

Delegate Ken Plum's *Virginia E-News*



Photo by Dr. Michael McKee of Reston

Delegate Ken Plum was "auctioneer" at a silent and live auction for the Hunter Mill District Democratic Committee's Annual Lasagna Dinner in Reston.

April 9, 2008

Commentary

The Cost of Justice Kenneth R. "Ken" Plum

More than one in every 100 adults in America is in jail or prison, according to a report issued earlier this year by the Pew Center on the State's Public Safety Performance Project (www.pewcenteronthestates.org). While the report recognizes the necessity of locking up violent and repeat offenders, it points out that prison growth and higher incarceration rates do not reflect a parallel increase in crime or a surge in the nation's population. Instead, more people are behind bars "principally because of a wave of policy choices that are sending more lawbreakers to prison and, through popular 'three-strikes' measures and other sentencing laws, imposing longer prison stays on inmates."

Virginia is among those states reflecting the national trend. Fourteen years ago voters bought into the bumper-strip campaign to "abolish parole." Virginia's population of state responsible prison inmates of nearly 40,000 is expected to climb to almost 45,000 by 2013. Housing new inmates while replacing older prisons will necessitate the

construction of six new prisons in as many years. In the meantime, legislators are likely to show their toughness by increasing prison time for more crimes.

One morally correct and sensible but potentially politically risky action was taken last month by Governor Timothy M. Kaine to reduce the prison population by one in granting a conditional pardon to Ollin Renaye Crawford who had served 23 years for robbing four banks of a total of \$10,000. She was classified as a three-time loser under an earlier Virginia law that has since been amended to require two previous incarcerations before an extended sentence was imposed. The 48-year-old mother of three with eight grandchildren who finished a college degree program while in prison is no threat to society. Three previous governors had not been willing to do the right thing and grant the pardon.

Longer sentences and reduced possibility of parole are producing an aging population of prison inmates. In FY 90 there were 715 “geriatric” (age 50+) inmates. Over the last 16 years that number has increased more than five times to 3,700 inmates. During the same time frame the total confined population has doubled.

It is questionable whether the requirements for incarceration for more crimes including drug use and for longer sentences are making our communities any safer. More alternative programs for nonviolent offenders should be put into place and intensive treatment programs that use cognitive-behavioral therapy need to be provided. We need to ensure that the cost of justice is a reasonable and sustainable number. We should never be soft on crime, but we should be sensible. Crime prevention costs less and reduces the number of persons who become victims of crime.

If you have not done so already, please respond to the transportation survey on my website, www.kenplum.com. Click on *Transportation Survey 2008* . Thank you for sharing your thoughts.

May 6 Report with Del. Plum and Senator Howell

Attend a **Post-Session Report with Delegate Ken Plum and Senator Janet Howell on Tuesday, May 6, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.** at the **Reston Community Center at Hunters Woods**. Which bills passed? Which bills failed and why? How will they affect our community? Hear all about the new legislation that will become law on July 1.



Delegate Ken Plum's Weekly "Virginia Report" on Reston Comcast Channel 28

View Delegate Plum's *Virginia Report* online at
<http://www.rctv28.com/videosVR.htm>.

Tonight – April 9, 10:30 p.m. – Patricia Nicoson, President, Dulles Corridor Rail Association
– “Dulles Rail Update”

Tuesday, April 15 at 7:30 p.m. and Wednesday, April 16 at 10:30 p.m. – Kristen Skowronski, Rachel Carson Middle School student, environmental activist, and State Senate Messenger – “Two Months with the General Assembly”

Capital Reception



Capital Reception with Delegate Kenneth R. Plum

**Tuesday, April 15
4:00 to 6:00 p.m.**

**The Berkeley Hotel
Richmond, Virginia**

***For information on sponsorship
and attendance, please email kenplum@aol.com.***

Announcements

The **Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation** is sponsoring a number of **programs for 4-year-olds to 5th graders this summer** at Jamestown Settlement and Yorktown Victory Center. Programs are hands-on and range in length from a couple of hours to a couple of days. For more information call 757.253.4731.

Congratulations to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors for having approved a resolution **pledging to implement greenhouse gas emission reduction actions** as part of the National Capital Region's Cool Capital Challenge. The environmental agenda and the Environmental Improvement Program for fiscal year 2009 are available at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/living/environment.eip.

The **Virginia Department of Business Assistance offers information and resources to small business owners and potential entrepreneurs** in the Commonwealth. For help with business-related questions, contact vbic@vdba.virginia.gov, visit www.vdba.virginia.gov, or call 1-866-248-8814.

The United States Postal Service has launched a pilot program that **allows residents to mail their unwanted electronics to a recycling facility at no cost.** The test program is limited to smaller electronic devices such as **PDA's, MP3 players and digital cameras, as well as spent inkjet cartridges.** Residents can obtain free shipping envelopes at any of 1,500 select post offices, and the postage to ship the used electronics is being provided by Clover Technologies Group, an electronics recycling company that won the right to participate in the program through a competitive bid. For more information visit www.usps.com/communications/newsroom/2008/0408_028.htm.

The latest snapshot of the number of homeless individuals and families in the Fairfax-Falls Church area reveals:

- Overall, there were **1,835 homeless people counted** in the community.
- The number of **homeless families increased slightly to 311** compared to 307 in 2007. Nearly 60 percent of all homeless people were in families and **66 percent of adults in these families were employed full time.**
- There were **670 homeless children** counted in the community. Out of all homeless people, **36 percent were children and 75 percent of these children were under the age of 12.**
- The number of **homeless single individuals was 744.**

Fairfax County provides real estate tax and personal property tax relief to citizens who are either 65 or older, or permanently and totally disabled, and meet the income and asset eligibility requirements. Qualified taxpayers may also be eligible for rent relief. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dta/tr_re_faq.htm for qualifications and answers to frequently asked questions.

The CASH (Creating Assets and Hope) Volunteer Tax Assistance (VITA) program will prepare your taxes FREE. This service is worth \$150. **If you have earned income under \$40,000 you may qualify for the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit** when filing your federal tax return. Assistance is available to **help you obtain your refund in about 10 days**. Sites participating in the program include: Lake Anne SkillSource Center in Reston, Thurs. 3-8 pm and Sat. 9:30 am-12:30 pm; the Pennino Employment Center in Fairfax, Wed. 3-7 pm, and Sat. 9:30 am - 12:30 pm; and the Herndon Neighborhood Resource Center, Thurs. 6-8 pm and Sat. 10 am - 1 pm.

Suspect insurance fraud? Report to Virginia State Police Insurance Fraud Program, "Stamp Out Fraud," at 1-877-62FRAUD (1-877-623-7283) or visit www.stampoutfraud.com.

To **subscribe to Supervisor Cathy Hudgins' eBlast**, email your **address and contact information** to hntmill@fairfaxcounty.gov and put **eBlast Subscribe** in the subject line.

Share your views with Delegate Ken Plum on how Virginia should fund its infrastructure needs. Go to ?www.kenplum.com and click on "Transportation Survey - 2008."

Calendar of Events

Participate in the **United Christian Parish Preschool Book Fair at Barnes and Noble on April 14 through April 16, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.** Any purchase you make at any Barnes and Noble on those dates will bring a contribution to the school. Use book fair number 260950 when you make your purchase.

Ms. Marion Dobbins will present a Living History program focusing on **African-American life and genealogy in Fairfax County on Tuesday, April 15, 7:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Chambers, 127 Center Street South, Vienna.** The Living History program, sponsored by Historic Vienna, Inc., is free, and refreshments will be served. Call 703.200.7806 for additional information.

The **Fairfax County Department of Transportation plans to offer advertising space in certain County bus shelters** and wishes to **receive public comments about this plan** at a public meeting on Saturday, **April 19 at 10:30 a.m.**, Fairfax County Government Center, Conference Rooms 2 & 3. Sign up in advance to speak by calling Katharyn Rogers at 703.324.1120, TTY 703.324.1102 or sign up at the beginning of the meeting. For more information about the advertising plan visit ?www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fcdot or call 703.324.1100, TTY 703.324.1102.

Fairfax County's 2007 Earth Day/Arbor Day Celebration is being held at the Annandale Campus of **Northern Virginia Community College on Saturday, April 19, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** with the **Awards Program beginning at 1:00 p.m.**

Attend the **Best of Reston Awards Gala and Dinner on April 24.** The 2008 Best of Reston Honorees are John Coleman, The JBG Companies, the Volunteer Medical Providers of the Jeanie Schmidt Free Clinic, Ruth Overton, The Reston Garden Club, Tetra Partnerships, and VISTA Wealth Strategies & Judy Redpath. The Awards and Gala are **produced in partnership by the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce and Reston Interfaith.** Last year's Best of Reston event **raised more than \$300,000 for Reston Interfaith.** Watch here for details about this important event.

The topic of Fairfax Futures' **4th annual School Readiness Symposium**, to be held on **Saturday, April 26 in Fairfax** will be "**Resilient, Resourceful and Ready: the Importance of Social and Emotional Competence for Young Children.**" Dr. Daniel Gartrell will be keynote speaker. For more information go to ?www.fairfax-futures.org.

Mosaic Harmony's 15th Anniversary Spring Celebration Concerts will be held on **April 26 and May 3, 7:00 p.m., at the McLean High School Auditorium**, 1633 Davidson Road, McLean. Tickets for the "Let it Shine" concerts are available now. Visit ?www.mosaicharmony.com or call 301.816.9220 for information and ordering. Find out more about Mosaic Harmony by emailing ?information@mosaicharmony.com.

IMAGINE 2008, the fundraiser for the Northern Virginia AIDS Ministry, will be held at the **Tornado Factory in Old Town Alexandria on April 26, 2008** 8:00 to 11:30 p.m. For

the Torpedo Factory in Old Town Alexandria on April 20, 2008, 8:00 to 11:30 p.m. For more information contact ?katerman@novam.org.

The Annual Benefit Concert of the **Reston Community Orchestra** will be **"A Family Evening at the Pops"** on Sunday, **April 27, 5:30 p.m.** in the newly renovated Sunset Hills Montessori School, corner of South Lakes Drive and Ridge Heights Road. **RSVP for tickets and table reservations** to 703.860.1328 **by Thursday, April 24.**

Join hundreds of bicycle commuters to celebrate **Bike to Work Day on Friday, May 16, 6:30 to 9:00 a.m. at the Reston Town Center.** Each year since 2002, cyclists have gathered at the Town Center for a **free breakfast, raffles of bike-related prizes, and bicycling information handouts** including the new Fairfax County Bike Map to be unveiled on Bike to Work Day. Pre-registered riders also get a free t-shirt. Delegate **Ken Plum and Hunter Mill Supervisor Cathy Hudgins will greet the riders at 8:00 a.m.** Register at ? www.waba.org.

The **Northern Virginia Fine Arts Festival** sponsored by GRACE is **May 17-18.** More information is at ?www.restonarts.org.

Authorized and Paid for by Kenneth R. Plum

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