

# OPINION

## Letters To The Editor

### Ebony rezoning vote appealed, citizens invited to add support

**To the Editor:**

It's not over. There are too many things that seem wrong with this picture and too much at stake to let it go. After taking 30 days to figure out our strategy, a Petition was filed on Feb. 28, 2020 to APPEAL the Jan. 29, 2020 Ebony rezoning decision.

On behalf of all who opposed the rezoning of A-1 property to B-1 to accommodate Dollar General or any business on the B-1 list, Petitioners (Plaintiffs) are listed as Anne Edwards Hartley and the Prospect Cemetery Association. Our attorney leading the appeal process is John M. Janson of South Hill.

The Petition is designed not only to reverse the Jan. 29, 2020 rezoning decision for Ebony but also to try and prevent future disconnects with land use management and efforts to inappropriately commercialize Ebony and other similar A-1 places in the County. The Ebony rezoning is not aligned with Current and Future Land Use in the County's Comprehensive Plan nor Zoning Ordinances. Zoning governance is designed to prevent exactly what has happened with the 3-2 vote. We hope better understand why this breakdown occurred, hopefully find ways to improve the land management practice in Brunswick County and begin to heal a very divided community.

We encourage and invite all who opposed to add your support to the Petition to Appeal by submitting your perspective on a form called an Amicus Brief (Friend of the Court) that is very easy to do. In a nut shell you submit your support in writing and it becomes attached to the Petition that was submitted.

We have posted an Amicus Brief (WORD doc) with instructions on the Appeal page of the KeepEbonyCountry.org website. All you have to do is edit the document and add your personal comments about why you opposed the rezoning and why the Petition should be granted to reverse the decision. Sign and mail copies to four recipients. If you do not have access to the website resource, feel free to request the form via email to keepebonycountry@gmail.com, and if email is not an option, call (919) 602-5012.

Thank you for your stand of opposition to the Ebony rezoning and any support you can add to the Petition to Appeal. Please help spread the word.

**Respectfully Submitted,**  
**Anne Edwards Hartley**  
**Ebony Preservation Group**  
**Ebony, Virginia**

## Brunswick STEW

by Mark Evans



### Grandchildren are such a joy!

Hey, Brunswick County, I hope you are having a great Sabbath Day.

Like many of you, we stayed home from Church today after it was announced that, in an effort to stem the spread of Corona Virus, all Church meetings and activities have been canceled for a time.

It kind of weird substituting Home Gospel study for worshipping with fellow Christians but it was still enlightening. We went out and visited a couple of widows, prayed with them, and made sure they felt loved.

We have received reports that our grandchildren really enjoyed having "home church services."

We hope that this suspension of meetings doesn't last long, and, like you, we include a plea that the plague of Coronavirus will be taken away in every prayer.

Speaking of grandchildren, I would like to introduce you to Isabell, one of our three year old granddaughters. Affectionately called Izzy, she is a total trip.

She has 5 older brothers and sisters whom she adores and emulates.

And, she loves her grandma and grandpa. Cindy and I drove over to their house last Thursday to watch over her and her siblings for a few days while her parents took a small trip together.

Soon after our arrival, I looked down the hall at Izzy and smiled.

She said, "Grandpa, you're too cute!" Of course, I replied, "Izzy, you're too cute too!" She made a puzzled face and went off to play.

About an hour later, she came right up to me and very distinctly said, "Grandpa, you are Cuckoo!"

Suddenly, I realized what she had said earlier. I laughed.

Over the course of the next 3 days, I heard her say "Grandpa, watch me" about a hundred times. I did my best to watch because her smile and the flip of her head make even the most mundane actions amusing.

When her brother and sisters got home from school they bombarded us with interesting stories from the day at school and with the most exciting news that school was canceled for two weeks! It was like snow days with no snow!

After listening to her siblings for a while, Izzy grabbed my hand and began to relate the events of her day. The account started with, "Grandpa, when I was a big girl at school, ....." I laughed. You would have, too.

The next morning, she drove with me to drop her 13 year old brother off at the Junior High School. Just before he closed the door behind him, she shouted, "Will, you forgot your Barbie!"

It took me 5 minutes to stop laughing. I was amazed that she was so skillful in dishing out public embarrassments.

Later, that afternoon, Cindy and I took the 7 children on a 2 mile hike along the Rails to Trails near their home. We walked along a dry creek bed looking for interesting rocks. We found some great samples of smokey quartz. I noticed Izzy also picking up random rocks.

Then, a jogger came up the path. He had a long beard but pleasant eyes.

When he was about 20 feet away, Izzy asked him, "Are you a bad guy?" We quickly shushed her and hoped that he hadn't heard and that he didn't answer in the affirmative.

A short while later, Izzy told me that she couldn't walk anymore and asked to be carried. We already had the baby in the one seat stroller so I encouraged her to carry on.

"But grandpa, my pants are too heavy!"

When I looked closer, I found that every pocket was full to the brim with gravel.... pieces of crush and run.

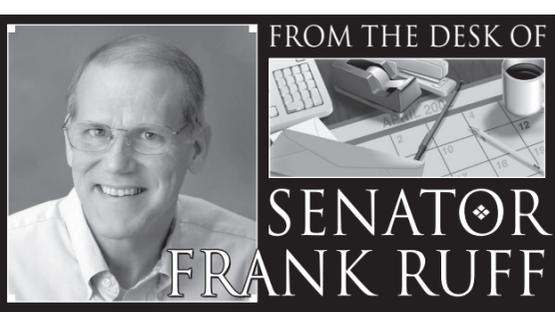
We saved three rocks. I smiled as, with a lighter load, she took off.

That night I knelt by her at her bedside as she said her prayers. If her prayers for Corona virus to go away were not heard, none of our prayers will ever be. It made me smile to hear her simple faith expressed.

Just sitting here now, over a hundred miles away, my face is still smiling just from thinking about her.

Then it was time for Cindy and I to leave. Suddenly,

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FROM THE DESK OF  
**SENATOR FRANK RUFF**

### Budget Done, Right or Wrong

Thursday we returned to Richmond to finish the biennium budget. As in every budget, there are good and not so good things. It is, however, important that we all have budgets whether it be families, businesses, or governments. If not, we tend to spend when we ought to be saving.

Once a budget is agreed upon, it is then up to the Governor and his staff to closely follow the revenues coming in to make sure that spending is reduced if revenues don't meet expectations. Just as your family would need to adjust spending if your income is reduced.

This leaves us with a major question that we attempted to address on Thursday. Between the time that the budget negotiators agreed to a plan and the few days later that we came back to Richmond, the world changed dramatically. The Corona virus and the reaction to it caused turmoil in the business world from jobs, travel, and events, to the stock market. No one expected the stock market to drop 10% in less than a week. The budget did not reflect these events. We attempted to delay the vote for a few weeks in hopes that we could better understand how lasting these effects might be. This would have allowed us to better set priorities as to how to cut back to match whatever the economy delivers.

#### Spending

State budgets must factor in all revenue expected. Therefore, the booming national economy has more people working and employees earning more. That revenue must be accounted for whether it be spending or saving, whether it be taxes or tuition that you pay to a college, or a federal research grant to a university.

Thankfully, the House agreed to the Senate's position that, rather than borrowing money for needed construction, we are planning to spend cash on some of those projects. As well, we set aside \$2 billion in case things

are not as rosy as was expected a week earlier.

Raises for our teachers, state employees, and such folks as those who work in the Sheriff, Treasurer, and Commissioner's offices are included in the budget. We fell behind during the years after the collapse of the economy in 2008 and 2009. However, this will require our counties to adjust their spending to meet the match required for our teachers.

#### Education

In addition to raises, the budget provides for more assistance in the realm of early childhood learning in both our schools and non-school settings. Likewise, the need for more counselors in our schools was recognized. The budget calls for one counselor for every 325 students. A problem with this is there may not be enough trained counselors statewide. This may leave smaller, poorer counties not being able to fill positions as the wealthier counties that pay better may attract them away.

At the community college level, we agreed to assist those students that are focused on pursuing high level skills that are in short supply. Such things as skilled trades, healthcare, and law enforcement. Likewise, we agreed to more assistance for those focused on the computer science field. For those who have children in or about to attend college, we funded more for tuition freezes and need based assistance.

#### Public Safety

Not only will our prison guards, troopers, and deputies be receiving raises, there is an attempt to give additional raises for those who have been good long-term employees who have suffered from pay compression. Some of our most experienced and loyal troopers and guards are making only marginally more than new hires. This is not right! We also provided funds to our town and city police departments, allowing them to adjust pay as needed.

#### Agriculture and Conservation

Understanding that the most effective way to protect our rivers and bay is to empower and assist farmers in keeping livestock out of streams, we invested \$80 million in these projects. We have many Soil and Water District dams that are showing wear and tear. We invested \$15 million more in rehabilitating them.

In the coming weeks, I will recap some of the major issues that were before the General Assembly this year and how you will be affected.

We love to hear from you! You can reach us at Sen. Ruff@verizon.net, (434) 374-5129, or P.O. Box 332, Clarksville, VA 23927.

District Emergency Response Team in my office to make sure are as prepared as possible and so constituents can receive advice and care.

To those constituents who are concerned they may have coronavirus-related health-concerns, I encourage you to stay at home and call your local physician. It is important that you call your physician and your local health department before leaving your house to seek care. The health department will issue guidance on how to proceed and how to obtain a test kit if deemed necessary.

My office is coordinating with all the hospitals throughout the district, and I would encourage you to call my Charlottesville office at (434) 973-9631 or my Danville office at (434) 791-2596 if you have further questions about what to do or where to go. I have also set

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March 13, 2020

Friends,

This week has been dominated by headlines surrounding the COVID-19 virus outbreak. I have set up a

## Letters to the Editor

Womack Publishing welcomes letters to the editor on matters of public concern. Letters must be signed with full name and include the writer's address and telephone number (telephone numbers are used for verification only). Letters may be edited for length, clarity, accuracy and grammar. Womack Publishing will accept no more than two letters per month, per person or organization. Womack Publishing reserves the right to edit or reject any letter at the discretion of the publisher. Send letters to: Brunswick Times-Gazette, P. O. Box 250, Lawrenceville, Va. 23868 or email to news@brunswicktimes-gazette.com. The phone number is (434) 848-2114.

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