THE HOT LIST

10 brightest ideas of the week

Smart people are everywhere and so are people who have common sense. That’s why we’re looking high and low every week to bring readers the brightest ideas of the week just past. Got a suggestion? Send it to: threads@dce examiner.com

Fixing presidential nomination process
1 Plan the schedule in advance.
   The details: Republican convention-goers will consider proposals for most delegates in future years to be chosen later in the process. And Barack Obama wants Democrats to downplay the unelected “super-delegates.” Both ideas, in broad form, would make sense to voters confused, depressed or just plain bored by this year’s mud scramble.

Prepare for the cyber-wars
2 U.S. must strengthen tech defenses.
   The details: The Heritage Foundation’s homeland security expert Dr. James Carafano proposes that Congress establish new public and private educational programs to train skilled cyber-warriors to combat cyber attacks, especially those from Russia and China. What are we waiting for?

Black gold means green cash for Uncle Sam
3 Drilling here, drilling now, creating money.
   The details: The latest Department of the Interior auction of lease rights to drill in the outer continental shelf produced more than $487 million in income for the government. Billions more will be offered if drilling is allowed in the bodes areas now off-limits. So how about using those billions to repair dangerous bridges?

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Bright light of the week

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   Why: This hardly senior noticed a door that shouldn’t have been open when she returned from church, so she retrieved her .22-caliber revolver and went looking for the explanation, which turned out to be a 17-year-old boy.
   How: Smith ordered the boy to call 911 for the police, then made him lie down face-first and spread-eagle on the floor while the two awaited the arrival of the authorities. “It was exciting,” she said. Smith started keeping a firearm handy after several burglaries nearby in her neighborhood.

Low-tech solution to high-tech problem
6 Charges of voting-machine fraud are rising.
   The details: University of Tennessee law professor and Instapundit.com blogger Glenn Reynolds has the solution to the growing wave of post-election lawsuits charging voting machine fraud: Go back to paper ballots, which are easily counted and verified.

No more tax increases
7 Gov. Tim Kaine pledges not to raise taxes again.
   The details: Virginia faces a $1 billion shortfall due to a slowing economy and less-than-expected revenue projections. Since the commonwealth’s $77 billion biennial budget is based on those same revenue projections, it stands to reason that state spending be adjusted accordingly, instead of forcing taxpayers to make up the difference.

Peoples’ Press Collective
8 Colorado bloggers pool convention coverage.
   The details: More than 15,000 mainstream media journalists are headed to Denver to cover the Democratic National Convention, an event that will most likely produce little actual news, since everything has already been settled. A group of Colorado-based bloggers are joining together in the Peoples’ Press Collective to offer an alternative to the hordes of regular journalists asking the same people the same questions over and over.

Sticking up for poor parents
9 Making good use of abandoned schools
   The details: Matt Fraidin, associate professor at the University of the District of Columbia’s law school, is using a $75,000 grant to set up a legal aid clinic for parents threatened with the loss of their children. Fraidin says poverty and racial bias accounts for the vast majority of kids removed from their homes.

New York-style transit straps
10 Metro is testing overhead handles.
   The details: Too-high grab bars on older Metrorail trains make it difficult for children and shorter adults to steady themselves as the cars lurch their way into the stations. The solution: Inexpensive nylon-mesh straps that hang down at least a foot, which Metro hopes to install on 300 railcars by the end of the year.

Furry rehabilitation
11 Program uses unwanted dogs to help wounded vets.
   The details: The Washington Humane Society is offering a course in dog training and behavior at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Both disabled veterans and the shelter dogs they will train for eventual adoption stand to benefit from the eight-week, hands-on course.

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