

# Delegate Ken Plum's *Virginia E-News*



December 19, 2007

## COMMENTARY

### Yes, Virginia, There is a Santa Claus Kenneth R. "Ken" Plum

In 1897 Francis P. Church wrote for the *New York Sun* what was to become one of the most famous editorials ever written. He wrote it in response to a letter from a young girl.

Dear Editor –

I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, "If you see it in *The Sun*, it's so." Please tell me the truth is there a Santa Claus?

Virginia O'Hanlon

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The external light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies. You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if you did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived could tear apart. Only faith, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives and lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay 10 times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Jane and I are thankful for the spirit of Santa Claus that we see throughout our community every day. We wish for all peace and joy this holiday season and throughout the New Year.

### **Constituent Survey – 2008 General Assembly Session**

Please take a moment to complete my annual Constituent Survey. Your responses to questions about current issues will help me as I prepare for the 2008 General Assembly Session. Take the survey by clicking on the following link. Thank you in advance for sharing your views.

[Click here for Survey](#)

### **Pre-Session Town Meeting in January**



**Join Senator Janet Howell and me for our annual Public Meeting** prior to the upcoming General Assembly session on **Thursday, January 3, 2008, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the Reston Community Center at Hunters Woods.** Let us hear from you about issues affecting our neighborhoods and our region.

**I have also scheduled a Public Meeting with Senator Mark Herring on Monday, January 7, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. at Fox Mill Elementary School, 2601 Viking Drive, Herndon.** Senator Herring and I look forward to seeing you and having your views.

Please plan to attend one of these important Public Meetings. I look forward to talking with you and finding out what is important to you.

### **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 – Wednesday, December 19 at 10:30 p.m.* – Megan Seals and Jim Dunstan, The V Prize Foundation – "Challenge to the Commercial Space Community"

### **Announcements**

**Join Ken and Jane Plum in their work to rebuild Biloxi, Mississippi.** Your **tax deductible contribution** can be sent to Project REHAB, Habitat for Humanity of Northern Virginia, P.O. Box 8940, Biloxi, MS 39535.

The Virginia Association of Health Plans presented its **2007 Distinguished Public Service Award to Delegate Kenneth A. Plum** at a banquet in Richmond recently. The recognition included a **\$1,000 contribution to a charity of Delegate Plum's choice, the Jeanie Schmidt Free Clinic of Herndon.**

Beginning with his first term in 1978, **Delegate Plum has been introducing bills to establish an independent, nonpartisan redistricting commission** including most recently a bill this year and next session. An organization has been formed to assist with getting such legislation passed. **The Virginia Redistricting Coalition seeks "effective government through competitive elections."** For more information visit [www.FixtheLines.com](http://www.FixtheLines.com).

According to the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance, the **average retail price of gasoline in Virginia is \$2.90 per gallon.** That's the 9th lowest in the U.S. Virginia ranks 41st of 50 states in terms of cost at the pump. Now **compare the cost per gallon in Virginia to the following western nations.** (Source: Energy Information Agency)

- Canada – \$3.83
- Japan – \$4.74
- France – \$6.86
- Germany – \$7.28
- United Kingdom – \$7.33

For more information on regional transportation issues and NVTVA, please visit [www.nvta.org](http://www.nvta.org).

If you think you might be one of the 1,400 people **owed a total of \$1.2 million in refunds from the IRS**, please visit Congressman Jim Moran's website at [www.moran.house.gov](http://www.moran.house.gov). The website features a video to raise public awareness on the refunds.

The State Corporation Commission (SCC) has submitted a report on **Virginia's goal to cut electricity usage over 15 years**. The report prepared by the SCC staff concludes that a goal of **reducing electricity consumption by Virginians by 10 percent can be achieved by 2022**. The report further identifies alternatives for, and additional questions related to, **implementing programs to achieve the reduction**. The staff report as well as the reports and comments of the work groups are posted on the SCC's website at <http://www.scc.virginia.gov/division/eaf/conserves.htm>.

## Calendar of Events

The first day of the upcoming **General Assembly session in Richmond is Wednesday, January 9, 2008**. My Reston office phone, 703.758.9733, will be forwarded to my Richmond office for your convenience. Contact me by phone or send me an email at [kenplum@aol.com](mailto:kenplum@aol.com) with questions about pending legislation of interest to you. Send me a fax at 804.698.6736.

The National Council for Science and the Environment will sponsor the **8th National Conference on Science, Policy, and the Environment, *Climate Change Science and Solutions***, to develop comprehensive strategies for protecting people and the planet against rapid climate change. The conference will be held January 16-18, 2008, at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, DC. Visit [www.NCSEonline.org/2008conference](http://www.NCSEonline.org/2008conference) to register and view the conference agenda.

Attend the **25th Anniversary Performance of the Capitol Steps to benefit Reston Interfaith on January 27, 2008, 7:00 p.m.** at the Hyatt Regency Reston. To make a reservation, visit the following link to Reston Interfaith's website: [www.restoninterfaith.org/uploads/CapitolSteps2008orderform.pdf](http://www.restoninterfaith.org/uploads/CapitolSteps2008orderform.pdf). Return your order form to Meredith Magwire. For questions or more information, call 571.323.9566 or email [meredith.magwire@restoninterfaith.org](mailto:meredith.magwire@restoninterfaith.org).

Share your thoughts at a **panel discussion** hosted by the Reston Association, "**Making Meaningful Connections: How local Organizations Can Reach Out to a Diverse Community**" on Wednesday, **January 30, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.** at RA's main conference room at 1930 Isaac Newton Square. A **light dinner** will be provided, and **translation services and child care** will be provided. To register, call Karen Monaghan at 703.435.6514.

Authorized and Paid for by Kenneth R. Plum

Join Our Mailing List!

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