

CAPITAL ROUNDUP

Clinton suggests 'V-chip' to block Internet porn



Clinton: V-chip 'is the answer'

AP

President Clinton, resuming his public campaign for national education standards, said Thursday that a "V-chip" should be developed to enable parents to protect their children from pornography on the Internet.

At a "town hall meeting" in Clarksburg, W.Va., Clinton suggested that a computer chip like that now being devised for television might also be used in cyberspace. "There are a lot of things on there that we wouldn't want our children to see" Clinton said. Last year he signed the Communications Decency Act, which banned indecent material on the Internet. Court challenges have sent that law to the Supreme Court.

The president's statement signals "a really important and positive change in policy," said Daniel Weitzner of the Center for Democracy and Technology, a group which has challenged the ban on indecent material. "It focuses on empowering parents to make choices rather than having the federal government make one choice for every single family." Weitzner also noted that software already exists to help parents limit Internet material.

— by Susan Page and Leslie Miller

Promoting Internet Links for All Students, Clinton Suggests 'V-Chip'

By Peter Baker

Washington Post Staff Writer

CLARKSBURG, W.Va., May 22—First it was steamy television. Now it's smutty computer imagery. As he pushes to wire every public school to the Internet, President Clinton said today he wants to develop a "V-chip"-style device that would block out pornography and other material inappropriate for students. At an education town meeting beamed from here around the world via the Internet, Clinton told a parent worried about what his child might be exposed to that he shared the concern and said his administration was working to develop technology to screen out "a lot of things on

there that we wouldn't want our children to see."

"I think that is the answer, something like the V-chip for televisions," Clinton said. "And we're working on it. I think it's a serious potential problem myself."

Yet the president hastened to add that such concerns should not be used as an excuse for not following through on his goal of linking every classroom to the global computer network by the year 2000. "Let me say it would be a serious potential problem if they were not in the schools," he said. "Because the kids are normally under supervision, you have a far less likelihood that the Internet will be abused or that the children will be exposed to some-

thing they shouldn't see during the school hours . . . than at home."

Clinton's remarks came during his first town meeting of his second term as he returned to the road to promote his education program. Chatting with a specially selected crowd in the auditorium of Robert C. Byrd High School here, Clinton announced that West Virginia and Massachusetts have agreed to adopt his plan for new standardized tests and he offered rhetorical support for a longer school year if localities can afford it.

The television V-chip became a major thematic element in Clinton's first-term agenda, partly because it helped him co-opt the family values issue from Republicans and partly because it came to symbolize his

scaled-down approach to domestic policy in a period when, as he declared, "the era of big government is over."

But the V-chip is easier promised than delivered. So far it has yet to become available for televisions and the rating system devised in advance to accompany it has run into a torrent of criticism for being too vague. Creating a foolproof V-chip for the Internet would be infinitely more complicated because virtually anyone can post material on a Web site.

"A V-chip is a simplistic thought that just isn't going to be appropriate," said Gary Arlen, president of Arlen Communications, a Bethesda-based research firm specializing in information technology. "Adding a so-called V-chip in a world where

there are hundreds of thousands of content suppliers—not just a few dozen television broadcasters—and getting each of them to monitor its material . . . would be not only unmanageable but unthinkable."

In recent years, a number of commercial software programs have hit the market catering to parents looking for help, including SurfWatch, CyberPatrol, CyberSitter and Net Nanny. These programs generally prevent users from gaining access to sites deemed sensitive because of certain key words like "sex" or "drugs" or through one of several rating systems. In some cases, companies add specific sites discovered by their programmers or customers and update them regularly.

However, while manufacturers

'Type Limits

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believe they screen out the vast bulk of objectionable material, such programs cannot block everything a parent or teacher might want. And they have led to unintended consequences, such as the early versions that blocked sites dealing with breast cancer because of the word "breast" or one that even screened out the White House Web site because it used the word "couples."

Marc Kanter, vice president for marketing of Solid Oak Software Inc., of Santa Barbara, Calif., said its CyberSitter program blocks out tens of thousands of sites and provides considerable protection for parents. But he added, "There's absolutely no way that any filtering program will ever get 100 percent of the material out there."

In a School Gym, Professor Clinton Presides

By JAMES BENNET

CLARKSBURG, W.Va. May 22 — Equipped with a passage from "Charlotte's Web," a mathematical word problem and his studiously fatherly manner, President Clinton played teacher in a high school gymnasium here today, leading a hand-picked crowd through a seminar on his proposals for improving education.

In answer to questions from his audience, Mr. Clinton endorsed extending the school year, provided such a change was affordable. He also embraced the idea of applying a V-chip to the Internet, to protect children from information objectionable to their parents. Such technology will soon be applied to television sets, and the White House said application to home computers was in development.

Returning to the town-hall format he built upon during the 1992 campaign, Mr. Clinton spoke before about 160 business and academic leaders, along with a smattering of children, seated on staggered platforms arranged in a horseshoe.

He devoted most of his presentation to his plan for voluntary national testing of the English skills of fourth graders and the math skills of eighth graders. West Virginia and Massachusetts announced today that they would adopt the tests by 1999, bringing the number of participating states to five.

"It's scary," Mr. Clinton said in explaining one reason why some people oppose his tests. But, he said, "this is not an instrument of failure, it's an instrument of accountability and a pathway to success."

The President, though still recovering from his two-month-old knee injury, did not seem to need his glossy black cane as he walked the gym floor, gesturing broadly to point at charts displaying sample reading and math questions.

But as he sat occasionally in a gray swivel chair to entertain questions, he struck a thoughtful pose by folding his hands and resting them at the top of the cane, where it bends like a shepherd's crook.

Mr. Clinton has often been accused of adopting the techniques of Oprah Winfrey or Phil Donahue. But, as his session today illustrated, such comparisons are inapt: far from seeking conflict or unscripted, powerful emotion, the ratings fodder of daytime television, he aims for an atmosphere of amiable conversation as banks of television cameras record it.

The dozen questions today were all

friendly. Referring to his testing plan, Mr. Clinton's first questioner asked him "how we as educators and parents and community leaders can help you address this important initiative."

To illustrate the texts that pupils might be tested on, Hannah Gale, a fourth grader from a nearby school, read from "Charlotte's Web" a passage in which the spider contemplates tricking a farmer to save a

The President takes his education crusade on the road, to West Virginia.

pig. "People are not as smart as bugs," Hannah read.

In response to another question, Mr. Clinton said he liked the idea of a standardized test before graduation from high school, as part of a broader effort to insure that students know the basics.

The President said he had come to West Virginia to highlight the state's progress in raising the math performance of its students. And he called West Virginia "the nation's leader in putting technology in schools."

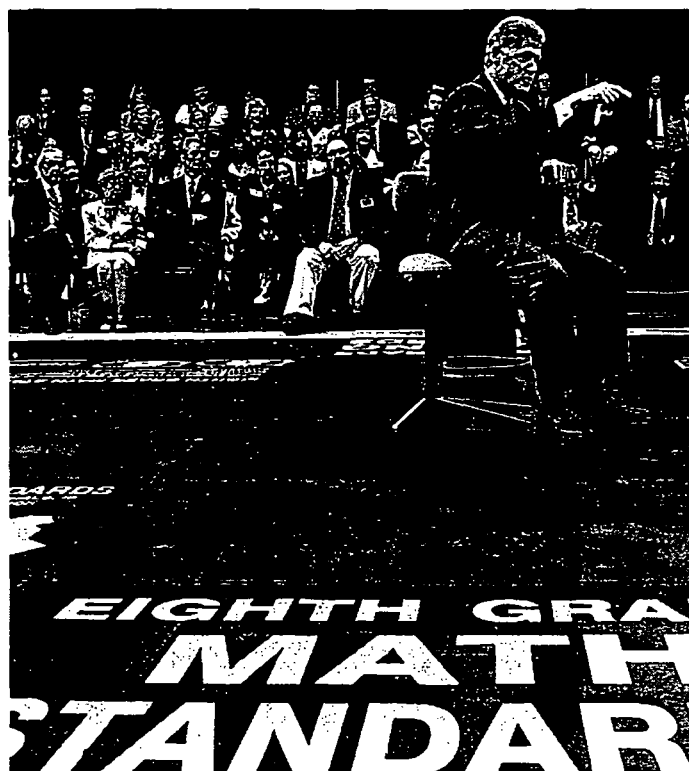
To underscore that point, he made his remarks at Robert C. Byrd High School, named for the Senator who has brought so much Federal money to his home state. The \$24 million school, which opened in January 1996, has at least one computer per classroom, seven computer laboratories and a virtual-reality lab, students said. Sharing a plateau among steep green hills with a stadium and several tennis courts, it serves more than 1,000 students from two former high schools.

Mr. Clinton had previously advanced his testing plans in speeches to state legislatures. But his aides seemed delighted with today's town-hall approach, which they said better reaches parents and teachers. The forum was broadcast on public television stations around West Virginia and was transmitted over the Internet.

Mr. Clinton was the first incumbent President to visit Clarksburg since Harry S. Truman, and hundreds of residents lined the motorcade route to the high school to welcome him. American flags dangled outside small clapboard homes.

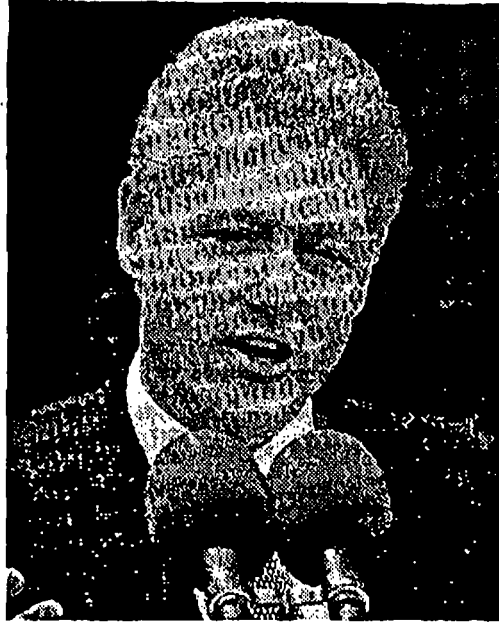
"We Pray for You," declared the red-brick Evangel Baptist Church in its sign welcoming the President, while a Midas shop lauded his prized Ford: "Bill, Dig Your Mustang."

On the way back to the airport, Mr. Clinton, who said he was "deeply touched" by the crowds, stopped to greet children along his route.



At Robert C. Byrd High School in Clarksburg, W.Va., President Clinton sought voluntary national testing of the English skills of fourth graders and the mathematics

Historic Event



PRESIDENT CLINTON IN CLARKSBURG

THURSDAY, MAY 22, 1997

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Gain a piece of History Wednesday when the CLARKSBURG **EXPONENT** & **TELEGRAM** publish a special Section about President Clinton's visit to Robert C. Byrd High School on Thursday, May 22, 1997.

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NASA experts lend hand in putting town hall on-line

by Bill Byrd
STAFF WRITER

Computer experts from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration are working this weekend to put President Clinton's town hall meeting Thursday in Clarksburg on the World Wide Web.

Internet users around the world will be able to see and hear the president and a carefully-selected audience of state residents discuss American schools in real time.

The new Robert C. Byrd High School web page being designed at NASA's 'Classroom of the Future' at Wheeling Jesuit College will also permit computer users to submit questions for the president.

The school, like nearly all schools in the state, has a web page. But it lacks the necessary computer power to generate a live video of the event.

Meanwhile, Harrison School Superintendent Robert E. Kittle said yesterday a number of decisions will be made Monday following hours of nearly non-stop planning by his staff and a White House advance team.

RCB's 975 students will have classes Thursday, he said. And they and their 65 teachers, as well as anyone else in the school that day including the audience for the education forum, will also have to pass through metal detectors.

But there will be some school schedule changes to accommodate county students and teachers because of the presidential visit, the superintendent said. Those changes will be announced Monday.

But the schedule for the high school forum - which will also be telecast live in-state by public television - and a presi-

dential stump speech at Benedum Airport before Clinton returns to the capital won't be known until late Tuesday or Wednesday, he said yesterday.

About 10 more guests have been added for the town hall event in the high school's 2,500-seat gym.

That increases the size of the audience invited by Kittle, U.S. Sens. Robert C. Byrd and Jay Rockefeller, Gov. Cecil Underwood and the state Democratic Party to 160.

THE CLINTON VISIT

"We're going to start notifying people Sunday night," Kittle said.

Planners have also identified one of the two sites for the distribution of free tickets to the public for the airport departure speech and ceremony.

The new Heritage Bank of Harrison County at 140 West Main Street in Clarksburg will be one ticket outlet. Residents will have to show a photo ID when picking up their tickets and go through a portable metal detector at the airport before being allowed into a secure area to see Clinton's farewell remarks.

The time and date of the airport event ticket distribution will be announced by Tuesday, planners say. The other ticket outlet, planned for a location in Bridgeport, is still undecided.

To solve the parking shortage for a huge crowd at the airport, county school buses will run a free park-and-ride service from Meadowbrook Mall to the airport.

About 10,000 tickets for the airport event will be printed early this week by Clarksburg

See NASA, A10

NASA

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Publishing Co., the parent firm of the Clarksburg Telegram and Exponent.

Bell-Atlantic West Virginia crews began installing additional telephone lines and a beefed-up communication system for the computer video link as early as last Friday, a top telephone company official said yesterday.

"There's a consortium of talent from around the state working together to make this event come off," said Don Molter, Bell-Atlantic's area manager.

"We're just happy to be able to do our part. Our guys have been working 24 hours straight to run the extra fiber-optic lines for the additional phones," which will be used by the presidential party and the press.

The phone company is also installing a Litespan 2000 communication switching system for the event.

The Litespan system will be removed after the event but the additional telephone lines will remain, Molter said.

Clinton to state priority

Area high-technology efforts attract visit

BY EVELYN RYAN

The Dominion Post

CLARKSBURG — In the midst of pinning for the prom, finessing finals and gearing for graduation, students at Robert C. Byrd High School have to deal with another major event — a visit from the president of the United States.

President Clinton will be at Robert C. Byrd High on Thursday for a town hall-style discussion of his ambitious plan to toughen education standards, modernize school buildings and wire every classroom to the Internet.

A select audience of at least 100 parents, students, teachers and education leaders will question the president about his plan during the early afternoon meeting.

A stage will be set up at Benedum Airport so the president can speak to the public before flying back to Washington.

Clinton has made the 10-point Call to Action for Education his highest priority. White House spokeswoman Julie Green said.

"He is going to Robert C. Byrd High School because it is so progressive, with state-of-the-art facilities," she said. "He wants to highlight it as a model of what can be done."

Robert C. Byrd High School, at 1 Eagle Way (named for the school mascot), is a \$24 million high-tech facility for about 1,000 students from Clarksburg-Nutter Fort.

What makes Robert C. Byrd High School different? "I think it's our technology," Assistant Principal Geary Rollins said.

Each classroom has at least one computer, while seven computer labs hold another 125 computers. The school has a virtual reality lab and an automated phone system, and everyone has voice mail.

All of this advanced technology sets up another plus for the visit — it will be "broadcast" via the

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CLINTON

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World Wide Web

Harrison County School Superintendent Robert Kittle said Bell Atlantic technicians are installing the wiring to make this connection possible.

West Virginia Public Broadcasting will air the forum live, and provide feeds for news broadcasts.

Welcome to high school

Sitting on about 20 acres in a bowl on the edge of Clarksburg, the Robert C. Byrd campus includes a major sports complex, a gym seating 2,500 and designed for multiple uses, and a state-of-the-art theater seating 675.

A community environmental learning center is going in, Rollins said, complete with a pond with wetlands and mini-amphitheater.

"When we built the school, we envisioned it as a place the community could use," Rollins said. "It's like a civic center — something's always going on."

Since it opened in January 1996, Robert C. Byrd High has averaged an outside group or activities in the build-

ing almost every other day, he said. Graduation is set for Friday, May 30.

As for visitors, "we have had the governor, we've have had the senator, where else can you go after Senator Byrd?" Rollins joked. "It has to be the president. The last time Senator Byrd was here, we told him next time he came back to bring the president."

Rollins, who attended both of Clinton's inaugurations, hopes to meet the president during his visit.

Kittle isn't sure how West Virginia and Robert C. Byrd High came to be chosen for the honor of hosting the educational town meeting. He just knows that a normally busy time has become filled with even more meetings, tours and consultations.

"We've had people in every day, it's increased every day," he said. "They're very thorough. Every I's dotted, every T's crossed, every L's looped."

Kittle said they're working on getting the other 11 counties in RESA 7 to send students to the forum.

Airport speech, too

If you're not invited to the school forum, you still have a chance to see the president. Tickets are being print-

ed for a speech he will make at Benedum Airport before flying back to Washington on Air Force One. These will be available later this week.

All of those stages the Clarksburg's Public Works Department has assembled for Italian Heritage Festivals made it the top nominee to handle the airport speech.

Clarksburg City Manager Percy Ashcraft described that as the city's biggest undertaking "because we have just a few days to plan it." He's confident it will be done in time.

"We obviously want to have our city well-groomed for the visit," Ashcraft said. "It's been difficult, as you can imagine, with the cold, wet weather. We're hoping the first of the week will be kind to us."

State tops in education

State School Superintendent Henry Marockie said the president's visit, combined with the state's rating in *Education Week's* "Quality Counts" report on education, is a "testimony to the quality of what's going on in public education in the state."

The president's proposed national tests — reading for fourth-graders,

math for eighth-graders — fit the state's plan, he said.

"The fact those new tests are being developed will tie to the West Virginia instructional goals and objectives in various areas," he said. "In this case, reading and math. So the whole idea fits beautifully into the reform movement under way here to increase core requirements and the academic rigor of the program."

U.S. Sen. Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., speaks strongly of how education affected his life. He's delighted the school bearing his name will play host to a White House event intended to draw attention to education issues.

"I hope, as well, that through this town hall meeting, West Virginia will gain some well-deserved positive recognition nationally for the impressive strides made in recent years to improve our state's economy and its educational system," Byrd said.

Kittle sees another reason behind the president's visit — the economy.

"Think of how that recovery is happening," he said. "It's changing all of our lines of work. At one time we had to depend on natural resources; now we depend upon knowledge."