



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

January 23, 2008

## Commentary

### Steps to Saving the Environment Kenneth R. "Ken" Plum

Our environment did not deteriorate overnight nor will it be possible to clean it up in an instant. Rather, many small steps must be taken to restore quality to our air, water, and land. The General Assembly is known for taking small deliberate baby steps in most everything it undertakes, and that is the approach being taken with environmental protection. The good news is that we are moving in the right direction.

The House of Delegates acted favorably on my bill and others to eliminate phosphates from dishwashing detergents by 2010 as a way to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay. Phosphates were eliminated from household laundry detergents in the 1980's. The need for this legislation was brought to my attention last summer by Kristen Skowronski, a student at Rachel Carson Middle School. Kristin is working as a Page in the Senate of Virginia this session, and she provided testimony before the House Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources Committee on the importance of a phosphate ban. If you want to make the switch now to phosphate-free dishwashing detergent, visit the website Kristen has established at [www.reducephosphates.com](http://www.reducephosphates.com) to review a Consumer Report evaluation of the several brands of phosphate-free detergents that are currently available on the market.

My bill to require recycling of cathode ray or picture tubes from televisions and computer monitors is making its way through the House. The bill requires localities to establish recycling programs. Television picture tubes can contain up to eight pounds of lead along with other hazardous materials. My bill to require computer manufacturers to provide a recycling program for their products has the support of the computer industry and is likely to be acted on by the House this week.

Although smoking bans are popular in our region, they remain controversial in the remainder of the state because of the role that tobacco plays in so much of the state's economy. I will

vote for the strongest ban we can get in restaurants and public places to save people from second-hand smoke, but it will be a hard sell even with the Governor's strong support. Thankfully there are no more "smoke-filled rooms" in the Capitol. In my early years in the legislature there was a smoky haze in every room where the legislature met and in every dining establishment in the city.

There will be a push that I am supporting to expand the use of renewable energy resources in the Commonwealth as well as efforts to promote energy conservation. These initiatives build on the success I had last session in getting renewable energy and conservation provisions in the electricity re-regulation bill. I am co-patron and will be floor manager on a bill to require utilities to provide annual reports on their progress in meeting renewable and conservation goals.

These small steps are a recognition in the state Capitol that we must do more to clean up and protect our environment. For those of us who have been working on these issues for decades, these small steps are hopeful signs towards more progress in the future..



### **Around the Capitol**

A House Subcommittee defeated my bill that would have established an independent reapportionment commission on a party line vote with two Democrats voting yes and four Republicans voting no. The current process is dominated by incumbency protection concerns where legislators attempt to pick their voters rather than voters picking their representatives in districts that reflect a community of interest. I first introduced this reform of the process of redistricting in 1978 at the recommendation of Mr. Charlie Brown of McLean who was active in Common Cause.

A resolution in the House of Delegates proclaimed February 14, 2008 as Valentine, Virginia (the name of a small town in Virginia) Day. Delegate Shannon Valentine abstained on the vote.

The House Militia and Police Committee defeated on a party line vote a bill that would have required background checks on persons buying guns at gun shows. A background check would keep guns out of the hands of criminals and the mentally ill like the killer at Virginia Tech. All Democrats on the committee voted for it, and all Republicans voted against it. All Delegates and Senators representing citizens along or near the Dulles Corridor signed a letter to the Federal Transit Administrator James Simpson last week requesting that he take "necessary, immediate action to advance rail in the Dulles Corridor."

A recent email opposing the bill to make cockfighting a felony posed some interesting questions: "How do you consider cock fighting so bad when coon hunting is not even in these bills? There is one cock on one. In coon hunting there is sometimes four to five dogs (or more) killing one coon. Sometimes the hunter will injure the coon so the dogs will have a better chance to get the coon. What is the difference?" I will vote to make all animal fighting a felony.

## 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>.

Tune in to Reston Comcast Channel 28 on Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. and on Wednesdays at 10:30 p.m. for "Delegate Ken Plum's Richmond Report."

## Announcements

The **2008 General Assembly session has begun**. Follow the action at <http://legis.state.va.us>. Please **stay in touch with me** about issues of interest or concern to you. Email me at [kenplum@aol.com](mailto:kenplum@aol.com). Call me at 703.758.9733. Your call will be forwarded to my Richmond office at no cost to you. Send me a fax at 804.698.6736.

**Congratulations to Reston Hospital Center** for receiving **the nation's highest award in nursing excellence**, Magnet status, from the American Nurses Credentialing Center. It is a distinction that only 4 percent of the healthcare organizations in the U.S. have achieved.

Transatlantic Renewable Energy Exchange (TREE) is offering **three-month summer internships in Germany for college students** focusing on renewable energy. German language study required; fee. Information at [www.cdsintl.org/fromusa/tree.htm](http://www.cdsintl.org/fromusa/tree.htm).

The Sallie Mae Fund announced that its scholarship application season is now open and invites students attending college in the fall to apply for more than \$2 million in scholarships it will award for the 2008-2009 school year. Applications, eligibility and deadline information are now available at [www.salliemaefund.org](http://www.salliemaefund.org).

The Virginia Council on Indians is the advisory board to the Commonwealth of Virginia on matters of interest to the Virginia Indians. Among its legislated duties is the education of the general public on Virginia Indians, past and present. More information at <http://indians.vipnet.org>.

## Calendar of Events

Braddock District Supervisor Sharon Bulova will host a community meeting to kick off a **countywide Asian-American History Project tonight, January 23**, at 7:30 p.m. in Braddock Hall (immediately adjacent to the Braddock District Office), 9002 Burke Lake Road, Burke. The project is designed to **capture and tell the history of Asian-Americans who have made Fairfax County their home**. For additional information on the Asian-American History Project, call 703.250.1830, TTY 711, or [corazonfoley@fanhs-nova.org](mailto:corazonfoley@fanhs-nova.org). For additional information about the community meeting, contact Christina Fullmer in the Braddock District Office at 703.425.9300, TTY 711, or [christina.fullmer@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:christina.fullmer@fairfaxcounty.gov).

The Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce Community Service committee will present an **educational workshop for nonprofits on January 24**. The guest speaker, Mikel Smith Koon, president of Mosaik Strategies, will discuss **The ROI of Nonprofit/for-Profit Collaborations**. The session is being held at the Chamber office, 1763 Fountain Drive, Reston. Check-in is 8:30 a.m., and the workshop begins at 9:00. Greater Reston Chamber members can attend free of charge; nonmembers pay \$15. A continental breakfast is provided. To register call Olga at 703.707.9045.

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.

"**Seeds of Independence: Freed People's Settlement on Mason Neck**" will be presented on **Sunday, February 3**, 2:00 p.m. at the Gunston Hall Visitors Center. Learn about the **origins of Shiloh Baptist Church and cemetery and a Negro School established in the late 19th century** on land once owned by George Mason and **the search today for the Log-Town slave quarter** built at Gunston Hall in the 1700s. Call 703.550.9220 for information and registration.

The annual Polar Plunge at Lake Anne will be held on **Saturday, February 9, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.** Take a full winter dip, a "Chicken Dip," or sponsor a brave plunger. Registered participants will plunge into Lake Anne to **raise funds for Camp Sunshine**. Registration forms and pledge sheets are at [www.freezinforareason.com](http://www.freezinforareason.com). Spectators are welcome.

The **Democratic and Republican Presidential Primary Elections** will be held on **Tuesday, February 12**. Polls open at 6:00 a.m. and close at 7:00 p.m. go to your regular polling place to vote. visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/eb](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/eb) for information about voting absentee in person or by mail and to download an application for an absentee ballot.

A **special groundbreaking event** to celebrate the beginning of the **major restoration and repair work on Reston's streams** will be held on **Tuesday, February 12**, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. at the United Christian Parish Church, 2222 Colts Neck Drive in Reston. This landmark project was made possible through the collaborative effort of innovative leaders in the community who have a passion for preserving Reston's treasured natural environment. RSVP to

[karen@reston.org](mailto:karen@reston.org).

Bid on treasures from the past at **Reston Museum's "Attic Auction" on Thursday, February 12**, 5:30 p.m. Live bidding begins at 6:30 p.m. Visit [www.restonmuseum.org](http://www.restonmuseum.org) for more information about the Museum.

**Authorized and Paid for by Kenneth R. Plum**

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Delegate Kenneth R. Plum | 2073 Cobblestone Lane | Reston | VA | 20191