

Editorial Page

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ELECTION 2007

Three More

Goochland, Powhatan, and New Kent face similar challenges and opportunities. Not long ago, all three were primarily rural counties on the edge of metro Richmond. Today, the counties retain their bucolic beauty — but are also home to ever-expanding suburbs as Central Virginians move farther away from the traditional center. Elections in the three counties this year will be especially important, as the boards will be responsible for both protecting treasured lifestyles and overseeing the dynamic growth that is unavoidable in such a free and prosperous nation.

Goochland has long been divided — the rural west, which looks to Charlottesville nearly as much as it does to Richmond, and the increasingly suburban east, which abuts Henrico's prosperous West End. Tensions are inevitable. The county also possesses an economic jewel — the West Creek office park, which offers an exceptional opportunity to build a large commercial base to fund municipal needs and keep property taxes under control.

The current board has demonstrated a sound understanding of Goochland's assets and challenges. Three of the five supervisors face challengers this year. We believe the incumbents deserve reelection and we endorse **James Eads, Joe Lacy Jr., and Andrew Pryor**. We also support incumbent **Andrew Meng** in the only contested School Board race.

Powhatan exhibits the growing pains of a rural county facing the next stage of life as an exurb. Its leaders must balance regional responsibilities with the need to invest in infrastructure and human capital. The county's voters will find a slate of candidates ready and able to tackle the challenges of the next four years.

For the Board of Supervisors we recommend businessman **Joe Walton** (1st District), retired Navy Commander **Marsell Bustos** (2nd), incumbents **Bob Cosby** (3rd) and **Scott Daniel** (4th), and retired corporate executive **Carson Tucker** (5th). For the School Board, **Rick Gideons** (1st) and **Jason Moore** (2nd) are unopposed. To join them voters would do well to choose **Valarie Ayers** (3rd), **Debbie Jones** (4th), and **Tim Gresham** (5th).

New Kent, the fastest-growing emerging suburb east of Richmond, sees only a handful of contested races. For the Board of Supervisors, we endorse incumbent **Stran Trout**. For the School Board, we support incumbent **Joe Yates**. (Full disclosure: Yates works as a regional circulation manager for this newspaper.)

Goochland, Powhatan, and New Kent will continue to grow, as will their influence. We look forward to the skilled leadership that we believe these candidates can bring to their counties.

CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

Dear Friend

The letter opened, "Dear Friend: These are the days when I'm especially proud to be a Virginian." It goes on to stress the importance of this year's elections, and asks for donations to ensure that the writers' preferred candidates prevail.

Tim Kaine signed the letter, which was paid for and authorized by Moving Virginia Forward, the governor's political action committee. Our copy was addressed to RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH.

The letter closes, "I have relied on you before — and I need you again today more than ever!"

The Reply Memorandum includes spaces to mark the contribution — \$250, \$500, \$1,000, or "other." Moving Virginia Forward not only takes checks but accepts credit cards.

We respectfully decline.

WALL STREET

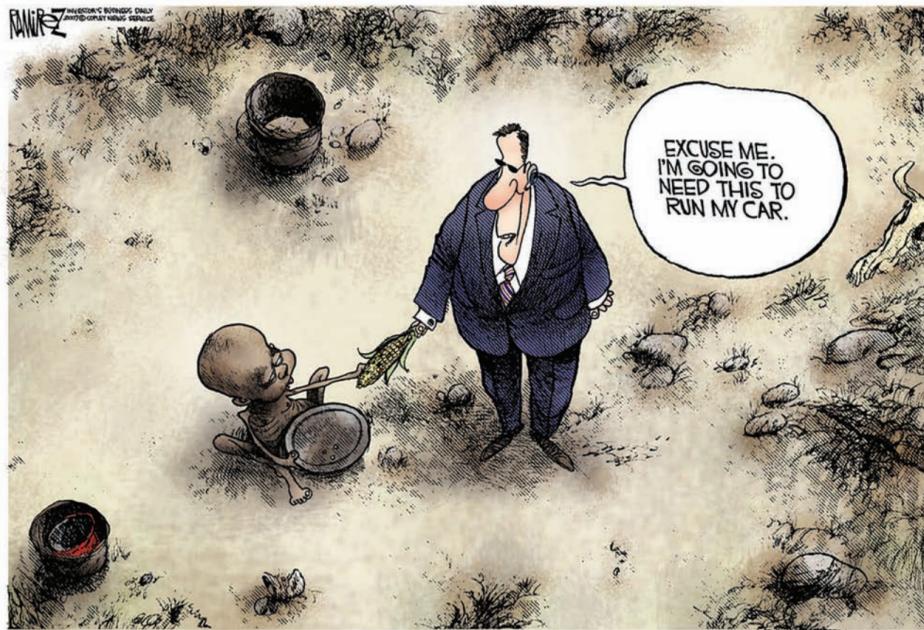
Reckon So

On Tuesday, Stan O'Neal stepped down as Merrill Lynch's head. His departure had been anticipated since the company reported a third-quarter write-down of \$7.9 billion, a somewhat higher amount than the company's original figure of \$4.5 billion. In a Tuesday editorial, "Wall Street Reckoning," *The Wall Street Journal* discussed accountability in the financial sector:

"What really matters is that Wall Street is beginning to hold its leadership accountable for the subprime debacle. Politicians and other faux populists like to gripe that CEOs and mere 'Wall Street traders' make too much — at least until they're asking those traders for campaign contributions. But along with bonuses in the good times comes the peril of dismissals for major losses. . . . This self-cleansing is crucial for the financial credibility of individual companies as they try to win back customers, many of whom have taken a bath. But it is also vital to the larger financial system that the big banks are honest about their mistakes, clean up their balance sheets, and generally police themselves. . . . And while it may be painful for companies and CEOs, it will help the system work through the losses faster and prepare for recovery sooner."

Everything the editorial says is correct. Tuesday's *Journal* also included a perhaps pertinent point in its news columns. "The departure of Stan O'Neal, the embattled chief executive of Merrill Lynch & Co., is a foregone conclusion — but not the terms of his exit," the paper reported. "Despite expectations that O'Neal would step down from the Wall Street firm [Monday] morning, the 56-year-old Merrill chief stayed in command as lawyers for the board and O'Neal tried to work out terms of an exit package that could exceed \$160 million."

Executives should be held accountable for the bad times that injure clients and employees. Much of O'Neal's parachute reflects profits he and the company previously had earned. Yet as the sagas involving titans suggest, reckonings are not created equal. *The Journal* refers to pain; \$160 million buys a lot of aspirin.



Letters to the Editor

Where Is the Democrats' Help for Black America?

EDITOR, TIMES-DISPATCH:

I am a 37-year-old black American, and I've got one question: Why do fellow black Americans continue to vote for Democrats? I've got a lot of reasons why we shouldn't. I'm originally from Washington, D.C. and I've also lived in Detroit. Both cities are dangerous and poverty-stricken. The streets have giant potholes, the schools are in poor condition, and drugs are everywhere.

If the Democrats are on our side, then why can't they fix some of these problems? The Democrats try to make us think we can't make it in life without their help. They want us to believe that the playing field is uneven. I'm here as a black, ex-alcoholic, ex-drug addict, and ex-felon, to tell everyone the playing field is level. I'm making it just fine because I decided that I had to go out and make things happen — not wait for the government to help me.

We don't need the government and all its programs to get ahead in life. We have to realize that we are no longer victims, and we can be victorious. We have to have the desire to make a good life for ourselves, then go do it.

The main things we need government for are to enforce the law and protect us against other countries that seek to do us harm. If one expects the government to do more than that, he or she needs to look in the mirror and realize that success or failure depends on him or her.

As a Christian, it is important to realize what one is voting for instead of just voting Democrat because that's what blacks do. Moral issues are important: partial-birth abortion, gay marriage, and manmade global warming are things Democrats support. If one doesn't support these things, don't vote Democrat.

DAVID GLEAVES,
STAUNTON.

Elect Montgomery To Henrico School Board

EDITOR, TIMES-DISPATCH:

As a Varina District voter, I want my neighbors to know about a highly qualified candidate for the Henrico School Board: John Montgomery.

Montgomery knows about the challenges to our public schools that are coming to our county and our state as well as impending global challenges to our nation. He will meet these challenges with an open mind, new ideas, energy, and commitment.

To relieve overcrowding in Highland Springs and Varina High Schools, Montgomery will accelerate construction of new high schools that are built to last and save money while providing enhanced learning environments for our children. He will bring High Performance Design Schools (or "green" schools) to Henrico.

Common throughout the country, these schools are designed and constructed for minimal impact on the environment through saving energy — which means saving taxpayers' money!

CORRESPONDENT OF THE DAY

Community Must Face Youth-Drinking Truths

EDITOR, TIMES-DISPATCH:

I am concerned about a growing social problem in our area. In the West End, there is a lack of supervision of teens. Having just completed my teenage years, I am well aware of the peer pressure and temptation to drink and engage in other risky behaviors.

I am extremely concerned about youth in our area, as this trend has begun to spiral out of control. I fear not only for my younger brothers and their friends, but for our entire community.

The special task forces that the Henrico police have come up with to target youth delinquency are commendable. However, prevention rather than conviction should be the

primary focus. Knowing that an alarming number of parents are encouraging, enabling, and denying illegal acts by teens, it would be beneficial to educate not only the youth but adults in our area as well.

Just as orientation to a new school is mandatory for students and parents, so should be orientation into the dangers and consequences of underage drinking. Educating parents not only about the legal consequences that they and their children could face, but also about the life-threatening dangers of underage drinking could prevent it from becoming a problem in their own homes. However, we must first come together as a community to declare that this dangerous behavior is unacceptable.

Are you ready to take the first step?
TRACEY PARTIN,
BLACKSBURG.

Green schools lead to improved learning thanks to clean air, for healthier students, and fewer absences; optimal lighting in quiet classrooms; and opportunities for students to learn about lifelong energy conservation.

John Montgomery will receive my vote on Nov. 6 as the most qualified candidate in Varina.

JANE C. KOONTZ,
HENRICO.

Not Breeding Dogs Means No More Dogs

EDITOR, TIMES-DISPATCH:

I was very upset by the article, "Two Breeds Better Than One?" Mixed-breed dogs can be marvelous pets, but to claim that so-called designer dogs are healthier than a carefully bred purebred is questionable at best. The parent clubs for the Labrador retriever, golden retriever, and poodle list various health issues for each breed. All three breeds are prone to hip dysplasia and progressive retinal atrophy (PRA). Just because a dog is a mix of two of those breeds does not lower the chances of such problems.

Responsible breeders screen for those problems, and others, and do not use affected animals in their breeding programs. All of the breeds listed as being popular mixes with pugs also have health concerns, as do all breeds of dogs. Again, responsible breeders are selecting away from inherited health problems.

Then there is Robin Starr's emotional statement that parrots PETA: "Any sort of intentional breeding of dogs is irresponsible. There are wonderful, sweet, healthy dogs who need a home. There is no justification for breeding more."

While this sounds good on the surface, it actually put into practice, within a decade there would be no dogs. All dogs from shelters in Virginia are legally required to be sterilized. Therefore, if the

only available dogs are unable to reproduce, the end result is no more dogs.

Why not educate the public? Help them understand what sort of commitment a dog requires and how to choose a mix or breed that fits each individual's lifestyle. This would go a long way toward keeping pets in their homes and do much to solve the problem of unwanted dogs.

BETH GOODBODY,
RICHMOND.

Vote Diana Winston For Henrico School Board

EDITOR, TIMES-DISPATCH:

This letter is to express my strong endorsement of Diana Winston as the Henrico School Board's representative from the Three Chopt District.

Winston has a proven record of involvement with education and schools. She was a teacher in Henrico for 10 years and a principal for 20 years at various schools in the county. She was the first Henrico County Instructional Leader of the Year, a very prestigious award given in recognition of excellence.

Winston was also the principal of Tuckahoe Middle School when it was recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School. She is committed to ensuring our schools are student-centered and staffed by highly qualified teachers and administrators. Winston also wants to focus on school safety, working cooperatively with other members of the School Board, and developing proactive planning for the future.

I served as principal of two outstanding schools in the Three Chopt District, and I encourage all voters to come to the polls Nov. 6. Our school system needs strong leadership and direction from our School Board. Make the educated choice and vote for Diana Winston.

LES STANLEY,
BOWLING GREEN.

Richmond Times-Dispatch

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