

| WAY TO GO! |



Sorority adopts garden

Members of the Kappa Rho Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® recently adopted the butterfly garden at Ellis Acres in Dillwyn. Flowers were planted, leaves were raked and weeds were pulled up to enhance the true beauty of the beautiful garden. This project is just one of the community service projects of the sorority whose motto is "Service To All Mankind." Pictured are, from left, sorority members Joyce Booker, Bobbie Holman and Vera Cooke-Merriitt. We commend the Kappa Rho Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® for its service to community. (Send "Way to Go!" photos with a description and names to WayToGo@FarmvilleHerald.com.)

Different worlds

It used to be that when I saw the legislation that some members of the General Assembly proposed to become law, I would shake my head in disbelief. Now I have come to expect the unexpected. They simply come from a different part of the state than ours and I dare say a different world sometimes.

Many of the legislators that now represent Northern Virginia come from elsewhere. They were attracted to Virginia by the good jobs available in the Washington area working for the government or working for companies that do business with the federal government. These folks know little about the rest of Virginia. They believe that all parts of Virginia have the same curbed streets that their suburban homes have. These legislators often are surprised when they find out that our lives are much different from theirs.

It is no wonder that they introduce bills that make little sense to my constituents. For example, offering legislation telling how we should deal with our pets and livestock, as if they know better than us. They often have legislation that effects farmers about land protection, not understanding that those same farmers have far more interest in protecting their farms from erosion and water run off than those from urban areas. They believe our primary roads are there for them to get through rural areas as fast as they can. We, however, believe that our primary highways are important to attract rural economic opportunities and that we should encourage job producers to come to our region.

GUNS

While they are making big plans to limit your rights as a gun owner, my constituents, as well as those in most of rural Virginia, are having massive crowds show up in support of making our jurisdictions Second Amendment Sanctuaries. They do not seem to understand that a police officer might be able to arrive moments after they are called, while in rural areas, the only officers may be on the far side of the county when we call.

MY UPBRINGING IS FAR DIFFERENT FROM MOST OF MY PEERS

While many in the General Assembly were born into great situations, I, however, was not. I was raised in a family that did not have indoor plumbing until I was six. My father died when I was 12. My mother was left to raise three teenagers on her own. She returned to teaching to care for us.



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The above facts, which sound dire, were never perceived that way by us. We were rich in the values we were taught. We were taught to be frugal in everything we did and everything we bought. That frugal upbringing has been part of my entire life, often to the chagrin of my family. It truly bothers me to spend money. Yet, it has made me a better legislator. I often question the wisdom of spending state taxpayer's money unless there is proof that it is a value.

In addition, my career was in the business world. In both the corporate world and as a small-business man, I understood how important the bottom line is to the success of a business. Not watching costs and spending too much on overhead means that small businesses that do not have the cash flow are limited on how much inventory their business can stock. This limits profit as the business moves forward. Likewise, not treating employees fairly leads to turnover resulting in losing the skilled employees a business needs.

Many of my peers have never had to worry about holding down expenses. Their careers often are government related businesses. Their greatest concerns have little to do with the success of their employer. This is the reason that they often propose legislation that pleases some constituents but causes businesses to consider whether to start or expand in Virginia or move to states that remember that businesses and corporations are created, not to satisfy the wants and needs of their employees, but rather to provide profits to those who have invested in the business by providing a service or product that serves their customer's needs.

Following what I learned from my upbringing has served me well as I try to serve you. I wish more of them had the same background.

FRANK RUFF JR. serves as the 15th District senator in Virginia. He can be reached at Sen.Ruff@verizon.net, (434) 374-5129 or P.O. Box 332, Clarksville, VA 23927.

Making your vote count

As the issue of the Second Amendment Sanctuary becomes particularly relevant to our area, I wanted to share some thoughts that I had on the subject.

I certainly think the Second Amendment is an important part of the U.S. Constitution and something worth being defended.

However, I do have some concerns about how these sanctuaries are looking to mount that defense. It seems like they are serving to invalidate elections to a certain degree.

If I understand the sanctuaries correctly, it seems like a political party may gain a majority at the state government level through elections, but if the laws that these state-level elected officials pass are not deemed constitutional by local governments, the local-level elected officials can opt not to enforce them.

This may seem clever if it benefits the side of the political aisle with which one identifies, but it doesn't really seem like the way things are supposed to work.

From what I know, the reason these Second Amendment sanctuaries have become a popular issue is that Virginia Gov. Ralph S. Northam and a General Assembly controlled by the Democratic Party are expected to pass significant gun control legislation next year.

In opposition to this expected action, people are showing up in large numbers to local government meetings where adoption of the Second Amendment Sanctuary resolution is being considered. I'm actually glad they're doing this, making it clear the Second Amendment is something they want protected.

However, as a best practice, I think it is incumbent on voters to also show up on Election Day in large numbers in order to make sure they elect representatives that will advocate legislation trending in the direction they support. From what I understand, less than half of registered voters in Virginia participated in this year's election.

It does seem like many smaller Virginia districts did vote Republican and are feeling



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like their wishes are not being represented in the face of more heavily populated northern and southeastern districts. I can certainly understand that feeling, and I'm not sure of the best way to resolve the issue.

I do also think it is possible to vote for someone and then express vocal disagreement with a certain decision they are thinking of making, but to take that disagreement to the extent of refusing to enforce the corresponding law seems like it threatens to unravel our system of government.

If elected officials are breaking the law, they can be individually investigated and removed from office. If they are passing legislation we strongly disagree with, we can vote for someone else in the next election. But if we lack grounds to do the former and fail to do the latter, then I don't think it is a wise course to simply engage in selective law enforcement.

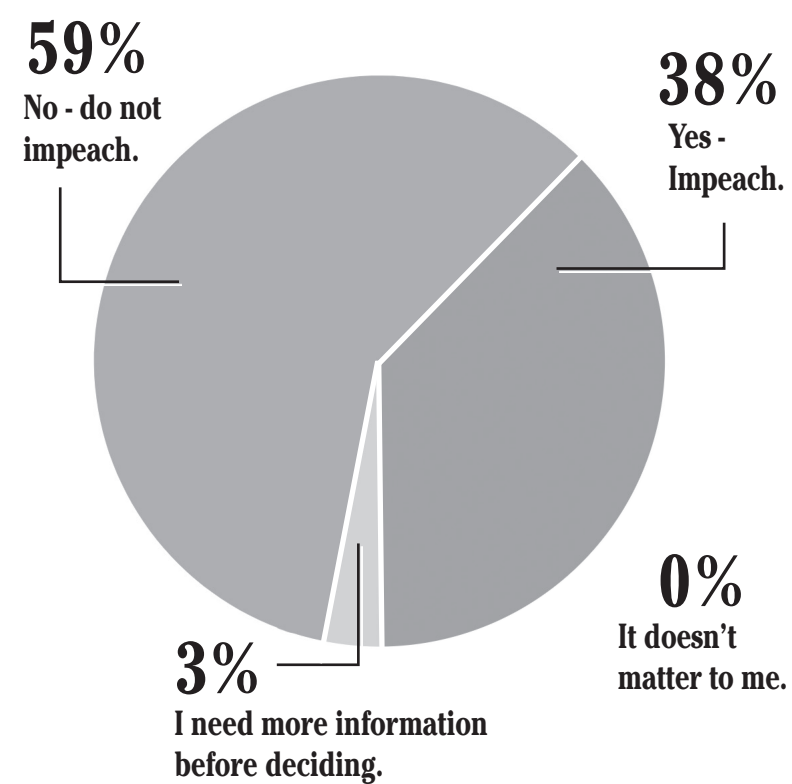
Ultimately, I think it would be best if the sanctuaries went away but that Gov. Northam and the General Assembly would listen to the unusual and vocal statement so many of the people they represent are making as they show up to these local government meetings by the hundreds. I would hope it would cause Gov. Northam and the General Assembly to scale back some of their gun control plans to appropriately reflect the wishes of the people of Virginia.

And on future election days, it would be great to see far more people become informed and involved, to let their voices be heard, regardless of their politics, the way our system intended.

TITUS MOHLER is the sports editor for *The Farmville Herald* and Farmville Newsmedia LLC. His email address is Titus.Mohler@FarmvilleHerald.com.

| YOUR PULSE |

THE QUESTION: To impeach or not to impeach?



Check www.FarmvilleHerald.com for our latest question.

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Dillwyn Primary receives donation

Keystone Lodge 188 in Buckingham donated 193 pairs of gloves and hats to Dillwyn Primary school. Pictured are, from left, Irvin Mosley, Abraham Kimbrough, Ronald Jackson, Clarence Lewis, Freddie Watson, Mark Holman and Gary Anderson. Not pictured is Douglas Gregory. We commend Keystone Lodge 188 for their generosity to Dillwyn Primary. (Send "Way to Go!" photos with a description and names to WayToGo@FarmvilleHerald.com.)

The start of a hopeful conversation

Editor,

At the board meeting Dec. 17, I was disappointed by the lack of civility and order. Residents of Prince Edward County who voiced approval of the Second Amendment Sanctuary proposal were allowed their three minutes of time uninterrupted, while those residents who disagreed were shouted down by a crowd of 500 extremists. My ending comments were barely heard over the jeers so I include them here: My concern as a resident of this county is the safety of my family and I voted for a safer Virginia in November because I believe gun laws save lives. I believe in the process of democracy and the power of a vote to change the general assembly in Virginia. Thousands of Virginians in this county and across the state did too! The laws made in Richmond do reflect the values

of citizens like me who want a safer Virginia, despite what you saw in the room that night. We may disagree about many things but couldn't we at least agree that we value life and the rule of law over guns? We all want to keep our family safe, see our children grow with dignity and have the same rights as any American. There are many issues in this county we can join together to work toward - let's put more resources and our time toward the school, food banks, our elderly, low-income communities.

Our community can be the start of a hopeful conversation but we have to stop yelling and listen.

In Christ's love,

Susan Halliday
Farmville

Happy birthday

Just a passing thought. Isn't it interesting that we say happy birthday to George Washington, Columbus, Robert E. Lee, Martin Luther King, etc., as we celebrate their birth dates, but we say merry Christmas when we refer to the day honoring Christ's birthday? However, what we say is not as important as what we feel inside our hearts as we celebrate. What is important is that we

celebrate his birth for the right reason.

Isn't it also grand that more people are now saying merry Christmas again? Over the past decade or two, because of political correctness, it became unpopular to utter the words merry Christmas. Stores that make most of their profit during the Christmas buying season seemed to be afraid to use those words. Instead, they wished everyone happy holidays. Schools



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stopped calling the days off around December Christmas. Instead, they started referring to this period as the winter break. All this is very interesting because I have friends of other religions who are not offended in the slightest by those of us who choose to say merry Christmas; with full knowledge that our purpose for the celebration is for Christ's birthday.

TAKE TIME TO RELAX AND REFLECT

This time of year, all of us are running around trying to accomplish things. Sometimes it is decorating and buying gifts, other times it is planning and preparing meals. Sometimes it is work related. Things that must be accomplished before the year-end knowing that other workers or businesses are working shorter schedules for the last days before Christmas and new year's pushes those deadlines earlier and

The Reason for the season

Christmas has come to mean and come to be many things for many people, but I would like to focus on the original purpose for the holiday — commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ.

The Bible gives the explanation for the significance of Christ's birth as well as historical accounts of the event.

In Romans 3:23, it says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Three chapters later, the plight of mankind without Christ is further established, as Romans 6:23 cites, "For the wages of sin is death..."

But thankfully, God came up with an amazing plan to give humanity a way of escaping eternal separation from Him in hell, and His plan is outlined in the very familiar verse that has the reference John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

Matthew 1:21 says that Mary "will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

Someone still had to pay the wages of those sins, and Jesus did that. We simply need to trust in Him for our salvation. Evidence that we have done that will include having a desire to obey His Word, the Bible.

In that Word, Luke 2:8-20 gives a historical account of Christ's birth:

"In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there



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has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."

"When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, 'Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.'

So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them."

Knowing the significance of Christ's birth — knowing the stakes involved for us — helps give clear understanding, indeed, why His coming was such 'good news of great joy' for all! Merry Christmas, everyone!

TITUS MOHLER is the sports editor for *The Farmville Herald* and Farmville Newsmedia LLC. His email address is Titus.Mohler@FarmvilleHerald.com.

earlier than we had planned. However, think about what is truly important. It is not the perfect decorations or meals but rather the loved ones that we want to enjoy being around. Don't work yourself into frenzy so that you cannot enjoy your time with them.

I cannot easily heed my own advice. My schedule gets more and more hectic each and every year. Because so many meetings have been occurring the last several weeks, I have had some who were critical of me because I was not at this or that meeting that they thought I should have attended. However, as large as this senate district is, it is impossible to be everywhere at the same time. This week, I am stopping to enjoy my family and my relationship with my savior.

GOVERNOR'S BUDGET

The Governor released his budget. I will not get into the nuts and bolts of his spending plan until after Christmas,

but rest assured there will be plenty to talk about. There will something in his budget to please all and, at the same time, to offend all. Next week, I will share my thoughts on some of his planned spending. Or I should say spending and spending plan.

In his presentation, he pointed out that Virginia's economy is doing very well. We will have almost record breaking revenue this year, however, he explained that is not enough to satisfy his spending wishes. He, therefore, proposed several new taxes on you that will bring in hundreds of millions of extra money to spend.

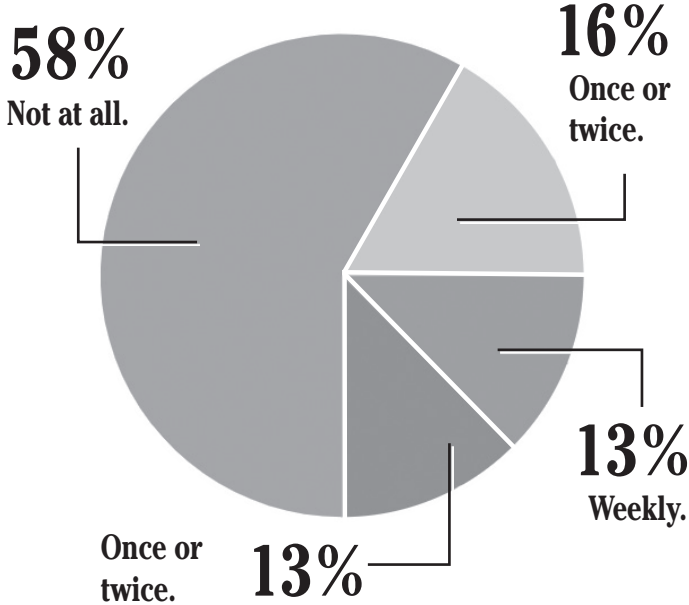
Again, this is an issue that all of us can stew on in the coming weeks. Right now, please relax and give your loved ones an extra hug.

Merry Christmas and happy birthday!

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| YOUR PULSE |

THE QUESTION: How often have you experienced incivility in the past month?



Check www.FarmvilleHerald.com for our latest question.

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Alumni donates backpacks

Members of the Robert R. Moton/Prince Edward County Schools Alumni Association donated 50 backpacks to Prince Edward County Middle School. The school is grateful for strong community partners. Pictured are, from left, Dr. Maurice Smith, Dr. Erin Green, Jeanine Garrett, Bety Baskin, Chuckie Reid, Elsie Walker, Cornell Walker and Thomas Foster. We commend the association for their support of you in our community. (Send "Way to Go!" photos with a description and names to WayToGo@FarmvilleHerald.com).

| YOUR VIEWS |

A good resource for environmental education

Are you an educator in Amelia, Nottoway or Prince Edward counties? Do you teach about water, soil and/or natural resource conservation? Do you want your lessons to have a lasting effect on your students? If so, the Piedmont Soil & Water Conservation District (PSWCD) is here to support you.



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Despite the long name, the Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation District's goal is to support sustainable practices and improve soil and water quality in Amelia, Nottoway and Prince Edward counties. The Piedmont SWCD is one of 47 soil and water districts in Virginia. Most counties in Virginia are supported by a soil and water conservation district. The services offered through these districts vary slightly, but the overall goals are the same. We are here to assist the public, encourage best management practices that conserve soil and water, and provide education to all ages.

The PSWCD office has recently added me to their team as the district's education coordinator. I come with a strong education background and the desire to support and help educators. I hope to provide educators with materials that are available free of charge to educators through the district.

Available materials can be borrowed, implemented in your learning setting and returned to the district, or I am available to visit you to lead your students through a learning experience. Some of the education topics available include agriculture awareness, watershed identification, water cycle comprehension and soil awareness.

In the spring we partner with several other local organizations to introduce third-graders to agriculture awareness. During this experience participants learn about local foods, livestock care, best management practices (BMPs) and water pollutants. Each participant enjoys hands-on, project-based experiences and leaves with a better understanding of sustainable habits.

Also in the spring, all students in grades K-12 are invited to participate in our poster contest. Posters are designed around a conservation theme and creativity is encouraged. All entries are reviewed by qualified judges. Ribbons, certificates and awards are distributed to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners.

Speaking of winners, every year Envirothon teams from around the state and world compete. An Envirothon team is made up of 5-7 high schoolers. Any school can have a team. Team members are coached by a willing adult (teacher, parent, volunteer) and the Piedmont SWCD provides support to that coach (workshops, local experts, stipend, teaching materials, etc.). Teams prepare for the competitions where they are tested on their knowledge of soils, aquatics, forest-

ry, wildlife and a special topic. This year's topic is water resource management: local control and local solutions. Envirothon is a fun, extra-curricular activity that introduces participants to numerous opportunities in the fields of natural resources.

At PSWCD we know that clean water is an essential natural resource, and we have lessons and visuals available to enhance learning about water. Our most popular learning tool is our Enviroscape watershed model. This model teaches about watershed concepts and visually demonstrates water pollution. Upon completion of this exercise, participants have a better understanding of their own watershed and how certain behaviors impact soil and water quality. This is a fun, interactive program that aligns well with third and sixth grade SOLs, but learners of all ages can benefit.

The water cycle is another water concept taught in early education and revisited in science classes throughout the school years. The PSWCD's water cycle game, "An Incredible Journey," is a fun way for participants to gain an understanding of the journey that water takes. Participants investigate the processes of evaporation, condensation and precipitation. Key concepts include the origin of energy that drives the water cycle and the processes involved in the water cycle.

We also have resources available to help participants understand the major concepts related to soil. These include lessons and activities that teach about origin, components, properties, layers, importance of soil and soil erosion. Through hands-on activities and demonstrations, participants will gain a thorough understanding of soil as a valuable resource.

The Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation District has a lot to offer area educators and students who are interested in soil, water and the conservation of these natural resources. All of the resources available align with the most current Virginia SOLs and are free. For more information about teaching materials, or to learn more about these programs call (434) 392-3782 x132.

KELLY ATKINSON is the PSWCD education coordinator. She can be reached via email at katkinson@piedmontswcd.org.

Early gridiron excitement

A new high school varsity football season always brings with it the possibility of excitement on the weekends in the fall, and the first week of the season this past weekend did not disappoint.

Grabbing the top headline for the teams in our coverage area was Buckingham County High School.

On Friday night, I was getting photos from the games at Prince Edward County High School and Cumberland County High School, but I was keeping track from afar of the Knights' game against perennial state title contender Appomattox County High School with the help of Tim Hartless on Twitter and Richard LeSueur and Frank Shanaberger on radio station WVHL 92.9 Kickin' Country.

I started working at *The Herald* in April 2016, and the Knights had never won "The Battle of the Axe" in football since I've been here. In fact, the Knights hadn't won against Appomattox since 2014.

The Raiders have seemed like an unbeatable team against Buckingham in recent years, and their state-level achievements have made them seem all the more intimidating. They won the Virginia High School League Class 2 state championship in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

It was a testament to how good the Knights were in 2015 that they lost only 14-7 to Appomattox that year. That was the late great Craig Gill's final year leading Buckingham, and the Knights finished 10-2 that year, including a brief playoff run.

But since then, it had seemed like the impossible dream for the Knights to even be competitive with the Raiders. In 2016, Buckingham lost 57-6. In 2017, the score was 63-14. Last year, with present Head Coach Seth Wilkerson at the helm, it was still 44-7.

I had gotten used to opening week being a good test for the Knights against the best the state has to offer, but also an essentially guaranteed Buckingham loss.

And then this year happened.

I was hearing that the Knights were holding their own with a 7-6 lead after the first quarter, and then they held that lead at halftime. There still seemed like there was room for the Raiders to wake up and put together a rout in the second half, but instead, Buckingham began adding to its lead. 13-6. Appomattox's starting quarterback was sidelined. The Knights



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began driving on offense for even more points.

In the end, Wilkerson and his players achieved a 27-6 victory over the heralded Appomattox football program, bringing the axe back to Buckingham.

In so doing, the Knights taught me an important lesson — they have held their own with the best in the state before, and they can do it again.

Shifting our focus to Division III of the Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association (VISAA), Fuqua School opened its season Saturday afternoon by taking on host Fredericksburg Christian School, the 2018 state champion of VISAA Division II, which features larger schools than Division III. The Falcons ended up routing the Eagles 52-27.

Fuqua Head Coach Ben Manis was careful to point out that a large group of seniors who helped the Eagles win last year's title had graduated earlier this year. However, the Falcons' big win against a strong Division II program helps highlight that, this year, it is they who are the senior-laden team showing significant strength.

As a younger, rebuilding squad last year, Fuqua still managed to make the Division III state title game. The Falcons lost that game in lopsided fashion to the elite Roanoke Catholic School, but graduation claimed some key Celtics talent, so the gap between the teams has likely shrunk.

Prince Edward and Cumberland did not generate the kind of headlines they were hoping for with big week one losses, but each program is led by new coaches who have fixed their attention on important things that will likely help bring wins to their teams moving forward. So, there is plenty of reason to stay tuned when it comes to the Eagles and the Dukes.

The promise of gridiron excitement is alive and well here in the Heart of Virginia.

TITUS MOHLER is the sports editor for *The Farmville Herald* and *Farmville Newsmedia LLC*. His email address is Titus.Mohler@FarmvilleHerald.com.

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