

Parrot Heads Les and Diane Morvay are pictured with their daughter, Megan, and son, Chris. (See page 2)



# THE PICKUP EXPRESS

NEWS AND IDEAS FOR ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY VOLUNTEERS

## Spring cleanup set for April 14

This is an eventful year in the Commonwealth of Virginia. We commemorate America's 400th Anniversary and the long progression of events since the first English colonists made a permanent settlement in North America. Of course, we're talking about the founding of Jamestown. Many people will be observing this red-letter year, both residents of the Old Dominion and visitors from afar.

Every Adopt-a-Highway team will have opportunities this year to make the state lustrous in appearance for Virginia's quadricentennial. A very important opportunity will be the spring cleanup on April 14—one week before Historic Garden Week begins. We want our roads, byways and scenery to look their best, along with the many beautiful homes and gardens here.

One might say we're helping make history this year—or at least helping to make history brighter. What a great year to put some polish on the patina of our heritage. Thanks for your part in beautifying our state, especially on Saturday, April 14.

| APRIL |     |      |     |      |     |     |
|-------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|-----|
| SUN   | MON | TUES | WED | THUR | FRI | SAT |
| 1     | 2   | 3    | 4   | 5    | 6   | 7   |
| 8     | 9   | 10   | 11  | 12   | 13  | 14  |
| 15    | 16  | 17   | 18  | 19   | 20  | 21  |
| 22    | 23  | 24   | 25  | 26   | 27  | 28  |
| 29    | 30  |      |     |      |     |     |

April 14, 2007 is the spring cleanup day.

## FAQs about 'meth' waste

Unfortunately, Adopt-a-Highway volunteers sometimes encounter dangers mixed into the trash on the side of the road. One that has been found more frequently of late is methamphetamine or "meth" waste.

### What is 'meth'?

Methamphetamine is a very toxic, highly addictive stimulant, considered to be the No. 1 drug threat today. It can be manufactured almost anywhere and the process leaves a large amount of dangerous waste.

### What is the danger associated with this waste?

A common part of a meth lab is a container of kitty litter called a "death bag" or "death bottle." One whiff of the gas in a death bag can send you to the hospital with permanent lung damage. If a bag or plastic bottle has duct tape on it and a rubber tube or piece of garden hose sticking out of it, it may well be a death bottle.

### What do I do if I suspect it?

Don't touch anything! Sometimes illegal narcotics makers rig booby traps with their labs. Tie an orange trash bag to a post near the site, stop the pickup session and leave the area. Contact the state police or sheriff nearest you.



Commissioner Ekern



Diane Morway

## WHY I VOLUNTEER

### COMMISSIONER'S COLUMN

Our transportation system touches every Virginian, everyday. And it tells visitors much about our state. Virginia certainly has a rich variety of landscapes, waterways, vegetation and historic resources, which are a treasure for the nation as well as the state. All of this is a major benefit for millions of Americans.

These resources require care, as you well know. And I commend each of you for the responsibility you've taken for preserving the quality and beauty of our roadsides.

Your importance in the public image of Virginia is even greater this year, as we observe America's 400th Anniversary. We will host visitors not only from across the country, but from other parts of the world. This is a rare opportunity to tell Virginia's story and present her unsurpassed loveliness. I'm sure all of you reading this newsletter are eager to do what you can to make your community look its best.

Historic Garden Week is coming April 21-28, and that event beckons us to a special effort on April 14, our statewide spring pickup date.

Your participation April 14 will be noticed-by many people and appreciated by Virginians across the state who are planning for the success of this special week. Adopt-a-Highway teams have helped make Garden Week special for years.

I want to thank you for all that you do for your community and state year round, every year. And I also want to thank you in advance for your contribution during this very special year when Virginia is in the national—make that world—spotlight!

*David*

David S. Ekern, P.E.

Diane Morway picks up trash to beautify her environment, as you might expect; but she has additional reasons. One of those pertains to her membership in the Parrot Heads of the Old Dominion, Northern Virginia Chapter. Half the membership in this chapter of the Jimmy Buffett fan club remove litter from Signal View Drive in Prince William County, and Morway is co-captain with Kevin Wilshere for pickups there. Morway and her husband, Les, their son, Chris, and their daughter, Megan, clean the road together. They began October 1999. The other club members clean up on Route 15 in Loudoun County.

**Why did you start picking up?** "There are three reasons. People think all we do as Parrot Heads is party; but there's a lot more to it. We party with a purpose. We hold no event without a charity drive, and we are a member of the international organization Parrot Heads in Paradise. We collect food for the needy and raise money for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and the Alzheimer's Association. It's also a valuable lesson for the kids, for them to learn that you have to help out. And it's nice to clean up near your own home."

**Choice Quote:** "People blow close by us in their cars, but some people jog by or ride bikes and thank us for our work. That washes away the feelings about the discourteous drivers."

**How I help the environment:** "It's nice to drive through an area where it's not littered and trashed—especially right outside your own neighborhood."

**Added reward:** "We were recognized for our efforts by Prince William County, which gave us an award for doing the road cleanup consistently over five years."

### Pickup duty for probationers

Adopt-a-Highway and community cleanup volunteers contribute \$3 million worth of labor every year, reports Jim Barrett, the department's regulatory and compliance manager in the Asset Management Division. That amount is half of what VDOT spends annually on litter clean-up by mowing contractors, convict labor and VDOT staff.

But a third contingent is now coming into the battle against litter as part of the Adopt-a-Highway program.

Under a new program called Assign-a-Highway, people on probation are assigned by a court to clean up two-mile sections of highway, once every week or two, throughout their probation period. If they fail to perform the required cleanups, the court will have them serve the jail time of their original sentence. This program has become very effective in four counties in Southwest Virginia, and it is spreading to other localities.

## Here's what you said

### THE SURVEY

The last edition of the Pickup Express included a survey with questions about how much you value the newsletter, what you read in it, and your preference for either an online or a printed version of it.

#### **We have tabulated your responses and want to report them to you.**

First, we asked: Is the Pickup Express of "great value" to you, "some value," "little value" or "no value." Eighty-two percent of you responded that the newsletter had either "great" or "some" value. Eighteen percent said that the publication had "little" or "no" value.

About 63 percent of you said that you "read" or "scanned" the newsletter in its entirety. "Stories from the Roadside" and "Why I Volunteer" were the features you read the most.

A strong majority of you prefer a printed version over an online one—59 percent to 37 percent. Four percent saw no need for any type of newsletter. While many of you voting for an online version cited cost savings and environmental benefits, you also expressed concern for those you know who do not have access to a computer.

Comments about the Pickup Express were mostly positive. For example: "Very interesting and motivational," "Super job," "Keep it coming and increase the news pages." One reader said the newsletter gives "a sense of being part of something bigger." Another writes, "I get no thanks...but the Pickup Express makes me feel what I do is of value to others."

#### **You had suggestions, too.**

Several of you want more news about what the state is doing to educate or penalize people who litter. One respondent suggested legislation to establish a bottle and can deposit bill. One reader asked for statistics on "fines for people who litter"; another wanted facts on how much trash is collected; someone else asked, "Are we making any progress in reducing trash?" Two readers saw no value in reporting the unusual types of litter picked up.

Some of you wanted more safety and equipment tips for pickups, and tips on how to keep the environment safe and clean. Others asked for more photos of team members and stories on volunteers. (We welcome them, especially good photos.)

Thanks to everyone for your responses. They are helpful to the editors!



**Bill Harbaugh (left) and Sam Long assemble a new pickup tool donated by the Winchester WAL-MART.**

### Group Focus

Talk about gusto, Doug Butler of the Kiwanis Club of Winchester is "Mr. Enthusiasm."

As chairman of the club's Adopt-a-Highway committee, Butler says, "We've got something going all the time." And that can range from an award for the largest and the smallest hubcap collected on a pickup to his announcement at club meetings of special "finds" on pickups, including significant money. He believes in recruiting.

Of course it's all in fun, but it pays off. Each pickup morning starts with a "fellowship breakfast" for 25 to 30 club members before going to clean the interchange at I-81 and Berryville Avenue in Winchester. At each pickup they come up with 25 to 30 bags—and, incidentally, pickup frequencies just went from quarterly to every two months.

There's a good reason for more pickups: The interchange is in a fast-food district, and motorists "clean out their cars" before they get on I-81, says Butler. Club members prepare trash for recycling by putting paper, glass and aluminum items in separate bags, all ready for the city of Winchester's recycling program. The city has commended the club for its extra efforts.

Office of Public Affairs  
Virginia Department of  
Transportation  
1401 East Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
VirginiaDOT.org

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Richmond, VA  
Permit No. 1347

Address Service Requested

## STORIES FROM THE ROADSIDE

### Latest Intelligence Report

Boy Scout Troop 163, Purcellville, must have its own intelligence staff. Here's the latest: "Bud Lite man who has always reliably trashed our road has switched to Natural Lite. Maybe he is trying to confuse us."

### Didn't negotiate the U-Turn

Found by the Southcreek Kids crew in Chesterfield County: "A boomerang, visibly in good shape but obviously flawed—it didn't return to sender."

### Drinking and ...?

Austin Ridge Homeowners Association in Stafford County notes: "Lots of booze bottles and left-over political signs." Were the politicians celebrating a win or grieving a loss?

### How domestic!

Some discarded items are so homey. For example, an ironing board and vacuum cleaner on a Fairfax County route.

Virginia Department of Transportation  
1401 East Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
804-768-2802 (TTY users, call 711)  
email—VDOInfo@VDOT.Virginia.gov  
www.VirginiaDOT.org

6.5m/ March.2007 Job#07-084  
©2007 Commonwealth of Virginia



Pickup Express is printed on recycled  
30% post consumer waste