



# Yes, Virginia!

Issue # 6

The Newsletter of Scenic Virginia

Fall/Winter 2001

## ***A Note from Scenic Virginia's President***

*Scenic Virginia has been extraordinarily busy this year. In concentrating on several important issues this fall, our limited staff has been unable to focus adequately on fund raising, and time ran out for sending an appeal to members and supporters for year end contributions. Fund raising is critical to the long term viability of non-profits, and Scenic Virginia is no exception.*

*Our newsletter shows how involved Scenic Virginia is in protecting the Commonwealth's scenic assets. We all know that the real value of our state's most scenic vistas lies not in their development potential but in their contribution to the state's beauty and natural heritage. Scenic Virginia is being called on daily for advice, informational materials, support and for active involvement in issues all across the state. To be in a position to respond to these appeals we must have the financial support of all who are interested in preserving the intangibles that make our state beautiful. Please consider a year end contribution to Scenic Virginia. Your support will go a long way and will be greatly appreciated.*

*Hylah H. Boyd, President*

## **Lights! Camera! Action!**

### **Scenic Virginia to Produce Documentary on Traffic-Calming**

**R**oute 50, it seems, is getting ready for its cinematic close-up.

Scenic Virginia is joining forces with acclaimed filmmaker George Sibley to produce a documentary on the history-making use of traffic-calming measures currently being implemented along the scenic and historic road that runs through Aldie, Middleburg, and Upperville in Virginia's beautiful Piedmont region. The resulting "Scenic Virginia Presents" video will be available for nationwide distribution to groups facing a similar challenge of wanting to enhance safety on their roads yet preserve their historic and scenic assets.

"The time is right for this film," said Scenic Virginia's President Hylah Boyd. "More and more we are hearing from citizen groups across Virginia that don't want to trade their local scenic and historic assets for VDOT 'safety improvements' that destroy the character of a beloved road. We're here to tell

them that they don't have to settle. It is possible to have both."

Scenic Virginia will be working hand in hand with the Route 50 Corridor Coalition, the local grassroots group representing the communities along the rural Route 50 corridor. "We are thrilled at the idea of this documentary," says Coalition chair Susan Van Wagoner. "Our lessons have been hard-learned, and we would like other groups to have the benefit of our experiences."

As for VDOT, the agency is now working cooperatively with a local Task Force on the implementation of the project. Notes Leighton Powell, "George Sibley has made it clear that he wants a fair and accurate accounting of this situation. VDOT is to be commended for its decision to listen to the citizens along Route 50. Everyone involved wants it to work."

Scenic Virginia is currently seeking associate producers for the film. Please contact the Scenic Virginia office for more information.

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NOTES FROM THE SCENIC VIRGINIA OFFICE

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**Annual Meeting 2001**

Scenic Virginia hosted its 2001 Annual Meeting on September 17 at the Kent-Valentine House in Richmond. At that time, Scenic Virginia's Board of Trustees unanimously elected the following slate of officers to new one-year terms:

**2001-2002 Officers**

**President:** Hylah H. Boyd, Richmond

**Vice-President:** David R. Kenerson, Jr., Norfolk

**Secretary:** Mrs. J. Martin Scott, Jr., Danville

**Treasurer:** Margaret B. Clarke, Charlottesville.

We are delighted to have this slate of officers for the upcoming year, and we ask that you join us in thanking Hylah, David (who is also Scenic Virginia's President-Elect), Sharon, and Marlee for their service.

In addition, please join us in thanking John Newell of Ashland for three years of service as Scenic Virginia's Vice-President. We are pleased to note that John will remain on the Board as a Trustee.

**Departing Board Members**

Following the election of new officers, President Hylah Boyd recognized the following Trustees who are leaving the Board: Reba McClanan of Virginia Beach, Marilyn Paschke of Richmond, and Martha Wingfield of Ashland. We join Hylah in thanking and saluting these members for their three years of dedicated service.

**New Board Member**

Also at the Annual Meeting, Hylah Boyd announced that Eleanor Potts Snodgrass of Virginia Beach has joined the Board of Trustees. Eleanor, known as "Pottsie" to her friends, will be spearheading our development efforts in the Hampton Roads area. We are pleased to have her fundraising expertise and ask you to join us in welcoming her to the Board of Scenic Virginia.

**Hot Off the Press!**

**Scenic Virginia Updates Its Brochure**

Scenic Virginia has recently updated its brochure to reflect the varied programs the organization now addresses.

"It was time for a change," says Executive Director Leighton Powell. "The old brochure simply wasn't doing justice to our current concerns and projects, such as Scenic Virginia's increased focus on preserving the Commonwealth's most valued viewsheds. The new brochure does that, and more."

The new brochure will be sent to Scenic Virginia members as part of an organization-wide mailing. Members should contact Leighton if they need additional copies.

**"Scenic Virginia Works!":**

**The 2002 Tour**

We are currently accepting bookings for 2002 for our noted slide show, "Scenic Virginia Works!" If you're interested, please contact Leighton Powell at the Scenic Virginia office (804.282.5522) with possible dates. In addition, the slide show is undergoing an update and will soon be available as a PowerPoint presentation.

**Increasing Our Political Clout**

Do you care about scenic issues in Virginia and are you willing to help make a difference? If so, you need to be on Scenic Virginia's email address list to receive our time-sensitive legislative alerts during the upcoming General Assembly Session.

If you are a member and haven't given us your email address, please do so soon. Legislators need to know that their constituents care about scenic issues.

**Questions?**

We encourage our members to call the Scenic Virginia office in Richmond at 804.282.5522 if you need help of any kind.

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## Scenic Virginia, Senator Ticer Celebrate Passage of SJ 428

*State Senator Patricia S. Ticer (right) presents Scenic Virginia President Hylah Boyd with a framed copy of Senate Joint Resolution 428, the successful legislation from the 2001 General Assembly Session that recognizes the intrinsic value to Virginia of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground project. Scenic Virginia sponsored the legislation and is a partner in the JTHG, located along the Route 15 corridor.*

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### Scenic Virginia Joins Virginia E-Action Network

Scenic Virginia is working with the Virginia League of Conservation Voters Education Fund on an exciting new project: the Virginia E-Action Network.

Already in place in other states, the Virginia E-Action Network sends time-sensitive email alerts on important legislation to those Virginians interested in primary conservation issues such as land conservation, transportation, or water quality. Just as important, the Network provides the tools to let members respond quickly to their legislators.

Says Leighton Powell, a member of the

E-Action Network's Steering Committee, "LCVEF is providing a quick and easy way for our members to stay up-to-date on conservation issues beyond Scenic Virginia's primary focus. We support the project and hope our members sign up."

Powell notes that LCVEF will **not** solicit those who sign up, nor will they use email addresses for any other purpose.

If you are interested in receiving the alerts, please visit [www.actionnetwork.org](http://www.actionnetwork.org) (the site will be up and running in mid-January).

If you have additional questions about the project, please call the Scenic Virginia office.

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NEWS FROM AROUND THE COMMONWEALTH

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**Say AAH!  
(Adopt-A-Highway, that is)**

As you probably know by now, Scenic Virginia actively supports and promotes VDOT's Adopt-A-Highway program, which saves Virginia taxpayers millions of dollars a year by recruiting volunteers to pick up litter along Virginia's roadsides. There are currently 7,000 Adopt-A-Highway volunteers across the Commonwealth, but there is always a need for more.

Where are the roads most in need of care? Leighton Powell recently asked Jennifer Sieck, VDOT's Adopt-A-Highway coordinator, to provide us with a list of Virginia's neediest roads. Jennifer obliged, giving us the following:

**Top Ten Roads in Need of Adoption**

1. **Robert E. Lee Drive** (from Blockhouse Road to Old Mill Lane), in Spotsylvania County
2. **Rt. 33**, in Louisa County
3. **Rt. 18**, in Allegheny County
4. **Rt. 11**, in Botetourt County
5. **Rt. 41** (from Rt. 863 to Rt. 612), in Halifax County
6. **41st Street on- and off-ramps**, Hampton
7. **Rt. 75** (from Abingdon corporate limits to Rt. 672), in Washington County
8. **Rt. 156** (from White Oak Road to Hines Road), in Henrico County
9. **Rt. 17** from the Coleman Bridge to York High School, in York County
10. **Rt. 340**, south of Luray to Stanley, in Page County.

In case none of these roads is near you, Jennifer notes that a complete listing of VDOT roads "most in need of adoption" is on the Web at [www.VirginiaDOT.org](http://www.VirginiaDOT.org). In addition, those interested in adopting a road can call 1-800-PRIDE-VA or send an e-mail to [adoptahighway@vdot.state.va.us](mailto:adoptahighway@vdot.state.va.us).

If you decide to adopt a Virginia highway, please consider listing Scenic Virginia on the Adopt-A-Highway road sign.

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**Illegal Signs a Nuisance? Richmond "Signs Off" on the Issue**

During 2001 Scenic Virginia heard from members fed up with illegal "popsicle" signs and fliers placed in the rights-of-way and on utility poles. Most expressed frustration that little could be done to counter illegally posted real estate signs in medians and "Work from Home"-type posters stapled to telephone poles — both a constant source of irritation. The rampant posting of illegal campaign signs during the last election cycle was, for many, the last straw.

To help localities that don't have good litter ordinances, Scenic Virginia has been working with VDOT to develop a program similar to its Adopt-A-Highway effort. The new program would train and authorize citizens who want to remove these illegal signs safely and without incident.

In Richmond, which has a good litter ordinance, Scenic Virginia member Bob Swisher brought the problem to the attention of the Clean City Commission's Pride in Richmond Task Force. The result? The first annual "Great Richmond Sign-Off!" To make it work, the Task Force first educated citizens on what makes a sign illegal and then encouraged civic groups to participate in a competition to remove them.

Citizens and civic groups gathered at Richmond's Byrd Park on November 10 with their "bounty." A top prize of \$250 was given to the Greater Fulton Civic Association, which brought in 1,139 illegally posted signs. All in all, participants eliminated 5,644 illegal signs from Richmond's streets.

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## Department of Forestry Awards Scenic Virginia a Second Year of Funding for Staff, Scholarships to National Urban Forestry Conference

Over the summer the Virginia Department of Forestry awarded Scenic Virginia a second year of funding for Non-Profit Staffing. The grant, in the amount of \$8,000, was given in recognition of Scenic Virginia's continuing efforts to promote tree-planting and urban forestry in its community outreach and education programs.

Scenic Virginia currently discusses the merits of urban forestry in its slide show, "Scenic Virginia Works!" Scenic Virginia is also working with the Department of Forestry and several utility companies in Virginia on the Municipal Tree Restoration Program, which offers municipalities the option of replacing overly pruned trees under utility lines with new, lower-growing species.

In addition, the Department of Forestry awarded scholarships to Scenic Virginia President Hylah Boyd and Executive Director Leighton Powell to attend the 2001 National Urban Forestry Conference, held September 5–7 at the Omni Shoreham in Washington, D.C.

Conference attendees from all across the United States attended seminars, visited exhibits, and heard from community activists, elected officials, non-profit organizations, professional arborists, foresters, and concerned citizens wanting to help spread the word about the many benefits of trees to a community.

We thank the Department of Forestry for both the 2001–2002 grant and the scholarships to the National Urban Forestry Conference. Look for updates on the urban forestry movement in 2002.

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## Scenic Virginia, Citizens of Bedford Join Together to Celebrate Lady Bird Johnson and Earth Day

On April 22, 2001, Bedford citizens gathered at two adjoining Bedford County farms to celebrate Earth Day and to pay tribute to longtime scenic preservationist Lady Bird Johnson. Attending the event were youth representatives from local schools, plus adult members of several prominent organizations, including The Evergreen Project, the Bedford Humane Society, a local woman's support group, and Scenic Virginia.

Bedford resident and Scenic Virginia member Dee Gussoni reported that one of the day's highlights was the planting of the first of a series of "Lady Bird's Gardens," envisioned as a project for area youth. As local musicians played, the contributions of the former First Lady were told to the children, many of whom were too young to be aware of her dedication to roadside beauty. The celebration in honor of Lady Bird Johnson culminated in the presentation to her, in absentia, of an award from Scenic Virginia and The Evergreen Project recognizing her efforts and expressing our gratitude.

*Bedford participants Jenny Popper (left) and Rachel Perkins pose with the award presented to Lady Bird Johnson*

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**Scenic Virginia Feted at Charlottesville Receptions**

*(Left to right) Scenic Virginia President-Elect David R. Kenerson, Jr.; hosts Linda K. Ford and The Honorable Sally H. Thomas; and Scenic Virginia President Hylah H. Boyd share a smile at Windsor Hill, Mrs. Ford's beautiful home in Charlottesville.*

When Linda K. Ford returned home one afternoon two years ago, she was shocked to see the crude and ugly cuts that VDOT had made to trees that lined the right-of-way adjoining her property. Thanks to the efforts of Scenic Virginia, the brutal trimming of trees will no longer be permitted.

After hearing from concerned members, Scenic Virginia called VDOT's attention to the issue. This resulted in the formation of an advisory committee composed of VDOT management, the Department of Forestry, arborists, Scenic Virginia President Hylah Boyd and member Don Jones. At the request of Scenic Virginia, Delegate Mitchell Van Yahres of Charlottesville sponsored a bill to develop statewide guidelines for the trimming of trees by VDOT. The bill passed both Houses during the 2001 General Assembly, and Governor Gilmore signed it into law. The resulting guidelines are being called "the best in the country."

Mrs. Ford was so grateful for Scenic Virginia's involvement and ultimate success regarding this issue that she honored the organization at two receptions at her Charlottesville home in October. The co-host for both evenings was The Honorable Sally H. Thomas, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors of Albemarle County and a Trustee on Scenic Virginia's Board. Hylah Boyd, Scenic Virginia's President and Founder, and David R. Kenerson, Jr., the organization's President-Elect, were honored guests.

Attendees heard a brief report of Scenic Virginia's current activities, and responded by asking a variety of questions about upcoming projects. In addition, Delegate Van Yahres was recognized and applauded for sponsoring the tree-trimming legislation.

Scenic Virginia thanks Mrs. Ford for providing this wonderful opportunity for us to share our message with her Charlottesville friends and neighbors.

## Scenic Virginia Spotlight

### **Citizens Ask: Who Will Have Dominion Over the James River?**

In August 2001 concerned citizens contacted Scenic Virginia for help in protecting several scenic and historic viewsheds along the James River in Richmond. At issue was Dominion Virginia Power's request for a zoning change that would allow it to build a high-rise office tower of unlimited height on its property along the James. A tower in that location would effectively eliminate some of Virginia's most extraordinary views of the river, including those from Hollywood Cemetery, Belle Isle, James River Park, and Oregon Hill Riverside Park. In fact, the Chairman of the Falls of the James River Scenic Advisory Board stated, "The panoramic view of the river from Oregon Hill Riverside Park is THE most dynamic and spectacular view along the entire 320-mile stretch of the James River."

The issue was tricky. Dominion's plan for expansion was to move 1,000 employees in Henrico County to the corporate headquarters in Richmond, and inward flight from the suburbs to the city is usually desirable. In this instance, though, the proposed site for the massive development was along a sensitive stretch of the James River isolated from the downtown region. There were immediate security, safety and traffic concerns since the site was on a floodplain and the only way in and out was a narrow two-lane road ending in a cul-de-sac.

Scenic Virginia signed on and immediately began assisting Citizens Advocating Responsible Riverfront Development (CARRD), the coalition of neighborhood and civic groups opposing the plan. In September President Hylah Boyd, Executive Director Leighton Powell, and CARRD representatives met repeatedly with City Council members and Dominion representatives. Together the groups publicized the issue through email alerts and fliers, and continued to build support for responsible development along the James River. The coalition supported a redesign of the corporate headquarters that included a trading floor, but proposed moving the other divisions to a high-rise in the Central Business District. There, surrounded by restaurants and shops, Dominion workers could venture out at lunchtime and contribute to Richmond's economy – not a possibility if housed on isolated Tredegar Street. Suggestions for an alternate location included an empty parking lot across the street from Dominion's One James Center Plaza in the Central Business District.

In early October coalition members appeared before the Richmond Planning Commission to oppose Dominion's zoning request. The Planning Commission heard the arguments against and complied, denying the B-4 request and specifically noting the inappropriate nature of the proposed 175-foot office tower. They instead recommended that Dominion return with a request for B-5 zoning with a Special Use Permit for additional height.

CARRD and Scenic Virginia immediately supported the request for B-5 zoning, which limited buildings to 60 feet, but still opposed the siting of the office tower, now marginally reduced to 160 feet. In November, however, the Planning Commission bowed to economic pressure from Richmond's business community and gave approval to Dominion's plan. Scenic Virginia again sent out alerts, and members enthusiastically responded. Many outside of Richmond contacted the Mayor to note their love of the river and the surrounding views; Richmond residents called or emailed their City Council representative directly. One Councilman privately complained that he was hearing from so many of us, he "couldn't get any work done."

In spite of the overwhelming opposition from constituents and a full-page ad donated by Scenic Virginia members to highlight the cause, Richmond City Council -- as expected -- passed the measure unanimously. In meetings with CARRD before the vote, Council members agreed that Dominion's plan was flawed but indicated that their hands were tied.

Attention now will focus on Dominion. Scenic Virginia hopes that the corporation's Board of Directors will take another look at its plans, listen closely to the citizens of the Commonwealth, and respond. A corporate headquarters and trading floor skillfully designed to fit in with the surrounding City Parks and park-like settings would make Dominion a heroic corporate citizen in the eyes of many.

***For more information about this project, please contact Scenic Virginia at (804) 282-5522 or visit CARRD's web site at [www.savethejames.com](http://www.savethejames.com).***

# YES, VIRGINIA!

The Newsletter of Scenic Virginia  
P.O. Box 17606  
Richmond, Virginia 23226

**FIRST-  
CLASS  
POSTAGE  
REQUIRED**

## Scenic Virginia



*Scenic Virginia, a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, is devoted to preserving and enhancing the scenic character of Virginia's communities and countryside.*

Scenic Virginia meets four times a year. Check [www.scenicva.org](http://www.scenicva.org) for information.

### New Mission Statement

Scenic Virginia has a new mission statement to accompany the newly updated brochure. At the 2001 Annual Meeting, the Board of Trustees voted unanimously to adopt the following:

Scenic Virginia is dedicated to the preservation, protection, and enhancement of Virginia's scenic beauty.

We support public and private actions that strengthen the appearance of Virginia's landscapes and communities, especially along our highways and byways.

We believe that scenic assets are essential to the cultural and economic health of our Commonwealth.

### Join Scenic Virginia Today!

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_; Fax \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

#### CURRENT MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

**Friend of Scenic Virginia** \$1-\$999  
**Scenic Steward** \$1,000+

Gift Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Donated in honor of \_\_\_\_\_)

*Detach this application and mail to:*

Scenic Virginia, Inc.  
P.O. Box 17606  
Richmond, Virginia 23226  
Phone: (804) 282-5522; Fax: (804) 282-5506  
E-mail: [email@scenicva.org](mailto:email@scenicva.org)

*Make checks payable to Scenic Virginia.  
To arrange a gift of stock, please call Davenport & Co.  
in Richmond at (804) 780-2102.*

*Contributions are fully deductible for  
Federal Income Tax purposes.*