

VIRGINIA
CAPITOL
CONNECTIONS
QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

Elect No Strangers!

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Summer 2017

This Week IN RICHMOND



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In addition to the presenting station, WCVE (Richmond), *This Week in Richmond* is seen on WVPT (Harrisonburg), WBRA (Roanoke), WHTJ (Charlottesville), WHRO (Norfolk), TV-48 Norfolk's Neighborhood Network, and other cable systems providing statewide coverage.

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A brief history of Virginia's General Registrars

By TRACY HOWARD



“You’ve come a long way, baby!” This tag line from a successful marketing campaign was first used by the Phillip Morris Company in 1968. Just like this “Virginia Slims” ad, Virginia had come a long way. The late 60’s were a time of great and disparate change, the country was often divided, and social and civic reform ruled the decade.

Many changes had filtered across the Potomac, and the slow but steady march for transformation had finally made its way to Richmond. Attitudes were changing.

Supreme Court decisions and Federal Acts had rightfully eviscerated the discriminatory clauses of Virginia’s sixty six year old Constitution, and with it, the Commonwealth’s Election laws under Title 24.

In Virginia however, change comes slowly, and not without associated growing pains.

The Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act had been signed by President Johnson; the U.S. Supreme Court over the course of several decades had systematically dismantled discriminatory registration and election practices.

The remnants of the “Byrd Machine” and the ratification of the 24th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution resulted in the Old Dominion temporarily adopting a “You can’t tell us what to do” attitude that produced separate and often competing Federal and State voting rolls. It was only after the U. S. Supreme Court ruled against Virginia’s mandatory poll taxes in Harper vs. Virginia State Board of Elections did lawmakers began to re-evaluate. (Harper v. Virginia Board of Elections, 383 U.S. 663 (1966))

Something had to be done, and in 1968 the process of re-writing Virginia’s election laws began. The Virginia General Assembly mustered an election laws study commission that, in conjunction with the work of writing a new Virginia Constitution, resulted in a revised body of law administering the Commonwealth’s elections.

The new Election Laws were compiled into Title 24.1, enacted by the General Assembly in 1970. Along with the articles of suffrage of the newly proposed Virginia Constitution the revamped election laws were revolutionary and very progressive at the time. The new set of laws demanded uniformity in voter registration and charged the State Board of Elections with oversight of the registrars’ offices and practices.

GASP! Nearly everyone could register to vote! It was enough to give grandma the vapors!

The new Constitution disallowed registration only for non-citizenship and the legal disabilities of felony conviction and adjudicated incompetence. Originally, a short residence requirement of six months, and legal age of 21 years old were included only to be changed within a year. The 26th Amendment allowed eighteen year olds to register and in the same year a Supreme Court ruling struck down durational residency requirements. (Dunn v. Blumstein, 405 U.S. 330 (1972))

But Virginia being Virginia, and quite set in her ways, kept many of the well-established methods of administering her elections. Some of these laws were enacted by Acts of Assembly dating back to the 1880s. The somewhat unique Virginia system of appointed Electoral Boards and Registrars was first utilized in 1884, along with standardized ballots, officers of election and pre-registration requirements.

But the new laws did make several significant changes, from the new set of laws a new office emerged, the Office of the General Registrar.

The General Registrar was the centralized replacement for a registrar of voters in every precinct. Beginning in 1971 each Virginia locality relied on the General Registrar as the single registration official who maintained the voter rolls throughout the locality. Later the Constitution was amended to include the office of General Registrar. (Art II § 8)

Under the 1970 changes, the Commonwealth was the first state to create a centralized voter database, and among the first to use the central system to allow transfers between localities when a voter moved. The centralized system prevented multiple registrations and helped push Virginia to the forefront of voter list maintenance. The General Registrar was and continues to be, the official charged with adding, changing, transferring, and deleting voter records from the Virginia list.

The new General Registrar would still be appointed by a three member Electoral Board, all of whom are appointed by party. However the General Registrar wore no party label, could not participate in party politics, could hold no other office, nor be an employee of any elected officer.

This new paradigm was meant to create an autonomous entity, theoretically free from the type of party control that had typically influenced the election rolls for their own benefit. Case law in the 1980’s reinforced this independence and prohibited the practice of removing a registrar for party affiliation when the Governor changed. Another case prohibited the registrar’s office from being anywhere but in a publicly accessible building.

As the legal challenges of elections grew, the office of the registrar evolved. Each General Assembly session added language to §24.1. The title also grew through litigation, more Federal Acts, and a continually expanding electorate.

By 1992 §24.1 was so piecemealed and disorganized the Virginia Code Commission undertook the job of re-codifying the Title into the 10 separate and distinct chapters of §24.2, the title Virginia Elections operate under today.

Virginia’s Election Laws have continued to transform and evolve. Each year the Virginia General Assembly will, on average, consider 200 individual election related bills. Since the re-codification in 1993 the 180 page §24.2 has grown to over 400 pages of Code in 2017. State law, Federal Acts, and Court rulings continue to shape the Commonwealth’s elections. Virginia’s General Registrars, now also referred to as Directors of Election, have evolved with the law to keep Virginia’s Elections among the

Continued on next page

Elect No Strangers!

By DAVID BAILEY

Twenty-eight years ago, (1989) to write a haiku, I penned the words that became the title for the new directory of candidates.

Elect No Strangers!

If possible, elect friends.

If not, make friends of those elected.

Every year since 1990 David Bailey Associates has published Elect No Strangers to help interested Virginians become better

acquainted with candidates for statewide offices and the General Assembly.

Our staff reaches out to every candidate, and most of them provide photos and information. However, if there is no response we include the information from the Virginia Department of Elections and or the Virginia Public Access Project. We always receive assistance from the Democratic and Republican Caucus staff.

The candidates are listed in the order that they will appear on the ballot for the statewide offices and the House of Delegates. Prior to 60 days before the November election, party nominees that withdraw may be replaced by new candidates.

Official information regarding the November election is available from local registrars and from the Department of Elections web site, elections.virginia.gov. An excellent source for campaign information is the Virginia Public Access Project, vpap.org.

As we say, the directory includes all the ‘winners’ —all of those who will be elected to serve. This will be correct until there’s another successful candidate who duplicates Jackie Stump’s 1989 winning write-in campaign for the House of Delegates. If you do not know the history of Stump’s election, you are missing an interesting aspect of recent Virginia political history.📌

A brief history continued from previous page

most highly regarded in the United States.

Even as Virginia is rated among the top three states in the nation in election administration and voter registration, there are still obstacles to overcome. It wasn’t until 2016, that Virginia finally made all local election offices full-time, allowing all Virginia Citizens equal access to registration and elections services. Local administrations still don’t know how to classify the General Registrar, and too often elections are overlooked, and underfunded

for other priorities. I’ll get into that next time.


Yes, we’ve come a long way, baby, but there’s still a long way to go.

Tracy Howard has served as the General Registrar/Director of Elections for the City of Radford since 1992 and is President of the Voter Registrars Association of Virginia.📌

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Highest Aspirations: Virginians Hear *Hail to the Chief* Again

By MICHAEL E. BELEFSKI

Back in the 2010 Summer Issue of *Virginia Capitol Connections*, I wrote “Recent Virginia Governors-Presidential Timber?” The time is ripe as an apple for an update. Virginians did not get to hear “Hail to the Chief”. Let’s take a look how those seven years fared for our Virginia governors and look ahead to their future political endeavors.



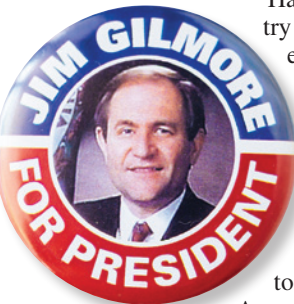
George Allen

When U.S. Senator Jim Webb decided not to run for re-election in 2012, Allen decided to run for his old seat. He easily won the GOP nomination with 65% of the vote against Jamie Radtke (23%), Bob Marshall (7%), and E. W. Jackson (5%). In November, Democrat Tim Kaine defeated him with 52.86%-46.96% of the vote.

Allen continues to be a Reagan Ranch Presidential Scholar and constantly campaigns for GOP candidates throughout the Commonwealth.



Jim Gilmore



Having run for president for his second try in 2016 and being eliminated again early in the delegate nomination process, he anticipated a Clinton-Kaine victory in 2016 and was ready to run for the U. S. Senate in a Special Election contest. But the Trump-Pence ticket won and Gilmore had to change his plans.

This year, he fell short by 733 votes to be re-elected to the National Rifle Association (NRA) Board of Directors. Gilmore is President and CEO of the American Opportunity Foundation that emphasizes conservative solutions that promises real prosperity, national security, infrastructure transportation projects, and traditional values. He is currently being considered for a diplomatic position in the Trump Administration.

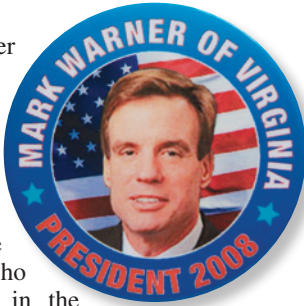
Mark Warner

In 2014, Democrat Mark Warner won re-election to the U. S. Senate in a lackluster campaign with 49.14% of the vote against Republican Ed Gillespie (48.33%) and Robert Sarvis (2.43%).

Warner’s perceived weakness was a failure on his part to include more of President Obama’s voters who re-elected him in 2012, especially in the NOVA suburbs, where increased population growth has pushed the Commonwealth into a purple battleground.

He has emerged as one of the Senate’s more-moderate Democrats. He frequently voted against his party’s leadership including support for the controversial Keystone XL pipeline. During a 2014 party vote for minority leader, he cast a ballot against Majority Leader Sen. Harry Reid. Warner’s leadership interests concern military affairs, intelligence and technology legislation.

Last year, he told The Wall Street Journal that his presidential



window is probably shut. But, as vice chairman of the U. S. Senate Intelligence Committee, he currently holds a national spotlight to investigate and obtain credible answers on Russia’s influence over our 2016 presidential election which he said was taking up 100% of his time.

Bob Mc Donnell

We left that summer talking about Former Governor Bob McDonnell’s Confederate history, gay rights and voting felon controversies. A popular governor with a 55%-32% approval to disapproval rating at the end of his term, he was known for being a hard-working executive who advocated job creation and funding for transportation and infrastructure improvements.

In 2012, he was being considered as VEEP on the GOP ticket and extensively toured the country on behalf of the Romney-Ryan ticket.

When he left office, he and his wife, Maureen, were indicted on honest services fraud and the Federal Hobbs Act extortion charges related to their acceptance of more than \$177,000 in loans, gifts, and benefits from Star Scientific CEO Jonnie Williams while in the governor’s office. The jury convicted Governor McDonnell.

McDonnell became the first Virginia governor to be indicted or convicted of a felony. He was sentenced in 2015 to a two year prison term and additional supervised release and was free on bond during an appeals process.

In 2016, The U. S. Supreme Court unanimously vacated his conviction and remanded the case back to a lower court. The U. S. Justice Department later announced that they would not prosecute the case again and moved to dismiss the charges.

Today, he is a distinguished professor at Regent University’s Robertson School of Government and will assist establishing the Governor’s Center for Federalism and Civility. He started a consulting business, began teaching at the Regent University School of Law, rejoined his law firm, and works as a consultant for business development and real estate projects.

At a recent speech at Virginia’s American Legion Boys State, he joked that he may ask people to help him pay his legal bills that amount to more than \$10 million, although, in a recent e-mail from The Restoration Fund, he has a staggering \$27 million to pay in legal bills.

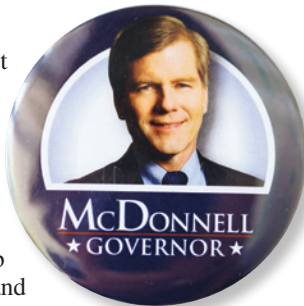
Tim Kaine

Kaine came closest in a century in Virginia’s quest for one of the top spots on the national political scene.

He was just leaving the governor’s office in 2010 and was halfway through his term as Chair of the Democratic National Committee. He beat George Allen in his quest of a U. S. Senate seat in 2012.

Recognizing that Kaine was born in Minnesota, raised in Kansas, University of Missouri graduate, Richmond councilman and mayor, Lieutenant Governor, Governor, Roman Catholic, fluent in Spanish and an ability to give speeches for hours without notes, Hillary Clinton announced on July 22, 2016 that she selected him to be her vice presidential running mate and was nominated at the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia.

The Clinton-Kaine ticket lost in the Electoral College, but the Commonwealth was the only southern state won by the Democratic



ticket. He also took himself out of consideration for the 2020 presidential election cycle soon after the 2016 presidential election and is running for re-election to the U. S. Senate in next year’s election. This year, he has raised \$2.6 million in the second quarter, ending the period with \$7.3 million in his campaign coffers.

Terry McAuliffe

Current Virginia Governor and businessman Terry McAuliffe is on a roll. Bringing on his experience as co-chairman of Bill Clinton’s 1996 presidential re-election campaign, chairman of the Democratic National Committee from 2001-2005 and chairman of Hillary Clinton’s 2008 presidential campaign he is considered to being laying the ground work for a presidential run of his own in 2020.

He was instrumental in his recommendation of Tim Kaine as Hillary Clinton’s VEEP choice in 2016. During his stint as Governor, McAuliffe continues to leave the country promoting Virginia businesses in various trade missions around the world.

Writing for the Democratic Victory Fund, McAuliffe writes “Our future is at stake this November. With Donald Trump in the White House and right-wing Republicans controlling Congress, Virginia is on the front line of resistance to their extreme agenda and dangerous actions. Your support now helps build and expand winning ground games as Democrats take on radical Republicans across the Commonwealth. If Democrats don’t have what it takes to win across Virginia in November, we’ll be surrendering our state to the radical Trump-Gillespie agenda. Together, we can make sure Virginia stays blue this November.”

If his choice for Governor, Ralph Northam, wins look for him to begin a nationwide exploratory run continuing Virginia governor’s quest for the presidency.



Politics Roundtable Overview

Tom Davis, III

Rector, George Mason University, Former Congressman

We may be the mother of President’s but we haven’t been pregnant in a long time.

It may be that the formula for winning a swing state makes Virginia governors too moderate to win their respective party’s nominations for President. Cuccinelli tried the hard right and couldn’t win statewide even in a Republican year. Warner won but wasn’t liberal enough.

Quentin Kidd, Ph.D.

Christopher Newport University, Dean of the College of Social Science

With the exception of Terry McAuliffe, there are two things that characterize the other five governors and one is that speak to their presidential ambitions and failed presidential ambitions.

The first is a personal mistake or personal failings and the second is some combination of bad timing and bad preparation.

The ‘Macaca Moment’ and the ‘Jonny Williams Scandal’ did George Allen and Bob McDonnell in really before they could enter any kind of presidential competition.

George Allen did not have an Exploratory Committee because he was taking some criticism about already running for president before his re-election to the U. S. Senate but went speaking in Iowa and New Hampshire and did not formally organize anything.

Bob McDonnell was on everybody’s list when it came to VEEP potential presidential candidates but done nothing formally in terms of entering or creating leadership PACS.

The other three governors are not failures because of personal

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failings but non-successes who had bad timing and bad preparation.

I think that the governor that gets the gold star for bad timing and preparation is Jim Gilmore. He is the most ambitious of what he tried to do and has always been shown cut up short because he was ill prepared or had bad timing in what he was trying to accomplish. He has run for president twice and ran unsuccessfully for the U. S. Senate once. People access his governorship so poorly that he has never been able to build anything from what people think of as a really poorly constructed foundation which is his governorship.

Mark Warner and Tim Kaine are more of a function of bad timing and preparation.

See “*Highest Aspirations*”, continued on page 8

Highest Aspirations from page 7

Warner created an Exploratory Committee and then just decided that it just wasn’t his time. It was a personal thing. He pulled out in part primarily because it was a personal family timing issue.

It just wasn’t Tim Kaine’s time in terms of being the VEEP candidate on the ticket with Hillary Clinton. I don’t think he had done anything up to that point. Kaine is a situation where probably, it was a personal timing moment. He did not express his own personal ambition to being president or vice president and although he had ambition he wouldn’t have said ‘yes’, he did not personally push his name out there. After leaving the governorship, he indicated that his real ambition was to go teach at the University of Richmond. He then got persuaded to run for the U. S. Senate.

Terry McAuliffe is in many ways like Jim Gilmore in the sense that he is early and often has put his name out and has indicated an ambition for running for president in 2020. I’m not comparing his governorship with Gilmore’s. There seems to be a very similar level of obvert ambition on the part of Terry McAuliffe as with Jim Gilmore, although George Allen and Bob McDonnell both expressed that same level of ambition at some point in their careers.

The bottom line is that as Virginia has become more competitive at the federal level especially at the presidential level, the political value to being governor has grown, has increased and it’s that political value that makes these people who are governor think more ambitiously beyond their life in Richmond and that some ambition sometimes takes them to the U. S. Senate, sometimes it takes them to other things. It has also taken them to thinking about a larger place for themselves in national politics.

This is a situation where the one-term governor in an off-year election in a state that is now among the five to seven most competitive in the country isn’t much of a hindrance as it might otherwise be. Although, we can say none of the Virginia governors have been successful and perhaps none of the reasons is that four years in Richmond simply isn’t enough time to build a network and develop the policy credibility that one might need to successfully run for president.

Stephen J. Farnsworth, Ph.D.
University of Mary Washington

Virginia is in the VERY unusual position of having three plausible candidates for president in 2020, and all three of them are Democrats.

Mark Warner took a few trips to Iowa to explore a 2008 run, but the former governor chose to run for the Senate instead once Senator John Warner decided to retire. The current Senator Warner’s high-visibility role in investigating possible Russian meddling in the 2016 election strengthens his hand for a more serious run for the White House in 2020, should he decide to give it a go.

Senator Kaine, the 2016 Democratic vice presidential nominee, would be a serious contender should he decide to run for president in 2020. He acquitted himself well as on the national stage last year, and has become an increasingly visible senator since his time on the ticket.

Both come with the advantages of considerable experience as both a senator and a governor. But Kaine and Warner may not be sufficiently angry enough to satisfy the most active parts of the Democratic primary base.

Governor McAuliffe, who leaves office in January 2018, will be more able than most potential 2020 presidential candidates to spend large amounts of time in Iowa and New Hampshire, the early states on the nomination calendar. He would be the most likely successor coming out of the Clinton wing of the party, and would be a particularly formidable fundraiser, a key measure of a candidate’s viability in the early going.

The shut-out of Republican state-wide office holders in recent has limited the ability of Republicans to offer a viable candidate for president in 2020. Former Governor Jim Gilmore ran with little success four years ago, and former Governor Bob McDonnell’s

history of sordid finance issues may not have led to a prison sentence but it did make it impossible to run for office as a credible national candidate. George Allen, a former senator and governor, hasn’t been a viable candidate for national office since he lost his re-election bid in 2006.

The GOP field, of course, will depend on if President Trump chooses to run for re-election and if so what his approval numbers might look like in a few years.

Geoffrey Skelley
Associate Editor, Sabato’s Crystal Ball,
University of Virginia Center for Politics

George Allen’s 2006 Senate reelection loss ended speculation about his 2008 presidential aspirations. Since then, he lost another Senate bid in 2012 against Tim Kaine and has largely exited the political world, at least as a prospective candidate. There is zero expectation for him to seek office again, much less the presidency in the future.

Jim Gilmore made a quixotic presidential bid in 2016, one that attracted very few votes. Even in his home state of Virginia, Gilmore only managed to win 0.06% of the vote. There is no reason to think that he would have any luck in a future presidential bid, and no one is going to pick him as a running mate.

Mark Warner may long to run for president and could probably mount the resources for such a bid; someone with his moderate profile might struggle in a Democratic presidential primary. Nonetheless, Warner could try to use his post as vice chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence to attract national notice as it delves into possible Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election. Although he nearly lost reelection in the GOP-friendly 2014 cycle, Warner remains quite popular among Virginia voters. He could conceivably run for president or be a vice presidential pick, but it doesn’t seem incredibly likely, at least at this point.

Bob McDonnell is hard to view as anything other than damaged goods at this point, at least politically. While the court system eventually exonerated him, he was found guilty of improper action by the court of public opinion (not to mention a jury). Given this toxicity, no one would pick him as a running mate, and if McDonnell were to run on his own accord, he would forever have to handle tough questions regarding his acceptance of gifts that led to the corruption charges.

Tim Kaine was his party’s vice presidential nominee in 2016 and is obviously going to show up on lists of possible future presidential candidate. For the time being, Kaine appears unlikely to run, having said that he will not seek the presidency in 2020. Still, he’s running for reelection in 2018; if he wins reelection, Kaine might change his mind once the 2020 campaign cycle starts in early 2019. Still, given his attachment to a disastrous Democratic result in 2016 and the possibly crowded Democratic field in 2020, it’s safe to view him as unlikely to run. And having taken the VP nomination once, would he do so again? Hard to say.

Terry McAuliffe actually might be the most likely to run for president. The incumbent Virginia governor can’t run for immediate reelection, so he might position himself as a possible national candidate going forward. He’s has a decent approval rating, has major fundraising chops, and knows everyone in the party. Plus, he does have some progressive accomplishments that he could cite in an effort to inoculate himself to left-wing attacks for being too establishment (e.g. his mass restoration of voting rights for felons who have served their time). Nonetheless, he is heavily connected to the Clinton’s, which will be a first-paragraph mention in any candidate profile in 2020 should he run. That might hurt him with Berniecrats and anti-establishment Democrats.

Michael E. Belefski is a politics reporter for VCC and President of CPC CORPORATION, a Business, Law and Political Communications and Public Relations Firm. He can be contacted at mike.belefski@capitolsquare.com or cpccorp@verizon.net.

Making Sure Virginia Is The Most
Women Veteran Friendly State In The Nation

BY ANNIE WALKER, DIRECTOR, VETERANS EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND EMPLOYMENT (VETE) SERVICES, VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES

Years ago, there were always some smart-aleck kids in the neighborhood who would yell to my daughters, “Your Mom wears combat boots!” The kids probably did not even know the origin of the phrase, and my daughters certainly didn’t. To them, it made perfect sense that Mom would wear combat boots — she was a soldier, after all, and that’s what soldiers do. And today, even more women wear combat boots, and flight suits, and mechanics coveralls, and surgical scrubs...and they are justifiably proud to do so.



While women have served in the U.S. armed forces throughout history, various rules and regulations limited their roles, involvement, and advancement opportunities. Over the past thirty years, the role of women in the military has dramatically changed. Women now serve in all service branches and comprise 15% of total active duty, guard, and reserve forces. Women hold command positions at the highest level of the armed forces, and that leadership and experience is making a direct impact in the civilian sector.

Women also serve side-by-side in combat roles with their male counterparts. Since September 11, 2011, more than 240,000 women have served in Iraq and Afghanistan and more than 140 have died in these conflicts.

With so many more women in service, the number of women veterans is also rising. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (the VA) estimates their numbers will increase by over 300,000 in the next twenty years, from 1.86 million today to 2.16 million in 2036. Here in Virginia, we lead the nation with the highest percentage of women veterans. Of the nearly 730,000 veterans living in the Commonwealth, more than 100,000 or 14%, are women; that number is forecast to be over 130,000 in 2036, when women will comprise over 20% of Virginia’s veterans.

As with all veterans, these women face the challenges of balancing family life with their service and transitioning to a successful career in the civilian workplace. I am a veteran, as are many of my colleagues here at the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (VDVS). This

gives us a personal perspective in understanding that women veterans have unique needs to help them readjust to a new lifestyle, obtain vocational and educational training, and sometimes overcoming emotional trauma.

Women veterans as a group are younger than their male counterparts and more likely than male veterans to face unemployment after their service. While most women veterans feel their military experience was positive, some feel the public does not fully recognize the value of their service and contributions. At VDVS we are working to change that by ensuring our programs and services meet the needs of Virginia’s woman veterans, and by showcasing the leadership skills and talent that women veterans bring to the civilian workforce.

On June 22 and 23, VDVS, along with many community partners in the public and private sectors, hosted the 4th Virginia Woman Veterans Summit. More than 400 women veterans and active service personnel attended the summit, which featured nationally-recognized speakers on women veteran issues. Summit attendees also learned about opportunities available to women vets and shared personal experiences.

The motto of the 2017 Summit, held in Chesapeake, was “Achievement, Empowerment & Wellness: Virginia’s Women Veterans Lead the Way.” Based on its success, the 5th Virginia Women Veterans Summit is already being planned for next June in Northern Virginia.

Governor Terry McAuliffe and the Virginia General Assembly have set the goal that Virginia should be the most veteran-friendly state in America. With their full support, and in conjunction with our public and private sector partners, we are working to put special emphasis on our women veterans and to ensure that Virginia is the friendliest state in the nation for women veterans.

It is our duty to these brave and unselfish women to give them a direct line of support and to make the Commonwealth a caring, trusted and safe state where they can live and thrive.

Annie Walker is Director of Veterans Education, Training and Employment (VETE) Services, one of six directorates under the Virginia Department of Veterans Services. A former US Army Drill Sergeant, she ended her military career as the Director for the Instructor Development Course at the US Army Quartermaster School Center and School at Fort Lee.



VDVS staff at the Women’s Summit. From left to right: Alison Foster, Charlie Palumbo, Beverly Van Tull, Commissioner John Newby, and Annie Walker.

Denbigh Aviation Academy Files Flight Plan for Future Careers

By BRENDA LONG

Denbigh Aviation Academy and Newport News Public Schools are addressing a critical need by preparing a competent and qualified workforce for the aviation industry. Dr. Aaron Smith, director of the Denbigh Aviation Academy, is passionate about the program and the opportunities students have for future careers. Dr. Smith shared the information below about Denbigh Aviation Academy.



Airports across the globe have a lot in common—the hustle of passengers, planes, helicopters, and private jets coming and going. These economic ventures can stabilize or improve a local economy. All airports have a vital element in common; they rely on competent and qualified employees to keep passengers moving through the terminals and across the world. In Virginia alone, there are 67 airports working to keep people flying safely and maintaining rigorous safety standards.

The aviation and aerospace industries are already scrambling to find competent and qualified workers. It is estimated that shortages of pilots and mechanics already exceed over a half million employees. Understanding this scenario, Newport News Public Schools and the Denbigh High Aviation Academy are working to prepare students for the high-paying, high-demand jobs in the aviation industry. Located in the old passenger terminal at the Newport News-Williamsburg International Airport, the Aviation Academy was created in 1995 to encourage students to learn more about the aviation profession and to continue their pursuit of related careers.

Starting as an Army ROTC program, the Aviation Academy evolved into an award-winning STEM program. Students have the best of both worlds at the Aviation Academy. While at the airport location, students enjoy the hands-on approach and real-life work integrated into academic and elective classes. Meanwhile, students also have the opportunity to be a part of a high school and participate in school activities, sports, and student organizations. Today, nearly 350 students are enrolled in this exciting program.

Academy students can select one of four program areas: flight operations, aviation technology, aerospace engineering, and aviation security and safety. During flight operations, students first learn ground piloting in the two year courses. Upon completion of these classes, students are eligible to earn their Federal Aviation Administration Ground Certification, which is the first step in acquiring their pilot's license. In their junior and senior years, they take air traffic control and airport operations management.

The aviation technology concentration prepares students for careers in mechanical engineering. During their junior and senior year, students take courses in aviation maintenance technology, which is the foundation for the Airframe and Powerplant industry certifications.

In aerospace engineering and public safety, students take courses in digital electronics, and engineering design and aviation security and safety. Key elements of the course include Transportation Security Administration (TSA), aircraft accidents, and terror-related issues at the airport and on planes.

In keeping with the program's commitment to excellence, partnerships have been formed with the Society of Manufacturers Engineering Education Foundation, Arconic (Alcoa-Howmet) Foundation, Huntington Ingalls, National Aeronautics Space Administration, Newport News Williamsburg International Airport,



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Liberty University, ViGyan, Ft. Eustis, Langley Air Force Base and many others. These partnerships allow the Aviation Academy to keep up with trends and provide students with valuable insight on the skills needed and job opportunities available. From internships, guest speakers, and dialogues with astronauts onboard the International Space Station, students receive priceless experiences that not only enrich their resumes, but hooks them into the profession as a vested member.

The program also focuses on two other critical components: workplace readiness skills and work-based learning experiences. For example, students utilize the wind tunnel and learn how to fly an

Continued on next page

Virtual Education

By DELEGATE DICKIE BELL,
20TH HOUSE DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

As chairman of the Virtual Learning and Education Technology subcommittee under the Joint Committee to Study the Future of Public Elementary and Secondary Education in the Commonwealth, I have accepted the challenge to better educate and expand the awareness of virtual education in Virginia.

The technology available to us in the twenty first century, and the speed at which it changes and advances makes it absolutely essential that we better understand the virtual educational model. Although there are several products and a variety of vendors available in Virginia today, there is far less known about virtual learning than perhaps any other learning tool. Our objective is to make those willing to participate in our exercise more comfortable with the practical applications of virtual education.

Members of both the full committee and this subcommittee realize that many different perceptions, and more than a few misconceptions, currently exist regarding virtual education. To that end we have asked WHRO public television, the administrator for Virtual Virginia's on line learning programs, to create an opportunity for legislators and staff personnel to have the hands on experience of participating in a virtual education exercise.

We believe this will provide the experience and the knowledge needed to make informed decisions on the future of virtual education in Virginia. It is our hope that an increased awareness among decision makers in the legislature will foster a better relationship between traditional bricks and mortar education and the opportunities that instruction without walls can provide. If we are successful in this mission virtual learning in Virginia should offer many more educational opportunities to Virginia students.

The exercise, which actually enrolls participants in a virtual class that will run for three weeks, should begin in early August. Access will be on the participant's own timetable and identities will remain anonymous. No grades will be taken.

I look forward to the review that will take place at the meeting of the full committee in September. ▮



unmanned aerial vehicle. Denbigh's Aviation Academy recognizes that all students must gain post-secondary education. Whether they are receiving additional training in a military branch or working toward a two-year or four-year degree, the program sets strong expectations so that the transition is easy.

Denbigh's Aviation Academy has been recognized at the state and national levels. In the last six years, the program has been awarded over \$120,000 in private grants, and recognized by the Virginia Department of Education as a winner of the Creating Excellence Award for Secondary Business and Industry Partnerships with NASA. On a national level, the Society of Manufacturing Engineers Education Foundation awarded the Aviation Academy with the Partnership Response in Manufacturing Education (PRIME) award in 2013.

At the Aviation Academy the motto is simple: Attitude = Altitude. This often reminds a student that nothing is impossible as long as they work hard and believe in their ability to succeed. With this mindset combined with the skill sets gained at school, graduates are more than college, career and citizen-ready. They are cleared to take off in clear blue skies.

This is the Denbigh Aviation Academy. Ready for takeoff!

Dr. Brenda D. Long, Executive Director, Virginia Association for Career and Technical Education. ▮

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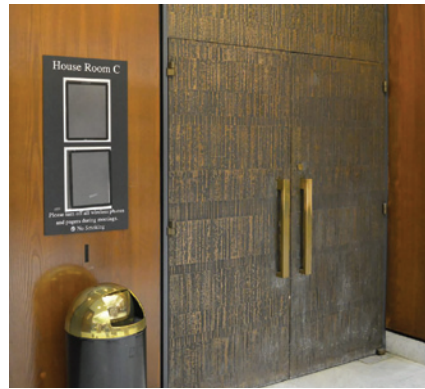
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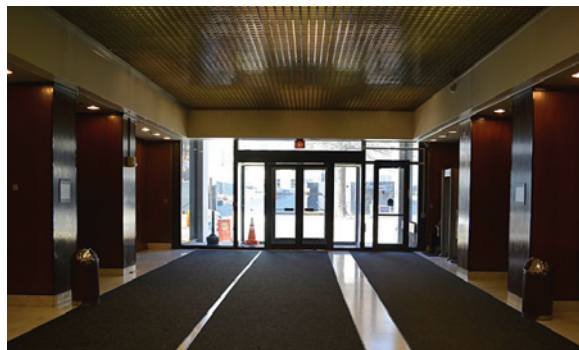
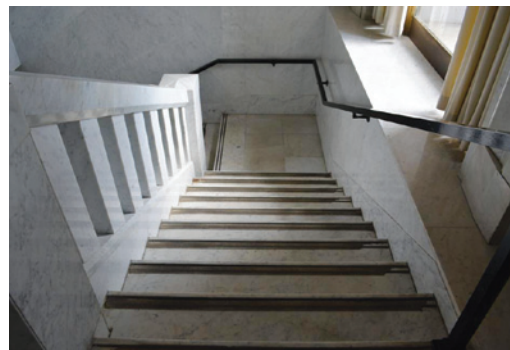
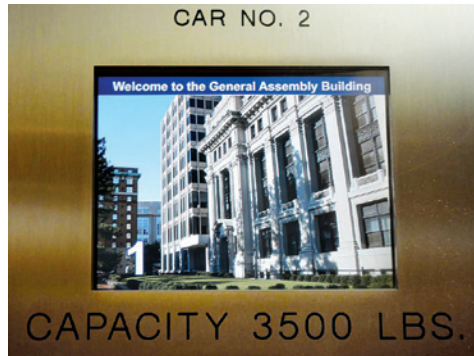
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GAB: Soon to Be Gone... But Not Forgotten

By MIKE HAZELWOOD
Legislative Aide, Delegate Keith Hodges



If Those Walls Could Talk....

By SARAH ALDERSON

If the walls of the now defunct Virginia General Assembly building could talk, what kind of tales would they tell? I began wondering about this as the structure was being emptied out and readied for demolition. I knew there were lots of interesting things that happened there over the years and plenty of secrets that would probably never be told. You know, the “What happens in the GAB, stays in the GAB.” sort of thing. But I particularly wondered if there were any ghost stories that could be shared. It had suddenly occurred to me that I had worked there over 10 years and never actually heard of any.

There are all kinds of reports of hauntings around the Capitol area, and that’s to be expected on such an historic site. Surely, I thought, there must be some that involved the GAB. I must have missed them somewhere along the way, but somebody else certainly knows.

That curiosity sent me on a mission to ask as many people as I could who have worked around the Capitol in various capacities what they might have heard over the years. I contacted a wide variety of people from senators and delegates to Capitol Police and long-time legislative staff. Even those who had worked in the building the longest, such as Delegate Kenneth Plum—the longest serving member of the House of Delegates, and Susan Schaar—Clerk of the Senate who has worked in the clerk’s office for over 40 years, had not heard of any ghost stories there.

Most people connected with Capitol Square tell me they have heard of mysterious sightings and sounds involving other buildings. Stories abound around the Capitol, the Governor’s Mansion, the Supreme Court Building, the Patrick Henry Building, Old City Hall, and on the grounds itself. In fact, one former member of the Capitol Police, Paul Hope, wrote a book about some of his experiences called “Policing the Paranormal: The Haunting of Virginia’s State Capitol Complex.” However, I have yet to find any of these incidents attached to the GAB.

On the other hand, most people who worked in the General Assembly Building knew it was a “sick building.” “Sick Building Syndrome” is a term used to describe situations in which building occupants experience acute health and comfort effects that appear to be linked to time spent in a building, but no specific illness or cause can be identified. There was plenty of asbestos, mold, plumbing and HVAC problems creating various health hazards. One former staff member I talked to had to quit her job because of severe allergies and other reactions to materials inside. She got so she couldn’t even walk into the GAB.

There were several efforts over the years to replace the building, but budget and politics kept getting in the way. The fact that it’s finally being demolished was prompted by a publicized 2012 review indicating that the 11-story General Assembly Building had problems with asbestos, faulty air flow, rotting windows, a leaking roof and a crumbling façade among other issues. It was a health hazard not only for everyone working there, but also the public.

The Capitol Studios, where I often worked, were in the basement of the building. There were often strange sounds emanating throughout the office, much of which were workers in the walls above, elevators arriving and leaving the basement, people working out on the street, noisy vehicles going by and that kind of thing. We never thought of them as anything paranormal.

The atmosphere was also dim and dank, and it occasionally flooded if it rained hard enough or a large amount of snow around the building began to melt. Dehumidifiers and fans were a regular part of our daily studio set ups.

When I first started working there, stalactites were prominent



throughout the main studio hanging from the maze of pipes above our heads. Occasionally, some of them would drip on us. We didn’t know what kind of substance or substances they were made of, and in a way, we didn’t want to know. A sign warning of asbestos was posted in our office area, and strange smells emanated from the back storage room that probably included black mold.

One of my former co-workers, Billy Lamberta, reminded me of the strange old gym with the discarded CPR mannequins that was down in the sub-basement below us. He said he probably took a few years off his life wandering down there with the asbestos and mold. I always heard how creepy it was, but never got around to having someone take me down there, and I was never adventurous enough to go search it out for myself.

These sorts of things could be disconcerting and maybe even a little scary, but none of us thought of them as being otherworldly.

The press room for various print, radio and television journalists who covered the Capitol on a regular basis was also in the basement, and at one time it was bustling with activity during sessions.

Bob Lewis, media relations manager and former political reporter for The Associated Press, mentioned that even during busy sessions he heard people say the affectionately titled “dungeon” around the bill room could be particularly spooky.

As for actual hauntings, he added, “I used to stay in that building till the wee hours during budget conference time, and sometimes would definitely get the creeps up on the 9th and 10th floors when conferees had left, and I was still filing stories from my laptop. I never saw or experienced anything like a poltergeist or spirit entity. It was just my tired brain and active imagination.”

When asked about possible ghosts, media consultant/instructor and former reporter/anchor, Bill Oglesby, replied, “No, just some pretty pale legislators.” Columnist and feature writer for the Richmond Times-Dispatch, Bill Lohmann, hadn’t heard of any, but decided to ask his friend and senior photographer for the Richmond Times-Dispatch, Bob Brown. Brown reported, “Lots of skeletons in lots of closets, but not aware of any ghosts.”

Senator Jennifer McClellan speculated that ghost stories most often abound where there have been battles, places where people have died or where they had a strong emotional connection. The General Assembly Building apparently didn’t fit the bill for any of those qualifications.

Even though those walls may not have talked or housed ghosts, they did witness plenty of citizens and lobbyists arguing with lawmakers and waging battles over bills. And there were plenty of deaths as a result—of potential legislation. Many can claim battle scars from fighting for or against various bills, and legislators can tell you about the horrors of watching their bills die in committee. Dead bills don’t tell tales, make noises or walk the halls, and they’re often forgotten.

Delegate Plum responded with his own theory about the lack of hauntings, “The building was filled with asbestos. Probably killed off or scared off the ghosts. As you may already know, the building housed the Life of Virginia life insurance company. Maybe they took their ghosts with them.”

News Director for 88.9 WCVE Public Radio, Craig Carper, had yet another take on why there are ghosts reported in other buildings nearby, but not in the GAB. “I didn’t want to spend any time there in life. I’m sure no-one wants to be there in the afterlife. The Capitol and the Mansion are much cooler.”

One way or another, and for better or for worse, everything that happened over the years in the old General Assembly Building is part of the Commonwealth’s history.

As the new General Assembly Building is constructed, Capitol officials will be striving to incorporate some of the old materials and architectural elements. They are particularly hoping to preserve the historic façade that was part of what was originally a bank constructed in 1912. It’s the oldest of the four structures built through 1965 and then combined in 1976 to house the General Assembly and various legislative agencies.

See *If These Walls Could Talk....*, continued on page 15

General Assembly Building Fence to Impact Pedestrian, Vehicle Traffic through 2021

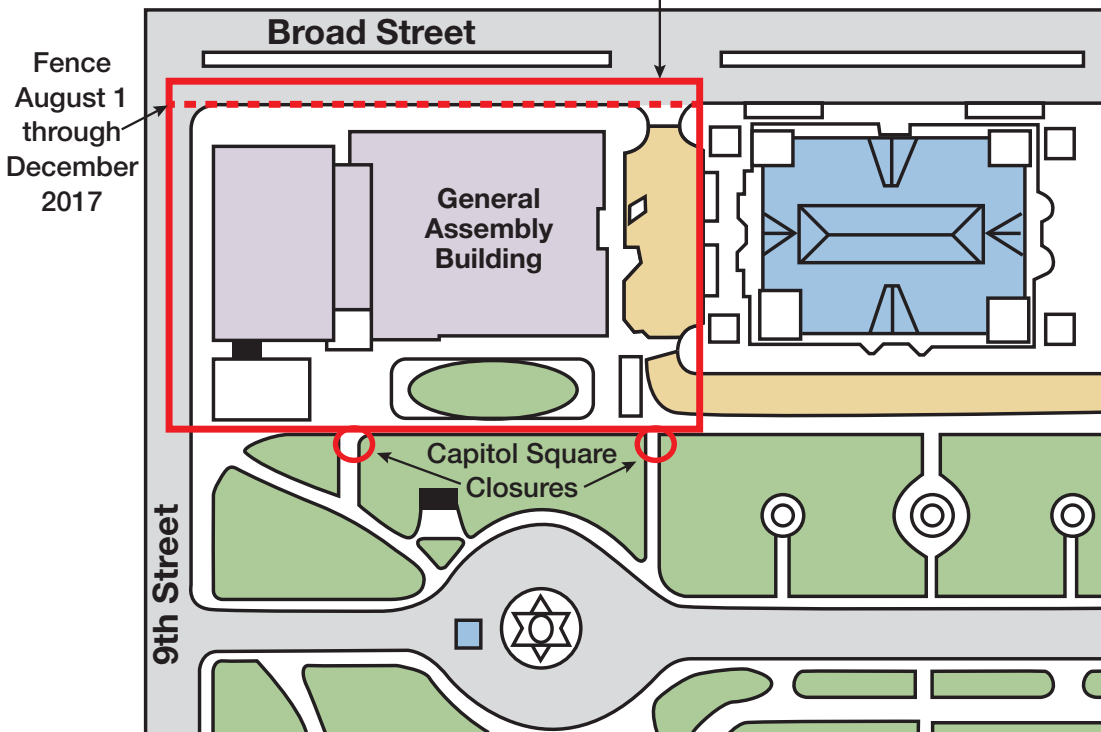
Fence will be erected on August 1

RICHMOND, VA – The Department of General Services (DGS) announced today that a temporary fence will be erected around the General Assembly Building on August 1 so the Commonwealth can begin abatement and demolition of the building then construction of a new facility.

The fencing will have the following impacts:

- From August 1 through the end of the year, the sidewalk along the south side of Broad Street will close from 9th Street to 10th Street. Beginning in December, the southernmost lane of eastbound Broad Street also will close and will remain closed through 2021.
- Beginning August 1, the east lane and sidewalk of 9th Street will close from the Capitol Square fence to Broad Street and remain closed through 2021.
- Beginning August 1, two northwest entrances to Capitol Square will be inaccessible and remain closed through 2021.

Fence beginning December 2017



- Beginning August 1, 10th Street will close to traffic. Those state employees who park along 11th Street near the Patrick Henry Building will enter and exit at that street. [V]

Available in January

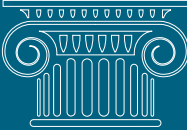
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“Sorensen has been a very important part of my political life. One of the greatest things I brought out of the program was the ability to compromise. Compromise is not losing. Compromise is coming out with the best that you can where everybody wins something. I think the Sorensen Institute ingrains that in their graduates. And for those who go on to elected office, that is a very valuable asset.”

State Senator John Cosgrove

“The Sorensen Institute is an invaluable investment in yourself for any person who has what it takes to be a public servant. What I expected to be just another leadership program instead became a foundation of principles that will continue to guide me as I strive to be the best leader for the people I serve. As a graduate of the Political Leaders Program, I still benefit from the strong relationships with my classmates, the meaningful experiences I had during the program, and memories that will last a lifetime.”

Delegate Lashrecse Aird



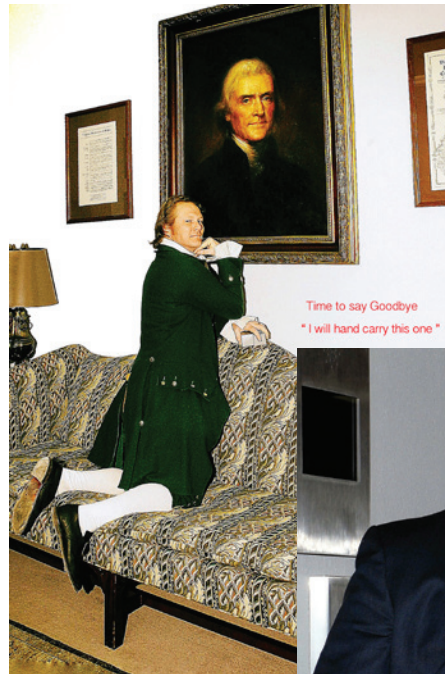
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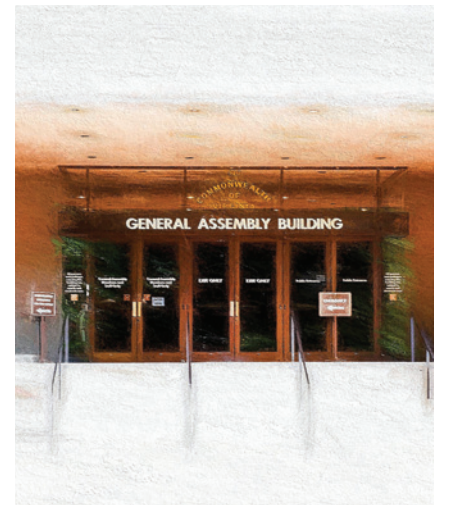
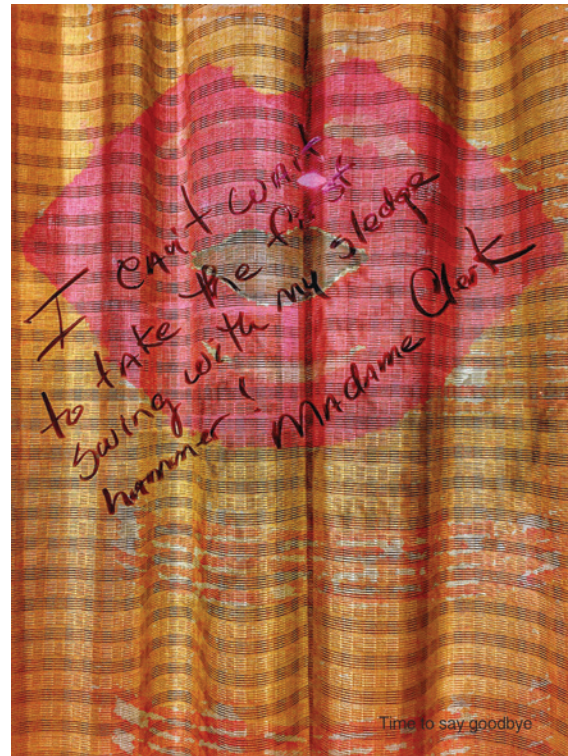
If These Walls Could Talk... from page 13

Since some parts of the original buildings will be incorporated into the new building, one could imagine that those walls might still be able to talk in the future. And, there will certainly be new stories. Whether any of the old walls, skeletons in the closets, or dead bills decide to start telling tales, only time will tell.

Sarah Alderson is an award-winning freelance writer who also works in the General Assembly broadcast control rooms during sessions and the Capitol Studio throughout the year. She can be reached at aldersonproductions@gmail.com [V]



THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF Wanda Judd





Edgar Herbert “Herb” Thompson age 67, of Mechanicsville, transitioned into Heaven on Monday, July 3, 2017. He is survived by his wife, of 38 years, Dian Thompson; and niece, Christine Merchant (David). He proudly served his country in the U.S. Air Force. Herb was a Professor Emeritus of Education at Emory & Henry College, Emory, Va. He was a widely published poet, essayist and literary critic.

Herb was a frequent contributor to this magazine, and each article stimulated readers. Herb was my friend.

David L. Bailey, *Publisher*

The Past Still Matters

By EDGAR H. THOMPSON

It is interesting how we remember the past. I was going through notebooks I keep of on-going correspondence and publications, and I came across a note that the founding editor for *The Clinch Mountain Review* had written me. He told me the poet-laureate of Virginia, who had also published in that journal, told him she liked my poem “A Thousand Dollars’ Worth of Coal.” That poem was about my grandmother, who was born in Upshur County, West Virginia. Here is the poem:

A Thousand Dollars’ Worth of Coal

My grandmother’s one claim to wealth
was a deed to a thousand dollars’ worth of coal,
and when she needed a loan or
to prove her worth,
she would pull that paper out
and show it to people.
It made her feel
vested.

She never needed it.
She never sold it.
She died.
To the degree that it had any value
didn’t matter.
The deed disappeared into the family lore.
Any money probably found its way
into the bank account of an operator
who had already mined it.

Value and worth
as a human being?
Not much
when compared to coal.

How we remember the past is affected by what is happening in the present, and sometimes the filters that we use are not clear and pure. We remember things imperfectly, and had I remembered that the poet laureate of Virginia liked one of my poems, this remembrance might have helped me at moments when I was down, had a bad day, or had something I had written rejected.

Why are we uncertain or unclear about what we remember? A part of the answer to this question has to do with our history and where we are from, of course. In my case, I was born in West Virginia, so in some people’s eyes I might be more Yankee than Southern, but I still have Southern lineage. I am related to Fauquiers and Stonewall Jackson on

Herb was the type of person who could fill up a room with his personality and passion. He was always very mindful about his comments but had a viewpoint on most issues that cut to the point. One thing he constantly preached about was the need to let others know about what was happening in Teacher Education. He wanted a quality teacher for all classrooms, however, he especially want quality teachers for the small and rural towns and cities of Southwest Virginia. Herb knew if those children wanted to improve their lives they need a solid education. He spent a major portion of his life making a contribution. My heart is heavy but I know that he is getting to have that conversation he has been waiting all of his life to have..... God Speed Herb Thompson.

John Blackwell

*Coordinator of Instructional Technology and Assessment,
Virginia State University • President of Virginia Association
of Colleges for Teacher Education (VACTE) • One Voice for
Teacher Education*

I’ve met few people more passionate about the field of education, particularly as it pertained to children in poverty. He leaves a legacy that pushed us towards a great pursuit of equality of our schools, which gives way to knowledge and ideals of our great state of Virginia.

Beth Ackerman

*Professor • Chair of Special Education, Liberty University
Past President of Virginia Association of Colleges for
Teacher Education (VACTE)*

Herb Thompson was a man who was passionate about life and committed to his work as a teacher educator. His voice was always full of concern for his fellow teacher educators and for his students. Herb’s passion and voice will be sorely missed by all of us who knew and admired him.

Jim Alouf

Professor of Education, Sweet Briar College

both sides of the family. I am also related to Chester A. Arthur, who was one of our past Presidents. When you come from a state that was born out of the civil war, you may be touched by the past in ways in which you are not consciously aware.

I have a copy of a newspaper article from my hometown, Buckhannon, WV. It was published in *The Republican Delta*. Our family would never have subscribed to *The Democratic Record*—the thought of which makes me chuckle now. Anyhow, there is a picture

A Compressed World

By EDGAR H. THOMPSON

We text. We twitter. Even those of us who luxuriate in words need compression. A few years ago I reread a favorite book of mine, *Coming into the Country* by John McPhee in preparation for a paper I was writing for delivery at a conference. When I first read this book, nearly 35 years ago, I was amazed that McPhee was able to give me a sense of what it was like to be in Alaska in only 400 pages, which I thought was an incredible feat. When I finished my recent rereading, I thought he could have cut the length of the book by about 170 pages and still accomplished his goals. What happened to my original perception? Like all of us, I didn’t need or want as much elaboration as I used to need.

It is not that we don’t want art. It is not that we don’t want quality and precision in language used in what we read, listen, see, or experience. We are busy; we multi-task. We want language created by others to be presented in a more compressed manner. To this end, in my mind poetry can accomplish this goal; however, it is often overlooked as an artistic tool that can achieve these goals because people have so many misconceptions about poetry. For instance, many people believe rhyme and a perceived cadence or rhythms are required for word structures that we call poetry. An example:

Alone, alone, all all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.”

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “Rime of the Ancient Mariner”

Some very good poetry does use these tools, but poetry is not only about rhyme and cadence. Poetry is about compression. It is like what Hemingway said, the actual words used should suggest as much about what is not there as what is.

Some people don’t like free verse. Free verse doesn’t not mean that rhyme and rhythm or cadence are unimportant. Rather, instead of putting words into a preconceived form, rhyme, or rhythm structure, the actual form and rhythm—and maybe rhyme—created is guided by the actual meaning of the words, the meanings that are created by the juxtaposition of certain words with others, all of which is guided by the overall message the writer is trying to communicate. The words find their own natural order or pattern. What the writer is trying to do is to get readers to actually read and understand the words the way the writer sees them, to create a replication. To the degree that the reader’s replication is accurate or congruent with what the writer intended, great for the writer. However, even if that match is not perfect, an elaboration of where the reader was is caused by the words the writer put down on paper, which is also a success. The idea here is to go beyond where we were, where we are, to a new place or understanding. A buddy of mine who was a retired actor, director, and producer did not like the whole notion of free verse and blew it off as not being poetry. However, when I gave him the explanation I just presented above, he changed his mind. I taught him something he had not considered, and if I remember, he even published some free verse after that.

So now what? What I propose is that instead of writing essays or

in this particular issue, in 1950. I was born in 1949, and I am between six months and a year old, and I am sitting on the lap of my great-grandmother Miles. She was 90. My cousin Emma, who was four, was also in the picture. When I used to talk about history instruction with students, I taught each semester, I asked them to look carefully at this photograph. Then I asked them who was President of the United States when my great-grandmother was born. They said consistently they didn’t know, but then they looked at the date and thought about my great grandmother’s age, and would come up with 1860. They quickly realized that Abraham Lincoln was president when she was born. I also pointed out that she would have been around five years old when Lincoln was assassinated, so she would have known something important was happening by the reactions of adults around her at this

stories about the world, maybe we need to write a series of poems on topics of interest or concern and publish them in what I will call Chaplets, small booklets about eight pages long. Ted Badger, who ran Bear House Press—he published my four poetry chapbooks—encouraged writers several years ago to publish very short collections about eight pages long. When he made this suggestion, it didn’t make sense to me. Now, it does. You can write on eight different topics or treat one topic from eight different perspectives. Such an approach would accomplish what I have suggested in this piece, short artistic commentaries or expressions on topics of interest or need, practically or muse-driven.

Examples

What follows are four pieces I recently drafted. They are not finished. The first reflects my thinking about the challenges of being retired and still having no control over my time. The second one tries to capture what it is like waiting for the muse to strike or for a sense of direction to occur when none has—regardless of age. The third one is a retelling of a poignant story my wife told me that made me stop and think about what I have to be thankful for. The last one is about the unexpected challenges of aging. None of these may interest you at all, but one or two might give you something to think about. Since reading all four takes so little time, what do you lose by taking a few moments to read them?

Whittlin’

When I was a kid I used to sit in front of Critchfield’s
Esso and whittle away, shards of wood flying
through the air, sometimes with words said,

other times not, my attention on
nothing but making smooth, clean gouges
in wood, the strips flying clear, no splinters.

I thought being retired meant
we could do what we wanted to do.
My friend Walt told me so.

Why, we could go to Death Valley
and work as caretakers at Scotty’s
Castle for three months, but no we can’t.

Why not? No time! No time?
If we can’t at this point do what
we want to do, what else is there?

It is time to whittle down
our schedules so we are flying
clean, no words, no splinters.

Simplicity. No Splinters. Simplicity.
Time. Simplicity. No words.
Simplicity.

Time.

See *A Compressed World*, continued on page 20

time. When you consider degrees of separation, to think I was sitting on the lap of someone who was alive when Lincoln was alive blows me away.

I didn’t realize something else until a former student, who is a history buff, pointed this out to me a few years ago. Since she never really left Upshur County West Virginia, she was actually born in Buckhannon, Virginia, because West Virginia didn’t become a state until 1963. She was probably aware of the celebrations when that happened. Good heavens! One picture, such connections, such history. Where you come from, who your family was and is, what your family did and does for a living, how you were or are connected to your community are all important social issues. Even though we don’t talk about such things as much as they used to, we need to. [E]

Nexus

A boy
stands in the middle
of a road,
the land flat
in all directions.

“What to do?”
“Where to go?”
he thinks,
as a gentle wind blows,
the sunlight yellow
and warm.

Does he wait for Godot?
Does he wait for Sam Shepherd?
Does he wait for August Wilson?
Does he let his mind go blank?
Does he use his imagination
to create a world
that will take him
enticing places?

He stands
and
waits.

Angel

A girl
lived in a house
across the road.
She was
ignored through school, nerdish.

While home from college
in Sunday School, she shared a sacrifice
she had made, and
the teacher said, “That was wonderful, and
that was what you should have done!”

The girl repeated the story over
and over again for the next hour,
clearly hoping to get the same praise and
attention she had just received.

And we think we are hurting,
not getting what we deserve or want.

Crumbling

I still want to get up
and move and do what I have
always done, but the seasons, the weather,
“Arthur,” and degenerating bones
keep me from doing so with ease.

As I struggle with this part
of my life, I must say, in so
many ways it is the best—no
major responsibilities to worry about—and
the worst—no drive or energy
to plot new maps and trajectories
on life’s speedy itinerary.

Contradictions abound, as my bones
rub, lock, and crumble into the future.



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On a more profound level, I was recently in a book store reading and found a poem by Stephen Dunn in issue Number 219 of *The Paris Review* that said succinctly in just shy of 200 words more than anything I have heard from the talking heads on the various political commentary shows in the last six months. I can’t share the whole poem, but I will share a small portion that reveals what Dunn claims is the challenge of recording history at this moment in time, because the imperfections of memory would combine with the slipperiness of documentation to produce versions only people who need not be persuaded could agree with.

Hospital and Healthcare Association

By JOAN WILLIAMSON, RN, MN, CPHQ, CPPS • VIRGINIA PATIENT SAFETY ORGANIZATION DIRECTOR • VIRGINIA HOSPITAL & HEALTHCARE ASSOCIATION

I’d like you to think back to your childhood for a moment, if you would. If you’re like me, you probably had a parent who stressed the importance of a balanced breakfast each morning to get you off to a good start for the day. A similar principle applies in the world of neonatal and perinatal care – in short, giving babies a healthy start is an important factor in influencing future success and productivity throughout a person’s life.



Getting mothers and babies the health care services they need to make a strong start together is a key focus for members of Virginia’s health care community engaged in perinatal, neonatal, and pediatric care. While that never ends, Virginia has achieved some encouraging results. For example, data released at the end of 2016 showed the Commonwealth had achieved the lowest early elective delivery (EED) rate in the nation. In recent years, Virginia lowered its EED rate from 8 percent to 1.3 percent, ranking the Commonwealth first in the nation in reducing EEDs, according to federal Hospital Compare data. Virginia previously had been ranked 24th in the nation on EED rate based on Hospital Compare data released in 2014. Reducing EEDs is important because research has shown that babies carried to full term (after 39 weeks of gestational age) can improve birth outcomes and have lasting positive effects on lifelong health. Previously, conventional wisdom held that babies born between 37 and 39 weeks were generally as healthy as those carried to full term. Alongside that came a trend toward early elective deliveries. It is now known that babies are still developing in the final weeks of gestation and that early deliveries which are not medically necessary should be avoided. Virginia’s community hospitals and health systems, the Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association’s (VHHA) Center for Healthcare Excellence, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the Medical Society of Virginia (MSV), the March of Dimes (MOD), and other health care providers and stakeholders have worked in recent years to reduce EEDs.

In addition to the focus on EEDs, health care providers in this arena are also working to decrease primary, normal presentation cesarean births, promote safe sleep environments, and a range of other strategies to prevent prematurity and maternal and infant morbidity and mortality.

Yet another challenge providers are confronting is the effect the ongoing opioid crisis is having on mothers and babies. In Virginia, opioid-related fatalities have become the leading cause of accidental deaths, overtaking car crashes to earn that ignominious distinction. And while we often associate this health crisis with the adult population, it is also impacting very young patients. Many babies born to mothers with an opioid addiction can experience withdrawal symptoms due to a drug exposure

Continued from previous page

Wow! I think this is a perceptive observation. Personally, I would rather read a short poem saying this kind of thing than listening to hours of babbling from television commentators and personalities.

Language has power. We all still value it, but time is at a premium, and we don’t want our time wasted. Finding ways to make each word count as it tries to communicate an idea, a thought, a feeling, a whim is important to all of us. Try poetry. You might be surprised at what you can do.📖

in the womb. This condition is called neonatal abstinence syndrome, or NAS. Babies born with NAS can be prone to involuntary behaviors atypical in infancy such as reduced quality and length of sleep following a feeding; increased muscle tone, tremors, and convulsions; respiratory-related issues such as sweating, frequent yawning, and sneezing; and gastrointestinal issues such as excessive sucking, poor feeding, vomiting, and loose stools. Often, these symptoms are relatively short-lived. However, some research suggests that this condition could have longer lasting effects on children’s development.

And unfortunately, the prevalence of NAS is growing. Data shows the number of infants diagnosed with NAS quadrupled from 2012-2016. Last year, more than 770 Virginia newborns, out of nearly 96,000, were diagnosed with NAS. In other words, 1 percent of Virginia babies born in 2016 exhibited NAS symptoms.

In an effort to combat this public health challenge, members of Virginia’s hospital community have joined with VHHA, MOD, and ACOG to launch the Virginia Neonatal Perinatal Collaborative (VNPC) to focus on improving birth health for mothers and babies in the Commonwealth. VNPC is initially prioritizing improvements in care for pregnant women diagnosed with substance use disorders and infants impacted by NAS. That work is being supported by the Virginia General Assembly. During the 2017 legislative session, Delegate Chris Stolle, an obstetrician-gynecologist from Virginia Beach, successfully patroned House Joint Resolution 745 to raise awareness for efforts to improve birth health by designating the first week of July as Substance-Exposed Infant Awareness Week in the Commonwealth of Virginia. That resolution was part of a package of legislation introduced to address Virginia’s opioid crisis. And Senator Siobhan Dunnivant, an obstetrician-gynecologist from Henrico County, helped secure in the new fiscal year state budget cycle that began July 1 funding to support the establishment of VNPC.

The VNPC was formally launched at a State Capitol news conference in late July featuring representatives from Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital, Children’s Hospital of Richmond at VCU, HCA Virginia Health System, Riverside Health System, University of Virginia Health System and UVA Children’s Hospital, and VCU Health System. These are just a few of the stakeholders engaged with the Virginia Neonatal Perinatal Collaborative, which exists to ensure that every mother has the best possible perinatal care, and every infant cared for in Virginia has the best possible start to life. We believe in an evidence-based, data-driven collaborative process that involves care providers for women, infants, and families, as well as state and local leaders. We believe that working together now will create a stronger, healthier Virginia in the future.📖

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Tazewell County Makes Strides to Improve Healthcare Outcomes

By LYDIA FREEMAN

In Tazewell County, poor healthcare outcomes have led to action from the Board of Supervisors.

“Several years ago Tazewell County ranked 131 out of 133 which was very poor,” said Eric Young, Tazewell County Attorney. “Since then, the Board of Supervisors and our industrial development authority have taken opportunities to try and address that problem.”

The Virginia County Health Rankings lists counties by their health outcomes. Counties ranked toward the top have residents with better length and quality of life. Counties listed lower are experiencing the opposite.

According to the County Health Rankings, Tazewell County has improved health outcomes: the county currently ranks at 119, in comparison to the 2015 ranking of 131. Much of this rise can be credited to the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors’ recognition of the poor healthcare outcomes, and the work that has been done to expand residents’ access to healthcare.

Four major initiatives have been employed to cause this dramatic increase in residents health: utilizing the Virginia Coalfield and Energy Coalition, the creation of a Veterans Affairs clinic, recruiting Trina Health to work with diabetic patients, and partnering with Virginia Tech faculty to research causes of cancer in Tazewell County.

One avenue that the Board has taken to provide residents with quality healthcare is a partnership with the VCEDA (Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority). VCEDA is a regional economic development organization created by Virginia’s General Assembly in 1988 to enhance and diversify the economic base.

“If we have employees that are high wage and highly trained, it benefits our economy,” explained Eric Young.

The Board has also made use of capital resources to promote new healthcare resources. Tazewell County had two buildings that were vacated: a former health department building in Tazewell and a school building in Falls Mills.

“We took the old healthcare building and sold it to Southwest Virginia Community Health Systems at a discount like a grant,” explained Young. “They provide healthcare to underinsured and uninsured on a sliding scale based on income. We feel like that is a really good project.”

The school was donated to the Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens (AASC) in Cedar Bluff in order to build an adult daycare center. The new center, when complete, will provide adult daycare services, nutrition programs for the community, care coordination and the services available through AASC’s Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE).

“For example, if your dad can’t take care of himself and might wander off and get lost, you can take him there while you go to work,” explained Young. “This is fantastic for a lot of people. They’ll check his blood pressure and temperature and make sure he takes his medicine or ensure. That’s a very big health benefit to the elderly.”

This June, Governor Terry McAuliffe recommended more than \$500,000 be given in an Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grant for this daycare center.

Other new health facilities include the Trina Health Center in Pounding Mill, which provides an innovative treatment for



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diabetes, and the Community Based Outreach Clinic for Veterans in Tazewell.

“We worked in 2016 with Carilion and the State Department of Veterans Affairs to establish a VA Clinic,” said Young. “We have a very high population of veterans, and previously they’d have to drive to Salem or Beckley. Now they can get treatment here. This is huge boost.”

Another concern that the Board worked to address were cancer rates in Tazewell County.

Susan Marmagas, faculty at Virginia Tech, worked closely on this research. She said that while it was difficult to use the data on cancer rates to make strong conclusions, they did determine



that cancer was likely caused by a combination of lifestyle and environmental factors, like radon.

“Radon is a naturally occurring gas that comes from the ground where there are uranium deposits,” explained Marmagas. “Some homes may have high levels of radon, some may not.”

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer next to smoking.

“If you put smokers in homes with radon your lung cancer risk is significant,” continued Marmagas. “Tazewell sits on a radon belt. If you look at a radon map there’s a red belt that runs through Tazewell County.”

In Tazewell County few people know about the risks of radon. Marmagas and other researchers worked to educate the community on radon. They also conducted a random sampling of homes and found that over 50% had radon levels above the recommended level. Others were significantly above.

If there is radon in a home, that home can be mitigated to reduce the radon present. But radon mitigation is expensive, and the Virginia Tech team recognized the cost would be a barrier for Tazewell County families. Therefore, funds were raised to help cover the cost of mitigation in homes that contained high levels of radon.

The work in Tazewell County continues as the Board continues to seek partnerships that will improve the health of residents.

“We’ve had a healthcare issue in Tazewell County, and we’re doing everything we can to address those things as far as facilities and treatments and things like that go,” said Mike Thompson, the economic development director. “Whenever we hear of anything that needs our support, we’re always willing to help in any way we possibly can. We’ll continue to do that in the future in hopes that we’ll see the health issues in the county improve.”

Lydia Freeman is a teacher at KIPP ENC Public Schools in Gaston, North Carolina where she pushes sixth graders to think deeply and engage with historical, social and political spheres while practicing reading and writing. She writes often, engages deeply in conversation with friends, and strives to live purposefully in her community.

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Student Activism in Virginia: *From Women’s Rights to the Debt Owed to Slaves*

By ANDREA Y. SIMPSON AND RENA X. XIAO

Since the 2016 presidential election, a wave of activism is sweeping the country and university campuses. Rather than protesting a war or free speech, as students did in the 1960s, today’s college students are mobilizing around reproductive rights, tuition costs, civil rights for minorities and the LGBTQ community, and immigration restrictions. Another issue is the failure of universities to acknowledge their debt to slaves and their complicity in that shameful institution. So, while students in the 1960s protested broad issues that affected their futures, students today are concerned with wide-scale discrimination and equality as well as issues close to home such as tuition.

According to a nationwide study commissioned by The Panetta Institute for Public Policy, over half of the college students surveyed believe that the country is headed in the wrong direction. Almost seven out of ten believe that America is on the decline. Fifty-eight percent believe that the problems facing their generation are more national in scope than international. Findings from the University of California Los Angeles annual Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey indicated that interest in political and civic engagement among first-year students in the United States is at an all-time high since the survey began 50 years ago. An estimated one in ten incoming first-year students is expected to participate in some form of rally or protest during their years in college.

One of the hot-button issues in Virginia and the nation is women’s reproductive rights—specifically the right to terminate pregnancies. Many Virginian high schools and colleges have active Planned Parenthood Generation Action chapters on campus. Planned Parenthood Generation Action is a network of young activists advocating for reproductive freedom and the right to choose. There are currently 11 chapters across Virginian high schools and college campuses. Each campus chapter works to mobilize members through running events, rallies and campaigns that provide education about sexual health and awareness.

In February 2016, students from George Mason University confronted presidential candidate and Ohio Governor John Kasich about signing a bill defunding Planned Parenthood in his home state. When a pro-life group appeared on the campus of Virginia Commonwealth University in the fall of 2016 with graphic posters of aborted fetuses, student staged a pro-choice counter-protest. At the University of Richmond, students, faculty, and staff turned out for a small demonstration regarding a myriad of concerns regarding federal funding for the environment, Planned Parenthood, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Tied to the issue of accessibility of women’s health issues are university responses to incidents of sexual assault. The United States Office for Civil Rights, (OCR), targeted the following Virginia schools for violation of Title IX of the Civil Rights Act: The College of William and Mary, University of Virginia, University of Richmond, George Mason University, James Madison University, and Washington and Lee. Title IX states that institutions may not deny any student the ability to participate fully in educational and other opportunities on the basis of sex. If institutions’ mishandle sexual assault cases, then the resulting psychological trauma impairs



students’ ability to function. The Office of Civil Rights opens cases as they arise, and clear the institution when they resolve all of the cases. We found accounts of student protests around the investigation of and responses to sexual assault at most of these universities except Washington and Lee.

Protest action helped to bring about reforms. To offer an alternative to university adjudication of sexual assault, the state of Virginia is exploring the establishment of a regional investigative agency that would handle campus cases. George Mason established a Task Force on Sexual Assault and Interpersonal Violence in 2014, which resulted in several reforms to the process, including the hiring of a full-time Title IX Coordinator. The University of Richmond plans to create a Center for Sexual Assault Prevention and Response along with a full-time coordinator.

Students are forming coalitions across university campuses. According to their Facebook page, The Virginia Student Power Network “is a growing multi-issue grassroots network of progressive and radical young organizers and activists from universities across Virginia.” The University of Virginia is part of this network through UVA Students United. Other groups who are part of the system are the Virginia Student Environmental Coalition, Old Dominion Student Power, and Old Dominion Democrats. Participating organizations address issues ranging from tuition abatements to gender equity.

At the University of Virginia, President Theresa Sullivan established a Commission on Slavery to explore the history of slavery at the university and build legacies to the slaves who helped build the institution. Commission institutional members include the College of William and Mary, Georgetown University, Hampton University, Sweet Briar College, University of the South, Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia Military Institute and Virginia Tech. In 2015, hundreds of students staged a sit-in at Georgetown University near President John J. DeGioia’s office protesting the hostile racial climate on campus. Students felt it was the university’s ties to slavery that poisoned the atmosphere. Slaves built Georgetown, and Jesuit priests sold 272 slaves to Maryland and Louisiana plantations to pay off debt.

Mobilizing students in the 1960s was a “ground game” utilizing face-to-face solicitation of support, distribution of flyers, and coordinating meetings. The tools of activists in the 21st century are accessible technology and social media. Information is now rapidly shared through online platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. Helped by viral hashtag campaigns such as #icantbreathe and #handsupdontshoot, the Black Lives Matter movement reached out to any student that has access to the internet. Technology has changed campus activism to allow greater connectivity and faster spread of information. Students need only turn on their smartphone or laptop for information on the latest developments and planned protest activities. We will likely see more student activism in the coming years. Such activism indicates a growing awareness of, and interest in, political and civic life, which is healthy for democracy.

Andrea Y. Simpson is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Richmond and Rena X. Xiao is a rising sophomore.

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Bluefield College Takes Action to Ease Student Load Debt

You’ve seen the numbers; you’ve heard the reports: Americans are more burdened by student loan debt than ever before. In fact, seven out of 10 college students have accrued debt at an average of more than \$30,000 by graduation for a total of more than \$1.4 trillion nationwide.

In Virginia, six out of 10 college students graduate with debt, owing an average of about \$28,000 each. More than one million Virginia residents owe a combined \$30 billion in college loans. It’s no wonder that amidst those harsh realities student debt has emerged as a prominent political issue, discussed often a year ago on the national scene by presidential candidates and the point of numerous bills introduced in the recent Virginia legislative session. In fact, Virginia lawmakers proposed nine student loan bills designed to provide relief and to protect students from overwhelming debt loads. All nine bills failed.

With the debt numbers climbing and no immediate relief in sight, Bluefield College, a private Christian liberal arts college in southwest Virginia is taking its own action to ease the debt burden for college graduates. Bluefield is taking a more generous approach to the awarding of its financial aid and offering a unique half-price tuition program to students who can least afford higher education.

“The national discourse on higher education has been centered on concerns over the rising level of student debt, the rising costs of education, and whether the average American family can afford a college education,” said Bluefield College president Dr. David Olive. “So we’re responding with ways to help those who are desperately in need of an education to better their lives, but have little means to obtain their dreams.”

For example, two years ago Bluefield launched a Pathways half-price tuition plan to “provide a ‘pathway’ to quality higher education for students from the lowest socio-economic level,” said Dr. Olive. The plan in essence cut tuition in half for students who qualify for the federal Pell grant and live at home within 45 miles of the school. It also allowed these students to attend Bluefield with little to no direct out-of-pocket impact on their families.

“Due to stagnate and in some cases declining family income, students and their families from our region are struggling to afford a college education,” said Dr. Olive, “but through the Pathways initiative we are doing all that we can to remain accessible to the students who can least afford the expense of a college education.”

Thanks to Pathways, students in the program are projected to graduate with much less debt than the average college student. For example, students who qualify for the maximum Pell award and live in Virginia and qualify for the state’s Tuition Assistance Grant could graduate with as little as \$20,000 in debt, which is much lower than the \$28,000 average for Virginia college graduates and the more than \$30,000 national average.

“Bluefield College recognizes there are families that desire a college education for their sons and daughters, yet they struggle to meet the financial obstacles,” said Dr. Olive. “We want to make our quality higher education more affordable and accessible to those families and students. I can’t imagine a better way to live out our Christian mission in serving the ‘least of these’ who live in our surrounding communities.”

In addition, Bluefield is making an intentional effort to secure more institutional aid for its students and to award more financial aid dollars to an even greater number of students. In fact, 98 percent of Bluefield College students receive some form of financial aid, and the college awards an average of \$12,000—more than half its annual tuition cost—to its students. The result of all these efforts: a college nationally recognized for its value and affordability and an average student debt load significantly lower than that of the average Virginia college graduate. At Bluefield, students overall are leaving with just more than an average of \$22,000 in debt, compared to the \$28,000 average for Virginia college graduates.

“As legislators, we have made many efforts to make higher education more accessible at our state institutions,” said Will Morefield, a member of the Virginia House of Delegates, representing the 3rd

district in southwest Virginia. “It’s exciting to see a private institution doing the same, because education is the key to our success. We’re seeing a mass exodus of our young people in this area, and (Bluefield College) gives them the opportunity to get a quality education from a traditional university right here at home.”

And Morefield is not the only one recognizing Bluefield’s efforts. The college was just recently named among the top 50 Christian colleges in America for graduating students with low debt burden by Christian Universities Online, among the most affordable online colleges in America by College Choice, and among the nation’s best values by *The Economist* magazine. And value and affordability are not the school’s only distinctions as this past fall *U.S. News and World Report* listed Bluefield among its Top 50 Colleges in the South, the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) ranked Bluefield graduates among the highest earners in the state in its Wages Report for the Virginia Longitudinal Data System, *Virginia Living* magazine named Bluefield one of the top colleges in Virginia, and the American Council of Trustees and Alumni designated Bluefield as one of just 22 colleges nationwide to receive an “A” rating for quality core curriculum.


“Perhaps more than ever before, education is key to enabling upward mobility in the workforce and producing an informed and engaged citizen,” said Dr. Olive. “We are working hard to ensure students and their families have access to an affordable, values-driven education, and we will continue to do so in an effort to impact and transform as many lives as possible.”




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Remembering Maggie Lena Walker

By LYDIA FREEMAN

Eighty-three years ago, young civil rights giant-to-be Ferguson Reid and aging social activist and legend, Maggie L. Walker were neighbors.

Ferguson “Fergie” Reid would become the first African American to be elected to the Virginia General Assembly since Reconstruction. He also co-founded the Richmond Crusade of Voters, and continued working into his nineties to strengthen voter registration and participation.

His neighbor, Maggie L. Walker, was already a civil and women’s rights pioneer: founder of *The St. Luke Herald* newspaper, head of a nationwide insurance agency, and the first African American woman to charter a bank. Her efforts trailblazing financial independence were focused on African Americans, women, and oppressed minorities with limited access to the services she provided.

In the 1930s, Reid was a child, spending his time playing with Walker’s grandchildren, sliding down banisters, and accompanying the family on Memorial Day picnics and cemetery visits, complete with limousines, flowers, and bologna sandwiches.

“She’d put all of us in her limousine and take us to the various cemeteries that she had relatives buried in,” recounted Reid.



“Flowers on graves. Lunch for the kids. Specifically, I remember,” Reid paused and chuckled, “one of the favorite meats was bologna on white bread with yellow mustard. That’s what we would have in the picnic basket with drinks and dessert things.”

The Reid family shared an address with the Walker household: 110 East Leigh Street. The houses were adjacent to one another, and the copycat address led to mix ups.

Once, young Reid remembers opening the door to a dignified man with a mustache and fine pointed goatee. He was looking for Mrs. Walker, and Ferguson politely directed him next door.

“I didn’t know who it was until years later,” Reid recounted, his voice holding an air of amazement. “I was flipping through history books and found his picture. That was when I realized who it was. Maggie Walker and W. E. B. Dubois were friendly with each other.”

Walker was born nearly seventy years prior to this in July of 1867. Walker’s mother, a former slave, pushed for her to receive a quality education. Walker excelled at the Lancaster School of the Quakers. On the evening of her graduation, she participated in the first recorded school strike by African Americans in the United States. The graduating class of 1883 stated that “our parents pay taxes just the same as you white folks, and you’ve got no business spending big money out of those taxes to pay for the theater for white children unless you do the same for black children.”

Walker continued to challenge the status quo throughout her life. After her graduation she became involved in the Independent Order of St. Luke’s, an independent aid society. By 1899 she became the president of the organization and was able to turn the financial tides from near bankruptcy to profitable. In 1902 she founded the St. Luke’s Herald, in order to communicate the work of the Order of St. Luke’s to local chapters. In 1903 she founded the St. Luke’s Penny Savings Bank, allowing African Americans a place to deposit and borrow funds in a Jim Crow world that barred access.

She asked her neighbor, friend, and fellow NAACP member, Reid’s father Leon Reid, to be one of the trustees. He stayed on as a trustee until he died.

Another of Walker’s accomplishments was to open up a department store on Broad Street in Richmond aimed at serving African Americans.

“She worked to advance Blacks,” explained Reid. “And because Blacks could not shop in various department stores, she had her department store on Broad Street. She was very active with that and advancing black business.”

She led a bank merger in 1930 with two other smaller black-owned banks in Richmond, keeping her business afloat as many banks collapsed under the financial strain brought on by the Great Depression.

Ferguson Reid’s memories of Walker take place during those early years of the Great Depression toward the end of Walker’s life.

“At that time a lot of the kids in the neighborhood were in various quartets, and they’d sing hymns and songs in front of her house,” recalled Reid. “She would always send someone down to give them some money. During the Depression you could buy bread for 10 cents. The money she gave them was quite a bit of money for that time period.”



Later in life, Walker became paralyzed from the waist down by diabetes that would eventually lead to her death in 1934. To get into her limousine, she had a platform built from the house into her garage, where she was helped into the car by her chauffeur, Alfonzo.

“Everybody called him Fonzo,” recalled Reid.

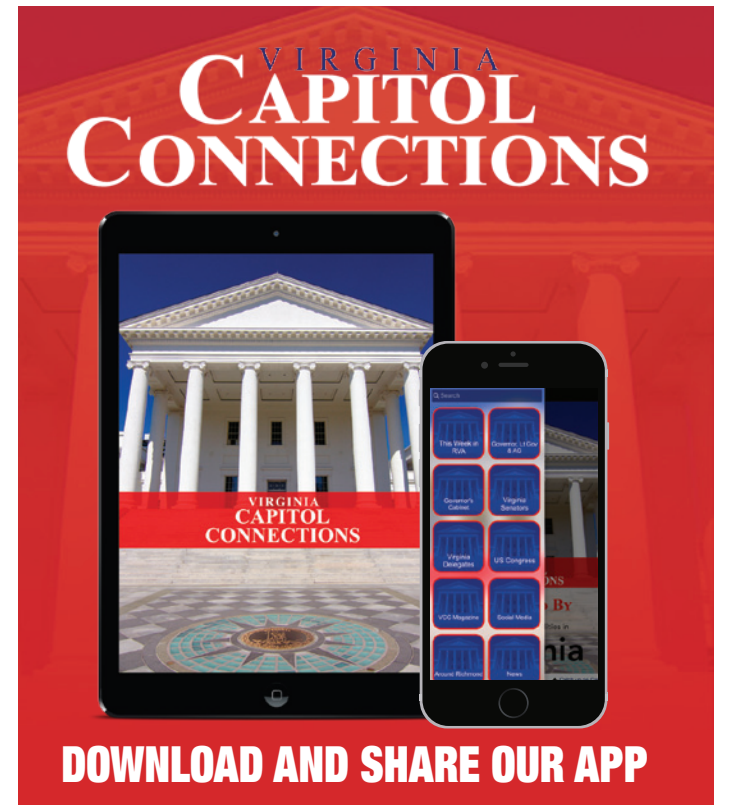
At Christmastime, Walker would have Alfonzo help her into that limousine. From there, she would take a pile of dollar bills, giving one to each of the police officers who were directing the traffic on Broad Street.

“She’d get in her limo and give each police a dollar,” said Reid. “A dollar was a lot of money. You could buy almost a whole carton of cigarettes for a dollar.”

“She was generous,” recounted Reid. “She was an entrepreneur but her organizations were more like benevolent societies. To build a building and have a printing press ... it took quite a bit of doing to do that as a woman in the early 1900s. That’s quite an accomplishment. She built her own building and employed women, and a few men. The men ran the printing press, but most of her clerks were women. She educated her clerks. This was a time when it was difficult to find work as a woman. She probably employed more women as clerks than any other business in Richmond.”

Reid was nearly nine when Walker died in December of 1934. Her funeral, which Reid described as large and well-attended, was held at Richmond’s First African Baptist Church.

Reid went on to become a surgeon, civil rights leader, and delegate. Today, he lives in Chevy Chase, Maryland. When asked if he had attended the recent unveiling of Maggie Walker’s statue



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in Richmond, Virginia’s Jackson Ward, he said that he had not, although he had seen photographs.

“I’m over ninety years old,” he reminded, saying again that he no longer lived in Richmond.

“When I saw her she was paralyzed, so I never saw her standing up,” said Reid. “I was delighted to see that the statue shows that she was a lady of power and standing erect.”

The statue symbolizes the power and dignity of Walker, rising as a mark on the city of Richmond.

Lydia Freeman is a teacher at KIPP ENC Public Schools in Gaston, North Carolina where she pushes sixth graders to think deeply and engage with historical, social and political spheres while practicing reading and writing. She writes often, engages deeply in conversation with friends, and strives to live purposefully in her community.

This Week in Richmond

Nearly 10 years ago James Baum, President and CEO of Blue Ridge PBS, initiated the production of *This Week in Richmond*. At first it was a weekly show during the time the General Assembly was in session and then monthly the rest of the year. Very soon it became weekly throughout the year and then it was picked up by the PBS stations in Richmond, Norfolk, Charlottesville and Harrisonburg. *This Week in Richmond* would not be what it is today apart from the great team of professional staffers at Blue Ridge PBS.

In addition to serving as host of the shows, I sought the underwriting. Among the wide variety of underwriters, three stand out due to their being supporters from the beginning: Marty Hall, Sandra Davis and Virginia State Firefighters Association. I sincerely thank them along with all those named on the inside front cover of this magazine.

As WCVE in Richmond becomes the presenting station, we welcome additional new underwriters. Some are named on page 2 of this issue and these are the others;

VIRGINIA
IS FOR
LOVERS

New River Valley
RAIL 2020
Putting Passengers On Track

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Be Our Guest — for This Week in Richmond

In today's fast-paced, high-tech world, we're constantly bombarded with media messages everywhere we go. But what ends up passing for news these days is often just a bunch of repetitious soundbites and exaggerated headlines.

This Week in Richmond is a public television program that captures first-hand perspectives of state legislators and other decision-makers from around the Capitol. It is hosted by state capitol veteran David Bailey.

With *This Week in Richmond*, viewers get a non-partisan, in-depth look at current events, developments and decisions coming out of the Capitol each week through complete, unedited interviews with the people who are making Virginia's government work every day.

From budget cuts to regulatory affairs, the program spotlights the latest happenings at the General Assembly while it is in session. During the rest of the year, it provides timely insights and behind-the-headlines analysis about taxes, education and other matters that are critical to people across the Commonwealth.

From the leadership in both chambers and the executive branch, to agency heads and cabinet members, to the clerks of both the Senate and the House of Delegates, to current and former governors and first ladies, to Virginia members of Congress, the show has given viewers a chance to hear directly from a wide range of the most influential people behind the scenes.

For its guests, the show is an increasingly rare opportunity to expound on the issues that matter to them the most in an easy going and relaxed atmosphere.

For viewers, it's an equally rare opportunity to get a glimpse of the people and personalities behind the positions through complete and unedited conversations.

As one viewer said, "The main thing I like about the show is that the host doesn't constantly interrupt the guest or interject his own ideas about the subject. He lets his guests talk."

Whether you're a participant or a viewer, you can cut through all the other media noise out there and stay informed each week with a straightforward, detailed report about what's going on here and now in Virginia's Capitol. Simply put, you are cordially invited to relax, pull up a chair, and be our guest — for *This Week in Richmond*.

Continued on next page

UVA Today features publication of local tax rates

UVA Today is featuring the publication "Virginia Local Tax Rates: 2016," 35th Annual Edition, by UVA's Cooper Center for Public Service, which is in print and is available through Lexis-Nexis.

<https://news.virginia.edu/content/who-pays-most-breakdown-local-tax-rates-virginia-0>

The 375-page book features tax information for all 38 Virginia cities, all 95 counties and for 137 of the state's 192 incorporated towns. The soft-cover book was compiled by Stephen C. Kulp, research specialist with the Center for Economic and Policy Studies.

Many Virginia localities impose different types of taxes for local services and all have differing tax rates. For example, 29 cities and two counties impose tobacco taxes and net a total of more than \$70 million from such taxes, which amounts to less than 0.5 percent of all local revenue. Tax rates on cigarettes range from a high of \$1.15 per pack in Alexandria to 55 cents in Charlottesville to 10 cents a pack in Petersburg.

The Virginia Local Tax Rates book references all the tax categories permitted in the Code of Virginia. Readers can find data on taxes for real property, merchants' capital, tangible personal property, utilities, motor vehicle licenses, business licenses, tobacco, meals, lodging and more.

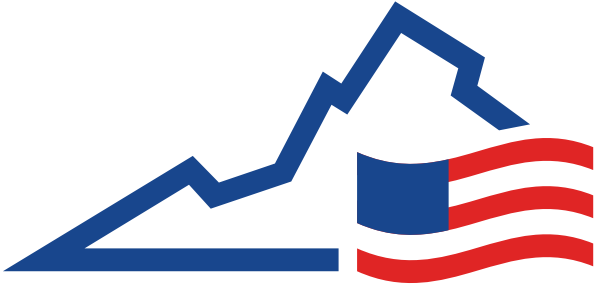
The only comprehensive view of local taxation in Virginia is prepared annually by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service. It is an indispensable resource for anyone involved with local governments in Virginia, either as a taxpayer, elected official, administrator, business leader, or researcher.

The printed book and eBook can be pre-ordered online at the LexisNexis Store: <https://store.lexisnexis.com/categories/product/virginia-tax-rates-2016-35th-annual-edition-skuusSku22860439>.

The Cooper Center is a research and training organization focused on the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Center provides objective information, data, applied research, technical assistance, and practical training to state and local officials, community leaders, and members of the general public.

The Cooper Center's 60-member staff includes experts in public management, demography, economics and public finance, political science, leadership and organizational development, workforce issues and survey research.

Contact: Stephen C. Kulp, research specialist with the Cooper's for Economic and Policy Studies, (434) 982-5638



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Continued from previous page
Sarah Alderson is an award-winning freelance writer who also works in the Senate broadcast control room during sessions and the Capitol Studio throughout the year. She can be reached at aldersonproductions@gmail.com and her new blog launches in March at thesarahfiles.wordpress.com.
This a shortened version of an article that originally appeared in the Winter 2013 issue of *Virginia Capitol Connections Quarterly Magazine*.

This Week
IN RICHMOND
VIEWING
SCHEDULE

community
idea stations
WCVE

- WCVE 23.1** (Richmond) — Sunday at 9 a.m.
 - WHTJ 41.1** (Charlottesville) — Sunday at 9 a.m.
 - WVPT** (Harrisonburg) — Tuesday at 5 p.m.
 - WHRO-World** (Norfolk) — Tuesday at 5 p.m. • Thursday at 5:30 p.m.
 - Blue Ridge PBS -WBRA** (Roanoke, Lynchburg) — Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Sunday at 2:30 p.m. • Tuesday at 7 p.m.
 - Southwest Virginia PTV**
Monday at 6:30 a.m. & 8:30 p.m. • Tuesday at 11:00 a.m. • Friday at Noon
 - Norfolk's Neighborhood Network**, TV-48 — Sunday through Tuesday, 12 noon • Wednesday through Saturday, 7:30 a.m.
- Weekly show information is on Facebook — **THIS WEEK IN RICHMOND**
Past shows may be found on YouTube.

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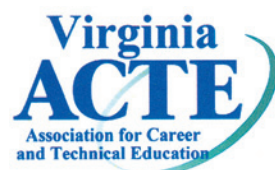
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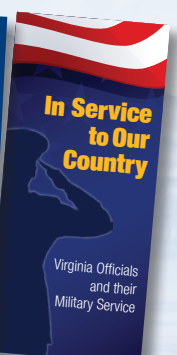
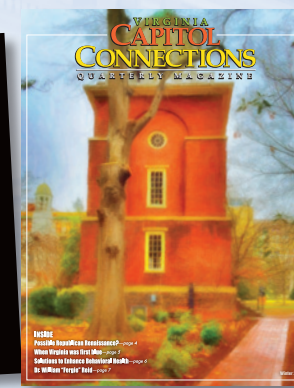
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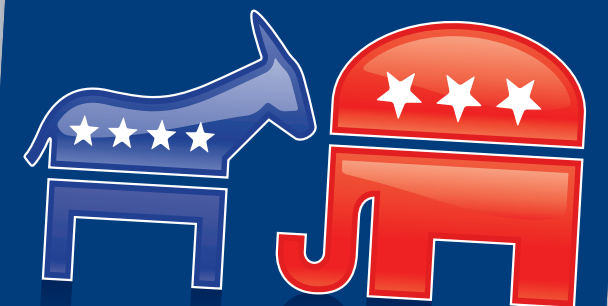
This year's edition includes contact information for candidates for Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General, and nearly 200 persons running for the House of Delegates. The wide distribution among elected officials and others interested in Virginia politics makes this the best place for your copy to be seen. Every winner in November is in this directory, so act now to order your copy.

Elect No Strangers! and all other Virginia Capitol Connections publications are available online at www.wordsprint.com/vcc-publication-orders.html.



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