he's working on a people's credenza and a Mao Tse-Tung memorial wet bar.

A Chinese peasant-entrepreneur named Guo Yuanying made a profit of \$7,500 at his textile factory last year. He used the profit to become the first Chinese peasant to buy a light airplane.



"Uh, Francis," the editor said, "Love the piece. But about your lead . . ."

Private Practice, a magazine for physicians, recently ran an editorial by Francis A. Davis, M.D., the magazine's publisher, arguing against a freeze on physicians' fees. The editorial began, "Recently, I attended the Winter Olympics in Sarajevo . . ."

Asked to provide justification for bringing the documents back, the officers returned to Defense and got another memo, and then two other military officers were dispatched . . .

When the House Civil Service Subcommittee was to hold hearings on the Reagan administration's internal security program, the Department of Defense sent the subcommittee a memo arguing for tighter security. The memo was subsequently found to include classified information, and two military officers were dispatched to Capitol Hill to retrieve it.

There's some dispute about whether cocoa butter expenses are deductible under section 572.

An organization called "Great American Tax Breaks" offers seminars held in Maui and Steamboat Springs where customers can meet with a "university professor, a Ph.D and CPA" to learn how to "maximize spendable cash and minimize taxable income." The courses cover such subjects as "Developing a tax vocabulary for communicating with your attorney and your CPA" and "How to benefit from business losses and expenses." The seminars are deductible under sections 162 and 212 of the Internal Revenue Code.

