



Delegate Ken Plum's *Virginia E-News*

October 31, 2007

COMMENTARY

A Civic Duty Kenneth R. "Ken" Plum

For a couple of years after graduate school I taught a course in government in two high schools in Fairfax County. Central to the curriculum of the course was the teaching of the civic responsibility of voting. If the purpose of education is to affect behavior, a longitudinal study would give pretty low scores to government teachers for their lack of success in getting their students to vote as adults. In defense of my colleagues who are government teachers, there are other influences that discourage voting.

I believe that many people are turned off to voting by political campaigns. Too many good men and women who announce for public office in order to serve their communities find themselves caught up with such a strong desire to win that it distorts their judgment. And they get advice from paid political consultants who as hired guns will destroy the reputation of anyone they are paid to destroy. The flimsiest of charges based on dubious research can be exploded into a major character flaw for the victim. Decorated war heroes end up defending their patriotism. Private lives become fodder for the political bonfires that these political hacks can ignite if not controlled.

Unfortunately, negative campaigns have been shown to be successful. If you repeat a lie often enough in mailings or television advertising, it becomes the truth in the minds of the public. Even if the opposing candidate has the money to counter the charges, he or she will be on the defensive, unable to present a positive program. Astonishingly some voter households will get more than 50 slick brochures from candidates plus mailings from special interest groups and political parties this election cycle. The messages on too many of the mailings will not be worth reading.

Any wonder that after months of trashy roadside signs, slimy brochures, and misleading television ads that many voters are turned off! The problem is not with Republicans or Democrats; both are involved. It is not a new phenomenon. Aggressive, nasty and negative campaigns go back to at least the presidential election of 1800 in this country. Most

participants justify their actions by pointing at others who may be doing the same thing. In fact, one strategy is to suppress voter turnout with a negative campaign as a way to influence the outcome.

Hopefully voters will be able to put the campaigns behind them, choose positive candidates who most reflect their views, and vote for these candidates on Tuesday, November 6. Polls are open from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. If you cannot get to the polls on Election Day, call 703.324.4700 for 24 hour recorded information on absentee voting. Voters in my legislative district should have received a Voter Guide from me that presents all the candidates and the ballot questions with my not too surprising recommendations. If you did not get a copy, e-mail me at kenplum@aol.com or call 703.758.9733. Please note that on Ballot Page 1 of 4, the lower box on the right side should be "Sheriff."

Remember the lesson of your government teacher: vote on Tuesday, November 6. It's your civic duty. Not voting can change the outcome. In my first re-election campaign in 1979 I was defeated when the voters in the part of the district where I was strongest did not bother to vote, but the voters in the areas where I was most vulnerable voted in high numbers because of a hotly contested local election.

When these state and local elections are out of the way, we can then turn our attention to a year's worth of presidential campaigns and Congressional elections. Will they be any better?

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](#)

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, October 24 at 10:30 p.m. and on Tuesday, November 6 at 7:30 p.m. and Wednesday, November 7 at 10:30 p.m. – Krysta Jones, Founder and Chair of Virginia Leadership Institute – "Expanding Our Political Opportunities"

Re-Election Campaign

Ken is a candidate for re-election to the House of Delegates on November 6, 2007. To ask Ken a question about the issues, e-mail kenplum@aol.com. To contribute electronically to his campaign, go to www.kenplum.com.

Announcements

Virginia has opened its first **Business Opportunity and Workforce Development (BOWD) Center**, a two-year pilot program that will give **underutilized, disadvantaged business enterprise (DEB) firms the tools and knowledge they need** to be more competitive when vying for federal-aided transportation contracts. To learn more, visit www.viriniadot.org/business/BOWD.asp or call 804.662.9555.

Governor Timothy M. Kaine has released the final report of the **Transportation Accountability Commission**, which recommends **seven broad goals and 34 performance measures to improve the Commonwealth's transportation network**. The Commission, established through Executive Order 37, was charged with evaluating Virginia's current accountability methods and making recommendations to **ensure that the state's transportation agencies deliver maximum value** for taxpayers, employ rigorous management techniques and are held accountable for the performance of the state's transportation system. A copy of the report is available at www.transportation.virginia.gov/Initiatives/TransportationAccountability.

America Recycles Day is November 15. "Take the Pledge" to recycle more at www.americarecyclesday.org.

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ABSENTEE VOTING:

In Person Absentee Voting is available **NOW** at the **Office of Elections, Fairfax County Government Center**, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 323, Fairfax. In Person Absentee Voting will **also be available at Fairfax County's seven satellite locations including the North County Government Center, 12000 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston.**

Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/eb for information about Absentee Voting.

Calendar of Events

The Center for Multicultural Human Services presents **"We Are America Now: A Celebration of Immigrant Contributions to our Community"** on **Friday, November 2, 7:30 to 9:30 a.m.** at the McLean Hilton. Visit www.cmhs.org for information about nominations for leadership awards to be presented at this event and to register.

Enjoy **Virginia Indian Heritage Day on Saturday, November 3**, at the Jamestown Settlement. There will be family activities throughout the day including children's crafts and hands-on activities, Virginia Indian Heritage dancing, and an evening lecture by W. Richard West. Visit www.historyisfun.org for more information.

Teen Driving SafeD Day – "One Day to Save the Rest of the Days of Your Life" – will take place **Saturday, November 3**, at the Fairfax County Government Center. Federal, state, local, and private agencies and organizations will be setting up displays, demonstrations, hands-on activities, and be **presenting seminars to teens and their parents on the issues** relating to teen driving safety. Visit www.TeenDrivingSafeD.org for more information.

The **Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council** will host a one-day **regional conference, "Turning a New Leaf,"** on **Friday, November 9, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.** at Northern Virginia Community College's Annandale campus. The conference will feature tracks on **conservation landscapes, green development, and creative stormwater management**. Topics include eco-friendly lawns, native alternatives to traditional plantings, backyard forests, rain gardens, stream restoration techniques, and public-private partnerships for green development. **Registration has begun.** Visit www.ChesapeakeLandscape.org for details.

The **Virginia Recycling Association** will hold its **Annual Meeting of the Members on Friday, November 9**, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Doubletree Hotel in Charlottesville. To join the VRA and/or register for the Annual Meeting, visit www.varecycles.org or call the VRA at 804.302.4231.

Citizens may review and comment on **potential transportation projects and programs** to be included in the Commonwealth Transportation Board's **Six-Year Improvement Program for Fiscal Years 2009-2014**. The meeting will be held on **November 13, 6:00 p.m.**, at the **Fairfax County Government Center**, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. Contact Laura Southard at Laura.Southard@VDOT.Virginia.gov or call 804.370.8109 for more information.

The **Fairfax League of Women Voters' Reston evening unit** will meet at the Reston Museum at Lake Anne on Wednesday, **November 14, at 7:30 p.m.** Guests are welcome. Study materials for the meetings can be found at www.LWV-fairfax.org. Call 703.319.4114 for more information.

Attend the "**Development and Urban Forest: Discovering Common Ground**" conference on **Friday, November 16**, 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Algonkian Conference Center at **Algonkian Regional Park**, 47001 Fairway Driver, Sterling, VA. For registration information, contact Becky Woodson at becky.woodson@dot.virginia.gov.

The **Audubon Society of Northern Virginia (ASNV)** will hold an **advocacy training workshop on November 17**, 2007, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon to provide tips on how to advocate for conservation. The workshop will be held at the Hidden Oaks Nature Center, 4022 Hummer Road, Annandale (just inside the Beltway at the Annandale/Little River Turnpike east exit). There is no charge. **Reply to Virginia at info@asnv.org or call 703.256.6895 by October 26.**

Authorized and Paid for by Kenneth R. Plum

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