

# OPINION

## Letters To The Editor

### Say no to rezoning and Dollar General in Ebony

To the Editor:

The Brunswick County Board of Supervisors public hearing and vote have been scheduled for Wednesday, January 29 at 6:30 p.m. in Lawrenceville. This will be the ultimate decision.

Brunswick County has an opportunity to set a precedent by really assessing the need and fit for a Dollar General in the Ebony, Virginia community. This means looking at the full picture, trade-offs, and alignment with current zoning regulations, the 2037 Comprehensive Plan for Brunswick County as well as the Board of Supervisors Vision for 2035. The opposition position is that Dollar General is NOT NEEDED, NOT A FIT for the location, and there is much data that suggests it will NOT BE a net benefit for Brunswick County.

The unchecked Dollar General proliferation – trending at 20 new stores per week – is well-documented to cause negative side effects that outweigh proposed benefits touted by Dollar General. This is especially true with the expanded focus on rural America – like Ebony!

Every Dollar Store application does not need to be approved! The only way to stop them is through discerning leadership and citizens of the community that consider the whole picture are prepared to say NO for very valid reasons. There may be places where Dollar stores can be as asset - not every 10 miles in every direction - just because the geography may support it.

Brunswick County has a lot of open fields and rural

communities where many Dollar Generals can be planted and forever ruining the valued authentic, rural settings and scenic byways of our heritage that the County considers a strategic asset and draw. Do we really want Dollar General stores as the new cash crop? Are we willing to risk the potential negative impacts on the well-being of the community as well as Brunswick County's treasured heritage; there are many case studies that substantiate these concerns.

Let's set the precedent and be the role model for the rest of rural America! Let's start by saying NO to Dollar General in Ebony.

Please join the opposition to this rezoning request at the January 29 meeting – be present and be heard. This is a defining moment – not only for the Ebony community – but for all of Brunswick County and its future.

These 2 resources have been created for those who are interested in learning more about this issue and why many are up in arms in opposition:

Website at [KeepEbonyCountry.org](http://KeepEbonyCountry.org)

Facebook (Keep Ebony Country)

Thank you for your attention and consideration to oppose and be heard.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Anne (Edwards) Hartley**  
**Ebony native and founding**  
**member of Ebony Preservation Group**

**Brunswick STEW**  
 by Mark Evans



#### Homeless Barbie

Happy New Year, Brunswick County!

I hope your holidays were holy and happy.

Here at the Evans' home, we were blessed with the visits of many family and friends. Some stayed for just a few hours. Some stayed for a few weeks.

It was all fun, exhausting, wonderful, and lovely.

At one point, with meals being eaten in four rooms of the house by children aged 1 to 12, I was vacuuming the carpet four to five times a day just so the crumbs and chips weren't spread to the entire house.

One son-in-law arrived with a massive drum set and a huge speaker which he proceeded to assemble in the living room. Fortunately, the drums were digital. But, when it was cranked up on New Year's Eve, and accompanied by the piano, a guitar, and 20 sets of vocal cords, the volume was incredible.

At one point, I went outside to see if the decibels were such that we would be getting a visit from Brian Roberts or one of his fine deputies.

Of course, many gifts were exchanged. One of our dear little granddaughters shared with me a very personal gift of a severe cold and cough. I am just getting over it.

I also received a very unique gift from a new son-in-law... a Barbie Doll.

Ok, you need some background so that that gift isn't so weird.

About 2 months ago, he and I and some others were talking about Christmas gifts for our 22 granddaughters, and the topic of the different Barbie dolls came up. Every imaginable career and hobby-based Barbie is out there. Astronaut Barbie, Cupcake Shop Barbie, Car Repair Barbie, Teacher Barbie, Librarian Barbie, Sports Barbie, Race Car Barbie, Police Barbie, etc

I let my mind wander to see if I could think of a Barbie type that would not ever be made.

I suggested that Homeless Barbie probably would not ever hit the market.

This thought had come to mind because I had been recently asked by a grandson, who lives in Danville, Virginia to come and help with his Eagle Scout project on Christmas morning. He had volunteered to lead out in the coat and blanket project associated with feeding the homeless and less-fortunate in Danville.

Our newest son-in-law had said, as he had handed me his gift (wrapped in old newspaper) that it was something that I didn't need but that I would enjoy it. Little did he know how much joy it would give four of our granddaughters and what it would represent for all of us.

When unwrapped, Homeless Barbie was wearing tattered clothes, had incredibly tangled hair, duct-tape shoes and had a ragged backpack. Her face and arms were smudged and she was packed in a cardboard shelter lined with newspaper.

Now, before you get offended and think that this was a mockery of unfortunate people, please, read the rest of the story.

This son-in-law is a very sensitive boy, and realized that this gift was to help us recognize the plight of others and then act.

How grateful I was that family members that were gathered early that Christmas morning, opening gifts, were able to act on the compassion we felt within 2 hours.

Cindy and I, two unmarried sons, and one married son and his expecting wife, arrived at the Danville Community Center about 9:30 a.m. on Christmas Day and joined our son, his wife, and his 7 children who live in Danville. We were immediately put to work preparing trays of food to be delivered to shut-ins. Then we sorted coats and blankets.

Those invited to eat in the decorated, converted warehouse all looked like good folks who were down on their luck or who were overwhelmed by life. I grabbed two granddaughters and we began sitting with and talking to these children of God. Each had something to tell us. Each was so grateful for the food and supplies. Each smiled with as many teeth as they could as we laughed with them.

My heart went out to them. I wished there was more we could do.

I could see my wife across the room smiling and lis-

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FROM THE DESK OF  
**SENATOR FRANK RUFF**

#### But Who Pays For It and How?

I was taught early on in life that you get nothing for free – there is always a cost to everything. That cost might be in money or it might be in loss of freedom or security. At any rate, we should always ask – what is the real cost to me and my family?

Recently, a poll was released that concluded that a majority of Virginians want legislation that would require cleaner air, as we all do. However, the poll was based on what the questions were and how they were asked. If the question on clean air was: Do you believe the General Assembly should have cleaner air by ending the use of coal and/or natural gas and instead rely on solar and wind? many would answer yes.

However, if the question was preceded with the statement that currently we do not have the capacity to produce all the power we use with renewable resources, would you be willing to:

- \* Pay two or three times more to receive the power needed to change over to renewables?
  - \* Would you be able to not drive to work but a couple of days a week?
  - \* Would you accept that you would not be able to heat your house above 60 degrees or cool it below 85?
  - \* Who believes that the majority would respond yes?
- Those who ask the questions know they wouldn't, therefore, they limit the information they provide. They simply want you to respond the way they believe.

The same is true with the issue of guns. Often pollsters ask simplistic questions such as, "Should someone be able to buy an assault rifle or should they be able to have access to high round ammunition magazines?" They do not define what they mean by an assault rifle.

They may even refer to automatic weapons that are currently restricted. They might forget to mention that an ammo magazine that holds seven rounds meets their standard of "high capacity".

They might ask, "Should people who are mentally ill or are criminals be allowed to buy guns without background checks?" They don't mention that it has been Virginia state law for almost 30 years that for someone to legally buy a gun in Virginia, the seller must run a background check. Those who can not pass that check, either for criminal or mental reasons, are not allowed to make a purchase. By chance, it should be noted that those criminals never are investigated for their attempted buy.

Pollsters use the term "universal background checks" as if that is possible. It would effectively add those who buy guns at gun shows but that's all. Those who go to gun shows rarely are the problem. It should concern everyone that the real problem is not someone who legally bought a gun but rather goes on the street to buy a stolen gun from the trunk of a car. In what world does one live in to believe that those who sell and buy guns illegally are going to delay the sale to ask the state police to do a background check? The only "universal checks" would be of law-abiding citizens; the evil doers would not be affected in the slightest.

Other gun issues that have arisen, such as trigger activators that can be made at home or bought on the internet, are impossible to regulate. Likewise, shifting the onus on law abiding citizens makes no sense as in the case where one becomes a criminal if they don't realize theirs was stolen. The same is true if you tried to train the next generation how to handle and use a firearm safely.

The majority is not satisfied with your safety and freedom. They also want you to help pay for college education for those who are in Virginia illegally while those who live in 49 others states don't get that benefit. They expect you to pay 5 cents for every plastic bag you use, but I often see them drinking water out a plastic bottle which is a far greater environment problem than a paper or thin plastic bag.

As is often said at Memorial Day ceremonies, "Our Freedom is never free".

We love to hear from you! You can reach us at Sen. Ruff@verizon.net, 804-698-7515, or P.O. Box 332, Clarksville, VA 23927.

Qasem Soleimani, a terrorist and leader of the Iranian Republican Guards Quds Force. As a former USAF Intelligence Officer, combat mission planner, and team lead for Counter-Improvised Explosive Device operations, I know first-hand the devastating effect of Iran's activities against U.S. service members in the Middle East. Hundreds of American soldiers and thousands of Syrian civilians have been killed by Iran and Soleimani.

President Trump's escalated air strikes against those planning to inflict harm on Americans are a warranted response against Iranian actions. The United States reserves the right to defend itself, especially against bad actors like Soleimani and Iran.

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**ON THE HILL**  
 with  
**DENVER RIGGLEMAN**  
 U.S. CONGRESSMAN

January 3, 2020  
 Friends,  
 Last night President Trump approved a military drone strike in Iraq that resulted in the death of

**Our Mission: to be a written and visual record of what makes our community special**

### Brunswick Times-Gazette

Published each week by Womack Publishing Company, Inc.  
 P.O. Box 250, Lawrenceville, VA 23868  
 Phone: 434-848-2114 Fax: 434-848-2115  
 Email: [news@brunswicktimes-gazette.com](mailto:news@brunswicktimes-gazette.com)

(USPS 614-140-ISSN: 1074-5114)  
 A Periodical Postage paid at Lawrenceville, Virginia

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The Brunswick Times-Gazette welcomes letters to the editor on matters of public concern. Letters must be signed with full name and indicate the writer's address and telephone number. (Telephone numbers are used for verification only.) Letters may be edited for length, clarity, accuracy, and grammar. Letter should be mailed the Brunswick Times-Gazette, P.O. Box 250, Lawrenceville, VA 23868 or faxed to (434)848-2115.

Subscription Rates: Brunswick County - \$46/Year • Elsewhere - \$64/Year • Online E-Edition - \$31/Year  
 POSTMASTER: send address changes to Brunswick Times-Gazette, P.O. Box 250, Lawrenceville, VA 23868



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